How to MAKE PRESENTATIONS THAT TEACH AND TRANSFORM

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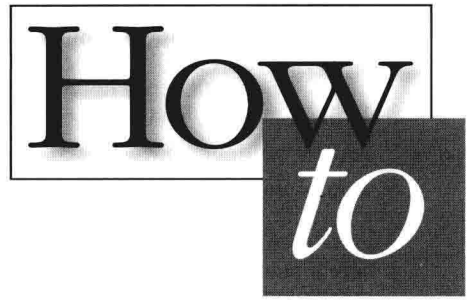

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Getting Started

A good teacher takes you somewhere else.
An excellent teacher changes you where you are.

— Kazuaki Tanahashi (1990)

A PRESENTATION IS A GIFT. THE PACKAGING, THE CONTENTS, AND THE manner in which the gift is presented determine its value to the receiver. Thoughtful gifts focus on the receiver's needs and desires. They are not hastily pulled off the shelf, gift-wrapped by an impersonal salesclerk, and thrust into the hands of a startled recipient. Rather, they are thoughtfully selected, carefully wrapped, and presented with just the right amount of surprise—and timing.

This book, too, is a gift. It is built upon several assumptions about you, the reader, and your interests.

Assumptions About You as the Reader of this Book

Our first assumption is that you have teaching experience that may range from guiding your own children at home, to classroom teaching, to work in college or graduate school settings. This experience is a resource for presenting to adults. Presentations, whether they last an hour or a day, are teaching events that require goals and objectives, lesson designs, and measures of achievement.

Our second assumption is that you have an array of presentation experiences to draw upon. In our professional and nonprofessional lives we all participate in lectures, seminars, and workshops as both presenters and audience participants. Some of these events are sublime. Some are not. We can draw upon these experiences to borrow what works and consciously avoid what does not when we design presentations.

Our third assumption is that you desire presentation mastery and are looking for a practical resource to help you extend your knowledge and skills. This is most likely the reason you chose to read this book in the first place. Presentation artistry can be learned. It is not something given at birth; it is something that you must develop. Like all complex sets of skills, there is a learning curve with ascents, descents, plateaus, and surprising moments of flawless integration and mastery.

Our final assumption is that you want to make a difference. You want to share your expertise with others and help your audiences learn and take action. You want to avoid making presentations that may get standing ovations but leave audiences with nothing to chew on. Your goal is a balanced presentation—valuable content in appropriate quantities. Servings that make a difference.

Suggested Ways to Use this Book

We hope this book will be a tool you can use to refine your own skills or teach others about presenting. We have included a collection of practical maps, graphics, tools, and recipes for your perusal and adaptation. You can read this book cover-to-cover or dive right into sections that address your specific, immediate interests. We hope you will use it as a reference guide and planning tool. The following synopsis of the chapters might help you decide where to begin your presentation planning.

Chapter 1—How to Design for Learning. In this chapter we explore the essential issues of presentation design: what we know about audiences, the presenter's stance in relationship to the audience, macro maps that guide presentations, presentation frameworks, selecting objectives, planning for outcomes beyond objectives, managing the content and process ratio, and four powerful design perspectives.

Chapter 2—Five Presentation Stages. This chapter explains five presentation stages: Before the Opening, Openings, Delivering the Content (the body of the presentation), Closings, and After the Close.

Chapter 3—Maintaining Confidence. In this section we examine ways to stay emotionally resourceful, build confidence, achieve the physiology of high performance, and provide techniques for mental rehearsal.

Chapter 4—Knowing Your Audience. Here we focus on ways to detect and work with audience differences before and during presentations. We give you a variety of potential differences to consider and strategies for monitoring and adjusting to these as your presentation progresses.

Chapter 5—Communicating with the Entire Brain. Good presentations engage each participant's whole brain. In this chapter we offer verbal and nonverbal strategies for whole-brain communication, including the uses of body language, voice tonality, language, presentation graphics, and humor.

Chapter 6—Making Learning Active. This chapter presents a variety of strategies and structures for active learning, including ways to get the audience's permission to engage in active learning, strategies for forming and reforming groups, and ways to elicit and answer questions and handle comments.

Chapter 7—The Presenter as Social Architect. Lastly, we examine the presenter as a social architect who helps to create and develop learning organizations. The goal is to bring about personal and cultural change by developing presentations that are nonepisodic and connect to greater organizational purposes.

In true learning communities we all present and we all learn. We all coach and are coached. We all consult and are consulted. Presentation skills need to become more than the province of a select few. When they are internalized and broadly shared, they help individuals and groups meet the goals of schooling.

How To Make Presentations that Teach and Transform

1
How to Design for Learning

THIS MAY BE THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAPTER IN THIS BOOK BECAUSE, as we shall see, all presentations are made twice—first in the presenter's mind, during the design stage, and second, during the actual presentation. Eighty-five percent of the quality of the second presentation is a product of the first. The remaining 15 percent comes from personal energy, charisma, and our openness to serendipitous relationships with our audience. In planning presentations we must remember the carpenter's adage, "Measure twice and cut once."

What You Must Know About Yourself

The most important design questions are about you. A presentation is a point in time within a relationship between a speaker and an audience. Who you are, not what you know, is the dominant message in any presentation. Who you are, in relation to what you know, is critically important self-knowledge that helps you make decisions about what's important to communicate and how to communicate it. This self-knowledge gives your message congruence and credibility.

Of the four cornerstone questions of presentation design, three are generic and applicable to all settings for which you may be planning a presentation: Who are you? About what do you care? How much do you dare? The fourth question is more audience-specific: What are your intended outcomes?

Who Are You?

Whenever you step before a group of people to persuade, provide information, or develop new learnings, you unconsciously choose to bring certain parts of yourself into the relationship. Which parts will you invite to the event in order to be multidimensionally present with the audience, and more interesting and credible? Are you a parent, spouse, daughter, sports fan, potter, skier, photographer, or poet? Are you a gardener, only child, gourmet cook, speaker of several languages? Your goal in selecting an answer to this question is to reduce the psychological distance between yourself and the audience. Therefore, the question "Who are you?" can also be thought of as "Who do you want to be with this particular audience?"

In *Speak Like a Pro*, Margaret Bedrosian (1987) suggests five stances from which presenters might choose to speak. Each has a distinct base of power and a distinct approach. Speakers may use more than one of these stances during a single presentation.

1. Boss. This stance is based on positional authority. When speaking from this stance, you support your ideas with the organization's history, mission, policies, goals, and procedures. The downside of this stance is that many audience members will listen to the position more than the presentation. Because of this, your words and demeanor can have far more impact than you intend.

2. Expert. From this stance you share information and correct misinformation. In order to present as an expert, you must stay current in all the latest developments in your field. Your power in this stance comes from being able to synthesize enormous amounts of information from your area of expertise and present it in tight, coherent forms. The downside of this stance is that the expert role is the one most vulnerable to attack.

3. Colleague. In this stance you reduce perceived distance between yourself and the members of your audience by being one of them. As a colleague, you present information while being open to discovering new information from others. You refer to work experiences of your own that are similar to the audience's. Your speech includes the collegial "we" and "us." You elicit data from the

group and then extend the data. Many presenters find that this is the most effective stance when presenting to their own faculties.

4. Sister/Brother. In this stance you communicate concern and warmth. You appeal to the family spirit of a healthy working team. You share the ups and downs of your own learning journey. This is often an effective stance for coaching individuals or groups to better performance. You are more approachable than the boss or expert, and let the audience members know you have a caring investment in their success. A possible downside in this stance is that certain audience members may feel encouraged to share highly personal learning problems with the hope that you can help resolve them.

5. Novice. This stance is based on enthusiasm. You share recent discoveries and their meaning with the audience. While you admit to lacking a comprehensive background, you must be well-informed about recent discoveries and have immersed yourself in the topic at hand. The freshness of your approach and your vitality can renew or awaken the interest of your audience.

About What Do You Care?

Who you are is predominantly related to your personal values. To answer the question "What do I care about?" you must identify what is important to you, not as a laundry list of personal values, but in a search for the core of what motivates and concerns you. For example, if you value classrooms as learning communities in which students are interactive learners invested in each other's success, these values will permeate your presentation design and processes. Elegant presenters have conscious access to such personal values and deliver presentations that are unusually powerful because of the congruence of both their message and metamessages.

How Much Do You Dare?

If you value risk-taking, what will you risk in the presentation—a song, a silly energizer, a new design? If you value certain psychological principles of learning, will you

speak your mind if your view is contrary to a newly adopted curriculum?

To know your own values, and act on them, you must engage in a feedback loop of continuous growth and self-improvement, trust your own capacity for self-management, and work to enhance your self-esteem. If *you* can trust you, so can audiences and others. You will generate a sense of personal efficacy.

How much *should* you dare? When your personal risk quotient in any area is less than you like, here is one way of checking to see if this is a common sense posture of personal security from which to operate. Examine what rewards or punishments exist in the environment should you speak up for principles dear to you. Then ask yourself about the degree of importance you attach to each reward and punishment. Often you'll discover that you can't be hurt enough to deter you from acting on your values. Other times you may decide to place personal safety above other considerations. When you dare, dare smart. Don't get removed from the game in the process.

As we have seen, three of the four cornerstone design questions are generic and contribute to life stances as well as presentation skills: Who are you? What do you care about? How much do you dare? The fourth cornerstone question is related to each specific audience and presentation event.

What Are Your Intended Outcomes?

What do you want participants to carry away from your session? Presenters must consider this question from two vantage points, the macro, or bird's eye, view and the micro, or worm's eye, view.

Macro outcomes resonate from our core values, concerns, passions, and missions in life. A presenter who values a rigorous interchange of ideas might consistently elicit divergent views, respond candidly to audience questions, or incorporate exercises in which partners would identify alternative ways of viewing an issue. This might become part of a person's presentation design even though the session topic is math manipulatives and has "nothing to do" with communication. The presenter thus

models a personal core value and enrolls audience members in that value.

In contrast, the micro-outcomes relate specifically to your presentation topic. What knowledge, skills, attitudes, or actions do you want for your listeners? As we shall see, there are ways to answer this question with precision and power without succumbing to the agony of developing behavioral objectives.

Achieving Outcomes: Three Macro Maps

A macro map is one that displays an entire territory so the map reader can plot reasonable destinations and routes. It gives the user a *way* of looking at the territory through certain lenses. On a backpacking trip the macro map allows the hiker to see the boundaries of the wilderness region, the two or three major established trails in the area, the distance in miles (but not in perspiration or fatigue) between two points, and the valleys, rivers, meadows, and mountains that make up the area. It is only from this comprehensive picture of the land that the hiker can set overall goals for the trip; because once on the forest trail, the hiker's visibility is reduced to the bend ahead, and aspirations can be diverted by emotional and physical fatigue. Unexpected events like a blistered foot or a rest at an idyllic stream can take the hiker off course. It is knowledge of the map of the whole that allows the traveler to flexibly engage with these distractions yet still achieve intended outcomes.

Like the hiker, presenters with conscious access to their macro maps for presentations can make decisions during presentations that are congruently related to their overall objectives. They can seize opportunities, unrecognized without the maps, to move a group toward envisioned destinations.

The following are three macro maps that guide the design work of premier presenters. We explore other macro maps in Chapter 7 in relation to facilitating transformational change for individuals and organizations.

Macro Map 1: Always Speak to Four Audiences

Bob Garmston once watched a performer in a Beirut nightclub present to an audience in which some spoke Arabic, some French, and some English. Like the carnival performer who spins a series of plates on sticks, this trilingual performer balanced his time in the three languages, being careful not to spend too much time in any one language for fear that a segment of his audience might feel left out and grow bored. In a similar manner, because of learning style preferences and variations in the ways people intake and process information, presenters attend to at least four different types of audience members in each presentation: those seeking facts, data, and references; those wishing to relate the topic to themselves through interaction with colleagues; those who wish to reason and explore; and, finally, those interested in adapting, modifying, and creating new ideas and procedures as a result of attending the presentation.

We describe presentation techniques for these four audiences in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Macro Map 2: Leverage Presentation Time by Choosing the Most Powerful Levels of Intervention

Bateson (1972) and Dilts, Hallbomgo, and Smith (1990) have identified a hierarchy of intervention levels for transformational change. Each level corresponds to a human characteristic at which the presenter focuses his change effort. The levels, in ascending order of ability to produce powerful change, are (1) behaviors, (2) capabilities (the mental strategies that guide behavior), (3) beliefs, and (4) identity.

Chapter 7 covers strategies for working at each of these intervention levels.

Macro Map 3: Empower the Audience

Because feeling empowered is the first step in being empowered, the best presenters consistently aim at helping audiences obtain this feeling. After all, perception shapes reality. This is the true nature of cause-and-effect. Central to being empowered is a sense of efficacy. This state of mind

helps people to believe themselves capable of taking charge and producing results.

Presenters help audiences feel efficacious with a number of subtle moves. They provide choice. Where to sit, how long the break should be, what personal goals should be worked on, who to partner with, and which homework suggestions to pursue. Presenters also consistently use language that presupposes efficacy. "As you decide what's most important to you . . . ." "As you tell others what learnings you have constructed from this day. . . ." "As you recall previous successes. . . ." "Knowing that you are busy people, and intend to produce as much value for yourself as possible today. . . ." "As you examine your strengths. . . ."

Efficacy is enhanced when participants help shape agendas to their needs, when they teach others, when they control their own learning goals and environment, and when they look at their own behaviors from the perspective of choice. Presenters promote this viewpoint when they respond to participant statements such as, "there's just too much to cover, and not enough time," with language that *reminds* the participants that despite existing environmental constraints, they always maintain choice: "So you're in the process of deciding which portions of the curriculum are most important for your students."

Because educational goals are achieved through collections of people, it makes sense to speak to people individually in ways that allow each person to learn best; to promote awareness of personal identities that are caring, collaborative, and successful; and to continuously shape efficacy in ourselves, our audiences, and our students. Hikers must know "they can" to complete the journey, but it is the traveler who knows the territory who attains the outcome and enjoys the trip.

Choosing a Presentation Framework

Now, within the ever-present context of these powerfully influencing macro maps, which presentation framework is best?

Presenters save planning time by plugging their information and creative thoughts into an established

format. Research also clearly shows that listeners remember better and remember more if they have a sense of the shape of the talk. Because a grasp of the pattern is important to participant understanding of your material, the best technique is to make each individual section, as well as the overall organization, simple, logical, and clear. The best presenters make the organization of their talk boldly obvious to their listeners.

Here are seven time-tested, logical frameworks you might work with:

Time Sequence

This framework is used to explain something in the exact order in which it occurred or happened in real time. For example: "First we discovered that students had rote knowledge of math and limited problem-solving capacities. Next we explored alternative approaches to our curriculum. Lastly, we decided to incorporate manipulative materials into our math program. Let me describe our central findings at each of these stages."

Question-Answer

This presentation framework is logically built from answers to one or more key questions. To create this structure, first identify all major questions you feel need to be answered and any extra questions your audience will likely want answered. Then, simply consolidate both lists of questions into one unified sequence. This sequence becomes your question-answer framework. For example:

[OPENING]	"Today, we'll answer three basic questions: First, how did the project begin? Second, how has it evolved? And third, how is it unique?"
[BODY]	"Let's start with how the project began . . ." "Now, let's see how it has evolved . . ." "Finally, let's look at how it is unique. . ?"
[CLOSING]	"In summary, we have answered three basic questions . . ."

Three Ideas

This is used to focus listeners on important concepts or issues related to a topic. You might use this as an advanced organizer from which you can provide extensive elaboration or to highlight areas a group should consider in reaching a decision.

[OPENING] "Three goals form the driving force in the Cognitive Coaching model. First, trust in the teacher-coach relationship. Second, continuing and accelerated learning for both parties. And third, a mutual state of autonomy characterized by both professional independence and interdependence."

[BODY] "Let's start by defining what we mean by trust, how it's elicited and maintained, and why it's important in the coaching relationship."

[CLOSING] "So today we have identified the three goals each Cognitive Coach keeps in mind . . ."

These first three frameworks can also serve as lightning quick organizers for impromptu speeches. Using one of these frameworks allows you to arrange in your head a simple, logical set of mental notes from which to speak in the amount of time it takes the president of the school board to ask for your input on a topic and for you to position yourself in a speaking posture.

Startling Statement/Reasons—Solutions

This framework opens by boldly stating a problem in a manner designed to achieve a psychological state of intense alertness and focus that grabs the listeners' undivided attention. The speaker then follows with possible causes and a call to consider certain approaches to solutions. For example:

[STARTLING STATEMENT] "For the tragic majority of American high school students, classrooms are bleak, lonely, emotional wastelands. For over 30

years, this has been a consistent research finding, and, unless we do something structurally different with our schools, it is likely to remain so."

[REASONS] "Teachers are not unfeeling automatons or ogres. What contributes to this persistent situation? Teachers teach every day. This in itself is exhausting. But to reach out positively and supportively to four to six successive classes of twenty-five or more students every day, every week, every semester, may be impossible."

[SOLUTION] "We must allow students the emotional attention and academic depth that can only come from longer instructional blocks of time with a teacher. Here is how we might pursue this . . . ."

Problem-Solution

One of our favorite variations of the problem-solution framework was developed by Communication Development Associates (Figure 1.1). It contains nine steps presented in a specific order.

When organizing this type of presentation you'll find that it helps to plan item 5 first (the solution), then outline item 2 (the problem), and develop your anecdote near the end of your planning.

Spatial Order

This framework consists of describing the parts of an object that occupies space. For example, in describing early childhood classrooms, the design of the classroom facility could be presented starting with the classroom meeting corner and moving through various learning centers in the classroom, with attention to movement patterns and the educational thinking behind the design. This framework has limited use but is quite effective.

Topical Grouping

If your topic is large and no other framework seems exactly right, you might try a topical grouping: divide the