Three Minute Thesis 2014
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THREE MINUTE THESIS

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http://3mt.gradstudies.yorku.ca/registration/
THREE MINUTE THESIS 101

• 180 seconds/ ~450 words

• 1 static slide; no props or other media

• Non-specialist audience
  • Faculty in other disciplines
  • University staff
  • Other graduate students
  • Members of the public
THREE MINUTE THESIS 101

- Designed as an opportunity to showcase exciting graduate research and help students develop their research communication skills

- Requires students to think beyond the boundaries of their usual presentation styles
  - Conference papers
  - Lectures
  - Tutorials

- Gives students the skills to talk about their research to anyone, and to make it both intelligible and interesting: the ultimate elevator pitch
AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

• Audience: intelligent but unfamiliar with your work and with the field in which you work

• Purpose: to make your listeners excited about your work
  • To convince them of the importance of your work
  • To convey the its potential impact
  • To generate curiosity in your listeners
Simple, but not simplified
EXERCISE 1

What’s the purpose of your research?
WHAT A GREAT 3MT LOOKS LIKE

Jennifer Campbell
Queen’s University champion & People’s Choice winner 2012

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuRw_4VSp44
WHAT’S GREAT ABOUT THIS 3MT?

• Narrative—personal
• Clear and confident delivery
• Open body language
• Jargon-free
• Describes research in terms of making a positive difference in how we see or live in the world
• Effective visuals
3MT AS STORYTELLING

- Personal connection
- Human and concrete, rather than abstract
- Provides continuity and flow
- Memorable
EXERCISE 2

What’s your story? Describe how you came to this research project.
EMOTIONAL IMPACT

Why do you care about this research, and why should your audience care?
EXERCISE 3

What’s the connection between your research and the world? Why is it important?
METAPHOR

• Power of concrete language
• Turns abstraction into vivid and relatable images
ELEMENT OF SURPRISE

• Does your research break a pattern?

• Does it go against common sense or common understandings?

• Does it do something counterintuitive?

• Does it force us to rethink something fundamental?
Nanocantilevers
A New Tool for Medical Diagnostics

Jennifer Campbell, Department of Physics
THE TITLE

• Short and snappy
• Attention grabbling
• Jargon-free
• NOT the title of your actual thesis/dissertation
PRESENTATION STYLE

• Audience engagement
• Clear and confident body language
  • Good posture
  • Taking up the stage
  • Smiling
• Eye contact
• Strong and steady voice
  • projection
• No nervous tics
  • Um, ah, like
  • Playing with jewelry/hair/clothing
  • Pacing or, conversely, standing in one place
• No notes or prompts
• No looking back at the PowerPoint
WHAT TO AVOID

Too technical – lose interest
Too much on each slide – get lost – try to read while trying to listen is hard!
No structure – doesn’t seem like a ‘story’. Takes too much energy to listen.
Reading from notes - don’t feel involved. Worse if less eye contact.
Unclear speech – not understand or follow what is being said
Visible emotion – makes you feel for them and is distracting
Too simple – feel ‘talked down to’
Body language – too much or not enough
Small font or wacky fonts undermines the authority of the speaker
Lots of different fonts or colours – distracting again
Q&A

- Preparing?
- The actual competition?
- Tips & tricks?
- What judges are looking for?
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RESOURCES

- http://threeminutethesis.org/
- http://3mt.mcmaster.ca/
- https://www.grad.ubc.ca/sites/default/files/materials/gps_3MT.pdf