

General Considerations for Presentations

1. First of all, consider why you are presenting something orally, instead of just handing everyone a piece of paper. That will tell you a lot about what you should be doing up there.
2. By presenting orally, you can engage the listener in different ways, and often better ways, than you can in writing:
 - You can use your voice and gestures to emphasize points
 - You can look at your audience and judge their reaction, and shift what you're doing accordingly: are they bored? confused? Engaged?
3. Think of the presentation as more of a conversation than a speech.
 - If it's going to just be a speech, give a piece of paper to them and let them go home.
 - If you're just going to read what you've written, without ever even looking up, then give them that piece of paper and let them go.
 - That means that you should have notes, but NOT the whole thing written out.
 - If that makes you too nervous, write it all out, triple spaced in 14 point type, and then highlight the key points with a marker. You will find that you really only need to glance at it from time to time to make your points.
4. Engage your audience in your presentation. Here are some suggestions:
 - Begin by having them write on a 3 x 5 card what they know about the topic (e.g., if the topic is your own racial-ethnic philanthropic heritage, have them jot down any assumptions/stereotypes that they have)
 - Ask questions. (E.g., "Do you know who the major Chinese-American contributors to UC Berkeley are?" or "Who are the Tangs and why do they give Berkeley so much money?")
 - Ask rhetorical questions (E.g., "Why do so many African Americans give to xxxx?")
5. Use visual aids: flip charts, the chalkboard, overheads, handouts. Especially if you're providing figures of any kind, make sure the audience gets a copy.
6. Encourage and solicit questions and comments.
7. Make a real end to your presentation. One that is shown in your voice.

Don't end with "So that's just about it, I guess."
8. That's about it.