Public Speaking for International Postdocs

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Top 10 Fears

The following list of top ten fears is taken from *The Book of Lists*:

10. Dogs
9. Loneliness
8. Flying
7. Death
6. Sickness
5. Deep Water
4. Financial Problems
3. Insects and Bugs
2. Heights

And the #1 FEAR:

Speaking in front of a group!
Activity

3 Volunteers Needed
1) Using the Whole Instrument
- The importance of breathing
- Speaking as a physical act
- Pitch, intonation, stress

2) Crossing the Language Barrier
- Addressing the language issue
- Compensatory strategies
  - Speech rate
  - Visual aids
  - Checking in
  - Providing a sound structure
  - Sign-posting
Use your fear!
Nervousness + Breathing = Energy
Speaking is a Physical Act
Monotonous speech induces sleep

Intonation and enthusiasm

English uses stress and pitch to emphasize important points
Sentence Stress is key

- Highlights new, contrasting, important information

- Creating stress
  - Louder
  - Longer
  - Pitch change

Try this: I left my keys on the desk
Let’s continue our discussion of pollution. Yesterday we defined pollution. Today we’ll talk about the impact of pollution and its far reaching effects. Many people think that pollution is a problem for scientists but it’s not just a problem for scientists. It’s a problem that affects everyone. Because it affects human lives it’s a health problem. Because it affects property it’s an economic problem. And because it affects our appreciation of nature it’s an aesthetic problem.
What if they don’t understand me?

- Begin by being up front, but don’t apologize!
- Use visual aids.
- Slow down.
- Read the audience.
- Check in early and often.
What if I don’t understand *them*?

1. Acknowledge
2. Restate
3. Answer
4. Confirm
Let’s check your understanding

Maybe it’s not my English…?
You are the tour guide

- Background and Context
- Activate prior knowledge
- Use real experiences and analogies
A North American Structure:

- Beginning
- Middle
- End
A well-marked roadmap needs

**Signposts**
- “We’ve been talking about…”
- “Now let’s move on to…”
- “In addition…”
- “As an example…”
- “On the other hand…”
- “To summarize…”
- “Okay?”
- “So?”
Summary

Using the whole instrument
- Breath
- An embodied voice
- A range of pitch

Strategies for clear communication
- Enlist the audience
- Use visual aids, eye contact, slower rate
- Elicit and respond to questions
- Frame your topic
- Provide a good structure
- Make transitions explicit
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