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 does

- 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

context=bread

- societal impact if all goes well

Speaker 2:

- project details and method

- predicted outcomes if everything goes according to plan and if nothing does

- needed resources to complete the work

experiment nuts & bolts = filling

Dividing up the presentation: Option 3 (Back and Forth)

Speaker 1:

- brief project overview

each partner speaks long enough to establish flow

- 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

- "Guide for Proposal Writing," National Science Foundation, 18 Feb. 2004, http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2004/nsf04016/nsf04016.pdf

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