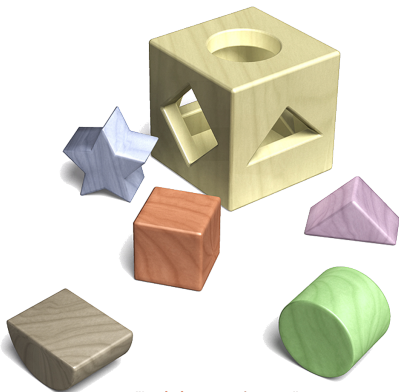


A Talk about How to Give a Talk – Part II

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"Logic is everywhere ..."



Overview

Part I How to conceive and prepare a talk

Part II How to present the talk



Practice and Test the Presentation

- ▶ **Practice your talk** (Maybe: in sections first, then entire talk)
 - ▷ Don't read your talk. Speak free
 - ▷ **BUT: DON'T memorize your talk!**
- ▶ **Stay within Allotted Time**

Prepare talk that is a few minutes shorter than the time slot
But: you might speak faster than when just training
- ▶ **Mimic the real event:**
 - ▷ Practice by saying the words out loud!
 - ▷ If possible, practice talk in room/lecture hall where you'll actually give it
 - ▷ **Ask colleagues to attend and to give you feedback**
 - ▷ **Practice answering questions with your mock audience**
- ▶ **Allow 2 days after each practice talk to implement changes.**
- ▶ **Videotape your talk**



Towards Presenting Your Talk – The Night Before

Go through your slides the night before

Maybe: Do final polishing

If possible: adjust your slides to audience

Your talk must be absolutely fresh in your mind



Before Presenting Your Talk – Good Manners

- ▶ **Arrive well ahead of time**
- ▶ **At a conference / workshop:**
 - Meet session chair before the session starts**
 - Session chairs like to know that you're around**
 - and might want to tell you how they intend to run the session**
- ▶ **Test laptop etc in break before**
 - If everybody is waiting, but you can't start,**
 - gives no good impression**



Starting Your Talk

Use your title slide as “background” to introduce yourself

Don't Skip Personal Introduction!

- ▶ **It's rude! You're asking people to listen to you, but they don't know who you are**
- ▶ **Pronounce your name**
tell which university you come from
which research group you belong to
focus of work of this research group.
- ▶ **Most people don't focus immediately on your message**
It takes a couple of minutes
to get accustomed to speaker's voice and speaking style



Finishing Your Talk

Don't just stop talking

Present a Conclusion

- ▶ Ask: what do I want my audience to think about when they leave?
- ▶ Summarize main argument: key idea, main result
- ▶ Maybe ONE slide with few sentences (maybe just one sentence)

Finish on time

- ▶ Audiences essentially stop listening when your time is up.
Continuing is very counterproductive
- ▶ **Emergency Exit:** Simply truncate and conclude
Have a two sentence conclusion ready



How to Present Your Talk – Enthusiasm

Your most potent weapon, by far, is your

ENTHUSIASM

- ▶ If you do not seem excited by your idea, why should the audience be?
- ▶ Your **ENTHUSIASM** wakes 'em up
- ▶ **ENTHUSIASM** makes people dramatically more receptive
- ▶ Use language such as
“this was surprising because” or
“this was especially exciting because”
These words signal that the rest of that sentence will be important.
And it makes the talk more interesting and engaging!
- ▶ **However:** Speak primarily to **Inform**, **not** to **Impress**



How to Present Your Talk – Main Points

- ▶ **Point at the screen, not at the overhead projector**
BUT: Minimize use of laser pointer
Don't move it over the screen all the time
- ▶ **Speak to the audience, not to the screen**
- ▶ **Make eye contact**; identify a nodder, and speak to him or her
But don't speak just to one person
- ▶ **Watch audience for questions.**
- ▶ **Think of your talk as a conversation, not as a "lecture"**
- ▶ **Biggest mistake to make with title slide:**
Read the title slide verbatim
Instead: Use the title slide to introduce yourself
- ▶ **Generally:**
Slides are NOT your script (do NOT read them!)
As you design your slides, remember:
Slides are a tool to improve learning, they should assist you



Being Frightened

If you don't feel nervous before giving a talk,
especially to a large or unfamiliar audience,
you are a most unusual person.

Remember:

**the person who just gave that confident, assured presentation before you
almost certainly felt just the same.**



Strategies for Coping with Nervousness

- ▶ **Remember: Some nervousness is natural**
- ▶ **Remember: Audiences don't usually perceive a speaker's anxiety**
- ▶ **Interaction with audience helps . . . ask questions**
- ▶ **Interaction with audience includes eye contact!**
- ▶ **Arrive early, become familiar with auditorium, try to meet a few people**
- ▶ **Practice . . .**
Doesn't make a talk perfect, but makes for confidence
- ▶ **Have realistic expectations . . .**
which should not include giving a "perfect talk"
- ▶ **Script your first few sentences precisely (⇒ no brain required)**

Final hints

- ▶ **If possible: Move around a lot, use large gestures, wave your arms**
- ▶ **Deep breathing during previous talk**



Nonverbal Communication

- ▶ **Voice**
- ▶ **Eyes**
- ▶ **Body Language**



Nonverbal Communication — Voice

- ▶ **Drink a little warm water before speaking . . . relaxes your vocal cords**
- ▶ **Keep water next to you at podium (if throat is dry)**

- ▶ **Avoid common habit of letting last words of sentence drop**
- ▶ **Avoid letting last words of sentence rise (sound unsure)**
- ▶ **Be aware of use of “fillers” (er, ah, ummm)**

- ▶ **Use pauses . . . for emphasis**
- ▶ **Slow down! Nervousness tends to make people talk faster (and higher pitch)**



Nonverbal Communication — Eyes

Where to look?

- ▶ **Do not stare at your slides**
- ▶ **Tell your story to your audience** (not the screen)
Look your audience in the eye
Allows you to read visual “cues” (smiles, nods)
- ▶ **Look at all of your audience** (including the back row)
Don't just look at the chairman or at the most important person
Look at different parts of the audience



Nonverbal Communication — Body Language

- ▶ **Body language sets “first impression”**
Impressions are crucial, unfortunately difficult to change
- ▶ **The Very First Impression:** Walk “confidently” to podium
- ▶ **Once you reach podium**
Take a moment before you begin – put papers, water down
Look at the audience and smile! (while you are introduced)
- ▶ **Get out from behind the podium**
But don't roam aimlessly (caged animal)
- ▶ **Avoid repetitive gestures:**
Clearing your throat, twirling your hair, opening and closing jacket
Avoid fiddling with objects on podium (your glasses, pencils, . . .)
- ▶ **Videotaping is very helpful for discovering Distracting Mannerisms**



Questions During the Talk

- ▶ **Questions are not a problem**
Questions are a **golden golden golden** opportunity
to connect with your audience
- ▶ **Specifically encourage questions during your talk:**
pause briefly now and then, ask for questions
- ▶ **Be prepared to truncate your talk if you run out of time.**
Better to connect to the audience,
and not to present all your material



Question and Answer Session — Preparation

- ▶ **Talk to other scientists about your work!**

You'll learn what the common questions are, and how to answer them.

- ▶ **mock audience**

Ask friends/colleagues to listen to your talk and to ask questions

- ▶ **Think about audience**

what types of questions they're likely to have

- ▶ **Think about your research — any limitations?**



Question and Answer Session — Hints

- ▶ **Tell audience when you'll take questions**
E.g., at end of talk,
usually time for questions already foreseen
- ▶ **Make sure to save time for questions!**
Often scheduled anyhow
- ▶ **Avoid the 2 most common errors speakers make**
Start speaking too quickly (allow person to finish question!)
Saying too much — answer question, briefly
- ▶ **Restate / rephrase / summarize question**
Gives you a few moments to prepare answer
Allows everyone to hear the question



How to Handle Difficult Scenarios

▶ **What if you don't know the answer?**

Be honest: "I'll try to find answer and will get back to you"

▶ **What if one person monopolizes Q and A?**

You need to control Q and A (if the session chairman doesn't) —

e.g., "In order to give everyone a chance . . ."

"Maybe we should discuss these details during the next break . . ." —

then turn away, break eye contact

▶ **What if a person asks 3 questions embedded in 1?**

Answer 1 question: "I believe your main question regards..."



If English is Not Your Mother Tongue

- ▶ **If you cannot understand the question,**
state that English is not your native language
and ask the person to speak slowly, clearly
- ▶ **If English is not the native language of questioner**
and you have difficulty understanding the question,
ask the person to repeat . . . once
- ▶ **If you still can't understand the question,**
ask to speak with the person following your talk



Conclusion

TELL A STORY

HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH THE AUDIENCE

