
How to give a professional talk

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Problems arise when presenters

- ❖ Have not practiced.
 - ❖ Have not considered the needs their audiences.
 - ❖ Have not considered the affordances of the situation.
 - ❖ Allow natural nervousness to knock them off course.
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Today's Topics

- ❖ Understanding your purpose
 - ❖ Meeting your audience's needs
 - ❖ Maximizing your talk / poster
 - ❖ Preparing yourself for the occasion.
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Purpose

To present the most current information on your research in a short timespan by:

- ❖ Engaging your audience immediately.
 - ❖ Making the information accessible to all.
 - ❖ Supplementing visually (oral presentation).
 - ❖ Supplementing orally (visual presentation).
 - ❖ Being the person MOST excited about your work (it's contagious!).
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Audience

ORAL PRESENTATION

- ❖ Varied knowledge & interest in your topic
- ❖ Is seated and focused
- ❖ Can hear the context to understand the research better
- ❖ Needs verbal cues to follow the presentation.
- ❖ Will ask questions (hopefully!)

POSTER PRESENTATION

- ❖ Varied knowledge & interest in your topic
 - ❖ Passes by and stops (limited focus)
 - ❖ Will engage visually more than auditorily
 - ❖ Needs visual guidance to move from context to content
 - ❖ Will ask questions (hopefully!)
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Oral Presentation Content

- ❖ What is the problem and why is it a problem?
- ❖ What has been done about it before?
- ❖ What are you doing (or have done) about it?
- ❖ What additional value does your approach provide?
- ❖ Where do we go from here?

Remember to collaborate on this with your faculty advisor!

ENAR Effective Presentation Guidelines (2000)

Maximizing 10-12 minutes of airtime

- ❖ Get the audience hooked! Place them and/or you in the context.
 - ❖ Think of the “narrative” or story of the work.
 - ❖ Use connective and transitional devices as you speak to guide the audience.
 - ❖ Keep concepts simple.
 - ❖ Be aware of your breadth and depth: try to strike a balance.
 - ❖ Think of your “takeaway” idea to end on.
 - ❖ Don’t go over your allotted time!
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Building a slide presentation

- ❖ Simplicity is best
 - ❖ Color, font & size matter
 - ❖ Avoid fancy transitions & animation
 - ❖ Keep graphics high-quality
 - ❖ Use graphs/charts
 - ❖ Use the slide sorter to view the flow of your presentation
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Practice, Practice, Practice

- ❖ Make eye contact.
 - ❖ Do not read from your slides.
 - ❖ Know your material inside and out.
 - ❖ Don't panic if you forget to cover a detail.
 - ❖ Prepare for possible technological failures.
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You as a public speaker

- ❖ Know yourself under pressure: Do you hold your breath? Do your shoulders go up? Does your mouth get dry?
 - ❖ Eliminate distractions: pronunciation of key terms, spelling on slides, issues in the room (lighting, etc).
 - ❖ Dress comfortably yet professionally: This helps your body language.
 - ❖ Be confident and don't apologize: The audience is a fan club!
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Maximizing your poster

*First see the [URC poster guidelines](#) and work with your faculty advisor on the content!

- ❖ *Be Simple!* Emphasize results and conclusions. YOU are there for the details. Format text with bullets.
 - ❖ Think BIG. Everything should be legible from 4 feet away.
 - ❖ Work with color for consistency and emphasis.
 - ❖ Present data in graphics. Avoid tables. Trend lines (through line and bar graphs) present in a memorable way.
 - ❖ Keep all headings and labels horizontal.
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Maximizing your poster presentation

- ❖ Prepare a two-minute talk that offers an overall summary of your research.
 - ❖ Practice giving that talk with a friend.
 - ❖ Practice in front of your poster.
 - ❖ Point to relevant elements of the poster during your two- minute talk.
 - ❖ Make eye contact.
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Content of your two-minute talk

- ❖ Explain what you're researching and why.
 - ❖ Explain your findings (so far).
 - ❖ Explain the significance of your findings.
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Engage your viewer from the start.

- ❖ Stay close to your poster (but off to the side) to allow people to take in your ideas.
 - ❖ Make eye contact and greet viewers as they approach your poster.
 - ❖ Introduce yourself and offer to answer questions.
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If a viewer stays for a while...

- ❖ Offer your two-minute talk.
 - ❖ Ask the viewer questions:
 - Can you see what's going on here? (If they're looking at a particular image or figure).
 - Would you like more information/background on that?
 - Do you have any questions?
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Don't...

- ❖ Don't hold your phone in your hand (no texting, etc. even when you don't have a viewer at your poster).
- ❖ Don't read directly from your poster.
- ❖ Don't chat with a friend or another presenter while you have a viewer at your poster.

Remember, you are the link between the viewer and the poster.

Responding to questions

- ❖ Repeat the question back to the person to be sure you understand it well.
 - ❖ Answer one piece at a time.
 - ❖ Keep your answer short.
 - ❖ Offer to correspond later if it seems appropriate.
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Good luck!

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