

Research Talks

In general, the lab talks on **Research progress** would benefit by making use of the following format. If necessary, I can meet with you before the meeting to review a prepared outline of your talk or, in exceptional cases (e.g., preparation for a conference talk), you can rehearse the talk with a colleague. Times are suggestions only:

1. Give a **brief outline** of the talk, e.g. the title along with a few sentences. (1 min)
 2. **Broadly** introduce **the general area** you are talking about – some people may be unfamiliar with the topic, others may need a review, others can sit patiently and marvel at the clarity of your presentation and resolve to do equally well when their time comes. At this point you can state your long-term goals. (5 min)
 3. **Briefly**, state the **specific scientific problem** being addressed in today's talk. And, why it is worth investigating. In other words: What have been and what are your present scientific goals? (2-3 min)
 4. **Briefly**, describe **the technical plan**, otherwise known as your *specific aims*. What experiments must be or have now been done to achieve the scientific goals. i.e. What is your **experimental approach** to the problem stated in 3? (2-3 min)
3. and 4. can be well combined, but **do** try and say **why** you chose to do the experiments outlined in the plan.
5. **Describe the experiments you have done since you last presented the work. Give the rationale, outcome and interpretation of each experiment. Describe the success and failures in as much depth as possible in the time. Try not to repeat data that you have described in previous meetings, unless it is required to make a point. The aim is to present new work in detail, so that it can be understood by everyone in the group. Therefore, all the others can learn from or contribute to the work. – (15 min)**

Extended discussions of technical problems can take place after the meeting, if they are articulated sufficiently well that we know they exist.

6. **Summarize** your new data and say how it contributes to a solution of the scientific problem under investigation. (5 min)
7. **Summarize your immediate goals**, i.e. for the next two-three months. (5 min)
8. **Talk about any bright ideas** you have had related to your work. (5 min)

Please be organized. Figure out what you are going to talk about BEFORE the meeting (see above). Use Powerpoint. There should be no rummaging through notebooks unless someone asks to see a crucial piece of data.

In general, people are too close to their own work and tend gush forth streams of data. The work needs to be set in context **and interpreted**: 1) so your colleagues can understand you and most likely contribute to the work, which you can take advantage of; 2) so you can obtain your own perspective on the work.

Your talk should be self-contained, such as would be presented at a national meeting except for the focus on in recent experiments. Remember, there are sometimes new people in the group or visitors who should understand the story you are telling. This is reasonable stress-free way to practice speaking about your work. You must be able to do this to get any job related to science or almost any worthwhile job for that matter. Therefore, look upon your group meeting as an opportunity; don't just try and get it finished in the shortest possible time.