

A Guide for Effective Talk, How to Design and Introduce: Review

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Abstract: A talk or a lecture is a major method for teaching and training the undergraduates and postgraduates worldwide. Although the presenters frequently have good relevant knowledge, they lack the skills and parameters relevant to how to design and present an effective talk. The present topic aims to illustrate these items. It is also based on the scientific fundamentals derived from different references and my experience in the field of university teaching and training for more than 12 years.

Keywords: Effective talk, Effective lecture, Speaker guide.

1 Introduction

Any lecture presents particular information or data to the recipients. Many lectures may comprise great or advanced scientific data, but need a better design and other ways of illustration to be beneficial for students, trainees or any recipients, in general. Any lecture or talk comprises four aspects: Topic, speaker, environment and recipients. An effective talk or lecture, direct, online or recorded, requires the following fundamentals.

1.1 Lecture Design

1.1.1 Selected Program: Select the appropriate program to design your lecture, such as PowerPoint, prezi, etc. Choosing a program is a subjective method, but the optimal design of the slides is the major key that has to be considered.

1.1.2 Title: The title of your topic must be clear and not exceed 50 characters. It also must explain the main frame of the topic and avoid ambiguous terms (1).

1.1.3 Parts: In addition to the title, the lecture must comprise the following main parts: introduction, main topic, summary and sources (references). Other parts, such as quizzes or explaining videos (2), can be added.



Fig.1: Rule 5, good contrast of text and background colors.

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1.1.4 Slide Design: This point is fundamental to the design of any talk. Without the ideal design of slides, all other items will be insufficient .

1.1.4.1 Slides Text & Rule 5: (Fig 1) Slides involve words and photos. If these components are badly designed, the slide may be useless. The text size must be consistent with its type (i.e. heading text is larger than the body text and both have the suitable font). The text design must follow (rule 5) which means that the slide must **not contain more than 5 lines** and **each line must not contain more than 5 words**. The data in the slide should present at least reasonable words as explained in **Fig (2)**. This will empower the recipients to easily understand the data and pay full attention to the speaker **(1)**.

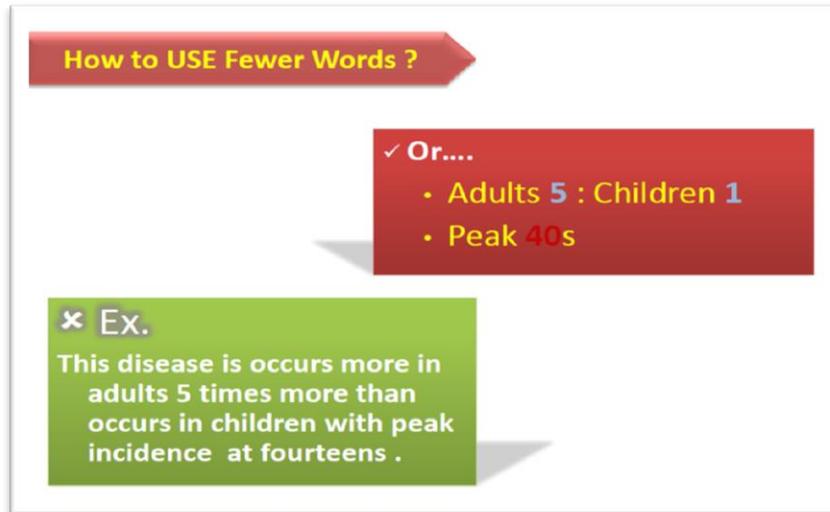


Fig.2: Example of how to use fewer words in the slide. However, Number **40** is an example of **bad contrast** text & background.

1.1.4.2 Slides Colors, Spacing and Alignment

Rule 5 requires good spacing and alignment to be ideal. The five lines must fill the slide rather than being at one side or badly aligned. Text and background color must be of good contrast and against each other to avoid eye strain, e.g. Black text and white background or vice versa - **Fig (3)** . Text, photos and pictures in the slides must be good aligned parallel to each other and of suitable size; not so small or so large exceeding the borders of slide. It must be of good colors contrast and clear details .

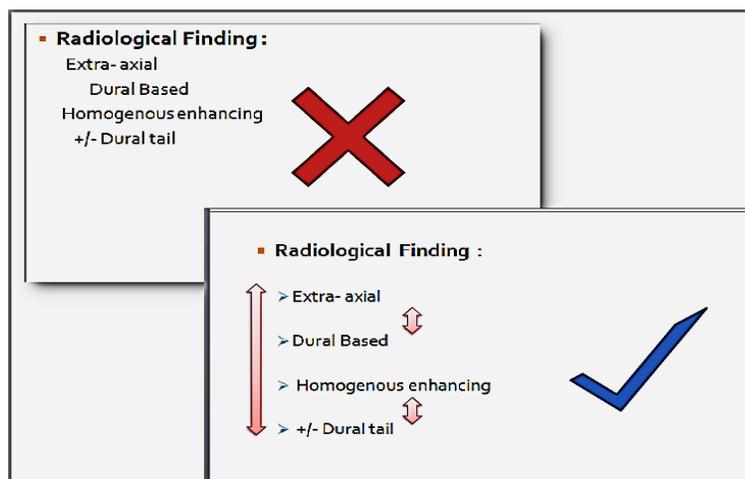


Fig.3: Example of Rule 5 with good and bad spacing.

1.1.4.3 Animations

Animations of slides must attract recipients and never cause disturbance or dissociation. Animation must highlight important data to capture the attention of the recipients.

1.1.4.4 Photos and Words

Presenting information in the form of photo is more informative than words. If the photos are motile (e.g. of GIF extension or short videos), they may be more informative and easily remembered. Even using words must be based on the fewest words number in regular manner. The speaker must adopt spoken more than written words, i.e. not just a reader of the slides .

2 Speaker: How to be Effective

Introducing a talk or a lecture is a talent that is improved by learning and training on the fundamentals of an effective speaker or trainer. These principles are summarized, as follows:

2.1 Voice

The voice of speaker is fundamental, so it must be clear, audible and not monotonous. The adopted language must be appropriate for the recipients' comprehension and scientific level. The tone of the voice has to be modified throughout the lecture of both low (but audible) and high (but not noisy) and to be related to the nature of the data presented, e.g. Dangerous or important data must be loud, clear and attractive (4). This requires more training and experience based on the following saying: Teacher is an actor more than a teacher.

2.2 Eye Contact

The speaker must adopt appropriate eye contact with all recipients and avoid concentrating on some and ignoring the others. Good eye contact is an important factor for capturing the recipients' attention (3) .

2.3 Posture and Motions

The speaker must use all his abilities to deliver the data to recipients. He must use appropriate motions of hands and steps during the presentation. Hand motions must be consistent with the data; for example, when you address the increasing level of something, you will raise your hand, ...etc. Many positions must be avoided during your lecture, especially turning your back to the recipients, crossing arms in front of the chest or putting hands in the pockets of your trouser because these acts create a barrier between the recipients and the presenter. Thus, the lecture will lack the aspects substantial for their attention and better comprehension. Moreover, you have to create consistency between facial gestures and the topic. Further training helps you efficiently apply the principle of: A teacher is an actor more than a teacher is. The effective speaker must like this and not just a lecture or Slides reader (5).

2.4 Other Items

During your lecture, give sufficient short breaks and tell few jokes unrelated to race, religion, disabilities or any non-moral topics to refresh attention (4), control your lecture, never give a continuous permission of interruption for any purposes as discussions or explanations, define a specified time for this after each topic or at the end of your lecture, be familiar with the recipients, smile but in the way that does not interfere with the full control of your lecture and be the speaker and the leader all over the time. The speaker must be the main source of information through clarification not by reading the data written in the slides.

Environment

The environment of the lecture or the topic must be optimized and includes all the surrounding factors, such as place, light, used materials and machines such as microphones, data show or LCDS, air conditioning or even chairs and tables. All these factors must be optimized for better comfort and attention of the recipients. The lecture hall design C or U shape design (Fig 4) is ideal as it involves the best contact of the speaker with all recipients (4).



Fig.4: On the right side, C or U shape lectures hall is a better design than the usual elongated shape design on the left side.

3 Conclusion

Any lecture comprises (3) factors: Topic, speaker and environment. Each factor must be optimized to introduce an effective talk. The lecture must be of ideal design of parts and ideal design of slides following rule 5 and good colors alignment and spacing. The lecture environment must be suitable enough. Speaker must follow instructions and be well-trained to use effective methods of introducing talk using suitable motions, clear words, good contact with recipients and avoid monotonous voice. Finally, the speaker must keep in mind that his/her next talk must be better. In addition, he must learn from his mistakes in every previous lecture. The way to keep continuous progress is to consider that the best has not come yet.

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