How to Give a Talk

Gil Chu
The Eightfold Way

1. Don’t talk without a message
2. Don’t use fancy backgrounds
3. Don’t rely on abbreviations
4. Don’t show too much
5. Don’t muddy the slide
6. Don’t muddy the message
7. Don’t talk without rehearsing
8. Don’t talk to the slides
1. Don’t talk without a message

• Provide take home messages
• Guide them with sign posts
2. Don’t use fancy backgrounds

Fuggetaboutit
3. Don’t rely on abbreviations
4. Don’t show too much

Eliminate the extraneous

Table 3.—Prevalence of Ghost Authors by Journal and Type of Article

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>No. of Articles</th>
<th>Total Articles With Ghost Authors, No. (%)</th>
<th>Research Articles With Ghost Authors*</th>
<th>Review Articles With Ghost Authors*</th>
<th>Editorials With Ghost Authors*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Journal of Cardiology</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>13 (9)</td>
<td>10/112 (9)</td>
<td>2/15 (13)</td>
<td>1/7 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Journal of Medicine</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>15 (13)</td>
<td>3/30 (10)</td>
<td>12/73 (16)</td>
<td>0/10 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>13 (10)</td>
<td>9/94 (10)</td>
<td>3/16 (19)</td>
<td>1/14 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annals of Internal Medicine</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>16 (15)</td>
<td>12/59 (20)</td>
<td>3/29 (10)</td>
<td>1/14 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAMA</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>14 (7)</td>
<td>11/114 (10)</td>
<td>2/60 (3)</td>
<td>1/19 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New England Journal of Medicine</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>22 (16)</td>
<td>20/76 (26)</td>
<td>1/46 (2)</td>
<td>1/13 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>93 (11)</td>
<td>65/485 (13)</td>
<td>23/239 (10)</td>
<td>5/77 (6)</td>
</tr>
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*Data expressed as number of articles with ghost authors/number of surveys returned for each type of article for each journal, followed by percentage of articles with ghost authors.
4. Don’t show too much

Eliminate the extraneous

Prevalence of ghost authors

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Flanagin et al. JAMA 1998; 372:2509-20
4. Don’t show too much

*Everyone hates a time hog*

2 minutes per slide

*Can’t delete a slide?*

Put it after a blank slide at the end
4. Don’t show too much

Ernest Hemingway
_Death in the Afternoon_

“If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water.”
5. Don’t muddy the slide

They sleep when overwhelmed
5. Don’t muddy the slide
5. Don’t muddy the slide

Take a LARGE screenshot of the PDF
5. Don’t muddy the slide

*Add legible labels*

Training Set of 95 Tumors

Genes Associated with Favorable Prognosis
6. Don’t muddy the message
What’s the take-home message?

Apollo

• Mutant cells with defects in mating are restored by expressing Apollo
• Fishing for Apollo also catches Daphne
• Fishing for Daphne also catches Apollo
• Homologous to Daphne

Blue (bad) ⇔ Black (ok) ⇔ Green (good)
6. Don’t muddy the message

Apollo activates mating

- Mutant cells with defects in mating are restored by expressing Apollo
- Fishing for Apollo also catches Daphne
- Fishing for Daphne also catches Apollo
- Homologous to Daphne

Blue (bad) ↔ Black (ok) ↔ Green (good)
6. Don’t muddy the message

Can you make passive into active tense?

Apollo activates mating

- Mutant cells with defects in mating are restored by expressing Apollo
- Fishing for Apollo also catches Daphne
- Fishing for Daphne also catches Apollo
- Homologous to Daphne

Blue (bad) ↔ Black (ok) ↔ Green (good)
6. Don’t muddy the message

Apollo activates mating

- Apollo restores mating-defective cells
- Fishing for Apollo also catches Daphne
- Fishing for Daphne also catches Apollo
- Homologous to Daphne

Blue (bad) ⟷ Black (ok) ⟷ Green (good)
6. Don’t muddy the message

Can you remove stuff?

Apollo activates mating

- Apollo restores mating-defective cells
- Fishing for Apollo also catches Daphne
- Fishing for Daphne also catches Apollo
- Homologous to Daphne

Blue (bad) ⇔ Black (ok) ⇔ Green (good)
6. Don’t muddy the message

Apollo activates mating

• Apollo restores mating-defective cells
• Apollo interacts with Daphne
• Homologous to Daphne

Blue (bad) ↔ Black (ok) ↔ Green (good)
6. Don’t muddy the message

Can you construct items the same way?

Apollo activates mating

- Apollo restores mating-defective cells
- Apollo interacts with Daphne
- Homologous to Daphne

Blue (bad) ⇄ Black (ok) ⇄ Green (good)
Apollo activates mating

- Restores mating-defective cells
- Interacts with Daphne
- Shares homology with Daphne

Blue (bad) ⟷ Black (ok) ⟷ Green (good)
6. Don’t muddy the message
A picture is worth a thousand words

Apollo activates mating

- Restores mating-defective cells
- Interacts with Daphne
- Shares homology with Daphne

Blue (bad) ↔ Black (ok) ↔ Green (good)
6. Don’t muddy the message
A picture lets you say more in fewer words

Apollo activates mating

- Interacts with Daphne
- Impels her to change

Blue (bad) ⟷ Black (ok) ⟷ Green (good)
Apollo

- Mutant cells with defects in mating are restored by expressing Apollo
- Fishing for Apollo also catches Daphne
- Fishing for Daphne also catches Apollo
- Homologous to Daphne

Blue (bad) ⟷ Black (ok) ⟷ Green (good)
7. Don’t talk without rehearsing

- Try your talk on friends
- Show up early to test the hardware
- Use PDF slides for on-site computers

BE
PREPARED
NOT
SCARED
8. Don’t talk to the slides

*The rhetorical triangle*

- **speaker**
- **audience**
- **message**
8. Don’t talk to the slides

*Break out of slide prison*

Use active learning

Hit the B or W key
The message

LESS IS MORE
The Golden Rule

*Talk as you wish others talked to you*

What do you wish for?
The Golden Rule

*Talk as you wish others talked to you*

- Speak clearly
- Tell stories
- Exploit active learning
- Repeat questions