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Lilly Gray

Author Success Workshop:

Effectively Communicating Your Research Part 2

Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University

PM Session, 12 February 2019

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What are your goals?

You need to be an *effective communicator* of your research

Articles Presentations

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What are your goals?

You need to be an *effective communicator* of your research

Presentations

1. Importance of presenting
2. Poster presentations
3. Oral presentations
4. Preparing slides
5. Presentation skills
6. Effective Q&A

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Section 1

Importance of presenting your work

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Skills needed on the path to publication success

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Why are presentations important?

- Share your published *and unpublished* findings
- Identify trends in the field
- Network and form collaborations

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When should you present your work?

Before you publish?

Conferences, Seminars,
Lab Meetings, Journal Clubs

After you publish?

Conferences, Seminars,
Press Conferences, Media Enquiries, Media Interviews,
Social Media, Open Days, Public Education

BOTH!

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Presenting *before* you publish

Advantages

- Identify new trends
- Meet similar researchers
- Get advice
- Identify problems

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Identify problems early

- Unclear aims
- Methodological problems
- Unclear figures
- Missing /weak data
- Unclear relevance
- Lack of interest

"Why is this important for the field?"

Lack of interest in your published article

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Presenting *after* you publish

Advantages

- Actively promote your article
- Advice on future directions
- Networking with researchers
- Networking with journal editors

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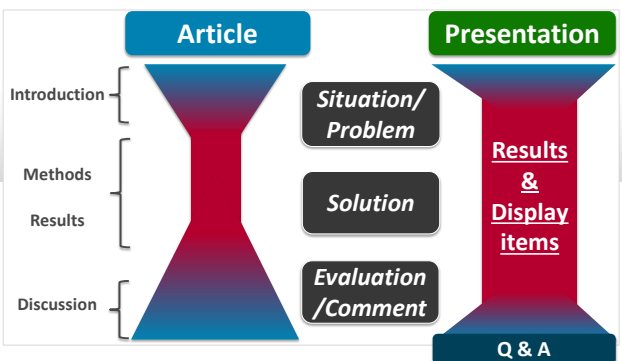
Articles vs. presentations



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Encouraging feedback

1. Check microphones before presentation
2. Ask for Qs at breaks and at end
3. Allow interruption for small audiences
4. Gauge level of audience knowledge
5. Provide contact details in slides/poster

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Section 2

Poster presentations

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Benefits of poster presentations

Allows you to *share* results with peers

Allows you to discuss *one-on-one* with other researchers about your study

- More interactive than oral presentations
- Improve discussing your research in English
- Help build international collaborations

Don't block your poster

There will likely be more than one person reading it

Don't make them read it!

Present your poster to people

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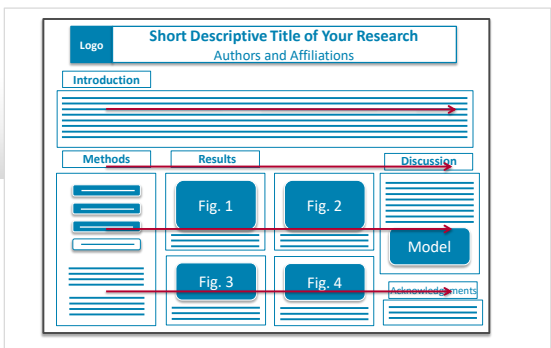
Poor poster layout



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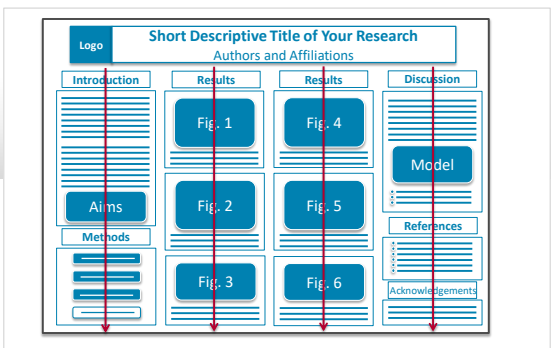
Good poster layout



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Poster formatting

Font

- Read from 1.5 m
- Lighting may be poor
- Use sans serif font (Arial, Calibri)
- Title: 85 pt
- Authors: 50 pt
- Headings: 36–44 pt
- Text: 24–34 pt

Colors

- 2–3 colors maximum; keep them consistent
- Light background with dark/black letters
- PowerPoint colors are often too dark for printing

Note: Check guidelines for size/format, board size, and posting method; Typical size = A0 (33.1 x 46.8 inches) or 36 x 48 inches

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Preparing your poster

Do include	Don't include
• Brief introduction • General methodology • Most important results • Brief discussion • Funding, Conflicts of interest, Acknowledgments • Contact details	• Abstract • Detailed methods/results (use a QR code) • Too much text (50:50) • Justified text (prefer left-aligned); no ALL-CAPS • Many references

You won't always be at your board…
Bring namecards and A4 / A3 color copies of your poster (with contacts and QR code) to distribute

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Brief introduction

Why your work should be done	Current state of the field Identify knowledge gaps State your objectives
Keep it short	2–3 paragraphs 200–300 words
Illustrations	Use schematics or models to help explain your hypothesis

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General methodology

- Briefly describe techniques in logical order
- Don't include specific details (e.g., dimensions of minor components)
- Use flow charts and illustrations for clarity

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Results

- **Most of your poster** — Large and clearly labeled figures; illustrative quotes according to themes
- **Figure legends** — Should explain technical details as well as factually explain results
- **Image quality** — 300 dpi vs 72 ppi; CMYK vs RGB

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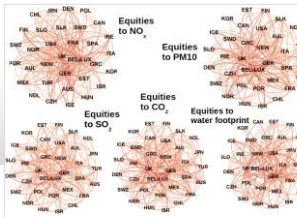
Figures



Clear figure legend

Fig 4. Backbone of the links of null-model-enhanced local reciprocity, between the equity layer and the five environmental layers, for the year 2010: NOx, PM10, SO_2, CO_2 equivalent and water footprint. Relationships between equity and the five environmental layers in each country are shown after performing reciprocal multiplex network analysis. Increasing dark red indicates an increasing out-degree of the node. The hubs are placed in the core of the cloud. The reciprocity analysis confirms that equity is mostly reciprocated with NO_x and SO_2, suggesting a link with the industrial sector.

- **Title of the experiment**
- **Brief methodology**
- **Key findings**

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Ruzzenenti et al. PLoS ONE. 2015;10:doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0136767.

Table formatting

Table 1. Yield strength of steel alloys after HT and LST

- **Clear and concise table caption**
- **Data aligned and formatted; specific data highlighted**
- ***NO* black lines!**
- **Abbreviations defined**

Alloy	Treatment	Yield strength (Mpa)
13xx	Heat	278
40xx	Heat	246
41xx	**Heat**	**620**
13xx	Laser	248
40xx	Laser	260
41xx	Laser	450

HT, Heat treatment
LST, Laser surface treatment

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Conclusions

- **Summarize important points**
- **Use bullet points for emphasis**
- **Illustrate your model with a schematic**
- **Do not place *too* low on the poster**

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Start positive and get their attention early

You will have 30 seconds to convince people to stay at your poster

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Photo used with permission from Dr. Pascal Wallisch

Start positive and get their attention early

You will have 30 seconds to convince people to stay at your poster

Polite greeting — Smile; say: "Good afternoon…"; "Thanks for coming to view my poster"

Study implications — Why your poster is important to them

"In our study, we found that [main conclusion]. This suggests that [implication]." OR

"Can I tell you about our study? We've shown that [main conclusion]. This means that [implication]."

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Presenting your poster

You should be able to present your poster <5 minutes

Other posters	**Be respectful,** attendees want to see other posters too
Other attendees	**Be efficient,** you want to present to many attendees
Limited attention	**Be aware,** many distractions and attendees may be tired

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Briefly introduce your study

Introduction

- **What is known** — "Currently, it is thought that…"
- **What is not known** — "However, it is not clear whether…"
- **Objectives and methodology**
  - **What are your aims to address the problem?**
  - **Briefly describe the general methodology**

"To address this issue, we used [methodology] to determine [aims]."

Useful to ask the *background* of your audience

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Figures – Guide the audience

Describing data/figures

- **Introduce what you did**
  - "First, we [describe first aim]."
- **Say how you did it**
  - "To do this, we [describe specific experiment]."
- **State what you found & what it means**
  - "Here, you can see..."
  - "This result suggests that..."

Ask for your audience's *opinions*!

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Finishing your presentation

Conclusions

- **Main conclusions**
  - "Together, these results show that..."
  - "We conclude that..."
- **Implications**
  - "Our findings suggest that..."
  - "Based on our findings, we recommend..."
- **Future**
  - "Currently, we are investigating..."
  - "Do you have any questions or suggestions for the next step?"

Get *advice* to improve your study

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Activity 1: Poster formatting

Your colleague has prepared three different posters, but he is unsure which one is the best for presenting at a conference he is attending next month.

Please review each of the three posters and give advice on how he can improve their readability.

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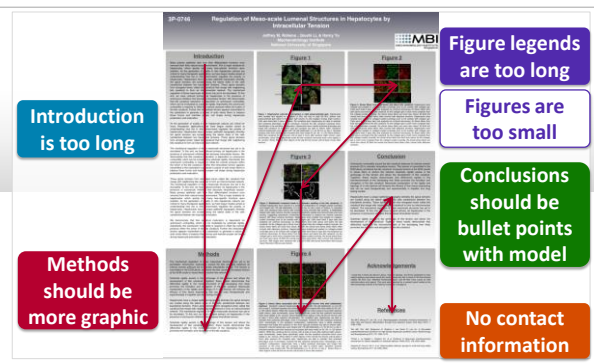
Activity 1: Poster 1



Introduction is too long

Methods should be more graphic

Figure legends are too long

Figures are too small

Conclusions should be bullet points with model

No contact information

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Too much text!

Activity 1: Poster 2

Content of title is unclear

Figure legends are too short

Conclusions should be bullet points

Methods should be more graphic

Font has low readability

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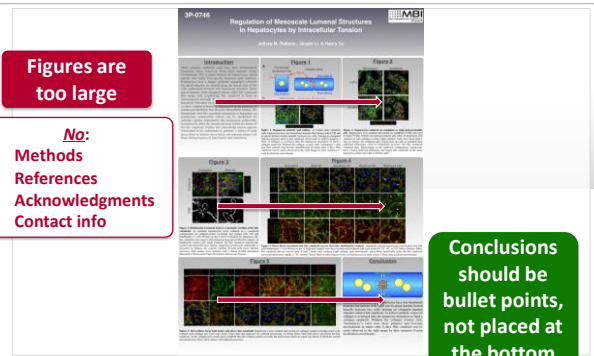
Activity 1: Poster 3



Figures are too large

No:
- Methods
- References
- Acknowledgments
- Contact info

Conclusions should be bullet points, not placed at the bottom

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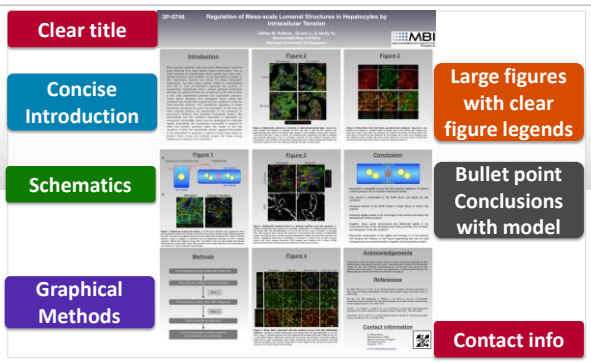
Activity 1: Good poster



Clear title

Concise Introduction

Schematics

Graphical Methods

Large figures with clear figure legends

Bullet point Conclusions with model

Contact info

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Section 3

Oral presentations

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Comparing articles and presentations

	Articles	Presentation
Time	Not limited Readers can take their time	Limited Limited attention
Flow of information	No control Readers can skip sections	Control Audience has to listen to everything

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Keep your audience in mind

What do they want to know? ⟷ What do you want to tell them?

Keep it simple!

What will be interesting for them?

What will keep their attention?

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Keep your audience in mind

Experience level and area of expertise

Younger/ Broader
- More introduction/explanation
- More graphics (e.g., methodology)
- Simpler explanation of results
- Clearer/broader implications

Experienced/ Specialized
- Less introduction
- More data and figures
- Detailed mechanisms
- Detailed future research directions

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Telling a story

Beginning	Why your study needs to be done	*Situation/ Problem*
Middle	What you did & found	*Solution*
End	How your study advances the field	*Evaluation /Comment*

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Logical flow

Transitions within and between slides

In writing, you can link the end of one sentence to the beginning of another.

Your study design is not perfect, but you deserve funding. Your grant will be awarded next year.

Use the same principle in your presentations!

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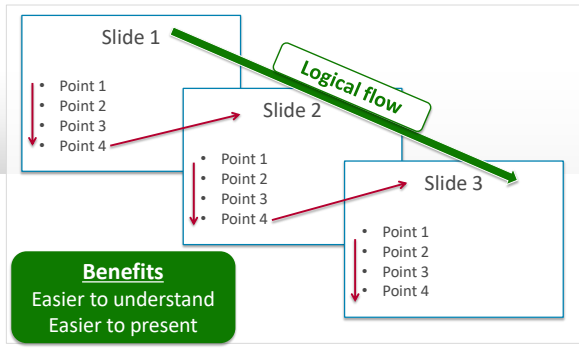
Transitions within and between slides



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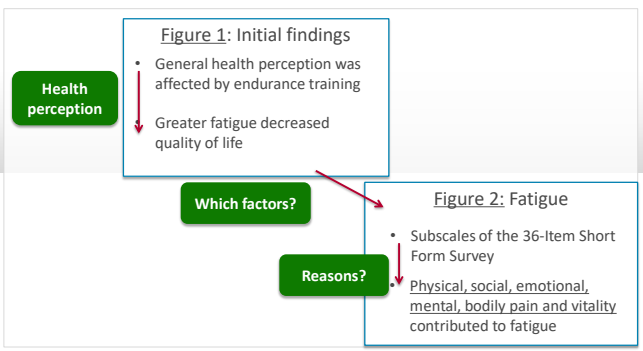
Transitions within and between slides



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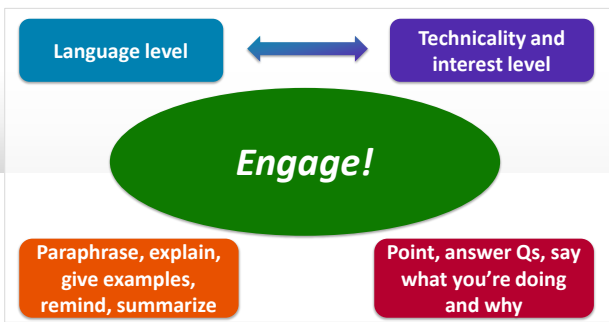
Don't lose your audience



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Section 4

Preparing slides

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Beginning

- **Brief introduction**
- Background information
- Aims of your study
- Use pictures and diagrams

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Example

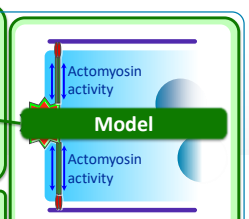
- Lumenal structures (bile canaliculi, BC) between hepatocytes are difficult to maintain *in vitro*

What is known

- Sandwich culture configurations promote BC maturation

What is not known

- **Intracellular mechanisms unclear**



AIM: Determine if intracellular tension promotes or maintains BC maturation *in vitro*

What are the aims

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Middle

- **Methods**
- Flow chart or schematic
- **Figures**
- Important results

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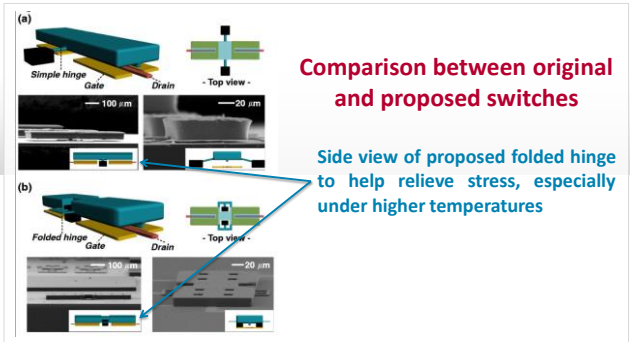
Selecting important data



Comparison between original and proposed switches

Side view of proposed folded hinge to help relieve stress, especially under higher temperatures

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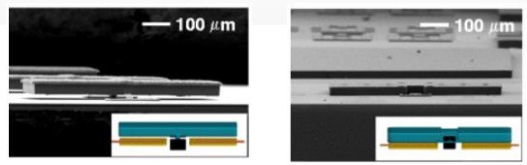
Kim et al. Micro and Nano System Letters. 2014;2:2.

Selecting important data

Comparison between original and proposed switches

Side view of proposed folded hinge to help relieve stress, especially under higher temperatures



Original switch Proposed switch

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Kim et al. Micro and Nano System Letters. 2014;2:2.

Selecting important data

Characteristic	Total Cohort (N=1,120,295)	≥ 60 ml/min/1.73 m² (N=924,136)	< 60 ml/min/1.73 m² (N=196,159)*
Age (yr)	52.2 ± 16.3	49.1 ± 15.1	66.6 ± 13.0
Female sex (%)	54.6	53.4	60.2
Ethnic group			
White	50.9	47.2	68.6
Black	7.4	7.2	5.3
Hispanic	5.9	6.3	4.1
Asian	8.1	8.5	6.7
Mixed	2.4	2.4	2.8
Other	25.3	28.4	12.5
Medical history			
Coronary heart disease	6.3	4.5	17.8
Stroke	2.6	1.7	8.3
Peripheral arterial disease	1.8	1.1	6.7
Chronic heart failure	2.1	1.0	19.8

Important

* estimations

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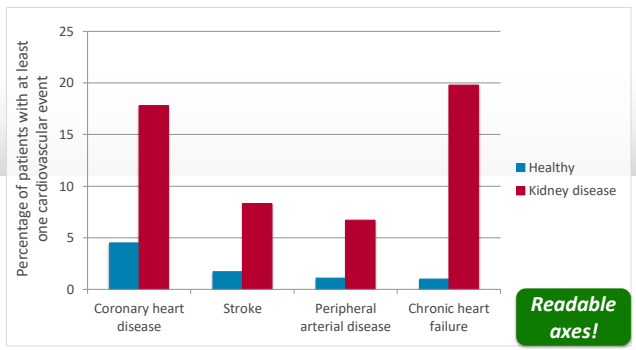
Modified from: Go et al. New Engl J Med. 2004;351:1296.

Often graphs are better than tables



Readable axes!

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Modified from: Go et al. New Engl J Med. 2014;351:1296.

Ending

Conclusions

Summary and implications

Future directions

How is this being further developed?

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Slide layout

Font

- Sans serif (e.g., Arial, not serif)
- 40 pt for titles
- 30+ pt for headings
- 24+ pt for text

Layout

- Limit to ~8 lines of text per slide
- Use bullet points, not sentences
- Use a variety of slide elements
- Organize and align clearly
- Lots of spacing; no textures

No textures!

Well-designed slides show that you care about the presentation

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Bullet points

You should never write complete sentences like this on your slides. Therefore, try to use bullet points instead to communicate your ideas to your audience. Bullet points are also a great way to list the main points for your audience on the slide. However, it can also be boring for them as well. If this happens, you can quickly lose the attention of your audience. As we discussed earlier, once you lose the attention of your audience, your presentation is essentially over and you have not communicated the significance or relevance of your work to them. Another problem with bullet points is that it might suggest hierarchy in the list that you are sharing with your audience, which can be misleading for your audience. They may assume that the first point is more important that the last point, when this may not necessarily be the case. Lastly, having one large block of text to read takes more time for your audience and can be more difficult, especially for non-native English attendees.

Serif font style (Times New Roman)

Font is too small (14 point)

Full sentences (unnecessary text)

Written as paragraph

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Bullet points

Advantages

- Are easier to read than sentences
- Are a good way to list information

Disadvantages

- Can be boring
  - Can lose your audience's attention
- Can suggest hierarchy
- Can still be difficult to read

- Sentence fragments
- Parallel grammar
- 2 levels of bullets
- 26/32 point font
- Color, bold
- Show your logic

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Animation

- Focus the attention of your audience
- Don't let the audience read ahead
- Keep it simple: appear, fade, wipe
- Don't distract from your information!

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Graphics

- Simple and organized
- Contrasting colors, easy to read
- Distracting
- Lack of contrast = difficult to read
- f contrast = ult to read
- or information, not decoration
- For pictures, use compressed images

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Activity 2: Slide formatting

Study the following 4 slides. What would you recommend to improve their readability?

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Don't use Clip Art!

Bad contrast

Why are friends in Asia so similar??

Bad font style

Font too small

Research in Asia has shown that friends are more similar than chance would predict. There are to models that have been suggested to account for this similarity. The first is the social selection model, which states that because people want to be friends with people similar with them. The second model is the peer influence model, which states that because friends become more similar over time. However, because longitudinal studies to distinguish between these to models are difficult and complex, it's still really unclear which model is accurate.

Use bullet points

Don't use full sentences

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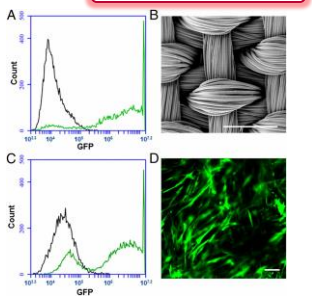
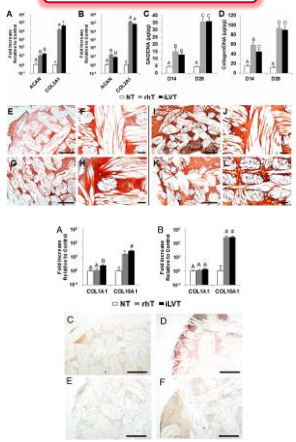
Too small to read

Brunger et al. PNAS 2014; 111: E798–E806.

PCL scaffolds can be interwoven to promote stem cell differentiation and extracellular matrix formation similar to what is seen in native tissues

Too many figures





Conclusions

Unrelated background

- Identified social stratification as a likely cause of workplace prejudice
- Establishment of support programs improves working environment
- Optimal program conditions are 8–10 people and 2 hours long
- Biannual programs are sufficient in reducing prejudice
- Currently evaluating cultural factors involved in program efficacy

Distracting & hard to read

By Notnoisy (Own work) [CC BY 3.0], via Wikimedia Commons

Conclusions

Make backgrounds semi-transparent

- Identified social stratification as a likely cause of workplace prejudice
- Establishment of support programs improves working environment
- Optimal program conditions are 8–10 people and 2 hours long
- Biannual programs are sufficient in reducing prejudice
- Currently evaluating cultural factors involved in program efficacy

Use dark text

Section 5

Presentation skills

Before you present…

Most important thing you can do…

Practice builds confidence!

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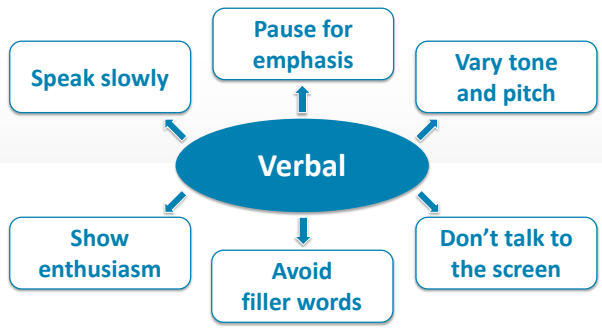
Presentation tips – Speaking style



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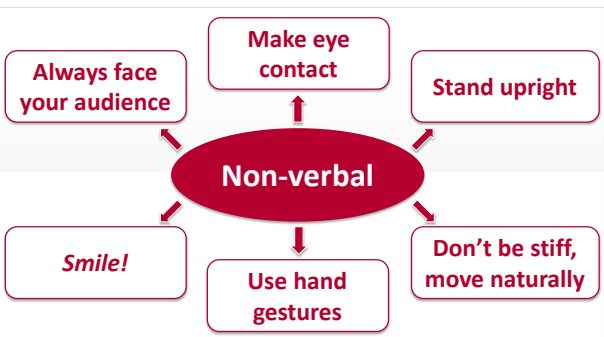
Presentation tips – Appear confident



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Edanz rule of 3

Always answer these <u>three</u> questions

1	***Introduction*** – <u>Why</u> your study is needed	1. What is known? 2. What is not known? 3. What are your aims?
2	***Figures*** – <u>What</u> you found	1. What did you do? 2. How did you do it? 3. What did you find?
3	***Conclusion*** – <u>How</u> your study advances the field	1. What is the conclusion? 2. What are the implications? 3. What are the next steps?

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Start positive and get their attention early

Never read your title slide

Start with what is *important* about your talk

- Say what the implications are
- Keep your audience in mind!
- For long talks: make an Agenda or Goals list (sets direction; activates prior knowledge)

Never **apologize for your English or for being nervous!**

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Start positive

Introduction

- **Thank the organizers**
  "I would like to thank [organizer] for kindly inviting me here today."
- **Opening comments**
  "I'm very happy to be able to speak to you today."
- **Start your presentation**
  "Today, I would like to talk about..."

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Develop your story

Body of presentation

~~• It is well known that...~~
~~• It has been reported that...~~
~~• It has been found that...~~
~~• In this method, it is important to note that...~~

- **Introduce the sections**
  "This is how I will discuss..."
  "As you can see, my presentation is divided into four sections."
- **Start the sections**
  "First, I would like to discuss..."
  "In this section, I will show that..."
- **Summarize each section**
  "I'd like to summarize the main findings from this section."
  "...So that's what we found when..."

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Figures – Guide the audience

Describing data/figures

~~• It can be seen that...~~
~~• It is clear from these experiments that...~~
~~• It seems that...~~
~~• It was found that...~~

- **Introduce the figures**
  "Now, I'd like to show you data from our recent experiments."
  "What we did here was..."
- **Talk about the data**
  "Here, you can see..."
  "The top graph shows..."
  "Here's...", "On this axis is..."
- **Focus on important information**
  "I'd like to draw your attention to..."
  "There are three things to note..."

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Finishing your presentation

Conclusions

- ~~It can be concluded that…~~
- ~~It can be implied that…~~
- ~~It is expected that…~~

Conclusion & Implications/Future
"In conclusion, the main findings of this study are…"

Thank people

Thank the audience:
"Thank you for your attention today."

Acknowledge assistance:
"I'd like to thank the people who were involved in this project."

Invite questions
"I'd now be happy to answer any questions that you may have."

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Additional tips

- Hold the laser pointer against your body to prevent shaking
- ***Always*** speak into the microphone
- ***Connect*** with your audience

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Connect with your audience

Presenters share with their audience	Have a conversation; involve the audience
Non-verbal tips	Eye contact, friendly, relaxed, confident
Verbal tips	Enthusiastic, not monotonous
Greet audience members before your presentation	

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Connect with your audience

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Time management

- Stay within your time limit
- Use a clock, watch, or mobile phone
- 1.5 to 2 minutes per slide; Skipping slides make you look unorganized
- Practice often and keep track of each section

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Always be prepared!

- Person before you spoke too long, so you have to shorten your talk
- You're asked to speak for longer
- Technical difficulties
- Many questions during your talk

- Only essential information on your slides
- Can adjust your timing based on your talking points

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Section 6

Effective Q&A sessions

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Goals of Q&A

- For the attendees
  - Learn more about your study
  - Clarify important points
- For you
  - How interesting is your study?
  - Advice to improve your study

Similar questions that peer reviewers may have!

- For everyone
  - Networking and building collaborations

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Encouraging questions

Can't provide all the information — **Have extra slides for the end: Methods, extra data and figures**

"I do have more on this, which I can share later if anyone is interested."

Prompt questions — **"Currently it's unclear what caused this effect…" / 6WHs**

"That ends my talk. I would now like to take questions from the audience."

Talk to attendees beforehand — **Know their interests More comfortable to ask you**

"Good morning; how are you?...What's the topic of your research project?"

Appear friendly — **Make eye contact, smile, show enthusiasm**

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Answering questions

1. Thank the audience member
2. Understand the question
3. Repeat/rephrase the question
4. Answer the question (*be concise!*)
5. Ensure you have answered the question
6. Thank the audience member again

Gives you time to think of the answer!

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Handling questions – Understand the question

Could you hear it clearly?
"Could you repeat that, please?"

Could the audience hear it clearly?
"So, the question was…"

Do you understand the question?
"Do you mean…?"

What do they really want to know?
"So, your question is about…"

Is the question appropriate for the audience?
(Summarize a technical Q or A)

What is the most relevant question?
"Because of time, I'll focus on…"

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After the presentation…

Approach those who asked questions

- Tell them you appreciate their interest
- Ask them about their research/interests
- Great way to build networks and collaborations with researchers in your field

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Asking useful questions

- **Identify two or three important questions during talk**
  - Write them down & practice how you will say them
- **Try to ask your question first, so someone else doesn't ask it before you!**
  - If someone asks your question #1, then ask question #2
- **Justify your question to the speaker**
  - "You mentioned that X leads to Y; however, it is also possible this is an indirect effect. How did you verify a direct relationship between these two variables?"
- **Clarify any confusion the speaker might have**
- **Thank the speaker for his or her answer**

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What are your goals?

You need to be an *effective communicator* of your research

Presentations

1. **Importance of presenting**
2. **Poster presentations**
3. **Oral presentations**
4. **Preparing slides**
5. **Presentation skills**
6. **Effective Q&A**

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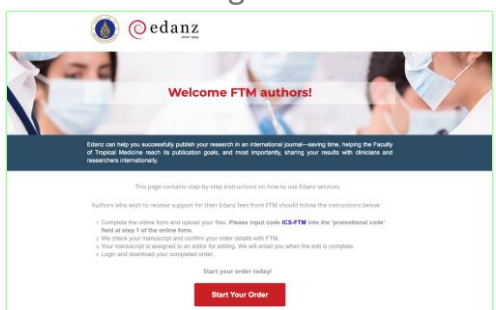

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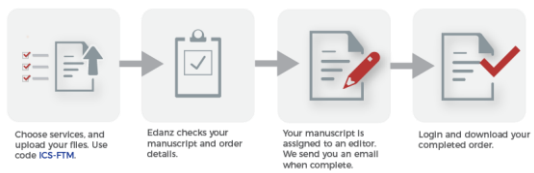

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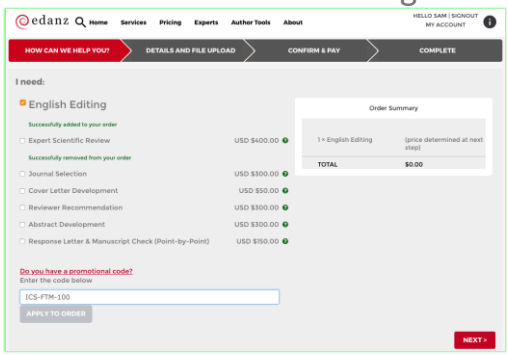

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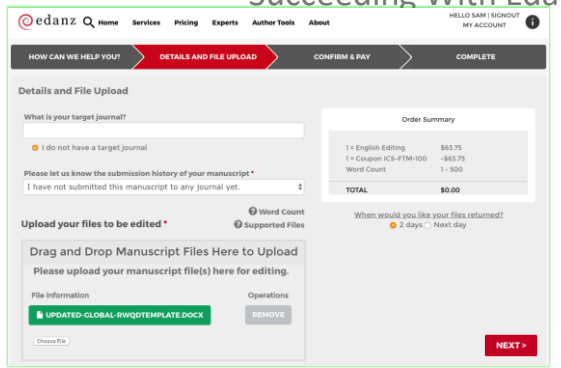

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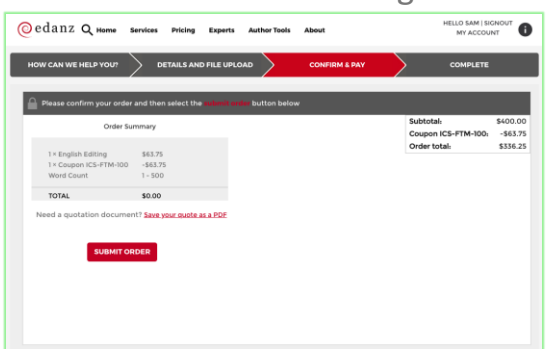

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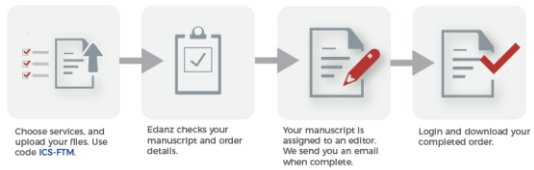

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