

BATS – preparing for your talk

A strategic guide to help you craft your BATS talk
By the BE Communication Fellows

By defining your purpose, you will get more out of your BATS experience

What is your **goal** for this talk?

Gather **feedback** on project direction

Develop **collaborations**

Receive critical evaluation from **outside scientists**

Connect your work to other fields

Your purpose should **not** be to show all your data

Example (Tony K's talk):

Scalable screening of drug-adjuvant pairs with microfluidics (spring 2014)

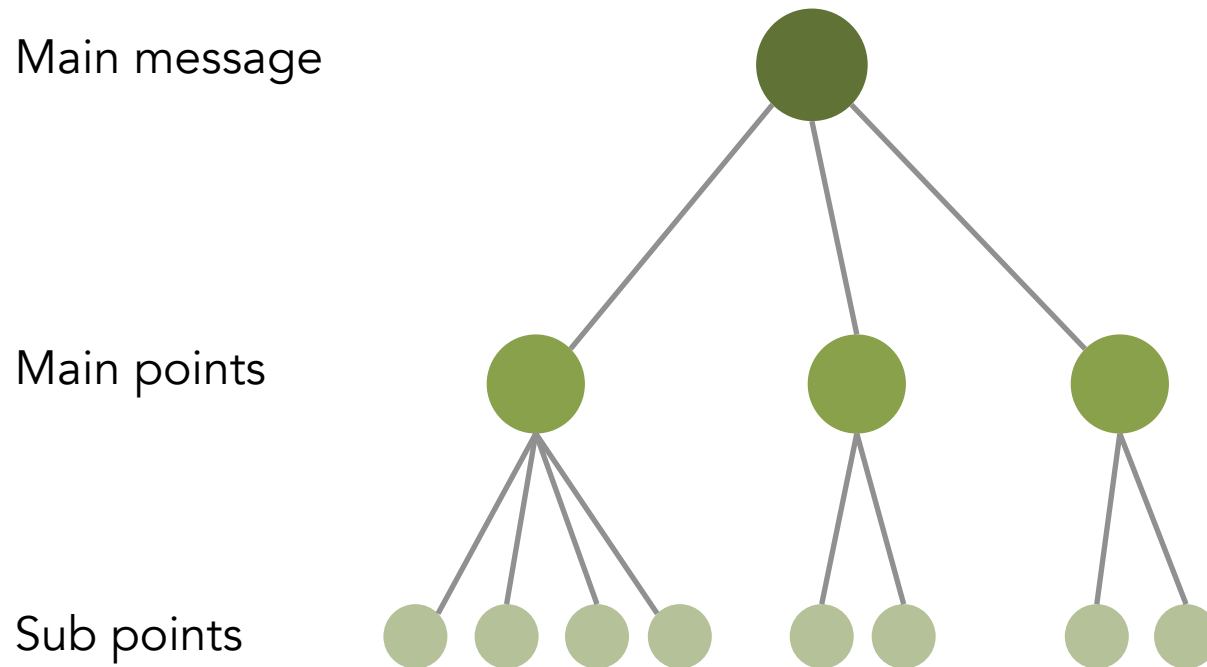
His purpose:

Receive feedback from **outside scientists** (microbiologists)

How to achieve his purpose:

Present simplified version of his technique so that scientists outside the field can provide input

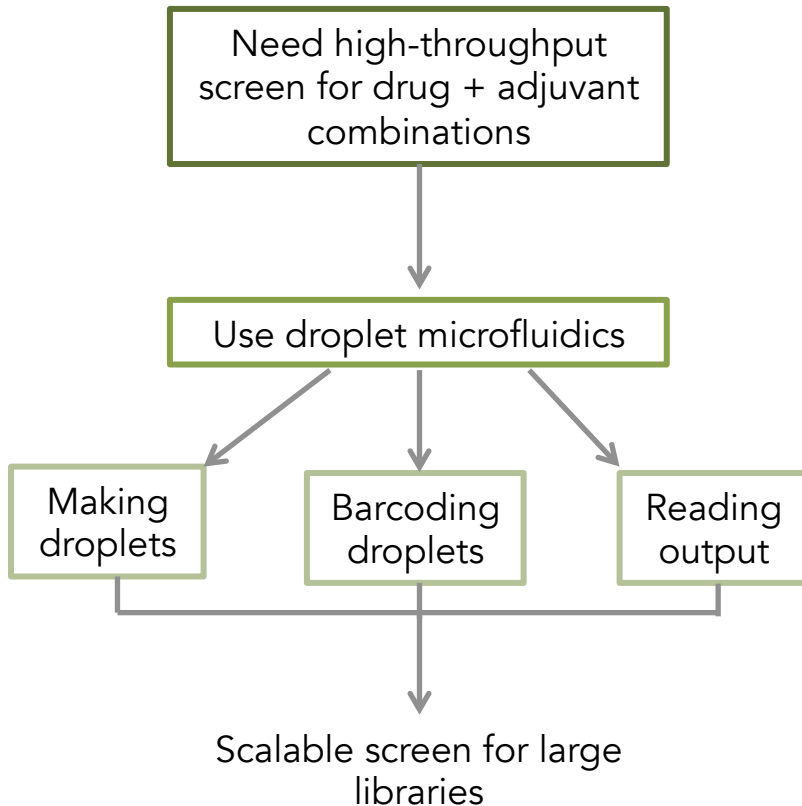
Tell one story; depth is better than breadth



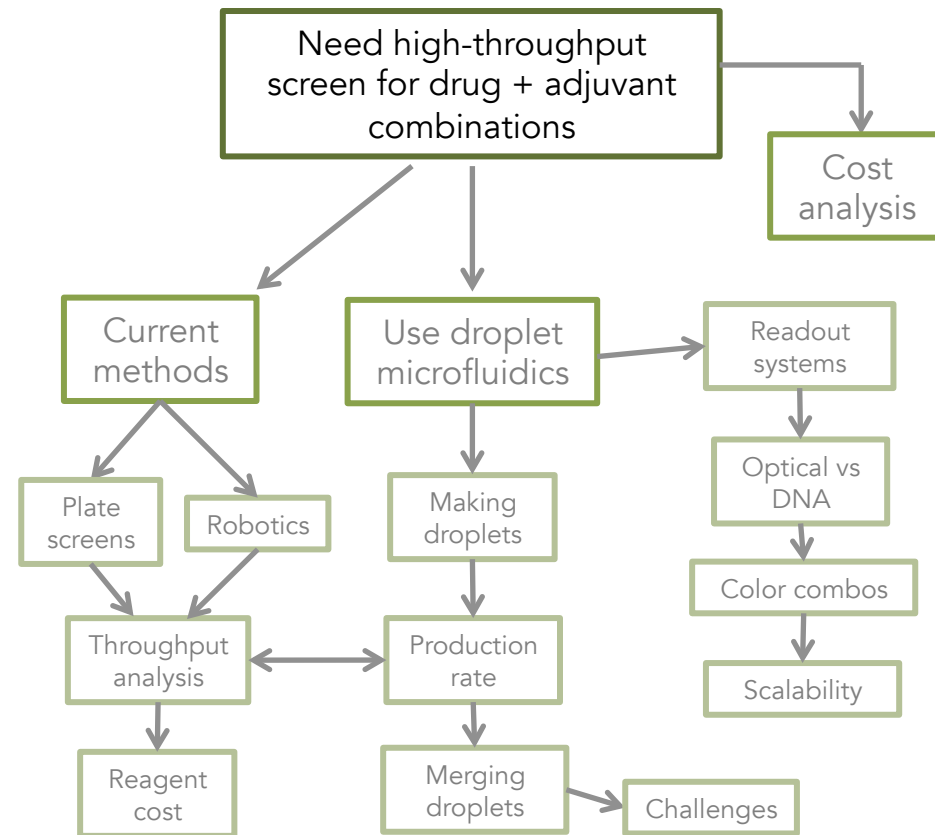
Your audience will only remember a few big ideas from your talk; make sure all of your details fall under 1-3 themes or concepts.

A single storyline helps your audience follow the talk

One storyline aids understanding

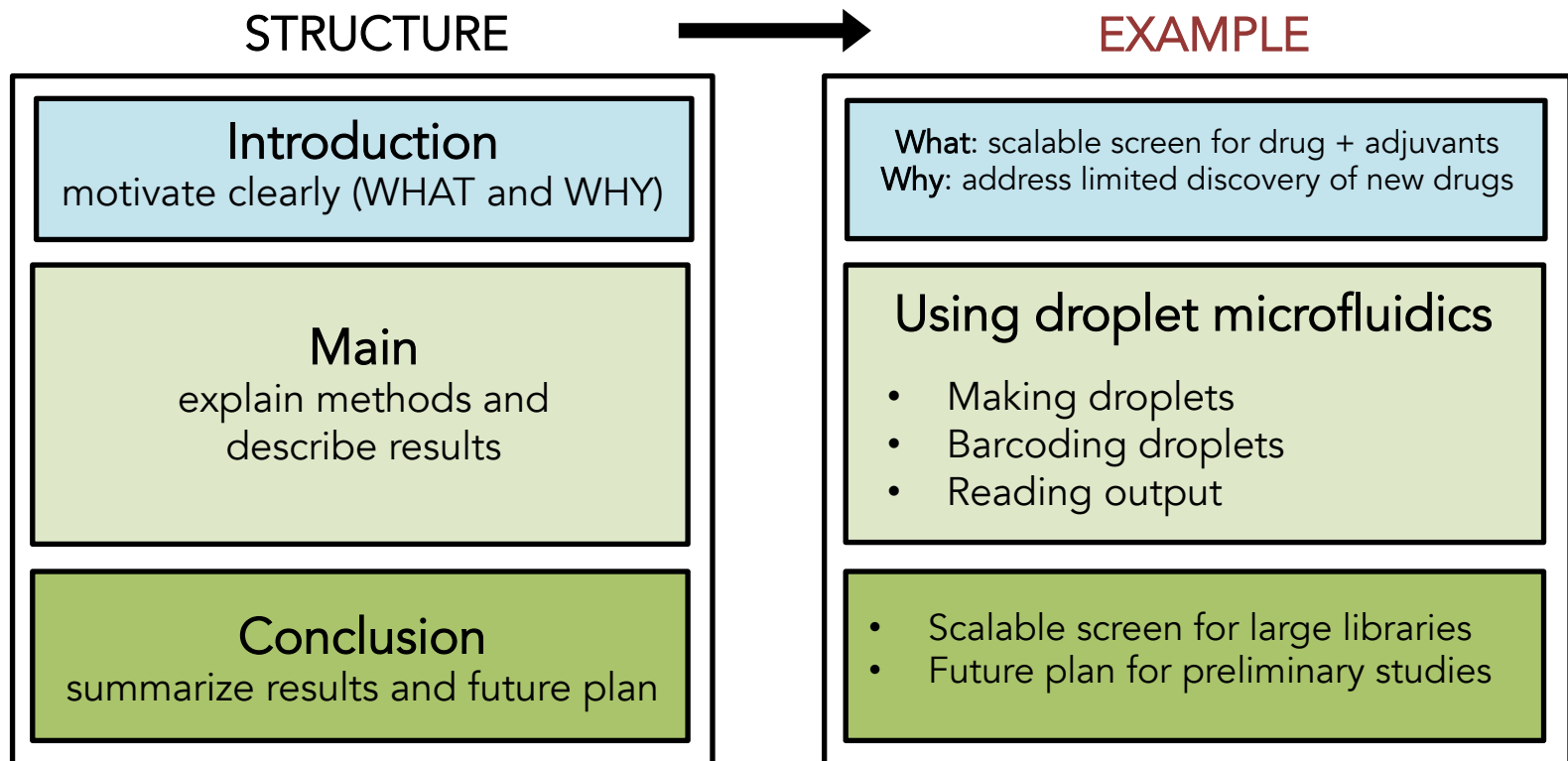


Many stories can confuse



Your BATS audience is diverse; engage by providing a clear context and scope

- Present a clear context: why should people care?
- Divide into logical subsections:



Use your body and voice to connect to your audience



Be mindful of your words and movements; they can be distracting.

Slide design matters; present only one concept per slide

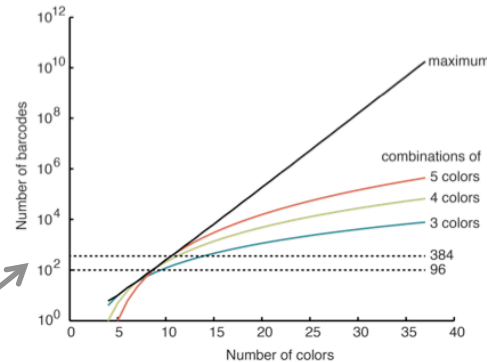
The **title** conveys the main message of the slide (the so *what*)

No frivolous additions or unnecessary data are used – only figures that are discussed

Don't just copy figures from Matlab; help the audience see what's important from your data

The **text** serves to support the message, not act as a script (make sure font size is large enough!)

Optical barcoding scheme is easily scalable to ultrahigh library complexity (>384 combinations)



Only 9 colors needed for library of 96
Only 11 colors needed for library of 384

14

Slide from Tony Kulesa

Ask yourself:

What is the point of this slide?

Does the title convey the "so what"?

Will I actually discuss every figure?

Does my text enhance the slide, not serve as a script?

Checklist

Preparation

- ❑ **2 weeks out:** prepare outline
 - Decide on topic, title, and thesis statement
 - Draft out slide titles or flowchart
 - Decide where data figures will be placed

- ❑ **1 week out:** get feedback on outline
 - Schedule BE Comm Lab appt
 - Email slides to BE Comm Fellow

- ❑ **3 days out:** schedule practice talk and make list of potential audience questions

Slide content

- ❑ Intro (2-3 minutes)
 - Attention getter
 - Preview of the presentation
 - Main message (one sentence you want your audience to remember)

- ❑ Main (9-10 minutes)
 - Explain methods (don't get caught in details)
 - Describe results (were they what you expected? what do they mean?)

- ❑ Conclusion (2 minutes)
 - Summarize results and conclusions
 - Present your future plan
 - Stimulate audience to think ahead

- ❑ Acknowledgements (should be brief)

Use the BE Communication Lab early and often



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BE Communication Lab



Helping you communicate effectively.

Staffed by the BE Communication Fellows, the BE Communication Lab offers writing and speaking support for scientists by scientists.

Course 20 undergraduate students, graduate students and post-docs are invited to bring in any communication-related pieces they are working on – from coursework and posters to resumes and publications.

We encourage students to **book an appointment** at any stage in the writing process – the sooner the better. In addition to offering coaching, the BE Communication Lab runs **workshops** and is building an online tool box to help you find tips and resources quickly to help you communicate more effectively.

NEW!

We are excited to now offer the **BE Communication Lab Certificate** to students who have shown a commitment towards improving their communication skills.

be.mit.edu/communicationlab