Introducing Expectations for Oral Presentations: A 55-Minute Lesson Plan

1. **Do Exercise: Similarities and Differences Between Writing and Speaking**
   1. **3-minute free write** about similarities between writing and speaking, especially similarities between writing a paper and giving a presentation.
   
   2. **3-minute free speak** with peer partner about differences between writing and speaking.
   
   3. **5 to 7 minutes reporting out** by addressing these two prompts:
      - What are the most important similarities?
      - What is different about a presentation that can make it sometimes more effective than a paper?

2. **Brainstorm on board components/criteria for oral presentations.**
   Let students generate these in any order, but as you put them on the board, begin to group them in three columns (don’t put the headers on the columns yet).

3. **Categorize these components as related to Content, Structure, or Delivery.**
   Label the three columns Content, Structure, and Delivery. Explain importance of each and emphasize structure as perhaps the most important difference about speaking to which they should attend.

4. **Discuss briefly how they (and you) might weigh the three categories when grading.**

5. **Create commentary sheets by dividing sheet of paper into three columns (for Content, Structure, and Delivery).**

6. **Watch a sample student presentation; use three-column sheet to take notes for feedback.**
   A sample presentation that works well is “True Blue: An Informative Speech” from the Belmont University Speech Lab: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHLIZ_Qy_CE

7. **Solicit feedback from students; as necessary, steer discussion toward content and structure.**
   With the “True Blue” presentation, students often are initially fixated on what they see as the speaker’s composure and entertaining demeanor; it may take some questioning to get them to think more deeply about, for instance, the organization of his argument.

8. **Distribute “Content, Structure, Delivery” handout**

9. **Explain their assignment; distribute criteria/rubric (tweaked to reflect particular task).**
   See the reverse of this sheet for a starter template you can adapt for your use.

10. **Provide now (or closer to presentation dates) questions for required self-evaluation.**
    Require students to submit their self-evaluations the class period after they present; don’t write up a grade until you receive the reflection, and as much as possible refer to the student’s own evaluation of their presentation as you offer yours (and the final grade).
Presentation Feedback

Content & Organization

Introduction
--Engaging (e.g., story, image, question, fact/stats)
--Clear focus/question
--Explicit preview of structure and content

Comments:

Body/Development
--Logical organizational scheme
--Ideas explained, terms and concepts defined
--Transitions/Flow between points
--Restatements and signposts

Comments:

Evidence and Research
--Points and ideas supported with evidence
--Sources cited in some way

Comments:

Conclusion
--Recaps and reinforces
--Closes strong

Comments:

Delivery
--Enthusiasm for topic
--Eye contact
--Gestures and body language reinforce message
--Voice: appropriate volume, speed, emphases
--Ease with notes and any visuals

Comments:

Audiovisual Elements
--Enhance presentation without dominating
--Integrated with what is being said

[Slides or poster:]
--“Less is more” – bullets, text, images
--Legible at distance; simple, uncluttered, consistent design
--Charts and graphs are clear, helpful
--Sources of images cited

Comments:

Final thoughts:
Presentation Self-Evaluation

I. CONTENT
- Was the purpose of the presentation clear?
- Was the presentation appropriate for the assignment (met time limits, covered the appropriate material, etc.)?
- Did I really pull the audience in with an attention-getting introduction?
- Did I make my theme clear and give background information?
- Was my presentation clearly organized and easy to follow?
- Did I have transitions between all of the main sections of my speech?
- Did I leave any gaps, not answer any questions, or leave connections unexplained?

II. DELIVERY
- Did I maintain eye contact with my audience?
- Did I have vocal variety (didn't sound monotone)?
- Did I control my gestures and facial expressions?
- Did I have too many vocal fillers ("um", "uh", "like", etc.)?
- Did I have good posture? Appear confident?
- Did I seem enthusiastic?
- Was I within the time limits allowed for this presentation?
- Did I rehearse this presentation beforehand?

III. VISUAL ELEMENTS
- Did the visuals add to the presentation?
- Were the visuals used well?

IV. OVERALL

What Were My 1 or 2 Main Weaknesses?
1.

2.

What Were My 1 or 2 Main Strengths?
1.

2.
What to Say in a Presentation (and How to Say It)

THE WHAT: Content

* Make a sentence outline, either working from a draft or completed paper or outlining your main points for a project.
* Then, cut out any of these sentences that are not vital for you to make your point.
* Using your pared-down sentence outline, find one or two specific pieces of evidence from your research to support each.
* Don’t overwhelm your audience by reading many long quotations from other sources; one or two well-placed quotations might help add some power and authority to your presentation.
* Decide which statistics, facts, figures, or dates are essential for you to discuss aloud. If you must show a progression over time or make a comparison of statistics, you might use a combination of statistics, you might use a combination of...