



# 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



# 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?

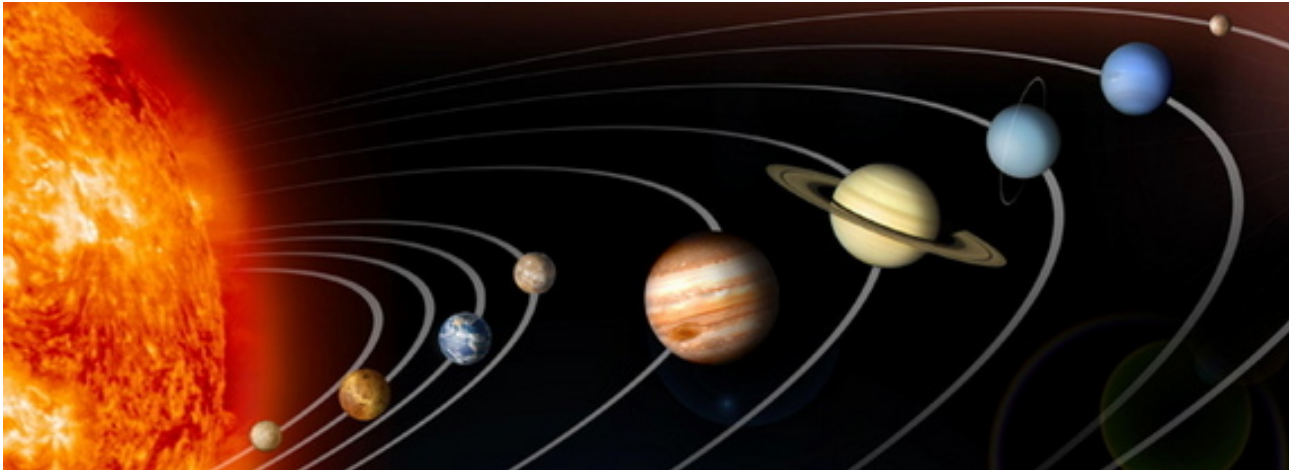
# EXERCISE 3



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

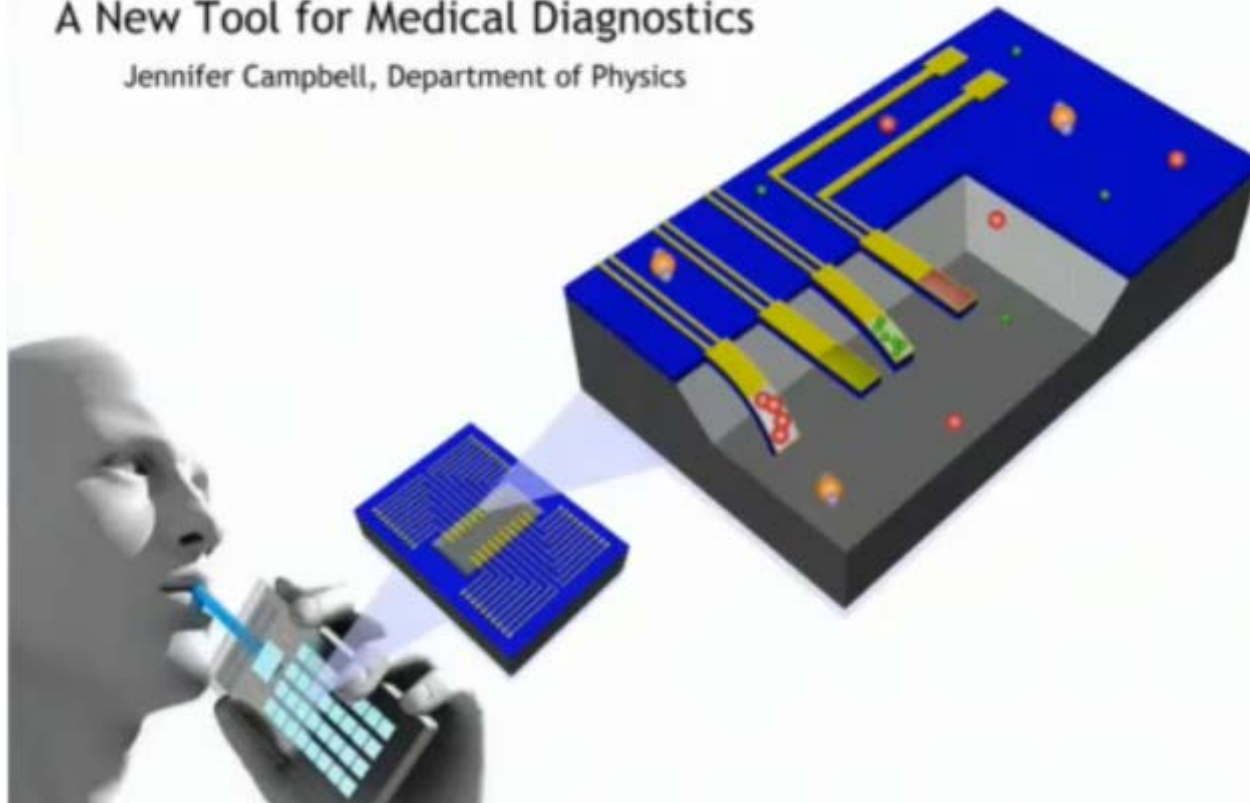


- Does your research break a pattern?
- Does it go against common sense or common understandings?
- Does it do something counterintuitive?
- Does it force us to rethink something fundamental?

# Nanocantilevers

A New Tool for Medical Diagnostics

Jennifer Campbell, Department of Physics





# THE TITLE

- Short and snappy
- Attention grabbing
- 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/>
- <http://prezi.com/jwhwyydfzqxo/how-to-talk-about-your-thesis-in-3-minutes/>
- [https://www.grad.ubc.ca/sites/default/files/materials/gps\\_3MT.pdf](https://www.grad.ubc.ca/sites/default/files/materials/gps_3MT.pdf)