

Frequent Comments from Evaluators

Although every presentation is different, some comments from faculty and students appear frequently on the evaluation sheets. If you consider these comments in advance, you can make sure your presentation doesn't result in the same critiques.

Introduction:

- It took quite some time for you to arrive at your research question or the objective of your research. Help the audience understand what they need to get from your background by starting with at least a brief statement of your question/objective.
- Although you gave background (facts), you didn't really explain the research *context* of your work: what have others working in this field already learned, and how does your project fit in with that framework? What new knowledge do you expect to gain from your research?

Communication of Research:

- You only showed your results very briefly; the audience didn't have time to look carefully at your graph and what it showed.
- You gave a lot of detail about the *mechanics* of your experiment, but you didn't really explain your experimental *design*. Be sure your audience knows how you designed your experiment to test your hypothesis or answer your question before you dive into the detailed methodology.
- Rather than listing all of your methods at once, it would be easier for the audience to understand your experiments if you told why you did one experiment, how you did it and what the results were before going on to the next.
- You could have used statistical analysis of your data to determine whether there was a significant effect.
- You didn't tell us enough about your statistical methods or how you used them for us to understand whether the right analysis was done.
- Although your statistical analysis showed no significant difference between your two treatments, you proceeded to tell us that one was greater than the other.
- The labels on your graph were small, and your graph was missing a y-axis.
- Instead of using a legend, label the bars on your graph directly on the x-axis.
- We couldn't read your bibliography slide in the two seconds it was shown. Consider putting condensed references on the slides where they're used, instead, or leave your bibliography slide up at the end.
- After presenting your results, come back to your original hypothesis, question or background and bring the presentation full-circle: what do we know now as a result of your work?

Presentation Style and Mechanics:

- Be sure you are looking at the audience, not at your slides!
- Be sure you know how to pronounce all of your terms.
- If your slides are wordy, your audience will be reading your slides instead of focusing on you and what you are saying. Use just a few words on the slides to support what you are saying and help your audience with difficult terms.
- You had much more time available than you used, so you had time to go through your results more carefully or review the literature more thoroughly.
- Avoid saying “my data were inconclusive.” Almost all data allow you to conclude *something*, even if it's only that you didn't perform a technique correctly. Be specific about what the data do or don't show or how you know they're flawed rather than falling back on “inconclusive.”
- You had great slides, but you didn't seem to have carefully thought through what you wanted to say about each slide, or how you were going to say it. It's especially helpful to think of how you will transition between ideas.