How to give a good short talk to a broad audience

VPA seminar
February 13th, 2018
What is the purpose of a short talk?

• Introduce yourself and your work to the audience
• Inform the audience of broad line of research
• Convince a group of your ideas
• Raise interest for other presentations
  • Longer talk
  • Poster
  • Publications
  • Podcasts, videos, magazines
Exercise –TED talk

• Watch this video: https://www.ted.com/talks/edsel_salvana_the_dangerous_evolution_of_hiv#t-268179

• Discuss what you think of this video in groups of 3-4

• What makes this presentation good/bad?
  • Oratory (speed of talking, enunciation, pauses, fillers)
  • Subject matter (take-home message)
  • Shape/structure of the talk (begin, start, end, storyline)
  • Presenter form (stance, hands)
What makes this TED talk good?

- Oratory
  - No fillers
  - Pauses
  - Clear enunciation
  - Not too fast
  - Variation in speech pattern

- Subject matter
  - Very little jargon
  - Metaphors used
    - Human v. ape genetic variation
    - Malaria resurgence

- Shape of the story
  - Status quo
    - increasing HIV occurrence in the Philippines during global reduction
  - Challenge
    - Subtype variation
  - Call to action
    - Research into non-B subtypes

- Presenter form
  - Engaged form (hands move)
  - Easy movements
    - No fast walking
    - Not standing still
Structure of a good short talk

• Subject matter
  • Have a take home message that is understandable/memorable without background knowledge
    • This disease is bad, this is one step closer to a cure
    • My machine/process benefits this thing/process
    • Process A is important for Function B

• Shape of the story,
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nYFpuc2Umk&t=3m43s
  • Describe status quo
  • Challenge the status quo
  • Call to action/perfect future
Form of a good short talk

• Presentation style
  • Visualize concepts
  • Limit text
    • Describe what is on the slides, don’t recite
  • Leave open space

• Oratory
  • Take your time speaking
  • Avoid jargon
    • Use metaphors
    • ‘Think of it as…’
  • Vary speech pattern

• Presenter form
  • Feel free to step away from podium
  • Move around
  • Face the audience
  • Be engaging
    • Use gestures
    • Non-verbal communication
Exercise – Is this talk good?

• Watch the videos
• After each video, discuss what you think of this video in groups of 3-4
• What makes this presentation good/bad?
  • Oratory (speed of talking, enunciation, pauses, fillers)
  • Subject matter (take-home message)
  • Structure of the talk (begin, start, end, challenging the status quo)
  • Presenter form (stance, hands)

• https://www.ted.com/talks/mike_gil_could_fish_social_networks_help_us_save_coral_reefs

• https://www.ted.com/talks/carl_schoonover_how_to_look_inside_the_brain?language=en
Lightning round talks 2017

• Winner: 39 words on 20 slides

• Rubric used for judging:
  • Validity of scientific project
  • Originality and innovation
  • Approach to problem solving
  • Organization and clarity
  • Conciseness and timing
Don’t forget to register for the VPA symposium!!!
April 12th, 2018 in Student Life Center

You can register without submitting an abstract immediately!

If you do this, send your abstract to postdoc@Vanderbilt.edu before March 15th