**HO4: Tips for mentees-oral and poster presentations**

**Tips for mentees-oral presentations**

**Task:**

Read through the tips below

* Highlight or mark the ones on this handout not identified in the group checklists
* Add any top-rated tips identified in the group checklists which you feel are missing here

1. **Structure talk as a story (IMRAD format - basically a narrative):** For example, say how you became interested in your research topic, how you addressed it, what you found, and what the findings seem to mean.
2. **Consider building up to the most important content:** In the results section of a scientific paper, one often puts the most important finding first. In presentations, however, some good speakers like to begin with the less important findings and build up to the most important one.
3. **Include much less detail than in a journal article:** In particular do not describe the methods in great detail. Listeners want to know the overall methods you used, not the details of your protocols.
4. **Begin and end strongly:** Listeners especially notice the beginning and end. Attract listener’s attention with a strong beginning. And end with a strong “take-home message”.
5. **Remember: people must understand what you say as you say it:** In a written article, people can look back if they don’t understand or remember something. They can’t do so in a talk. Thus, the talk must be clear throughout.
6. **Avoid unfamiliar abbreviations and acronyms:** Talks with many acronyms tend to be confusing. And once readers are confused, they tend to stop listening.
7. **Beware of using too many slides:** (about 1 slide per minute is the very limit)
8. **Keep slides simple and uncrowded:** (a guideline for text: no more than 7 lines of 7 words each).
9. **Generally, use bullet points, not paragraphs (OK to use phrases rather than sentences):** Bullet points tend to be easier to read.
10. **Make sure all lettering is legible (for main text, beware of using less than 28 point):** Also, use a sans serif typeface (such as Arial, Helvetica, or Calibri).
11. **Time the presentation carefully when you rehearse:** Remember, at many conferences you will not be allowed to speak for more than the assigned time.
12. **Arrive early, and make sure audiovisuals are working:** This way, you are less likely to feel hassled and to have technical problems. Also, some conferences have “speaker-ready rooms” where speakers can practice their presentations beforehand, using the type of equipment being used at the conference.
13. **Speak slowly and clearly:** Remember - although you are very familiar with your content, audience members will need time to digest it. Also, listeners who are not native speakers of the language that you are speaking are likely to appreciate the extra time. If you are a non-native speaker, consider checking pronunciations in an online dictionary that has pronunciations to which you can listen.
14. **Look at the audience:** Eye contact helps engage the audience.
15. **Show enthusiasm:** Showing that you are interested in the content helps generate interest among listeners.
16. **Avoid distracting habits:** Avoid habits such as saying “um, um, um”, fidgeting with your hair or any kind of repetitive movement. One way to identify these habits is to video yourself rehearsing.
17. **Briefly repeat each question:** Audience members might not hear the questions that you are asked. Therefore, briefly repeat each question. Doing so also gives you more time to think of your answer.
18. **Answer each question briefly:** If more detail is wanted, people can ask you later.
19. **If you don’t know an answer, don’t fake it:** It’s better to say that you don’t know. In some instances, you can say how to find the answer, ask whether anyone present has the answer, or arrange to answer the question later.
20. …
21. …
22. …
23. …
24. …
25. …

Etc.

**Tips for mentees-poster presentations**

**Task:**

Read through the tips below

* Highlight or mark the ones on this handout not identified in the group checklists
* Add any top-rated tips identified in the group checklists which you feel are missing here

1. **If you can, base the poster on images that present key messages and attract viewers:** Posters basically are a visual medium. Thus, it’s ideal to base them largely on images.
2. **Plan to include little text (a general guideline:500–1000 words):** In other words, the amount of text in a poster generally should be only twice to four times the amount in a typical abstract.
3. **Plan to make the poster understandable on its own:** People should be able to understand the poster even if they view it when you aren’t present. Therefore, for example, be sure to label the images.
4. **Organize the poster logically:** For example, use the IMRAD format (introduction, methods, results, discussion).
5. **Place the text in vertical columns:** Doing so makes the text easier to read. (otherwise, the lines of text are too long to read easily.) For example, a landscape-format poster may contain three to five columns, and a portrait style poster may contain two columns or so.
6. **Include plenty of white space:** White space is an important design element. If a poster is too crowded, it looks oppressive and is hard to read.
7. **Unless required, don’t include an abstract:** A poster is little more than an extended, illustrated abstract. Including an abstract is redundant and takes up precious space.
8. **Use large enough type for the title (72 point or more):** The title should be large enough for people walking by it to read easily.
9. **Don’t write the title in all capital letters:** Using all capital letters takes more space. It also makes the title harder to read, as capital letters are less varied in shape than lowercase letters are, for example TITLE OF YOUR POSTER vs Title of Your Poster
10. **Choose images that both attract and inform (photos, flow charts, graphs, etc.):** Ideally, the images will help both present content and attract viewers.
11. **Keep images simple, so they are quick to understand:** People reading a poster do not have the time and patience to understand complex images.
12. **If feasible, use graphs rather than tables:** In general, graphs are quicker to understand than tables are.
13. **Make images large enough:** Make images large enough to understand easily. A poster with many small images tends to be hard to understand and unattractive.
14. **Remember to label each image:** As mentioned, label each image, especially as you might not always be available to explain the images.
15. **Keep each section of text relatively brief:** people reading posters generally don’t have patience to read long blocks of text.
16. **Make the text large enough to read easily (at least 18 points):** Even 18 points is rather small for a poster. One experienced editor of scientific posters suggests using 30-point text.
17. **Where feasible, use bulleted or numbered lists (not paragraphs):** such lists tend to be quicker and easier to read than paragraphs.
18. **If paragraphs are used, keep them short (also do not right-justify):** dividing text into short paragraphs makes it easier to read. Also, text with an unjustified (“ragged”) right margin tends to be easier to read and to have more even spacing between words.
19. **Include your contact information:** In case someone reading the poster wants to contact you, include at least your email address.
20. **Prepare accompanying oral presentations of various lengths (for example: 1, 3, and 5 minutes):** that way, you’ll be ready to discuss your work with people who want a quick overview, a relatively detailed summary, or something in between.
21. **Think ahead about questions you might be asked:** consider possible questions, and think of how you would answer them.
22. **Perhaps have handout material available (copies of the poster, reprints of papers, CVs, business cards):** another option is to have a sign-up sheet for people who want items emailed.
23. **:**
24. ,

Etc.