What are the most common problems when giving presentations?

Weak structure - there may be no clear beginning, middle or end of the presentation. The main reason for this is generally lack of preparation.

Poor timing - the presentation is too long to fit into the available slot or (less frequently) too short. This is made worse if the speaker is unable to edit or gloss over material as he/she goes along.

Unsuitable language - the lexical density/ information content of the presentation may be too high; the style may be too informal; lengthy technical words may be mispronounced because of failure to place the stress in the right place; syntax of sentences may be too lengthy and difficult for the listener to follow; this may be made even worse by poor grammar skills.

Monotonous delivery - intonation may be flat and monotonous, and there may be little sign of normal rhythm patterns of English. This is especially true if the presentation has been memorised.

Over-detailed visual materials - there may be too much visual material on each PowerPoint slide, and too many slides altogether. Slides may be difficult to read from the back of the room. PowerPoint slides may be too 'busy' and distracting, and may detract from what the speaker is saying.

Over-use of/reliance on PowerPoint - the speaker can tend to be 'led' and controlled by the PowerPoint slides he/she has prepared, but is not able to adapt the presentation as he/she goes along. The presentation may give the impression of being inflexible, with the speaker unable to adapt to the needs of the moment.

Undue reading from a script - reading aloud can work very well, but sometimes it can adversely affect the overall level of communication, and can often create additional pronunciation mistakes for international students.

Unhelpful/intrusive gestures - the speaker may wave their arms around or pace back and forth, thereby distracting the listener.

Verbal 'tics' can be a source of irritation - the constant use of words such as 'you know', 'like', 'sort of', 'errr' can be very frustrating for the listener.

Poorly handled question and answer session - this section may be inadvertently omitted, insufficient time may be left to deal with questions; or perhaps the audience cannot hear/follow the questions properly?