

Short presentations of complex research

Description

Lithium ion batteries were used as a comparison when Jiayuan Wei explained her research on electrodes made from lignin.

The performance gave her first prize in a three-minute presentation competition, 3MT, during the 2018 Marcus Wallenberg Prize event.

Jiayuan Wei, Luleå University of Technology, Sweden, tries to make carbon materials from lignin to be used as electrodes in supercapacitors. She mentioned lithium ion batteries, that we have in smartphones and laptops, to explain the idea with her research.

– Both supercapacitors and lithium ion batteries are energy storage devices. By making the connection I believe I did not push my audience out of their comfort zone, she says.

One slide and three minutes

Jiayuan Wei and 30 other PhD students and post docs from five countries were invited to the 2018 Marcus Wallenberg Young Researchers' program during four days in Stockholm, Sweden, at the end of September. All participants presented their work in both posters and 3MT-presentations.

3MT-presentations is an academic competition to encourage presentation and communication skills. Only one static slide and a three-minute speech were allowed during the 2018 MWP 3MT competition. The session was moderated by Professor Jack Saddler, University of British Columbia. He is a member of the MWP Selection Committee, which constituted the 3MT-jury. All participants also picked their choice in a joint panel.

The winners were chosen by both selection groups. Jiayuan Wei was awarded the first prize, SEK5,000.

Focus on the big scale

Annika Ketola, VTT, Jyväskylä, Finland, was second best according to the jury. She received SEK3,000.

Annika Ketola did not go into actual results from her research on designing new bulky and light-weight cellulose-fibre materials. She had decided to keep it simple and focus on her aim to replace plastics with cellulose.

– Most people are familiar with the environmental problems with plastics, so it was relatively easy to build the story around it. My plan was to address the big problem, provide the solution and hope that people will come to my poster to hear more, she says.

Simone Haslinger, Aalto University, Espoo, was awarded third prize and received SEK2,000 for a presentation on a process using an ionic liquid to upcycle textile waste.

Workshop with feedback

The 3MT competition was introduced in 2016 in the MWP Young Researchers' program. Jack Saddler has seen a strong progress from year to year.

During the workshop he encouraged the participants to learn from each other.

– What worked, what would you do different next time? Write it down to remember, Jack Saddler said.

He also encouraged the participants to try to find punchlines.

– You must condense your research to a hook that you can remember. Learn from top scientists like Einstein, who was a good communicator. There are lots of quotations from him.

Anita Teleman, member of the MWP Selection Committee and a Marcus Wallenberg Prize Winner in 2003, was very impressed by the presentations.

– It was very educating for me. Very informative, she said during the workshop.