

Designing and Delivering Dynamic Presentations

Andrea McKenzie

Director, Writing in the Disciplines



The Top 5 Problems

- Going overtime: presentation not timed
- Going overtime: lack of planning
- Going overtime: too much intro, no discussion
- Going overtime: choppy delivery
- Going overtime: poor design leads to choppy delivery

URC Presentations

- 8 to 10 minutes (plan for 8 minutes only)
- Question period afterwards
- 5 to 8 speakers per session
- 3 or 4 judges per session
- Data projector and PC laptop available
 - Test Mac files ahead of time

Designing for your topic

- What are the expectations for my discipline?
- What is my research question? (The HINGE)
- What is unique about my research? Where should my focus be?
- What are the most important findings? What impact or potential impact do they have on the field? What is novel or unique?
- What evidence can I use to SHOW the audience?

1. What are the expectations for your discipline?

Design of structure

- Are certain sections expected? Look to published research in your field

Delivery

- Humanities: a timed paper you read; can be illustrated if your topic calls for it
- Social Sciences, Science, Psychology, Math, Economics, etc.: a timed extemporaneous presentation focused on visual slides
- If unsure, **CHECK WITH YOUR MENTOR**

2. What is my research aim or question or thesis?

- One sentence (may have sub-aims to follow)
- Clearly identifiable (“My aim....”)
- The HINGE
 - Intro leads up to it
 - Findings and conclusion answer it
- If we cannot hear/see it, point of presentation lost

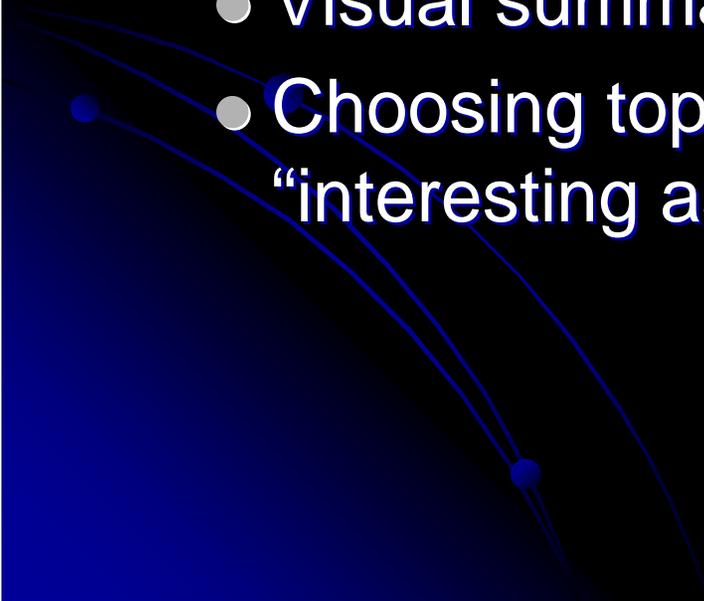
3. What is unique about your research?

- What distinguishes your research from others in the same field?
- What new knowledge have you uncovered?
- What should your presentation focus on?
- **DESIGN FOR YOUR TOPIC**
 - E.g innovative method, then focus on method!

4. What are the most important findings? What is their impact?

- Prioritize your findings
 - In-depth better than laundry list
- What is
 - Immediate impact?
 - Higher level meaning or significance for field?
- Design around these **unique** points
- What is the **story** you want to tell us?

5. What evidence do I have? How can I SHOW my audience?

- A year's work in 8 minutes?
 - Helpful strategies:
 - A case study or in-depth analysis that shows us what you did
 - Visual summaries of results (for experiments)
 - Choosing top results/findings; choosing most "interesting aspect"
- 

An Example: English/Art

- What did the covers of L. M. Montgomery's *Emily* books tell us about the status of women writers across cultures and time?
- Question or objective the HINGE of presentation
 - Findings and conclusions answer it, both specifically and on higher level
 - Introduction (and Methods) lead up to it, including its value

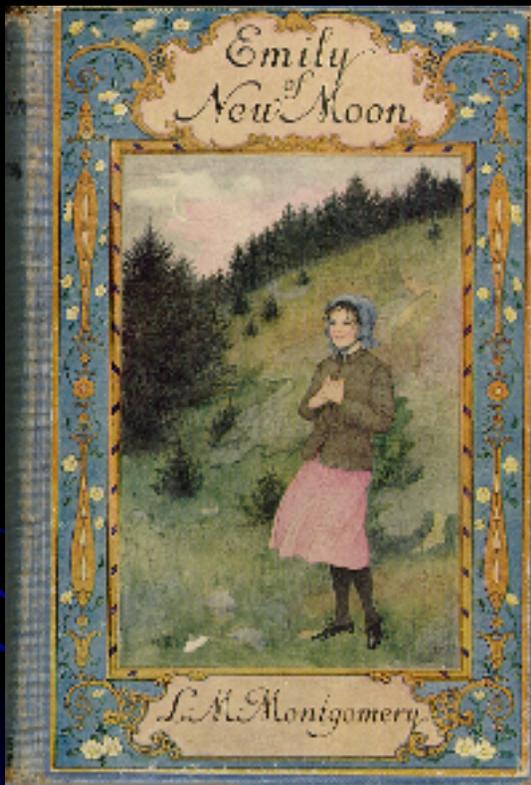
My “Data” (Findings)

- North America, 1920s: the older Emily depicted as increasingly confined, romantically-oriented
- The Netherlands, 1920s: draws in well-to-do reader by depicting reflection of social class, domesticity; non-threatening
- Canada, 1950s: Emily looks to lover, not pen
- And so on, for another 50 pages and 20 covers
- CANNOT present all research
- MUST find way to show evidence that leads to conclusions

My Conclusions

- Immediate:
 - Adult women writers seen as threatening, environment confined, domestic; demotion and denial across culture and time
 - Illustrations work AGAINST Montgomery's depictions of power, autonomy
- Larger:
 - Socially encoded notions of "writer" collide with those of "woman"
 - Power of illustrations: cultural expectations, positioning of author, positioning of audience
- Which evidence should I show and how?

Prioritizing issues & evidence

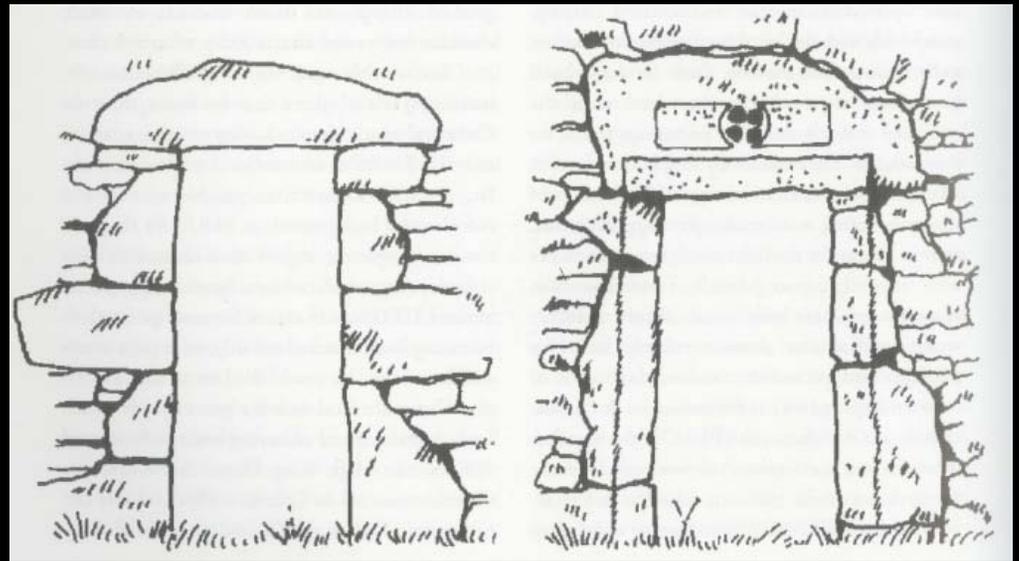


- 1st eg: in-depth analysis using visual rhetoric
- For next 2 or 3 major points, one or two examples that epitomize what I'm saying
- Montgomery quotes also included

Another Example: Ecclesiastical Early Irish Architecture Analysis



In Intro: used to educate us about features



In Results/Discussion: to base analysis on

In Science & similar subjects

- NOTE: From a proposal, not a final report
- Are the Dorsal Neurons Mediators of *Drosophila* Larvae Photophobia?
- Immediate conclusions: If the function of the DN-2 in larval photophobia is elucidated it would provide great insight into the mechanisms by which the internal molecular clock can control rapid output behaviors, such as light avoidance. In the short term it could lead to the identification of new clock output signals. As of now a neuropeptide called PDF is the molecule involved in signaling between clock neurons, and experiments have shown that it is not involved in light avoidance.
- **Larger significance: In the long run, human homologues of proteins identified in *Drosophila* could lead to potential therapies and treatments for jet lag or sleep disorders, such as insomnia.**

Science, Psychology and Visually-oriented fields: what not to do

- Geographic Locations of the Continents of the World
 - North America
 - North of South America, Australia, Antarctic
 - West (?) of Europe, Asia
 - South America
 - South of North America, Arctic
 - West of Europe, Asia
 - North of Antarctic
 - Europe
 - I'm sure you see my point by now.
 - Asia
 - Australia
 - Africa
 - Antarctic

World Continents



= 1000
words

For Visual Pres: Design in Pictures, not Words

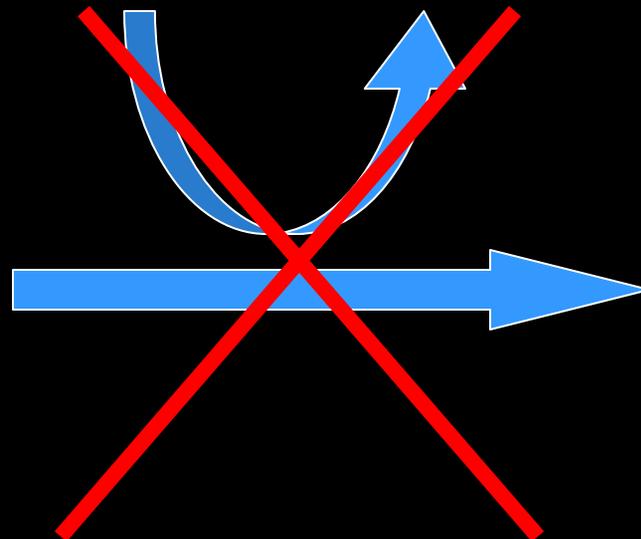
- Create a logical flow of **DIAGRAMS**
 - Add text for labels and captions
- Your verbal explanation explains the diagrams, adds the connections
- Use text only when you can't think of a way to **SHOW** us
- For Economics & similar fields: show models, use equations if relevant

An Example: Thiopurine methyltransferase (TPMT)

TPMT



Thiopurines

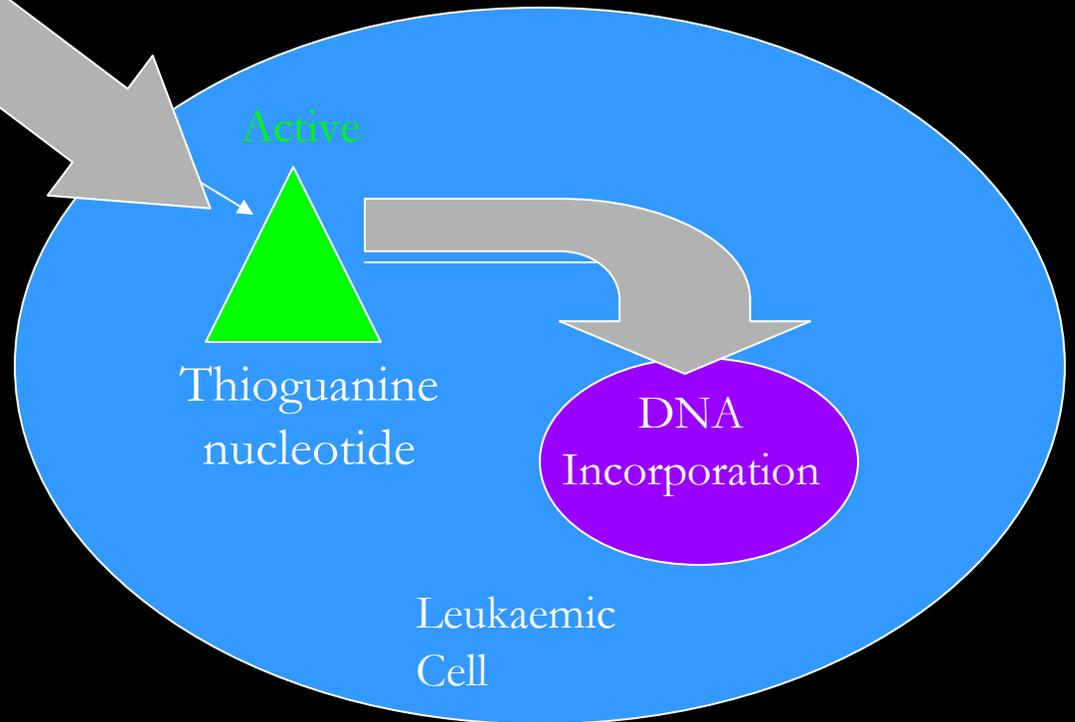
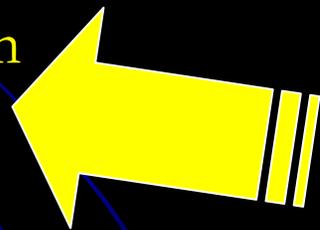


Thiopurine methyl-
thiopurine

Thiopurine Therapy



- Toxic accumulation of thioguanine nucleotides
- Cell death
- Tumor shrinkage
- Myelosuppression
- Antileukaemic effects
- Secondary cancers



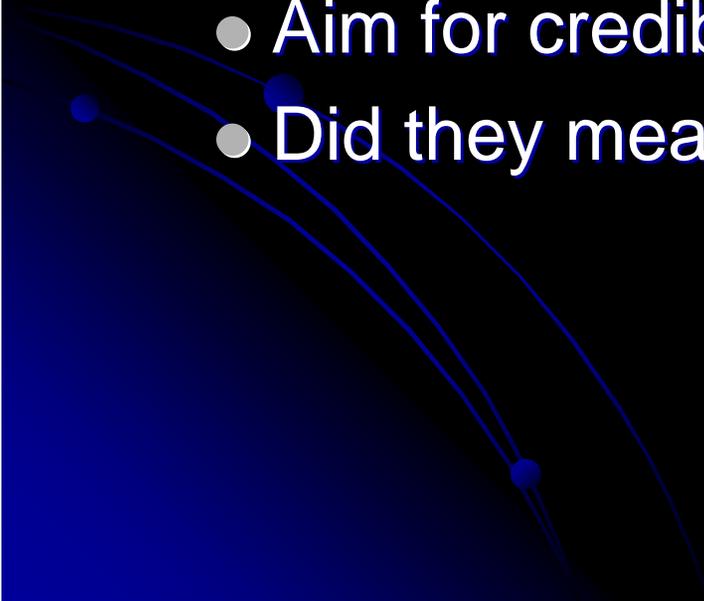
AFTER you've designed the story

- Design the Introduction
- What background info do we need to know to understand your story?
- Design for an audience with knowledge of your discipline, NOT of your topic
- Again, if appropriate, THINK VISUALLY
 - Photos of artwork or architecture
 - Example of music (if music studied!)
 - Diagram of complex scientific concept or brain

Your Intro: 3 mins max

- Begin with your topic, not with “Since the dawn of time, humankind has wondered....”
- Give us the context, problem, situation or current state of research
- If appropriate, show us (art, architecture, science concept, demographics, model, music)
- **Give us a reason to listen: why is this research important or valuable?**
- Tell us (or show us) your question, objective or goal in performing this research

Your Methods

- If an experiment, think visually
 - If an analysis, what theories, models or methods did you use?
 - Level of detail
 - Aim for credibility; justify your methods
 - Did they measure what you wanted them to?
- 

Organization Recap

- (Title slide)
- Introduction – background, significance, **question or objective**
- (Methods/Approach – if applicable)
- Results and/or analysis
- Discussion/Conclusions
- NOTE on timing:
Results/Analysis/Discussion/Conclusions
should take up at least half your time

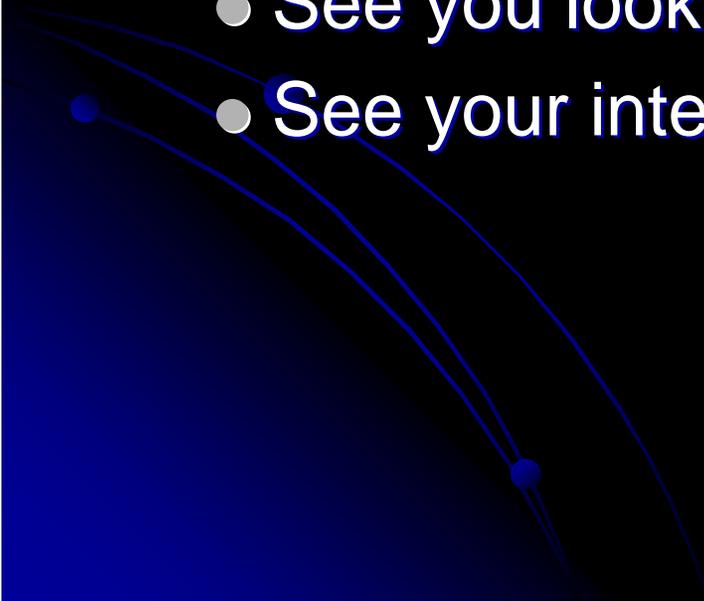
Those using Powerpoint

- THINK VISUALLY. Little text, lots of graphics
 - Explain complex concepts visually
 - Storyboard using visuals FIRST
- Use large fonts
- Keep background plain; don't distract us
- Use contrasting font and background colours
- Don't place important points on bottom $\frac{1}{4}$ of screen

When You Rehearse

- Is your message clear?
- Is the flow logical?
- Does the Intro contain enough detail that we understand your question or objective?
- Is the question or objective clearly stated?
- Does the analysis, results, or issues focus on the most important issues?
- Do your conclusions follow from this evidence?
- Have you answered your question or objective?

Delivering Dynamically

- We need to:
 - Hear you
 - Understand you
 - Not be distracted by mannerisms
 - See you look at us
 - See your interest
- 

The Translation

- Speak clearly at a natural pace
- Develop your own style, but...
 - If reading, practice expression
 - If not reading, practice expression and pace
- Stand straight and look confident
- Deliver to your audience, not to your paper or the screen
- Look at your audience
 - So your voice travels to them
 - So that they see your interest

Good Delivery

- Takes practice and rehearsal
 - Time yourself!!!
 - Run through 4-6 times, especially if not using paper or notes
 - Note choppy places and revise wording in paper or slide design: **VERY IMPORTANT**
 - Practice standing up
 - Practice out loud
 - Practice using equipment

Managing Nerves

- Begin when you're ready
 - Don't rush
 - Raise your eyes and look at the audience
 - If in doubt, begin with "Good morning/afternoon" and your topic
- End smoothly: "That concludes...." and "Thank you."
- Give the appearance of confidence; tension breeds tension

Managing Nerves

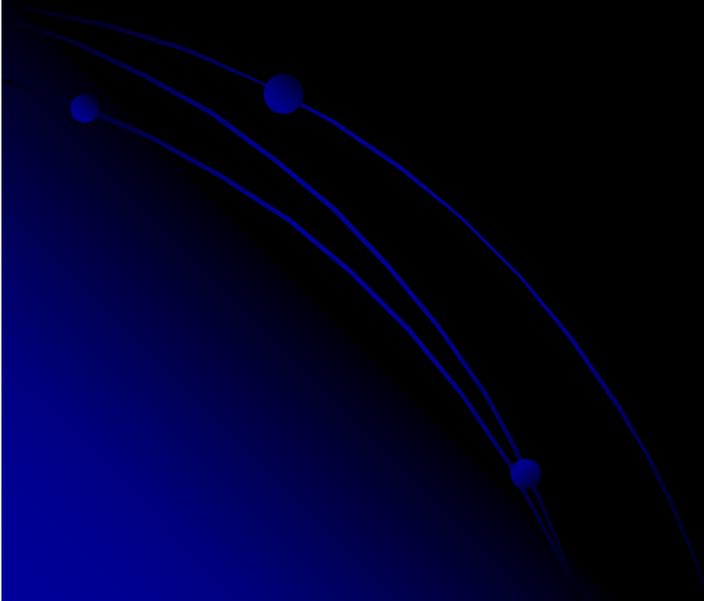
- If no notes and you forget what you're going to say:
 - Pause naturally, take a deep breath, focus, and begin again. Audience won't notice
- Learn your weaknesses; strategize
 - Shaky voice; put up visual or quote
 - Shaky knees; wear baggy trousers or skirt

Managing Nerves

- Focus on the audience, not yourself; you have an exciting topic you WANT to tell them about
- YOU KNOW YOUR SUBJECT AND YOU HAVE PRACTICED
- Your audience
 - can't see your knees knocking together
 - won't notice trembling hands
 - won't notice you skipped a line

Remember

- Learn from each presentation
- 8 minutes will not matter in 10 years' time
- We improve with practice
- You are your own worst critic



***Good Luck
and
Thank You!***

