

Workshop staging and didactic

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT) is a competition originating from the University of Queensland and now run for PhD students worldwide. The 3MT challenges research degree candidates to tell a non-academic audience what they are doing, how they are doing it and why it is important - in just three minutes. Doing a great 3MT can be difficult because the academic training emphasises detail over story and accuracy over excitement. Doing the 3MT can sharpen good communication skills that you can bring back into your academic presentations. It is also a good way to work out how to talk to your Great Uncle at the next family BBQ when he asks you why you are still doing your PhD. Who knows? If you explain the importance of your research really well he might send you a check for next month's rent!

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Audience: mid candidature

Number: up to 40 participants

Resources: A/V, cafe style tables or lecture style, whiteboard and pens.

Participants should bring: pen and paper

Speaker bio



You can download a high resolution picture of Inger [here](#) (103 Mb)

Professor Inger Mewburn has specialised in research education since 2006. She is currently the Director of Research Training at The [Australian National University](#) where she does inter-disciplinary research training and research on student experience and employability. Aside from editing and contributing to the [Thesis Whisperer Blog](#), she writes scholarly papers, books and book chapters about research student experiences, with a special interest in employability and digital transformation. You can find out more about Inger and her work on her [Linkedin profile](#), [Amazon author page](#), [Google Scholar](#) and [OrcidID](#).

How to win the 3MT

Professor Inger Mewburn (aka @thesiswhisperer)
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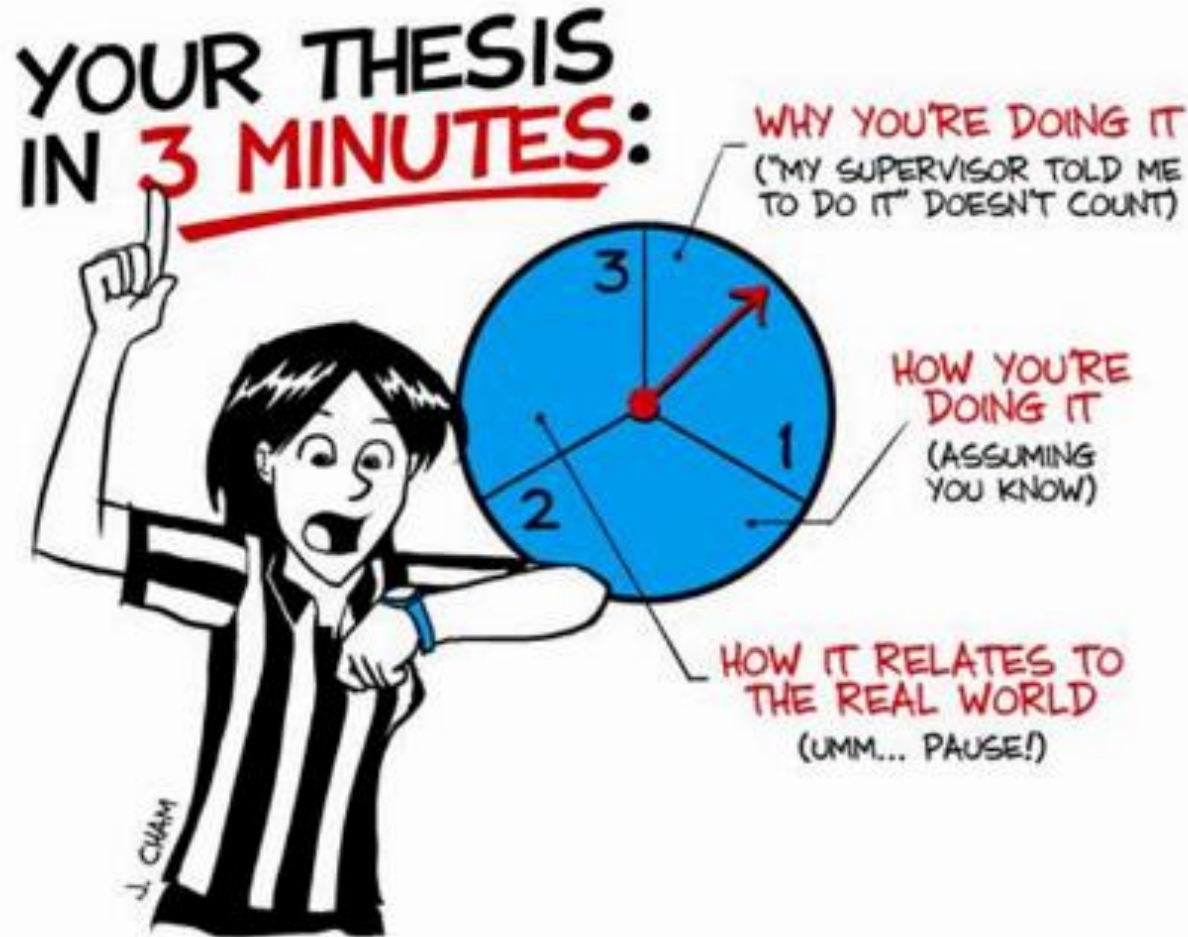
In this presentation we will

Talk about bad presentations

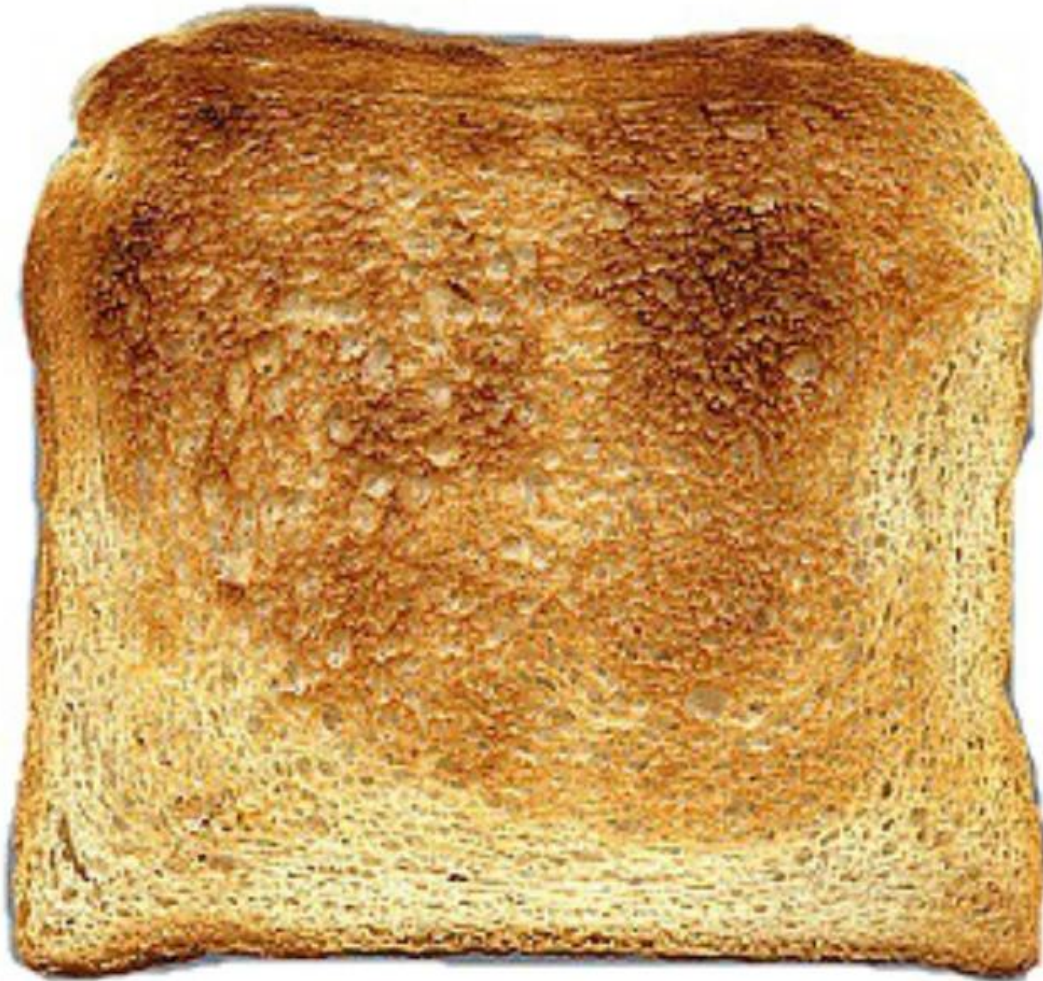
Look at some examples of the 3MT in action

Go through some steps to help you make one

What is the 3MT?



In other words, it shouldn't be like this:



Why are some presentations bad?



What other students have said

Too technical

Too much on each slide

No structure to talk

Reading from notes

Unclear speech

Nervous speaker

Too simple

Weird body language

Small font / wacky fonts / yellow font on white background

Busy backgrounds

Let's look at some 3MT contestants in action

[Barlarka Banerjee](#)

[Jack Midalek](#)

[Sumaiya Ahmed](#)

[Jamie Flynn](#)

[Daniel Crabtree](#)

2020 ANU winner:
Nutsinee Kijbunchoo



A good 3MT presentation...

Doesn't try to say too much

Is delivered slowly.

Has expression (pauses, rises, falls and stresses)

Includes a story, metaphor or emotional element

Gives concrete examples

Doesn't 'telegraph'

Tells you things you didn't expect to hear about the topic

A framework for action

In "[Made to Stick](#)" Chip and Dan Heath claim that this formula makes information rich presentations unforgettable:

Simple

Unexpected

Concrete

Credible (we won't deal with this)

Emotional

Staories

Let's work on Simple

Complete the following sentence.

"The purpose of my research is..." (add max 50 words)

Share your sentence and we'll workshop some of them.



Let's work on Unexpected

Tell us an interesting fact about your research!

All of you will know something that has probably ceased being of interest to you, but is new to us.

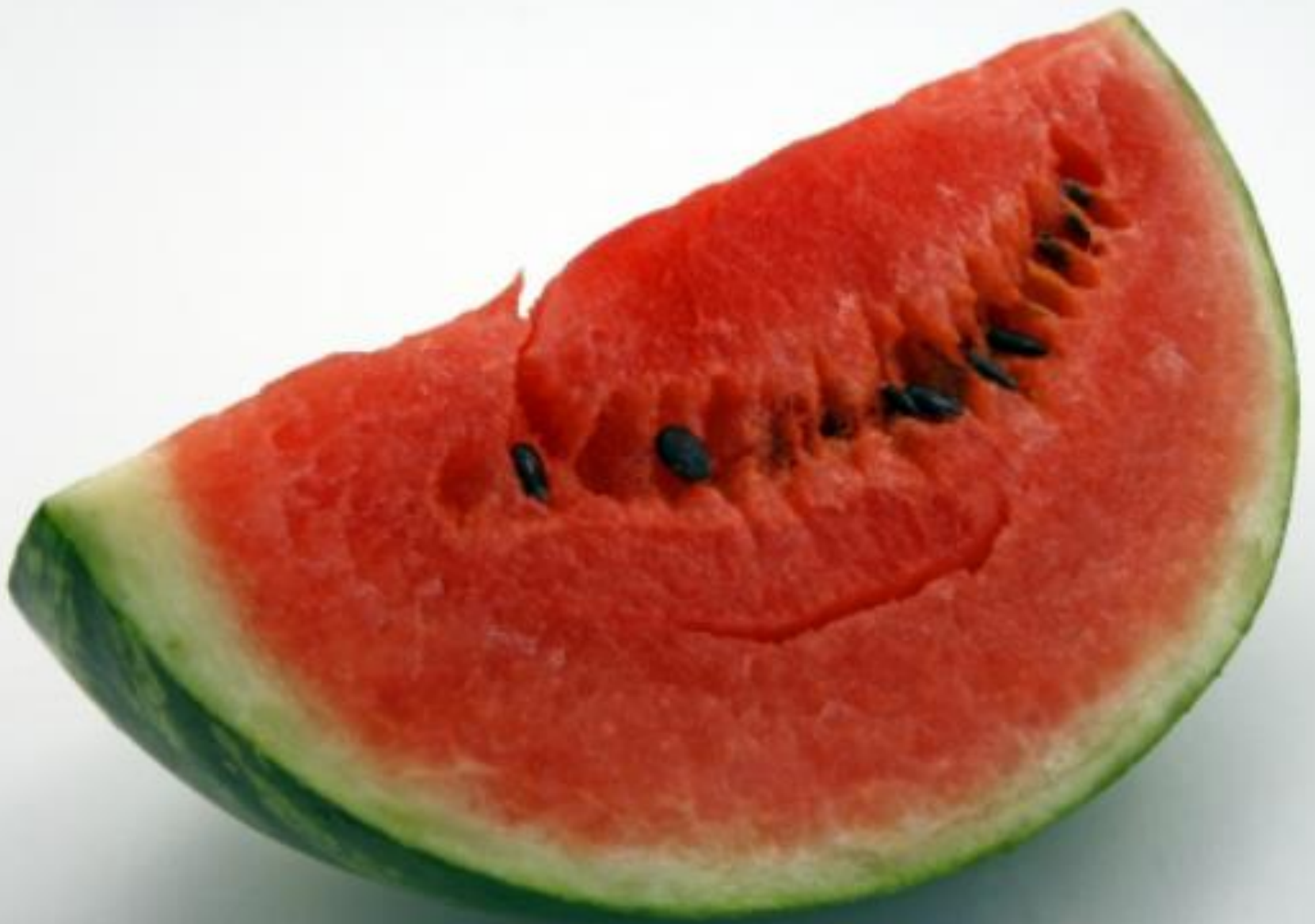
For example:

- Silver turns your tongue blue.
- The chemical that makes bananas go brown probably causes alzheimer disease.
- Watering a plant is good because you are giving it electrons.

Take a few minutes to think about it, then share one if you can.

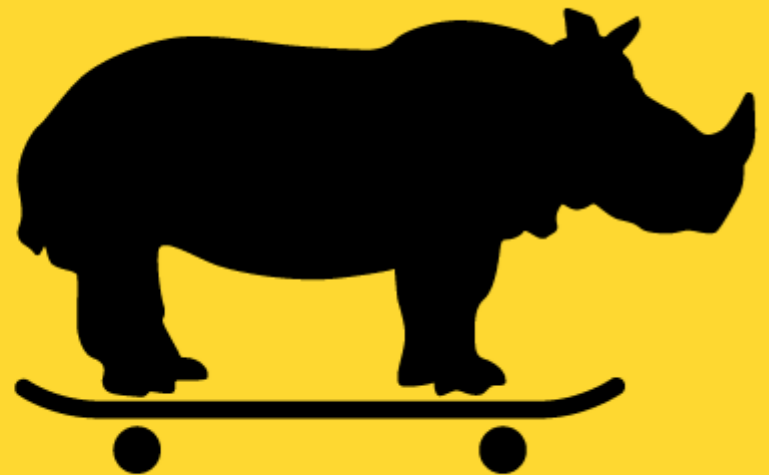
Let's work on Concrete

Close your eyes... and listen to me



BEWARE THE RHINO

**TRAMS WEIGH AS
MUCH AS 40 RHINOS**



Emotions

In research writing we are told not to resort to emotional arguments, but in the 3MT it is essential. Here's some emotions you can work with:

"What's in it for me?" (WIFM)

"Oh, how sad :-(

"Interesting!"

"That's mysterious..."

You need to convey your passion for your work too, but be aware of the possibility of 'topic fatigue' in the audience.

Story

Including a story can help you work in an emotional angle

Good stories include the following elements:

Characters (they don't have to be human)

A beginning, middle and end (not necessarily in that order)

Some kind of change or transformation

A "call to action"

Read this blog post ["Story telling in business"](#) for more ideas.

What should go on the slide

Resist temptation!

Don't rely on it as a presentation aide

Choose one 'hero' image or diagram

Title can be a question, or your actual title

Put your name and contact details on it

Final advice:

People don't remember everything you said, but they always remember how you made them feel.

Before you leave!

**Read about how to
participate in the 3MT at ANU**

May the force be with you!

For more advice and ideas head to the [Thesis Whisperer blog](#) which has a section on [presenting](#)

Resources

- [Made to Stick](#)
- [Nancy Duarte's 'Slideology'](#)
- [How to deliver a TED talk](#)
- [Start with Why](#)

