

Presentation & Other Verbal Communication Skills

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About Amanda

Education

- PhD. University of Rochester
- BS. Houghton College

Career

- Bloomberg 2016-
- Yahoo Labs 2013-16
- AT&T Labs Research 2007-2013
- Stony Brook University 2002-2009

Research

- Natural language processing

Outreach

- ACL Rolling Review
- ABET
- CRA-WP board

Hobbies

- EMS, walks, music



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Yuqing Melanie Wu

Education

- PhD. University of Michigan
- BS. MS. Peking University, China



Career

- Pomona College 2015 –
Department chair 2017-2020
- Indiana University, 2004-2015



Research

- Database, data representation and management, query language, optimization, ...

Outreach

- ACM-W council
- CRA-WP board



Hobbies

- Traveling, cooking, gardening,



What This is About

This session will focus on building your **oral communication skills**. Where does oral communication happen?

- Scientific/technical talks
- Poster presentations
- Lecturing and mentoring
- Discussion with your advisor, classmates, ...
- Chat in the hallway, around the water cooler, ...
- ...



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Exercise

- Do you think you are a good presenter? Why, or why not?
- What are the things you are anxious about when you prepare/give a presentation?
- Now, think about your last, or upcoming, presentation
- What's the goal of the presentation?
- Who are the audience?
- What are the three take-away messages you hope they remember?



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The woman is standing in front of a large screen. The screen displays a word cloud at the top with words like 'Place', 'System', 'and', 'input', 'Architecture', 'Place', 'close-quarters', 'flicking', 'the', 'the', 'the'. Below the word cloud are two tables. The left table is titled 'Figure 1' and the right table is titled 'Figure 2'.

Score	Figure 1	Figure 2
0.999	images	0.602
0.998	heart	0.593
0.996	burn	0.590
0.992	main	0.571
0.989	input	0.561
0.983	endanger	0.541
0.982	elucidate	0.529
0.972	kill	0.527
0.940	imposed	0.516
	range skyscrapers	0.502
	harmonizing	
	prepare	

```
graph TD; A[Preparation] --> B[Delivery]; B --> C[Follow Up]
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Preparation

Delivery

Follow Up



Scientific Talks – Preparation

Questions:

- Who are the audience?
- How much time do I have?
- Why should they be interested in what I am talking about?
- What is the 3-sentence take-away message?
- At what details do I want to convey my ideas and support my claim?
- What questions may I get?

Preparation :

- Tailor your talk to the level of your audience
- Make your presentation focused and compact
- Keep your audience engaged
- Focus on the take-away message
- Balance the level of details
- Anticipate questions



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Scientific Talks – Preparation

- Tailor your talk to the level of your audience
 - Define a concept or not, how much preliminary to provide, ...
 - How much details should you get into
- Make your presentation focused and compact
 - 1-2 minutes for 1 slide
 - Avoid clutter - less text, more visual aids
 - Use animation to pace information dissemination
- Keep your audience engaged
 - The hook - motivating examples
 - Story telling



Scientific Talks – Preparation

- Focus on the takeaway message
 - Embed it throughout the presentation
 - Repeat it frequently
- Balance the level of details
 - Tailor to your audience, time limitation...
 - Prepare backup slides with more details
- Anticipate questions
 - Build the explanations into your slides
 - Prepare backup slides to answer the questions



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Scientific Talks – Delivery

Now, your slides are ready.... What is a good delivery

- Your message is delivered and well received
- Your audiences are engaged throughout your talk
- Understanding your talk does not feel like the labors of Hercules
- Their questions are answered to their satisfaction

Delivery

- Speak slowly and clearly
- Check the reaction of your audience and adjust
- Address their questions directly and tactfully



Practice, practice, practice.....



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Scientific Talks – Follow-up

Now the presentation is over...

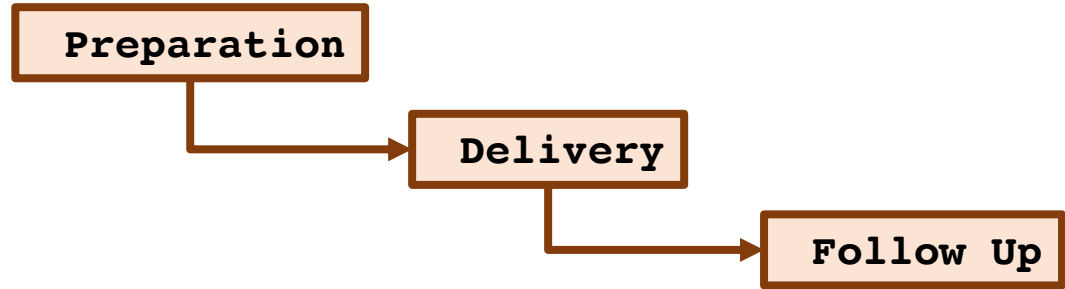
- Reflect
 - Any good questions asked?
 - Did I do a good job preparing/delivering the talk?
- Follow up
 - Topics/questions
 - People



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Posters



Questions:

- Who are the audience?
- How much time/space do I have?
- Why they should be interested in what I am talking about?
- What are the 3-sentence take-away message?
- At what details I want to convey to support my claim?
- What questions I may get?



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Posters vs. Talks

At a poster session

- Some audiences will (only) read
 - provide more text
 - invite questions/conversation



The audiences start at different time, progress at different pace and are interested in different aspects of your work

- intentionally form small groups and give a mini-presentation/demo

More casual

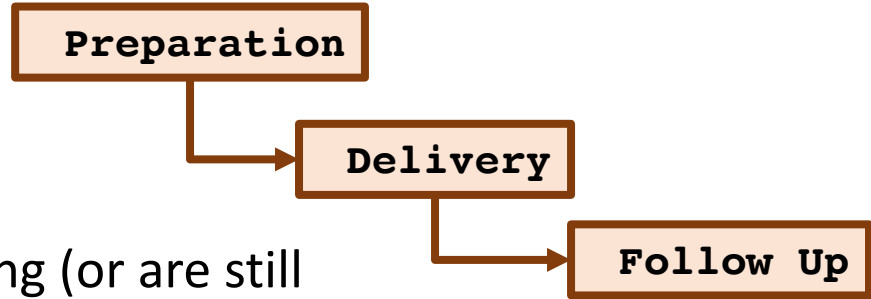
- invite questions, comments, opinions
- start a conversation



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Teaching / Mentoring



Audience: students who are learning (or are still confused about) the materials

- Preparation and delivery
 - articulate the concepts
 - design good examples for incremental learning
 - pay **CLOSE** attention to the reaction of the audience and adjust
- Be aware of the power dynamics
 - Be welcoming, patient, kind, encouraging, ...
- Do follow up



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Exercise

Including team meetings, one on one meetings, talks, posters...

- How many presentations have you made in the past two weeks?
- How many have you observed?
- What one presentation told the best story?



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Team / One on One Presentations

Questions:

- Who are the audience?
- How much time do I have?
- What is the story I am telling?
- What is my pitch?
- What questions may I get?

Preparation :

- Make your presentation focused
- Observe your audience
- Anticipate questions
- Plan your ask



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Team / One on One Presentations

Observing:

- What is the story they are telling?
- What is their pitch?
- Why am I in the audience?
- What questions do I have?

General:

- Every meeting is a presentation
- Plan to speak and to observe
- Know your agenda



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Handling Questions



Questions to shape your response:

- Who is the questioner?
- Why are they asking this question?
- Is this a question I should answer (now)?
- Is this a question I can answer?

Responding and answering are different things

- *I'm not sure I understand...*
- *That's a great question, let's take it offline*
- *You sound like someone we should hire!*
- *I'll get back to you by tonight*
- *That will take two weeks*



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Low Level Tips

If you want people to be convinced, be convincing

- Pose
- Pause
- Plan
- Speak



If you want people to be excited, be exciting

- Smile
- Act
- Observe
- React



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Continuous Improvement

You get better at presenting through:

- Preparation - no presentation unplanned!
- Practice - present often!
- Evaluation - record yourself, get feedback!



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Resources

- Michael Alley: “The Craft of Scientific Presentations”,
<https://www.craftofscientificpresentations.com/teaching-resources.html>
- Mark Hill: “Oral Presentation Advice”,
<http://pages.cs.wisc.edu/~markhill/conference-talk.html>



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Resources

- Duarte, Nancy:
 - Resonate: Present Visual Stories that Transform Audiences
 - slide:ology The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations
 - Illuminate: Ignite Change Through Speeches, Stories, Ceremonies, and Symbols
- Bento C. Leal III:
 - 4 Essential Keys to Effective Communication in Love, Life, Work--Anywhere!
- Oren Klaff:
 - Pitch Anything: An Innovative Method for Presenting, Persuading, and Winning the Deal



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Thank you!

Questions?



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