Learning Objectives

- Learn approaches to effective presentations
- Information on research group talk structure
How to deliver effective presentations

- Know your audience and their background
- Research thoroughly
- Document your sources
- Write your speech
- Prepare the slideshow

http://sustainability.psu.edu/student-groups
Prepare the slideshow

- What are the points you want to get across?
- Slides are a visual aid
  - Pictures are good (oops...)
- Don’t put too much on a slide
- Not too much flashy graphics/animations
- Time your presentation
- References at end
- Extra material after the end
- Choose an appropriate style
How to deliver effective presentations

- Rehearse and have a dress rehearsal
- Modify based on rehearsals
- Prepare yourself
- Style on stage
- Present to the audience
- Answer questions

Common mistakes I’ve seen

- Too much text on a slide
- Reading all the text on the slide
- Text on slides too small (>= 24pt)
- Facing the screen rather than audience
- Too many slides (12 for 20 mins?)
- Interlocutory sounds
- Failed movies and live demonstrations
Asking Questions?

- You can always ask a question!
  - It’s what science is all about...
- Reflecting on what is being presented
  - Does it match what you know/believe?
- Why do we ask questions?
  - Clarify your understanding
  - To address contradictions
  - To highlight an aspect of the research
  - To gain further insight from experts
  - To propose future directions
  - To relate to other research you are aware of
  - To be known 😊
Asking Questions?

- Just ask one question
  - Wait for the chair or speaker to acknowledge you
  - Prepare - jot down what it is you want to ask about
  - Provide some context
    - On slide X
    - When you were talking about Y
  - Don’t make it about you!
  - Closed questions
  - Open questions
Answering Questions

- Stay calm!
- Think about possible questions prior to the presentation
- Ensure you understand the question
  - Ask for clarification or rephrasing if you don’t
- Take a few seconds to think about your answer
- Repeat your understanding of the question
- Give a short answer (yes/no) before a detailed explanation
- If you don’t know then say so – don’t make it up
  - You could offer an opinion
- If it is a misunderstanding of your presentation, then make that clear and try to rephrase
- If very detailed, or long to answer, suggest talking later
Research Group Presentations

- 20 minute presentation
  - What is the research area?
  - What do researchers in this area do?
  - What are the 'big' questions in the area, or how will it change the world?

- 30 minute discussion and analysis session
  - Q&A session
    - Work in small groups to develop questions about the area (10 minutes) with support from the presenter and course lecturers
    - Groups pose their questions to the presenter (20 minutes)
  - Presenter to pose a question/issue for the class. In small groups you’ll discuss the question/issue (10 minutes), then have a debate around that question/issue
  - In small groups you’ll develop a research project idea to tackle a big issue from the talk (10 minutes), then pitch the project idea to the presenter
Summary

- Presentations require structure and rehearsal
- Slides are a prop, minimize what goes on them
- Research group presentations will be interactive (+fun)
  - Asking questions is a core skill of a scientist
Sources