

# ***Instructor Presentation and Communication Techniques*** **Student Guide**

June 2026

*Center for Development of Security Excellence*

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## ***Lesson 1: Course Introduction***

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### **Introduction**

#### ***Welcome***

Instructors play a critical role in helping students to learn. As an instructor, your ability to clearly communicate and present well directly impacts training results.

Welcome to the Instructor Presentation and Communication Techniques course. This course will provide a high-level overview of presentation skills, and effective communication techniques.

#### **Course Objectives**

- Compare the different presentation styles and select the presentation skills appropriate for the type of training delivery chosen.
- Compare the communication techniques and select the techniques applicable to the delivery method and satisfies the learning objectives.
- Identify communication barriers and methods of their removal.

## Lesson 2: Presentation Skills

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### Introduction

#### ***Lesson Overview***

Welcome to the Presentation Skills lessons. This lesson will introduce you to steps you can take to prepare and delivery presentations effectively.

#### Lesson Objectives

- Evaluate how to prepare in order to host a successful presentation.
- Analyze speech improvement techniques to successfully host a presentation.
- Identify behaviors such as eye contact, body movement, attitude, feedback, and nervousness that occur in a presentation and address how to improve those behaviors.
- Identify effective presentation techniques in various training environments.

### Preparation

#### ***Planning Presentation Materials***

A great presentation begins with preparation.

To create effective presentation materials, begin with the learning objectives. Learning objectives are a measurable description of what the audience should be able to do at the end of a unit of instruction. The presentation's content should directly align with its learning objectives.

You should also tailor the content to the target audience. For example, consider the audience's prior knowledge of the subject. You may lose their attention if a lot of time is spent covering material they already know. This is also true when the material is too advanced for the audience.

Also consider how to engage the audience during the presentation. For example, are there any relevant or recent events that would be of interest to the audience? Do you plan to have activities such as scenario discussions or group exercises? What does the audience expect to gain from the presentation?

For further information about learning objectives, refer to the *Understanding Learning Objectives and Mapping Assessments* course.

## ***Creating Presentation Materials***

An outline is an effective place to begin creating your presentation materials. This can help you to organize your content and identify holes in your material. Conduct research as needed to ensure your information is up to date. After your outline is complete, select a template to use for your materials. The template should complement the content and audience.

In writing the presentation, quotations can be used to illustrate specific points when used in a timely and relevant manner. One-liners are often easy to remember and understand. For example, you might use a relevant pull-quote from the Secretary of Defense about the criticality of a mission on which you are presenting.

## ***Practice***

Practice can help you to feel more confident in your delivery.

Before you deliver the presentation, memorize what you want to say and develop key point note cards to keep you on track as needed. Prepare a timed schedule for yourself so that you can keep track of how long to spend on each segment of the presentation.

Seek feedback by either recording yourself during rehearsal or asking colleagues to observe you during a dry run of the presentation. Look out for distracting speech patterns, like mispronunciations, grammatical errors, and filler words such as um, like, and okay. Also give attention to your delivery pace and volume. Is it too fast? Too slow? Can the audience hear you? Evaluate whether your delivery sounds natural and conversational. Use high and low tones and pauses to emphasize or enhance the meaning of the content.

Finally, consider the presentation content through the audience's eyes. Is jargon, such as acronyms and abbreviations, clearly defined for them when first introduced? Do they need more examples? Do you tend to go off topic? What questions do you think the audience may have?

## ***Preparing to Present***

As a final preparation step, familiarize yourself with the delivery mechanism before the presentation. If in person, visit the location the presentation will take place. If online, do a test run with the software or platform that will be used. For technical difficulties, have a backup plan and the contact information for technical support if needed. On the day of the presentation, ensure you have everything that you need and arrive early so that you do not feel rushed.

## Presenting

### ***Movement***

When presenting, be aware of your body movement, hand gestures, and facial expressions. Move around the room when possible, and use your hands to emphasize important information in the presentation. Hand gestures can add a layer of meaning and expression, such as creating a picture or emphasizing a point. Keep these natural, and use the same gestures as you do in everyday conversation. Keep your hands neutral when they cannot add to the conversation. Find a neutral place for them, such as comfortably on the side of the podium, relaxed in front of you, or hanging to your sides. Do not fidget, tap your hands, run your fingers through your hair, or jingle change in your pocket. These are distracting to the audience. Facial expressions are also an effective way to display your feelings about the content, when used effectively. Ensure that your body movements, hand gestures, and facial expressions always appear natural to the audience and do not distract the audience from your message.

### ***Attitude***

Your audience will pick up on your attitude when presenting. Speak with a tone appropriate to the subject and with sincerity to convey the value and importance of your message. Your confidence when delivering the presentation will help to reinforce the audience's belief that you are knowledgeable in the subject.

### ***Eye Contact***

During the presentation, make eye contact with your audience. Rather than focus in one area, scan the participants and provide direct eye contact to individuals for 3 to 5 seconds before moving on. Limit turning your back on the audience to focus on visual aids, such as projections, whiteboards, or flip charts. Maintaining eye contact allows you to connect with the audience and identify potential adjustments you may need to make in the moment. For example, if the audience looks confused you may need to solicit questions or clarify information.

### ***Managing Nervousness***

It's natural to be nervous occasionally. Some outward signs of nervousness include shifting back and forth, using excessive pause words, losing your train of thought, coughing or experiencing dry mouth, and using distracting hand gestures. If you notice yourself demonstrating these, try these tips to combat them.

If you are...	Try to...
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Shifting back and forth	Stop your movement and start to move naturally through the room
Using excessive pause words	Slow your speech and focus on the content
Losing your train of thought	Focus on the content on your screen or notes
Coughing or experiencing dry mouth	Pause to take a drink of water
Using distracting hand gestures	Place your hands on the podium and relax your arms

### ***Virtual Presentations***

Presenting in a virtual environment requires additional considerations. First, virtual sessions should be kept to 45 minutes or less, when possible. For longer sessions, break it up using consistent timing. For example, hold the class at the same time each day, such as 9:00 on Monday through Thursday.

Next, plan to use a modern delivery platform that is rich with features to engage the audience. This allows you to maintain audience attention with group exercises and peer interactions. Use the technology to support your presentation. Common options may include, but are not limited to, screensharing, integrated learning assets, polling, hand raising, breakout areas, and game-based activities.

Ask someone to assist you with the facilitation of the presentation. The assistant can field questions and help with any technical issues while you focus on presenting.

Finally, take advantage of the opportunity that a virtual session may afford you to improve for the future. In addition to asking participants for feedback, you can use the platform's recording capability to record the session, allowing you to review the presentation to identify areas for improvement.

## **Review Activities**

### ***Knowledge Check 1***

Consider the scenarios below. Which instructor is best prepared to host a successful presentation?

*Select the best response. Check your answer in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.*

- Anna selects a template for her materials and begins her writing process directly in the template based on what she knows. The day of the presentation, she arrives on time when her notes in hand.

- Eric uses his learning objectives to write an outline for his presentation before creating the materials. He does a dry run of his session to identify adjustments to make and arrives early on the day of the presentation.
- Bart considers his depth of knowledge about the presentation topic and the knowledge level of the audience and feels confident talking to the subject without additional preparation.

### **Knowledge Check 2**

Rita receives low scores for her presentation skills. She decides to review a recording of a webinar that she delivered. How could this help her to improve?

*Select the best response. Check your answer in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.*

- This is unlikely to help her improve. The only way she will improve is to work with a presentation coach.
- She can evaluate why the audience gave her low scores so that she can adjust the instructions she gives to participants about the evaluation.
- She can evaluate her speech patterns to identify potential distractions and ways to mitigate them, such as asking whether everyone can hear her clearly.

### **Knowledge Check 3**

During a practice session, Charlie's colleague points out that Charlie tends to use his hands excessively when talking. How can Charlie improve this behavior?

*Select the best response. Check your answer in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.*

- Always keep his hands in his pockets.
- Use a small fidget toy to keep his hands busy and minimize big gestures.
- Continue to gesture as he does naturally but address the behavior with the audience to neutralize its effect.
- Consider when in his presentation what gestures are appropriate and decide on a neutral place to keep his hands when gestures are needed.

### ***Knowledge Check 4***

How might you adjust your presentation technique when instructing in a virtual environment, such as a webinar?

*Select the best response. Check your answer in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.*

- Remove audience interactions, as these are too cumbersome to manage in a virtual session.
- Ask a colleague to assist with facilitating the presentation behind the scenes.
- Select a basic delivery platform with a few features so that it is easier for you to manage.
- Disable any recording functionality that may be available through the delivery platform.

## **Conclusion**

### ***Summary***

You have completed the *Presentation Skills* lesson.

## ***Lesson 3: Effective Communication***

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### **Introduction**

#### ***Lesson Overview***

Welcome to the Effective Communication lesson. This lesson will introduce you to communication techniques and how to remove barriers to communication.

#### **Lesson Objectives**

- Identify effective communication techniques to deliver effective presentations
- Identify how to effectively send the message and consider barriers for effective communication
- Recognize effective methods to deliver and receive the message
- Identify question types that should be asked during the presentation

### **Communication Basics**

#### ***5Cs of Communication***

Communication is the exchange of information, which can include ideas, thoughts, data, knowledge, opinions, and more. For communication to be effective, the recipient of the message must understand it.

The 5Cs of Communication is one framework to help communicators to convey their message effectively. Recipients are better able to understand the message when it is clear, correct, complete, concise, and compassionate.

#### ***Word Choice***

To aid clarity, word your message with care. Proper grammar and sentence structure makes your message easier to understand. Word choice also plays an important role in clarity. Use clear words that the audience will understand. While it can be tempting to use “big” words to impress the audience, simple words are better.

Also ensure that words are used correctly. Incorrectly used words create confusion and misunderstanding. Accuracy is important in communication to avoid misinterpretation.

## ***Volume and Tone***

Your speaking volume and tone can have just as much impact on how your message is received as your word choice. If your audience can't hear your message, it won't matter how carefully it's crafted. Be sure to speak loudly enough for everyone to hear clearly. However, speaking too loudly may come across as overbearing, angry, or aggressive. Modulate your volume to match your message, and vary it as needed.

Aim for a friendly, yet professional, tone that projects confidence while being approachable. Avoid being defensive, emotional, or angry in your tone. Speaking in a monotone is also not effective, as it loses your audience's interest.

## **Overcoming Barriers**

### ***Messaging***

Communication barriers occur when something prevents the recipient from understanding your message. The message itself may present a barrier when it is not easily understandable. To overcome this barrier, prime your audience for the message you are about to deliver. Providing an introduction and objective to the message helps set the stage for your recipients. Be sure to use clear language, avoiding jargon, colloquialisms, and regionalisms. Your message may be confusing when it uses language that is not universal and standard. Organize your message so that you communicate one idea or topic at a time. This can help your audience to follow more easily what you are communicating.

### ***Environment***

Environmental factors may also pose barriers to communication. These may include distractions, such as noise, temperature, lighting, seating, and the physical arrangement of the space. If the audience is physically uncomfortable, unable to see visual aids, or unable to hear you or each other, it will interfere with their ability to give their full attention to the message. When possible, select the presentation location with care to avoid these distractions.

Technology can also create a barrier if the presentation relies on it, such as a computer to display slides or speakers to play audio. Prior to the presentation, verify that any technology needed is working properly. In case of a power or connection failure, have a backup plan.

Finally, the audience itself may cause distractions. At the start of your presentation, ask the audience to silence their devices and to exit quietly if they need a break.

## ***Interpersonal***

Recall that communication is the *exchange* of information. It requires two or more parties to occur, so interpersonal challenges can also present a barrier to communication. Strive to create a positive, threat-free environment for your audience so that students feel comfortable working together and contributing to discussion. Recognize individual differences in students, and avoid embarrassing them or offending their values. Provide positive feedback to students who are struggling, and do not permit others to make fun of either participants or the material. If emotional responses occur, acknowledge them, identify the problem, and work toward resolution.

## **Conducting the Presentation**

### ***Delivering and Receiving Messages***

People obtain and perceive messages differently depending on how well they understand the information, their attitudes toward the subject, and how they feel about you. When presenting, use multiple channels to convey the information, including spoken, written, and visual. Ensure communication is open and positive toward all participants, and ask questions of participants to determine what message they have received from you.

### ***Non-Verbal Communication***

Non-verbal communication is another important element when conducting your presentation. Be aware of your emotions and how these may be evident in your body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions. When listening, appear engaged by nodding and avoid slouching.

### ***Facilitating Discussion***

Facilitating discussion is a critical component to conducting your presentation. Discussion can help to engage the audience and allow you to verify the audience's understanding of your message and to clarify as needed. Provide frequent checks on learning and practice opportunities. Use the APPLES method, where you:

- Ask a question
- Pause to allow students to think
- Pick someone to respond
- Listen to their response
- Emphasize or repeat it for the audience
- Salute or acknowledge their performance.

Ask follow-up questions as needed to clarify the response, tease out further information, or re-direct misunderstandings.

### ***Question Types***

There are a variety of question types that you can use when facilitating discussion. These include factual, thought provoking, interest arousing, multiple answer, yes or no, leading, and canvassing.

#### **Factual Questions**

Students can answer factual questions directly from the provided content.

#### **Thought Provoking Questions**

Students must consider the question deeply, which can result in new ideas and a fresh perspective. Thought provoking questions may serve as a good conversation starter.

#### **Interest Arousing Questions**

When used effectively, interest arousing questions can help to provoke interest in content.

#### **Multiple Answer Questions**

Students must select from provided answer options. This type of question can give you well-defined parameters around student understanding.

#### **Yes or No Questions**

A yes-no question is a closed question that allows you to gauge your audience's position. This type of question can help you guide discussion.

#### **Leading Questions**

A leading question is intended to guide the student toward the desired answer. This type of question can help you to sway discussion in a certain direction.

#### **Canvassing Questions**

A canvassing question prompts debate among participants.

### ***Parking Lot Technique***

Questions may arise that you cannot answer in the moment when presenting. The parking lot technique allows you to collect questions for later to avoid derailing the presentation. Designate an area to place these questions, such as on a whiteboard, flip chart, or self-

sticking note on a wall. It is important that you find answers to these questions and provide them to the participants by the end of the presentation.

## Review Activities

### ***Knowledge Check 1***

Which of the following can help you to communicate effectively?

*Select the best response. Check your answer in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.*

- Speaking as loudly as possible throughout the presentation.
- Using standard grammar and sentence structure.
- Choosing impressive words to demonstrate expertise.
- Keeping your tone neutral in a monotone throughout the presentation.

### ***Knowledge Check 2***

How can you help to ensure your audience understands your message?

*Select all that apply. Check your answer in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.*

- Provide an introduction and objective for the message.
- Communicate one idea at a time.
- Provide negative feedback when students do not understand.
- Encourage jokes about the material.

### ***Knowledge Check 3***

Which is the most effective way to present information that will help your audience to understand it?

*Select the best response. Check your answer in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.*

- Spoken
- Written
- Visual
- All of these in combination

**Knowledge Check 4**

Which type of question might you use to start a discussion?

*Select the best response. Check your answer in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.*

- Factual
- Thought provoking
- Multiple answer
- Leading

**Conclusion****Summary**

You have completed the *Effective Communication* lesson.

## ***Lesson 4: Course Conclusion***

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### **Conclusion**

#### ***Lesson Review***

This course provided an overview of presentation skills and effective communication techniques and discussed the instructional proficiency evaluation.

#### ***Exam***

Congratulations. You have completed the Instructor Presentation and Communication Techniques course. You should now be able to perform all of the listed activities.

- Compare the different presentation styles and select the presentation skills appropriate for the type of training delivery chosen.
- Compare the communication techniques and select the techniques applicable to the delivery method and satisfies the learning objectives.
- Identify communication barriers and methods of their removal.

To receive credit for this course, you *must* take the Instructor Presentation and Communication Techniques examination.

## Appendix A: Answer Key

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### Lesson 2 Review Activities

#### **Knowledge Check 1**

Consider the scenarios below. Which instructor is best prepared to host a successful presentation?

- Anna selects a template for her materials and begins her writing process directly in the template based on what she knows. The day of the presentation, she arrives on time when her notes in hand.
- Eric uses his learning objectives to write an outline for his presentation before creating the materials. He does a dry run of his session to identify adjustments to make and arrives early on the day of the presentation. (correct response)
- Bart considers his depth of knowledge about the presentation topic and the knowledge level of the audience and feels confident talking to the subject without additional preparation.

**Feedback:** *The steps that Eric takes allow him to tailor his presentation to the audience's needs, effectively organize his content, and identify any content gaps that require further research. Practicing his delivery and arriving early also helps to ensure the presentation will go well.*

#### **Knowledge Check 2**

Rita receives low scores for her presentation skills. She decides to review a recording of a webinar that she delivered. How could this help her to improve?

- This is unlikely to help her improve. The only way she will improve is to work with a presentation coach.
- She can evaluate why the audience gave her low scores so that she can adjust the instructions she gives to participants about the evaluation.
- She can evaluate her speech patterns to identify potential distractions and ways to mitigate them, such as asking whether everyone can hear her clearly. (correct response)

**Feedback:** *It can be helpful to observe yourself in a recording to understand your speech patterns. Being aware of these lets you know where you can focus improvement efforts.*

### **Knowledge Check 3**

During a practice session, Charlie's colleague points out that Charlie tends to use his hands excessively when talking. How can Charlie improve this behavior?

- Always keep his hands in his pockets.
- Use a small fidget toy to keep his hands busy and minimize big gestures.
- Continue to gesture as he does naturally but address the behavior with the audience to neutralize its effect.
- Consider when in his presentation what gestures are appropriate and decide on a neutral place to keep his hands when gestures are needed. (correct response)

**Feedback:** *Hand gestures can add emphasis to your meaning but should be kept neutral when they have nothing to add.*

### **Knowledge Check 4**

How might you adjust your presentation technique when instructing in a virtual environment, such as a webinar?

- Remove audience interactions, as these are too cumbersome to manage in a virtual session.
- Ask a colleague to assist with facilitating the presentation behind the scenes. (correct response)
- Select a basic delivery platform with a few features so that it is easier for you to manage.
- Disable any recording functionality that may be available through the delivery platform.

**Feedback:** *You should ask someone to help you facilitate so that you can focus on presenting while your assistant helps to run interactive features such as polling and breakout areas.*

## **Lesson 3 Review Activities**

### **Knowledge Check 1**

Which of the following can help you to communicate effectively?

- Speaking as loudly as possible throughout the presentation.
- Using standard grammar and sentence structure. (correct response)
- Choosing impressive words to demonstrate expertise.
- Keeping your tone neutral in a monotone throughout the presentation.

**Feedback:** Using proper grammar makes your message easier to understand. Avoid speaking too loudly or in a monotone, and choose simple words when possible.

### **Knowledge Check 2**

How can you help to ensure your audience understands your message?

- Provide an introduction and objective for the message. (correct response)
- Communicate one idea at a time. (correct response)
- Provide negative feedback when students do not understand.
- Encourage jokes about the material.

**Feedback:** Clearly organizing your thoughts and priming the audience to receive the message helps to overcome communication barriers. Avoid encouraging negative interpersonal behaviors, such as negative reinforcement or making fun of the material.

### **Knowledge Check 3**

Which is the most effective way to present information that will help your audience to understand it?

- Spoken
- Written
- Visual
- All of these in combination (correct response)

**Feedback:** Using spoken, written, and visual communication channels in combination is an effective way to convey information.

### **Knowledge Check 4**

Which type of question might you use to start a discussion?

- Factual
- Thought provoking (correct response)
- Multiple answer
- Leading

**Feedback:** A thought provoking question can be an effective discussion starter.