Presenting A Successful Seminar

This seminar is based on a handout by Dr. Wayne Parrot in the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences at the University of Georgia. Special thanks go to him for sharing these materials.
Why present a good seminar?

1. To get a passing grade in your class
2. Audience recognition
3. You need to practice being on stage because you are petrified of doing so
4. You want a job
5. You want to highlight research you are doing

Steps for a good seminar

1. Select the topic
2. Collect and organize information
3. Design the Slides
4. Make the slides
5. Give the seminar
Steps for a good seminar

1. Select the topic
2. Choose the format
3. Design the slides
4. Make the slides
5. Prepare the abstract
6. Give the seminar

Select the topic

- Be somewhat familiar/interested in the topic.
- The topic must be covered comprehensively within the allotted time period.
Steps for a good seminar

1. Select the topic
2. Choose the format
3. Design the slides
4. Make the slides
5. Prepare the abstract
6. Give the seminar

Choose the format

- Decide on the content of the talk
- Organize the talk with an outline or other sensible structure
- The seminar must have a beginning and an end
What do you want your audience to remember?

Build a concept

- move from least important to more
- move from simple to complex
- use data to make each point
State the message in a noun-verb-object format using less than 6 words:

Here are some examples:

- GIS is useful to soil scientists
- Biotechnology makes better tomatoes
- Seminars take a lot of work

Choose the format

1. Decide on the content of the talk
2. Organize the talk with an outline or other sensible structure
3. The seminar must have a beginning and an end
The Outline of This Talk

Introduction
1. Select the topic
2. Choose the format
3. Design the slides
4. Make the slides
5. Prepare the abstract
6. Give the seminar

Conclusion

Details in the outline

STEP 1: Selecting the topic

STEP 2: Choosing the format
1. Decide on the content of the talk
   1. What do you want your audience to remember?
   2. State the message in a noun-verb-object format NOT TO EXCEED 6 WORDS:
      Here are some examples:
      GIS is useful to soil scientists
      Biotechnology makes better tomatoes

2. Organize the talk with an outline or similar structure
   1. Outline
   2. Part of the outline

3. The seminar must have a beginning and an end

STEP 3: Show, don't tell
1. "Visuals represent the credibility of your presentation, reinforcing your spoken words"
2. Visuals double as note cards
   The use of note cards or cue cards is not permitted during the seminar.

3. Types of visuals
   ✤ Use verbal visuals (i.e., word slides)
   ✤ Use the real thing
   ✤ Use graphs, maps, or flow charts
   ✤ Use drawings
   ✤ Use photographs
   ✤ Use data to support each and every point made during the seminar.
Choose the format

1. Decide on the content of the talk
2. Organize the talk with an outline or other sensible structure
3. The seminar must have a beginning and an end

Steps for a good seminar

1. Select the topic
2. Choose the format
3. Design the slides
4. Make the slides
5. Prepare the abstract
6. Give the seminar
6 x 6 x 6 rule

- *six words per bullet*
- *six bullets per slide*
- *no more than 35 words per slide*

Slide requirements

- *EACH SLIDE SHOULD HAVE A TITLE*
- *Keep simple*
- *Give proper credit*
Design the slides

"Visuals represent the credibility of your presentation, reinforcing your spoken words" (Edelhart and Ellison, 1989).

Each slide should serve as a "note card"

Each slide should be associated with a point

Don’t read a slide (Show, don't tell)

Types of visuals

- Verbal visuals (i.e., word slides)
- The real thing (models)
- Graphs, maps, or flow charts
- Drawings
- Photographs

Use data to support each and every point made during the seminar
Remember the following points while designing each slide:

- Slides must not be self-explanatory
- Use only ONE thought per slide
  (Anonymous, 1988)
- Keep everything simple, don’t clutter the slide
- Give proper credit
Selecting herbicide resistant crops based on broad acre selection procedures.

Possible reasons why susceptible individuals survive herbicide application under field conditions

I. Unevenness of spray application - because of drift, imperfect nozzle spacing or height, asymmetrical nozzles, and so on.

II. Unevenness in soil conditions - leading to greater vigor and thus more survival in one area than another.

III. Inadequate mortality - because the calculations of the rate at which to apply the herbicide were based on inadequate premises, or because of unpredictable climatic events (e.g., rain) after spraying.

IV. Avoidance of the herbicide. (e.g., by delayed germination).

V. Protection of plants by neighbors or weeds from foliar application, or by stones or deep sowing from preemergence applications.

VI. Differential interception of spray because of varying orientations of leaves at spraying.

Example of a bad slide

---

REASONS WHY SUSCEPTIBLE PLANTS SURVIVE HERBICIDE APPLICATION

1. Uneven spray application
2. Uneven soil conditions
3. Rate of application
4. Avoidance
5. Shading
6. Leaf orientation

Example of a good slide
More points to remember:

- Use graphics rather than tables
- Select the correct type of graph
- Do not number tables, figures, and graphs
- Avoid clip art
- Do not use 3-D graphs for 2-D data
- Be selective about the data you present (Kodak, 1994)

Table

Regeneration capacity of soybean genotypes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultivar</th>
<th>No. embryos/cotyledon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manchu</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Century</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmetto</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobb</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regeneration Capacity of Soybean Genotypes

Table versus graph-picture worth a 1000 words
Lots of data

Less data to clearly make the point
More points to remember:

- Error bars
- More than one data point?

⇒ **Keep credibility**

- Be selective about the data you present (Kodak, 1994)

---

Organize the slides

- Determine the key point for each individual slide
- Write in each slide sheets what information that slide will give
- Each slide must double as a note card, so build “reminders” of what to say into each slide

  *E.g.* ⇒
Assemble the seminar

1. Arrange the slide mockups on a large table
2. Try going through your talk
3. Shuffle the slides around until your talk flows smoothly
   or do this in PowerPoint

Make your talk flow, keeping the following pointers in mind (Kodak, 1994):

- build the concept
- move from the least important ideas to the most important ones
- move from the most familiar or simple to the less familiar or complex ideas
Steps for a good seminar

1. Select the topic
2. Choose the format
3. Design the slides
4. Make the slides
5. Prepare the abstract
6. Give the seminar

Make the slides
1. Provide a consistent look and feel

- Use the same background color for all slides
- Avoid scanning-in published tables or diagrams
- Be consistent with the use of capital and lower case letters
- Be consistent with bullets, fonts, & hierarchical styles
3. Additional notes on slide design:

- Check spelling/grammar
- Watch the justification
- Make effective use of the space available on each slide
Steps for a good seminar

1. Select the topic
2. Choose the format
3. Design the slides
4. Make the slides
5. Prepare the abstract
6. Give the seminar
Give the seminar

1. Practice
   - Scheduling
   - The final checklists

2. Before the seminar
   - Familiarize yourself with the room
   - Review your slides
   - Does the equipment work?

3. During the seminar
   - Start with a deep breath
   - Know the beginning remarks well
   - Do not memorize the presentation, but practice most your transitions
   - Do not speak with your back to the audience
   - Pointer ethics
3. During the seminar (cont’d)

- Have a beverage handy (?)
- Attire
- Confidence
- Body language
- Avoid excuses/don't apologize
- Ending the seminar
- Questions

The Conclusion should summarize the main points covered in the seminar
My seminar’s conclusions are:

- A good seminar requires significant planning
- There are many rules to consider, but they are simple and common sense
- With a well thought-out visual presentation, the words will follow

Seminars take a lot of work
The final statements should be a comment like:
“Thank you for coming to my seminar. I would be glad to answer any questions.”

http://yoda.rx.uga.edu/~momany/Public/ResHandoutStart.html