‘1-2 Minute’ Poster Stump Speeches

“Be interesting. . . Be enthusiastic. . . and don’t talk too much.”

—Norman Vincent Peale

UIUC Physics 499

Fall 2014 (thanks to Laura Greene)
Two Main Types of Speeches:

1. **Engagement** – to a general audience.
   Communicate general ideas and the excitement of your research. Keep the talk general and non-technical.

2. **Education** – to other scientists.
   Communicate technical information so that the listener can fit the work into their own context.

*Both are difficult to design and perform*
Write Out Your Talk!

• *Especially* important at the *beginning* of your career, — *write it out*! By doing so:
  – You will be as effective as possible in conveying information, communicating with audience.
  – It will help you to organize your thoughts.
    • It will provide useful feedback for content of your poster.
  – It will help with timing.
  – This is your base!
  – This is also a good technique for the first slide or two (maybe more) of any talk, particularly a short one.
Rules for Poster Speeches:

In general, you will have a diverse audience, so:

1. Always give some background and context.
2. Use plain language and avoid jargon and acronyms – they already know you are smart.
3. Keep eye contact to see if you are losing or boring them.
4. If you are unsure if losing/boring audience: just ask.
5. Be flexible – A memorized speech repeated verbatim is as big a loser as a speech that is too long. On the other hand, a disorganized speech is equally bad. This takes practice …
6. Don’t read your poster, but do make use of it: alternate connecting what you are saying to figures on the poster with eye contact. This takes practice …
More Tips For Poster Sessions:

1. During a poster session, *never* leave a poster unattended! Do not give up the opportunity to network and publicize your research.

2. Be remembered – there are LOTS of posters in poster sessions! Have copies of your related papers and 8½ x 11” printouts of your poster. Business cards may also be useful.

3. Keep a blank pad where you can write and explain. Hang it if possible. It also may help save your poster (see 4).

4. Be professionally attired. Tastefully coordinate your wardrobe.
When Someone Approaches:

- Introduce yourself and look at his/her name tag.
- “Hi! I’ve been working on ...” and pause to give an opportunity for a response
- If get a response – try to use it to get into your presentation
  - If not, or if in doubt, move into your regularly scheduled ‘presentation’
Rules for Answering Questions:

1. If you do not understand the question, ask for clarification.
2. If you do not know, just say so. Park ego and defensiveness at the door. Be GLAD they pointed out where you can grow – for you and how you appear.
3. Do not be afraid to disagree with comments, but keep to the science. NEVER take attacks personally!
4. Share e-mails and get back to the person with answers or more comments. Many collaborations begin here.
5. They may be right and you may be wrong in some interpretation – that is what science exchange is all about. Enjoy the learning!
6. Always be gracious!
General Outline of Speech:

1. Context of your poster and why it is important (Background).
2. State your objective (Introduction).
3. State succinctly what/how you did it (Methods).
4. State what you found (Results).
5. State what results meant (Discussion).
6. Give the grand finale’ (Conclusion or Summary).

Make sure these words are no more than 1-2 minutes and be prepared to be interrupted at every phrase – This is improv here: Show 2nd City what for!
Some Web Resources:

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m02leV4gxgE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m02leV4gxgE) – Presentation on How to Design a Poster.
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tlrVKbHO7YU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tlrVKbHO7YU) – ACS Webinar on Poster Presentations. Start at 34 minutes for the speech part.
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXKEGmYSNFg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXKEGmYSNFg) – ACS Webinar on Impactful Scientific Posters – Including Abstracts – yes or no?