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# Creating Your Proposal Presentation

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## Overview

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- Goals and components of the Module 3 Presentation
- Planning as a team
- Delivering the presentation as a team
- Revising as a team

# **A proposal presentation has a distinct audience and purpose**

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## **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

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- 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

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- 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...

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- 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

## **Early decisions should be planned jointly**

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### **Discuss, pre-drafting:**

- What to put in/leave out
  - What does audience need to know?
  - What do they not really need to hear?
- How to organize flow of information
- How much time should be allotted to each element of the talk
- Your assumptions
  - you know the project better than audience -- certain connections may make sense to you and not them

# Dividing up the presentation: general principles

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- Each partner should speak roughly the same amount of time
- Audience will assume: a 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)

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#### **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 methods
- predicted outcomes if everything goes according to plan and if nothing does
- needed resources to complete the work

*experiment nuts and bolts = filling*

# Dividing up the presentation:

## Option 3 (Back and Forth)

### Speaker 1:

- brief project overview
- 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 your proposal
- statement of the research problem and goals
- needed resources to complete the work

*each partner speaks long enough to establish flow*

## More options (for specific kinds of projects)

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- 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

## **Help focus the audience's attention on the right speaker**

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- 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

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- 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>

# Revision is an essential part of the collaborative process

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- 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

## **Critique your presentation's organization**

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- 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?

## **Critique your presentation's slide design**

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- 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?

## **Critique your (joint) delivery**

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- Can we get through our entire presentation in 12 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?
- Is each individual speaker clear and understandable?

## For more information

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- 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).