**Robert Brown’s Eight Questions**

**How to Answer the Questions:**

Most people need 2 to 3 hours to prepare their answers so allow enough time to do it well.

Pitch to the educated layperson, not disciplinary experts.

Do not use dot points; each answer must be in full sentences. (Sentences are full thoughts whereas dot points are only fragments of thoughts and do not give your audience enough to grasp.)

Present the questions in the order shown (and reproduce the headings) but you may find it easier to answer them in a different order. Specifically, questions 5 and 6 are sometimes easier to answer after answering questions 7 and 8.

No more than one extremely simple table or figure allowed.

Avoid generalities. Be as specific as you can.

Stick to the work limits. Part of the value of the exercise is to establish the essence of your paper and the word limits are an integral part of this.

**The Eight Questions (Reproduce each heading with your answer.)**

1. **Working Title of Paper** (20 words)

2. **Authors** (in order of appearance)

3. **Anticipated journal/s**

4. **Intended readers**

Name 4 to 6 potential readers – give their names and why they should be interested (e.g. “Tachabod Crane, paleo-fudgologist interested in polygalatic fudginomiality” not “other paleo-fudgologists”). Make sure all nominated readers really are likely to read the nominated journal (e.g. few practitioners read refereed journals).

5a. **What is the central question that your paper will pose?** (30 words)

The central question of my paper is…

5b. **What is the answer it will provide?** (30 words)

The answer it will provide is that…

6. **If your readers had only one sentence to summarize your article, what should it be?** (25 words)

Focus on the outcomes from the work, not the inputs.

7a. **Why did you do the work?** (70 words)

Briefly outline the problem you are tackling and why it is important.

7b. **What did you do?** (70 words)

Briefly outline the methods you used to gather evidence.

7c. **What happened?** (100 words)

Briefly outline the key results. Focus on outcomes.

7d. **What can you add to the theory?** (70 words)

A research paper has to add to broader understanding. What will yours contribute?

Think about how your results and conclusions will change how people see the world.

7e. **What can you add to practice?** (70 words)

Superior research also has practical consequences. What are the consequences of your work? Think about how your results and conclusions might change what people do.

8. **What remains unresolved?**

This is more for your own benefit, but will provide some guidance for your audience and some of it may be useful in your discussion.

**References**

Brown, R. (1994) The ‘Big Picture’ about Managing Writing. In O. Zuber-Skerrit and Y. Ryan, (Ed) Quality in Postgraduate Education Ch 8 , pp90-109, Kogan Page : London

Brown, R. (1994) How to focus your reader with the ‘main message’. In L Conrad (Ed) Developing as Researchers. Griffith Institute of Higher Education, Griffith University, Queensland.