TIPS ON ORAL PRESENTATIONS

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TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR SPOTLIGHT!
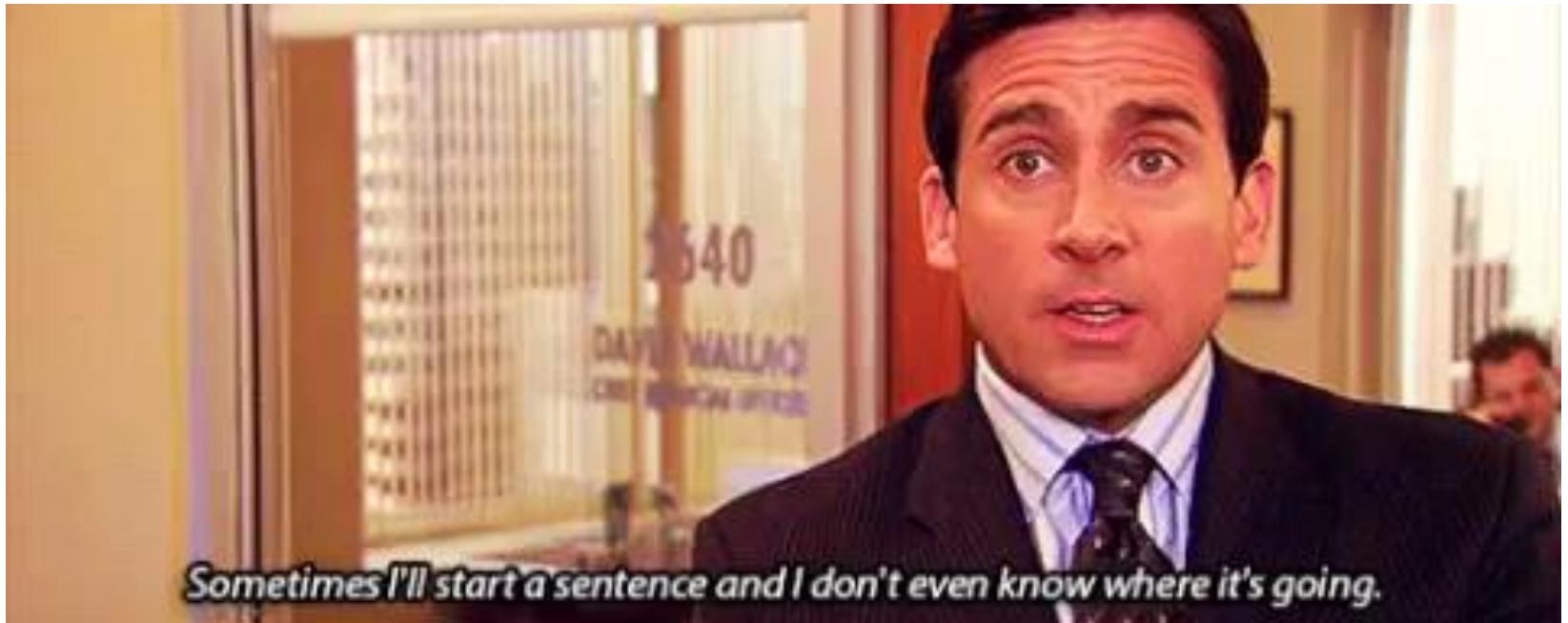
MAIN MESSAGE?

- Be selective to help your audience!

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR SPOTLIGHT!

- Effective communication is = getting your message across

- Information is the answer to the question What?
  - (as in "What did you find in your research?")

- Message is the answer to the question So what?
  - (as in "What do your findings mean to your audience?").

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THINK LIKE THE ~~READER~~ ATTENDEE

- Readers can select what they read and when they read it

- Readers can read at their own rhythm, and they can reread parts of the document as many times as they wish

- Written documents
  - convince your audience through solid, detailed evidence
  - Structure this evidence to enable selective reading.

- Attendees at presentation cannot select what they listen to or in what order they listen to it.

- Attendees usually less interested in details (they could more easily read in a document)

- On the other hand, they can get to know you and can interact with you through questions or discussion.

- In oral presentations, you convince an audience by
  - selecting cogent arguments
  - articulating them logically
  - delivering them effectively.

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THINK LIKE THE ~~READER~~ ATTENDEE

- When oral presentation builds on a written document
  - e.g conference presentation with a paper in the proceedings,
  - e.g. a Ph.D. defense,
  - e.g. a grant interview etc.

- Must be much more *selective* in your presentation than in your document

- Avoid saying out loud everything that you have already put in writing!

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- Structure

- Creating slides

- Delivering Presentation

- Answering Questions

STRUCTURE – ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- Similar to scientific papers
  - Share research with others
  - Must convince audience research presented is important, valid, and relevant *to them*
  - Thus must emphasize *motivation* and *outcome*
  - Must present enough evidence to establish validity of outcome

STRUCTURE — ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- Unlike scientific papers
  - More localized in space and time
  - Imposed sequence and rhythm for audience
  - Normally include some level of interaction.

- These three differences affect the selection of a presentation's content

STRUCTURE – ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- More localized in space and time
  - More defined audience – people in the room
  - Papers can be forwarded – and thus need to be self contained
  - Presentation more specific purpose (dependent on venue, audience, etc.)

STRUCTURE – ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- Imposed sequence and rhythm
  - Papers can be read in any order by reader
  - Presentation sequence imposed -> harder to follow
  - Therefore should be more selective in what they contain

- Written documents are for convincing with detailed evidence

- Oral presentations are for convincing with delivery
  - Verbal
  - Nonverbal

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STRUCTURE – ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- Interaction
  - Opportunity for additional information
  - Selective in main presentation – more in question and answer
  - Prepare and anticipate questions and answers

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STRUCTURE – ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- Order of ideas
  - Even more than paper – ok to break chronology of reporting research
  - Instead of order research was done – get main message across in theorem-proof fashion
  - State this message early and then evidence to support
  - Identifying main message = key to being selective

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STRUCTURE – THE OPENING

- Opening similar to Introduction in paper
  - Context, need, task, and objective.

- Context
  - Best replaced by an *attention getter*
    - Get attention
    - Link topic to what audience knows (more audience specific)

- Objective
  - Best called *preview*
    - Outlines body of presentation
    - Aim still same as for document – prepare audience for structure of body

- The message
  - *Main message* just before preview
  - one sentence you want audience to remember
  - State this message early and then evidence to support

STRUCTURE – THE OPENING

- Attention getter

- Need

- Task

- Main message

- Preview

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STRUCTURE – THE BODY

- Think of it as a tree (hierarchy) rather than sequence

- Main points
  - Think of (max 5) statements to support main argument

- Subpoints
  - Think of (2-5) statements to support each main point

- Together (main and subpoints) – about as much detail audience can support

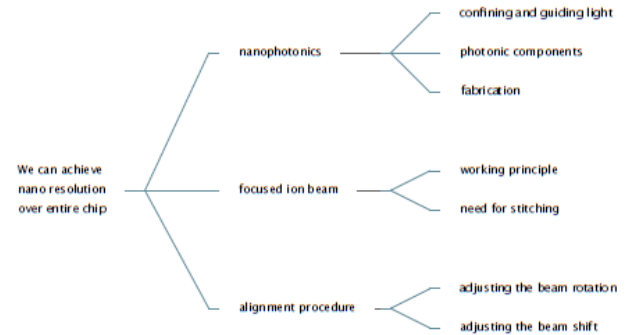# STRUCTURE – THE BODY

- Example: Marie outline

STRUCTURE — THE BODY

Marie's outline

Main message	Main points	Subpoints

nanophotonics
- confining and guiding light
- photonic components
- fabrication

We can achieve nano resolution over entire chip

focused ion beam
- working principle
- need for stitching

alignment procedure
- adjusting the beam rotation
- adjusting the beam shift

From a 10-minute PhD-day presentation on
Automated alignment procedure
for stitching with a focused ion beam,
by Marie Verbist (Universiteit Gent)

© 2010 Nature Education   You can watch this presentation on www.scitable.com

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STRUCTURE – THE BODY

- Even if body is thought of as tree
  - You will still *deliver* in sequence

- Sequence for main and subpoints
  - Organize logical progression
  - Reveal sequence logic to audience with good transitions

- Usually strongest arguments
  - First and last

- Usually weakest arguments
  - Middle

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STRUCTURE — THE CLOSING

- A review
  - Main points from body
  - Prepare for conclusion

- A conclusion
  - Restate main message
  - Now in more detail as the audience has heard arguments
  - Complement with any other interpretations

- A close
  - Indicate elegantly and unambiguously that these are your last words

PRESENTATION SLIDES

- Presentation is not a "set of slides"

- Presentation is about someone having something to say to an audience (you don't need slides)

- More important for presentation
  - Planning
  - Structuring
  - Delivering it well

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PRESENTATION SLIDES

- Slides serve to
  - make presentation tasks mentioned easier
  - i.e. get message across in a visual way

- Slides are for the audience
  - Should not be memory aid for speaker
  - You can use other tools for that (notes, etc.)
  - Slides "designed for speaker"
    - Overcrowded
    - Cryptic

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PRESENTATION SLIDES

- Slides get message across
  - Short sentences stating message

- Slides are visual aids
  - Audience can't read long text and listen at once
  - Be as visual as possible
  - Make sure material can stand on its own

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DELIVERING ORAL PRESENTATION

- Verbal: what you say

- Vocal: how you say it

- Visual: everything the audience sees about you

- For all three: Maximise signal to noise ratio!

DELIVERING ORAL PRESENTATION

- Verbal

- Don't write down and memorize / read

- Memorize outline (tree structure etc)

- Speak ex tempore – "reinvent" words as you go

DELIVERING ORAL PRESENTATION

- Vocal

- Vary tone, volume etc as function of
  - Meaning
  - Complexity
  - Importance

- Your way of speaking
  - Don't reinvent
  - Amplify

DELIVERING ORAL PRESENTATION

- Visually

- Control body
    - Stable
    - Confident

- Establish eye contact

- Engage audience

- Always address audience

- Anticipate slides

DELIVERING ORAL PRESENTATION

- As non-native speaker

- Imperfect language is more engaging for audience than memorized polished (less spontaneous) speech

- Practice
  - Identify missing vocabulary etc.
  - Key technical terms
  - Express ideas more fluently
  - Get feedback

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DELIVERING ORAL PRESENTATION

- As non-native speaker

- Pace yourself
  - Don't feel pressure because of language
  - May need to speak slower to be understood

- Support spoken with appropriate slides
  - Slides that are self contained
  - Use slides as visual aids

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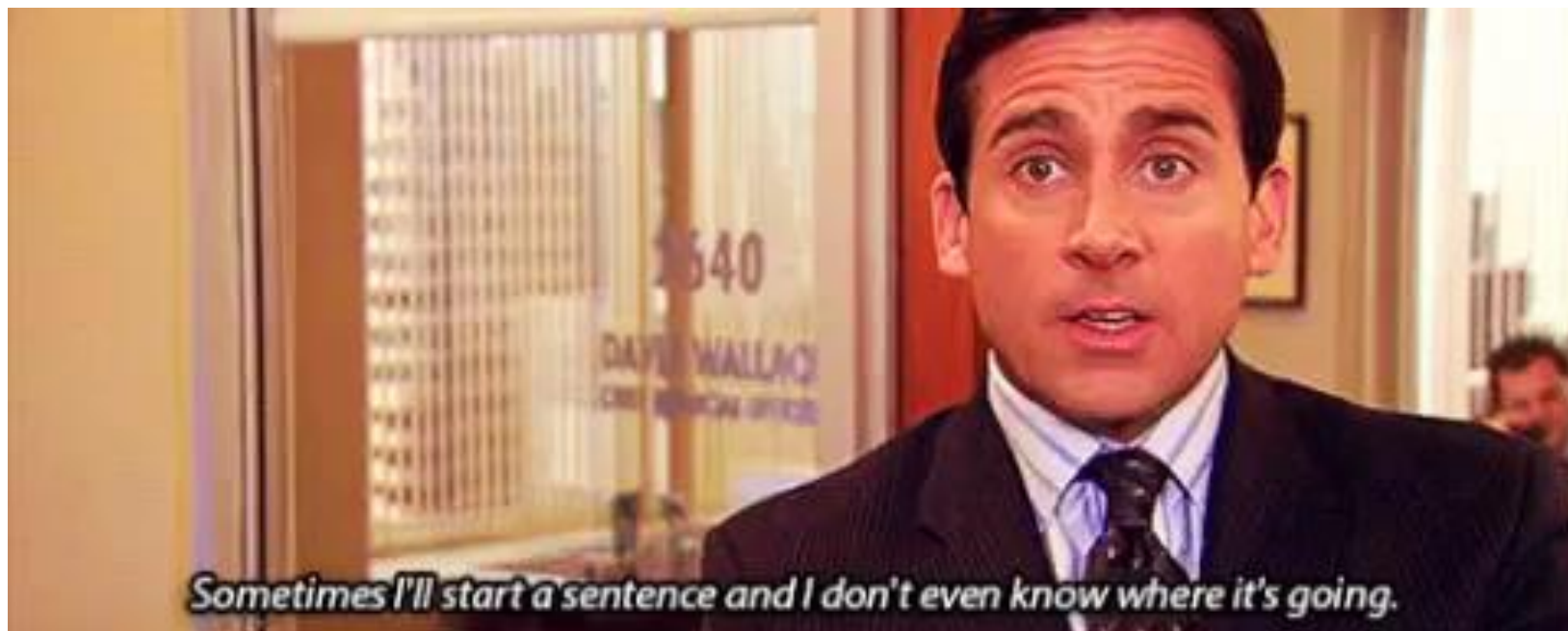Le génie pour l'industrie

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ANSWERING QUESTIONS

- Great opportunity to reinforce main message

- Anticipate questions
  - E.g. details not part of main presentation
  - Get feedback from colleagues on possible questions
  - Possibly create extra slides

- Don't rush to answer questions
  - Make sure you understand (can repeat)
  - Make sure other attendees understand (can rephrase)
  - Take time to construct concise, to-the-point answer

- Most situations attendees not asking questions as "an exam"
  - Do what you can to help audience understand

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THINK OF THE AUDIENCE — BE SELECTIVE!

RÉFÉRENCES / REFERENCES

- http://gph.is/1O3fSfG Michael from The Office

- https://www.nature.com/scitable/ebooks/english-communication-for-scientists-14053993/giving-oral-presentations-14239332 The presentation's content and structure is taken wholly from this source. The source has more elaborate explanations, examples, and other sections on scientific communication worth exploring.

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