3MT® Orientation and Tips

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Today’s Discussion:
• Overview of the 3MT® at Texas State
• Rules & Regulations
• Tips and Strategies
  – Familiarizing Yourself with the 3MT
  – Writing Your 3MT Presentation
  – Slide Preparation for the 3MT
  – Presentation Preparation for the 3MT
Overview

- Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) is a research communication program developed by The Univ. of Queensland (UQ) in 2008. Graduate students have three minutes to present a compelling oration on their research and its significance.

Why Compete?

- The 3MT® promotes presentation and communication skills, provides opportunities and feedback for students to work on explaining their research to a non-specialized audience, and in general helps students hone their “elevator pitch” discussions of their dissertations (especially useful for those students heading into job interviews!).
Who is doing the 3MT®? 86 different countries...and more than 250 universities in the United States
Eligibility

- Graduate students currently enrolled in a Texas State University dissertating doctoral program (PhD or EdD) or master’s thesis program are eligible to compete.

- The presentation must include findings/outcomes of research (that is, it can’t be a thesis or dissertation proposal that is presented, there must be at least preliminary findings or a pilot study to report).

- If a student participated in a 3MT® in a previous year, they are still eligible to participate in this year’s 3MT® (unless you won First Place, Runner Up, or People’s Choice in the University Final in a previous year! However, winning in the preliminary rounds is fine in terms of competing again the following year.)
New This Year!

• Instead of holding the preliminary round in front of a live audience, the preliminary round will be recorded and posted online for the entire Texas State community to vote on!

• Participants will register for a time slot and will come to a room where equipment will be set up for them to record their 3MT® presentation up to three times (participants will choose which recording will be posted online for voting).

• 3MT® preliminary presentation recordings will be randomly sorted into three groups. The purpose of the preliminary round is to advance the four top-scoring presentations in each group to the University Final. In each group, three presenters will be advanced based on official judges' scores, and the fourth presenter will be chosen by the university community through online voting (People's Choice Winner).

• The University Final is still live and in person – no changes there!

• Instead of being held during GSAW in April, it is held in February.
2020 3MT® Structure:

**Preliminary Group 1**
(People’s Choice Voting Online from 2/14-2/21)
- Top Scoring Presentation 1: $75
- Top Scoring Presentation 2: $75
- Top Scoring Presentation 3: $75
- People’s Choice $75

**Preliminary Group 2**
(People’s Choice Voting Online from 2/14-2/21)
- Top Scoring Presentation 1: $75
- Top Scoring Presentation 2: $75
- Top Scoring Presentation 3: $75
- People’s Choice $75

**Preliminary Group 3**
(People’s Choice Voting Online from 2/14-2/21)
- Top Scoring Presentation 1: $75
- Top Scoring Presentation 2: $75
- Top Scoring Presentation 3: $75
- People’s Choice $75

**3MT® University Finals**
Friday, February 28th, 10:00-12:00
- 1st Place $1,000
- Runner-up $500
- People’s Choice $500
Presentation Rules

- A single static PowerPoint slide is permitted (no slide transitions, animations or “movement” of any description, the slide is to be presented from the beginning of the oration).
- No additional electronic media (e.g., sound and video files) are permitted.
- No additional props (e.g., costumes, musical instruments, laboratory equipment, notes, laser pointers) are permitted.
- Presentations are limited to 3 minutes maximum and competitors exceeding 3 minutes are disqualified.
- Presentations are to be spoken word (e.g., no poems, raps or songs).
- Presentations are to commence from the platform.
- Presentations are considered to have commenced when a presenter starts their presentation through movement or speech.
- The decision of the adjudicating panel is final.
Judging Criteria

Comprehension and content

• Did the presentation provide an understanding of the background and significance to the research question being addressed, while explaining terminology and avoiding jargon?
• Did the presentation clearly describe the impact and/or results of the research, including conclusions and outcomes?
• Did the presentation follow a clear and logical sequence?
• Was the thesis topic, research significance, results/impact and outcomes communicated in language appropriate to a non-specialist audience?
• Did the presenter spend adequate time on each element of their presentation - or did they elaborate for too long on one aspect or was the presentation rushed?

Engagement and communication

• Did the oration make the audience want to know more?
• Was the presenter careful not to trivialize or generalize their research?
• Did the presenter convey enthusiasm for their research?
• Did the presenter capture and maintain their audience's attention?
• Did the speaker have sufficient stage presence, eye contact and vocal range; maintain a steady pace, and have a confident stance?
• Did the PowerPoint slide enhance the presentation - was it clear, legible, and concise?
Familiarizing Yourself with the 3MT®

Look at prior 3MT® presentations.
Texas State Competitions:

• Last Year:
  https://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/events/3mt/2019.html

• Previous Years:
  https://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/events/3mt.html#past

• World-wide 3MT® competitions: UQ has some suggestions
  – http://threeminutethesis.org/
  – http://threeminutethesis.org/uq-winners

• Others
  – CSI & Fingerprints
  – Meat Detective
  – Dementia
Writing Your 3MT® Presentation

• Write for a non-specialized audience.
  – Avoid discipline-related jargon and acronyms
  – Make the audience curious about your research!
  – Explain concepts that are important to understanding your research
  – When planning out your talk, take the approach of describing the research to a family member
  – Distill down, don’t dumb down.
  – Connect your research to big picture stuff – why it matters in the grand scheme of things

• Know what your goal or outcome is for your audience – what do you want them to come away with?

• Tell your research like a story
  – Beginning, Middle, and End!
  – Start with a hook; something that your audience can attach information to
  – It is useful to begin with an analogy
  – Summarize as you near the end

• It’s not an academic paper
  – Impress with communication of ideas, not discipline-specific terms!
Slide Preparation for the 3MT®

• Requirements
  – Use the widescreen (16:9) size for your slide, instead of the default 4:3 size. (In PPT: go to the “design” tab, then the “slide size” drop down menu.)
  – One slide is permitted
  – The slide must be static (no moving parts, transitions, etc.)
  – The slide must be presented from the beginning of your presentation
  – No additional media are allowed (audio or video)

• Suggestions
  – “Less is more” – don’t overcomplicate your slide
  – The slide should illustrate an important point, but don’t make it so complicated that the audience is figuring out the slide instead of listening to you
  – If you are using an analogy in your talk, you may want to represent the analogy on the slide
  – Choose graphics that present an important point of your talk, but that do not require 2 minutes & 55 seconds of explanation
  – Think of the slide not as the main part of your presentation – that is your talk – but rather as a supporting visual aid
Presentation Preparation for the 3MT®

• Practice to Polish
  – With such a tight time frame, you don’t want to be searching for the perfect word while delivering the presentation. Plan what you want to say and practice it in front of people. Record yourself and listen to the recording.
  – Elicit feedback from peers on your talk, and modify accordingly. If they are confused at all, so will be your 3MT® audience.

• Voice and Body Language
  – Speak clearly and confidently: this is your research, and you know it better than anyone.
  – Face the audience at all times – do not turn around to read something off of the slide!
  – Use inflections in your voice to demonstrate emphasis.
  – Use inflections in your voice to demonstrate enthusiasm!
  – Don’t pace, but use the “stage” if that is your normal approach to speaking.
  – Hand gestures are useful for emphasizing main points, but can be distracting if they are constant.

• Allow your personality to come through
  – This is about your research!
Questions from Note Cards (physical and virtual) and Other
• **Registration**
  – Students who are interested in competing in the 3MT® should sign up for the competition – registration is open and will close on January 31st. Registration for the competition is limited so be sure to sign up if you are interested!

• **Preliminary Round Video Recording**: there are several days and times available for students to sign up and record their 3MT® presentation. Each student can record their presentation up to 3 times and will select which of their presentations they would like to be the official Prelim entry for voting!
  – Students registered to compete by the deadline will record their presentations on the following dates:
    • San Marcos: February 6, 7, 10, or 12
    • Round Rock: February 11