Tips for Your Oral Presentation

Office of Undergraduate Research
Supporting research and creative activity at UT Austin

**Material in this presentation was acquired and adapted in part from information provided by The Writing Center and the College of Natural Sciences, Office for Honors, Research and International Study.**
Logistics

- For most oral presentations you will have about 15 minutes to talk and 5 minutes to take follow-up questions. (Check with the organizers to find out exact time limits for your event.)

- You can typically use PowerPoint and/or transparencies as a visual aid. Check the conference contacts to be sure what media sources will be available.
  - Bring your PowerPoint on a flashdrive!

- If you plan to use the internet make sure it is available at the conference!
Preparing Your Presentation

- Know the needs of your audience! Who are they? What do they want to know?
- If you can’t think of how to start, imagine you are writing to a family member or friend to explain what you did. Limit jargon.
- Follow a logical progression:
  - Introduction/Significance
  - Research Question/Hypotheses
  - Methods
  - Results
  - Discussion/Conclusions
Preparing your presentation

- Ensure your speech will captivate the audience and be worth their time. Think “Why is this study so important?” Then convey that to the audience.
Preparing Your Presentation

- Know your material thoroughly!
- PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!
  - Utilize family, friends, and even a tape recorder.
- Time your presentation to make sure you are within the limit AND allowing for questions! Time yourself during the actual presentation, also.
- Make sure it is not a rushed delivery. Take your time.
Preparing Your Presentation

- It is perfectly fine to make notecards, but only to highlight talking points that you can expand on as you speak.
- DO NOT read from your notes for an extended length of time or you will lose the audience!
- PowerPoint slides can also serve this purpose and are great for displaying results charts and other visual aids!
  - Keep PowerPoint layout simple and use BIG TEXT.
Preparing Your Presentation

- Know your strong and weak points, and you should emphasize the strong points during your presentation.
- At the same time, the audience does not expect you to be perfect nor do they want you to fail!
Prior to Your Presentation

- Arrive early to “scout” out the area where you will be presenting. Check audio-visual equipment, decide where you will stand and place papers, etc.
- Check for a visible clock or consider placing your watch on the podium.
During Your Presentation

- Dress appropriately and present your desired image to the audience.
  - Try to look pleasant, enthusiastic, confident, and proud.
  - Appear relaxed, even if you feel nervous.
During Your Presentation

- Introduce yourself (no more than 30 seconds). Where are you from? What is the origin of your paper?
- Establish rapport with the audience, perhaps making them laugh to break the ice.
- Speak to the person farthest from you to make sure your voice is loud enough.
- DO NOT RUSH! No one likes a rushed delivery! Allow time for the audience to reflect and think and for you to “breathe.” Stick to main points as needed.
During Your Presentation

- Avoid fillers ("umm," "like," "uh") and fidgeting.
- Body language is important. Standing and perhaps even moving around a bit using appropriate hand gestures is preferable to sitting down or standing with head down.
- Maintain sincere eye contact, focusing on one person for 2–3 seconds before moving to the next. This helps the audience feel involved.
During Your Presentation

- Leave time for questions!
- Overall, just speak, listen, respond, adjust, adapt! Change your strategy if needed.
- If you become short on time, know ahead what can be left out. If you have extra time, know what can be added.
- And finally, **have handouts and contact information available!**