Practicing Your Speech

Before writing out Notecards:

• Try reading through your speech outline to see what points you believe would be most helpful to have written on your notecards
• Focus on your speech part by part. First start with your introduction, practice it out-loud several times and once you feel comfortable with this portion, move on to your first main point, read it out-loud several times and once you feel comfortable with this portion, move on to your next point…etc. (continue rereading each section and as you become more familiar with your speech build on to the sections you have practiced)
• Don’t rush this process, read through your speech and feel comfortable and familiar enough with it to begin writing notecards and working on delivery techniques. If you are not familiar with your speech and you jump to notecard delivery and delivery techniques too quickly, it can be too much to focus on and lead to feeling frustrated or overwhelmed. Practicing your speech should build your confidence, not lower it: be patient with yourself.
• Remember, while the temptation may be to write everything possible on your notecards, this can lead to reading them while speaking instead of using them for reference. Write only what you most need to remember when presenting.

After writing out Notecards:

• The best way to practice speech delivery is to deliver it in front of people, but of course, for many of us it can be difficult to find people willing to listen.
  o One option is going to the Communication Lab where any of the tutors would be happy to help you with delivery in a comfortable and relaxed environment
• Another practice option is to record yourself presenting and watch the video back later. If you do this, take some time between recording and watching the video to approach it with fresh eyes.
• Practicing in the room you will present in can also help. If you are familiar with the technology and atmosphere, you will be more confident the day of your presentation.
• Finally, repetition is key! The more you practice your speech the better it will be. Give yourself ample time to practice your speech across several days, this way each time you practice you can work on another aspect of delivery, while becoming more familiar with your content.