



Presentation Skills for Academic Purposes

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Aim:

To encourage UACS teachers to consider, discuss and practice the skills of effective communication necessary for presenting their research at academic conferences

Topics to cover:

- Planning
 - Who? When? Where? Why? What? How? Time?
- Preparation
 - Structure, outline, slides, technical aids
- Delivery
 - Vocal pitch, tone, volume, speed; body language, stress.
- Dealing with questions

Effective spoken communication skills

DO

DON'T

Planning (1)

Write down the answers to these questions:

- **WHERE? WHEN?** How much **TIME** have I got?
- **WHO:** To whom am I speaking? What kind of people are they? Do I have to simplify? How will they react?
- **WHY** am I doing this? To inform? Persuade? Educate? Sell an idea? Why would the audience listen to what I have to say?

Planning (2)

- **WHAT** exactly do I want to say? What is the angle? What do I need to say? What does the audience need to know? What can I leave out? What must I include?
- **HOW** can I get these things across?

Planning (3)

- What do I want my audience to **do** as a result of my presentation?
- What are the **1-3 key 'take home' points** I want to get across?

Preparation

- Write down your objective in two sentences
Ex. "I want (who) to (what) (where, when and how) because (why)"
- Plan the **structure** - *classical, problem centred, comparative, sequential, or thesis*
- Prepare the **outline**
- Produce **slides**
- Anticipate **questions**
- Organise the room, check the **equipment** well in advance.

Structure

- **Beginnings**

- Grab attention!!!

Ex. Shock, humour, question, story, facts & figures

- Outline structure
- Indicate focus
- Be explicit: what is in it for them?

- **Endings**

- Usually most remembered!
- Main point!
- Don't end on a joke or a quotation!

Explaining

- **Signpost** showing structure and direction
 - ‘I want to talk about...’
 - ‘Firstly, ...’
- **Frame** beginnings and endings
 - ‘So that concludes...’
 - ‘Now let’s consider...’
- **Highlight** key points
 - ‘So the main point is...’
 - ‘Essentially, this means...’

Outline

Generic 15 min conference presentation

Title Slide (1) Title, author, affiliation, acknowledgements

Rationale (1-2) Why this is interesting

Methods (1-2) What you did

Results (2-4) What did you find and what does it mean

Summary (1) One thing you want them to remember

1 - 2 minutes per slide!

Slides

Use Images & Graphics

Relevant images communicate,
and maintain interest

Slides

Use Images & Graphics

Minimise text & numbers

Slides

Use Images & Graphics

Minimise text & numbers

Light text on dark background

Slides

Use Images & Graphics

Minimise text & numbers

Light text on dark background

Avoid distracting backgrounds

Slides

Use Images & Graphics

Minimise text & numbers

Light text on dark background

Avoid distracting backgrounds

Use large sans serif fonts

Helvetica or Arial rather than serif fonts like
Times

24 pt is minimum, **32 pt, or even 36 pt** is better

Slides

Use Images & Graphics

Minimise text & numbers

Light text on dark background

Avoid distracting backgrounds

Use large sans serif fonts

Mix upper and lower case

ALL CAPITALS IS HARDER TO READ,
ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT BE OK FOR THE
ODD TITLE

Slides

Use Images & Graphics

Minimise text & numbers

Light text on dark background

Avoid distracting backgrounds

Use large sans serif fonts

Mix upper and lower case

Use colour to highlight text

Use high contrast colours for important lines, symbols or text, and lower contrast colours for less important lines, symbols or text. But use a small number of colours

Slides

Use Images & Graphics

Minimise text & numbers

Light text on dark background

Avoid distracting backgrounds

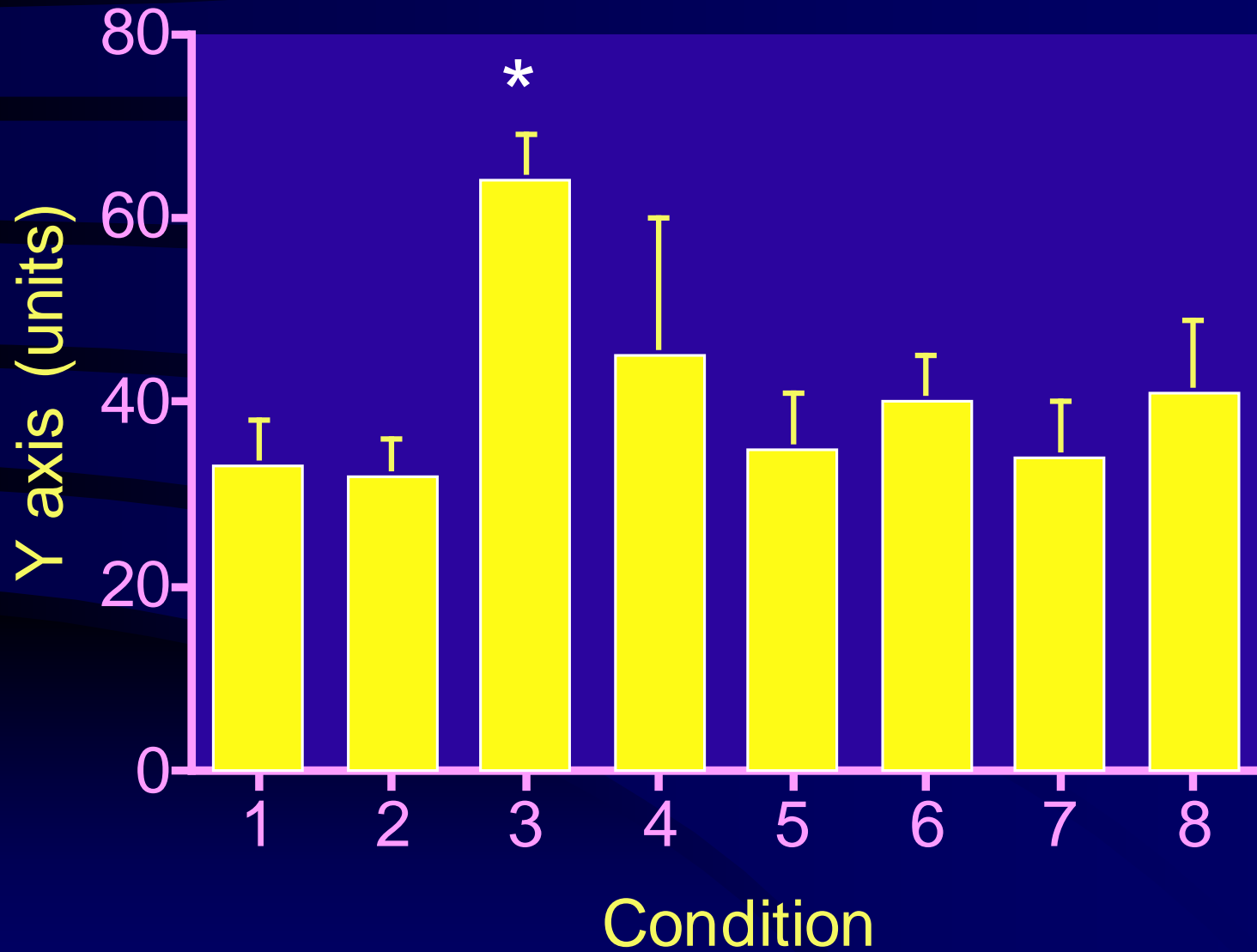
Use large sans serif fonts

Mixture upper and lower case

Use colour to highlight text

Keep figures simple

Show means, sd, effect size statistics, but not test statistics



Slides

Use Images & Graphics

Minimise text & numbers

Light text on dark background

Avoid distracting backgrounds

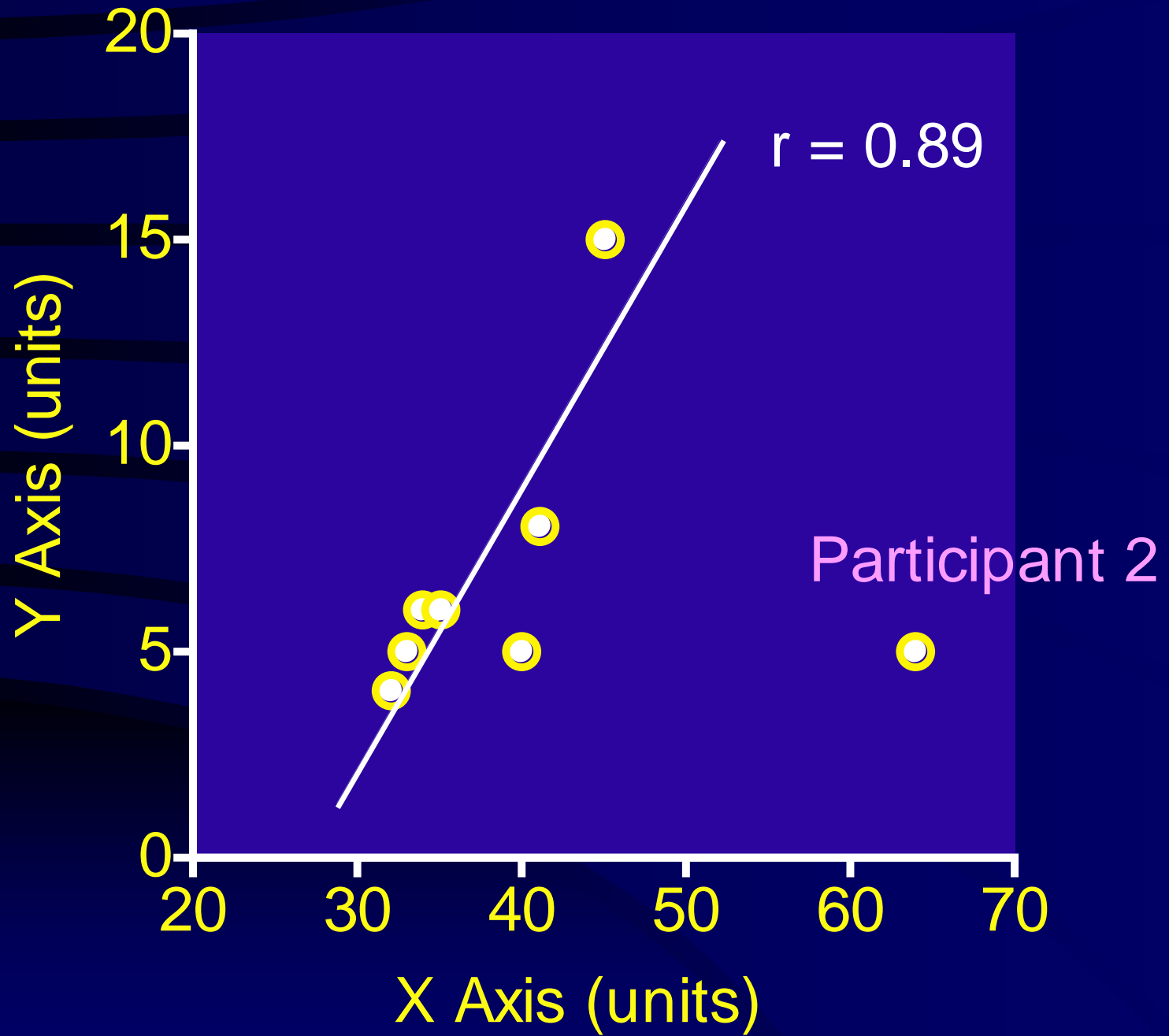
Use large sans serif fonts

Mixture upper and lower case

Use colour to highlight text

Keep figures simple

Thick lines and large symbols



Slides

Use Images & Graphics

Minimise text & numbers

Light text on dark background

Avoid distracting backgrounds

Use large sans serif fonts

Mixture upper and lower case

Use colour to highlight text

Keep figures simple

Thick lines and large symbols

Progressive disclosure

Delivery

- ❖ Be active - move
- ❖ Be purposeful - controlled gestures
- ❖ Be natural, enthusiastic
- ❖ Be direct – don't just talk in front of the audience, talk to them

Delivery

Stage Fright

- ❖ Everyone has it to some degree
- ❖ Can be used constructively
- ❖ Key issue is not elimination of fear

Instead, channel the energy it generates for an effective presentation

Delivery

- ❖ Variations – vocal (pitch, volume, rate)
- ❖ Speaking too fast
- ❖ Using jargon
- ❖ Tone and content
- ❖ Complicated or ambiguous language

Delivery

- ❖ “See” the audience - eye contact
- ❖ Take non-verbal feedback
 - congruent and incongruent body language
- ❖ Modify to meet audience needs
 - ❖ Don't go overtime. **Ever.**

Dealing with questions (1)

- ‘Please could you talk more about current work in your field, world-wide?’
- ‘My own work would suggest another direction. For example...’ (goes on for several minutes.)
- ‘I am still not convinced. There is plenty of evidence leading elsewhere.’

Dealing with questions (2)

- Questions offer a chance:
 - To cover additional points
 - Respond to any lingering concerns of your audience
 - Re-emphasise your message
 - Receive feedback

Dealing with questions (3)

- Guidelines

- Anticipate questions
- Actively listen, and then restate the question to show that you have heard and understood
- Stay with the question, do not re-define it
- If the questioner begins a speech, ask, 'What is your question, please?'
- Use other people in the audience to offer comment, information, and other views
- Don't be afraid to say you don't know ('I'll find out and get back to you later', 'Can we speak about this afterwards?', 'X is the person to ask')
- Avoid tendency to take a challenging question as a personal affront

THANK YOU!