

Making Good Presentations

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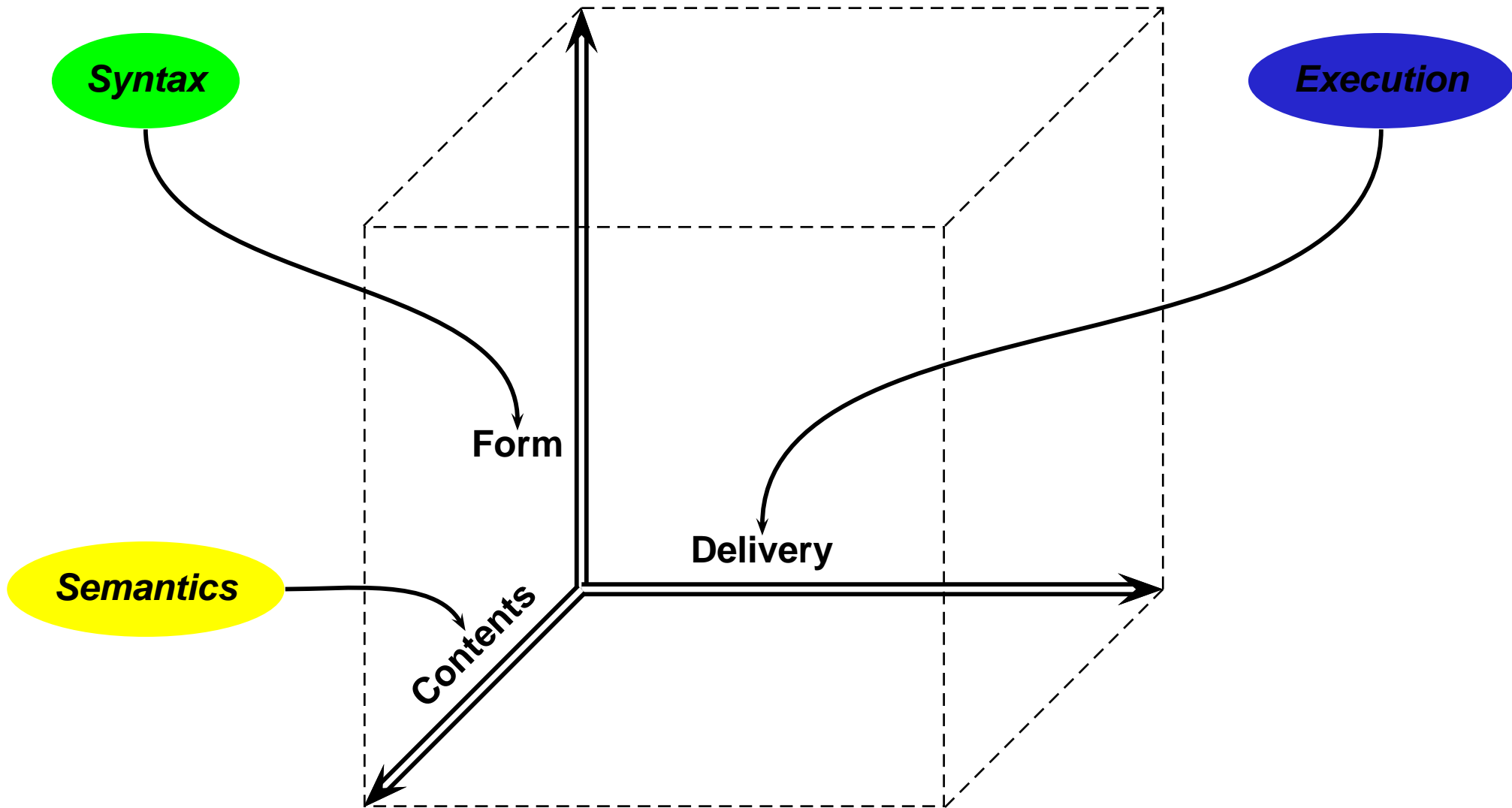
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Outline and Scope

- Many kinds of Presentations :
Sales, Motivational, Technical
- Many forms of presentations :
Narratives, Descriptive, Analytical, Persuasive
- Elements of Good Presentations
 - Form
 - Content
 - Delivery

Constituents of a Good Presentation



Form = Structure = Syntax = Organisation

- Tell them what you are going to tell them
- Tell them
- Tell them what you told them

Form = Structure = Syntax = Organisation

- Tell them what you are going to tell them :
Opening (15% to 20% Max)
- Tell them :
Middle (65% to 75%)
- Tell them what you told them :
Ending (10% to 15%)

Opening (15% to 20%)

Set the expectations right

- Topic : Theme of the talk
- Outline : Plan of the talk
- Introduction : Motivation, Perspective, Scope, and Focus

Introduction (Around 15%)

- Motivation :
Why is the talk important/relevant?
Why is the talk of interest to you? To the audience?
- Perspective : How does it fit in the larger scheme of things?
- Scope : What are the things you restrict yourself to?
- Focus : What is the key idea?

How About This Introduction?

“We worked in Computer Science. We proved some theorems. Some were big, some were small. Big theorems had big proof, small theorems had small proofs. We tried to connect the proofs to the theorems. Sometimes we succeeded, sometimes we didn’t. By then, the time for this talk had arrived, so here I am . . .”

Based on “*How to Have Your Abstract Rejected*” by M. Leunen and R. Lipton
<http://www.acm.org/sigplan/conferences/author-info/vanLeunenLipton.html>

Middle (65% to 75%)

Development of the key idea(s)

- Origin of the idea : Observations/experiments/puzzles/mysteries
- Evolution of the idea : Gradual movement across levels of abstractions
 - False starts, interesting dead ends,
 - Difficulties encountered/overcome/succumbed to,
 - Rays of hope/light at the end of the tunnel

Keep relating to the key idea(s).

Ending (10% to 15%)

Conclusions

- Important observations
- Lessons learnt : Your opinions on the matter
- Unanswered questions, open issues
- Future direction of work

Planning Your Contents

- Know your subject well.
- Know you audience well.
- Know the expectations of the audience well.
- Anticipate questions.

Planning Your Contents

- Good contents have the following characteristics
 - Relevance
 - Precision
 - Clarity
 - Coherence
 - Simplicity
 - Accessibility.

Anticipating Questions

- Recall the difficulties which you faced in understanding
- Extend the core ideas in all possible directions.

Most of these extensions are obvious.

Eg. “These conditions are necessary for . . .”

Are they also sufficient?

Anticipating Questions

Useful Tips:

- Explore symmetry :
Eg. Forward/Backward, True/False, Necessary/Sufficient, Some/All, Push/Pull, Static/Dynamic, etc.
- Explore Generality : Which specific details can be omitted?
Eg. Generalized theory of data flow analysis?
- Compare and Contrast : Identify relevant parameters of comparison
Eg. Efficiency/Complexity, Simplicity, Verifiability, Goodness of Solution, Applicability.
- Categorise.

Contents : DOs and DON'Ts

- Don't hide behind the symbols/formulae/definitions.
Bring out the intuition/meaning clearly.
No place for symbols/formulae/definitions in the introduction
Unless they are standard conventions ...

Contents : DOs and DON'Ts

- Don't throw a lot of information. Present knowledge
Information : Collection of Facts
Knowledge : Co-relation between Facts

Contents : DOs and DON'Ts

- Don't merely present the knowledge contained in your references/sources. Present your understanding of what the references/sources have to say . . . and a justification why it is relevant/meaningful.

Contents : DOs and DON'Ts

- Use abstractions/analogies skillfully
Don't give too many details.
- Use examples liberally
- Use pictures

Contents : DOs and DON'Ts

- Distinguish between opinions and facts

In a technical talk, the only place for opinions, most often, is in conclusions.

Contents : DOs and DON'Ts

- No sales talk :

Limitations, Unknowns, Uncertainties are important and must be stated clearly and precisely.

- Bring out relevance/importance realistically.

- Practical application
- Theoretical significance
- Aesthetics/beauty/simplicity

Delivery

Objectives : Engage the audience

- Presentation aids
- Voice Modulation
- Movement
- General Interaction

Practice is the key to good delivery

Presentation Aids

- White/Chalk Boards
- OHP, Transperancies
Handwritten/Printed? Covering/Overlays? Placement Marking? Details?
- Data Projector - Animations? Details?
- Slide Projector
- Handouts
- Pointer
- Microphone(s)

Completeness of Preparation

- Have examples/derivations etc. ready.
Show them step by step to the extent possible.
Common mistake : Working out examples on board.
Do so only for the issues raised by the audience.
- Readiness has two advantages:
 - Saves times
 - Makes a big impression

“Having Thought” is certainly better than “Thinking Online”

Voice Modulation

- Emphasis, Pauses, Suspense

Movement

- Beginning of an important point : Go close to the board
- End of an important point : Go close to the audience
- Any interaction with the audience : Go close

General Interaction

Should be Open, Warm, and Positive.

- Eye Contact
- Handling Questions

Practice

Take the help of a friend to

- Note the time required for each slide
- Identify repetitious, awkward phrases

How to Achieve Confidence?

- Prepare well and then fake confidence, if necessary

Conclusions

Making good presentations is easy. You need to have

- Confidence
- Knowledge of what you know and what you don't
- Awareness of the elements of good presentations
 - Form
 - Contents
 - Delivery

Just Plan and Practice!

Thank You

Useful URL

<http://www.support4learning.org.uk/jobsearch/interviews.htm#Presentations>