
Communication Skills I

Assignment 3: Critical Review

Lisandro A. Roldan

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Some FEM-DEM formulations to simulate multi-fracture in solid - coffee talk by Feng Chung

The presentation consisted in the explanation of four different methods developed by the speaker (FEM-DEM replace method, particle contact based method, share node based method and spring element method) for simulating fractures in solids.

The following review will only criticize the communicative aspects of the presentation, not the technical part. In order to do this, the critique has been divided into sections for a clearer exposition it.

Organization of the presentation

Overall, the presentation had a clear organization: introduction to the problem, objective of the project, methodology used, problems faced results and conclusion. However, it would have been interesting that the speaker had spent some time in the comparison between the four developed methods with their advantages and disadvantages.

Slides

The slides showed an excellent use of multimedia content. Most of them were equilibrated and organized showing few, but important, portions of text and mathematical expressions. Abundant quantity of pictures and videos were used to illustrate the results obtained, as well as graphs with readable information. It is important to remark that the use of good quality slides stimulated the audience, helping to keep their attention focused on the presentation.

Speech

Without any intention to offend, it is important to remark that the speaker had a specially marked accent and monotonic pitch. This sometimes led to auditory fatigue from part of the audience at some points of the presentation. It was also noticed, that the speaker tended to read the text from the slides and talk in first person, which are not recommended

practices while giving a presentations. A balanced use of the laser pointer was observed, employed only when it was necessary to emphasise something in the slides.

Conclusions

Feng Chung's presentation, in general, was satisfying. Specially if it is taken into account that the majority of the audience was technically unprepared to understand the details of the project. In stead of trying to explain details of the work done, the approach of the speaker was giving an overall view of the whole. It is doubtless that some members of the public, including the writer of this report, will read his paper when they obtain enough knowledge to fully understand it.