Creating your Proposal Presentation

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Overview

• Goals and components of the Module 3 Presentation
• Dividing up the presentation
• Delivering the presentation with your partner
• Questions to ask yourselves: organization, slide design, delivery
A proposal presentation has a distinct audience and purpose

Persuading evaluators to support your research project

• Assume that your audience comprises
  • experts in your topic
  • intelligent generalists with exposure to your field

• How can you make your proposal compelling?
  • Convince audience that project is worth doing
  • Convince audience that you are capable of carrying it out
Help your audience understand the motivation for your idea

- Broadly: What is the problem? What is its (social, scientific) significance?
- Specifically: How have you zeroed in on a well-defined research question?
  - What about your project is novel, relative to prior work?
Help your audience appreciate the merits of your approach

• Provide a clear overview of the scope of your plan
  • be realistic, not overambitious
• Propose pertinent experiments with good controls
• Explain your methods succinctly
• Demonstrate the kind of data you might see
  • show how they will illuminate your central question
• Offer alternative solutions/backup plan
12 minutes to cover...

• brief project overview
• sufficient background information for everyone to understand your proposal
• statement of the research problem and goals
• project details and methods
• predicted outcomes if everything goes according to plan and if nothing goes according to plan
• needed resources to complete the work
• societal impact if all goes well
Dividing up the presentation: general principles

• Each partner should speak roughly the same amount of time

• Audience assumption: Change in speakers corresponds to change in topic

• Keep shifts to a minimum
  • changing speakers can distract audience/slow the talk down

• Many options for dividing the talk!
  • depends on the shape of your presentation...
Dividing up the presentation: Option 1 (Down the Middle)

Speaker 1:
- brief project overview
- sufficient background information for everyone to understand your proposal
- statement of the research problem and goals
- project details and methods

Speaker 2:
- predicted outcomes if everything goes according to plan and if nothing does
- needed resources to complete the work
- societal impact if all goes well

*division assumes that Part I is roughly as long as Part II*
Dividing up the presentation: Option 2 (The Sandwich)

**Speaker 1:**
- brief project overview
- sufficient background information for everyone to understand your proposal
- statement of the research problem and goals

**Speaker 2:**
- project details and method
- predicted outcomes if everything goes according to plan and if nothing does
- needed resources to complete the work

*context=bread*

*experiment nuts & bolts = filling*
Dividing up the presentation: Option 3 (Back and Forth)

Speaker 1:
- brief project overview
- project details and methods
- predicted outcomes if everything goes according to plan and if nothing does

Speaker 2:
- sufficient background information for everyone to understand proposal
- statement of the research problem and goals
- needed resources to complete the work
- societal impact if all goes well
More options (for specific kinds of projects)

• Two discrete research questions OR
• Two discrete methods
  • each partner follows one strand
  • introductory and concluding material each presented by a single partner

• Other possibilities, depending on the particulars of your material
Revision is an essential part of the collaborative process

- Be prepared: collaborative presentations require more revision than individual ones
- Invest yourself in the success of the presentation as a whole
  - don’t get too emotionally attached to your own contributions
- Rehearse before AND after you revise
Help focus the audience’s attention on the right speaker

• During overview, identify who will speak on what topic

• Review/Preview as you proceed through the talk
  • Articulate transitions explicitly -- “hand off”

• Only one partner “onstage” at a time
  • If you’re not speaking, don’t hover nearby

• Do not interrupt each other
Rehearse as a team

- Familiarize yourself with partner’s material
- Note timing of each section and of talk as a whole
- Aim for similar speaking styles
  - don’t imitate each other, but match formality/engagement levels
- Practice moving into speaking position at transition points
- Will you advance each other’s slides?
- Practice Q&A

http://smu.edu/bobhope/images/hope-crosby.jpg
Questions to ask yourselves about organization

- Does our talk fit together as a coherent whole?
- Are all sections of the talk adequately developed?
  - Do we have a focused, well-defined hypothesis?
  - Is it clear what is going to be done and how?
  - Have we realistically articulated the scope of the work?
- Have we omitted extraneous material?
- Will our project fire up an audience’s interest?
- What might make this proposal more convincing to a funding body?
Questions to ask yourselves about slide design

- Is everything on the slide readable?
- Are our slides a good balance of text and figures?
- Have we chosen clear, specific titles that express the main point of each slide?
- Is the design/format of our slides consistent, or were they obviously designed by different people?
Questions to ask yourselves about delivery

• Can we get through our whole presentation in 10 minutes?
• Do we know where to position ourselves, and how to coordinate our shifts smoothly?
• Do our speaking styles work well together?
• Are we making the transitions between topics and speakers clear to the audience?
For more information

• Useful tips on creating funding proposals at http://www.wwu.edu/depts/rsp/insideview.pdf


• Andrew J. Friedland and Carol Folt, Writing Successful Science Proposals (Yale, 2000).