How to Give an Effective Research Presentation

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Before the Seminar

• find out about your audience
• prepare your slides, your notes, carefully
• practice
  – by yourself / with friends
• visit the seminar room to check:
  – your slides
  – lighting, projector, computer equipment,
  – make sure everyone can see (walk to back)
Before the Seminar - the Slides

• no more than 9 text lines per slide
• simple, clear diagrams
• label experimental conditions, axes
• be consistent in colors and style
• use text, graphs, drawings, photos, movies
• check your spelling!!
• text should be readable from a distance
• handouts might be useful (web address?)

Common Errors

• scanned images with unreadable axes, labels, no headings - must relabel
• no introduction or conclusion
• long sentences - use keywords only
• too much information - breakdown into several slides
• too many images on one slide
• unnecessary background colors
• unnecessary, or too many, animations

During the Seminar

• think about your audience
• have a plan of action
  – tell it to the audience
• start at the beginning - review
• be enthusiastic
  – a talk is a privilege and an opportunity
  – you are in command, act like it, enjoy it!
• repetition doesn’t hurt
Don’t!!
• mumble
• talk to the blackboard/screen
• apologize all the time
• read your talk (unless it is a speech)
• sit down while talking
• talk in a monotone
• have a poor attitude
• say “um” repetitively
• discuss things you don’t understand

Do’s
• arrive on time
  – plan ahead
  – the fog at the airport, really, was YOUR fault
• dress appropriately - any doubt, dress smartly
• thank your host
• quell repetitive, annoying, mannerisms
• move around, but not too much

At the End
• absolutely make sure you end on time
  – one minute per slide, two minutes per movie clip!
• give Credit/Acknowledgments
  – funding, coworkers, home institution
  – thank your host at the beginning
• listen to the Questions
• answer the questions
  – don’t be flippant, sarcastic, indolent
Presentations - Review a Paper

- Read around the subject
- Don’t copy whole sentences from paper
- Don’t write science you don’t understand
- Find focus in the paper
  - focus on one or two issues
  - don’t need to cover whole paper
- Simplify figs - big enough to read
- simplicity/clarity not comprehensive/detailed

Overall

- listen to the talks of others - and learn
- presentations are fun - enjoy it!
  - lose no opportunity to give a talk
  - go to conferences
  - give seminars to your peers
- respect your audience
- plan, plan, plan

Credits

- all my audiences, including students
  - for their endurance and politeness
  - for letting me practice on them
- my colleagues
  - for their examples, excellent and not so..
  - for asking me tough questions
Thanks for funding

- Foundation
- Agency
- Company
- University

This presentation can be found at:

http://chemweb.chem.uconn.edu/presentations/Effective_Presentation.pdf