Improving Presentation Skills

*Poster, PowerPoint, and Virtual Presentation Tips*

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Agenda

- Selecting Content
- Bookends: Introduction and Conclusion
- PowerPoint Presentations
- Posters
- Virtual Presentations
- Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication
- Wrap-Up
Selecting Content

- How long will you be presenting?
- Purpose of presentation? Format?
- Who will you be presenting to?
- What information do you want to convey?
  Your message? Takeaways?
  - Know your goal
  - Think big picture
- Consider any guidelines governing your poster content
Presentation Bookends
Starting Off Right - Introduction

- First impression
- Introduce yourself (mentors, advisors, etc.)
- Be welcoming
- Sets tone for presentation
- Outline main points

You only get one first impression.

A great introduction will capture an audience’s attention or spark interest.
Starting Off Right - Introduction

- Narrative approach - creating story, conversational
- Think big picture - intriguing and relevant
  - Necessary background information or definitions?
  - How did this lead you to your research question?
  - What were you hoping to find?
- Very short synopsis to peak interest
  - What is your research topic? State your purpose.
  - What have you found?
  - Why is it important?

Tips for Delivery: https://visme.co/blog/presentation-structure/
Finishing Strong - Conclusion

- Connect and summarize
  - What is the ultimate consequence of your journey?
  - Restate main points and re-answer the question (*tell audience where they are going, take them there, and then remind them where you took them*)
- Considerations for future research
  - Is this really the end?
  - What happens next?

Thank the audience (mentors, advisors, etc.) and invite questions.
Creating an Academic Poster

Great Resource for Presenting:
https://www.scientifica.uk.com/neurowire/tips-for-presenting-your-scientific-poster-at-a-conference
Creating an Academic Poster - Structure

- **Information Tracking:** Vertically from center to top to bottom, and horizontally from left to right
- **Content Areas:** Title, Presenters and Contributors, Logos, Abstract (Introduction), Methods, Results, Conclusions, References
- **Presentation:** Lists, diagrams, figures, etc.

Create a Narrative or Elevator Pitch
Creating an Academic Poster - Style & Structure

- **Do not** single space (double spacing after punctuation is easier to read)
- Justify text (be consistent)
- Visually appealing color and contrast
- **Font:**
  - Title: 60 point Bold
  - Section headings: 30 point Bold
  - Text: 24 point

30% text, 40% graphics, 30% empty space
Creating an Academic Poster - Style & Structure

- Templates available online and through research guides
- Check the poster size for conference/presentation
- Steps:
  - PowerPoint: Design → Slide size → Custom slide size
  - Slides: File → Page setup → Custom
- Save as .pdf for printing

Learn More: https://researchguides.case.edu/posterdesign
Creating an Academic Poster - Example 1
Creating an Academic Poster - Example 2
Creating an Academic Poster - Example 3
Creating an Academic Poster - Alternative

Reimagining the Academic Poster: https://radio.wosu.org/post/save-science-poster-researchers-want-kill-it-and-start-over#stream/0
Creating an Academic Poster - Alternative
Considerations for PowerPoint
Considerations for PowerPoint

- Keep text to a minimum (6-8 lines per slide, < 30 words per slide)
- Visually appealing color and contrast
- Images, lists, diagrams, etc. (label and cite sources)
- Font:
  - 18-point or larger
  - Sans Serif fonts
- Simple animations

Be sure to number slides
Considerations for PowerPoint

Before:
• Graph details too small to read
• Text pulled directly from figure legend
• Bullet points too detailed and make hard-to-connect reference to figure

After:
• Unified concept simplified into assertion statement
• Graph and images color-coded for clear referencing
• Graph much larger and easier to read

Alternative Text

Before:
• Graph details too small to read
• Text pulled directly from figure legend
• Bullet points too detailed and make hard-to-connect reference to figure

After:
• Unified concept simplified into assertion statement
• Graph and images color-coded for clear referencing
• Graph much larger and easier to read
Considerations for PowerPoint - Example 1
Virtual Presentation Tips
Virtual Presentation Tips

- Engage the audience
- Use a professional background
- Check the Tech
  - Consider using a headset
- Dress professionally
- Stand-up (if possible)
- Use a mirror
Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication
Verbal Communications

- Rate of speech and volume
- Avoid monotone speech and use pauses
  - Be enthusiastic
- Avoid filler words
- Speak to your demographic
- Ask questions to keep engaged
Non-Verbal Communications

- Comfortable distance
- Eye contact (camera contact)
- Appear confident
- Appropriate facial expressions
- Gestures and movement
Wrap-Up: Conclusion

- Content is key!
- Determine the message and narrow focus
- Consider approaches for each format and best structure
- Pay attention to the details
- Seek feedback and resources
- Have a plan B
- Practice, Practice, Practice
Thank you!

Questions?

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