Presentations and Talks

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The 4 Ps for giving a good presentation

POSITIVE

-Don't be afraid
-Why worry?
-Nothing to lose
-Everyone makes mistakes
-Think positive
-You can do it
-Have fun

PREPARE

-Start early
-Gather data and information
-Don't design yet
-Challenge your ideas
-Know your audience
Mind map your ideas
Now design!

PRACTICE

-Practice, practice
-Rehearse
  -on your own
  -record it
  -with audience
-Practice until you feel right
-Memorize key points (not scripts)
Let it flow

PERFORM

-Adapt your voice
  -volume
  -pace
  -tone
-Stay relaxed
-Face audience
-Stay in control
-Engage audience
-Use interactive tools
-Interruption is OK
-Don't apologize

Tips for Preparing the Talk

- **Introduce** – what you are going to talk about; the main goal or objective; one sentence
  - Use a grabber: something to catch attention
  - What the talk will cover ; one sentence
- **Inform** – this is the body of the talk
  - Present information in same order as above
- **Conclude** – repeat the main goals; answer question from introduction

Tips for Preparing the Talk

- **Keep it simple**: narrow down to 2-4 key points
  - You may want to tell the audience everything you did but it cannot be done
  - If audience wants more detail, they may ask questions at the end or contact you later after the talk

Tips for Preparing the Talk

- **Talk to Me**: use conversation language
  - Use short sentences and short words
  - Do not introduce complicated terms and concepts
  - The geosciences is a broad and diverse discipline so not everyone has the background to understand jargon and acronyms

Tips for Preparing the Talk

- **Body Language Matters**: how you say it is often more important than what you say
  - Look at audience (not the screen, floor or podium)
  - If you are shaking, do not use a laser pointer
  - Try not to hide behind the podium
  - Gesture and move naturally
  - Avoid jewelry that makes noise on podium or microphone; avoid shuffling paper; the microphone amplifies the noise

Tips for Preparing the Talk

- **Watch the clock**: practice the talk at least 1X or 2X at a podium and time it
  - Typical rate of speaking is 100 words per minute

Designing Talk Materials

- Audiovisual materials support a presentation; they are not the talk
- Do not try to cram too many slides into talk or cram too much onto a single slide
- Do not use distracting fonts, colours, patterns
- Murphy's Law: have a backup in case of equipment problems

Designing Talk Materials

- **Computers and Presentation Software**:
  - Powerpoint is the common software used by all
  - This can be both good and bad
  - Computers can fail so need backup
  - Software includes all kinds of formats, colours, animations, many kinds of inserts; problems can arise if you are too creative

Designing Talk Materials

- **Preparing slides**:
  - Use solid colours instead of patterns
  - Be brief and to the point; do not be wordy
  - Consider graphics and photographs instead of words
  - Keep figures and maps simple; audience only has one minute to see it; do not try to simply for audience if it is complicated

Designing Talk Materials

- **Use of colour**:
  - Darker background and lighter lettering is usually better, especially for longer talks
  - If too bright or too contrasty, can lead to eye strain
  - Use colour that minimizes contrast but allow text to stand out
  - Do not use weird colour combinations

Designing Talk Materials

- **Text Slides**:
  - Text size should be no less than 14-18 font and no more than 36 usually (perhaps except some titles)
  - Typefaces such as **Calibri** Calibri or **Arial** Arial are best; if you use typefaces such as **Times** Times or **Palatino** Palatino, the stems can disappear so use bold for these if you must
  - Avoid shadows or other facing effects

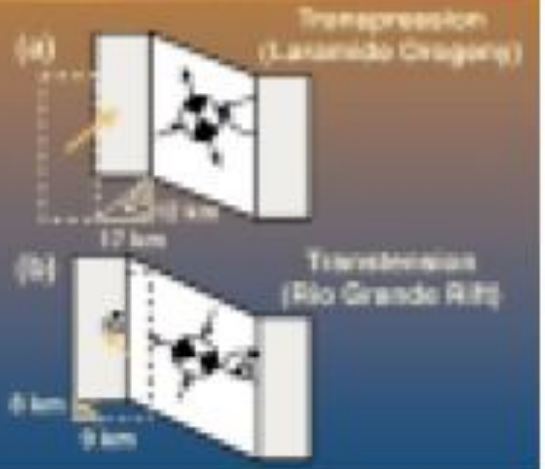
Designing Talk Materials

- **Maps and Figure Slides**:
  - Use pastel or earth tones; colours lead to eyestrain
  - Avoid complex maps
  - Avoid placing text over lines and patterns
  - Use colour to differentiate sets of data on graphs

GOOD SLIDES

TRANSLATION ESTIMATES

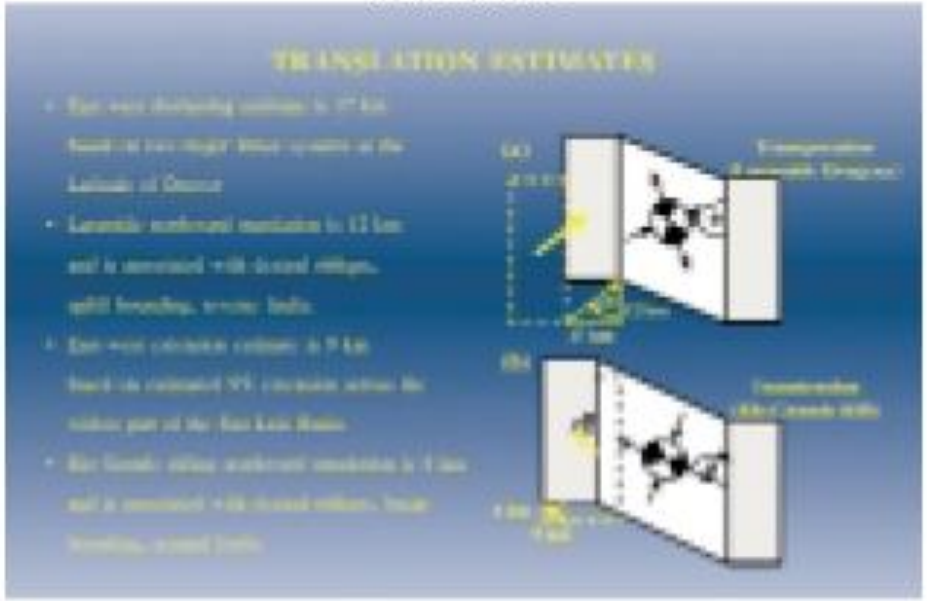
- East-west shortening estimate: 17 km
- Laramide northward translation: 12 km
- East-west extension estimate: 9 km
- Rio Grande rifting northward translation: 8 km



WHAT IS A SKY ISLAND?

- Found in Arizona, New Mexico, Mexico
- Isolated mountain ranges surrounded by low-land deserts
- Late Tertiary Basin-and-Range high-angle faulting
- Mio-Pleistocene deposition
- Biodiverse

BAD SLIDES



What is a Sky Island?

Isolated mountain ranges surrounded by lowland deserts make up the unique "Sky Islands" ecosystem of southeastern Arizona, southwestern New Mexico, and Northern Mexico. They are rich biodiversity reservoirs, each possessing a several vegetation zones, which developed according to variations in altitude, rainfall, insolation and other factors. The topography was created by Basin-and-Range high-angle faulting during the late Tertiary period and the basins were filled by material eroding off newly elevated highlands and by deposition in lakes which formed during the wetter Pliocene and Pleistocene epochs.

References

- Cockerill, K. And Wawrzyniec, T.F. 2001a. When presentations go bad: A commentary - Part I. Geological Society of America Today 11:12-13.
- Cockerill, K. And Wawrzyniec, T.F. 2001b. When presentations go bad: A commentary – Part 2. Geological Society of America Today 11: 24-25.