YORK UNIVERSITÉ UNIVERSITY

Strategies for delivering effective academic presentations

GLASA Workshop
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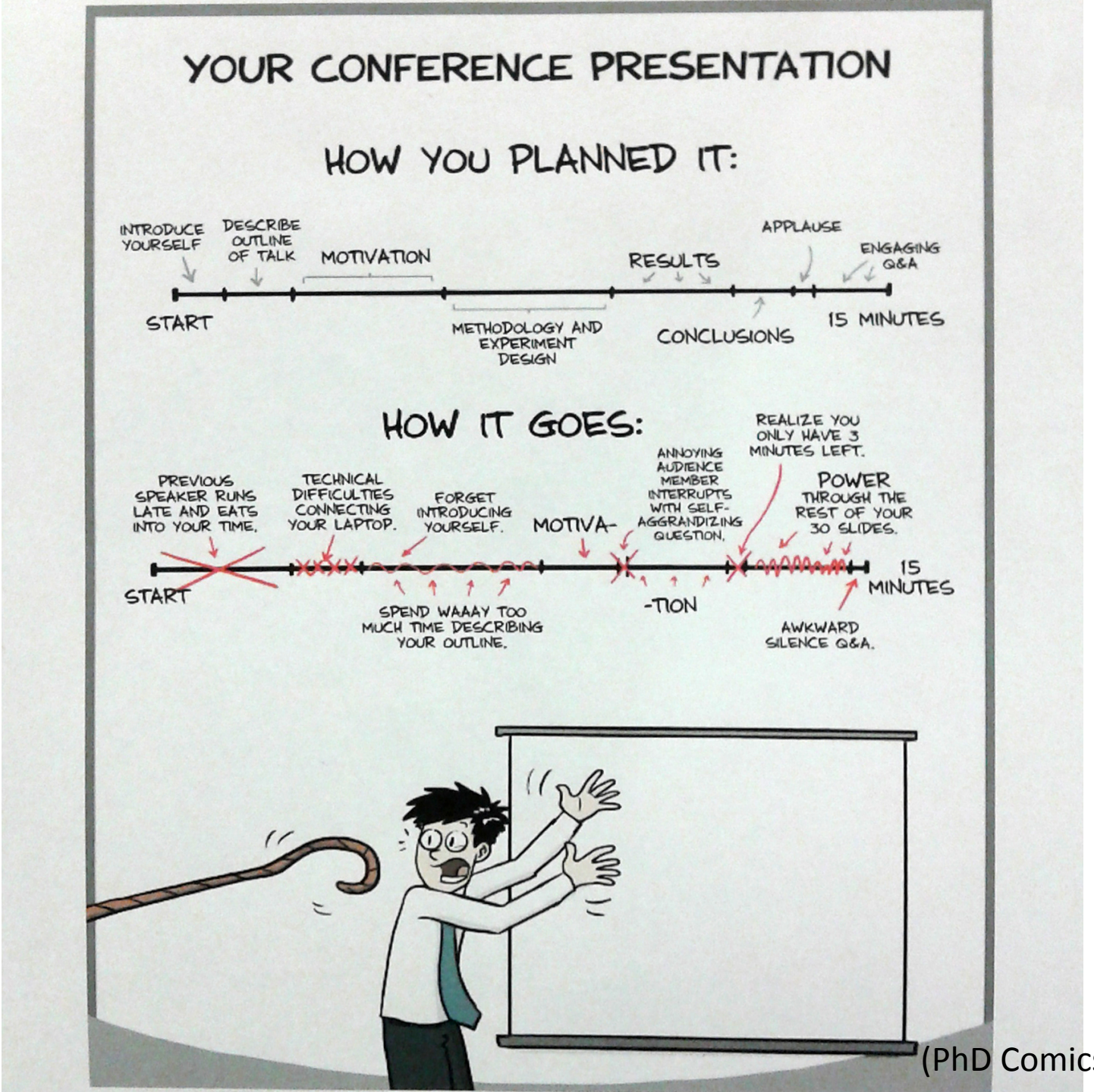


(PhD Comics, 2014)

Overview

1. Identifying your audience
2. Planning presentation structure
3. Managing nervousness & anxiety
4. Designing visuals

Identifying your audience

Identify your audience

- Academic conferences
- Professional conferences
- National or international audiences
- Specialists or generalists
- Research/project teams

Expectations for presenters

- Display your knowledge
- Use an authoritative voice
- Present a neutral, dispassionate perspective
- Demonstrate ability to evaluate knowledge claims
- Emphasize co-membership with an expert audience

Expectations for content

- Use an academic structure: IMRAD
- Explain key terms
- Provide background information
- Explain theoretical approach/model and methodology of study
- Share illustrative data
- Acknowledge sources of information and evidence

Identify purpose of presentation

What differentiates your work?

- Are you using a new method?
- Are you using an established method with new data?
- Are you using a new model or theory to explain something?
- Are there new implications for your work?

Presentation structure

How to begin your talk

1. Introduce yourself, your role and your institutional affiliation
2. State your general area of research
3. Explain title and purpose of presentation
4. Provide overview of presentation

Presentation types

Cause and effect	Begins with a problem/issue, moves to solution
Chronological	Time sequence
Theoretical	History or development of a model or framework
State of the art	Recent history and current developments of a framework
Philosophical	Reasoned defence of a thesis, rational persuasion
Empirical	IMRAD

Empirical Presentations (IMRAD)

1. Introduction
2. Method
3. Results
4. Analysis
5. Discussion

IMRAD: Additional content

1. Introduction
2. Overview
3. Creating a research space
4. Methods
5. Results
6. Analysis and discussion
7. Summary, limitations, and future work

Creating a research space (CARS)

Introductions to academic papers have been said to follow three "moves":

Move 1: Establish a research territory

Move 2: Establish a niche

Move 3: Occupy the niche

(Swales & Feak, 2004)

Identify research question

- Explain significance of research question(s)
- Describe the story/context of your research
- Use a simple, concrete example to illustrate research problem
- Get audience to relate to your project

Explain research methodology

- Identify your methodology
- Explain rationale for your methodology
- Describe research design and methods
- Describe sources of data, and data collection activities
- Share information about participants and research site
- Use models/heuristic devices to communicate complex methods

Present results/findings

- Provide evidence
- Show data samples
- Use appropriate knowledge claims
- Clarify whether findings are emergent
- Highlight themes/patterns/trends

"Based on the data I have so far…"

"To illustrate our findings, I have selected a few cases to share with you today…"

"The results of the data analysis show…"

Findings v. discussion

What's the difference?

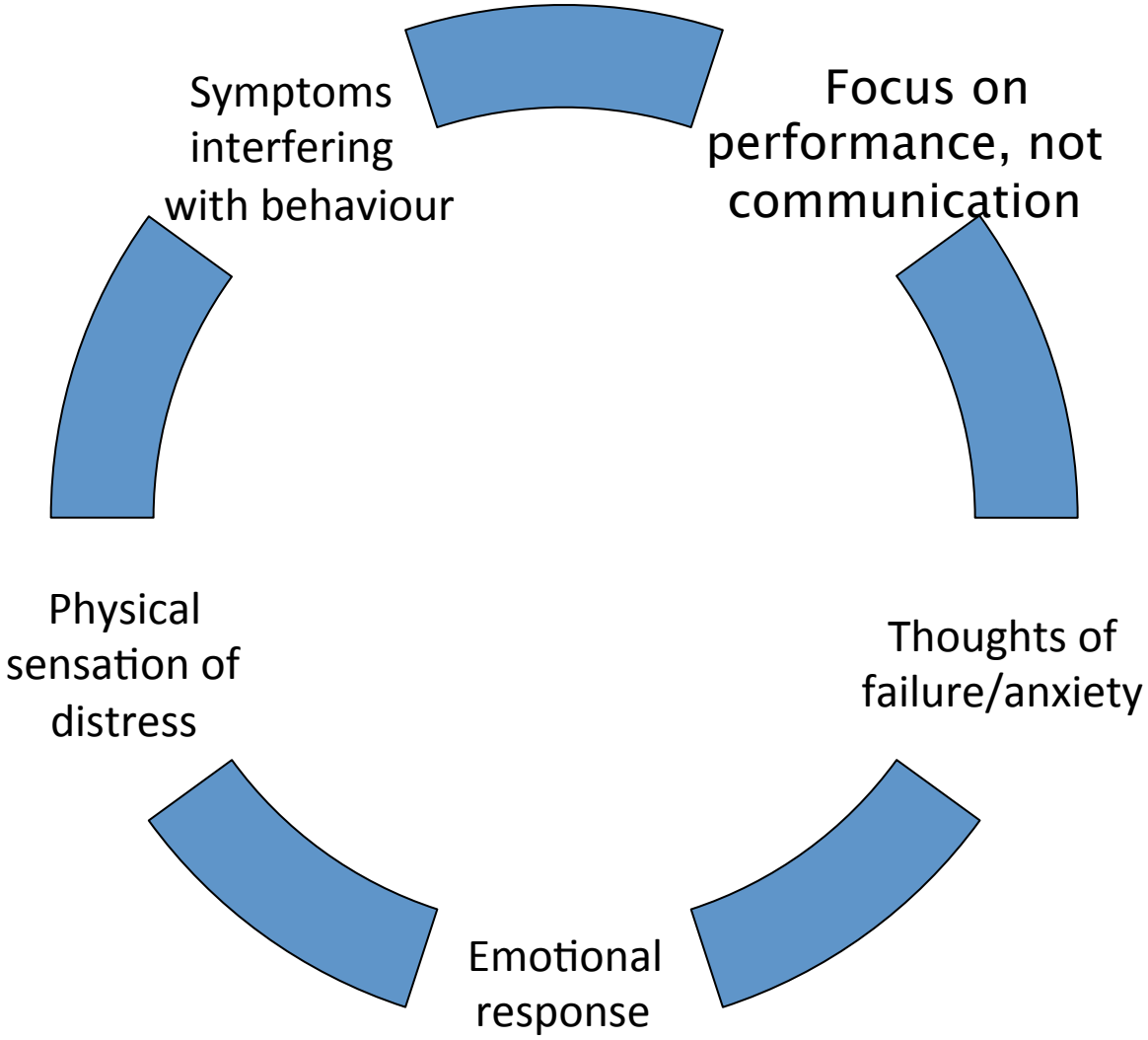
Discussion and conclusion

- Identify theoretical, methodological and/or practical implications
- Restate significance of your study
- Explain limitations of study (sample, methods, theoretical approach)
- Describe next steps in your research and/or scholarly work

Managing nervousness

Voice

- Use a natural, human, conversational style
- Project your voice
- Find “your voice”
- Tell the story of your research/project
- Connect with the audience
- Keep lights on


Symptoms interfering with behaviour
Focus on performance, not communication
Thoughts of failure/anxiety
Emotional response
Physical sensation of distress

Strategy: Know the audience

- Identify your target audience
- Ask people who are representative of the audience what they expect
- Share your presentation with others to see if something is missing or if you have too much
- Talk to audience members, find out why they are there and what they expect to hear

Strategy: Be prepared

- Prepare notes or script
- Practice several times
- Dress appropriately
- Bring your own equipment
- Anticipate problems

Never mention that you are nervous

Strategy: Get familiar

- Know the location and review map
- Get directions to the room
- Find out the technology requirements
- Arrive early
- Set up by yourself
- Remove or minimize obstacles
- Take care of audience
- Introduce yourself to chair, discussant, other panelists

Strategy: Deal with anxiety

- Use nerves positively
- Identify strategy to feel in control
- Visualize the presentation going well
- Take care of your body
- Bring water
- Breathe deeply
- Remember to pause and slow down
- Exercise before to deal with extra energy

The way you perform is the way your audience will feel

Strategy: Connect with audience

- Focus only on the present, now
- Observe and respond to audience reactions
- Smile
- Make eye contact with friendly faces
- Talk to the exit sign

Strategy: Deal with mistakes

- Pause when needed
- Do not dwell on mistakes, move forward
- Watch the time
- Check in with time keeper
- Know when to stop

The optimal rate for presentation speed is 100 words per minute.

(Radel, 2009)

Plan to be about 2 minutes shorter than you think

Visual communication

This is Calibri 12 point font

This is Calibri 18 point font

This is Calibri 24 point font

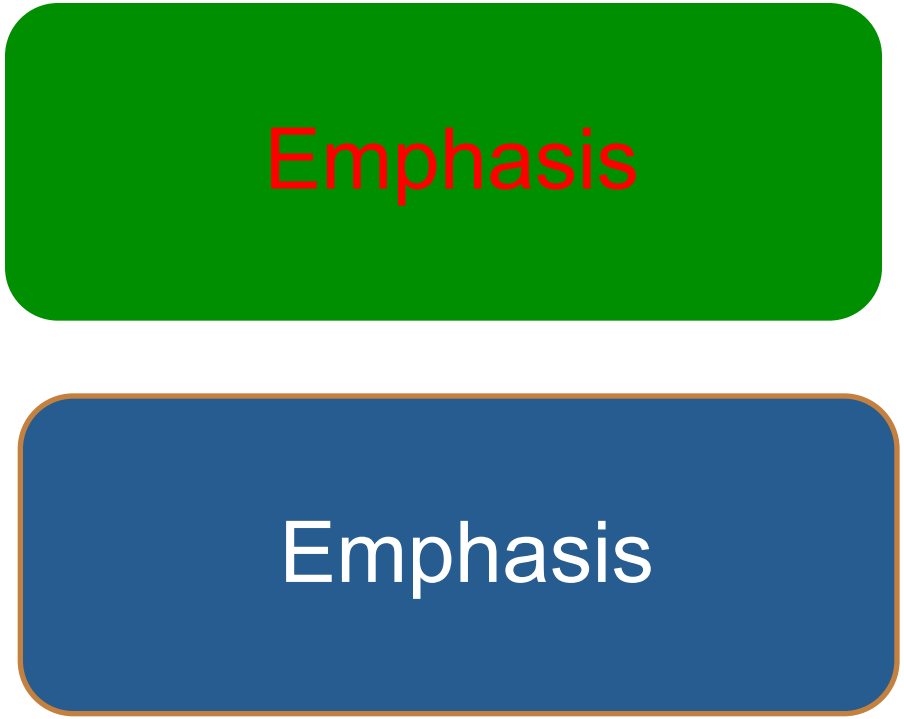
This is Calibri 36 point font

This is Calibri 48 point font

Radel (1999)

A MIXTURE OF UPPER AND LOWER CASE LETTERS IS EASIER TO READ QUICKLY AND ACCURATELY, AND TAKES UP LESS SPACE ON THE SLIDE

A mixture of upper and lower case letter is easier to read quickly and accurately, and takes up less space on the slide.



Radel (1999)

“Show quotes and definitions as slides,
but present them by saying nothing
and letting the audience read.
Don’t read aloud when the audience is reading for themselves.”

Bullet Points

- Present core ideas
- Use key words
- Avoid “word wrapping”
- Use parallelism for first word of each bullet point
- Omit sub-bullets

Images and pictures

Photos, digital images, sketches, maps, screen shots, digital art, digital video

Models of concepts/processes

Tables, diagrams, matrices, hierarchies, charts, timelines, animated graphics

A	B
C	D

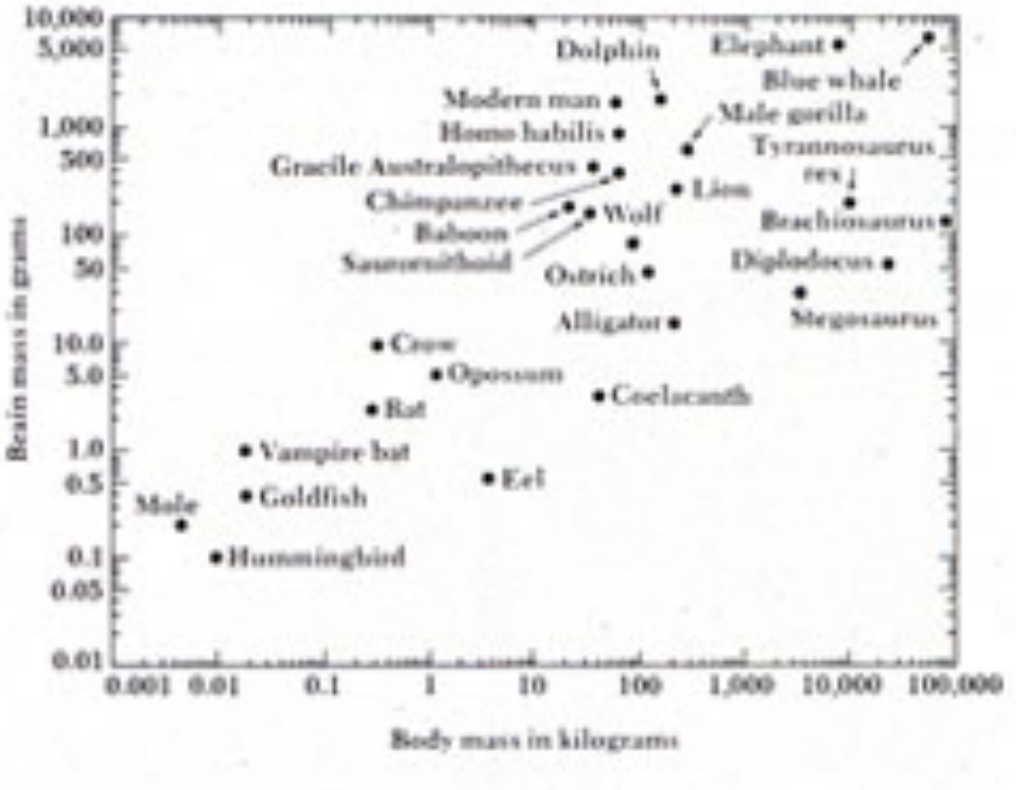
Data visualization

- Create 2-3 slides that make the most of the power of visual communication
- For example, watch:

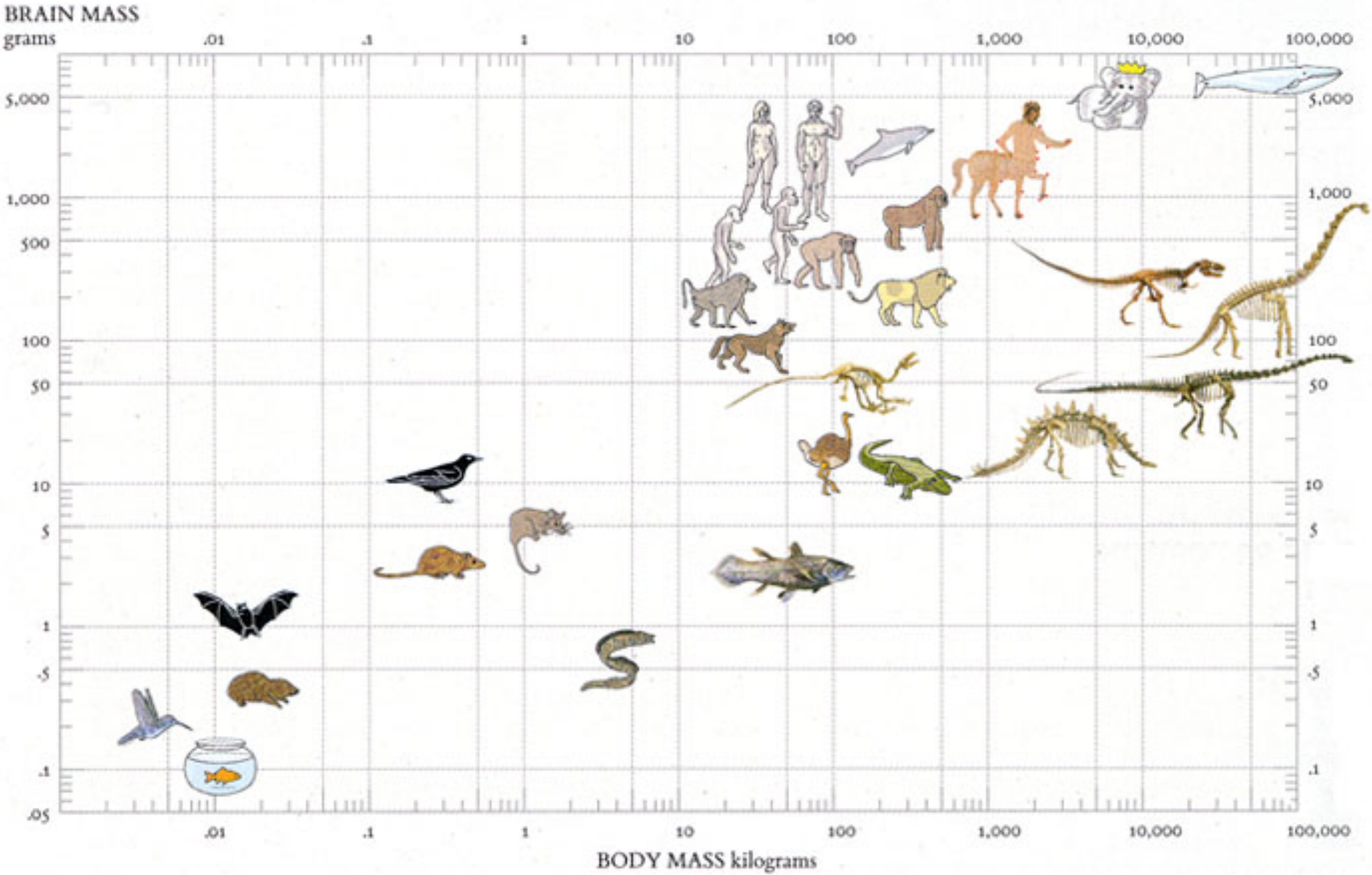
  Hans Rosling

  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbkSRLYSojo

Data visualization



Tufte (2006)


BRAIN MASS
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BODY MASS kilograms

Tufte (2006)