Speaking Skills

Don’t let your schooling get in the way of your education

--Mark Twain
Speaking Skills

- Principles
- Organization
- Practicing
- Performing
- Visual aids
Speaking – Principles

Every week, every day, almost every hour,
Your job is to communicate!!!

Departmental seminar
Teaching
Scholarly presentation
Grant proposal
Job interview
Speaking – Principles

The 4 fundamentals of success

1. Choose the right topic and style
2. Organize the content clearly
3. Practice several times and several ways
4. Perform with your whole being
Speaking – Principles

Principles are fine, but...

*Be Yourself!*

don’t…copy someone else
don’t…make yourself uncomfortable
do…try different things
do…develop your own style
Choosing the content

1. Choose a topic you can handle
2. Strictly define the topic
3. Gauge the audience
4. Determine the kind of occasion
5. Check out the setting
Speaking – Content

Matching the hatch, or…

How to hook the audience

Informative talks

• Purpose: transmit information
• Audience: peers, reporters
• Setting: conference, workshop
• Size of audience: small to medium
• Topics: data, methods, statistics
• Aids to effectiveness: tables, maps
Speaking – Content

Matching the hatch, or…

How to hook the audience

Persuasive talks

- Purpose: spur to action
- Audience: politicians, superiors
- Setting: keynote, board presentation
- Size of audience: small to large
- Topics: principles, examples
- Aids to effectiveness: quotes, tragedy/victory
Speaking – Content

Matching the hatch, or…

*How to hook the audience*

**Narrative talks**

- **Purpose:** tell a story
- **Audience:** general, mixed, banquet
- **Setting:** school group, informal
- **Size of audience:** any size
- **Topics:** people, places, things
- **Aids to effectiveness:** props, slides, videos
Humorous talks

- **Purpose:** entertain
- **Audience:** adult, casual
- **Setting:** banquet, welcome, informal
- **Size of audience:** medium to large
- **Topics:** unusual events, people (no jokes)
- **Aids to effectiveness:** personal anecdotes
Speaking – Organization

Creating and Evaluating are two different tasks.

SEPARATE THEM!!
Speaking – Organization

Brainstorming is essential!
Brainstorming is essential!

• Listing
  – Write general topic at top of paper
  – Write words or phrases as they come
  – Keep going!!!
  – Don’t edit along the way
  – Then group, cross out and rewrite ideas
Brainstorming is essential!

• Freewriting
  – Write general topic at top of paper
  – Begin writing, whatever you think about the topic
  – Keep writing for at least one page, maybe more
  – Read the page, circle interesting points
  – Start over with the interesting points
Brainstorming is essential!

• Clustering
  – Write general topic at center of paper and circle
  – Write related ideas around this circle, circle them and connect to main idea with lines
  – Do the same with the smaller circles
  – Later re-group, choose main points
For every ten bad ideas, there is one good one; and for every ten good ones, there is one that is practical.

--Michael Eisner
Former CEO, Walt Disney Company
Speaking – Organization

Organize into 3 parts
Introduction
Body
Summary

The preacher’s formula for a sermon:
*Tell ‘em what you’re gonna tell ‘em;*
*Tell ‘em;*
*Tell ‘em what ya told ‘em!*
Speaking – Organization

The Introduction

- Introduce the message—focus the audience
- Anecdote, fact, quote—grab their attention
- Put purpose in terms of audience
- State your intention
The Introduction

I’ll describe the process for turning an invention into a company.

I want you to leave tonight understanding genetic engineering.

I’ll show you how a good environment is also good for business.
Speaking – Organization

The Introduction

- Introductions must be **SHORT**!
- No more than 20% of time
- For long talks, no more than 10 minutes, better if 5 minutes
- Avoid the long wind-up before the pitch!
Speaking – Organization

The Body

- Deliver the message—convince the audience
- 3-5 main points, covered equally
- Clearly identify the points as you make them
I will present three approaches to protecting endangered species. The first approach is captive breeding... Now, the second approach, reintroduction... The third is my favorite—habitat protection...
Speaking – Organization

The Body

- 60% of the time
- So, 20% per point!
- More than 5 points? Reorganize!
- Be ruthless—the only way to win!
The Summary

• Drive home the message—motivate the audience
• Synthesize the main points
• Give the audience a specific challenge
The Summary

*Tomorrow, when you see that infomercial, remember that a researcher started it all!*

*If someone starts to trash genetic engineering, give them an earful—of high lycene corn!*

*When you start to buy something, ask yourself, “Is that good for me—and us?”*
The Summary

• This is the big finale—so save time for it!
• 20% of the time
• Just finish once
• Strong finish, so audience knows when you’re done!
Speaking – Organization

The 15-minute Scientific Talk

• Plan for 13 minutes
• Introduction – 2 minutes
• Body – 3 points in 9 minutes
• Summary – 2 minutes

Be Ruthless – the only way to win!!
Practice is a process, not an event

- Practice is *not* rehearsing the night before
- Practice is *not* memorizing the talk
- Practice *is* gradually getting to know and love the talk
Speaking – Practicing

**First step – Planning**

- Schedule time for preparation at several intervals—be **ruthless!**
- Brainstorm
- Prepare an outline
- Prepare a visual-aid plan
- Draft visual aids in first-draft
Second step – Creating the text

- A week before
- Write phrases, important terms
- Write word-for-word only for most important presentations (persuasive)
- Read aloud to test flow, expression
- Time the presentation
Speaking – Practicing

Third step -- Relaxing

• Forget about it!
Speaking – Practicing

Fourth step -- Finalizing

• Day or two before
• Read aloud again
• Draft final visual aids
• Plan for several minutes fewer than allowed
• Draft final talking text—be **ruthless!**
Speaking – Performing

Like it or not, you are a performer!

- Listeners judge you by performance, more than content.
- Listeners decide to like you in the first few minutes.
Speaking – Performing

**Appearance**

- Look as good as you can
- Dress better than the audience (better to be overdressed than underdressed)
Speaking – Performing

Mannerisms

• Nervous people act nervous—so practice!
• Be alert to personal idiosyncrasies—they are exaggerated when nervous
• Move around—naturally
Mannerisms

• Don’t…put hands in pockets
• Don’t…wave the pointer like a conductor
• Don’t…lean on the podium
• Don’t…stare at the floor, window, screen
• Don’t…hide behind the podium
Speaking – Performing

Speaking style

- Speak from key phrases, ideas
- Don’t read the presentation
- Don’t memorize the presentation
- Use short sentences
- Use common words
- Vary voice level, pace
Engaging the audience

- Speak to audience as one person
- React to individuals—smile, call names
- Work in the positive space
- Look around and gesture—at least a little
- **Have fun!**
Speaking – Performing

Engaging the audience

• Strong start
• Strong finish
Speaking – Summary

The keys to a successful presentation

1. Choose carefully for each occasion
2. Organize ruthlessly for clarity
3. Practice several ways
4. Perform with entire being
Visual Aids

When speeches are read
The listeners are few.
But props are a treat
That pull us all through.

Or

Never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever

GIVE A TALK WITHOUT PROPS!
Visual Aids -- Contents

The content of a slide, if it is to be understood by a majority of the viewers, must express the meaning of the work in a manner which, other things being equal, focuses the viewer on the single, essential, overarching conceptual message that is the purpose for the communication device.
Visual Aids – Contents

Keep It Simple, Stupid!
Visual Aids -- Contents

- One major idea per slide
- One or two levels of headings
- Key words, not sentences
- Simple tables, figures and maps
• **Players on a basketball team**
  
  – **Center**
    • Tallest player
    • Back to the basket
    • Rebounding skills
    • Soft touch around the basket
  
  – **Power forward**
    • Strongest player
    • Slashing ability
    • Strong defense
    • Good hands
  
  – **Forward**
    • Most versatile player
    • Move without ball
    • Outside shooter
    • Good passer
  
  – **Shooting guard**
    • Best shooter
    • Both fast and quick
    • Quick release
    • Defense is a plus
  
  – **Point guard**
    • Best ball handler
    • Team leader on floor
    • Vision of entire court
    • Good defender
• Players on a basketball team
  – Center
  – Power forward
  – Forward
  – Shooting guard
  – Point guard
• Players on a basketball team
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Players on a basketball team

Center

- Center generally is the tallest player on the team because he plays in the middle of the court.
- The center usually plays with his back to the basket so he can see when someone is going to pass him the ball; so he needs great sense of his position relative to the basket.
- Because he plays under the basket, he must be a great rebounder, on both the offensive and defensive ends.
- He also needs a soft touch around the basket, which is not a common trait of very tall people
Players on a basketball team

– **Center**

• Tallest player
• Back to the basket
• Rebounding skills
• Soft touch around the basket
North Carolina State University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player Name</th>
<th>TOT</th>
<th>3-PT</th>
<th>REBOUNDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FG-FGA</td>
<td>FG-FGA</td>
<td>FT-FTA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evtimov</td>
<td>6-11</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennerman</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>3-8</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simmons</td>
<td>4-8</td>
<td>0-0</td>
<td>4-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Atsur</td>
<td>3-7</td>
<td>2-6</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethel</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>1-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>1-1</td>
<td>6-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brackman</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>1-1</td>
<td>1-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>26-55</td>
<td>12-27</td>
<td>22-25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NC State defeats Miami, 86-77

- Cameron Bennerman
  - Free throws – 8 of 9
  - Total points – 23 (career high)
- Team totals
  - Free throws – 22 of 25 (88%)
  - Turnovers – 16
Visual Aids -- Composition

What is beautiful?

Sunsets over a mountain lake? NO
A still-life by Cezanne? NO
Snoop Dogg in concert? NO
Jessica Simpson? NO
Visual Aids -- Composition

What is beautiful?

BIG

I mean BIG

I mean really BIG!!!!!!
Visual Aids -- Composition

BIG

is

BEAUTIFUL!
Visual Aids -- Composition

60-Point Type

48-Point Type

36-Point Type

24-Point Type

18-Point Type

12-Point Type
Visual Aids -- Composition

- General Suggestions
  - 44-point for titles (maybe 40)
  - 36-point for subtitles (maybe 32)
  - 28-point for text (maybe 24)

- Nothing smaller than 18-point
  - Got it? Nothing smaller than this
  - This is 18-point type
  - And this looks too small for me
Visual Aids -- Composition

• Font types
  – Serif types for extensive text (Times New Roman)
  – San-serif types for main headings (Arial)
  – **No condensed type**
  – **No fancy type styles**
  – 1 or 2 fonts per slide
  – Maybe something *special* for emphasis
Visual Aids -- Composition

- Color combinations
Visual Aids -- Composition

• Color combinations
  – White background is always okay
  – Use high-contrast font color
    • Black
    • Red
    • Blue
Visual Aids -- Composition

• Color combinations
  – Black background is okay occasionally
  – Strains the eyes
  – Need high-contrast font color
    • White
    • Yellow
    • Green
Visual Aids -- Composition

• Color combinations
  – Blue background is great
  – Easy on the eyes
  – Can take many font colors
    • White
    • Yellow
Visual Aids -- Composition

• Color combinations
  – Yellow on green reads easiest
  – Best font colors
    • Yellow
    • White