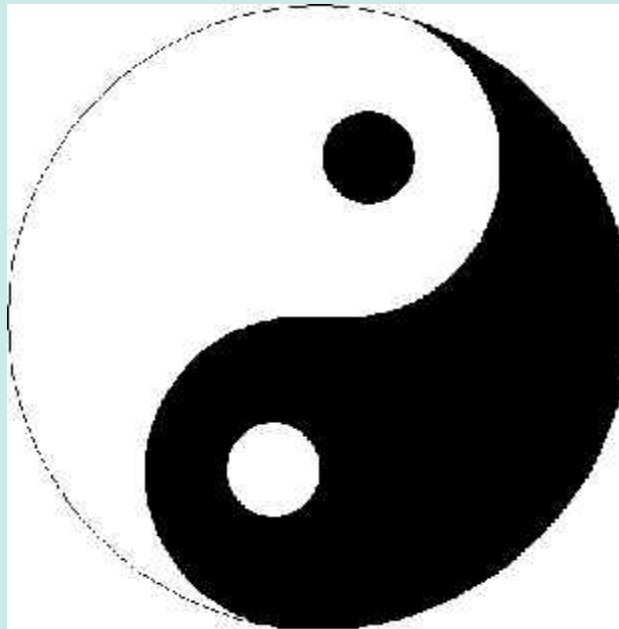


# **How [and Why] to Make an Excellent Scientific Presentation**

**Allan V Kalueff PhD**

# Why present?

What you can do  
for Science



What you can do  
for your career  
as a Scientist

# Why present?

- Explain your own data. Advance Science.
- Make a “lasting impact” on the field
- Meet others in your field or other fields
- Find out what colleagues think about your research
- Establish possible future collaborations

# Why present?

- Advance your own agenda
- Self-advocacy (but not self-promotion!)
- Find a future mentor
- Get a job
- Meet new friends (or potential relatives...)

# Why present?

- Like papers, presentations are critical yardsticks of productivity
- Quality is as important as quantity
- Presentations are important for CV:
  - Important for job/grant applications
  - Important for grant progress reports
  - Important for grant renewal applications
  - Important for promotion

# Why present?

- Opportunity to conceptualize and think more clearly about the research
- One of final products of the research project
- The more you present, the better you will be
- Good for developing teaching skills

# The bad news:



**ALL** young scientists experience strong anxiety when they first present at scientific meetings



Scientific meetings are becoming much "younger" – more young scientists **HAVE TO** present

# The good news:

All young scientists experience strong anxiety when they first present at scientific meetings:

Next time it will be easier!

Scientific meetings are becoming “younger” – more young scientists have to present

That is how we learn. Next time it will be easier!



**The only solution is to  
...just do it**

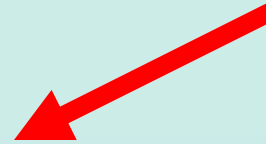
# What Makes a Good Presentation?

- Sound hypothesis/rationale
- Good experimental design
- Tells a good and “complete” story
- Understandable results
- Clear and concise figures/tables
- Reasonable discussion
- A thorough literature search (last-minute updates)
- Clear structure of the presentation
- Sound conclusions/summary

# Important tips

- Write it out and read it aloud:
  - Should follow a logical sequence
  - Avoid tongue twisters or words that are hard to say
  - Do not use terms you do not understand
- Practice it over and over
- If necessary, record yourself and listen to how you sound
- Employ your friends and relatives (mock presentation)
- Grandmas are particularly helpful

Good news: you have at least 1 person interested



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# Some additional tips

- Keep the talk simple
- Keep it clear and short
- Do not give away your great research ideas/plans
- First impressions count
- Maintain an eye contact
- **Know** your audience: who they are?
- Pick a “reference person” in the audience
- Monitor the audience (% of sleeping colleagues)
- **Talk to Joe The First Year Student**

# Some additional tips

- Humility [but within reason!]
- No mumbling
- Do not judge people in the audience by their appearance
- Be friendly with the audience [but keep the distance]
- Be prepared to fill the gap **WHEN** computer crushes
- Handle interjections/questions during the talk
- Leave enough time for questions [they are as important as the presentation per se]
- Double-check *langwidg* and *zpellinnng* in your slides

# Do not be discouraged

## WHAT YOU BROUGHT TO SEMINAR AND WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT YOU:

Stuff to take notes:  
First year. Foolishly  
thinks he'll ever  
need notes again.

Reading  
material: Third  
year. Just  
here for show.

Didn't bring  
anything:  
ABD/Postdoc.  
Has nothing  
better to do.

Laptop: Young  
Assistant Professor.  
Working on three  
proposals at the  
same time.

Playing with latest  
Gadget/Gizmo:  
Full Professor.  
Loooves new toys.

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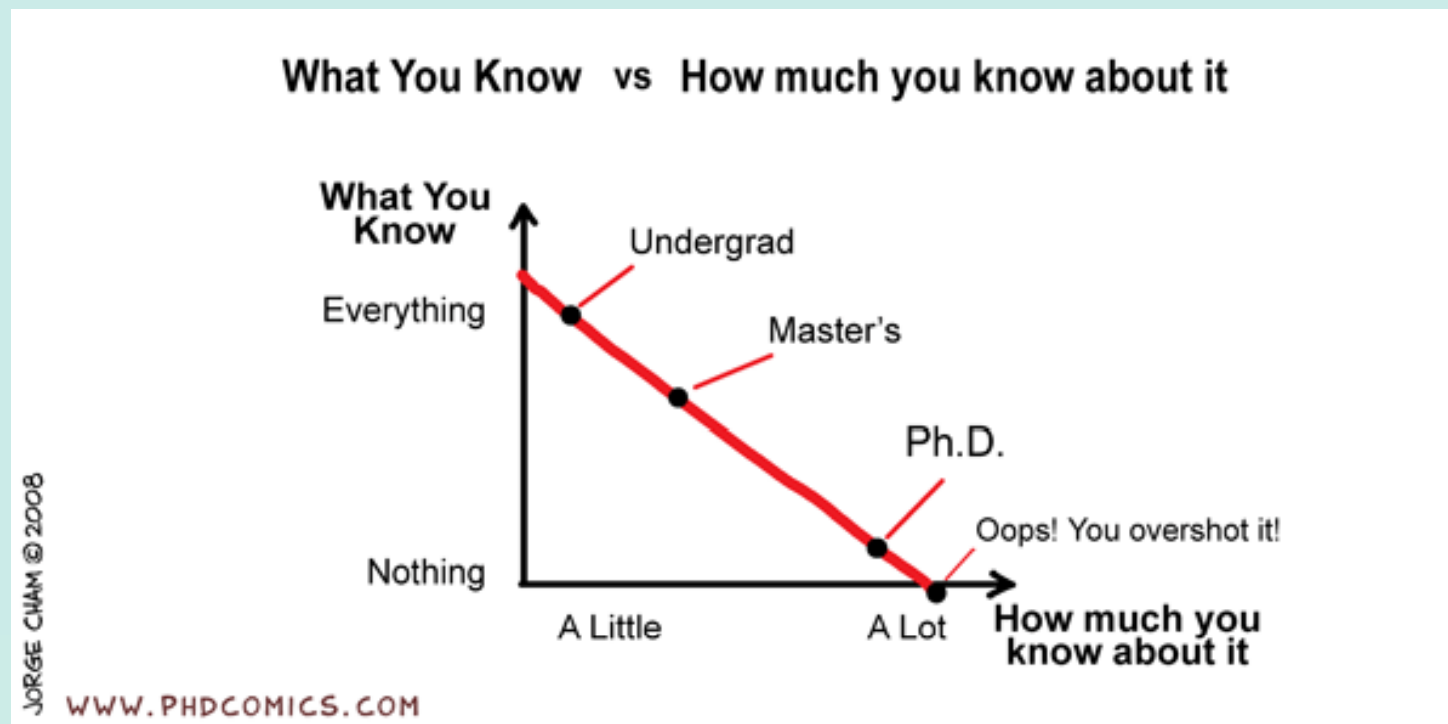
# Some other important tips

- Avoid personal attacks on colleagues or scientific schools
- Handle difficult colleagues (“Nothing personal”)
- Careful with the jokes
  
- If speaking at an International conference, consider cultural diversity of the audience
- No jokes about other countries, nations, races
- Do not speak too fast
- Avoid jargon and slang



# Summary

- Know your subject [and your DATA!]
- Keep the balance:



# Summary

- Be confident, **show** that you know the subject
- Know when to stop [keeping time is crucial]

THUS:

- Presenting a good talk is NOT that difficult
- It may be fun, and you may like it
- It may be beneficial for your personal growth
- It is part of our profession

# Summary

- Presenting offers excellent networking opportunities
- “Every talk is a job interview”
- “Feel” the audience
- “Ride the wave”

**Good luck!**