
Fifteen Ways to Get Your Audience to Leave You

I have found 15 effective ways to transform good science into a poor presentation. Here is the list, which I use for my own benefit and that of my students:

1. Cover too much material.
2. Include too many details.
3. Start with too much small talk.
4. Run over the allotted speaking time.
5. Avoid telling the audience why your research has been done.
6. Overestimate, or at least fail to assess, the audience's level of knowledge.
7. Fail to make contact with the audience.
8. Ignore the inherent difference that exists between oral and written communication.
9. Waste time searching for a specific overhead foil somewhere in your pile.
10. Use unexplained terminology, abbreviations and acronyms.
11. Use unexplained symbols in text or equations.
12. Use unexplained graphics.
13. Present overhead transparencies that are unreadable.
14. Read *in extenso* from projected transparencies.
15. If the moderator has just introduced you to the audience, alienate both parties by opening your presentation with such details as your name, your affiliation and the title of your talk.

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