Compelling Conference Presentations

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Agenda

• Conference presentation as a genre
• What You Say
  o Developing your narrative
• What You Show
  o Communicating with slideware
• What You Do
  o Presenting with confidence
GENRE ANALYSIS: APOS

A = Audience
P = Purpose
O = Organization
S = Style

“You do not really understand something unless you can explain it to your grandmother.”

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What You Say: Developing Your Narrative

Place your ADVERTISEMENT here!

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Developing Your Narrative

- “Narrative”: A clear, coherent, concise account of your research

- Beginning; middle; and end

- Not (necessarily) in the same order as the sections in your abstract
Mapping Your 8-minute Talk

- **BEGINNING:** Context
  - What’s the big-picture problem?
  - What’s the gap in our knowledge?
  - How does your research fill that gap?

- **MIDDLE:**
  - How did you carry out your research?
  - What did you find?

- **END:**
  - What is the significance of your results?
  - What are the limitations?
  - What further research needs to be done?
What You Say: Final Tips

- Read the draft out loud, and practice while standing
- Don’t vanish! Use “I” statements
- Use strong action verbs (e.g., analyze, evaluate, measure, compare, quantify, etc.)
- Help audience follow the thread of ideas
  - The second point I want to make is…
  - As a result…
  - Now that we know X…where do we go from here…
- Remain energetic/enthusiastic throughout
- Open and close convincingly
What You Show: Communicating with Slideware
What purpose do slides serve? Why not just talk?
What purpose do slides serve? Why not just talk?

- Hook
- Supplement
- Sign-post
- Memory Aid
- Visual illustration
- Complement

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Slide Content
Converting the written into visual form

Think about the audience:

• What slides would assist them in understanding your narrative?
• What slides would help signal your transition points?
• What data should you present in slide form? How much data do you need to show, and in what form?
Slide Design
Font, Font Size, Colour, White Space, Alignment

Logistic Regression Model of System: Immune Cell Ratio Factors - Survival Lung Cancer Patients:

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Remember to give people time to read.

Otherwise, you are simply competing with your slides.
What You Show: Final Tips

- Acknowledgements slide
- Quality images
- Video
- Repetitive structures
- Need explanation
What You Do: Presenting with Confidence
What You Do: How do you establish credibility?

- Eye Contact
- Paralanguage (volume, rate, pitch, and pronunciation)
- Gestures
- Posture
- Facial expression
- Personal appearance

(Fatt, 1999, *Communication World* 16(6): 37-41)

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What You Do: Final Tips

- Feeling nervous? Take a breath!
- Lost your way? Admit it!
- Dry-mouthed? Drink water!
- Find yourself rambling? Keep to the 8-minute time limit. Think about what you can condense so that you can still present your conclusions.
Takeaways
Resources

- Graphos 1-credit courses [www.mcgill.ca/graphos]:
  - CEAP 652 Fundamentals of Academic Presentations
  - CESL 651 Pronunciation for Effective Communication
- McGill Writing Centre workshop on “Write It Before You Say It” [http://www.mcgill.ca/mwc]

- Links to Articles:
  - Oral communication: Planning your talk
    http://www.engineering.utoronto.ca/Directory/students/ecp/handbook/oral/planningtalk.htm
  - Ten rules for keeping your audience awake
    http://edr.sagepub.com/content/33/4/13.full.pdf+html?ijkey=WasT9Q8huqPU&keytype=ref&siteid=spedr
  - How to give an effective conference paper
    http://www.universityaffairs.ca/career-advice/career-advice-article/how-to-give-an-effective-conference-paper/
- Link to Video
  - 3MT (3-minute thesis) 2011 Queensland winner - Matthew Thompson
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvjPzsLlyGw