

Maximising your academic conference experience



By the end of today, you will be able to...

- Build your confidence to attend conferences with a clear picture of what you want to get out of attending.
- Use enhanced networking skills to connect with other researchers, as an attendee or presenter.
- Create well-structured presentations and posters, using storytelling techniques, and deliver them with clarity.
- Use visuals that effectively convey research, engage viewers.
- Be an active, respectful, conference participant.
- Reflect on your conference experience in a structured way, follow up appropriately
- Take a long-term view of your conference participation for future career development and collaborative opportunities.

2 QUESTIONS...

1. What is your biggest 'worry' about attending academic conferences
2. What do you want out of today?

Do your prep to make the most of the experience



After the dance

- Follow up on networking, materials, insight
- Career development and long-term benefits

Presenting and engaging

- Conference etiquette
- Networking 101
- Posters and oral presentations

Preparing

- Academic conferences: What's the point?
- Doing your homework



EXERCISE

Why do people go to academic conferences?

One reason per sticky note!

(See if you can think of 50 reasons)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Presenting Research Findings | 21. Access to Experts | 41. Job Fair Participation |
| 2. Networking | 22. International Collaboration | 42. Innovative Teaching Ideas |
| 3. Learning and Education | 23. Student Engagement | 43. Global Research Trends |
| 4. Feedback on Research | 24. Access to Publishers | 44. Social Responsibility Discussions |
| 5. Career Development | 25. Camaraderie | 45. Advocacy for Open Science |
| 6. Collaboration Opportunities | 26. Community Building | 46. Public Engagement |
| 7. Staying Informed | 27. Cultural Exchange | 47. Exposure to Emerging Fields |
| 8. Publication Opportunities | 28. Multidisciplinary Exposure | 48. Promoting Diversity |
| 9. Exposure to Diverse Perspectives | 29. Technology Showcase | 49. Knowledge Transfer |
| 10. Professional Visibility | 30. Interdisciplinary Learning | 50. Celebration of Achievements |
| 11. Collaborative Networking | 31. Trends in Teaching | |
| 12. Professional Development | 32. Institutional Representation | |
| 13. Inspiration | 33. Leadership Opportunities | |
| 14. Access to Resources | 34. Citation Opportunities | |
| 15. Recruitment | 35. Personal Growth | |
| 16. Mentorship Opportunities | 36. Team Building | |
| 17. Conference Themes | 37. Policy Advocacy | |
| 18. Funding Opportunities | 38. Crisis Response Planning | |
| 19. Exhibition of Research Tools | 39. Exposure to Industry Trends | |
| 20. Policy Impact | 40. Student Recruitment | |

Our journey today



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Presenting and engaging

- Networking 101
- Posters and oral presentations
- Interacting as a presenter and attendee

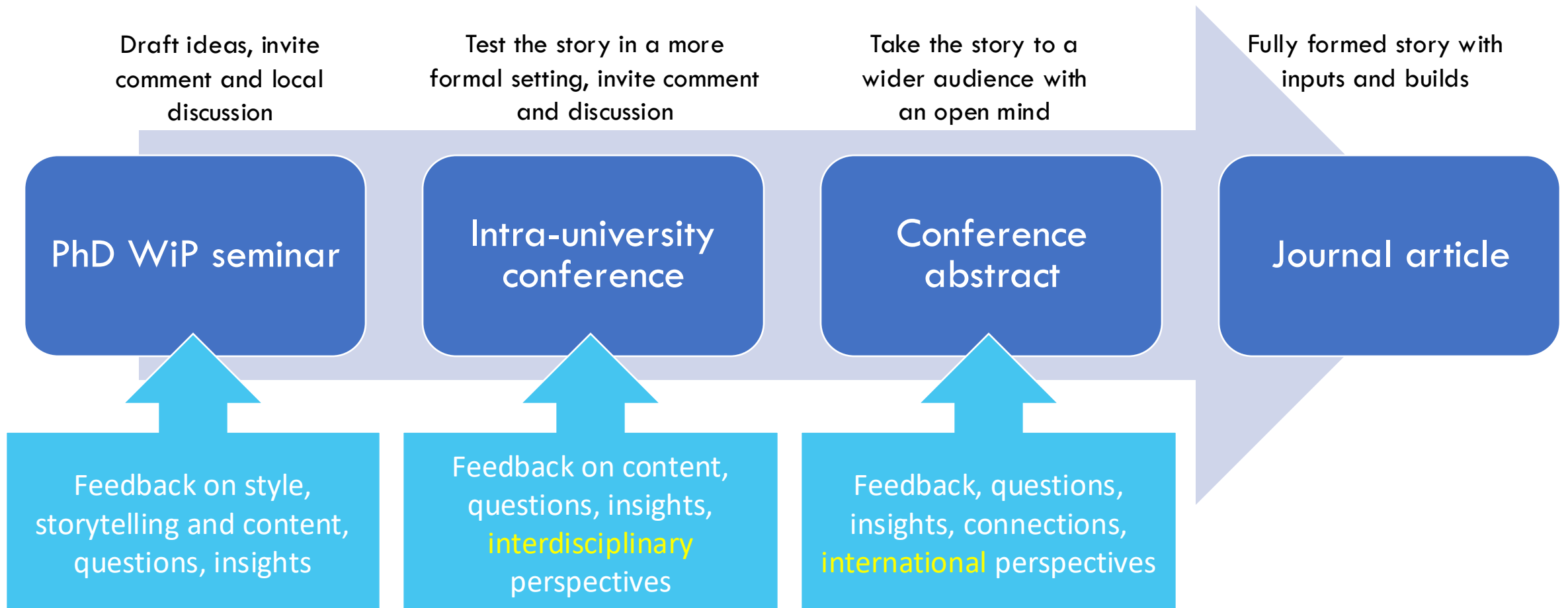
Preparing

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Use the whole range to build your research story and your confidence



If you submit, read the guidelines carefully and get it right!



Font and size	Paper size, margins and spacing	Required headings	Layout, eg. columns	Mathematical spacing	LaTeX?
Attribution format	Reference format	What save format (.doc .rtf .pdf)	Word counts and page limit	Footnotes/ Endnotes?	Embedded fonts
Logos	Headers/ footers/ page nos	Permitted abbreviations	UK/US English?	Inclusive language	Different rules for different sessions
		Anonymous submission	Register to submit		

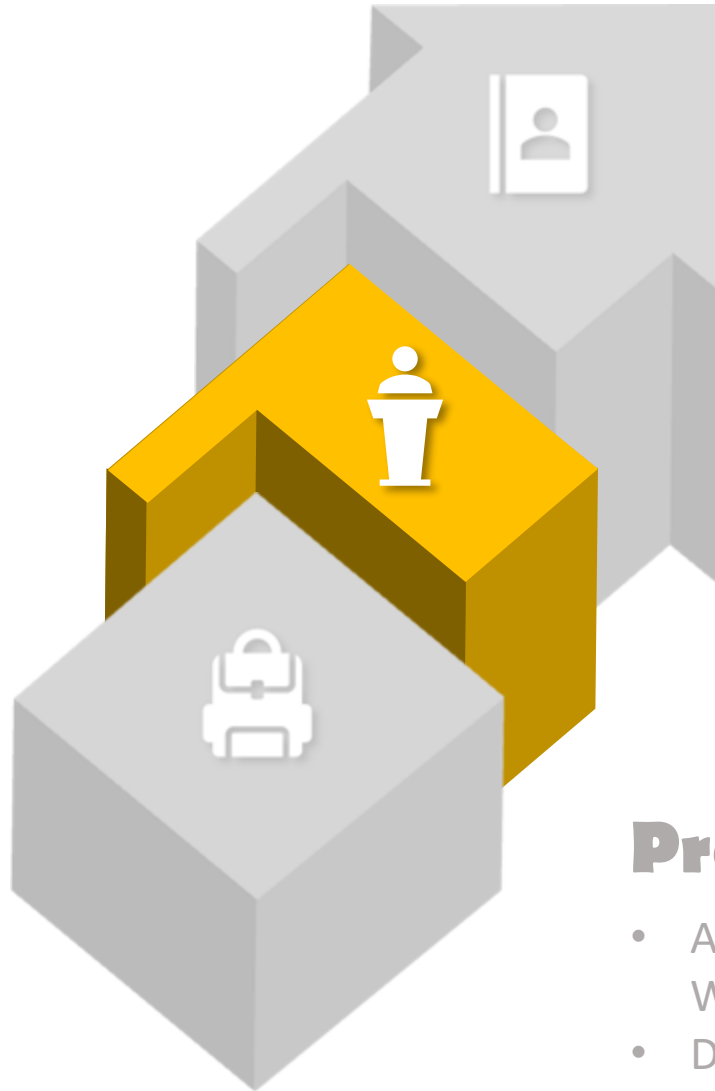
EXERCISE

What are the submission requirements for the conference you are looking at?

10 reasons conference abstracts get rejected (not in order!)

- **Incomplete submission**
- **Failure to follow formatting guidelines**
- Failure to register for the conference
- Poor quality graphics or figures
- Irrelevance to conference theme
- Poorly written abstract
- Ethical concerns
- Insufficient data or results
- Incomplete research
- Lack of originality or significance

Making the most of academic conferences



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There are some universal rules of conference etiquette



Put your phone away and switch it off/to silent/do not disturb.



Only use your laptop for making notes



Enter and leave between presentations.



If you attend a panel session, try and stay for the whole thing.



Ask succinct clear questions.



If you are sharing insights on social media, use quotations to make it clear you are quoting someone else, and give them attribution.

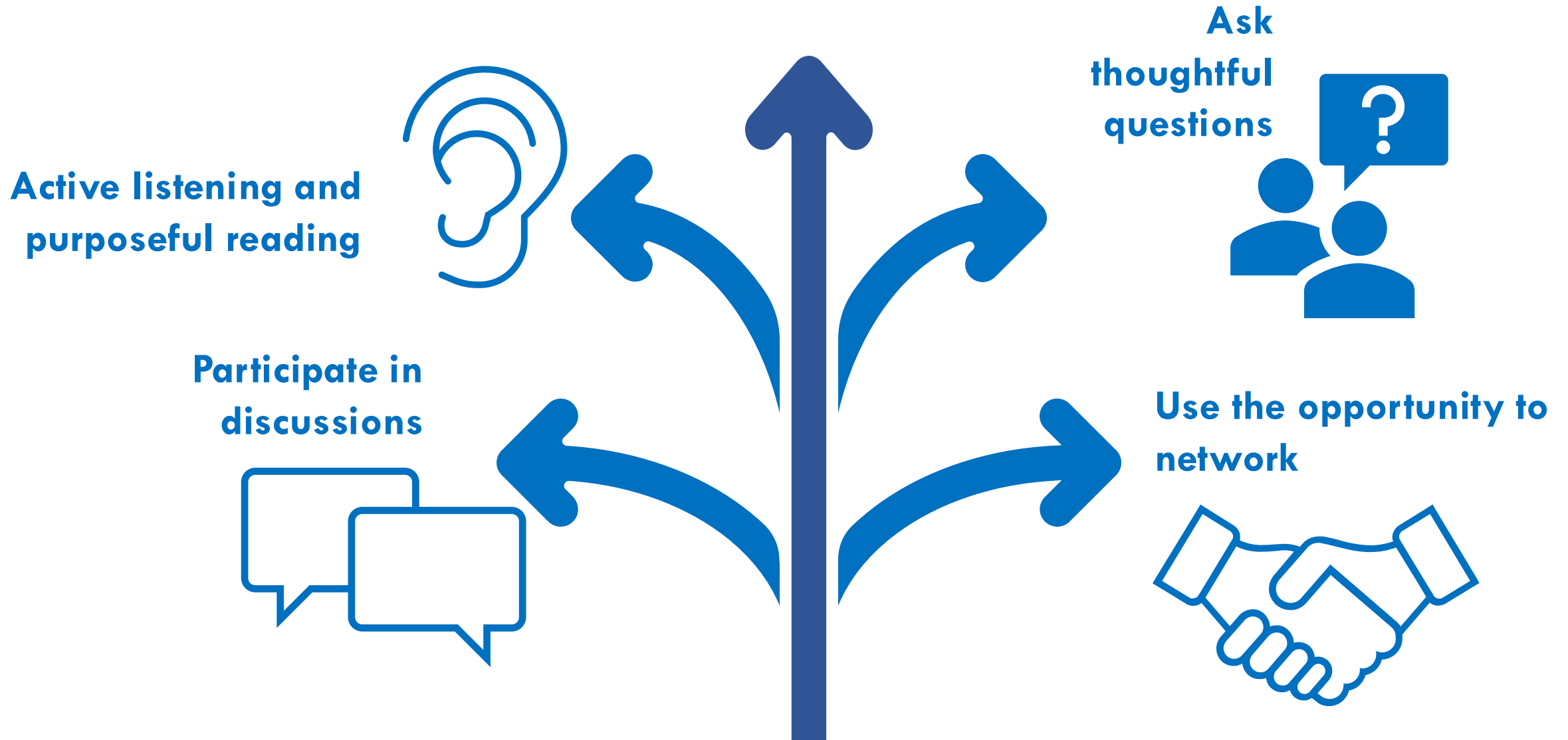


Business (academic) casual attire – this is a professional event and you are a professional.

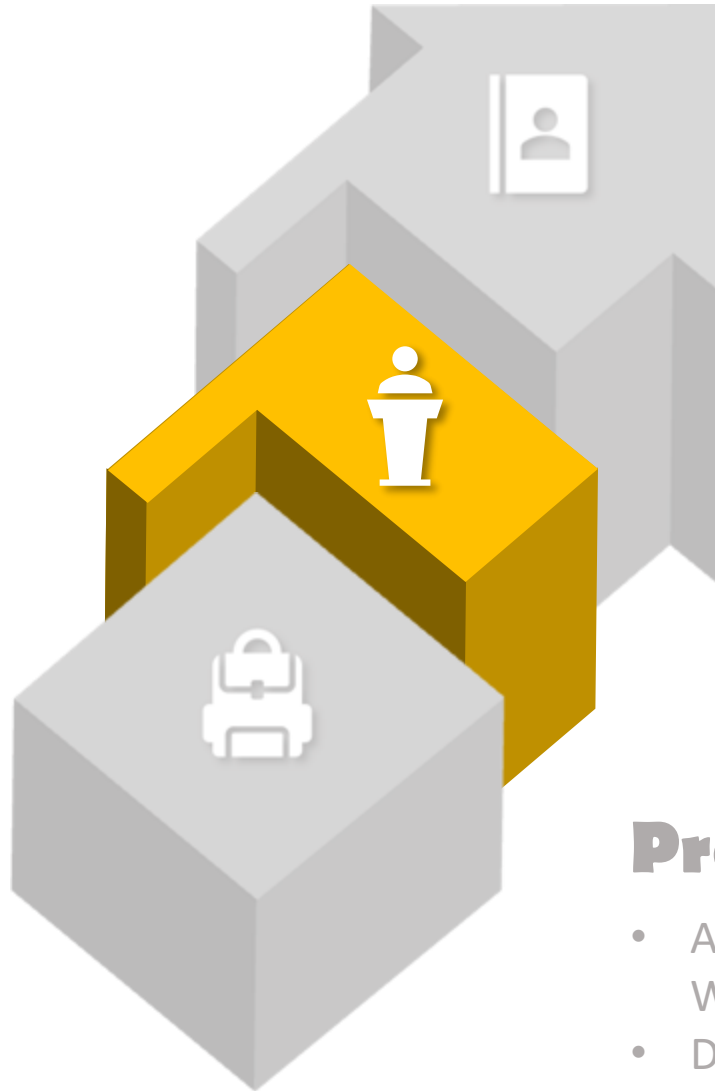
Be prepared for
differences in
conference
etiquette
around the
world



Be a contributing participant in conference sessions



Making the most of academic conferences



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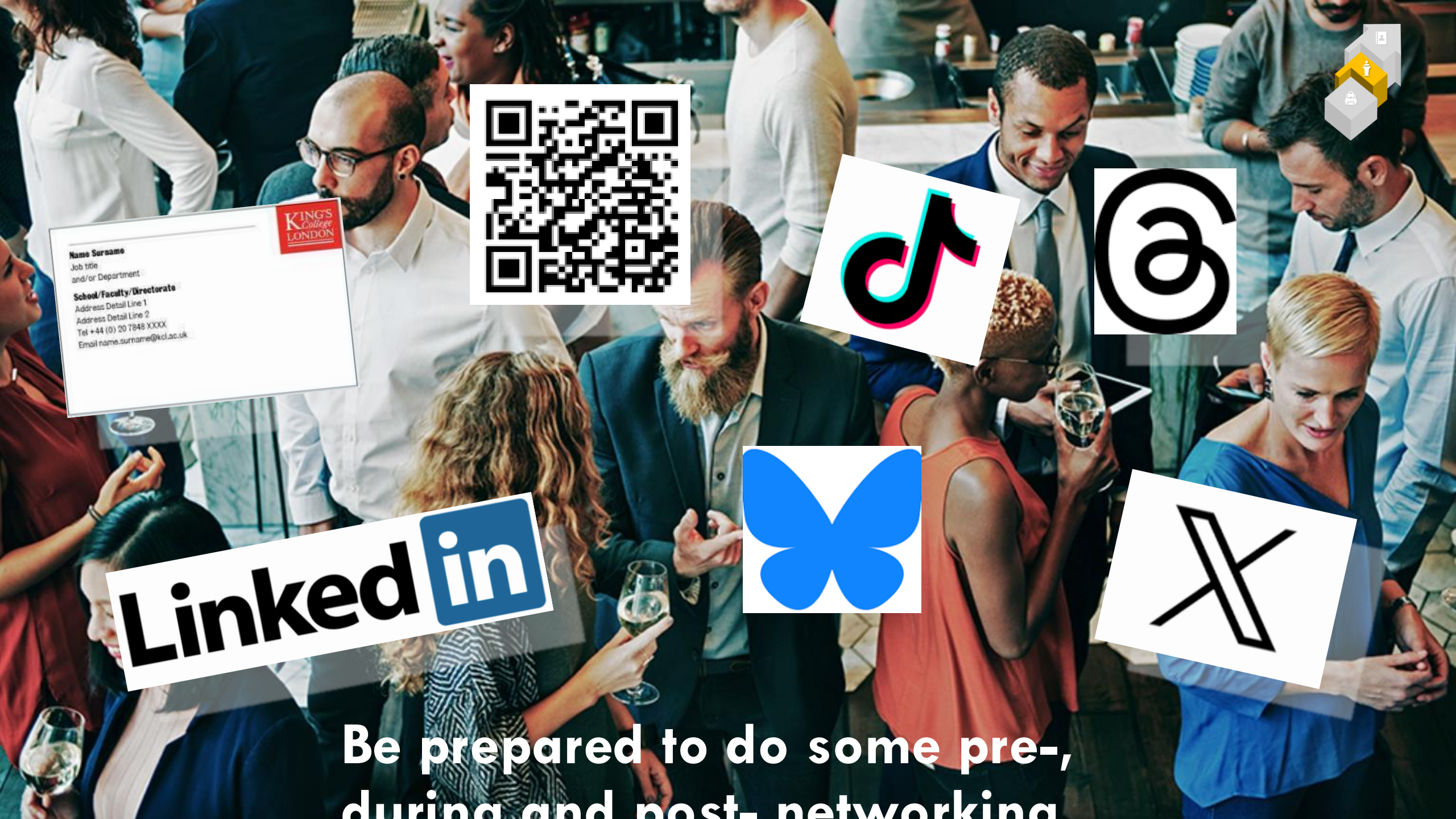
Presenting and engaging

- Conference etiquette
- **Networking 101**
- Posters and oral presentations

Preparing

- Academic conferences: What's the point?
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KING'S College LONDON

Name Surname
Job title
and/or Department
School/Faculty/Directorate
Address Detail Line 1
Address Detail Line 2
Tel +44 (0) 20 7848 XXXX
Email name.surname@kcl.ac.uk



Be prepared to do some pre-, during and post- networking

Use social media to your advantage

Use the
conference
hashtag

Share the
sessions you are
going to

Follow speakers
and other
attendees

Live “tweet”
insights

Use visuals to
attract the eye

Ask questions to
encourage
discussion

Summarise

Thank speakers

Continue
conversations

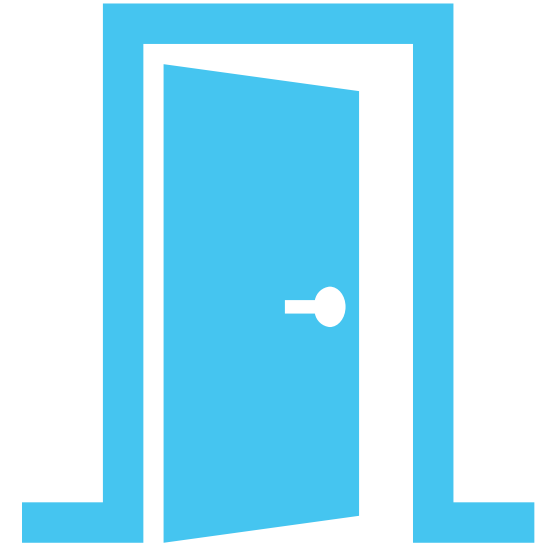
Tag
collaborators to
bring them in

Use LinkedIn!

What about elevator pitches, then?



A good elevator pitch should last no longer than a short elevator ride of 20 to 30 seconds, hence the name. It should be interesting, memorable and succinct.



If your elevator pitch is ready, there is no need to panic in a range of situations



So... what is
your research
about, then?

Umm....

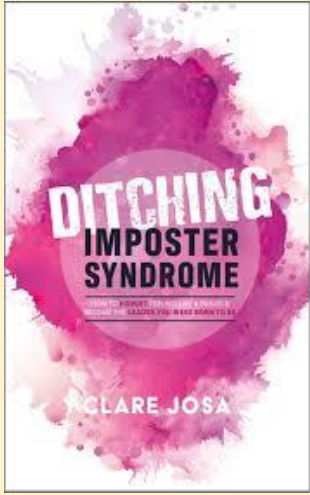
Could be:

- A coffee break encounter with another delegate at a conference
- Introductions at the beginning of panel session
- A chance to talk with someone you want to connect with



Treat your elevator pitch like a pick n mix

- What is the topic of your research?
- What is the problem, issue, or question that you are asking and addressing in your research?
- Why is that problem interesting and important? (i.e. So what?)
- How does your work connect with a broader disciplinary conversation about this topic/problem in your field, and what does it add to that conversation?



<https://ditchingimpostersyndrome.com/>

Ditching Imposter Syndrome
Clare Josa



EXERCISE

Create some “pick and mix” snippets for your
elevator goody bag

**Be ready to have a go with
these by 1.30pm after lunch!**

1. So, what is your area of research?
2. I'm struggling to see the applicability – who will use this research?
3. What's the central theme of your research?
4. What interest does your research have beyond your immediate area?

Have some conversation starters in your back pocket ready to go



Conference-related questions

Person and research-related questions

Conversation starters

Strategy for disengagement:

“Genuine compliment + Follow-up query + Handshake = Lasting Impression.”

Setting up a follow up:

“What’s the best way to get in touch with you?”





HELLO. MY NAME IS INIGO MONTOYA.
YOU KILLED MY FATHER. PREPARE TO DIE.

INIGO'S GUIDE TO NETWORKING SUCCESS

1. POLITE GREETING
2. NAME
3. RELEVANT PERSONAL LINK
4. MANAGE EXPECTATIONS



Conference
anxiety is not
just a “mindset”
issue



Mindfulness is a strong and consistent predictor of well-being.

For our purposes, we use the definition of mindfulness promoted by Kabat-Zinn ([1994](#)); that is, mindfulness is “paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally”. In general, mindfulness is a strong and consistent predictor of well-being.



EXERCISE

A mindfulness “rescue” technique

While you're there...



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Use posters and oral presentations to tell a story

- What is the **story** you want to tell?
- **Hook, build, payoff**
- Use a **structure** that supports your story

Tell them
what you are
going to tell
them

Tell them

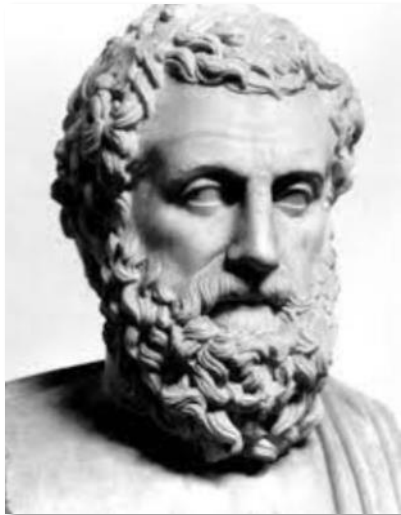
Tell them
again



The power of three

“Three types of speeches”

“Three forms of proof”



“Friends, Romans, Countrymen...”



“Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness”



“I have said it thrice: What I tell you three times is true”



“Thinner, lighter, faster”



What if my audience only remembered
THREE things (your mega-themes)?

Introduce the three things

Structure the body of your story around **those**
mega-themes

Repeat the three things in different ways

Summarise the three things

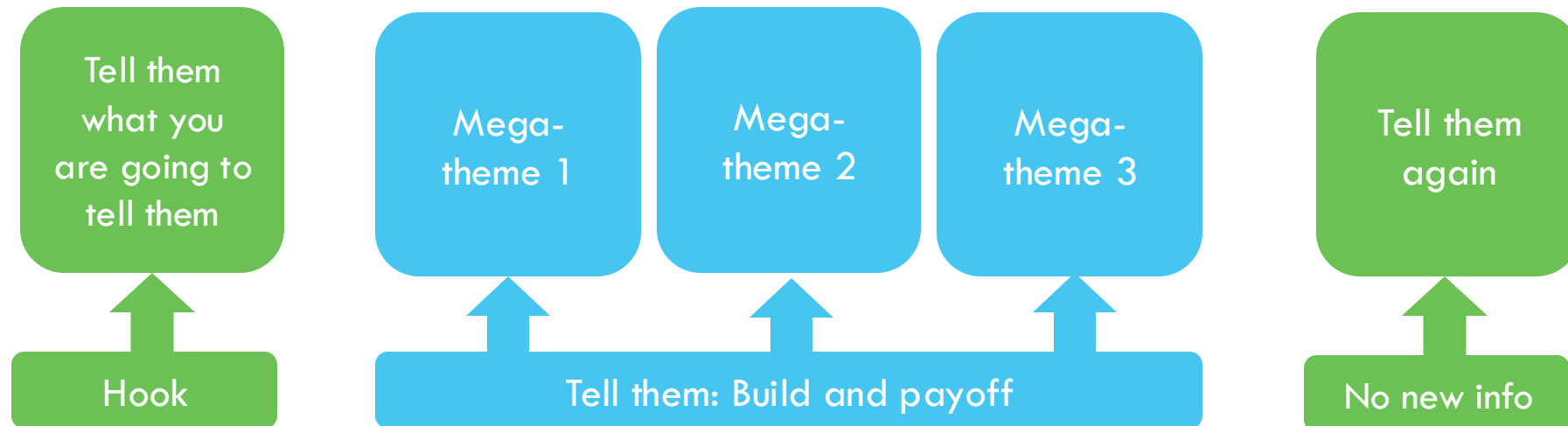


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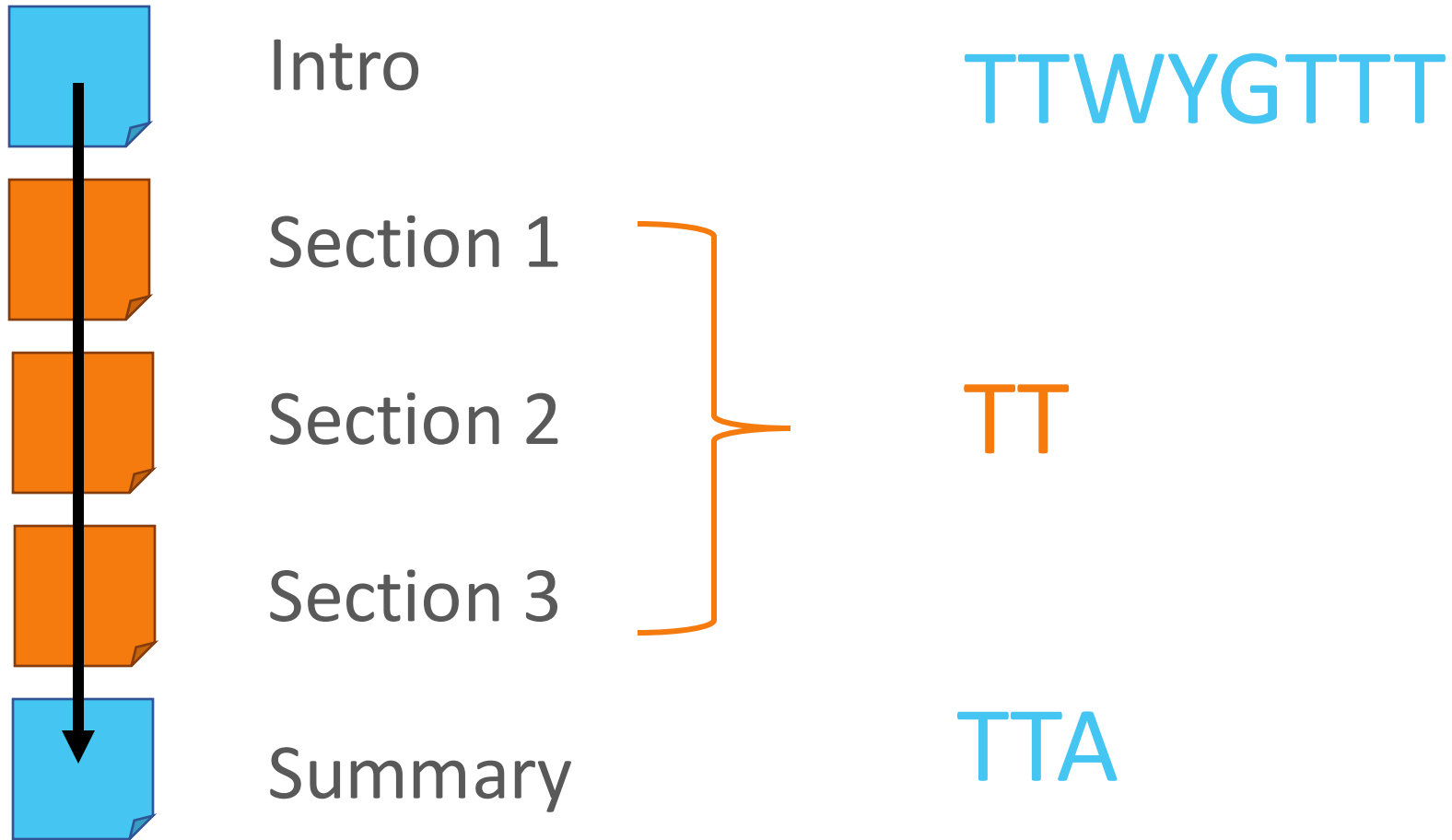


Use posters and oral presentations to tell a story

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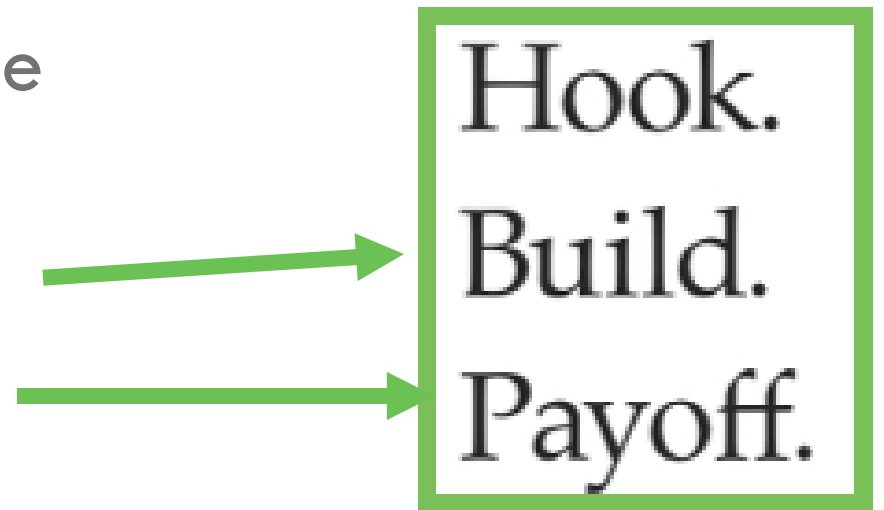


Storyboarding is a super-quick way to structure a presentation

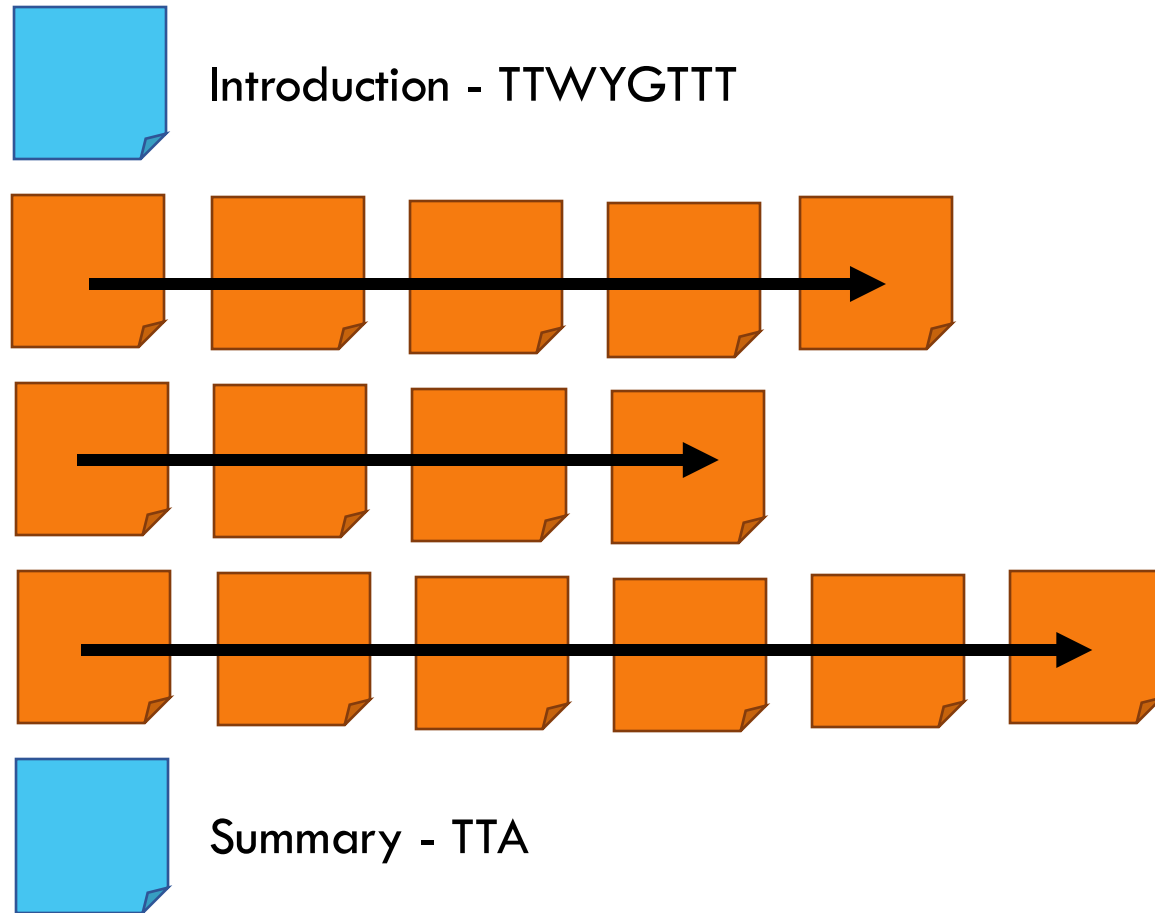


There aren't many other rules

- They don't have to be even
- Break your story up any way you like
- Just three chunks that make sense
- They should 'build' your story
- The third part should include the 'payoff'



Develop your story in your content



Partnerships bring fresh perspectives and challenge

- Complex knowledge demands different ways of working
- ~~Fresh perspectives / challenges~~
- A “critical friend”
- New skill sets
- Shared interest = increased motivation
- Increased “credibility” to research outputs?
Improved recognition?

KEY MESSAGE: Adapt current thinking and include climate change in future thinking

- **Key Message 2:** *Adaptation policies and programs that help individuals, communities, and states prepare for and manage a changing climate reduce the number of injuries, illnesses, and deaths from climate-sensitive health outcomes. Further, explicitly incorporating climate change risks into infrastructure planning and urban design can have beneficial health consequences.*





We believe that healthy people and a healthy business need a healthy planet

As a global healthcare company, our commitment to environmental health is an extension of our mission and vital to our aspiration to profoundly change the trajectory of health for humanity.



Children given and receive gendered messages from their peers from an early age

Johnny (age 4 ½) I'm going to be an airplane builder when I grow up.

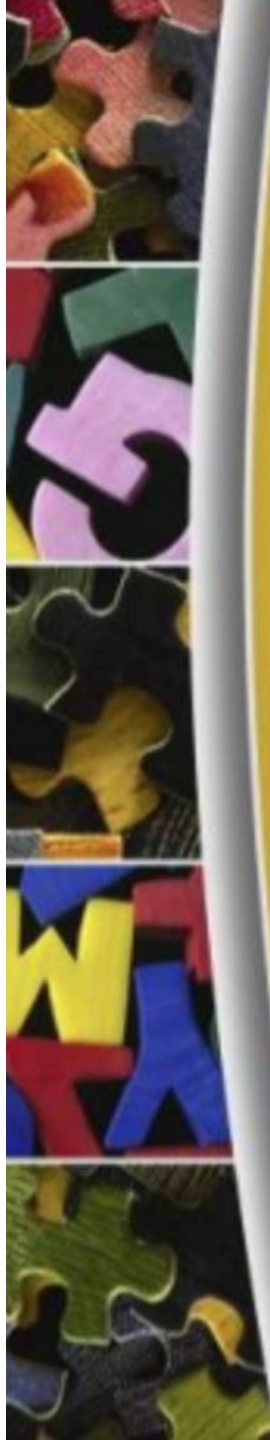
Jimmy (age 4) When I grow up, I'll be a mommy.

Johnny No, you can't be a mommy. You have to be a daddy.

Jimmy No, I'm going to be a mommy.

Johnny No, you're not a girl, you can't be a mommy.

Jimmy Yes, I can.



Poverty is the extent to which an individual does without resources

- Financial
- Emotional
- Mental
- Spiritual
- Physical
- Support systems
- Relationships/Role Models

EXERCISE

Getting started with the
Research Presentation Story planner



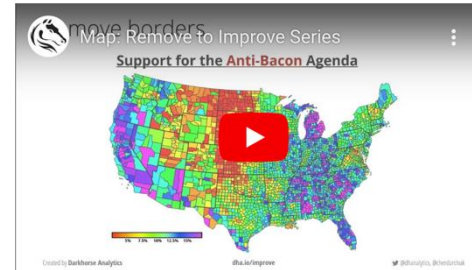
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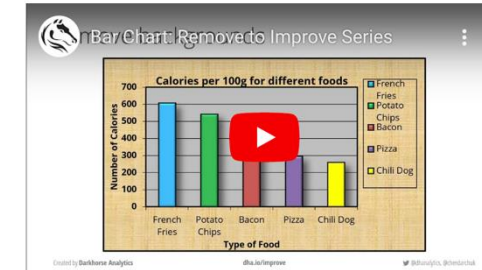
Use the Remove To Improve series on data visualisation

<https://www.darkhorseanalytics.com/remove-to-improve>

MAP



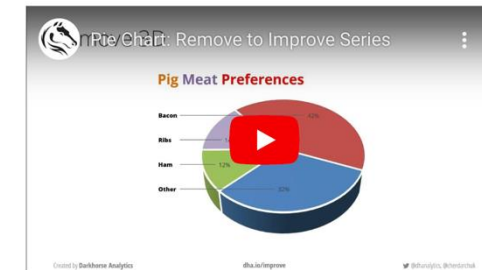
BAR CHART



TABLE



PIE CHART



You own the physical environment for oral presentations (mostly)



+



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Learn how to do clever things while you
are presenting on PowerPoint



PowerPoint Slide Show Keyboard Commands

Mouse click, space, press 'N', right or down arrow, RETURN	Advance to the next slide
Delete, press 'P', left or up arrow, or Page Up	Return to the previous slide
Slide Number followed by RETURN	Go to that slide
Press 'B' or '.'	Apply/remove a black screen
Press 'W' or ','	Apply/remove a white screen
Press 'A' or '='	Show/hide the arrow pointer
Press 'S' or '+'	Stop/restart automatic show
Esc, Command+'.' or '-'	End slide show
Press 'E'	Erase drawing on screen
Press 'H'	Go to the next hidden slide
Command+P	Change pointer to pen
Command+A	Change pointer to arrow
Control+H	Hide pointer and button
Command+U	Automatically show/hide pointer and button
Control+Mouse Click	Short Cut Menu

Practice "easing-in" questions for poster sessions

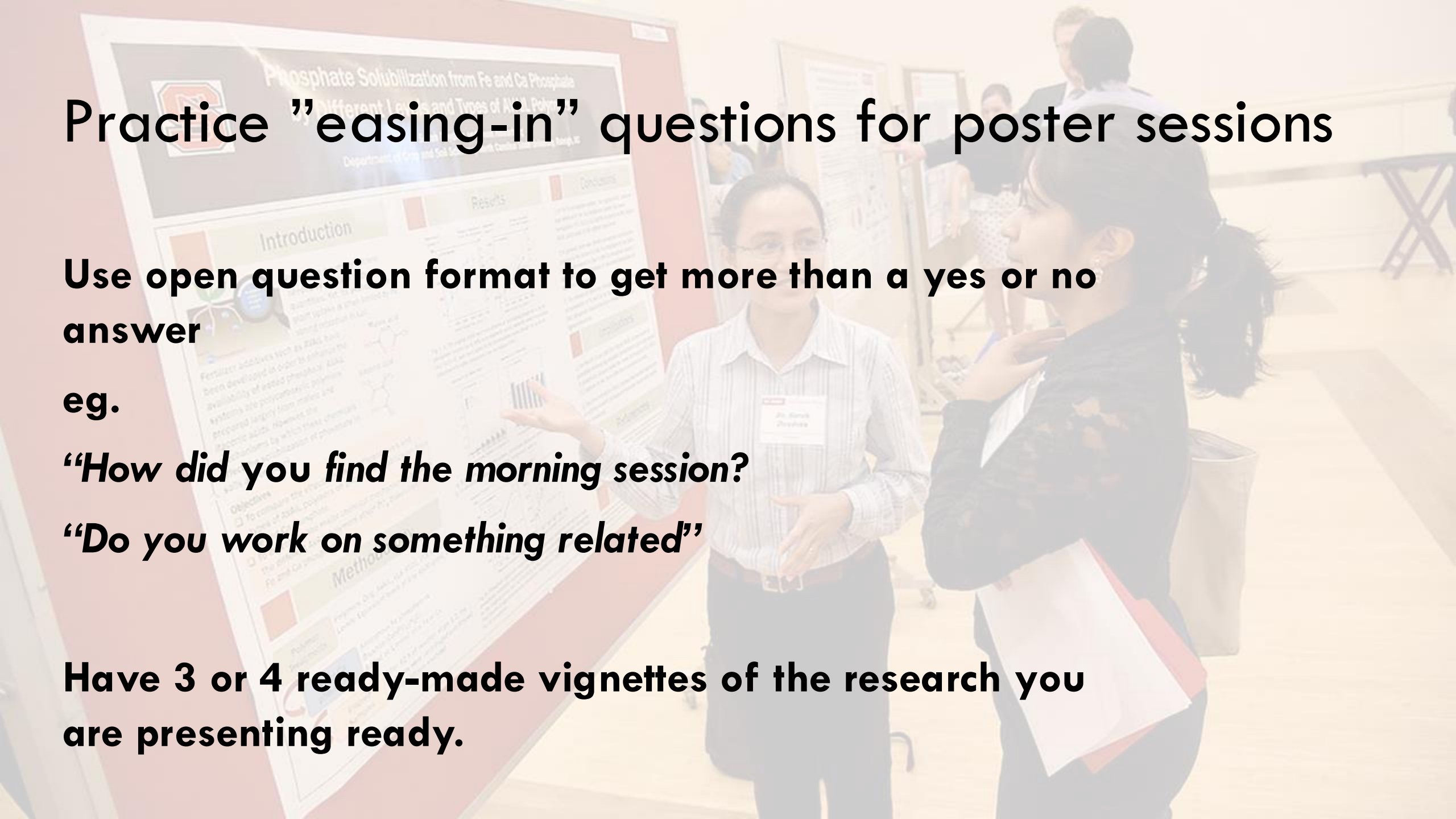
Use open question format to get more than a yes or no answer

eg.

"How did you find the morning session?"

"Do you work on something related?"

Have 3 or 4 ready-made vignettes of the research you are presenting ready.



Be prepared for Q&As



Have your slides printed out and numbered

Try your presentation out on a “safe” audience

Have a couple of extra slides with extra information ready

Prime a friend to ask an easy question!

Multiple questions

“there were a lot of questions in just deal with there, so I’ll the first one, if that’s okay”

Questions that aren’t questions

“I’m not sure I got what your question was there?”

The question you don’t know the answer to

“I don’t know, unless anyone else here does?”
“I don’t have that data here, but I can get back to you”

The question that tries to undermine

“I’m confident with my data and interpretation, but I’d be really interested to follow up with you for a different perspective”

EXERCISE

Question Lucky Dip



Dr Dani Rabaiotti · Apr 30, 2017



@DaniRabaiotti · [Follow](#)

Have you ever had a negative experience at a conference with someone criticizing your work? Feel free to expand + share experiences :)

Nope, never

27.7%

Yes, respectful criticism

39.5%

Yes, disrespectful

27.3%

Yes it was all out war :(

5.5%

488 votes · Final results

After the conference...



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Presenting and engaging

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- Academic conferences: What's the point?
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Conferences are a rich learning experience



Spend some time here –
just data collection, no
analysis

What were my goals?
What do I know now that's new?
What inspired me?
What is reinforced?
What next?
Where does this fit with my research?

Organise your conference 'spoils'



Conference programme and papers



Business cards and contacts



Freebies



Follow up with new contacts



General

“Great to meet ... at the ... conference last week – reflecting on ...”



Specific

“Hi, we met at ... and I’d really like to follow up with you about ...”



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EXERCISE

Following up from today

After the conference...



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Conference contacts can take you to all kinds of new places

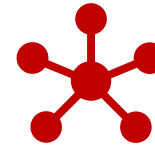
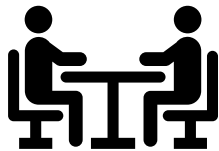


New ideas



Joint funding application

Internationalisation



Expanded research network



Internship or placement



Joint paper



New job



Partner for life!



Guest speaker



Public engagement

EXERCISE

Transferable skills from
conferences

Conferences have a place on your CV



Presentation skills



Networking and
communication



Listening and
questioning



Organisational
skills

Especially if international, competitive to get accepted, prizes, you were specifically invited, peer-reviewed conference proceedings

Making the most of academic conferences



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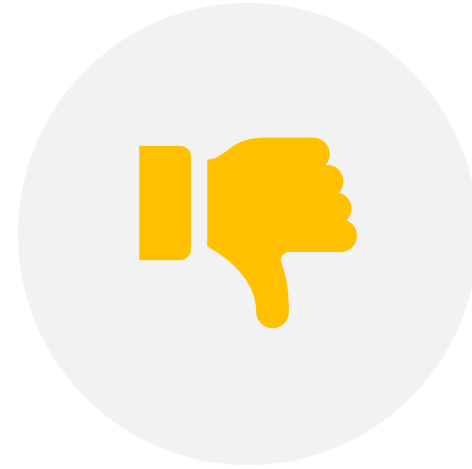
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- Take a long-term view of your conference participation for future career development and collaborative opportunities.



WHAT WENT WELL?

EVEN BETTER IF..?



Formal Feedback form:

<https://bit.ly/SCDTP-061224>



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THANK YOU!



bitly

caryn@caeledro.co.uk