# Self–Evaluation of Engineer Talk

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On March 7, 1997 I gave a talk titled "The Existential Pleasures of Engineering: The LCD Module via Parallel Port Project." The audience was a group of engineers, and the purpose of the talk was to give a technical overview of the project.

As I was preparing for the talk, I originally was going to present my ECE554 project from last semester. I was having trouble motivating myself to prepare a good talk on that subject, so I starting thinking about projects which I had been really excited about, which were different, non–school related, and entirely self–motivated. My LCD project fit those criteria! Although it was a technically simple project, and only took a few days from start to finish, I was really excited about it and I felt I could transmit that energy to the audience. A bored speaker will create a bored audience — a speaker with energy and enthusiasm will excite and interest the audience.

I created the overheads the night before. As a result of my dislike of tinkering with broken–by–design software, I kept my slides simple. This simple style kept them clear and easy to follow. I had one schematic drawing which was easy to see and understand. The only thing I would change regarding the slides relates to the length of the talk: I should have cut out some of the detail in presenting pseudo–code of the software interface. This detailed information was not vital to the point of the talk, and its inclusion made me rush my conclusion.

My delivery was pretty good. I believe I succeeded in transmitting my energy and interest to the audience. The main problem I had was that when I saw the signal for 1 minute left, I sped up instead of leaving out some information. Doing this made my conclusion a little less powerful. I have a hard time practicing speeches or presentations — during practice they come out flat and boring. Also, when I memorize exactly what I am going to say, I do not deliver with the energy and excitement which makes a good presentation. I usually just make up an outline and then get up and start talking. This on–the–spot technique makes the talk more lively and more comfortable. But on the other hand, doing so also sometimes leaves me unprepared for going over time and having to cut short.

All in all, the presentation was a success. The feedback I got from the audience was positive, and most of them were interested in my topic.