Guidelines for Presentations:

A. Preparation of Content
1. Start well in advance (putting together a talk is a process).
2. Read, think, take notes.
3. Decide on a topic (pick one that the audience you are speaking to will be interested in).
4. Write an outline (BUT, don’t make an “Outline Slide” for your talk…).
5. Define goals of the talk → within the context of your introduction, usually at the end or integrated with the intro, not as a separate slide at the beginning.
6. Organize talk around the goals.
7. Make sure it represents a logical progression, or a narrative flow. Make sure you are teaching something.
8. Finish with a summary → make a summary slide (2 or 3 “Take-Home” lessons).
9. Copy or make slides that illustrate the points of the talk (photos, graphs, etc.).
   a. One concept per slide (e.g. introduction, methods for assays, results, previous reports, etc.).
   b. Don’t put too much information in each slide.
   c. Slides should be neat; proofread for typos.

B. How to speak effectively
1. Advance preparation:
   a. Write out a script.
   b. Practice with the script (e.g. learn your talk).
   c. For results slides (Tables & Figures): orient the listener first, then tell what the results are.
   d. A typical research talk will have an introduction, goals, methods, results, summary, and conclusions. (“Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them.”).
   e. Don’t use your script when speaking (it was a tool to memorize and understand the flow of your talk).
   f. PRACTICE YOUR TALK.
2. At the lectern
   a. Wait until you are introduced.
   b. Organize the lectern (find the pointer, etc.).
   c. Introduce yourself.
   d. Speak slowly and audibly.
   e. Speak at a good pace – not too slow, not too fast. Say what is in your slides (content/timing).
   f. Try a little humor (helps wake up audience).
   g. Tell a story, be conversational.
   h. If something is a key point, say so (provide emphasis). Don’t talk in monotone.
   i. Speak firmly – you are in charge, don’t run on too long. Stay within allotted time (audience grows bored and restless if too long). Don’t spend too long on one slide.
   j. FACE THE AUDIENCE (make eye contact, scan the room).
k. Conclude with a summary.

l. Finish the talk with Thank You (tells the audience your talk is over and its time to wake up and applaud).

m. When someone asks you a question, repeat it (gives you time to think, allows you to paraphrase and simplify the question, lets everyone hear the question).

C. Further points.

1. Study other lectures and lecturers (What worked and why? What didn’t work?).
2. Prepare well in advance (start thinking about it as soon as you get the assignment).

Things to Do and Things to Avoid:

1. Do speak loudly and clearly. Avoid mumbling.

2. Do find ways to illustrate main points besides reading points on a slide. Use of an illustration which integrates the results of the paper with a model is one of the best ways to summarize and explain the main points of a manuscript. Avoid using slides which contain all text.

3. Do prepare you audience for what would be the next logical question/experiment in the sequence. This shows that you understand the progression of experiments in the manuscript. Avoid phrases such as “…and then they wanted to know….”.

4. Do try to keep a limit of one main point per slide. Avoid putting too much information on a single slide. Also, it may not be necessary to use all data in a SIP to illustrate your findings.