Tips and Strategies for Presenting Online:

**Choose the right tool or platform**: The first essential decision a presenter has to make is what tool to use. Sources emphasize that visually stimulating presentations are best, so avoid audio-only calls and text-heavy slide decks. Forbes (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/sap/2020/03/18/is-now-the-right-time-to-ask-employees-for-feedback/#4d95d91f2dc7>)  specifically offers strategies for utilizing Zoom, which is a great platform available to all MSU users and a lot of this information is transferable to other tools like Teams. Microsoft also offers step-by-step instructions (<https://support.office.com/en-us/article/broadcast-your-powerpoint-presentation-online-to-a-remote-audience-25330108-518e-44be-a281-e3d85f784fee>) on sharing PowerPoint slides online so participants can follow a presentation in real time on their devices. When possible, it’s best to use a tool that allows participants to see the presenter and each other (like Zoom). This allows the presentation to be interactive and lets the presenter gage how their presentation is being received. If you can’t see your audience you won’t know if they are really following along or just idly scrolling through Facebook.

**Be engaging and entertaining:** It is important that presenters be entertaining and interactive in order to keep their virtual audience engaged. This means (1) avoiding text-heavy slides and keeping content simple, (2) using images, videos, and interactive tools like Zoom’s chat function to encourage conversation and reflection, (3) looking into the camera and making eye contact when possible, (4) presenting in a well-lit space, wearing neutral colors, and in a strong, engaging voice (i.e. present as if your audience was in the room with you). When in doubt be a performer! Virtual presentations are a lot like theatre—the audience is going to take their cues from the presenter’s level of energy and enthusiasm. Don’t be afraid to use analogies, anecdotes, or ask questions. Do NOT just read from a slide deck, an audience can tell when a presenter is treating their role passively and will respond in kind.

**Timing:** With live presentations, including those in virtual environments, it is important to keep things moving. People are busy and this shift to online work and study has compounded the difficulty of managing time. Help people be on time with clear messaging and invitations well in advance of a presentation and stick to your schedule. Troubleshoot technical difficulties ahead of time to avoid having to postpone the start of a presentation. It’s also a good idea to practice a presentation ahead of time. Leave time for questions to encourage interaction and end presentations on time out of respect for everyone’s other commitments. Timing is also important during a presentation—don’t talk for more than 10-20 minutes at a time without in some way engaging the audience interactively. Pause for emphasis and questions when needed

**Connectivity and devices**: Students have varying levels of access to digital devices and reliable internet connections. Many students will have a laptop computer, but others may be forced to participate on their tablet or cell phone. So, presentations should be formatted in a way that is clear and engaging on any size screen. The best strategy here is to test out a presentation on different devices beforehand so you know how it is likely to be viewed by different participants. Also, some students may only have sporadic, intermittent access to a strong internet connection. This means that not every student will be able to join a presentation if it is being offered live at a specific time. Presentations should be recorded and posted somewhere accessible so students can access them from any device at a time that is convenient for them.