About Student Presentations and Evaluation
CSCI 6175: Seminar in Computer Science, Fall 2011
(Mostly copied from Dr. Fowler's CSCI 6175 Spring 2011)

Evaluation and Preparation

Toward the end of developing student's presentation skills, your presentation to the class will be evaluated, as described here. Implicit in this is a delineation of the elements of a successful seminar presentation in the context of this class. The goal is to sharpen students' presentation skills by providing a schema for analyzing technical presentations and applying that schema to the presentation. The evaluation form to be used is attached. The elements to be evaluated are discussed below and should provide the foundation for preparation of your presentation.

1. Content mastered
        Paper content
        Context provided

A good presentation must start with genuine mastery of the content of the paper. The semester's papers will vary quite a lot with respect to "technical" content. Some will be historical, leading to understanding of what may now seem quite antique concepts. Nonetheless, in providing the context of the paper, mastery of this content is required. Other papers will be more speculative, projecting out on the possible technologies of the future. Mastery of possible technologies makes sense here. It is expected that the presenter will read well beyond the paper that is to be presented. This will provide the background for content mastery, as well as allow the presenter to provide a broader context, or body of work in which the ideas of the paper lie. Again, the nature of the context will vary depending on the nature of paper. Note that the class requires a significant paper by the end of the semester which will require breadth of reading. Before the presentation is the time to do it. Supplying the audience the context of the work is a goal of the presentation.

2. Content presentation
        Overview
        Appropriate level and style for audience
        Technical points
                Clarity
                Selection
        Tie to other work
        Implications
        Conclusion/recap
        Leaves interested

Form, style, and explication are all parts of a presentation. Importantly, the talk should target its audience appropriately, e.g., where background material is needed, it should be provided, the audience will have read the paper, but not necessarily mastered it most challenging parts. "Losing" an audience is often due to inaccurately assessing the audience's background, interest, attention span, etc. It also can be due to overly detailed presentations that are not punctuated with changes of content level and rhythm. *"Losing" an audience is never acceptable.* Pictures (figures) help.

Technical presentations should begin with an overview of the talk that provides the research or historical milieu in which the work was undertaken, including both the context of the work, as well the "outline" and major parts and points of the talk. The "technical points", or what the paper says, are of course the principle elements of the presentation. Careful, clear presentation of those points is critical. However, in the allotted time it will not be possible to present everything the author writes about. The talk should se-

lect those most important elements judged important for the talk and focus on those, presenting a few well, rather than many less well. Completeness in presentation of all the papers points is not a goal. As appropriate during the explication of technical points, the work should be tied to other work in the area. Implications, or, more generally, why the work is important, should be covered. At the end of the talk a recapitulation of the talks points should be provided and conclusions, similar to implications, should be made. All good talks will leave the audience interested in the topic.

3. PPT slides
        Number
        Attention focus
        Illustrate/explicate
        Density
        Graphics design

Though a case can be made for not using PPT slides, student presentations will, and those slides should be carefully designed and integrated with the talk. As a rule of thumb, there should be about one slide for each minute or two for a relatively brief talk. The slide should serve to focus the attention of the audience, rather than present all of the material. That is, the presenter should display a principle point with details such as examples, etc., given verbally. The visual PPT medium is, of course, excellent for some illustration types and some elements of content presentation and should also be used for that, e.g., figures and tables. It should not be used to present large amounts of text, i.e., be too "dense", which also holds for all material. Slides should reflect good graphics design, e.g., balanced layout, appropriate color and background. In practice conservative usually works fine.

4. Delivery
        Pace
        Smooth (practiced)
        "Punctuated"
        Looks at audience

The pace at which the talk is delivered should be appropriate: relaxed, yet enthusiastic, but not rushed. Care should be taken to select an appropriate amount of material to present in the time allotted for talk such that there is no rush to deliver it, i.e., that the time to deliver all material is equal to the time allotted. The detrimental effect of rushed presentation to include more material far outweighs any benefit of added content. Delivery should be smooth in that the particular form of explication has been decided prior to the talk, i.e., the presenter should have decided how to make a point prior to the talk, rather than during the presentation. Somewhat coupled with this idea is that things sound different when spoken aloud than when written or thought about, so actually practicing the verbal presentation of the talk can enhance the quality of explication.

5. Questions/discussion
        Technically able to answer
        Provides context
        Facilitates discussion

Answering questions about the presentation is a time at which to demonstrate mastery of content and preparation. It provides a relatively unstructured and highly interactive opportunity to provide different, perhaps more effective, explications of ideas, as well as bring in a broader context to assist the questioner in understanding the material, perhaps even frame the question. Additionally, during preparation, thinking about all possible questions provides a fine motivation for thorough mastery of content. The presenter should answer questions in a manner leading to discussion, e.g., asking for the audience for alternative characterizations, works.

Presentation Evaluation: CSCI 6175: Seminar in Computer Science, Fall 2011

Presenter: _____   Date: _____

Topic:_____

	Outstanding	Excellent	Average	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable
1. Content mastered						
Paper content						
Context provided						
2. Content presentation						
Overview						
Appropriate level						
Technical points						
Clarity						
Selection						
Tie to other work						
Implications						
Conclusion/recap						
Leaves interested						
3. PPT slides appropriate						
Number						
Attention focus						
Illustrate/explicate						
Density						
Graphics design						
4. Delivery						
Pace						
Smooth (practiced)						
"Punctuated"						
Looks at audience						
5. Questions/discussion						
Able to answer						
Provides context						
Facilitate discussion						

Best things: _____

_____

Needs improvement: _____

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