

# From Boring to Brilliant: Techniques for Delivering Powerful and Impactful Presentations

Lecture by John R Katsion







# Great Teaching is like Great Music



- How is teaching like music?
- It's a performance
- It's a one-time performance
- It requires an audience
- Live is so much better
- There can be magic in that moment

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# You are giving a Performance

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- You need to be Audience Focused
- **Most do not want to hear your music**



There are two types of people in this world: Those who like Neil Diamond and those who don't. My ex-wife loves him (What About Bob).

# Why should a student come to class?

- This will be a word cloud created in class

# Community is an Excellent Reason

The pursuit of truth  
in the company of  
friends (Cowell  
College motto)

A subject-centered  
community (Parker  
Palmer)



A painting of a scholar with a long beard, wearing a red robe, sitting at a desk and writing with a quill. The desk is cluttered with books, papers, and a scroll. The background is dark and indistinct.

## Two Minute Scholar

- Turn to someone and discuss this question:
- What are some ways you can build community in your classroom?

# Ways I Build Community

- Student interactions with other students
- Excitement for the subject
- Interactions before and after the class
- Do I know them as people?
- Respect for each other
- **Lectures as opportunity to build community**





# Incentivize them to listen

Every great song has a hook

Why should they listen to this lecture?

Grab their attention

The pull of the phone is very strong

Realize you are not going to get everyone



## Remember Your Audience has a Short Attention Span

- Average attention span is 12 – 18 minutes
- You need to give your students mental breaks
- Give them a chance to talk to their neighbor
- Give them a video/visual fix
- Think mini-lecture/activity/mini-lecture/activity format



# Use Visual Aids

Visuals are proven to help audience retention

Do not read off the visual aid

Should be integral to your presentation

Should not be a running outline

Include the outline with the PowerPoint

# Dive deep rather than blast a shotgun

It is easy for me to sum up a chapter in a lecture

Fills time

But little audience retention

Lacks connection

I need to dive deep into one area

Take one idea from that chapter

Take a controversial/hot-topic idea from that chapter

Naturally engaging

Go deep into that one idea



## Teaching from the Microcosm

- Parker Palmer: *Courage to Teach*
- Find a topic or idea that demonstrates what he calls the logic of the field
- Every discipline has a gestalt, an internal logic, a patterned way to relating to the great things at its core (Palmer, 124).
- Every academic discipline has grains of sand through which its world can be seen (Palmer, 125).



## Use metaphor/simile as an organizational principle

- Can you outline your own lecture?
- Should have a clear organization
- Give a foundational metaphor that the students can use to organize the material
- In this lecture I am using music



# Tap into the power of story/narrative

Walter Fisher calls us  
homo-narrans

Persuaded by the logic  
of the story more than  
the classical logic of  
the argument

We are by nature given  
to story

# What would that look like in a lecture?

I am still experimenting

Personal story is one way I am incorporating story

Story in your introduction

Could your organizing metaphor be a story?