

The Oral Presentation

- People say public speaking is the number one fear
 - Death is 6th!
- "The human brain starts working the moment you are born and never stops until you stand up to speak in public."
 - George Jessel



The Oral Presentation

The Scientist as a Performer - Why?

- Communicate your findings to colleagues
- Establish scientific priority
- Public relations
 - You
 - Tenure and promotion
 - Your research group/PI



Presentation skills may get you the job, the grant, or the invitation to Europe!

The Oral Presentation

Defining the Scope of the Task

- Understand the background of your audience
 - Scope of session
 - Who'll be there? What will they know?
- Know who the session leaders are
- Know who the other speakers are
 - Should your talk be coordinated with those of others?



The Oral Research Presentation

Structure of a 20 Minute Talk

- Background (2-4 slides)
- Aim of the study & RQs (1 slide – essential!)
- Brief methods (2-5 slides)
- Results (4-8 slides)
- Summary/Conclusions (1 slide)
- Implications/Future Research (1 slide)
- Tips for students early in their program
 - As Dr. Ward would say – “Make it pretty!”

No more than
18-22 slides
in total!

The Oral Presentation

Avoiding Technical Snafus



- Take care with colors, font size, overcrowding
 - Project before the meeting
 - Don't apologize for slides (or need to)
- Arrive at the session room at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the session – run through the slides
- Have back-up systems in place
 - CD/zip/removable media plus laptop
 - Give a labeled copy of your presentation to your mentor or a trustworthy colleague or put in “dropbox”
 - Never check your presentation with your luggage!

The Oral Presentation

Tips for Delivery

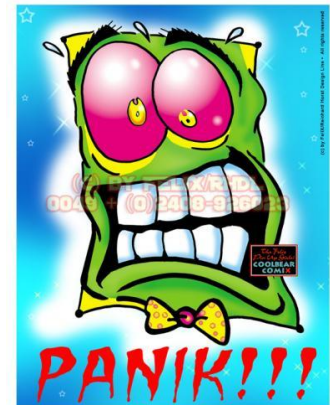


- Short words/sentences/paragraphs
 - Avoid jargon and abbreviations
- Plan out your transitions from each slide carefully
 - The audience cannot go back and review
- Establish and maintain eye contact
 - Place a friend in a strategic location
- Don't hesitate to show expression/enthusiasm/personality!
- Never read from a prepared text or recite a memorized one

The Oral Presentation

Overcoming Anxiety

- Practice, practice, practice!
 - Present to a variety of audiences if possible
 - Your talk will almost certainly get longer on the day; allow for this!
 - Use outline notes to ensure coverage of key points
- Physical considerations
 - Feet apart
 - Hands on podium
 - Pointer off between points!



The Oral Presentation

The role of rehearsal:

“It takes three weeks to prepare a good *ad lib* speech”

Mark Twain

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Handling Questions

- You are the expert
 - Prepare among friends
 - Insist that they challenge you
- It's OK to say you don't know, or haven't done the experiment yet
- The three "D"'s
 - Defend (nicely)
 - Deflect
 - Defer



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Handling Questions

- Different types – handle accordingly
 - Need clarification
 - Suggest something helpful
 - Want to engage in research dialog
 - Show that he/she is better than you
- Anticipate questions (additional slides)
- Don't let them hijack the talk (postpone)



The Oral Presentation

Closing Thoughts

- Presenting your work orally is a wonderful opportunity to further your career
- The keys to success are preparation, precision and practice
- Always have a back-up plan
- Develop your own style
- Try to have fun!

