Workshop #4: Giving a Talk.

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Some talks are amazing.

fascinating content + clear presentation + fun
→ “airplane-mode talk”

Other talks are literally the worst.

unclear what is content + bad presentation + not fun
→ “collective marginal politeness”

Today: Get them to clap because they loved it.
Not because they’re glad it’s over.
Tips for **giving good talks.**

1. Philosophy, structure, and strategy.
2. Slide rules so your slides rule.
3. How to improve efficiently.
4. Game-day tips.
Tips for giving good talks.

1. Philosophy, structure, and strategy.
2. Slide rules so your slides rule.
3. How to improve efficiently.
4. Game-day tips.
First, why give a **scientific talk**?

A talk is **information transfer & a performance**. It can…

- **entice** someone to read your paper,
- **bring** you that job/data/collaborator/respect,
- **teach** the audience a new idea or result,
- **excite** people about working in your area.
First, why give a scientific talk?

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**for you**

- entice someone to read your paper,
- bring you that job/data/collaborator/respect,
- teach the audience a new idea or result,
- excite people about working in your area.

**for science**
First, why give a scientific talk?

A talk is **information transfer & a performance**. It can...

**for you**
- **entice** someone to read your paper,
- **bring** you that job/data/collaborator/respect,
- **teach** the audience a new idea or result,
- **excite** people about working in your area.

**for science**

**Step 1**: decide what you want *and write it down.*
Step 1: decide what you want and write it down.

Ex: I want you to think of this talk first, the next time you prepare any kind of presentation.
Second, identify the idea.

A talk should focus on an idea, not a paper. Compare: “I want to tell you about a finding.” vs “I want to tell you about my paper.”

The idea is the cargo of the talk. The thing they take home.

What will they say when asked what your talk was about?

Step 2: identify your cargo and write it down.
Third, identify your audience.

Try to put yourself in their position. What are their brains going to be like, today?

Estimate their knowledge, opinions, mood, fatigue, etc.

Consider audience variance, not just mean. And err on the side of overestimating variance.

Step 3: model your audience, and write that down.
Fourth, set your slide budget.

1 slide = 1 minute.
Start with this unit conversion.
Give 10 talks. Only then adjust.

Filler slides count.

A 10-minute talk.
Fourth, set your slide budget.

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A 10-minute talk.

General Structure:
Tell ‘em what you’ll tell ‘em.
Tell ‘em.
Tell ‘em what you told ‘em.
Fourth, set your slide budget.

1 slide = 1 minute.
Start with this unit conversion.
Give 10 talks. Only then adjust.

Filler slides count.

A **10-minute talk.**

General Structure:
Tell ‘em what you’ll tell ‘em.
Tell ‘em.
Tell ‘em what you told ‘em.

1. Title Slide
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9. **What you told ‘em. + 1 Q**
10. Thx & Acknowledgements
Fourth, set your slide budget.

1 slide = 1 minute.
Start with this unit conversion.
Give 10 talks. Only then adjust.

Filler slides count.

A 10-minute talk.

General Structure:
Tell ‘em what you’ll tell ‘em.
Tell ‘em.
Tell ‘em what you told ‘em.

1. Title Slide
2. Intro. Entice audience.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9. What you told ‘em. + 1 Q
10. Thx & Acknowledgements
Fourth, set your slide budget.

1 slide = 1 minute.
Start with this unit conversion.
Give 10 talks. Only then adjust.

Filler slides count.

A 10-minute talk.

General Structure:
Tell ‘em what you’ll tell ‘em.
Tell ‘em.
Tell ‘em what you told ‘em.

1. Title Slide
2. Intro. Entice audience.
4. Outline. What you’ll tell ‘em.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9. What you told ‘em. + 1 Q
10. Thx & Acknowledgements
Fourth, set your slide budget.

1 slide = 1 minute.
Start with this unit conversion.
Give 10 talks. Only then adjust.

Filler slides count.

A 10-minute talk.

General Structure:
- Tell ‘em what you’ll tell ‘em.
- Tell ‘em.
- Tell ‘em what you told ‘em.

1. Title Slide
2. Intro. Entice audience.
4. Outline. What you’ll tell ‘em.
5. [Result]
6. [Result]
7. [Result]
8. [Result]
9. What you told ‘em. + 1 Q
10. Thx & Acknowledgements
Fourth, set your slide budget.

1 slide = 1 minute.
Start with this unit conversion. Give 10 talks. Only then adjust.

1. Title Slide
2. Intro. Entice audience.
4. Outline. What you’ll tell ‘em.
5. [Result]
6. [Result]
7. [Result]
8. [Result]
9. What you told ‘em. + 1 Q
10. Thx & Acknowledgements

Filler slides count.

Only four slides of content. The rest is [important] narrative.
Fourth, set your slide budget.

Step 4: budget + topic sentence for each slide.

Write **1 sentence** for each slide, that explains what the slide will do or chooses a figure for the slide.

1. Title Slide
2. Intro. Entice audience.
4. Outline. What you’ll tell ‘em.
5. [Result]
6. [Result]
7. [Result]
8. [Result]
9. What you told ‘em. + 1 Q
10. Thx & Acknowledgements
Recapping the strategy so far:

- **Step 1**: decide what you want and write it down.
- **Step 2**: identify your cargo and write it down.
- **Step 3**: model your audience, and write that down.
- **Step 4**: budget + topic sentence for each slide.
Finally, refine & enhance your outline.

People like stories.

**Coherent narratives.** The story of the problem.
**Personal puzzles.** The story of the research & you.
**Plot twists.** Surprises. Confusion. Resolution.

People like to feel smart.

Take **one hard thing** and **help them get it.**
Finally, refine & enhance your outline.

People like stories.

1. Title Slide
2. Intro. Entice audience.
4. Outline. What you’ll tell ‘em.
5. [Result]
6. [Result]
7. [Result + Aha! moment]
8. [Result]
9. What you told ‘em. + 1 Q
10. Thx & Acknowledgements

People like to feel smart.
Philosophy, structure, and strategy.

Step 1: decide what you want and write it down.

Step 2: identify your cargo and write it down.

Step 3: model your audience, and write that down.

Step 4: budget + topic sentence for each slide.

Step 5: refine & enhance with narrative & “Aha!”

Observation: at this point, you don’t have any slides.
Tips for giving good talks.

1. Philosophy, structure, and strategy.
2. Slide rules so your slides rule.
3. How to improve efficiently.
4. Game day tips.
Slide rules.

Aspect ratio: widescreen only. It’s 2019.
No unexplained figures.
And no unexplained axes.

And also:

Say “horizontal” and “vertical”, not x and y.

Consider putting up the axes before the content, and set expectations or ask for speculation [budget this]. What do we expect this plot will show? [Example]

Literally no point in figures if people don’t get them.

Annotate your figures with arrows, highlights, etc. [Example]

Remake labels from the paper’s version of figures in larger fonts for your talks. [Example]
Slide rules.

No unexplained equations or notation.

“Yes, but I need this notation.” lol ok, but do you really?
PANFLUTE FLOWCHART

do you need one

no

no panflute

YES

no you don't

webcomic: toothpastefordinner
Slide rules.

No unexplained equations or notation. They cost attention but provide precision. Consider the tradeoff.

Exceptions:

Audience affects the tradeoff. Physics department vs Sociology department.
Use in “job talks” where you need credibility and the appearance of rigor.
Use to combat “lightweight” bias* of audience. Do not overcompensate. [Example]

*Real talk: if you don’t have “rigorous looking” equations, some types of people will not take you seriously. Ridiculous & frustrating? Yeah. Still, worth considering.
Slide rules.

No small fonts.
Except for footnotes and citations.
Slide rules.

Put mini-figures on the conclusions slide.
Particularly useful for long talks. [Examples]
Slide rules.

Use a consistent theme and fonts.

“What would Sam Way do?”
Slide rules.

No unexplained figures.
No unexplained equations or notation.
No small fonts.

Use a consistent theme and fonts.
Put mini-figures on the conclusions slide.
Aspect ratio: widescreen only. It’s 2019.
Tips for giving good talks.

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What should you say?

Step 1: List what you need to say for each slide.

Then review your list.

Each slide is a story. Revise each slide till you naturally link its plot points. If you think you’ll forget something, place a cue on the slide. [Example]

If there is key wording, write exact wording on the slide. [Example]

Note: figures are a prepackaged story: tell figures start to finish.
Transitions are as important as content

Step 2: Plan every transition.

What will you say before clicking “next”? Set expectations, then meet or defy.

Say it before clicking! Never talk through a transition. Fun experiment: watch people’s eyes at slide transitions. Never on the speaker.
Practice and revision are fundamental.

**Step 3:** Talks don’t get worse with practice. Ever.

A. Make the slides, talk it through.
B. Edit the slides, rehearse the talk. Time it. [Repeat]
C. Present it like you mean it to video or a friend. Time it.
   
   Note: Giving a first-draft talk is disrespectful. Don't do it!

D. Listen to the feedback. Make changes. Hit step B again.
   
   Asking for feedback and then ignoring it is wasteful. Don’t do it!

E. Apply extra polish to the intro, conclusions, and transitions.
Equip yourself with delivery tools

- Speed.
- The pause.
- Loud vs medium.
- Warmth vs authority*.
- Eye contact (and intentional looking away).
- Pitch—consider mean & variance. [beware uptalk]
- Body movement. Head, hands & arms [the box], and legs.
- Turn it up to 11.
- Special effects**. The echo. The slow walk. The double pause.

*This comes from LeeAundra Keaney, a phenomenal speaker and coach  
**This comes from P. Edwards’ amazing notes: pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtotalk.pdf

Step 4: Plan a couple delivery tools.
Equip yourself with **delivery tools**

No. Not laser pointers. Don’t use a laser.

- **Speed.** Finishing under time at 1000 words/minute can be as bad as running over time at a regular pace. Experiment with speed.
- **The pause.** Try a pause to let your last statement sink in. Doubles as built-in water break. Feels longer to you than to audience!
- **Loud vs medium.** Again, experiment, but err on the side of more volume, not less.
- **Warmth vs authority*.** Next conference, notice how speakers tend to fall somewhere on an axis between warm & authoritative.
- **Eye contact (and intentional looking away).** More is better, generally. As with the others: experiment!
- **Pitch**—consider mean & variance. [beware uptalk] Opinions vary re uptalk. I suggest avoiding.
- **Body movement.** Head, hands & arms [the box], and legs. Experiment! Try a new move!
- **Turn it up to 11.** Enthusiasm is fun for you and the audience. Record yourself and cringe at how your 11 is IRL a 4.
- **Special effects**. The echo. The slow walk. The double pause. Advanced moves. 😎

*This comes from LeeAundra Keany, a phenomenal speaker and coach. **This comes from P. Edwards’ amazing notes: pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtotalk.pdf

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**Step 4:** Plan a couple delivery tools.
How to improve efficiently.

- **Step 1**: List what you need to say for each slide.
- **Step 2**: Plan every transition.
- **Step 3**: Talks don’t get worse with practice. Ever.
- **Step 4**: Plan a couple delivery tools.

Recommendation: hit step 4 before the day of the talk.
Tips for giving good talks.

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Things to do before you stand up.

Take 10-15 mins of time to yourself.

- Look at the ocean.
- Flip through your slides.
- Review your transitions.
- Breathing exercises.
- Pushups.
- Epic music. Chill music.
- Whatever. You do you.

Upload your slides as a PDF to an easy URL.

It’s 2019. No excuses. Always have a backup.
Things to do when you stand up.

Always use the mic.

“Do I need the mic?” produces more false negatives than false positives.

Keep the lights on.

You are exciting and beautiful but people will fall asleep if it’s dark.

Finish early but not too early.

Do not run over time. Just do not.

[And if you do, have an exit strategy: know ahead of time what to skip, & don’t mention that you’re out of time. Just finish victoriously as soon as you coherently can.]
Things to do after you sit down.

Debrief

What worked well and what didn’t?
Suggestion: do not ask other people. They’ll lie or you’ll be upset. Answer these questions for yourself, with a “getting better takes work!” attitude.

Learn from the greats

If you ever see a talk you like, reverse engineer it.
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Step 3: model your audience, and write that down.

Step 4: budget + topic sentence for each slide.

Step 5: refine & enhance with narrative & “Aha!”

Step 6: List what you need to say for each slide.

Step 7: Plan every transition.

Step 8: Talks don’t get worse with practice. Ever.

Step 9: Plan a couple delivery tools.
Workshop #4: Giving a Talk.

Further Reading:

• LeeAundra Keany is wonderful. http://thecontrarypublicspeaker.com/
• Paul Edwards’ fantastic notes: pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtotalk.pdf
• [Your suggestions here! email me daniel.larremore@colorado.edu]
Workshop #4: Giving a Talk.

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Workshop #3: Data Visualization.

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samfway.com/viz_workshop.pdf

More from this series:
**Example of putting up naked axes first.** Spoken: explain horiz. & vert. axes’ meaning. Then: what do we expect to see when the data show up on the next slide? Then, see next slide. (See next slide!) NB: This required creating this new naked fig in matplotlib. Worth it!
Stable, non-linear (32.3%)  Unstable and/or linear (67.7%)  Conventional narrative; $N=222$ (20.3%)
Example of annotating a figure. These annotations, like the ones on the previous slide (for remaking axes) are helpful for the audience but also for me, the speaker, so that I remember what the story of the figure is supposed to be. They remind me of what I want to say, the story I want to tell.

Example of remaking axes of figs from the paper. Here’s a before (left) and after (right). This figure features three parasites that had already been introduced and tied to the colors red, blue, and gold. So:

* Remade horizontal axis labels with bigger font & colors.
* Covered the big B because who cares which subfig it is?
* Annotated with $\Delta$ and X to assist the audience and myself while speaking with what the intended interpretation is.
* Added a caption.

Immune responses jump between 2008 and 2009 (plasma IgG) for the two 2009 isolates. Not so for control.
Relax and let the springs decide the ranks

$$H(s) = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i,j=1}^{N} \mu_{ij} A_{ij} (s_i - s_j - \ell)^2$$

SpringRank Hamiltonian: energy of the system, given the positions $s$.

Because the springs are linear, the potential is quadratic.

The SR Hamiltonian is convex in $s$.

$$\nabla H(s) = 0$$

unique.

Example of equations and language for credibility. This is a case where I was giving a physics colloquium, and there was an opportunity to include more equations and also the word “Hamiltonian.” This word has a meaning for physicists but no one else. Physics talk? Leave it in. Same content, but in the language of the audience. A student literally told me after the talk that he started paying attention when I said “Hamiltonian.” That’s great! Also lol. But great!
Conclusions

systematic inequality and hierarchy in hiring.

entanglement of prestige, productivity, gender.

misleading narrative of “traditional” career trajectory.
Example 2 of putting key figures on the conclusions slides. These two were the two conclusions slides from a job talk. I think they’re less clean than the previous example, but my pitch to the audience was: if you hire me, you get a scientist who does science but who also builds new methods. The work I was presenting had not, thus far, ever been explicitly divided into “results” and “methods” so I put all the pretty and appropriate figures here.

Back to linking slide

Key insights into malaria...

1. var genes evolve under highly structured yet heterogeneous constraints.
2. The var gene strategy has deep origins in ancestral ape parasites.
3. Parasites are evolving at the level of genes and repertoires with the human immune landscape.

Key insights into malaria, driven by new methods

1. Network-based methods open recombinant gene families to detailed analysis.
2. Statistically principled methods enable bipartite community detection.
3. Compressibility statistical tests measure relevance of node metadata to network structure.
Parakeets know which individuals are ranked above and below themselves.

Parakeets know their own rank and the ranks of others.

Confronting models, which incorporate different complexities of bird-knowledge, with meticulous data, reveals clues about mechanisms of hierarchy formation.

Solve the bipartite C.D. problem.

Gap in the literature: no statistically principled methods for bipartite community detection.

→ bipartite SBM

The probability of observing a network $G$ with adjacency matrix $A$ is:

$$P(G \mid g, \theta, \omega, T) = \prod_{t_i \neq t_j} \frac{(\theta_i \theta_j \omega_{g_i g_j})^{A_{ij}}}{A_{ij}!} \exp(-\theta_i \theta_j \omega_{g_i g_j})$$

Find the parameters that maximize the likelihood of the data

→ directly compute maximum likelihood point estimates for all parameters except groups $g$

→ use local search strategy to search partition space for optimal groups