

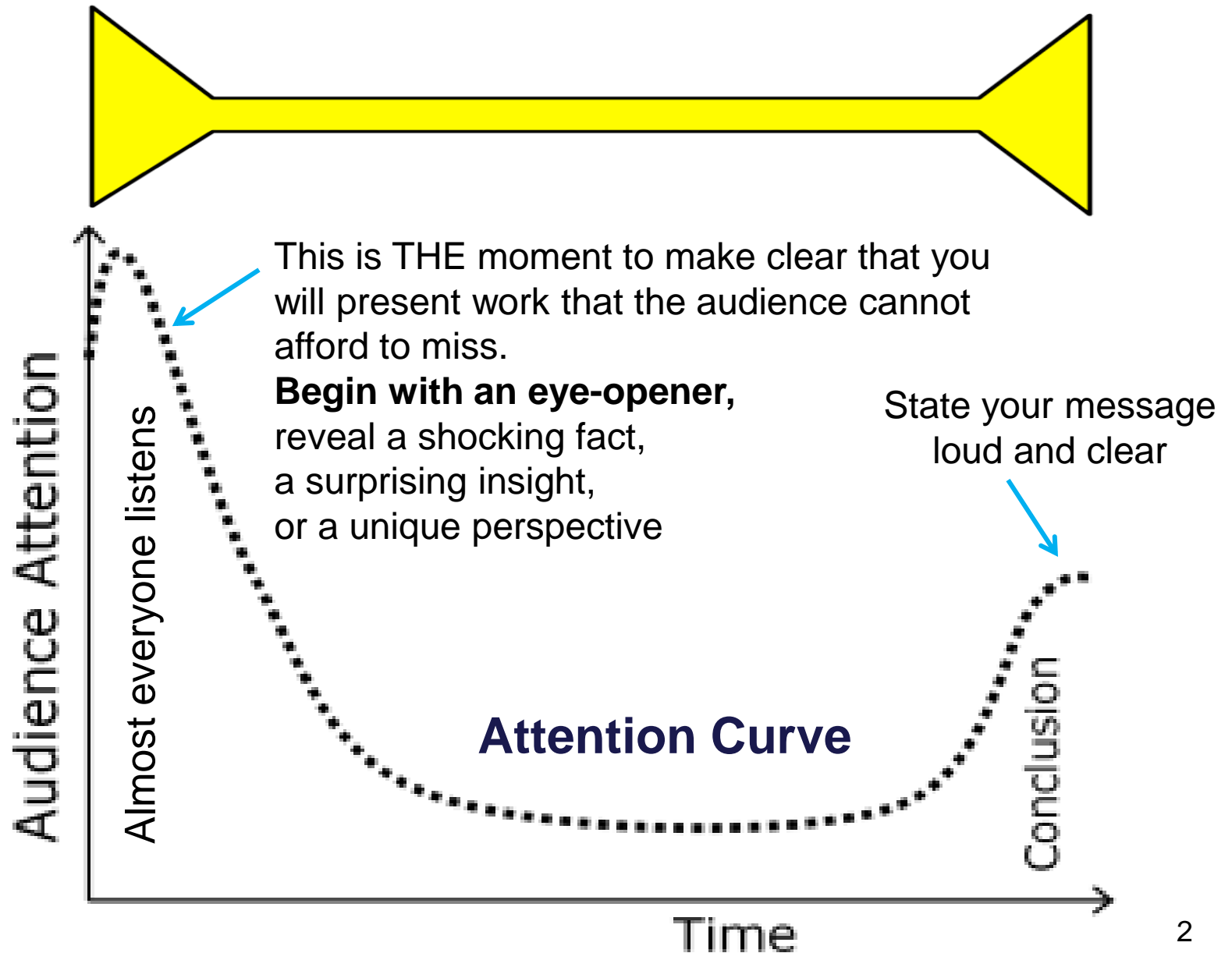
# Academic Skills

## Talk Preparation & Delivery



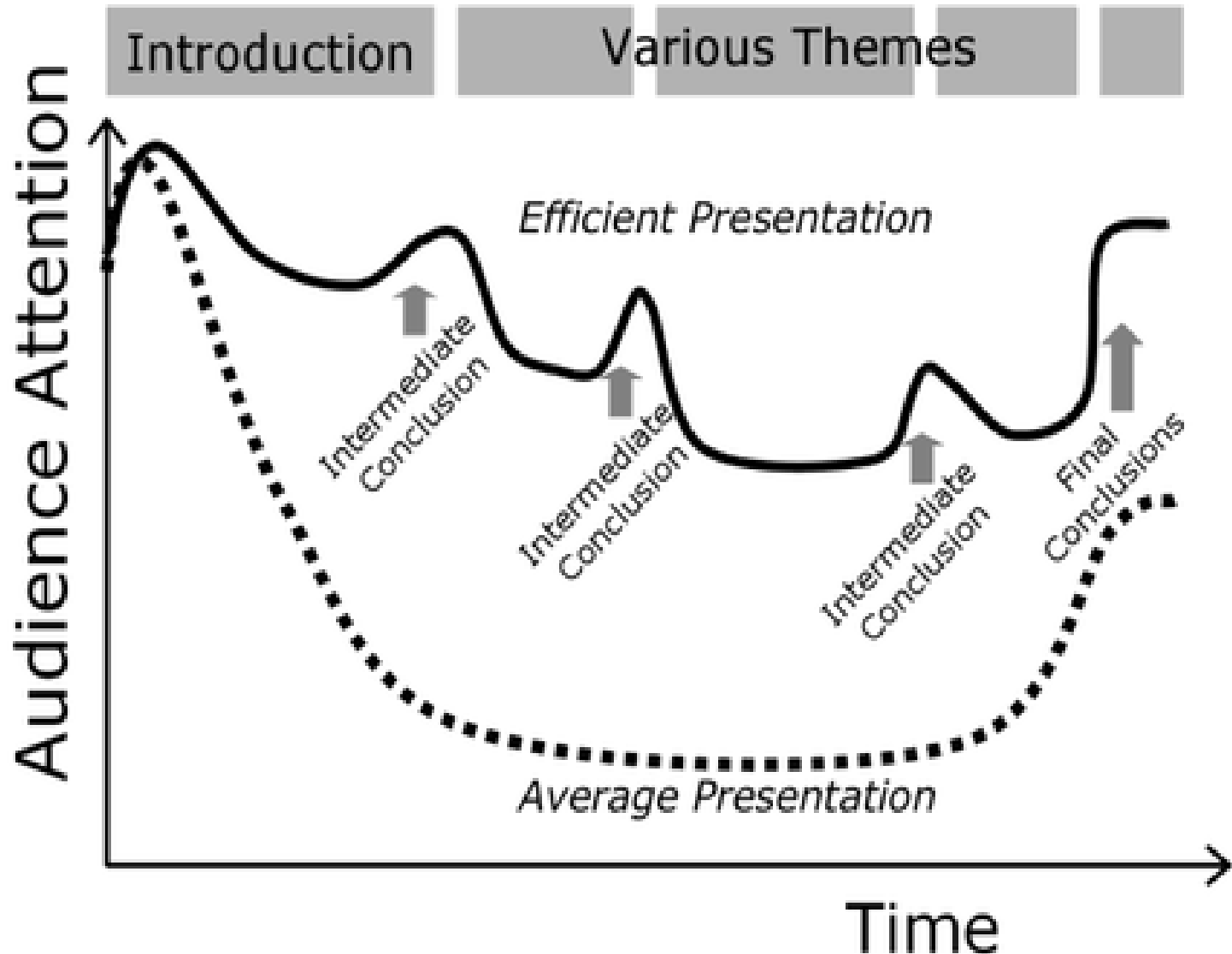
University of Groningen  
Zernike Institute  
for Advanced Materials

# Preparing Your Talk



# Improved Attention Curve

**Begin with an eye-opener.** Reveal a shocking fact, a surprising insight, or a unique perspective



# Writing up Talk's Narrative

- ✓ While making slides think of the text behind
- ✓ It's better to spell the text and make notes
- ✓ Leave only the focal points at the slides
- ✓ ...which should remind you the text

## Shall you learn the text by hart?

- ✓ It's better than mooing
- ✗ Any interruption might be deadly

## Foreign language

all requirements become tougher



# Humor in Your Talk

## *Leave humor to the professionals*

- ✓ Humor might be quite (and very) offensive
- ✓ Be aware that humor often has a nationality/gender touch
- ✗ Humor and improvisation are hardly compatible
- ✗ Don't try to be a comedian!



"There is something wrong with their brain, of those Russians"



# Talk's Practice

## Nothing makes a talk better than talk's practice

- ✓ Be (reasonably) enthusiastic
- ✓ Avoid fillers
- ✓ Speak loudly, clearly and not too fast  
(especially when talking foreign language)
- ✓ Reasonable hand-play is OK
- ✓ Remember about intonations
- ✓ Use the laser pointer and the remote
- ✓ Practice at your (girl)(boy)friend, parents, colleagues etc.

2-3 times will do...  
as a starter



# Talk's Practice

A trial talk for your colleagues is an absolute *must*

- ✓ Carefully listen to the criticism
- ✓ Change your talk accordingly
- ✓ Make another iteration

## Videorecording?

very useful but  
...don't fade away  
watching the playback !



# «Dont's» Talk's Practice

- ✗ Don't postpone it to the very last day
  - ✗ Don't give your talk for the monitor only
  - ✗ Don't (ever) read the slides
  - ✗ Don't use the jargon
  - ✗ Don't miss your timing
  - ✗ Don't think that your critics are idiots while you know better
  - ✗ Don't get discouraged  
if there is no further progress:
    - 1<sup>st</sup> rehearsal – 10x improvement
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> one – 2x
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> one – 1.1x
- BUT: provides more confidence**





# 4. Presentation

**Dress code: It's better to be dressed more formal than less**

**You should feel good  
in your clothing**

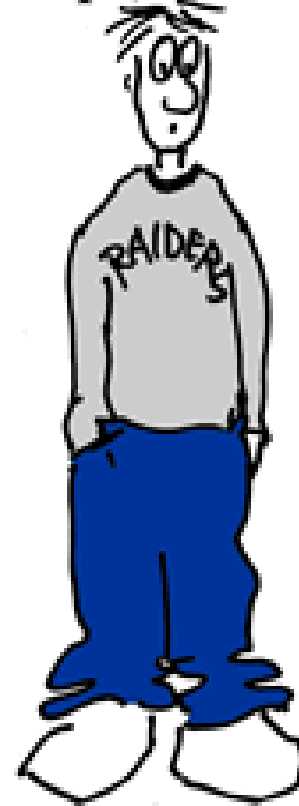
Oops, no.



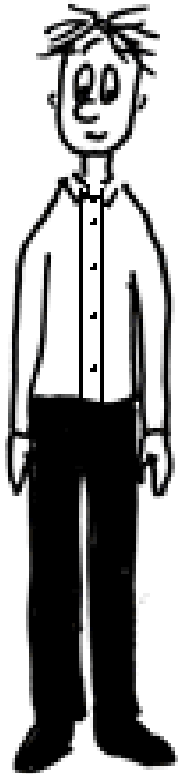
Yes!



Oops, no.



Yes!



*Skirt **BELOW** knee **WHEN SEATED**  
Black Pants with Black Socks, optional*

*No Tie  
Dark Socks*

# In the Break Before Your Talk: Check List

- ✓ Check compatibility of your presentation and the hardware
- ✓ Do you need a mike?
- ✓ Choose your position with respect to the screen and audience
- ✓ Provide yourself with water had you need it
- ✓ Make sure that the laser pointer works
- ✓ So does the remote
- ✓ Have a talk copy on a flash stick  
(for paranoiacs)
- ✓ Check up your dressing
- ✓ Repeat initial sentences
- ✓ Some anxiety is normal



**"For God's sake, Edwards.  
Put the laser pointer away."** 10

# Talk's Delivery

## Think positive!

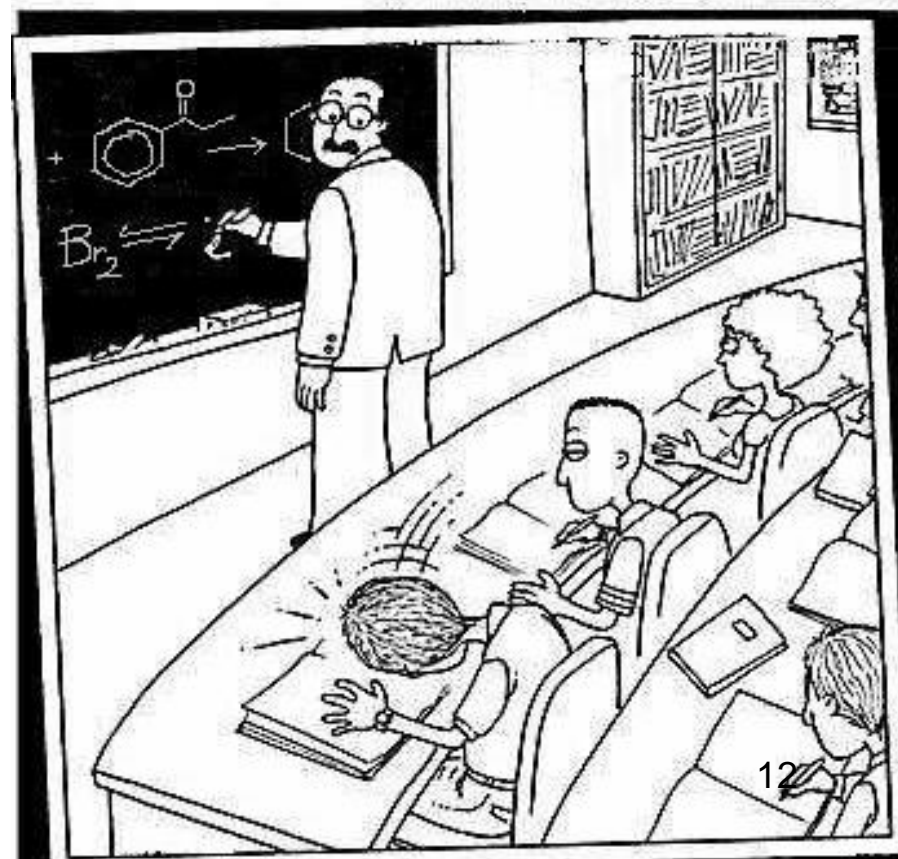
- ✓ You have impressive results
- ✓ You know your talk as a book
- ✓ You prepare a marvelous presentation
- ✓ You did practice many times
- ✓ Nothing can stop you



# «Dont's» Delivery

- ✗ Don't show your anxiety
- ✗ Don't apologize for not being prepared, lack of time etc
- ✗ Don't allow questions to take you off balance
- ✗ Don't address your talk to the screen, walls or ceiling
- ✗ Don't get upset if somebody leaves the room
- ✗ Don't improvise
- ✗ Don't wave the laser pointer
- ✗ Don't ignore your timing!

Professor Herman  
paused when he  
heard that  
unmistakable thud -  
another brain had  
imploded



# Answering Questions

- ✓ Carefully listen to the question
- ✓ Recognize if you got the point; if not, ask to repeat the question
- ✓ Repeat the question for the audience
- ✓ Answer in short and up to the point
- ✓ You might ask help from the audience (carefully!)
- ✓ Politely round up the going off-control discussion
- ✓ At the end, thank you audience one more time

What exactly here

$$\dot{v}_i^{(1)} = -\frac{4}{3}\frac{\dot{v}_i^{(1)}}{v_i^{(1)}} - \frac{1}{2}k\pi_i^{(1)}, \quad E = \frac{mc^2}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}}$$
$$\dot{v}_j^{(1)} = \dot{V} - (1 - 3c_j^2)\frac{\dot{v}_j^{(1)}}{v_j^{(1)}} - V - \frac{1}{2}k\frac{\omega_j}{1 + \omega_j}\pi_j^{(1)},$$

do you not understand?



# «Dont's» Answering Questions

- X Don't ever interrupt the question; let it go as is
- X Don't fantasize over “what did (s)he mean?!?!?”
- X Don't answer a question with a question
- X Don't be afraid to admit that you have no answer
- X Don't abuse this, however
- X Don't react to (nor address) personal invectives
- X Don't ever ever ever start a quarrel !



# In Case of Problems...

**Keep on smiling !**



# «Dont's» In Case of Problems...

Don't panic!





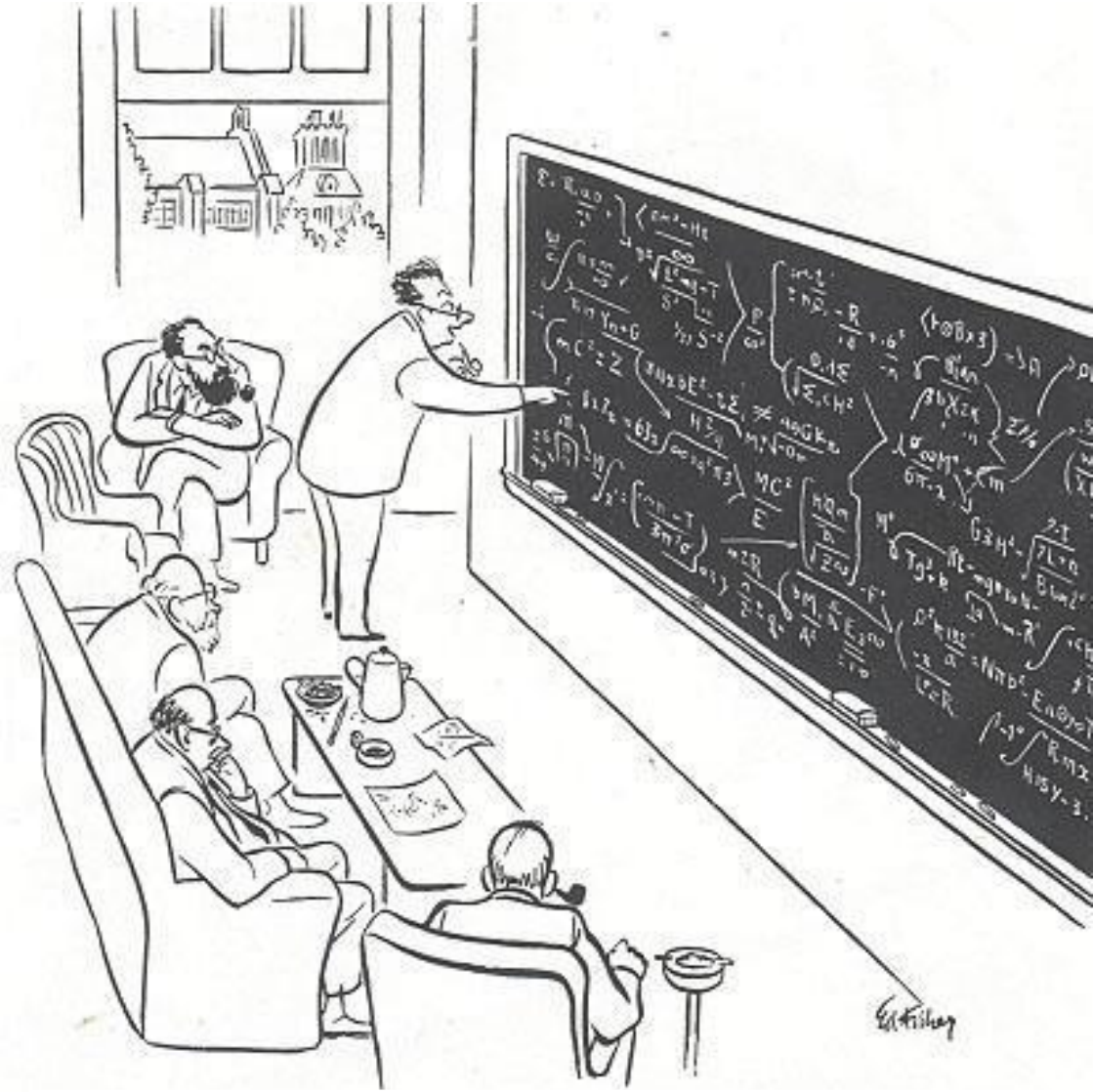
# Your Time Is Unexpectedly Shortened

- ✓ don't panic
- ✓ keep on smiling
- ✓ decide which slides you can afford to skip
- ✓ stick to the focus concepts
- ✓ carefully watch the time



# You Lost the Line

- ✓ don't panic
- ✓ keep on smiling
- ✓ say "excuse me"
- ✓ repeat the sentence from the beginning



I think I see where we went wrong.  
Is  $8 \times 7$  not 63?

# The Beamer Has Failed

- ✓ don't panic
- ✓ keep on smiling
- ✓ address the session chair: "YOU seem to have a problem!"
- ✓ entertain your audience while the problem is being fixed  
(= it's useful to have a story)





Enjoy the Silence.

# Other Similar Issues

- ✓ your laptop begins to update
- ✓ flat battery in the remote
- ✓ the mike is broken or loses connection
- ✓ unexpected distraction (noise in the room)
- ✓ movies do not work
- ✓ you are not introduced correctly
- ✓ ...



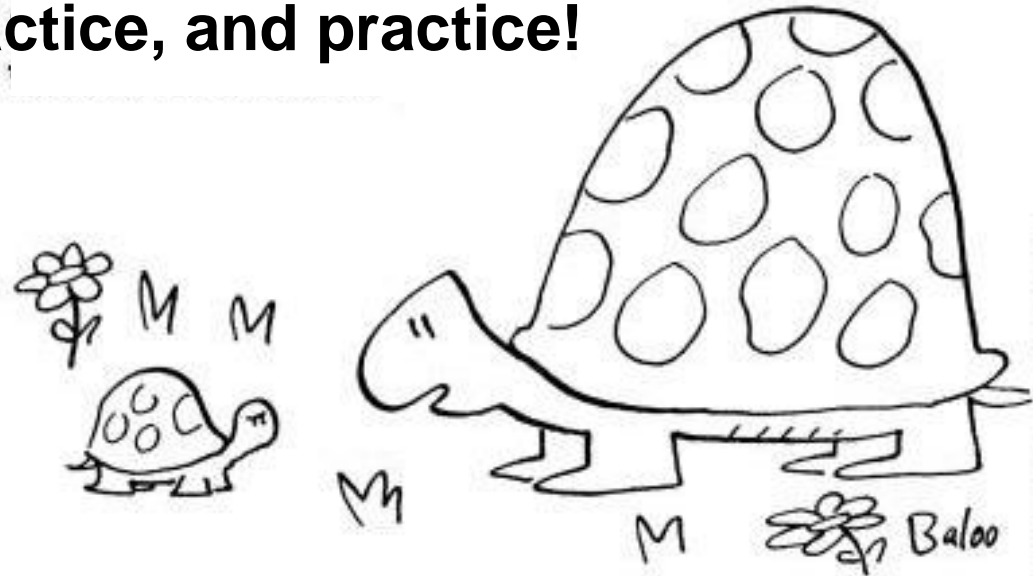
# Conclusions

## Three principles of efficient talk

- ✓ Understand your audience
- ✓ Clarity is above all
- ✓ Practice, practice, and practice!

### Remember!

Most difficult are only  
the first 100 talks



You may disagree with me now,  
son, but when you've given  
500 talks, you'll understand

# 10 Commandments «How to Spoil a Talk»

1. Thou shalt not be neat

Why waste reseach tijde on prepere slades?  
Ignor spell'g grammer und legibiliti

2. Thou shalt not waste space

Each new slide takes 100 KB while  
flash memory is expensive

3. Thou shalt not covet brevity

Always use complicated sentences.  
Use whole paragraphs and read every word

4. Thou shalt not introduce

If they ain't familiar with the field, it's not my  
problem

5. Thou shalt not write large

Important people sit in the first row anyway  
Who cares about that riff-raff at the back?

6. Thou shalt not use color

It's unfair to emphasize some words  
over others

7. Thou shalt not illustrate

Confucius says "A picture is a 1000 words"  
but you're smarter than Confucius

8. Thou shalt not make eye contact

You should avert eyes to show respect  
Blocking screen can also add mystery

9. Thou shalt not watch time

You prepared the talk and suffered,  
make them suffer too

10. Thou shalt not practice

Why waste several hours ~~out of your two~~  
~~years of research?~~

# 10 Commandments «How to Spoil a Talk»

1. Thou shalt not be neat

Why waste research time on preparing slides?  
Ignore spelling, grammar and legibility

2. Thou shalt not waste space

Each new slide takes 100 KB while  
flash memory is expensive

3. Thou shalt not covet brevity

Always use complicated sentences.  
Use whole paragraphs and read every word

4. Thou shalt not introduce

**10<sup>th</sup> Commandment is the most important**

Why are you familiar with the first? It's not my  
problem

5. Thou shalt not write large

**Even if you break the other nine,**

Important people sit in the first row anyway  
Why are you making them sit in the back?

6. Thou shalt not use too

**this one can save you!**

It's unfair to emphasize some words  
over others

7. Thou shalt not illustrate

Confucius says "A picture is a 1000 words"  
but you're smarter than Confucius

8. Thou shalt not make eye contact

You should avert eyes to show respect  
Blocking screen can also add mystery

9. Thou shalt not watch time

You prepared the talk and suffered,  
make them suffer too

10. Thou shalt not practice

**Why waste several hours out of your two  
years of research?**