How to Give a Talk

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Are there rules for giving talks?

It's the audience!

1. Know your audience
2. Respect them
3. Engage them
Are there rules for giving talks?

Found at the Stanford Dish
Are there rules for giving talks?

Ten Commandments

1. Don’t talk with nothing to say
2. Don’t talk without rehearsing
3. Don’t show too many slides
4. Don’t stuff slides with too much data
5. Don’t show slides with muddy messages
6. Don’t use subtle colors
7. Don’t show illegible slides
8. Don’t talk unless you can be heard
9. Don’t use jargon
10. Don’t wiggle the laser pointer (etc.)
Don’t talk with nothing to say

*Seinfeld created a TV show about nothing*

- People want a take home message
- They need to understand the message
- Include sign posts so that your mom could follow you
Don’t talk without rehearsing

*But Seinfeld did rehearse*

- Rehearse the talk to yourself and critics
- Test your slides on the actual equipment
- Back up your slides on a flash drive
Don’t show too many slides

*Everyone hates a time hog*

- The audience will be annoyed
- Speakers to follow will be annoyed
- Everybody will have less time for lunch

Allow 1 to 2 minutes per slide
Don’t show too many slides

*Everyone hates a time hog*

Want to hide the slide?

Hit the B or W key
Don’t stuff slides with too much stuff

*Human brains sleep when overwhelmed*
Don’t stuff slides with too much stuff

*Human brains sleep when overwhelmed*
Don’t stuff slides with too much stuff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genes Associated with Favorable Prognosis</th>
<th>Immune-Response 1 Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training Set of Tumor Specimens (N=95)</td>
<td>ACTN1 IMAGE:5289004 TNFRSF1B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ATP8B2 INPP1 TNFRSF25</td>
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<td>BIN2 ITK TNFSF12</td>
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<td>HOXB2 TEAD1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IL7R TMEPAI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Don’t stuff slides with too much stuff

- Frame the figure with a background if needed
Don’t show slides with muddy messages

Deciphering the Rosetta stone took decades
Your audience has a minute

- Give the take-home message in the title
- Avoid passive sentences
- Eliminate extraneous information
- Construct each item in the same way
Give the take-home message in the title

Apollo

- Mutant cells derived from patients with defects in signaling are rescued by Apollo cDNA
- Cloned by two-hybrid screen using Athena
- Interacts with Athena
- Homologous to Athena
Apollo plays a role in a cellular signaling pathway

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Apollo plays a role in signaling

- Apollo cDNA rescues mutant cells derived from patients with defects in signaling
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Eliminate extraneous information

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Construct each item in the same way

**Apollo plays a role in signaling**

- Apollo cDNA *rescues* cells with defects in signaling
- **Interacts** with Athena
- **Homologous** to Athena
Construct each item in the same way

Apollo plays a role in signaling

- Rescues signaling-defective cells
- Interacts with Athena
- Shares homology with Athena
Don’t use subtle colors

*Department chairs are often colorblind*

(5% of men are red-green colorblind)

*Colors should stand out against background and not look like this*

*Use complementary colors*
Don’t use subtle colors
*Department chairs are often colorblind*
(5% of men are red-green colorblind)

Colors should stand out against background and not look like this

Use complementary colors
Don’t use subtle colors

*Department chairs are often colorblind*

Fancy backgrounds?

Fuggetaboudit
Don’t use subtle colors

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Fancy backgrounds?

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*Department chairs are often colorblind*

Blue and white backgrounds both work

*White* allows students to take notes,
eliminates need to frame figures

(Let’s try white for now)
Don’t show illegible slides

Department chairs are partially blind

- Don’t copy/paste figures into PowerPoint
  (You can copy/paste into Apple’s Keynote)
Don’t show illegible slides

*Department chairs are partially blind*

- Save figures as jpeg files at 300 dpi
- Import figures: (Insert > Picture > From File…)

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**Training Set of Tumor Specimens (N=95)**

**Immune-Response 1 Signature**

- ACTN1
- ATP8B2
- BIN2
- C1RL
- C6orf37
- C9orf52
- CD7
- CD8B1
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- DKKP566G1424
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This figure was copied from a screenshot of a pdf file

On Macs, copy screenshots using Apple/Shift/4
Don’t show illegible slides

Department chairs are partially blind

This was copied from a LARGE screenshot of a pdf file
Don’t show illegible slides
Department chairs are partially blind

The projector may chop the edges from your slide

“Mirror Displays” fixes the problem

Apple Menu > System Preferences > Displays
> Detect Displays (works only with a projector) >
   Arrangement > Mirror Displays
   (Changes appearance of your desktop)
Don’t show illegible slides

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Your presentation may not work on another computer

**One solution:** project as a PDF file

In Adobe Reader: View > Full Screen Mode

(You will lose animations)
Don’t talk unless you can be heard
Department chairs are partially deaf

- Face your audience, not the screen
- Check that the microphone is working
Don’t use jargon
*We’re not the government*

“MHC” means:
Myosin heavy chain *in muscle development*
Major histocompatibility complex *in immunology*
Don’t wiggle the laser pointer (etc.)

*Inducing nausea is bad*

Other annoying practices:

- Blocking the screen with your computer
- Showing a slide for 0.2 seconds
- (Add your own favorites)
The Golden Rule

Talk as you would have others talk to you

What makes a talk good?

• Content that taught you something new
• Stories that share the excitement of discovery
• Humor that kept you awake
• (Add your own favorites)
Dad, can we have lunch now?