ORAL COMMUNICATION

ME 482 Senior Design II
Spring 2024

Dr. Trevor C. Sorensen

modified from an original presentation by Dr. Zhuoyuan Song
Why is Oral Communication Difficult?

What are you so afraid of?

% of Americans who say they fear...

- PUBLIC SPEAKING
- HEIGHTS
- BUGS, SNAKES, OTHER ANIMALS
- DROWNING
- BLOOD/NEEDLES
- CLAUSTROPHOBIA
- FLYING
- STRANGERS
- ZOMBIES
- DARKNESS
- CLOWNS
- GHOSTS

Source: Chapman University Survey on American Fears
Quiz

• What is the MCM of communication?

en.wikipedia.org
Objective

Keep Your Audience

Outline

• What does “alive” mean?
• How to keep them “alive”?
• What if...?
What does an ‘alive audience’ mean?

• **Literally**
  – Safety comes first!

• **Metaphorically**
  – Don’t bore them to “death”
  – Keep the audience enticed

• **More importantly…**
  – Make their time well spent
Why are the audience lost?

• Not interested from the beginning
  – Unrelatable topic
  – Lack of useful information

• Speech hard to follow
  – Jargons / abbreviations
  – Missing information
  – Uncomfortable pace

Dr. U. Hasson, Princeton
How to keep your audience “alive”?

Steps to effective oral communication (GenEd):

• Step 1. Determine general purpose
• Step 2. Analyze the audience
• Step 3. Determine the specific purpose
• Step 4. Research the presentation
• Step 5. Organize and outline the presentation
• Step 6. Prepare visual aids
• Step 7. Rehearse the presentation
• Step 8. Deliver the presentation to the class
• Step 9. Self assess the presentation
How to keep your audience “alive”?

Steps to effective oral communication (GenEd):

• Step 1. Determine general purpose
• Step 2. Analyze the audience
• Step 3. Determine the specific purpose
• Step 4. Research the presentation
• Step 5. Organize and outline the presentation
• Step 6. Prepare visual aids
• Step 7. Rehearse the presentation
• Step 8. Deliver the presentation to the class
• Step 9. Self-assess the presentation
Step 2: Analyze the audience

• Audiences are egocentric
  – Must relate your message to an audience’s existing interests/concerns, knowledge, and beliefs.

• Examine the demographic traits of the audience
  – Age
  – gender/sex
  – racial, ethnic, or cultural background
  – religious views
  – group membership
  – occupation, education, intelligence

• E.g. Quantum computing explained by Dr. Talia Gershon
Step 3. Determine the specific purpose

• Understand the nature of the presentation
  – Design review
  – Sales pitch
  – Demonstration

• Translate the purpose of your speech to what the audience care about
  – Practice: Summarize your project with one question that will entice most of the audience.
    • e.g. “How to keep your audience ‘alive’?”
Step 5. Organize and outline the presentation

Oral Communication

- General Presentation Information
  - Presentation Evaluation Criteria
  - Presentation Grade Sheet
  - General Presentation Development Resources
  - Oral Communication Lecture (01 Oct 2018)

• What?
• Why?
• How?

• What?
• So what?
• Then what?
Step 5. Organize and outline the presentation

What does “alive” mean?

Keep your audience “alive”

How to keep them “alive”? How to revive them?
Step 6. Prepare visual aids

Loren Shure, MathWorks
Step 6. Prepare visual aids

- Visual aids should be **substantive**
- Visual aids should be **easily seen** by the audience
Step 6. Prepare visual aids

• Visual aids should be **substantive**

• Visual aids should be **easily seen** by the audience

• Speakers should **not obstruct** the audience’s view of the visual aids

• Maintain **eye contact** while using the visual aids
Step 6. Prepare visual aids

Loren Shure, MathWorks
Step 6. Prepare visual aids

- Visual aids should be **substantive**
- Visual aids should be **easily seen** by the audience
- Speakers should **not obstruct** the audience’s view of the visual aids
- Maintain **eye contact** while using the visual aids
- Explain the visual aids
- Practice the presentation **WITH** the visual aids
Step 8. Deliver the presentation

• Gestures and movement
• Vocal variety
• Avoid using filled pauses such as "um," "uh," "like," and "you know."
• Eye contact and facial expression

• Stage Fright?
  – Practice, practice, and practice more!
Be ON TIME!

- Average adults’ attention span: 20 min

- Respect the audience (don’t steal their time!)
- Conclusion:
  - Signal the end of the speech
  - Reinforce the audience’s understanding of, or commitment to, the central idea
  - Over-time conclusion = @!#$!*&(!
How to “revive” your audience?

• Don’t count on it!
• Try with interruptions:
  – Interactive sessions
  – Examples / anecdotes
  – Recap and transit
• Best bet: Conclusions
Two final secrets for good presentations

1. Know your material thoroughly
   - Audience can tell when you’re hesitant about what you’re saying and not sure of the material

2. Show enthusiasm for your topic
   - Enthusiasm is contagious – audience won’t be enthusiastic about your topic if you aren’t
   - If you’re enthusiastic, the audience will wonder why and pay more attention to find out
In Conclusion

• Study the **audience**
• Start with an enticing theme (or question)
• Design the presentation around the audience
• **Keep your audience alive**
• Revive the audience if needed
• Be on time!