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978-0-521-70352-9 - The Art of Lecturing: A Practical Guide to Successful University Lectures and Business Presentations

Parham Aarabi

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The Art of Lecturing

This simple and clear guide to lecturing is an example-based account of effective strategies for exciting and successful lectures for academic and business lecturers. From the lecturing mindset, combating fear and nervousness, to lecturing tricks and tactics, this book discusses a wide array of practical ideas that may surprise and help even the most experienced public speakers and lecturers. The author provides unique insights into lecturing for twenty-first century audiences, based on his academic and non-academic lecturing experiences at the University of Toronto and Stanford University; experiences which have resulted in numerous institutional, provincial, and international teaching and lecturing awards.

Further resources for this title, including lecture slides and videos of presentations and lectures, are available online from www.cambridge.org/9780521876100

PARHAM AARABI is the founder and director of the Artificial Perception Laboratory at the University of Toronto. He has won many awards for teaching, including the IEEE Mac Van Valkenburg Early Career Teaching Award, an international award given for 'inspirational classroom instruction', in 2004.

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by

PARHAM AARABI

University of Toronto, Canada



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*To all who supported me, inspired me, stood by
me, guided me, and lent me a hand when I fell
down, thank you. You have always been the
reason that I would get up every time that
I would fall down.*

*To all who kicked me when I was down,
misled me when I was lost, and discouraged me
when I failed, thank you. You have always been
the reason that once I got up after falling down,
I would rush forward with an ever greater energy,
motivation, and focus.*

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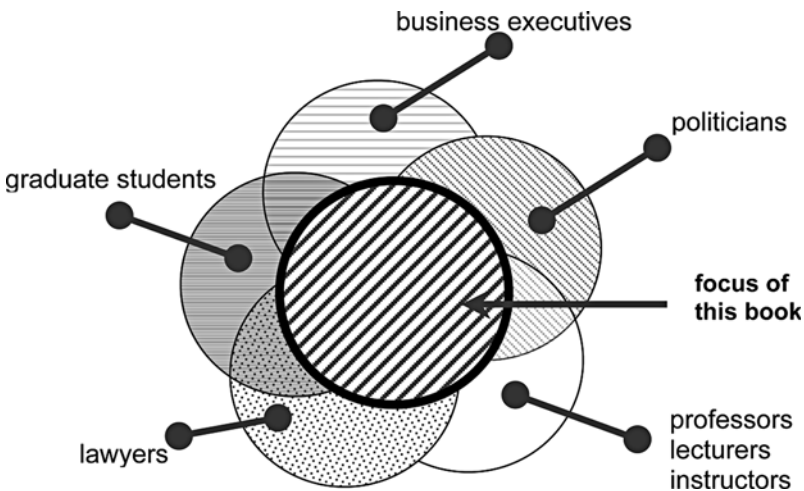
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Preface

This book consists of a personal account of lecturing principles and methods which have worked well for me while teaching at Stanford University and the University of Toronto. The target audience is mainly professors who want to enhance their lecturing effectiveness, graduate students who want to jump-start their lecturing careers, as well as business professionals and politicians who are interested in learning about large-audience lecturing strategies. The figure below illustrates the main target and focus of this book.

This book is meant to be to the point and very clear in its presentation in order to be as accessible as possible. While the goal is for this to be a fun, interesting, and unique book about lecturing, it can be used as a supporting book for a short course on effective teaching and lecturing. It should be kept in mind, however, that effective lecturing is



A graphical view of the potential application areas of this book.

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primarily achieved by practice and experience, and not just by reading a book. It is only in conjunction with such experience that the knowledge of certain facts, methodologies, and tactics becomes useful for lecturers. Ideally, a short course on these principles, requiring approximately 10–12 hours (each hour covering a chapter of this book), would be effective at illustrating the main points contained here. Such a course should be more like a demonstration of the different issues related to lecturing (i.e. a lecture on lectures) rather than a theoretical summarization of the key points. Potentially, graduate students, academics, business professionals, politicians, and anyone else interested in giving lectures would benefit from a course based on the contents of this book.

This book and the contents therein have been made possible by the direct and indirect advice and help of numerous individuals, including Professors Jonathan Rose, Amir Keyvan Khandani, Ladan Tahvildari, Tarek Abdelrahman, Paul Chow, Sergei Dmitrevsky, Brendan Frey, Zvonko Vranesic, Lambertus Hesselink, Bernard Widrow, and Safwat Zaky. Without their contributions and help, I would still be a struggling lecturer back at Stanford University. Finally, the thousands of students whom I have had the pleasure of instructing in classes are the cornerstone of the ideas in this book. Their advice, feedback, comments, questions, and complaints were like navigation beacons that have to this day guided me through the murky waters of lecturing dos and don'ts.

This book has also been particularly strengthened by the advice and editorial comments of Pegah Aarabi and Ivana Konvalinka whose detailed examination of the book I greatly appreciate. Also, I am indebted to Sanaz Motahari-Asl for her significant help with some of the lecturing photos that appear in this book.

Finally, it should be mentioned that, unlike the plethora of books on lecturing, this book is really a first person account of the art of lecturing. Things mentioned in this book may or may not be applicable to every single lecturer. In other words, please use this book and the information in it with caution.