

Graduate Seminar on Oral Presentation of Scientific Information

Fall Semester, 2012
National Taiwan University, Psychology Department

Instructor:

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Class Time: 9:10 –to 12:10 Tuesday; One three-hour meeting per week

Class location: South Building, SB 16; (basement room on the right)

Teaching Assistant:

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Criteria for admission: Psychology graduate students, and highly qualified undergraduate psychology majors can enroll. Enrollment is limited to 12 participants. On the first day of class participants will fill out a form and then Professor Woodward and the TAs will select the 12 students who are most qualified.

Introduction

Learning to make oral presentations of scientific information requires guidance and practice with non-threatening constructive feedback, so procedural knowledge can be acquired gradually in a supportive environment.

Goals

- 1) The immediate goal is to improve the participant's skill at oral presentation of scientific information, such as a research project or thesis.
- 2) The long range goal is to teach participants how to continue improving their oral presentation skills after the seminar is completed.

Organization of the seminar

The seminar uses deliberate practice to improve oral presentations skills:

- 1) Guided practice of oral presentations tasks that are beyond the ability of participants, and lie outside their "comfort zone;"
- 2) Frequent repetition under high motivation;
- 3) Detailed feedback that is so task specific, it can create improvement.

In-class activities

Four components of oral presentations of scientific information will be studied and practiced using four videotaped presentations.

- 1) Public speaking. Participants will receive training, practice, and self-evaluation of the following six public speaking skills: (a) quality of contact (rapport); (b) clarity of speech (speed, volume, and vocal variety); (c) confidence; (d) time management; (e) appropriate body language (face, hands, positioning); (f) speaking style (fluency vs reading notes);
- 2) Content. The context of an excellent oral presentation of scientific information consists of the following five parts: (a) Context; (b) W1 (Why was the research done?); (c) W2 (Why was the research done?); (d) W3 (What was discovered?); and (e) W4 (Why is the discovery important?).
- 3) Audience attention control. Participants will be trained how to capture, focus, and hold the attention of the audience. Six components of audience attention control are: (a) Presenting correct amount of information for the time limit; (b) taking advantage of the universal response to the human face; (c) making outline part of the message; (d) overlapping with knowledge and interests of audience; (e) how to avoid divided attention of the audience; and (f) how to avoid habituation of the audience.
- 4) Performance Anxiety Management. Two Ph.D. students, Yun-Hsin Huang and Shui-Ling Ho, will conduct three anxiety management training sessions using affects labeling and cognitive restructuring.