

Lesson 5 - Oral Presentation

Keywords

- Course project
- Writing a grant proposal
- Tips to engage audiences
- 'Selling' your project

Learning Objectives

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13 14



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During Module 1, students are asked to develop their ideas about a research question or to work with an already funded research project (defined by the teacher according to the level and interest of the students). Depending on the chosen format the project to be developed and presented in Module 1 and Module 2 can have the following frame:

OPTION 1: Research project - students will continue to work on their ideas aiming to transform them into a work plan that can become part of a **project proposal to be submitted** to a funding application. The idea is to set the grounds for a realistic project proposal by turning ideas into concrete action.

OPTION 2: Action project - students act as research managers and use their ideas to plan a **research management activity** they would like to perform (for example, finding suitable area-specific funding calls for researchers to apply to, setting up a system to regularly inform researchers about funding opportunities or analysing policy on open science and proposing a strategy for action).

OPTION 3: Career project - students act as **potential job applicants** in an RMA area and use their ideas to build a portfolio and present themselves to the job market.

Communicate your research findings to different audiences

When communicating your research results, it is important to consider diverse audiences, made up of both academics and non-academics. In addition, writing in a comprehensible way to target readers with different levels of expertise is bound to help reach more audiences and improve the impact of research findings.

Module 1 - Research Methodology and Design

1. Consider the broad spectrum of audiences:

- a. **Scientific community** (researchers, reviewers for a grant proposal/article);
- b. **Policy stakeholders** (legislators, professionals working in governmental institutions);
- c. **Civil society** (general public; members of non-profit organisations).

2. Tailor your writing and presentation to the audience:

- a. Before writing, take into consideration which framework you are working for: i.e. journal article, conference, call for applications;
- b. Translate your results to show how they apply to real-world issues of interest to your target audience (Miller, 2007).

Writing your research proposal

Preparatory tasks

1. **Outline your research** according to the purpose of your writing: map the structure of your proposal with the necessary information per section (according to the organisation's proposal guidelines)
2. Talk to **previous grant holders** of the programme/call you are applying for to learn more about the submission process and successful tips (Vieira, 2020)
3. Think about **your audience**:
 - a. learn more about who the reviewers of your proposal will be (scientific reviewers, funding agency staff, programme's professors)
 - b. align your proposal with the programme's or agency's mission
4. **Examine sample proposals** from your department, peers, and/or the organisation.

Common elements of Grant Proposals by Katy Vieira (2020)

<p>Short Overview (i.e. <i>abstract</i> or <i>executive summary</i>)</p>	<p>Here you briefly present the most important elements of your proposal. For longer proposals, you might be able to use a full page for this overview but for other proposals, you might have to condense it into just one paragraph. Either way, make sure you address the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose or goal of your project, the need you are addressing, or the problem you are solving? • What are the expected outcomes of your project and how will you achieve them? • How will you assess or verify the success of your project? • Why is your project important? • Briefly, describe yourself and your professional background.
<p>Tips</p>	<p>The first sentences are key to catching the interest of your audience. You can use different techniques:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Bold sentences ii. A question or quote <p>Include definitions of concepts when necessary.</p>
<p>Examination of a Need or Problem (i.e. <i>statement of need, problem statement, statement of problem, needs assessment</i> or <i>literature review</i>)</p>	<p>Your project is important because it is responding to a gap in resources, knowledge, or opportunity that needs to be filled. To establish the value of your project, you need to clarify the need or problem that your project responds to. Early in your proposal, make sure you establish the context of this problem (i.e., the background). If this problem affects a particular population, describe that group of people targeted. Include data, if appropriate. Particularly for academic grants, this examination may take the form of a short literature review, clarifying that you have read extensively on this topic and understand your project's scholarly context and significance.</p> <p>Also for academic grants it is important to clarify why the project will make a wider, positive impact and not just how it will answer a specific academic question.</p>
<p>Description of Your Project (i.e. <i>project narrative; project goals, objectives,</i></p>	<p>Once you have established a need for your project, you must describe it. Make sure you answer these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the goals of your project or your research questions? • What will your project's expected outcomes be?

<p><i>and methodology; or strategies and tactics)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [As with many other kinds of outcomes, grant proposal outcomes should be SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.] • How are you going to achieve those outcomes? What methods will you use? • How will you measure or recognize your project's achievements? • How can you be sure that your project will productively respond to the need or problem you have identified? • What will the timeline for your project be? • Several questions focus on the impact your project will have. Delineating the impact is important because funders want to see that you have clearly established the realistic benefits of your work along with how you plan to verify and assess your achievements.
<p>Tips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use introductory sentences to guide the reader and maintain a logical flow of ideas (Miller, 2007)
<p>Budget (i.e. <i>resources</i>)</p>	<p>In grant proposals you are asking for funding or other financial support, and you need to clarify why you are asking for particular amounts. Budgets are often formatted in tables and figures. Each amount should be clearly labelled, and you might need to directly follow your budget with a justification statement explaining the reason behind each cost, including motivating why certain materials and equipment are important for your project.</p>
<p>Conclusions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write separate sections or paragraphs for each research question (Miller, 2007) • Suggest future research looking forward

Final Revisions

- Ask a peer you trust and/or people with different scientific backgrounds to **revise your proposal**;
- **Re-read** to avoid repetitions;
- Double-check if **bibliographic references** are properly cited with correct referencing requirements

Bibliographic references

- Kate Vieira. (n.d.). *Planning and Writing a Grant Proposal: The Basics*. The Writing Center. Retrieved 11 January 2021, from <https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/assignments/grants-2/>
- Locke, L. F., Spirduso, W. W., & Silverman, S. J. (2007). *Proposals that work: a guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals* (5th ed). Sage Publications.
- Miller, J. (2007). Presenting Quantitative Research Results. In G. Miller & K. Yang (Eds.), *Public Administration and Public Policy* (Vol. 71). CRC Press. <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781420013276.pt8>