Welcome! While you settle in, please answer these questions:

- Do you use oral presentations in your classes? Why?
- Do you feel that oral presentations in your classes are successful? Why? Why not?

How did this teaching technique come about?

- Frustration
- Failure
- Panic
- Conviction
Challenges

Is it worth using oral presentations in classes?

How can I encourage students to convey information orally to their classmates in a concise yet effective manner that helps them learn new material through a personal connection to it?

Challenges (cont’d)

How can I make those presentations short and sweet, yet productive?

Since I’m dealing with the Millennial Generation, could the World Wide Web and Blackboard enhance students’ oral presentations, without distracting them from the presentations’ and the class’ primary goals?

Challenges (cont’d)

What should be the goals for a successful oral presentation, particularly in a language or literature classroom?
Primary goals

- To teach students how to convey information orally to their classmates in a concise but meaningful manner.
- In foreign languages and literatures classes, specifically, to motivate students to learn to convey sophisticated information orally in the Target Language (TL) and to develop their speaking skills in the TL.

Primary goals (cont’d)

- To encourage students to search, to evaluate, and to choose international web resources (sites and journals online) appropriate for a particular course’s subject matter in their preparation for the oral presentation.

Bonus Goals

- To teach students to develop their creative agency by giving them the opportunity to supplement the syllabus with an oral presentation on a topic of their choice, within parameters carefully crafted by the professor.
**Bonus Goals** (cont’d)

- To involve students actively in and make them responsible for the learning that occurs in the classroom.
- To have students use technology to teach the class in a controlled fashion.
- To encourage those students listening to the presentation to participate actively in making it a successful, collective learning event.

**Real Context of Technique:**

The SPA 212 classroom environment

**Sample instructions for oral presentations in an Intermediate II language classroom**

(Please see handouts)
While student speaks, professor records (1) . . .

- Particularly felicitous uses of sophisticated vocabulary in the TL.
- Specially interesting facts of importance to the whole class that student has unearthed in his or her research.

While student speaks, professor records (2) . . .

- Grammatical, lexical, or conceptual problems.

(Discuss problems later, in private with student. Or express them in writing in the follow-up grade sheet)

After presentation & Q&A, Professor . . .

- Writes on board new vocabulary student used and adds more words from same semantic field (e.g. Agricultura and La casa de los espíritus)
- Emphasizes relevant grammar points (veiled correction of errors)
Adaptability of technique to other fields

- Professor provides links to important academic journals & asks students to follow a particular topic in his/her discipline (e.g., the role of ocean currents in global warming, economic trends in Africa, etc.) in two different journals.
- Alternatively, professor might ask students to follow news stories related to the class in mainstream popular newspapers or news magazines.

Adapting technique to higher class levels

- Expand 5-minute limit to 10 (but not more!).
- Require more substantial and specific content for presentations.
- Instead of following topic in on-line media, provide links for specific academic journals or sites.
Final note of caution & advice

★ Try hard to assuage fears of shyest or most insecure Ss so that they eventually feel comfortable speaking in public in the TL.
★ P must be non-threatening to and supportive of Ss so they feel comfortable visiting her often during preparation of oral presentation.
★ P can guide the S to gain self-confidence in her abilities to speak publicly in a foreign language.
★ P should exert care not to intimidate shy students and should discuss different presentation techniques to avoid stage fright.