

Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning
Public Speaking in Science
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Tip #1 – Land Your Energy.

Remember the ball-throwing metaphor. There are three steps to throwing a ball—just as there are three steps to communicating with an audience during a lecture, presentation or job talk.

1. Are you ready?

2. Throw the ball

3. Did you get it?

- Stay connected with your audience at all times. Are they “getting” what you are saying?
- Keep good eye contact and open body language.
- Remember—speaking is not about *you* it’s about your *audience*. Make sure they “catch” what you “throw” out.

Tip #2 – Breathe!

- Take a deep breath before you speak.
- Breathe low and deep throughout your presentation or talk.
- If you tend to get nervous, speak too fast, or mumble—take regular deep breaths while you teach. Regulating your breathing will help you calm down, slow down, and speak clearly and distinctly.

Tip #3 - Connect with Body and Voice.

- Remember you teach with your entire body.
- Be conscious of your body language. What signals are you sending through your gestures, stance, and tone of voice? (“Signal vs. Noise”)
- Do a physical or vocal warm up, or some sort of physical activity before you start your talk—it will help you deal with nerves and focus on the task at hand.

Tip #4 – Use of Memorable Language.

- Use metaphors and similes to describe your work and its importance.
- Memorable, specific, colorful language helps get your points across and moreover helps your audience remember your lecture, presentation or talk.
- Just as you use visual aids to support your presentation, use more visual, palpable language to strengthen your speech. Paint a picture for your audience through your words.