LaSPACE

Guide to Oral Presentations

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Presentation to the
2022-2023 LaACES @ LSU
326 Nicholson Hall, LSU

Thursday, February 9, 6:00 pm
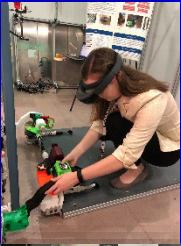
The goal of this lecture is to provide basic concepts and strategies for the drafting and delivery of a quality oral presentation using PowerPoint.

Major content areas covered:

- Content Development & Delivery
  - Communication & Rhetorical Strategy
  - Planning & Structure
- Design
  - Graphic Elements & Color
  - Parallel Structure
  - Incorporating Graphics/Using Visuals
- Execution
  - Resources / Tools
 - Body Language
  - Effective Speaking

Communication *employs rhetorical strategies to convey specific information via various modes of discourse to a particular community to achieve a desired outcome.*

- *Simplified: LaACES team gives a presentation to LaACES management to defend the contents of their of PDR in order to obtain permission to proceed with payload development.*

Rhetorical Strategy *refers to the use of context-dependent tools and devices to most effectively communicate information to a given audience.*

- *Simplified: LaACES team structures the presentation to mirror the PDR document while highlighting the most critical elements of each PDR section.*
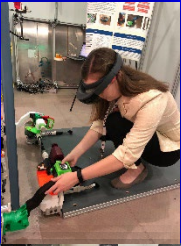
Communication Modes refers to the means of communication (visual, linguistic, spatial, aural, gestural) while the *Communication Medium* is the channel (photograph, essay, furniture arrangement, podcast, dance) through which the information is communicated.

- *Most Communications Artifacts are Multimodal, and the most common modes are visual and linguistic.*

- *Most STEM Professionals are expected to master the following Communications Media: Papers, Presentations, Posters, & Proposals.*

A Strategic Approach to Communications

*The **Rhetorical Triangle** is born of the classical oral tradition of appeals defined by Aristotle.*

- *The three appeals (Logos, Ethos, Pathos) correspond to the three major components driving the creation of a given artifact.*
- *The appeals contain various techniques for persuading your audience to accept your message.*

*The importance of each point on the triangle will vary depending on the big picture, but **Purpose, Persona, & Audience** will always matter as you develop your project.*

Logos
- Logic/Stats/Idea/Message

Ethos
- Authority/Credibility/ Trust

Pathos
- Emotion/Value/Stories

Purpose
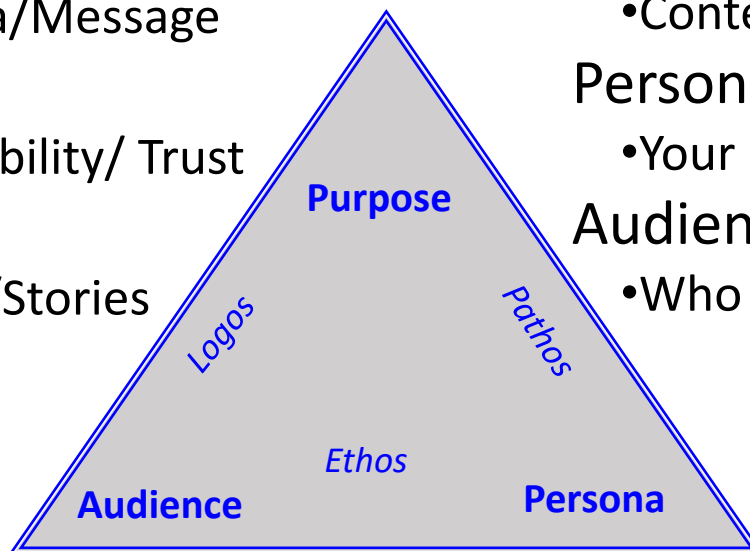- Content & Goals

Persona
- Your role and manner

Audience
- Who is listening & Why

Purpose

Logos

Pathos

Ethos

Audience

Persona

*Effective use of the triangle should lead to the overall message or the "**So-What**" of your presentation.*

Persona + Audience + Purpose
(Who am I? Who am I talking to? What am I trying to accomplish?)

- Each component is critical & required
- Each impacts the other
- The 3 combine to form your message
- Use your message to build your presentation
- Use devices to establish & stay on message
- Start Building!
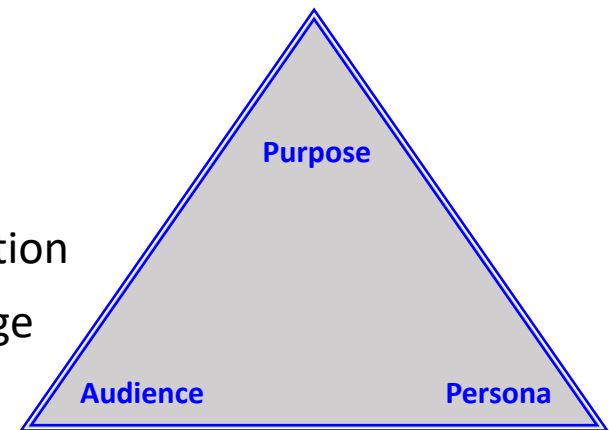
Purpose

Audience   **Persona**

Now that you have defined the Message (i.e. Purpose, Persona, & Audience) for your presentation, you are ready to map your story.

*Standard **Story** Structure*

- Beginning: Introductions, Set up, Goal(s)
- Middle: Body of the Talk, Evidence, Staying on Message
- End: Restating the Goal(s), Major / Important Conclusions, Results, Future Work
- Credits / Epilogue / Bonus Scenes: Q and A

The Introductory Content introduces the Presenter(s) as well as the overall content of the talk:

- **Comprehensive Title Slide**:
  - Title
  - Names & Titles of Presenter(s)
  - Context
  - Location
  - Date & Time
- **Slide #1 Summary Introduction**:
  - Mission Statement *OR*
  - Bulleted List of Objectives *OR*
  - Bulleted List of Content Areas *OR*
  - Table of Contents

✓ *This is the land them or lose them moment.*

✓ *Introduce yourself & your teammates.*

✓ *Recognize your audience.*
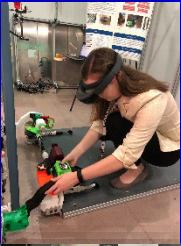
✓ *Paint the big picture & front-load with the so-what.*

The body of your presentation must follow the premises and promises established in your introduction.

Common Content Structure for a Research / Design Talk:

- Contextualize your project
- Share your specific research question(s)
- Reference the literature; science background
- Specify limitations & requirements
- Share and justify your materials & methods
- Present major & minor findings
- Account for alternative interpretations & errors
- Identify remaining tasks, if any, relevant to this work
- Identify your contribution to the field
- Identify future work on this or related content
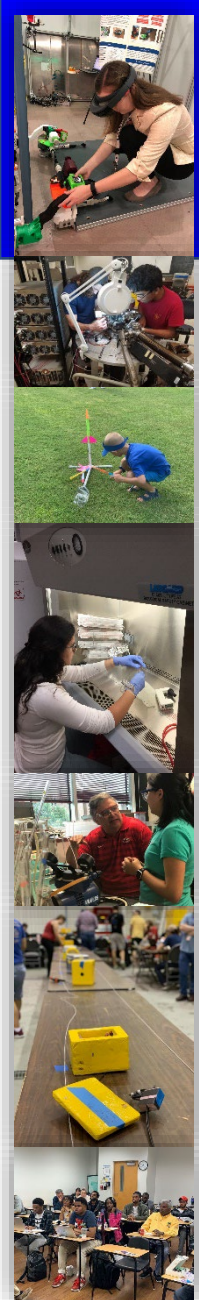- Open the floor for questions

Create a clean, consistent design theme that is easy to read and reinforces your message.

PowerPoint vs Other Platforms

- Easier conversion across the Office Suite
- Most people/computers have access

Template vs Unique Design

- Templates might have limited flexibility
- Color Schemes might not fully match the visual brand
- More difficult to incorporate original artwork, logos, images if the template is not editable

Use parallel structure to create easy access to information for you and your audience.

- **Parallel Structure** is the use of unifying design elements

- Consistent use of the same colors, visual pattern(s), font sizes, and organization of elements makes the final product more cohesive and easier to navigate.

- Include context &/or author info & slide numbers on all slides

Apply Parallel Structure:
- ✓ *Graphic Design Elements*
- ✓ *Color Scheme*
- ✓ *Font (Style, Size, Color)*
- ✓ *Placement (Titles, Headings, Captions)*
- ✓ *Bullet Styles*
- ✓ *Borders*
- ✓ *Figures (Photos, Graphs, Charts)*
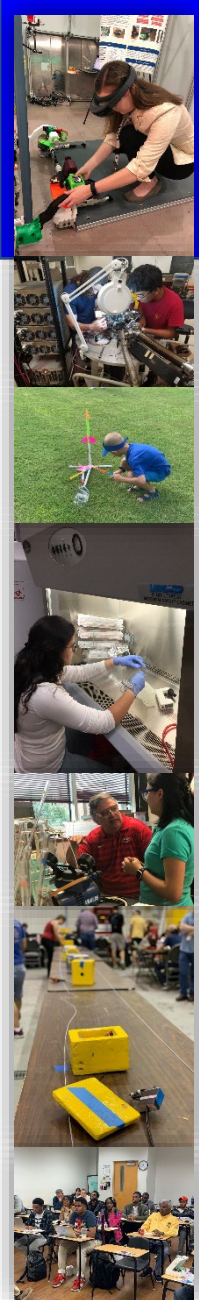
*Use a **color palette** that is easy to read, and complements required images that you cannot control. Select **font** styles, sizes, and colors that you and your audience can easily read.*

Developing the Color Palette

- Use colors from photos, charts, & graphs
- Incorporate designs & colors that reinforce your subject
- Avoid "**extreme**" colors except as accents
- Keep the body design to two or three colors
- Use contrast for readable text
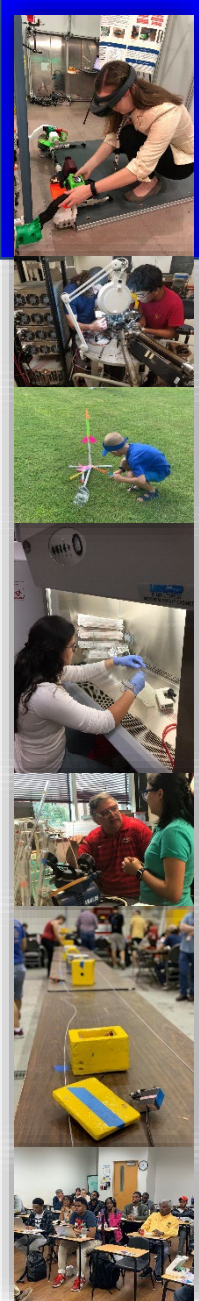
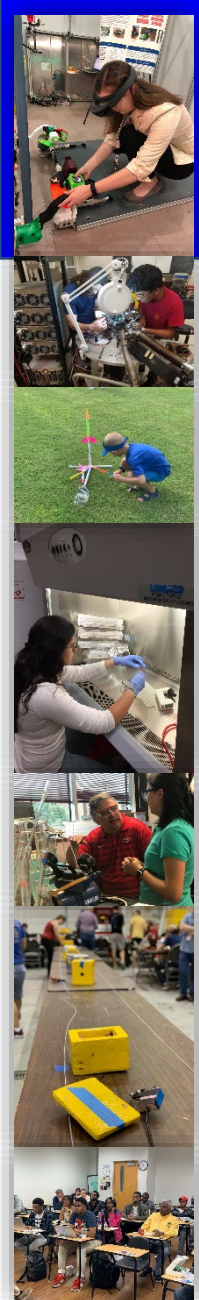*Select **font** styles, sizes, and colors that you and your audience can easily read.*

Font **Style**
- Use Sans-Serif Fonts (Arial, Helvetica, Lucida Sans)
- Use italics and other effects sparingly

Font **Size**
- Avoid fonts smaller than 18 point / larger than 72
- Use a descending scale with the title always the largest

Font **Color**
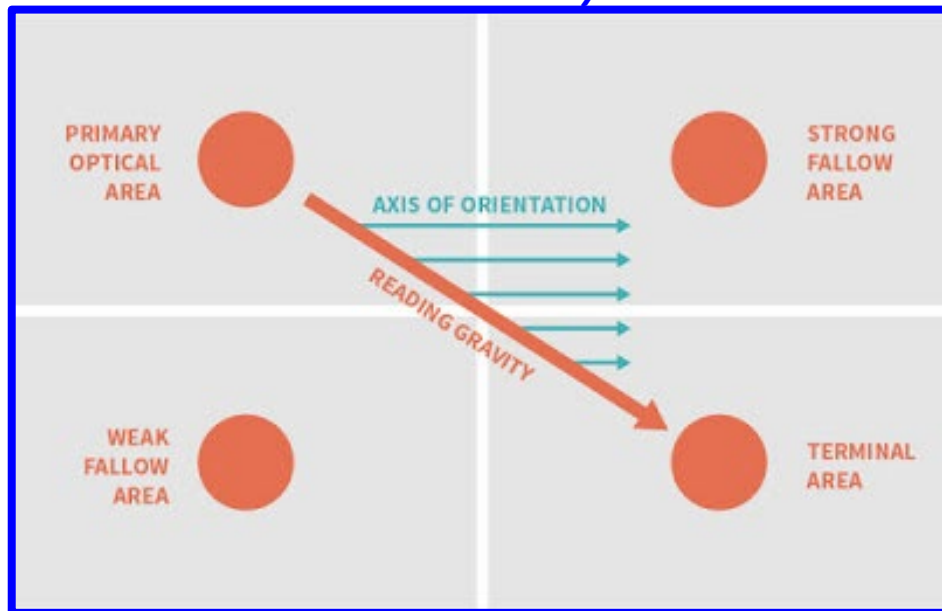- Dark on light or light on dark
- Avoid bright & harsh colors
- Avoid low contrast colors

*Include, and **directly reference,** visual representations to convey information most effectively; include cues for the viewer and consider reader gravity.*

Reader Gravity

Visual Tools:
- ✓ *Photographs*
- ✓ *Videos*
- ✓ *Schematics*
- ✓ *Drawings*
- ✓ *Graphs*
- ✓ *Charts*
- ✓ *Tables*
- ✓ *Flowcharts*

**Figure 1.** This diagram illustrates reader gravity, the typical way a Western Language person approaches a page.
*Credit: http://betterposters.blogspot.com/2016/09/reading-gravity.htm*

Use visuals that illustrate your point; lose those that don't help. Create comprehensive captions. Use Cues.

These charts show student visits to the CxC Studio by day of the week during the 2009-2010 academic year.
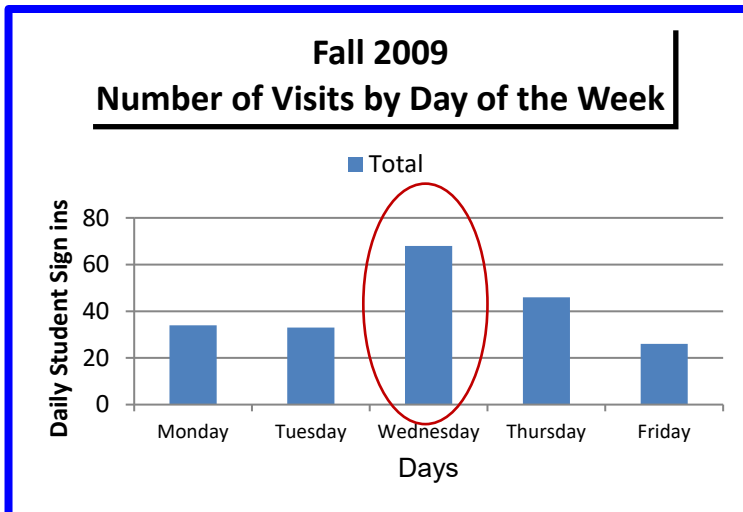
Figure 2. Fall 2009 shows student attendance varies by weekday with a noticeable peak on Wednesdays.
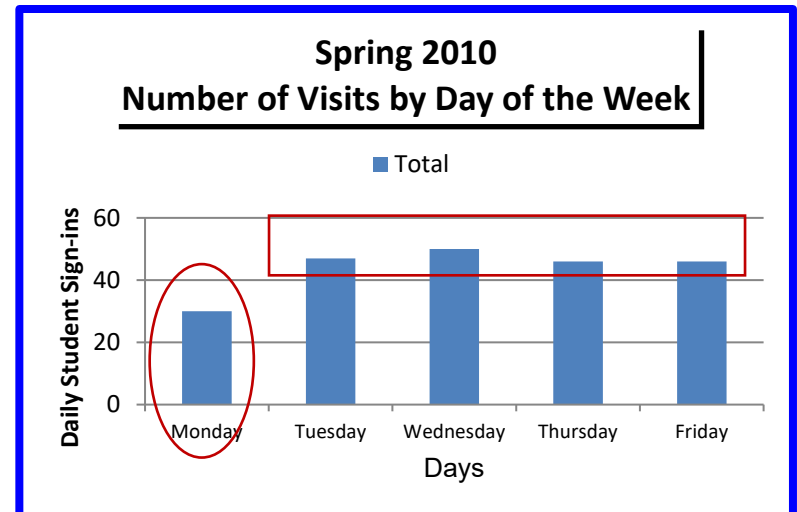
Figure 3. Spring 2010 shows a more even distribution Tuesday through Friday with a noticeable dip on Mondays.

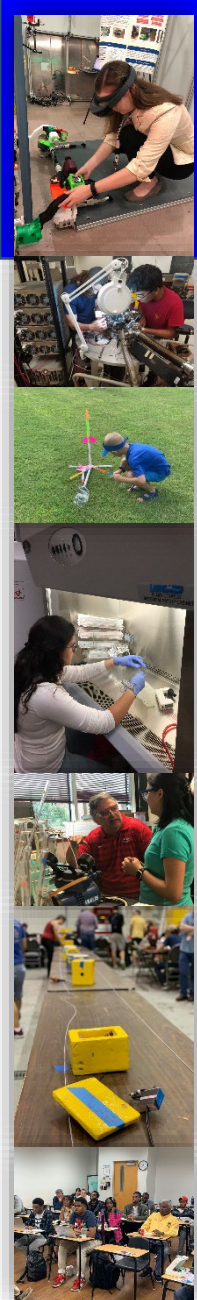*An effective **presentation** is an effective **performance**.*
- *The tools & resources you have access to will drive the limitations of your performance.*
- *The quality of your performance is within your control.*

Colleen's pet peeve:
"I'm giving a PowerPoint."

You are *giving* a presentation. PowerPoint is just a tool you are using for your presentation.

Performance Tools & Resources
- ✓ Technology
- ✓ Supplements
- ✓ Physical Space
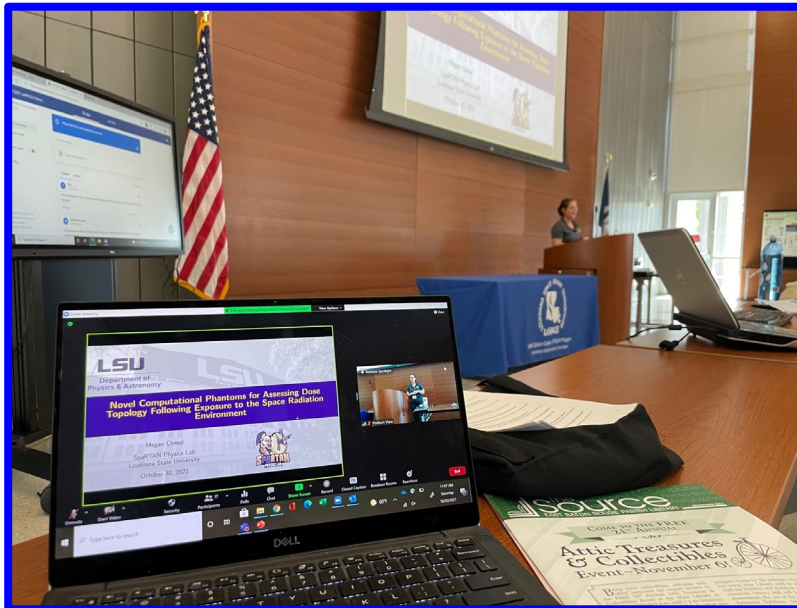- ✓ Time
- ✓ Personal Appearance
- ✓ Body Language
- ✓ Speech

PowerPoint is a highly effective tool used in the execution of a presentation, but it is not the only tool.

- *What other tools could you use to supplement your talk?*

Figure 4. LSU Physics PhD candidate, Megan Chesal, presenting at the Fall 2021 Space Grant Meeting. This image features several "tools" in support of the presentation.

Presentation Tools
- ✓ Handouts
- ✓ Manipulatives
- ✓ Whiteboards
- ✓ Computers
- ✓ Projectors
- ✓ Microphones
- ✓ Videos
- ✓ Websites
- ✓ PowerPoint Slides

Effectively use space, time, and technology to meet your presentation goals.

Space

- Where is your talk? Online? In-Person? Hybrid?
- What does the physical space look like?
- Are there restrictions on your movement due to the location and expectations of the audience (at a podium, walking around)?

Time

- Maximum/Minimum times?
- Any flexibility? Any hard requirements?

Technology

- Do you bring a computer, projector, flashdrive?
- Do you have to use the "house" machine?
- Is the operating system compatible? software? wi-fi?
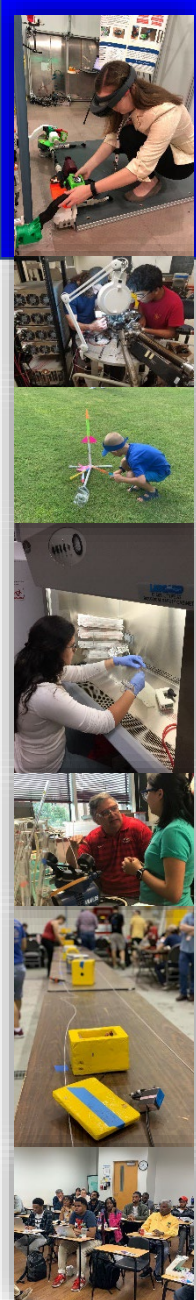
Dress the part BUT there is more than one part!

- The important thing is to know what your audience expects of you and meet that expectation.

Figure 4. The labelling of the images above give the impression that there is a right, wrong, and okay way to dress, but we know it's more complicated than it appears.

Dress Tips

- ✓ Ask the organizer
- ✓ Ask the person who invited you
- ✓ Check the website for guidance
- ✓ Check the website for past event images
- ✓ Ask people who have presented / attended before
- ✓ Use your best judgment
- ✓ Respect your comfort (zone)

Say what you mean and mean what your body says!

Effective Signals and Postures

- Face your audience

- Make eye contact

- Look into the camera

- Attend to the entire room

- Check for text in chat boxes / raised hands

- Keep your body open and relaxed

- Lean forward

- Smile, nod, pause

- Do not create distractions

- Do not succumb to distractions

- Be honest and enthusiastic about your subject

Tip
- ✓ *Pay attention to the people you are talking to and you will likely achieve positive body language naturally.*
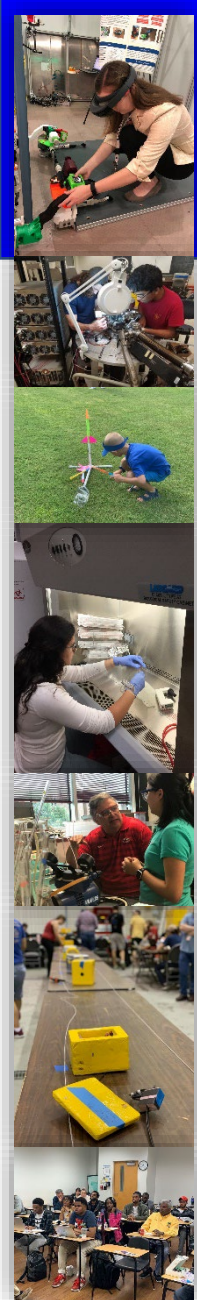
Say what you mean and believe what you say!

Effective Speaking

- Speak toward your audience

- Avoid "uh"s and "um"s

- Speak slowly, clearly (enunciate)

- Check the correct pronunciation of terms

- Consider your audience's experience level

- Acknowledge mistakes and quickly move on

- Expect challenges and technical difficulties

- Use the allotted time; use ONLY the allotted time

- Use meaningful pauses

- Use logical transitions between slides (& speakers)

- Monitor your audience's engagement

- Be honest and enthusiastic about your subject

Tip
- ✓ *Respect your audience, your subject matter, and yourself.*
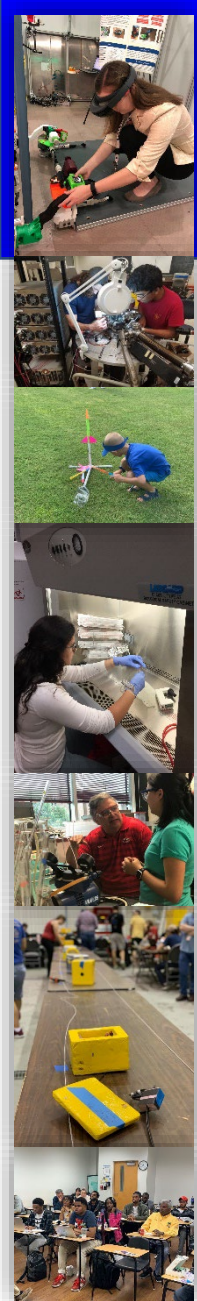
*Say what you know and know what you're saying!*

Practice

- Step 1: Practice while silently reviewing your slides
- Step 2: Practice out loud and time yourself
- Step 3: Practice out loud and time yourself in front of an audience
- Step 4: Repeat Steps 1-3 as needed

Practice will

- Improve the flow of your speech
- Reduce errors, inconsistencies, and structural flaws
- Reduce nervousness
- Identify content gaps
- Improve your understanding of the content

Tips
- ✓ *Fail to prepare: be prepared to fail.*
- ✓ *Practice is the best way to show respect for your audience, your subject, and yourself.*
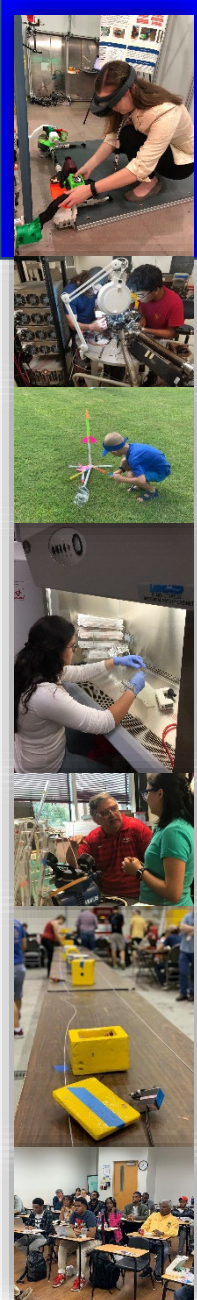
Thank you! Questions?

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