

How to make a more engaging talk

Henry Sinclair-Banks' Public Speaking Workshop



Professional Skills in Computer Science 2025, MIMUW, Poland

17th October 2025

Overview

1 – Soft Skills

+ two “table topic” exercises

2 – Slideshow Basics

3 – Self Improvement

+ questions for practise talks

Use Your Voice

Speak loudly

Speak slowly

Be expressive

Eye Contact

Don't avoid everyone's eyes!

Don't fixate on one person!

Try the *figure-of-eight* pattern

Positioning and Movement

Don't stand behind your laptop

Move from side to side

Body Language and Gesticulation

Assume an open stance

Move your arms!

Imagine silently describing your ideas

Table Topic 1: Gesticulation Sharades

Get into groups of at most four.

You will each be given a list of adjectives.

You have to silently act them out.

Move onto the next person when guessed correctly.

Order: A1, B1, C1, D1, A2, B2, ...

Personableness

Be kind to the audience

Tell us a joke! (sometimes)

Story Telling

“Your audience members are log-space machines”

Tell simple stories

Repeat important points thrice

Recap

1 – Soft Skills ✓

Use your voice

Share eye contact

Move around

Gesticulate

Show personality

Tell simple stories

Recap

1 – Soft Skills ✓

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2 – Slideshow Basics

3 – Self Improvement

Know Your Slides

Never read off your slides

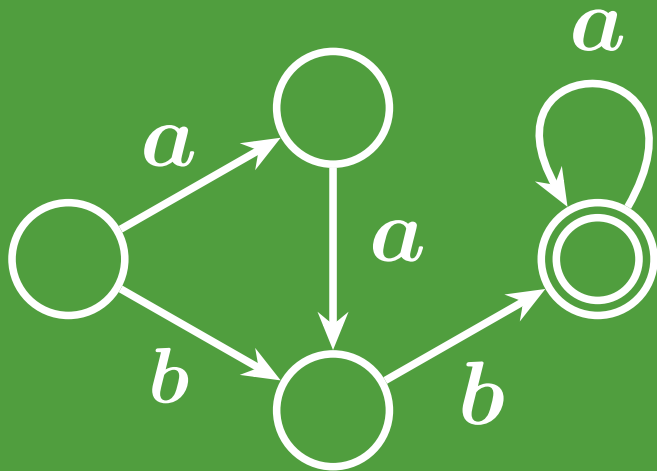
Always simplify your slides

Try different methods to remember

One Point Per Slide

Less is More

Pictures > nothing > unnecessary text



vs

Let $\mathcal{A} = (\Sigma, Q, \delta, q_i, F)$
be an automaton...

Title Slides are Important



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LICS'25: Seminar Room 1

25th June 2025

School of Computing, National University of Singapore, Singapore

Conclusion Slides are also Important

Don't use a blank “Thank you!” slide

Write down the main takeaways

Make it obvious when the audience should clap!

Overview & Recaps Slides

“Tell them what you are going to say”

“Say it”

“Tell them what you said”

Recap

1 – Soft Skills ✓

2 – Slideshow Basics ✓

Know your slides

One point per slide

Less is more

Title and conclusion slides are important

Do recaps ;)

Recap

1 – Soft Skills ✓

2 – Slideshow Basics ✓

Know your slides One point per slide Less is more
Title and conclusion slides are important Do recaps ;)

3 – Self Improvement

Easy Option: Practice Presentations

Present to at least 2 people

Make your audience give you feedback

Try giving your talk to a “outside friend”

Intermediate Option: Record Yourself

Record both practice and “live” presentations

Watch them back!

Identify one weakness to improve on

Hard Option: Try Public Speaking

Well done for being here!

Table Topic 2: Tone of Voice

Get into groups of at most four.

You will each be given a scenario and a tone.

You will deliver a “talk” for at most three minutes.

At the end the group guesses your tone.

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Example

**You are the mayor opening a new tram line
and you are *anxious*.**

Public Speaking Practise

- 1) What is the toughest phone call you've had?
- 2) Should humans colonise Mars?
- 3) Should access to the internet for children be limited?
- 4) Do you think żabka should be open on Sundays?
- 5) Explain a goal you would like to achieve within the next year.
- 6) What is one major change would you make to MIMUW?
- 7) If you had a time machine, when and where would you go?
- 8) Tell us about something that really annoyed you recently.

How to make a more engaging talk

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Show personality

Tell a simple story

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Title and conclusion slides are important

Do recaps

3 – Self Improvement

Practise, Practise, Practise

Record yourself

Do more public speaking

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Thank you!

Presented by Henry Sinclair-Banks, University of Warsaw, Poland 

Public Speaking Workshop, Professional Skills in Computer Science 2025, MIMUW, Poland 