

Tips for Academic Success

Presentation Skills

Structuring Content

Outcomes and Takeaways:

As a presenter, you want to avoid information overload. Plan to present your audience with relevant, key information.

Visual Representations:

Include visual representations to keep the audience engaged and clearly describe concepts.

Starting Off Right!

First Impressions: Begin by making a good first impression. Begin with confidence and don't forget to introduce yourself.

Know Your Audience: How much background do they have on the topic? Will you need to define key terms? To be safe, tailor the content and delivery to suit any audience (expert to novice).

Importance of Introduction: Consider a joke, cartoon, a bold statement, or personal experience.

Delivering Your Content

Create a Verbal Map: A verbal map should be a sequence of main points and can be reiterated to attendees at major crossroads or transitions.

Create Relevance: Focus both on the importance and relevance of your topic.

Use Transitions: Connect the concepts. Don't assume individuals will naturally follow you without a clear path.

Closing

Connect and Summarize: Last chance to resonate with your audience.

Considerations: Always want to present the audience with considerations for future research or implications for future studies or programs.

Questions: Leave time for questions.

Anticipate questions and practice your responses.

Verbal Communication

Rate and Volume: Practice the pacing of your presentation and know the appropriate volume for the presentation location.

Filler Words: Avoid using filler words (um, like, uh).

Monotone speech: Avoid sounding monotone by using inflection and varying your intonation.

Pauses: Pause naturally where punctuation would be located.

Non-Verbal Communication

Comfortable Distance: Stand close enough to establish rapport, but with comfortable radius with your audience.

Eye Contact: Speak to the entire audience, not just two people.

Appear Confident: Stand up straight.

Facial Expressions: Be personable without becoming distracting.

Movement: Do not lean on objects. Avoid swaying back and forth.

PowerPoint Considerations

Good PowerPoint

- Relies heavily on images
- Enhances the presentation
- Visually appealing
- Avoids content overload

Bad PowerPoint

- Contains small font
- Greater than 6 lines per slide
- Printed and distributed
- Poor quality images



Practice! Practice! Practice!

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Poster Presentations

What Makes a Good Poster?

Readable: Easy flow of ideas. Avoid grammatical errors, complex or passive sentence structure, and misspellings. Do not overload with content. What takeaways or key points should be included?

Legible: Font size and type is important. Make sure you choose a font that is easy to read and print all items large enough for attendees to see from 4-8 feet away. Pay close attention to the colors you choose for the poster. You want color contrast that is easy to see and visually appealing.

Well Organized: How well you organize the content spatially, can greatly impact how your message and information is communicated. If individuals can find the necessary information quickly, they will move on to the next topic.

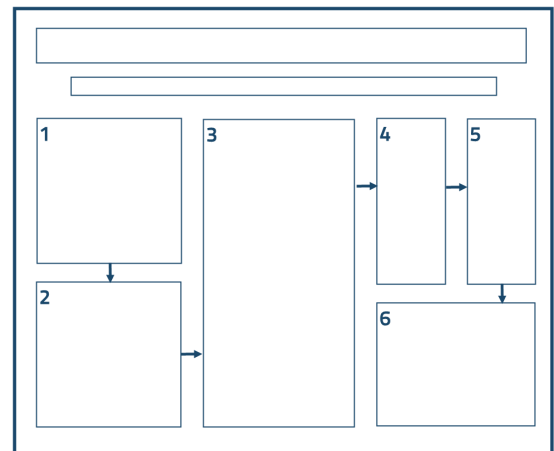
Succinct: Posters have a small window of time to grab the attention and interest of the audience. Make key items (including the title) prominent. Keep the amount of text used throughout to a minimum. Do not overwhelm the reader with text! Include less text, and more graphs, charts, and images.

Arranging the Poster

People approach new information in a known spatial sequence: vertically from center to top to bottom, and horizontally from left to right.

The most important information should be centered at the top (title) followed by the top left, and finishing in the bottom right.

Organize the material into logical sections with headings (abstract, introduction, methods, results, conclusions, references, etc.)



Tips to Remember

Prepare a brief narrative!

It is best to prepare a brief oral synopsis of the purpose, finding, and implications of your work to say to interested parties. Keep this narrative short, normally 2-3 minutes. You want to capture the main points in a succinct and compelling fashion.

Practice your dialogue!

A key component of a poster session is how well you can maintain dialogue with the judges or attendees. After presenting your information, you will need to be able to answer questions and interact with attendees. Anticipate questions and practice responses.

Adapted from: Making Great Posters for Research Applications, Ann Holstein, KSL