

Nailing the Job Talk or Erudition Ain't Enough

Andrew E Green, PhD

“The job talk is what will
make or break your campus
visit”

Professor Tim Lebestky
consultant
Williams College

Career.Berkeley.edu



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The Career Center's PhD counselors offer customized workshops designed to meet the needs of graduate students, PhDs, and postdocs whether you are pursuing a faculty position or are focused on professional options outside of academia. For more information about Career Center services for advanced degree holders, visit [Graduate Students, PhDs, and Postdocs](#).



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[Academic Job Search in the Sciences + Engineering I \(PDF\)](#)

Understanding the Search Process, Finding Job Announcements, and Managing your Online Presence

Aug 4

[Academic Job Search in the Sciences + Engineering II \(PDF\)](#)

Creating Your Written Credentials: CVs, Cover Letters, Etc.

Aug 11

Setting The Hook

- Most common start to a Job Talk:

My research is about the S. Korean Auto Industry

- Most common response:



Setting The Hook

- Just Because You've Spent All This Time on Your Topic Doesn't Mean They Will Find it Worthy of Their Attention
- Don't Start With a Laundry List
- They're Leaning Back - How Do You Get Them to Lean Forward?
- What is the Surprise? What's at Stake?
- Tell them a story
- EX 1

Structuring the Talk

- Provide the Context
- Give them a Road Map
- General - Specific – General
- Praxis before Theory; plenty of examples
- Brief Review & Finish With Implications
- Ex 2

Allude to Complexity, But Keep it Simple

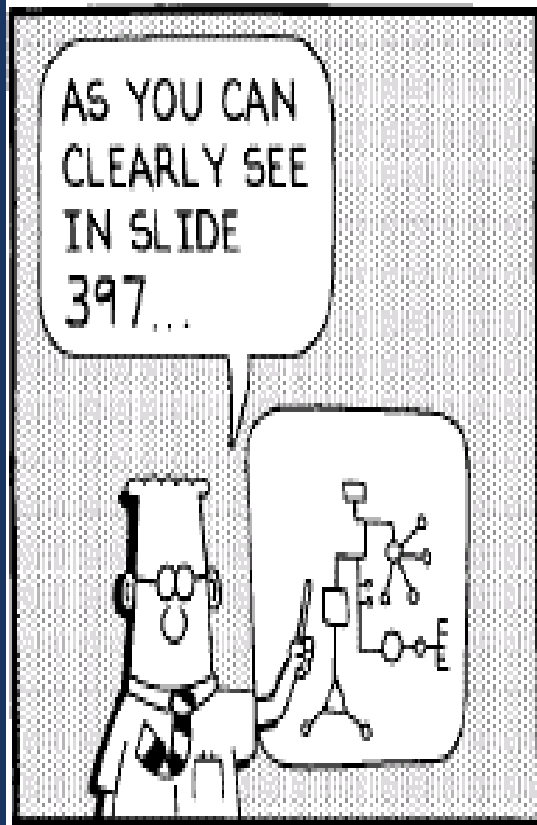
- Assume Ignorance
- Making it Easy for Your Audience – Visual Learners
- Making it Easy for You
- Do You Want to Address Questions in the Midst of or at the End - Decide Ahead of Time

Use Evocative, But Not Clichéd Language

- How many of you have sat through student or peer presentations?
- We most easily learn something new by reference/comparison to what is already familiar
- Use Analogies, Metaphors, and Similes to Illustrate
- RR
- Means/Ends - Statistics Don't "Speak for Themselves."

It's About More Than Words

- 7 Percent Rule
- Make Eye Contact
- Text vs. Notes/PowerPoint/Winging It
- Written vs. Spoken Language
- Speak Slowly - Pause for Emphasis
- Time it Out

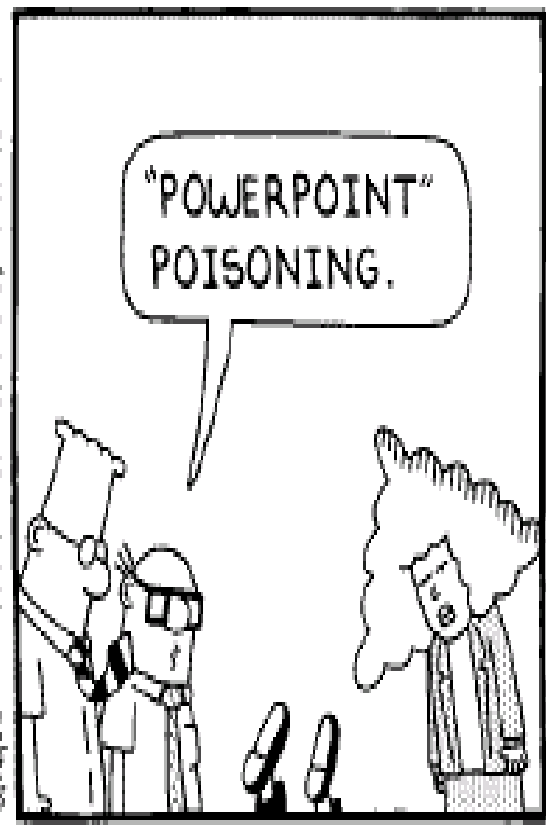


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Using Power Point Effectively

- Don't Use Distracting Fonts, Multiple Graphics, Transitions & Effects
- Don't read everything on your PowerPoint slides. Your audience can read much faster than you can articulate the words & their minds will have time to wander away while you catch up - will they ever come back?
- Most people are visual, rather than verbal, learners
- Bring Transparencies with You (art)

Handouts

- Don't Distribute a Printout of your Slides
- Something to Take Away
 - Not an Outline of the Talk but a Recitation of Key Points and Data

Display Confidence When Challenged

- You have Reasons and Evidence to Back Your Assertions
- Apparent Challenges are Often Requests for Clarification
- Re-State Their Objection in Your Own Words
- Address the Issues Raised - Take Them Through the Steps if Necessary
- Reasonable People Can Differ
- Move On

Chalk Talks

- Your plans for future research
- Not informal, Not Improvised
- Organize it like a grant application with 2-4 clear aims
- Übung macht den Meister – including writing on the board

Best Advice I have to Offer

- Providence, RI is a boring place to grow up

Upcoming Fall Presentations

- Nov 1 – **Nailing the Job Talk**
- Nov 30 - **Postdocs: What Should You be Looking For and How to Find Them**
- Dec 1 - **PhD Negotiation Skills and Strategies: How to get what you want and need**

Finally, have a good closing slide.
Why?

So your audience will know
its time to clap