Preparing an Effective Research Presentation Tutorial

Checklist A - Slide Preparation Checklist

1. Begin with a list of slide descriptions, (5A) so you have a plan for how many slides you will develop and what each one will communicate to the audience. With the exception of title and acknowledgement slides, plan on no more than approximately one slide per minute of presentation.

2. Spend the time to develop interesting, well-designed slides (5B). Once you have planned the content of each slide, if you do not seem to have an eye for slide design, seek the help of someone who does. Many universities have individuals trained in graphic arts available in an IT department.

3. Use a consistent background and color scheme throughout the presentation slides.

4. Limit the amount of text displayed (5C) on each slide. Summarize main points rather than writing sentences. Bulleted phrases can convey an adequate amount of information to the audience and also remind you of the main points you wish to make when speaking about the slide. The audience does not want to read your entire presentation from your slides!

5. Use contrasting text and background colors. A light background with dark text displays best under all lighting conditions. A white background provides maximal flexibility for selection of text and figure colors. Beware of using text and background colors of the same color intensity! (5D) (The text will wash out and be virtually impossible to read.)

6. Use a common text font such as Arial or Times New Roman. Unusual fonts (5E) can be difficult to read. Particularly beware of using less common fonts if your slides will be projected from a computer that is not your own. A different version of the slide software can cause your text to be reformatted, with surprising and undesired results!

7. Use a consistent font size for text (title slide text can be larger and citation and caption text can be smaller) and make sure that when projected, the text will be readable in the back row of your audience. A 24-32 point font (5F) generally works well for slide text.

8. Cite references on slides appropriately and provide citations for graphic material copied from other sources.

9. Incorporate figures, graphics, or even appropriate clip art into your slides. Slides composed of nothing but text generally are BORING!

10. Audiences can digest graphs much more rapidly than tables, so use figures or graphs rather than tables on slides when possible. If displaying a table, highlight the numbers you wish to stand out.

11. Avoid large blank spaces on slides; use as much of the display area as possible.

12. Do not use the sound feature of PowerPoint, unless showing a video/audio clip relevant to your presentation.

13. Do not get carried away with overuse of animation effects on slides. (Your goal is not to make the audience dizzy!)

14. Proofread your slides carefully for typos and other errors. Ask a colleague with an eye for detail to do the same.

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5A

Generic Descriptions of Twelve Slides for a Ten Minute Presentation

1. Title slide with authors' names and affiliations
2. Rationale—identify problem being addressed
3. Rationale—highlight work of others and point out where lacking
4. Purpose of the study
5. Methods—identify participants, recruiting & screening procedures
6. Methods—explain protocol and diagram experimental arrangements
7. Methods—description of data collected and statistical procedures
8. Results—graphs of main effects
9. Results—graphs of other results
10. Discussion—how these results differ from results of others (and why)
11. Conclusions
12. Acknowledgements

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5B

Weak example:

5B

Mechanical contributions to spinal pathology among female gymnasts

Spondylolysis: a fracture of the pars interarticularis

Left: an L4-L5 pars defect in a male of10 yrs.

Better example:

5B

Mechanical contributions to spinal pathology among female gymnasts

Spondylolysis: a fracture of the pars interarticularis

Left: an L4-L5 pars defect in a male of10 yrs.

Photo courtesy of L. Cohn, M.D.

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Weak example:

Mechanical contributions to spinal pathology among female gymnasts

Protocol:

8 cameras recorded 3 trials each of 5 commonly executed skills during competitions, including front and back walkovers, front and back handsprings, and the handspring vault.

Better example:

Mechanical contributions to spinal pathology among female gymnasts

Protocol:

8 cameras recorded 3 trials each of 5 commonly executed skills during competitions:

- front & back walkovers
- front & back handsprings
- handspring vault

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5D

5D

The background and text on this slide are of the same color intensity, making reading very difficult.

It is usually a mistake to use red letters on a blue background for this reason.

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Mechanical contributions to spinal pathology among female gymnasts

Protocol:

8 cameras recorded 3 trials each of 5 commonly executed skills during fall 2008 competitions:

- *front & back walkovers*
- *front & back handsprings*
- *handspring vault*

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5F

5F

Good size for most slide text

This is 12 point font.
This is 14 point font.
This is 16 point font.
This is 18 point font.
This is 20 point font.
This is 22 point font.
This is 24 point font.
This is 26 point font.
This is 28 point font.
This is 30 point font.
This is 32 point font.
This is 34 point font.
This is 36 point font.
This is 38 point font.
This is 40 point font.

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