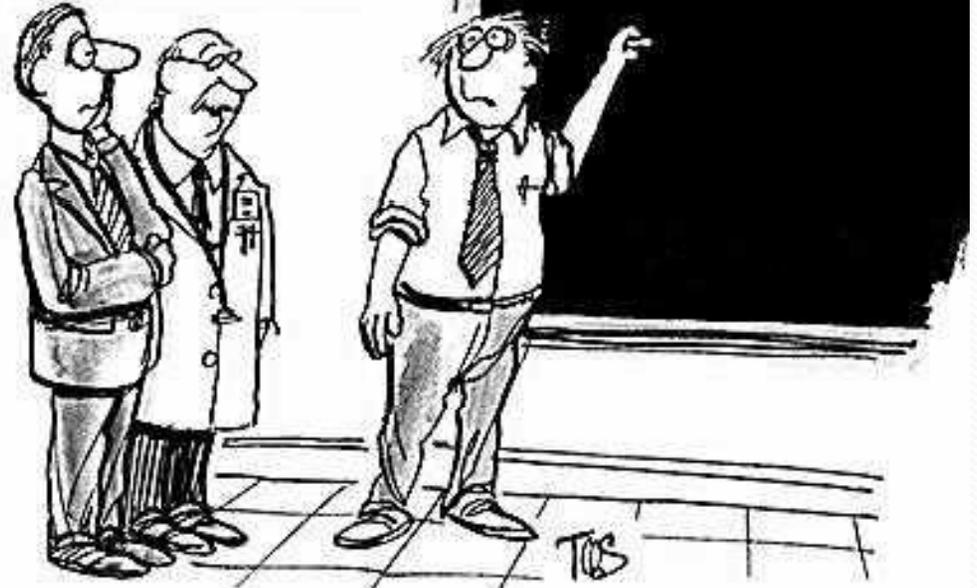


How to Give a Truly Terrible Talk, Briefing, or Workshop

© Original Artist
Reproduction rights obtainable from
www.CartoonStock.com



"It's a clear case of RLS:
Repetitive Lecture Syndrome.

Dwayne Meadows., Ph.D.

DwayneMeadows@msn.com



An homage . . . and update

“Strict adherence to the following time-tested guidelines will ensure that both you and your [agency’s] work [ideas, policies, plans] remain obscure [unconsidered, unused] and will guarantee you an audience of minimum size [a stunted career] at your next talk.”

- . . . Adapted from “Guidelines for giving a truly terrible talk”. EOS 66:812 © 1985, American Geophysical Union.

Guidelines for Giving

a Truly Terrible Talk

Strict adherence to the following time-tested guidelines will ensure that both you and your work remain obscure and will guarantee an audience of minimum size at your next talk. Continuity of effort may result in being awarded the coveted 5:00 P.M. Friday speaking time at the next national meeting.



Slides

1. Use lots of slides. A rule of thumb is one slide for each 10 seconds of time allotted for your talk. If you don't have enough, bor-

6. Use up all of your allotted time and at least half, if not all, of the next speaker's. This avoids foolish and annoying questions and forces the chairman to ride herd on the following speakers. Remember, the rest of the speakers don't have anything important to say anyway. If they had, they would have been assigned times earlier than yours.

If the above doesn't suit your style or goals, then perhaps the following alternate guidelines will be more useful.

Make a Better Presentation

dropped or become disarranged. Come a few minutes before the start of the session to give the projectionist time to arrange your slides for presentation.

10. If flying to the meeting, hand carry slides on board so that they don't get lost if baggage goes astray.

11. An introductory and concluding slide can much improve the focus of your talk.

Tables

1. Do not use more than three or four vertical columns; six to eight horizontal lines. Any more and the information will not be readable.

2. Do not use ruled vertical or horizontal lines. They distract the eye and clutter the slide.

1. Never, ever, EVER, practice,even briefly

- You might actually know what you are going to say and say it
- You might actually finish within the allotted time

Then what will your audience talk about afterwards?

- Talks are best when they arise spontaneously and in random order. Leave it as an exercise for the listener to assemble your thoughts properly and make some sense out of what you say.

2. Never, ever, outline your presentation

- If your audience knows where you are going they:
 - might be better prepared to ask you **difficult, annoying** questions
- You might actually finish within the allotted time

Tell 'em what you will say, say it, tell 'em what you said



3. Use **lots** of PowerPoint slides

- A rule of thumb is one every 10 seconds. Otherwise
 - your audience will be able to read everything on them
 - and may have time to think about the implications

And we all know where that leads . .

As a general rule, one slide for each 1 **or** 2 minutes of presentation is **ALL** that will be effective.

3. Use **lots** of PowerPoint slides

- A rule of thumb is one every 10 seconds. Otherwise
 - your audience will be able to read everything on them
 - and may have time to think about the implications

And we all know where that leads . . . **REALLY!**

As a general rule, one slide for each 1 **or** 2 minutes of presentation is **ALL** that will be effective.

$$\frac{\partial(*\phi)}{\partial t} + d * (\phi\vec{u})^b = 0$$

4. USE EVERY SINGLE INCH OF SPACE

- 3-Dimensional graphs with dozens of crossing lines
- Tables with at least 100 entries and lots of footnotes
- Maps with 20 - 30 data layers with North at the bottom
- Flow/SWOT diagrams that look like a corn maze

Are all incredibly effective at using up that pesky white space (and gray matter) that beckons like a siren

- Equations, especially with at least 15 terms, 20 variables, and squiggly symbols with numbers on top of each other are even better

$$\int \frac{dx}{x^n \sqrt{ax+b}} = -\frac{\sqrt{ax+b}}{(n-1)bx^{n-1}} - \frac{(2n-3)a}{(2n-2)b} \int \frac{dx}{x^{n-1}\sqrt{ax+b}}$$

One or more of these techniques will definitely preempt any discussion of your presentation or thoughts



4. USE EVERY SINGLE INCH OF SPACE

- Devote each illustration to a single fact, idea, or finding.
- Illustrate major points or trends, not detailed data.
- Each illustration should remain on the screen **at least** 20 seconds.
- Use the **absolute minimum** number of words in titles, subtitles, and captions.

4. USE EVERY SINGLE INCH OF SPACE

- 3-D affects peoples perceptions of reality and can confuse the scale and relative differences of data.
- Viewers cannot process more than 3-4 columns or 8 lines of a table in the time the slide will be visible.
- Do not use ruled vertical or horizontal lines. They contract the eye and clutter the slide.





5. Use really tiny font

- It really amuses your audience, and really
- Anyone who has not had the foresight to either sit in the front row or bring a set of binoculars is probably not smart enough to understand you anyway.



5. Use really tiny font

- It really amuses your audience, and really
- Anyone who has not had the foresight to either sit in the front row or bring a set of binoculars is probably not smart enough to understand you anyway.

Science, Service, Stewardship

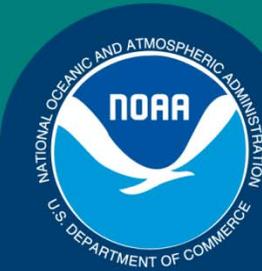


**6. Put your logo up top
so the meat of your
presentation has to go
at the bottom where
nobody can see it**

**NOAA
FISHERIES
SERVICE**

NOAA

Science, Service, Stewardship



7. Put the fancy graphics your employer paid a marketing company through the nose for up top so everyone can see it. (Who really cares if the meat of your presentation has to go at the bottom where nobody can see it—you are not paid as well)

You read right to left right?



10. Make sure at least 1 slide is out of order

- It relieves tension in the room
- And gives everyone a much needed break from your monotonous voice

In the era of computer projectors instead of 35mm slides you would think this is just a quaint memory, but it is so much easier to use a presentation over again for a new audience and just skip over the slides you don't need

9. Recycle material from old presentations



- It probably wasn't appropriate for the last presentation anyway
- you have a 50:50 shot it will be appropriate this time around, right?
- Besides, you can just make excuses for anything not relevant to this talk and a little extra background never hurts!

The President, CEO, Administrator, Director isn't really going to notice anyway

11. Face the screen or your feet and mumble rapidly

- This is especially helpful while making key points.
- Alternatively, speak very slowly, leave every other sentence uncompleted, and punctuate each thought with "ahhh," "ummm," or something equally informative.

It is a really fun game to count umm's during a presentation



12. Wave the laser pointer around the room or shake it vigorously

- If this is done properly, it will make 50% of the people in the front three rows (and those with binoculars) sick.

The other 50% will be hypnotized by the motion



13. Use up all of your allotted time & at least 1/2 of the next speaker's.

- Remember, the rest of the speakers don't have anything important to say anyway.
- If they had, they would have been assigned times earlier than yours.
- It assures leadership will choose your idea



See suggestion #3....

Practice . .(what's that cliché again??)

14. Use every single technological gizmo or PowerPoint gimmick

- It intimidates, fools, or dazzles your audience into thinking you know what you are talking about
- It impresses them with how hip you are and how well you know the software

Even Better . . .



- *Use the most beautiful, ornate, flowery font you can.*

What was I trying to accomplish again?



15. Use **red** and **green** to highlight key differences, data points, and so on

- You like Christmas so why not remember it all year long?
- Who really cares if 8% of males and 0.5% of females (or more if your audience is scientists) in your audience are color blind?

Use **VisCheck.com** to see how your presentation looks to people with color blindness.



Or?



16. Never ever check out the presentation room in advance

- You are so dynamic the environment is irrelevant
- Lighting and contrast with your slides
- Dimming ability
- Distance ok for your slide font and voice?
- Screen Height
- Acoustics



17. Use at least 3 fallacies of critical thinking. Some favorites:

- Use **jargon** to make something sound true/ scientific
- **Rationalize failures** or contradictory information
- Use coincidence as evidence
- *Ad ignorantium*: no evidence is not evidence against
- **Arguments from authority**
- **Circular reasoning**
- *Post hoc, ergo proper hoc*: it happened after, so it was caused by. .

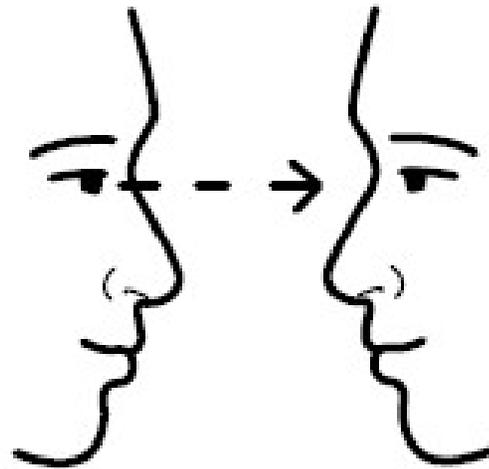
18. Look like you are dancing during your presentation

- You never know when you might be spotted by a reality TV talent scout!
- If you don't want to dance, feel free to practice drumming your fingers or tapping your toes or any other entertaining habit you have



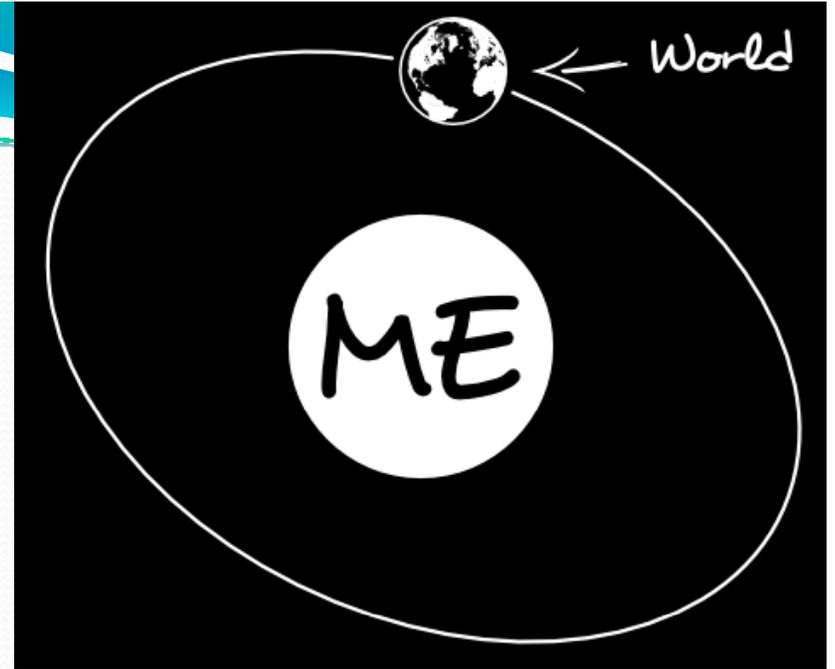
19. Never make eye contact with your audience

- They might see the whites of your eyes
- Reading your slide or notes means your talk will be perfect

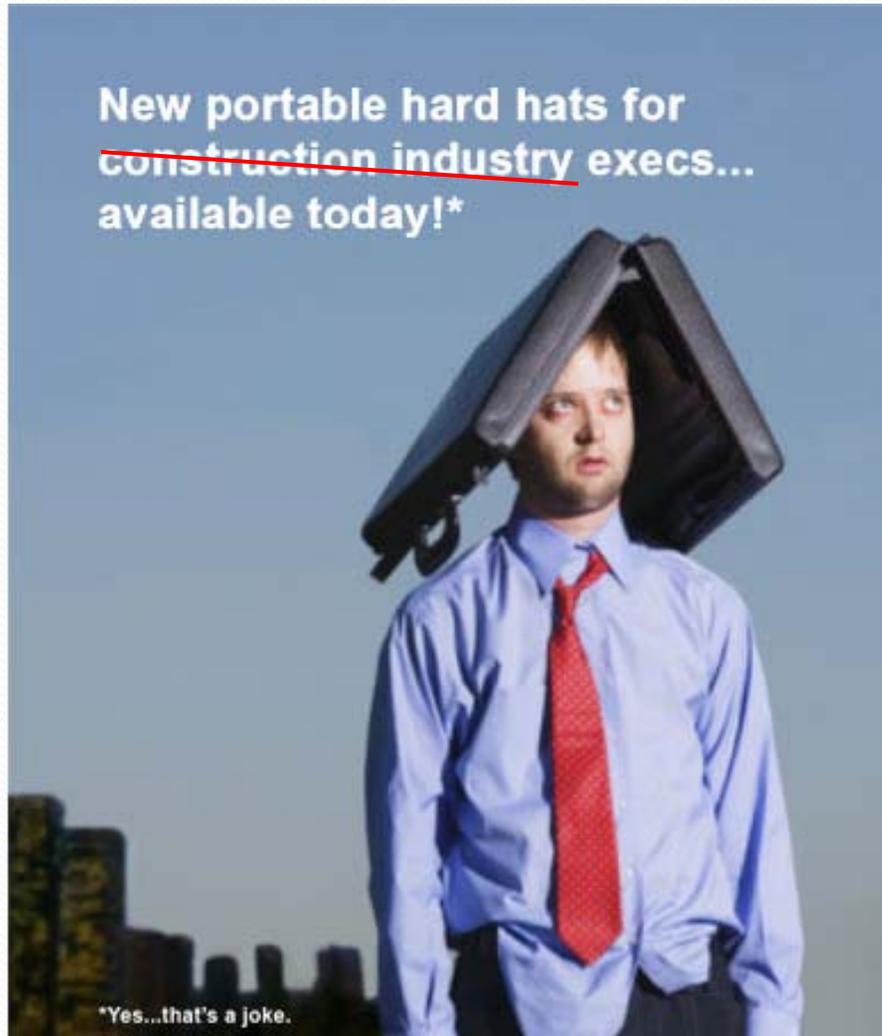


20. Know thyself

- It is all about you
- Know your audience:
 - Background
 - Knowledge
 - Biases



Humor is your enemy



THANK YOU