From Paper to Presentation: Engaging with Your Message and Your Audience

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Today:

• Planning
• Structuring a presentation
• Audience interest
• Articulating & projecting
• Visual aids
• Using effective body language
• Dealing with nervousness
But first...

Why are good presentation skills important?
Planning: 3Ws + H

Who? What? Why?
(“Purpose verb”: to explain, convince, argue, problematize, initiate, inspire, etc.)

+ 

How?
Structure: same but different?

A presentation is about an IDEA (not a paper)
Purpose verb? (To explain, argue, inspire action, propose a solution, initiate a discussion, inspire action, etc.)

WHY does this [issue/topic/solution] matter? (What is its significance?)

WHAT is the one thing you’d like the audience to take away?
4. Tell a story (with structure)
Structure (adapt to fit your content!)

Many options for structure; here are three
• **Introduction**: Opener, problem/question, motivation, give away the ending (?), forecast structure (1-2 slides)

**Structure**

- **MIDDLE**
- **END**
**Structure**

- **Introduction:** Greeting, problem/question, motivation, give away the ending (?), forecast structure* (1-2 slides)

- **Methods:** (1 slide)

- **Results:** 3-5 points with evidence (3-5 slides)

- **Discussion:** combine with results or separate slide(s)?

**END**
**Structure**

- **Introduction**: Greeting, problem/question, motivation, give away the ending (?), forecast structure (1-3 slides)
- **Methods**: (1 slide)
- **Results**: 3-5 points with evidence (3-5 slides)
- **Discussion**: combine with results or separate slide(s)? (3 if separate)
- **Conclusion**: Summary (main result) & Significance (takeaway!) (1 slide)
Structure

- **Introduction:** Opener, problem/question, motivation, give away the ending (?), forecast structure (1-3 slides)
- **Subtopic 1** (2-3 slides)
  - Method (?)
  - Result & discussion
  - Mini-conclusion
- **Subtopic 2** (2-3 slides)
  - Method (?)
  - Result & discussion
  - Mini-conclusion
- **Subtopic 3** (2-3 slides)
  - Method (?)
  - Result & discussion
  - Mini-conclusion
- **Conclusion:** Summary (main result) & Significance (takeaway!) (1 slide)
• **Introduction:** Opener, problem/question, motivation, give away the ending (?), forecast structure (1-3 slides)
• **Theory** (2-3 slides)
  – Premise from theory #1
  – Premise from theory #2
  – Relevance for upcoming topics
• **Subtopic 1** (2 slides)
  – Claim
  – Evidence (results & discussion)
• **Subtopic 2** (2 slides)
  – Claim
  – Evidence (results & discussion)
• **Subtopic 3** (2 slides)
  – Claim
  – Evidence (results & discussion)
• **Conclusion:** Summary (main result) & Significance (takeaway!) (1 slide)
Structure 1

Problem- Solution- Benefit
Structure 2

What? ➔ So What? ➔ Now What?
Other structures

• **Past-Present-Future** — good for providing a history or reviewing a process

• **Comparison-Contrast** — good for showing the relative advantages of your position, or the major differences between two approaches.

• **Cause-Effect** — good for helping people understand the logic of your position
• Tell a “story”; think about your “purpose verb.”
• A conscious choice: planned, tailored to task and topic, careful proportion of time.
• Organized logically (by sub-topics? Chronologically? By study?)
  
  general → specific;
  cause → effect;
  problem → solution.
• Clear introduction (capture interest, clearly outline the topic) and conclusion (summary and significance).
Activity: 3 minute thesis

Present your thesis project in three minutes (or less)!

Not enough time to use full IMRaD structure, but you might use one of the others on the handout if you wish. However you choose to structure your mini-presentation, think about:

1. What is your topic, and your “purpose verb” (I’d like to argue/explain/propose…)
2. Why does your topic matter? (This is significant because/ in the broader context of...)
3. What is the main thing you’d like your audience to take away?
Signposting: verbal punctuation (structure)

(Key phrases handout)
Audience Interest

- Hook
- "You," "we," "our"
- Relevant anecdotes, stories, and examples
- Audience involvement
- Direct or rhetorical questions
- Clarity & conciseness
- Attitude
- Varied media

Audience Interest

Depending on your content, you can:

• Use a great opening (story, anecdote, humor..., often followed-up on at the end)
• Use inclusive language: “You,” “we,” “our”
• Tell stories and use concrete examples
• Ask direct or rhetorical questions
• Reflect the attitude you want the audience to adopt
• Vary your media (but don’t drown in it!)
Visual aids can go really wrong. It’s never a good idea that your visual aids trump you as the presenter. They shouldn’t be your script, either.

PowerPoint has many terrible effects, transitions, and clip art made much too available. Ignore most of these.

PowerPoint has also, unfortunately, encouraged lots of people to present slides (or worse...just read them) instead of delivering a speech.

This is not inspiring

How do you like reading entire sentences as bullet points?

How do you like my reading entire sentences as bullet points on the screen that I can read faster than I can speak?

Hey look! A cat!
Near-Term Power Plant Economics with CO₂ Allowance Costs

Estimated Power Plant Electricity Costs in 2025 for Various Technologies
(includes the cost of CO₂ of ~$50/metric ton)

- To illustrate the economics of operating existing and new power technologies, the chart shows the cost of various technologies when the projected CO₂ allowance prices are included.

- Projected CO₂ allowance prices of roughly $50/ton in 2025 increase variable costs of existing plants powered by fossil fuels to the point where many are likely to shut down.

- However, S. 2191 provides significant incentives for CCS technology for coal plants in the form of bonus allowances, resulting in earlier penetration of advanced coal with CCS.

Notes: For the case with bonus allowances, the variable, capital, and fixed O&M costs are actually an aggregate of the solid part and the hashed part but the net cost is only the solid part. For this illustrative calculation, EPA used a very conservative efficiency metric for existing coal plants (10,000 Btu/kWh), which most plants currently meet or exceed. The marginal energy cost is defined as the cost of production of the most expensive unit operating in that hour. It includes the cost of fuel, variable O&M cost and the cost of environmental allowances. The capital cost data used here are from EIA v2.0, which relies upon EIA capital cost data from AEO 2006. More recently, capital costs have increased with increasing international demand for raw materials. It is not clear how the market will respond to these price increases and whether these increased costs will be sustained over the period of the analysis.

EPA Analysis of S. 2191
Less is (usually) more
Nervousness...
This energy is a resource to help you engage with your message and audience.

If harnessed, helps you to be present in the moment.

Debilitating fear of public speaking

No nerves

“Lagom” nervousness

- Often leads to mediocre presentations.
- An overly confident presenter might not consider their audience.
- No adrenaline to use to engage the audience.

- This energy is a resource to help you engage with your message and audience.
- If harnessed, helps you to be present in the moment.
So, we need:

tools for harnessing nervous energy so that we find our range of body and voice expression to best deliver our message and engage our audience
Reframing:

Performance VS. Conversation
A presentation of any kind is a conversation (not a performance)

- Ask questions! (Audience polling, rhetorical questions, etc.)
- Use the language of conversation, be inclusive
- Be present-oriented.
Warm up to find grounding

TIP!
Headspace
App or
Calm.com

Mind

Breathing

Body

Voice
Tools for creating dynamic communication

**INTENSITY**
body: neutral, open
voice: fullness, tone, projection

**DIRECTION**
body: placement, eye contact, gestures
voice: follows through and inclusive

**TEMPO**
pauses
speed variations
Articulation & Delivery

• Check pronunciation of key terms
• Emphasise important words
• “Project” doesn’t just mean “speak louder”
• Vary voice quality (think conversation)*
• Articulate numbers and key facts, and use examples
• Be clear and concise (avoid “academese” if possible)
• Pause (!!!!!)
Engaging with your presentation & dealing with nerves

Prepare
Practice
Plan

Reframe
Breathe
Pause
To Script or Not to Script?
Notes/Script Tips

- Large, readable font.
- Line spacing
- Bold important points/key words
- If you want to use full sentences: intro, transitions, conclusion only.
- Numbered note cards or pages
- Group all related information together. i.e. New point = new card
- Memorise a few “plan B” transition phrases in case you lose your place. E.g. “We can come back to that later on, for now let’s look at…” Or, the very honest: “I was going to say something more there, but I can’t quite remember what it was. So, let’s move on to…”
Practicing at home:

• If you get really nervous, establish a regular relaxation and warm-up routine.
• Exaggerate! Vocal projection, slow tempo, drawn-out pauses, gestures.
• Practice “grounding”: neutral, open posture, deep-breath while sitting, after standing up, before you begin.
• Practice in front of family members or friends. Practice making eye-contact.
• Working from your bullet points, try explaining/expressing the same point in different ways. Imagine you’re explaining something to a friend.
• Draw a mind-map of your points, so you can visualise how they relate to each other—keep it simple!
Write your own takeaway message
Academic Support Centre

Academic writing
Presenting
Study skills

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Works Consulted


