

UNIVERSITY *of* MISSOURI

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

How to prepare 3MT coaching sessions with Dr. Milbre Burch

1. At our first session we will view a short online video about Paul Zak's work on the impact of stories with a dramatic arc on the listeners. You can find it on You-tube if you want to preview it.
2. It is recommended that competitors visit the PBS website entitled "The Secret Life of Scientists and Engineers" to view as many different "thirty-second science" talks as you can handle to begin thinking about how to boil down your narrative for the Three Minute Thesis competition.
3. Plan to bring the "bones" of your research in the form of three sentences to the first session. These can be compound sentences, but begin to look for the beginning, middle and end of what you need your audience to know about your work including its broader impact on the public. We can work to flesh out those bones once you know what they are.
4. Consider how you can put a "human face" on your research, no matter what its topic. If you are working in the field of quarks, that human face may be the face of the teacher, mentor or professor who first got you excited about this area of study.
5. A compelling introduction combined with your passionate articulation, some relevance strategies to "hook" your audience into the narrative and "finished" with a summary that answers the "so what?" question will take you a long way toward exciting your listeners about what you're doing.
6. We will be doing improvisatory storytelling as well as dramatic and narrative exercises to expand your presentational skills and your movement vocabulary. Remember that the vast majority of what we communicate is through our paralanguage – intonation, pitch, volume, prosody or speech music, etc. – including gesture, facial expression and body language. Plan to dress in a way that will allow you to move freely from the floor to standing positions. Comfortable, flat shoes are strongly recommended for these sessions.

