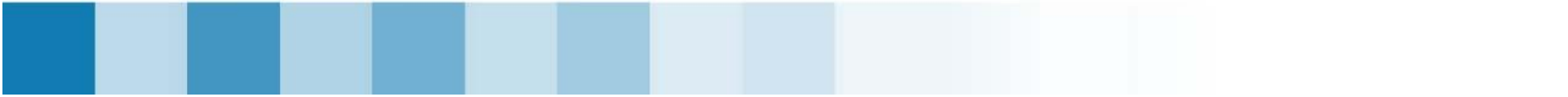




# Research Methodology

# Research Presentation

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# Outline

- Introduction
- Plan the presentation
- Prepare the presentation
- Deliver the presentation
- Question and answer

# Introduction

- Presentation is conveying information to others *via speaking* (oral) or in written form -reports
- Presentation has a specific purpose
  - communicating with others
  - persuading others
  - training/teaching others
  - graduating
  - etc

# Introduction ...

- Presentation is ***a part of*** research by definition
- Also, the higher your position is,
  - the more presentations you have to make.
- Presentation is also an important part of ***professional practice***.
- Good presentation skill contributes to ***professional success***

<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Audience</b>
Wants to convey something	May want to listen and benefit
One person, usually	Many persons
Familiar with the topic	May not be familiar with topic

# Introduction ...

- Most often than not, you will be called upon
  - to present the research findings as ***an oral presentation*** and
  - an ***accompanying written report***
- And at times, you may also be asked
  - to ***review literature*** and
  - ***present*** your finding as ***an oral presentation***
- An oral presentation, unlike written presentations, is ***a direct communication*** between a presenter and an audience

# Introduction . . .

- If writing a scientific report for the first time is viewed as ***challenging cerebral exercise*** analogous to mountain climbing,
  - then oral presentation is even more exigent when you embark on it for the first time.
- If you approach it ***methodically*** however, it is not too difficult to undertake.
- In this section, we will cover some basic guidelines
  - that will help you prepare and
  - execute both oral and written presentations ***effectively***.

# Introduction . . .

- Effectiveness, in this case, does not imply
  - ***overwhelming*** your audience with mountains of indecipherable data
  - thus leaving them wondering whether ***to admire your ability*** to actually understand the material
  - or ***to be irritated*** that their time was wasted with no gain of information

# Introduction . . .

- Presentation, particularly oral presentation,
  - requires a lot of *practice* before you can master the art of *gauging* your presentation to your audience in
    - a clear,
    - interesting and
    - informative manner.
- The content of this lesson will help you overcome some of the shortcomings commonly observed in a novice presenter



# Planning your presentation: Issues

- **Determine the objective** (type) of talk which may be
  - Talk to present new research results
  - Review/Overview talk
  - Tutorial talk
  - Training/Teaching
  - Presentation for selling an idea or a product (proposal)
- Assess knowledge level of **audience**
  - Homogeneity of audience
  - Knowledge of audience
  - Tailor your talk to the audience
- Major points you want to present
  - 3-5 points

# Planning your presentation: Organizing

- In the case of presenting a research finding
  - organize your message around the following
    1. Why was the work done?
      - *State problem and goal*
    2. What are possible solutions?
      - *State solutions*
    3. What findings resulted from the work?
      - *Present the results of your work*
    4. What do the results imply?
      - *State implications/consequences of your work*

# Organization

- A well organized oral presentation is smooth and effectively communicates the core concepts of the presentation to the audience
- The presentation could be
  - a graduate seminar,
  - thesis/dissertation defense,
  - a scientific meeting talk, *etc.*
- Regardless the venue for the presentation, there are some basic organizational principles that are common to all

# Organization ...

- The entire presentation should be related to
  - the topic thesis,
  - hypothesis,
  - objective or
  - question you are addressing.
- Side issues usually distract the audience from the core idea(s) you are trying to impart.

# Planning your presentation: Structure

1. Tell them what you are going to present
  - Overview, introduction, motivation **20%**
2. Your main presentation
  - Main body of your talk **70%**
    - Methods, Analysis, Results & Discussions
3. Tell what you told them again
  - Summary **10%**
    - Conclusion and Recommendation

# Planning your presentation: Structure ...

- **Don't forget :**
  - To focus on few *main* points
  - To design your presentation *around time ( < 35 to 40 Min)*
  - Don't collect/deliver facts – tell a story
- Make *a story line in a logically efficient order*
- **Order in which you carried out the work:**
  - *this may not be the best order of presentation*
- Create a logical order for your presentation
  - **Message 1**
    - **Sub-messages**
  - **Message 2**
    - **Sub-messages**

# Planning your presentation: Structure ...

## **Cover**

- Title
  - Authors/Affiliations
- 

## **Intro**

- Motivation
  - Problem statement
  - Research question
  - Literature review
- 

## **Main**

- Research method
  - Research design
  - Key assumptions
  - Results/discussion
- 

## **Ending**

- Limitations of results
- Implications/conclusion & recommendations
- Future work

# Planning your presentation: Structure ...

- Check regularly whether you are focusing on the main points
- Check regularly for logic and structure
- Keep the allotted time in mind
- Software
- Slide: Powerpoint, seminar package, beamer

Tools for graphics: ...

Check the organization



# Visual Aids (Computer & LCD projector/beamer)

- Just over a decade ago, most public scientific oral presentations were supported with *overhead projector* slides.
- Thanks to the ubiquity of *computers* and *LCD projectors*,
  - the chore of having to take pictures of notes, charts and figures
  - has now been supplanted by a presentation software (the most commonly used being PowerPoint™).
- The presentation software makes
  - the task of *preparing, editing* and *displaying* slides much more facile and user friendly.

# Visual Aids ...

- It goes without saying one should possess the ***basic skills*** in using presentation software.
- You should be skilled in the mechanics of using presentation software such as
  - Microsoft's PowerPoint.
- The discussion henceforth focuses on the style and substance of making an oral presentation.



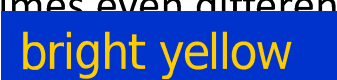
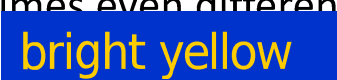

# Preparing an oral presentation

## Stylistic Issues: The Slide

- Despite the fact that it is commonly called “oral presentation” it is ***equally visual*** as it is an ***auditory*** medium.
- Therefore emphasis should also be given to the way the slides are designed and presented.
- The slide should be ***clearly visible and legible*** to the audience members sitting ***even at the very back*** of the room.
- Therefore there are certain points to consider:
  - i. Layout
  - ii. Background
  - iii. Font

# Preparing an oral presentation ...

## i. Layout:

- The background color of the slide & the color of the text should have a **sharp contrast**.
- If the background of the slide is dark then the text should be light in color and provide ample contrast (“light” does not necessarily mean “bright”).
- For e.g., if the background is midnight blue, then the text could be  or  white
- At times even different hues of color do not provide sufficient contrast.  bright yellow
- For example, using  background is **tiring to the eye** and not sufficient contrast is available.
- **If unsure about** what color  orange on black the text and background, the safest choice is to use **black text on white background**.

# Preparing an oral presentation ...

## ii. Background:

- After you have chosen an appropriate background for your slides,
  - *stick to your choice* and
  - use the same background throughout the presentation.
- Also, particularly *for scientific presentations*,
  - *a plain background* is preferred
  - (a gradient of the shades of the same color is also acceptable).
- If you are inclined to add graphic, picture, etc. in your background, make sure that
  - it is subject *appropriate* and
  - *does not draw attention* away from the text and figures that you are attempting to communicate.
- *Party balloons, a motorcycle flying off a cliff*, etc are not deemed appropriate.

# Preparing an oral presentation ...

## iii. Font:

- 'Small' case letters are easier to read than 'CAPITALIZED' letters.
- If you feel you need to use CAPITAL letters, use them *sparingly*.
- The type, size and typeface of the font are equally important.
- Do not use *script* type fonts;
  - they may seem fancy on an invitation card, but
  - are *unsuitable* for professional/ scientific presentations.
- Select a font type that is *easily legible* and has *sufficient spacing* between letters
  - (do not use condensed fonts, where one letter appears to overlap with the next).

# Preparing an oral presentation ...

## iii. Font: . . .

- As to the font size,
  - may be in the range of **18** to **28**
  - a good starting point is *twenty-four*,
  - you may, however, adjust the font size particularly for *titles*, *graph legends*, etc.
- Using **bold font** typeface throughout is *not necessary*:
  - limit the use of bold fonts for *titles*, *headers* and *words you want to emphasize*.
- Limit the fonts to at most 2 different types

# Preparing an oral presentation ...

- The best way to assess whether your slides are clear, visible and legible is
  - to view them projected on a white wall or screen and
  - yourselves seated a fair distance away
  - (if opportunity allows, you should preview your slides in the same auditorium or conference room *where the actual presentation will take place*).
- In this pre-presentation screening, view all your slides critically.
- If you need to make adjustments to enhance the view-ability of your text, figures, etc. then this is the best time to do it.
- This will help you avoid making *apologies* during the actual presentation for incompatible colors, fonts that are too small, etc.



# Preparing an oral presentation ...

## Content of pages in the slide - Text

- The oral presentation is a visual as well as an auditory medium.
- Most of your slides, however, ***should contain figures*** (whether images, graphs or tables) whenever possible.
- You should limit the ***use of text only*** to
  - ***state*** the problem,
  - ***frame the problem*** in the appropriate context,
  - ***summarize results*** and
  - state ***major conclusions***.
- Even in cases where you need to use text,
  - a slide with more than ***a few lines of text will*** bore your audience.

# Content of pages in the slide – Text ...

- State key concepts
  - *in bulleted phrases* or
  - *short declarative statements* and
  - cover the details *verbally*.
- Don't write every single word on your slides in full sentences.
  - (Tempted to help you remember what you want to say. )
- This usually leads to reading the text from the slide verbatim.
- It is safe to assume that
  - the *audience is literate* and can read for themselves,
  - making *the presenter a redundant* actor that does not add value to the presentation.
- Moreover, *crowding* each slide with a *dense text* is mind-numbing.

# Content of pages in the slide – Text ...

- Slide page content should be such that it satisfies the rule
  - minimum 10s per slide and
  - maximum 100s per slide
  - *Or average 60 s (or 1 min) per slide*
- The rule for technical presentations
  - may be the “2 minutes per slide” rule
- *N.B: One slide ~ one message!*
- *Don't overdo formulas (also be created with eqn editor)*
- Watch your colors (at most 3 colors)

# Content of pages in the slide – Tables and graphs

- The same applies to tables that are overcrowded.
- Simplify the tables so that you only have *a few columns and/or rows*.
- If need be,
  - breakdown your table into *bite-sized snippets* that
  - the audience can absorb and digest.
- Like wise, graphs, drawings or pictures in *a slide page* should be
  - Large enough to be clearly viewed
  - Well labeled, variables on both axes *scaled* and clearly shown *with units*
  - Appropriate *coloring* for sharp contrast with background and other content in the slide
  - If need be (for comparison), may be *a few multiple of them* as far as eligible

# Errors

- Major/Minor errors such as
  - misspelled words,
  - grammatical errors,
  - punctuation mistakes, etc.

convey to the audience that ***you have not put in enough attention to your work.***
- The implication of errors is the
  - audience will be skeptical about ***the soundness*** of the work you are presenting.

# Errors...

- If you did not pay attention to the material displayed in public,
  - *can you really be trusted* to pay due diligence during the actual conduct of the research?
- Errors that you could have easily corrected in a few minutes will taint the entire body of your work.
- *Avoid such errors at all costs!*
- If your spelling and grammar is not up to par,
  - you can always make use of the *built-in spelling and grammar checker* in the presentation software, or
  - even better *consult a friend* or an advisor.

# The Presenter: **General**

- Even though a work being presented in an oral presentation may be a collaborative effort,
  - it is customary that ***only one person*** takes up the role of a presenter.
- Particularly at the postgraduate level, you are most likely to be the ***sole candidate*** to prepare and present an oral presentation.
- An oral presentation is
  - not only a presentation of ***the body of your work***, but
  - you are also ***presenting yourself as the person*** who conducted the research project.
- So you should pay attention to ***your own present-ability*** as you do your work.

# The Presenter: **General** ....

- Oral presentations, such as seminars and defenses
  - are venues that provide you with *opportunities to impress your colleagues*, and fellow scientists.
- Who knows, perhaps in the audience there may be your future prospective
  - employer
  - financier/sponsor etc
- Thus *due care* should be taken in preparing yourself for presentation
- There are accepted norms that a presenter should generally follow.
- Primary among these are *physical appearance* and *mannerism*.



# The Presenter : *physical appearance* (both for males and females)

- Dress appropriately, and also be *clean*, and *attractive*.
- Though there is *no defined dress code*, but there are certain “**don’ts**” that you should always follow
  - Do not dress *shabbily*
  - Do not come with *unkempt/undressed hair* and *untreated beard*
  - Do not wear *slippers*
  - Do not wear *jeans and T-shirt*, or
  - other extremely causal *clothing*

# The Presenter : *physical appearance ....*

- The audience has taken the time and effort to attend your presentation;
  - proper attire/ *clothing* returns that show of respect.
- Further, shabby/ causal dress *unnecessarily* draws
  - the *attention of the audience* away from the slides and
  - the core ideas you are trying to communicate.

# The Presenter : *mannerisms (emotional tensions)*

- Aside of your clothing and grooming,
  - certain *mannerisms* may be magnified and
  - in full display when standing in front of an audience.
- You may already have these mannerisms, or they may be the symptoms of standing *nervously* in front of an unfamiliar crowd.
- Anxiety over public appearances are all *too common* in persons who have little or no experience in public speaking.
- Mannerisms could manifest in many ways, for e.g. *gestures* such as
  - *scratching* your nose or behind the ear,
  - straightening your *eyebrows*,
  - vigorously *rubbing* the palms, *etc.*;
- Thus try to exercise and avoid or minimize these, say during rehearsal

# The Presenter : *mannerisms...*

- Mannerisms could also manifest **vocally** such as
  - clearing your throat frequently,
  - pausing with “umms”, mumbling,
  - **Uncontrolling your voice (too faint or too loud) etc.;**
- Thus try to
  - Speak loudly and clearly
  - Avoid **monotony**
    - Change volume, speed, rhythm;
  - Make pauses

# The Presenter : *mannerisms...*

- Mannerisms could also manifest in *motions*, such as
  - pacing back and forth,
  - swaying on your heels, *etc.*
- Thus try to
  - Move, but don't pace
  - Use gesture and body language

# The Presenter : *mannerisms...*

- Other issues with mannerism include *nervousness* and *attitude*
- To deal with nervousness
  - deep breathe,
  - slow down, and
  - confess it
- Attitude/Style
  - Keep good time
  - Try to be
    - enthusiastic/eager
    - dramatic
  - Keep eye contact with audience

# The Presenter : *mannerisms* ...

- You as the presenter, *may not be aware* of these symptoms of anxiety.
- It usually takes another person to point them out to you.
- But once you are made aware of the peculiarities,
  - you should *consciously try to suppress them while rehearsing* your presentation.
- In time, as your exposure and experience in public speaking grows,
  - you will gain confidence and
  - will overcome the anxiety and
  - the symptoms that go along with it.

# The Presenter : *Others related issues*

- Language (English)
  - Keep it simple (concise/short but accurate)
  - Emphasize the key points (and minimize on less essentials)
  - Check the difficult ***pronunciations***
- Ending a point and beginning a new point
  - Slow down and higher volume
  - Short pauses
  - Appropriate expressions
- Interact with audience
  - Questions to audience (not frequently)
  - Be open to questions



# Practicing/ rehearsing

- After completing the slide preparation, it is imperative that you rehearse the presentation.
- ***Rehearse early enough to make modifications***
- It is ***not sufficient*** that you ***memorize*** every single word.
- The slides (as described above) are essentially
  - ***talking points for you*** the presenter and
  - ***highlights for the audience.***
- Practice/ rehearse the talk
  - until it is smooth and
  - you no longer require supplemental notes to guide you.

# Practicing/ rehearsing...

- Even for material that you are very familiar with,
  - it may at times ***stump you*** and
  - the presentation is neither the time nor the place to pause in search of an appropriate word.
- But it is OK for you to ***prepare notes*** as a security blanket in case you hit a mental block.
- It helps to memorize
  - an ***opening remark*** for the beginning of the talk to break the ice,
  - as well as ***alleviate the sense of anxiety*** that you may be feeling and propel you into the automatic mode.

# Practicing/ rehearsing...

- For example, you may say
  - “Thank you everyone for coming to this talk.” or
  - “I am happy to have this opportunity to deliver this talk.”
- Moreover, **include transition sentences** that will make the move **from one slide to the next** a natural progression.
- Also prepare **closing remarks** for the conclusion of the talk.
- Sentences that start with phrases such as
  - “In conclusion ...”,
  - “In summary ...” or
  - “The final point I would like to make ...”

indicates to your audience that the talk is nearing an end.

# Practicing/ rehearsing...

- It is not uncommon for inexperienced presenter
  - to just giggle nervously, or
  - say “**That is it!**” at the end of a talk.
- Have ***an ending prepared*** such as
  - “Thank you for your attention, does anyone have any questions?” or
  - “That concludes my talk, I will be happy to take your questions.”
- ***There is no substitute for repeatedly practicing the talk.***
- Once you have put the final touches to your preparation,
  - rehearse and practice the talk until it becomes second nature and
  - you no longer need to refer to your notes.

# Practicing/ rehearsing...

- Do it in front of a mirror, for friends, while walking, *etc.*
- The practice exercise
  - will strengthen your confidence about the impending presentation,
  - thus lowering your anxiety to a manageable level.
- Your goal when rehearsing should be
  - to make the actual presentation seem ***effortless***,
  - ***well thought out*** and ***effective***.

# Practicing/ rehearsing...

- Oral presentations commonly have strict **time limits** (30 to 45Min) for
  - the presentation and
  - Q&A sessions.
- The rehearsal will also assist you in timing yourself.
- The rule of thumb is that **on average** it takes **one minute** per slide.
- Nonetheless, there is a lot of leeway depending on
  - the **content** of a slide and
  - how much you want **to dwell** on it.
- The tendency of post-graduate students is **to use up**
  - all the time allotted for **the talk & the Q&A** session just for the talk,
  - **so as to cut back** on the amount of questions they will receive.

# Practicing/ rehearsing...

- But you should remember that
  - the Q&A session is *part and parcel* of the presentation, and
  - after your talk, the audience will want to and has the *right to ask questions* at the end.
- If you have practiced sufficiently and adjusted your presentation to the time allotted,
  - there will be no need to skip over slides without discussing them, or
  - to increase your pace to finish on time.
- After all, the oral presentation is
  - not for your benefit, but
  - for the benefit of the audience.

# Delivering the talk (Oral Presentation)

- If you had sufficient practice with your presentation, the
  - delivery of the oral presentation will be straight forward and easy.
- Regardless, there are certain points you should observe during actual delivery of the oral presentation.
- Moreover, the points discussed above in terms of
  - *your personal appearance and mannerism,*
  - *the stylistic and editorial design issues of the slides, etc*all contribute to the success or failure of the presentation effectiveness.
- The seminar or thesis defense is a professional talk - make your talk professional.



# Delivering the talk ...

- A few pointers are:
- Before heading to the venue of the presentation,
  - it will be extremely helpful
    - to have ***copies of the abstracts*** of your presentation to later handout to the audience.
    - This helps also
      - if the Visual Aid system fails
      - To stay at a particular slide
  - Additionally, you should prepare a few items that the person introducing you for the day can refer to during the introduction.
- Begin your presentation on time.
  - You should actually arrive at the venue of the presentation well ahead of time
    - ***to set up your audiovisual equipment*** and
    - to check that they are working appropriately.

# Delivering the talk ...

- Moreover, arriving early will give you the opportunity to check that
  - your slides are clearly view-able to the audience in that particular room/hall and
  - what lighting conditions are ideal.
- Familiarize yourself with
  - where the light switches are located,
  - how the audiovisual equipment works, and
  - how to get on and off the stage if there is one.

# Delivering the talk ...

- Arriving early will also afford you some time to discuss with the organizer(s) of the seminar about outstanding issues such as
  - the preparing copies of the abstract,
  - to go over the introductory notes, *etc.*
- If you have availed yourself on time and set up your gear for the presentation, the actual start of the seminar is up to the individual organizing the event.
- The organizer may decide to wait a few minutes
  - to allow the audience to take their seat,
  - to allow invited guests to arrive, *etc.*
- These considerations are up to the organizer,
  - therefore, do not be pushy in insisting to start on time.

# Delivering the talk ...

- You must make allowance for time that may be wasted before the start of the talk.
- Therefore, *it is not advisable to have made prior plans* to attend to immediately after the end of the seminar.
- If you are in a hurry to leave because of another engagement, your impatience will be evident and not kindly received.
- During the presentation, project your voice to the person seated at the very back.
- This does not mean you should shout, but that you speak loud enough to be heard.
- This may not be a major problem if the venue is equipped with a sound system.
- Enunciate your words clearly so that your audience is not left guessing what it is you said.

# Delivering the talk ...

- ***Mumbling*** through a talk usually means you will lose the attention of your audience.
- Do not speak in a ***monotone***.
- If ***you sound bored about*** your own presentation, it will be hard to raise the interest of the audience.
- It is natural to be nervous at an oral presentation and thus
  - *talk rapidly to get over the process as quickly as possible.*
- If you have rehearsed your talk, this should not be a major problem, but it could still arise.
- In such instances focus on talking deliberately and purposefully.
- This will dampen your urge to rush through the presentation.

# Delivering the talk ...

- ***Make eye contact*** with your audience.
- One of the symptoms of anxiety is
  - to face the slide projection on the screen
  - to avoid having to look into a room full of people who hang on your every word.
- ***Avoiding eye contact sends the subtle signal*** that
  - you are unsure and ill at ease.
- Moreover, if you are turned away from your audience,
  - your talk will not be audible beyond the first few rows in the room.

# Delivering the talk ...

- Take **sufficient time** to describe the axes on **graphs**, the symbols in your **figures**, the columns in your **tables**, etc.
- Even though you are seeing the slides for many times, remember that this is the first exposure your audience has to them.
- You should provide your audience with **basic descriptions of figures** to help them assimilate the information.
- Draw the attention of your audience to the points you wish to highlight by using
  - a pointer such as a laser,
  - a stick or
  - the computer mouse.
- If none of these tools are available to you, you may also use your finger.

# Delivering the talk ...

- Make sure that you do not block the view of the audience.
- This can be easily achieved by positioning the visual aid in a neutral spot where you or others will not be an obstruction.
- ***When making reference to the work of others***, always mention the name(s) of those responsible for the work.
- Do not just say
  - “The people who did this work ...” or
  - “They determined that ...”
- Instead say
  - “***Fisseha et al. studied this same problem ...***” or
  - “Netsanet and Samrawit suggest ...”.



# Delivering the talk ...

- When your presentation is a course seminar where all the data presented is generated by others,
  - it is prudent to source the citation on the slide (usually at the bottom of the slide).
- When discussing a certain value or figure, actually state the **number** or **outcome**.
- It is not uncommon to hear a graduate student say
  - “The growth was by **that** much ...” [*while pointing at the number*] without actually stating the value; or
  - “You can **see the trend in the graph** ...” without actually describing the trend.

# Delivering the talk ...

- Alternatively, it is best to say
  - “The growth was 25 percent more ...” [*while pointing at the number*]; or
  - “The trend shows a steep decline...” [*while pointing at the graph*].
- Begin the presentation confidently,
  - progress from one slide to the next smoothly and
  - end the presentation gracefully.
- This can easily be achieved by the pointers indicated above; have
  - an introductory remark,
  - transition statement and
  - concluding remark prepared and memorized.

# Delivering the talk ...

- If you had *assistance from others* during the conduct of your research project such as
  - your research advisor,
  - a statistician who helped with the data analysis,
  - a fellow scientist who loaned you equipment, etc
- then
  - it is expected that you *acknowledge* and thank these individuals.
- This is usually done on *the very last slide* of the presentation.

# Delivering the talk ...

- Actually, the more seasoned presenters usually have one last slide after acknowledgements.
- In order not to leave the screen blank *during the Q&A* session, it is desirable to have a slide
  - with a concise comment,
  - an overarching (all inclusive) statement,
  - a relevant picture, *etc*
  - that will stay on the screen

# Delivering the talk ...

- After you have completed your talk, have the light turned on
  - so that the Q&A session will be conducted in an illuminated room.
- A lit room will allow you to easily and quickly see those participants in the audience who are raising their hands to ask a question or make a comment.
- It will also make the back and forth with the audience more engaging
- ***Finish on time!***
- The beginning of the talk is usually beyond your control.
- But it is up to you to make sure you do not go over the allotted time

# Questions and Answers (Q&A)

- At the end of the talk, you should have opened the floor by inviting questions about the talk.
- At this point, it is important to note *the success of your talk* in terms of
  - *arousing interest* and
  - *being informative* can

directly be *gauged* by the type and number of questions asked.

- Particularly with graduate students such as yourself,
  - the tendency is to inundate the audience with vast amounts of incomprehensible information to illicit awe at your mastery of the subject
  - while at the same time to preemptively dissuade the audience from asking questions.

# Q&A ...

- If the audience does not come forward to ask questions,
  - it is either because it did **not** find the presentation **interesting** or
  - else **no new information** has been gained.
- Having **several people** raising their hands to ask questions
  - is actually a confirmation that the audience is **engaged** and
  - is a form of flattery to the speaker.
- That said, even with a very interesting presentation,
  - the Q&A session is also limited **by time** and therefore,
  - you should try and give as many people as possible the opportunity to ask.

# Q&A ...

- Usually, at the end of the talk,
  - the organizer of the seminar will take the floor alongside the speaker and
  - thank the presenter and open the floor for questions.
- At times the organizer will take the lead in identifying persons in the audience who want to pose a question;
- At other times the speaker him/herself may be the one leading the Q&A session.
- This is the type of issue that you, as the speaker, should discuss before the presentation.



# Q&A ...

- To keep the rest of the audience involved, it is always good to restate a question as you understand it before beginning to answer.
- This will give the entire audience
  - a chance to hear the question, and
  - the one asking the question a chance to see if you have understood the question put forth.
- ***If you do not clearly understand the questions*** posed,
  - do not feel obliged to answer
  - instead, politely ask the person to clarify or repeat the question.

# Q&A ...

- Once you are satisfied that you understand the question, and the person asking seems likewise satisfied, then
  - proceed to answer the question to the entire audience and
  - not to just the person who posed the question.
- At all costs, try and avoid turning the Q&A session *into a dialogue* between yourself and the person asking the question.
- At times, it is probable that the person is not satisfied with the answer and may pose a follow-up question.
- In such instances, it is customary to attempt to clarify your answer.

# Q&A ...

- But if the person is ***insistent*** and continues to ask subsequent questions,
  - you should courteously decline to engage in a verbal altercation with a single member of the audience.
- ***You may say things*** like
  - “Perhaps, I have not clearly understood the question.
  - I would be happy to continue this discussion right after the talk.” Or
  - “That probably requires a fair amount of time to discuss.
  - Will you be available to continue this after the talk is over?”
- Never be ***rude*** to the audience or a member of the audience!

# Q&A ...

- An audience who is persistently asking questions is not (might not be)
  - because s/he wants to embarrass you in front of your peers, but
  - rather because s/he wants to engage in an honest scientific debate about a matter of importance or interest to him/her.
- The one thing that the vast majority of graduate students fear is ***being asked*** a question that they have no answer for.
- If you have had
  - sufficient preparation for the talk, and
  - you know the subject material well,this should not occur frequently.

# Q&A ...

- But you must remember, that even the best experts in any field do not have all answers.
- If you ***do not know*** the answer to a question, ***do not just state***
  - “I do not know the answer”.
- If you have absolutely ***no idea*** on how to answer the question,
  - you can simply ***acknowledge the importance*** of the question and
  - state that you do not have ***a ready answer***.
- For example, you can say
  - “That is really an interesting question, but I can not provide you with a satisfactory answer now.”

# Q&A ...

- Or “ Your question is a very good observation,
- if you have the time, I would like to hear your thoughts right after the talk.”
- ***But if you can***, it is always better ***to speculate*** than not provide a response to a question.
- But just ***make sure that the audience*** fully understands that ***you are merely speculating*** and not stating a definitive answer.
- DO NOT under any circumstance make up an answer if you do not have one!

# Q&A ...

- Fibbing an answer usually leads to more questions on the topic for which you are not equipped to deal with.
- Making up a false answer
  - diminishes your credibility as a scientist in the eyes of your peers, and
  - will significantly lower the acceptability of your otherwise well prepared and delivered talk.

# Attending other oral presentations

- In most instances, particularly during scientific symposia, there will be other presentations scheduled along with your own.
- This may also hold true where you have
  - several theses defenses or
  - seminar courses presentations scheduled in succession.
- In such situations, it is extremely impolite
  - to just show up to deliver your talk and
  - then leave without attending the other talks.
- It is professional courtesy to attend as many talks as possible within a single session, if not all of them.



# Attending other oral presentations...

- This may mean that you will be attending talks
  - that you have tangential or no interest in, or in an extreme case,
  - you cannot follow the content very well.
- Regardless, professional courtesy dictates that you continue to attend such talks.
- As much as possible, listen closely and try to acquire as much information as you can.
- You should pay particular attention to the conclusion so that you can at least take away something from the talk.