

HUMS1006  
Presentation and Communication Skills

Lecture 1 | Listening, Engaging, Connecting

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# Do difficult times at least make for great speeches?



George Brandis to Pauline Hanson: 'I would caution and counsel you with respect to be very, very careful of the offence you may do to the religious sensibilities of other Australians.'



Penny Wong:  
'You talk about unifying moments? It is not a unifying moment.'



Jacinda Ardern:  
'I did not come into politics to be an opposition member'.

Kids can do it...!

15 year old climate change warrior  
Xiuhtezcatl Martinez addressing the United  
Nations General Assembly on Climate Change  
(29 June 2015)



12 year old Solli Rafael wins Australian poetry  
slam (2017)



# **Presentation contexts: Why do we need effective communication?**

Presentation:

**‘any opportunity you get to communicate your point of view to listening others’** (McCarthy & Hatcher *Presentation Skills* 2011: 2).

Communication:

Entails a combination of the following practices: listening – voicing – embodying – storying – and mediating.

Today, I'm going to introduce you to:

- some ways of thinking about the context(s) of presentational culture more broadly;
- some of the diverse genres of presentation that occur within it;
- some strategies and practices we can use to create effective presentations for a variety of purposes or outcomes.

Take the temperature: how do you all feel about presenting?

# 1. Presentational Culture – Perform or Else!



2009 consulting firm Accenture advertisement: Tiger Woods' skillful athletic performance = high performance in business

Jon McKenzie says: our 'age of global performance is not only populated by **high performers, peak performers, star performers, performers** who challenge forth themselves and others, but also by ... **those who cannot perform up to spec**: the mentally challenged, the physically challenged, the economically challenged, the digitally challenged, the stylistically challenged...' (*Perform or Else!*, 2001: 171).

Diana Taylor says: 'sunglasses, sneakers, computers, cars, drones and military systems **boast of their performance qualities**' (*Performance*, 2015: 90).

# The Simpsons parody our contemporary, performance-focussed culture:



HOMER: 'If I could  
just say a few words...  
I'd be a better public  
speaker!'



Watch & discuss: Homer at the Nuclear Power Plant



*PowerSpeak* addresses a problem that almost everyone in the business world today faces: how to increase your personal and professional “power” in order to make more sales, to move up to a better position, or to be more effective in your present position. The way you speak greatly affects how you are perceived in meetings, during phone conversations, and in all your daily one-on-one relationships.

Everyone wants to be considered strong, confident, dynamic, and convincing. The “power” in the title comes from how people perceive you: Effective communicators are *perceived* as more powerful than their less verbal counterparts.

From: Dorothy Leeds, *Powerspeak* (2009)



What kinds of persuasive dynamics are in operation in these clips? How does the speaker present himself?



Mike Cannon-Brookes,  
*ABC Lateline* interview (2016)



Mike Cannon-Brookes, TEDX

‘Most speaking situations have persuasive intentions, even if the speaker is not wholly conscious of them. Speakers who believe that they are presenting “objective” information are unconsciously choosing words and positioning ideas so that they represent their point of view.’ (McCarthy and Hatcher: 2)

‘The power of persuasive words and images should never be underestimated: they are central to the building of culture in large and small organisations; they are central to the building of culture in politics and in homes; and they are quintessential to the building of languages of leadership.’ (McCarthy and Hatcher: 7)



Margaret Thatcher, Education Minister, 1970



And as “Iron Lady” Prime Minister

Diana Taylor says: ‘Political advisers know that **performance as STYLE (rather than ACCOMPLISHMENT)** generally wins elections. Advisors ... train their candidates to learn their roles better than any actor does. The candidates rehearse and prepare. The gestures, style and affect of charismatic politicians can produce concrete effects. **The public may respond more intensely to how a candidate looks and what she does than to what she says.**’ (*Performance*, 90)



Former Prime Minister of Australia Tony Abbott, campaigned on the idea of 'action'



Former Prime Minister of Australia Julia Gillard became more feminised in her style

How we perform – publically, professionally, even digitally – communicates ideas about *who* we are; our performance creates **impressions and perceptions** about our **capabilities** for the role that we seek to undertake.

# Speaking and positionality:

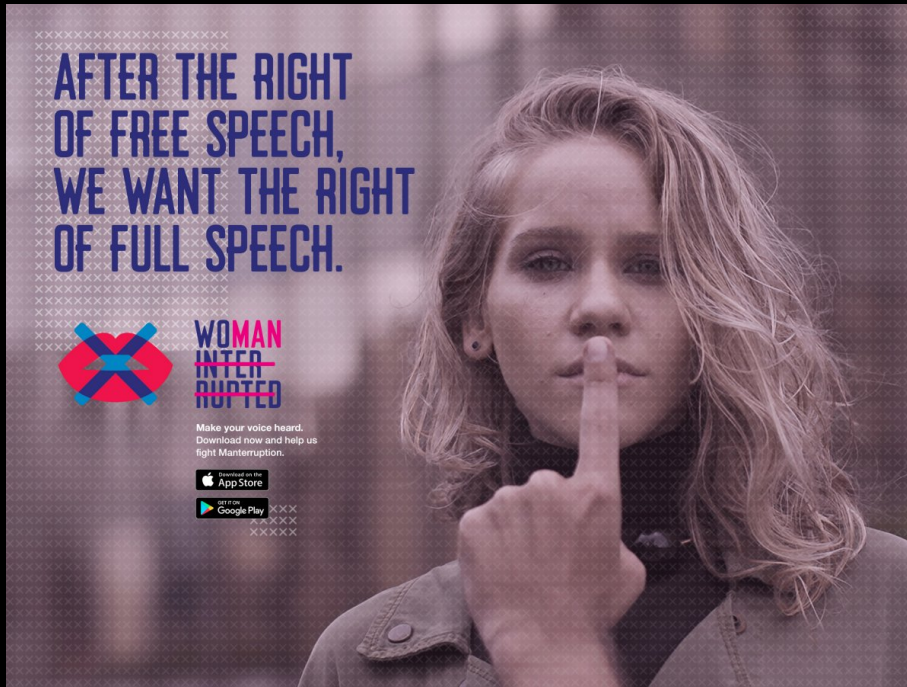
## **Snap Judgements**

As soon as we open our mouths and speak we are judged. Instant assumptions are made about us by others; about our intelligence, our background, class, race, our education, abilities and ultimately our power. As listeners we do this to each other all the time.

What does our voice reveal about us? Quite a bit. Do we sound enfranchised or disenfranchised? Educated or uneducated? Hesitant or confident? Do we sound as if we should be in charge or just subordinate? Do we sound as though we should be heard and answered?

To the ears of others we are what we speak. For any new listener immediately tries to 'place us', instantly decides whether or not we are worth listening to, makes snap judgements about whether or not even to answer us.





[See clips:](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9soYj3O4Ud8>

<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2016/9/27/13017666/presidential-debate-trump-clinton-sexism-interruptions>



US-based sociologist Karen Kelsky says:

‘Women I work with as students AND as colleagues routinely display the opposite of assertiveness—instead of confidence, they express insecurity, instead of calm, they display anxiety, instead of eye contact they look to the side, instead of emphatic hand gestures they play with their hair and fiddle with their clothes, instead of calm and confident body language, they droop their shoulders, slouch in their chairs, tie themselves into cross-legged, cross-armed knots until they occupy half the space to which they’re entitled.

Why does this happen? Women are trained from birth to self-effacement and deference. Women defer to men, in professional settings, across the board. ...

If you are a woman and want to test this supposition, I offer this assertiveness training exercise. The next time you are in conversation with a man, in a professional setting, and both of you start speaking at the identical moment, will yourself to NOT give in, to keep speaking, until he stops, and your voice prevails.

I’d wager money you can’t do it. If you can, you’re going to be surprised at the effort of will it takes. At how unnatural it feels. At how aggressive it seems.’

<http://theprofessorisin.com/2011/07/08/what-is-assertiveness-in-academia/>

The socio-dynamics of speech: who has the right to speak, and who has to work harder – or differently – to be heard at all

Attending to a practice of positional speaking means that you, as a speaker, in any context, take the time to become aware of how those who are listening to you meet the 'you' who is presented.



Malala Yousafzai (2014) Nobel Peace Prize



Anne Aly Maiden Speech (2016)

## The slippery-slide of performance – from powerspeaking to parody



Anastasia Douglas: *Talk like Kristen Stewart* (spoof)

In lecture activities:

Diagram a model of effective communication

Preparation questionnaire

What next?

Tutorials this afternoon

Online Modules 1 & 2

Assessment 1.1 due tomorrow in class