Effective Communication in Science

Presentations and Posters
Preparing Effective Presentations

• An effective talk has a clear purpose
  – If you don’t know what it is, the audience won’t either

• The title should convey the findings, briefly
Keep the Number of Slides to a Minimum

• 1.0 – 1.2 slides per minute
• For INBRE Grand Island, suggest 12 slides, no more than 15
  – A talk is not a movie!
Keep The Slides Simple

• A minimum of words, a maximum of graphics
  – We can either listen to you, or read your slides, we can’t do both
  – We’d rather listen to you
  – No bullet points
• Leave out the cheesy stuff and the elaborate slide designs
Methods

• Keep to a minimum
• Refer to methods by generic names
  – we don’t need details like time, voltage, concentration
  – e.g. “... by Western blot”
  – “... using a sucrose gradient”
  – “... immunohistochemistry and confocal microscopy”
• Your audience is scientifically literate, but is not familiar with the specifics of your area of enquiry
  – We know in a general sense what the various methods are for
• Except if you did something novel
  – Explain with a separate slide
Rehearse, Rehearse, Rehearse

• Did I say rehearse?
• Use direct language
  – I did ....
  – Then I did ....
  – I found that ....
• And links
  – This led me to ...
  – The obvious next step was to ....
  – I found that
Pointers

• Limit use to highlighting specific items on a slide
  – e.g., features of a figure, particular data points
  – even then, often done better using an arrow on the figure itself

• If you are going to use the pointer, have something important to say with it
Movies are Dangerous

• Sometimes the representation computer or the projector at a meeting site is not fast enough
• Be prepared to be disappointed
• Movie should be in the same folder as the presentation file when preparing
• Remember to copy the movie as well as the presentation file
Finish with a Summary Slide

• With the take-home point(s)
• And with acknowledgments – including INBRE
  – Supported by Grant Number P20 RR16469 from NCRR, NIH
• No babies or family pets
An Effective Poster is Self-Contained and Self-Explanatory

• It should be understandable to a scientifically literate reader without you being there to explain it
• Keep it simple
• Your poster is going to be viewed from a distance – use large letters and graphics
The Title is Very Important

• It should be immediately clear from the title what the poster is about

• Authors and affiliations in smaller type (but still large)
Layout

- Organize your poster in large blocks (panels) of information (6-10 typically), including Introduction and Conclusion
- Contrasting, unobtrusive background
The Message is in the Figures

• One or two major points per figure
• Heading with the take-home message on each panel
• Technical detail in smaller type below
• Place the most significant findings at eye level immediately below the title bar
Introduction and Conclusion

• Introduction - one panel at the left
  – Set up the question
  – Not a treatise

• Methods
  – Brief, generic, and out of the way (e.g., at the bottom)
  – Amplify only of someone asks
  – If there is something novel about your method, put it in a panel!

• Conclusion – one panel at the right
  – To the point – a few lines only
  – Save “Discussion” for anyone that asks
• Not needed

• However, if you use a figure or quotation from another source, acknowledge it in small print underneath (e.g., Hallworth et al. (2007))
Acknowledgments

• Who paid for it
• Especially INBRE!!
  • Supported by Grant Number P20 RR16469 from NCRR, NIH
• Anyone who helped
Preparation for Grand Island

• Our poster size: 48” wide by 36” high
  – other meetings differ
• Easiest to prepare in PowerPoint
• Set to half-size in PowerPoint, i.e., 24” by 18”
• View at 200% to judge legibility from a distance
• Allow up to a week for printing
Arachidonic Acid Anomalously Accumulates after Archetypic Apoptosis at Aardvark Association Areas. Anna Author, Aaron Associate, and Alana Advisor. Dept. of Neuroscience, Univ. of Affiliation Medical School, Affiliation, AZ.

1. Agonists and Antagonists Alternate Allotestically at A9 and A10 Acidotropic Autoceptors

   - [Diagram showing agonists and antagonists]

2. Accidental Axotomy Augments Anomalous Apoptosis

   - [Graph showing apoptosis and axotomy zone age]

3. Astrocytic A-current Affects ATP

   - [Diagram showing ATP synthesis and current over time]

4. Adolescent Acupuncture Addition Aggravates Adult Absinthe Abuse

   - [Diagram showing acupuncture and addiction]

5. APV Abolishes Arachidonic Acid Accretion Affecting AMPA-Activating Aspartate Analogues After Associative Ammonic Afterdischarge

   - [Diagram showing APV and AMPA activation]

6. Artificial Auto-Associative Annealing Algorithms Adiabatically Approximate Asychronous Attractors Along Arbitrary Algebraic Axes

   - [Diagram showing algorithm and attractors]

7. Anterior Analytic Antibody Antagonizes Antisense Antipsychotics

   - [Table showing antibody types and effects]

8. Ascending Aspiny Accessory Accurate Afferents Absorb Amyloid Agranular Amyloid A4 Aggregates at Acanthomized Amygdala

   - [Diagram showing amyloid absorption]

Conclusions

1. Axotomy augments apoptosis.
2. Annealing approximates attractors.
3. Afferents absorb amyloid.
4. ATP affected after astrocytic activation.

World Wide Web URL of this poster: [http://www.neuro.affil.edu/neo/post/AAA.html](http://www.neuro.affil.edu/neo/post/AAA.html)