CH801 - Oral Presentations 1

- Introductory Concerns
- Practice Oral Exams
  - {a brief intermission}
- Useful Tools and Techniques
- Moving on to Week 2…

Talking the Talk: Effective Oral Presentations

An Outline

- Understanding your audience
- Achieving focus - preparing for a talk
- Constructing a message
- Giving the talk:
  - Summary
  - Strategy
  - Execution
Before you begin - ask yourself..

- Are the audience experts?
- Are the audience interested?
- Are there prevailing attitudes?
- What are the audience demographics?
- What language will they understand?

Achieving Focus - ask yourself...

- Why was the project undertaken?
- What was done?
- What was learned?
- What does it mean?
- Where will the project go in the future?
Constructing the Message

- What do you want people to come away with?
  - *Ask yourself:*
    - What will people be saying after your talk?
    - How might they summarize your talk?
    - Do you want them to do anything afterwards?

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Constructing the Message (2)

- Tell them what you’re going to tell them…
  - *Give a summary that makes the point*
  - *Lay out the ground-work*

- Keep reminding them of the Message

- … and then tell them what you told them.
Creating a Summary

Do not just ‘replay’ the title…
… but do convey the central point.

Example: Patrick Holland’s colloquium

“Breaking bonds with Low-coordinate Iron: Chemistry Inspired by Nitrogenase”

Creating a Summary (2)

“Today I am going to convey our recent findings of the reactivity of unprecedented low-coordinate iron compounds, which are both rare in coordination chemistry and informative for hypotheses regarding the enzyme nitrogenase.”
From Message to Talk

- With a Message in hand, construct an outline
- Outlines should be used within the talk itself, and they should support your Message
- Remember that your Talk has a
  - Beginning
  - Middle
  - End
- Continue to use the language used in the summary

Designing the talk

(Not all talks are made with the same design!)

Information

- Categorical design
  - Basic research, applications
- Sequential/spatial
  - Each part of a multi-step synthesis
- Comparison-contrast
  - One protein structure vs. another
- Simple-to-complex
  - An easy model, then a hard one
Designing the Talk (2)

Persuasion

- Problem-Solution
  - A series of dilemmas and solutions
- Residuals Design
  - Eliminate all possibilities but yours
- Proposition-Proof
  - Hypothesize and then follow through...

Execution

- Orient your audience
  - Outlines
  - Signposts
  - Review
- Transitions:
  - Questions (e.g., What is the problem?)
  - Review or Preview: Where are we going?
- Language:
  - Once on Message, don't get off
- A sense of style
  - Remember, you’re holding a conversation
  - The sound of silence
In summary

- Planning makes all the difference
- Construct a story…
  - Remind the audience of its importance
  - Tell them what you will tell them
  - Tell them with facts, compel them with design,
  - And then remind them what you told them
- Use similar language
- And never be afraid of silence