Electronic presentations, created with software such as *PowerPoint*, *Freelance*, *Corel Presentations*, and *Astound*, are a common method of presenting information for a variety of audiences in business, government, and education. Their use is becoming commonplace in the school classroom for both teachers and students. Presentation software is a powerful tool for creating and showing professional electronic presentations, which often include a variety of effects such as animation, sound, and clip art. Electronic presentations are most effective with the use of an LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) projector and screen to provide appropriate visibility for the entire class.

Creating an effective electronic presentation generally consists of the same important elements that are part of any presentation: content, visual effects, and the act of presenting. The content is normally a summary of research that has been conducted independently of creating an electronic presentation. Copyright considerations apply to electronic presentations as they do to any form of research and writing. The storyboard technique of creating a slide-by-slide layout of the presentation will ensure better planning and sequencing of the presentation.

Suggestions for Students

Content:

- Create a title page that includes the title of project, name of student, course information, and perhaps the name of teacher, the date, and appropriate graphics.
- Table of contents
- Appropriate use of headings and subheadings
- Text should include only the most important points, grouped appropriately.
- Use phrases identified by bullets, rather than complete sentences.
- Limit the amount of text per slide; maximum of 7 lines.
- Provide some form of transition from one slide to the next for continuity.
- Avoid use of data tables; select relevant data and show in graph format if possible.
- Select appropriate graphics carefully and integrate with text.
- Concluding slide should leave a strong impression; it may be a summary or call for action.
- Respect copyright laws for text and graphics.
- Bibliography and credits

Visual Effects:

- Select or create a template and use it for all slides.
- Select background and text colours to provide contrast for easy viewing.
- Determine font style; sans serif styles such as Arial, Comic Sans, and Tahoma are recommended for clarity.
- Minimum font size should be at least 24 for ease of reading from anywhere in room.
- Use font variations such as bold or italics, and size for emphasis rather than changing font types.
- Select graphics carefully and use in moderation; determine size of graphic for visibility.
- Integrate graphics with the text for maximum benefit.

- Use special effects (movement, sound) sparingly; effects should not compete for attention with the content of the presentation.
- Use various techniques (template, colours, font, bullets, graphics, layout, special effects) to create unity and continuity throughout the presentation.

Presenting:

- Review the presentation for the overall effect and impact.
- Have a colleague view the presentation and provide feedback.
- Conduct a trial run with all equipment (computer, projector, screen).
- Place equipment for clear line of view from all parts of room.
- Presenter should face the audience, preferably standing in front of room near the screen.
- Consider using an assistant to operate the computer and advance the slides.
- Use prepared notes to expand on key points identified in the slides (avoid simply reading the text on the slides).
- Determine appropriate pace of presentation—moving too fast is a common problem.
- As in conventional presentations, volume and clarity are important, eye contact should be maintained, and pace should allow for audience questions.

Suggestions for the Teacher:

As with other strategies that may be new to the student, the teacher should model the use of presentation software to ensure its effective use by students in the classroom. Teachers should also make explicit the rationale for each of the decisions they made in development and delivery of the presentation (to help students in their own decision-making processes as they develop electronic presentations). It is important to note that the use of presentation software is to enhance a presentation, but is not necessarily a prerequisite for a good presentation. Most considerations of a conventional presentation apply to the electronic format.

When used in the classroom setting, teachers should discourage the use of presentation software simply as a method of note taking. Students often feel that they must record everything that is shown on the screen and, in the process, may not be able to concentrate on additional details and examples provided verbally by the presenter. On the other hand, good note-taking skills will help students note and record key points and maximize their learning experience from a presentation. This may be achieved through a handout that includes miniatures of the slides with accompanying space for participants to make additional notes. An alternative strategy may be to prepare a handout with appropriate details for distribution to the rest of the class after the presentation, thus allowing students full concentration during the presentation.

Unlike posters and brochures, electronic presentations cannot be placed on a bulletin board for student viewing and review or for room "decoration." They can, however, be posted electronically, perhaps on a shared drive, for students to access at any time for review. The knowledge that the presentation will be available to students will encourage more interactive listening and will reduce the temptation to write copious notes in silence during the presentation.