

# **Top 10 Guidelines (More Or Less) For Making Good Oral Presentations**

Dr. John M. Weiss  
Department of Mathematics and Computer Science  
South Dakota School of Mines and Technology (SDSM&T)  
Rapid City, SD 57701-3995  
john.weiss@sdsmt.edu  
MICS 2009

## **Abstract**

Fear of public speaking tops the list of greatest fears for many Americans. Overcoming this fear and learning how to deliver a good oral presentation is a critical skill for success in most occupations. I have delivered lectures to small groups of students in classroom situations on a daily basis for almost 25 years, interspersed with presentations at conferences and other professional meetings. I have also supervised many student classroom speeches, coursework defenses, research talks, and other oral presentations. In my experience, adhering to a few simple, common-sense guidelines will greatly improve the quality of any oral presentation.

## **Guidelines**

- Suit the presentation to your audience.
- Organize material to make presentation comprehensible and meaningful.
- Tailor your talk to fit the time provided.
- Use the right tool for the job (Powerpoint).
- Allow your talk to be guided by your slides (slides provide an outline, not full text).
- Prepare the right number of slides (about one a minute).
- Don't put too much on a slide (limit material to a few bulleted items per slide).
- Test your equipment beforehand.
- Don't read your slides!
- Talk to the audience, not the projection screen.
- Wear appropriate dress.
- Practice, practice, practice...