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# How to Prepare and Give a Talk

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Based on Jeff Radel's white paper:

[http://www.kumc.edu/SAH/OTEd/jradel/Preparing\\_talks/TalkStrt.html](http://www.kumc.edu/SAH/OTEd/jradel/Preparing_talks/TalkStrt.html)

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# How to Prepare and Give a Talk

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1. Planning
2. Preparation
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5. Practice
6. Presentation
7. Answering the Questions

# Planning

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- **Identify format of the talk**  
informal chat, seminar, formal presentation
- **Identify the audience**  
general/specialists, friendly/"hostile",  
conference/company/ academia, small  
group/large audience
- **Identify the topic**

# Planning (Cont.)

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- Clarify the purpose (expectations) of the talk
  - existing technology,
  - new technology,
  - proposing/defending an innovation,
  - research/development report
- Clarify the allotted time
  - short (< 20 min), medium, long (>40)

# Preparation

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- Identify the issues to be addressed
- Research
  - Research the less familiar issues, Internet, libraries, class notes, discussion groups
- Prioritize the issues
  - Eliminate less important/relevant issues (allotted time)

# Preparation (Cont.)

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- **Determine the transition elements**  
Link from one issue to the next. Smooth presentation flow
- **Anticipate (tough) questions from the audience**  
This may require additional research and reading
- **Decide about the visual aids**

# Outlining

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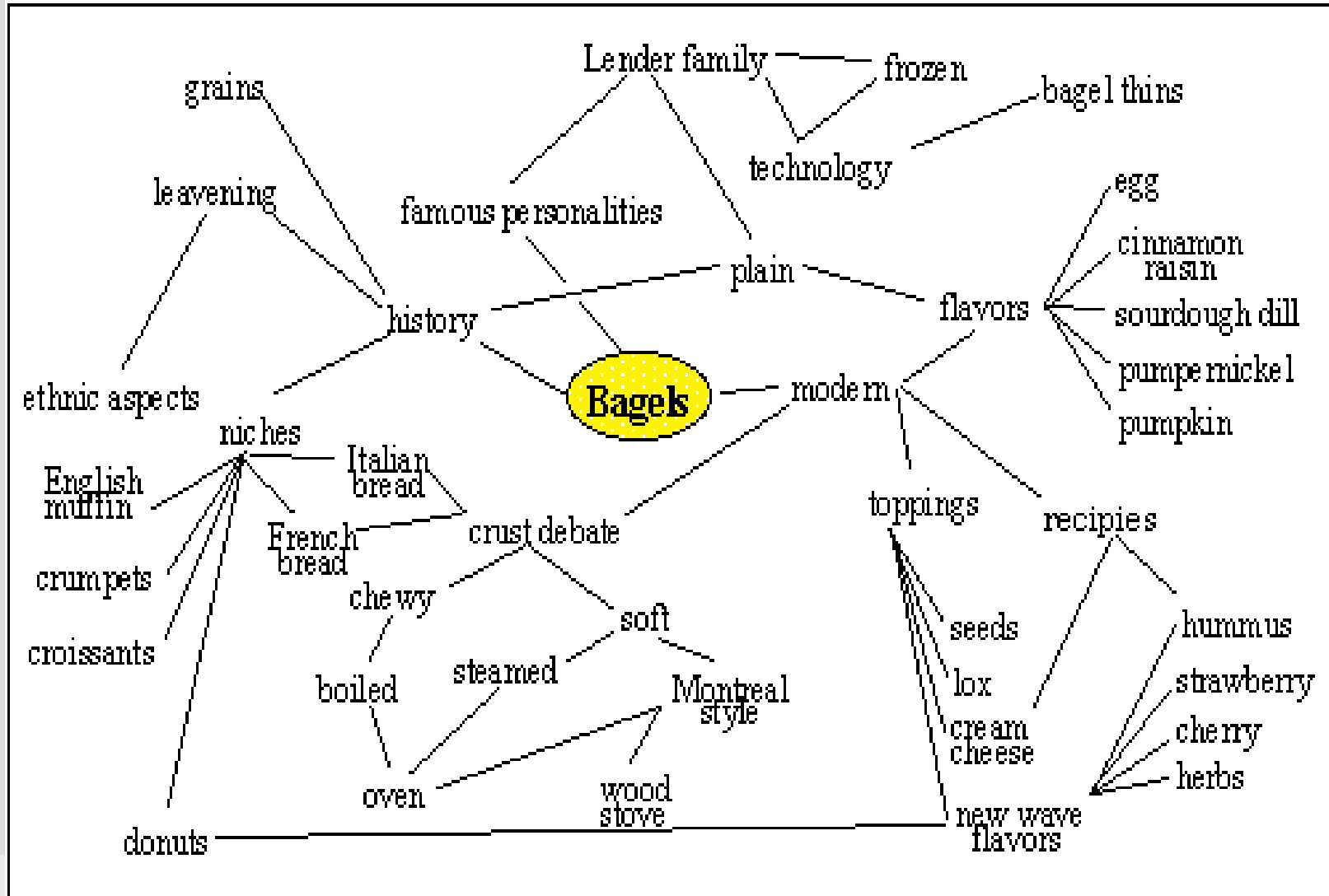
- **Idea Network**

This network evolves through the research phase. Should be trimmed up to the talk size.

- **Serialization**

Establish a transition path between nodes, which provides a smooth flow and fits into the talk size. Establish hierarchies between concepts and elements. Use index cards, which can easily be sorted and resorted.

# Idea Network Example using Cmap





# Outlining (Cont.)

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- Write the outline

Should be done regardless of use of visuals. Power Point is an excellent way to make a presentation outline. Rule of thumb: one slide for each two minutes, plus 20% of backup slides

# Visuals

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- **Start from the outline**

  - Add more text to the skeleton (outline)

  - Add illustrations, diagrams, charts, pictures

- **Slides must be easy readable**

  - Last row in audience can read the slide effortlessly. Use space efficiently and evenly, but don't overcrowd

- **Slides must be clear and simple**

  - Use short and simple sentences. Eliminate unnecessary details, drop proofs. Use graphs instead of tables. Use meaningful and non-distractive colors (they act refreshing).

  - Use one font and maximum two letter sizes

# Visuals (Cont.)

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- General format (all required in this class)

**First slide** Title, author's name(s), author's affiliation, name of the meeting, date and place (This slide doesn't count in two-minute-rule.)

**Second slide** Table of contents (top level of the outline hierarchy)

**Last slide** Summary and conclusion. Recapitulates the main points. Can also list other important related issues which were not covered in this presentation.

**References** Give credit and demonstrate your preparation

# Practice

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Once the slides are ready, you can start rehearsal. This is must for less experienced speakers, or for more experienced speakers who are giving an important talk before a large auditorium. For rehearsal you may prepare hard copies of slides and place them in order on a large desk (bed, floor). Walk around with a pointer and mimic your talk in real meeting room.

- **Rehearse loudly and in standing position**

Don't "imagine" your speaking, you must hear your voice. Standing position activates your mind, puts you in better control.

# Practice (Cont.)

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- **Partially rehearse the difficult parts**

Make sure you know what and how to talk about the critical parts. If you feel insecure, go back to research and reading.

- **Rehearse the beginning**

Fiasco at the very beginning can ruin the entire talk. Be sure you start smoothly and with confidence. You must win the auditorium at the beginning. This will encourage you for the rest of the talk.

# Practice (Cont.)

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- **Rehearse the entire talk**

After you have mastered the difficult parts and the beginning, rehearse the entire talk “in one piece”. If you still find bumpy parts go back to partial rehearsal.

- **Measure the rehearsal time**

Time measurement will verify the allotted talk time. In case of bad timing you have to drop or add slides. Consequently, this will require redesign of the rest of the slides.

# Practice (Cont.)

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- **Rehearse the night before the talk**

Important: last complete rehearsal should be a night before the talk. Make sure you have enough of good sleep afterwards.

- **Foreign accent**

People with foreign accent must carefully and thoroughly exercise the pronunciation of technical words and acronyms. Check this with English natives. Auditorium gets irritated with too bad accent

People with a strong foreign accent must speak particularly slowly and clearly

# Presentation

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- **Never give a talk about unfamiliar matters**

You must know what you are talking about in the first place. (Only certain very experienced college professors can talk about things they don't understand before their students, don't try that!)

- **Never, ever read or memorize your talk**

If you are familiar with the matter, then it is enough to think in terms of ideas and concepts, your words will follow naturally.



# Presentation (Cont.)

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- **Never, never, ever run over your time limit**

This extremely irritates the audience, especially the next speaker. You must keep an eye on your time all the time.

- **Maintain the eye contact**

Try to look at the auditorium, don't talk to the screen or to the whiteboard, ceiling or floor.

Look into the eyes of people. Don't fixate a single "victim" (your instructor?), go from one face to another, like you want to check if everybody can follow.

# Presentation (Cont.)

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- **Keep your hands out of pockets**

Don't do anything distracting, like playing with the keys in your pockets, or with the pointer. Don't walk too much around the podium.

- **Don't use jargon**

Use professional language. Use unambiguous words.

- **Don't apologize**

Your talk is supposed to be your best effort

- **Acknowledge**

Give credit to other people who have contributed or helped

# Answering the Questions

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- **Anticipate questions**

This is part of the preparation. You must have ready answers to all conceivable questions, even if the answer is that you don't know the answer.

- **Don't apologize**

If you don't know the answer, just say so, don't apologize. You may:

- offer to research the answer
- suggest the sources
- ask for suggestions from the audience.

# Make sure you give attribution (K. Stewart – if you use anything from Internet\*)

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<http://www.xbox.com/en-US/kinect>

If you do not give credit to where it came from, your audience assumes it is your creation, which might be plagiarism.

# Final Notes

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For many first time speakers giving a talk is a nightmare. Trust me: if you know what you are talking about, if you prepare the talk, and if you rehearse enough, you will feel a pleasure of giving the talk to any audience.

Audience can read your slide faster than you can when presenting, so do not bore them.

A final note: You must not be afraid of the audience, you must be open and feel friendly, the audience will sense that and will repay.