HTCC Presenting Tips

Most often, conference papers grow out of research papers. Keep in mind, however, that your conference paper is an oral presentation. In most cases, your research paper will need some significant revision to adapt it for your conference presentation. The following tips and guidelines should help you to develop and deliver your conference presentation.

- When presenting, practice good communication skills. Make eye contact with members of the audience, speak clearly, stand up straight, and smile. Remember that your audience is interested in and excited about what you have to share.
- While you may refer to written notes throughout the presentation, do **not** read your research paper verbatim. It is often very difficult for audiences to follow a written argument in an oral/aural medium. Moreover, reading directly from your paper distances you from your audience. The way you choose to present your material will depend to some degree on your discipline. Many conference presenters find using notecards an effective strategy; others find that rewriting their research papers to make them more accessible for a listening audience is helpful. In any case, eye contact and engagement with your audience is essential.
- Consider ways to make your thesis statement, central argument, or main point more prominent. In an aural/oral setting, it is especially important to make your thesis the focus of your presentation. The audience should be able to see clearly the connection between your thesis and all other points you make during your presentation. This will most likely mean several references to your thesis throughout the presentation. Consider using phrases that will help your audience to follow your argument. For example, "There are THREE MAJOR CAUSES of the current budget crisis: First, . . . Second . . . Third;" or "With an understanding of these CAUSES, we can now see a way to effective SOLUTIONS, such as…." You may also feature your thesis prominently in any visual material, such as handouts.
- If appropriate, do try to incorporate other media into your presentation, but do not rely on these media to convey your message on their own. Handouts, overhead transparencies, or music can enhance and improve your presentation, but they do not constitute a presentation in and of themselves. Just as you should not read your research paper, you should not spend your entire presentation reading from an overhead. **Please note, we discourage the use of PowerPoint for logistical reasons. If you wish to use PowerPoint, you will need to make arrangements with your Honors Program Director and supply your own projector and computer. Also please recognize that HTCC does not have the facilities to store your equipment when it is not in use.**
- If you use a handout, try to limit the content to one side of one page. Let the handout reflect the content of your presentation rather than trying to use the handout to make too many additional points. Please credit any sources you wish to acknowledge on the handout so that you do not need to spend time going over this information in your presentation.
- Rehearse your presentation several times with multiple audiences. If possible, ask a teacher whether or not you can deliver your conference presentation in one of your classes. Listen to the feedback of your audience and revise your presentation accordingly.
- Time yourself. Make sure that your presentation is the appropriate length. If you are presenting as an individual presenter, you will have twelve minutes; if you are presenting in a small group (2 students), you will have twenty minutes, and if you are presenting in a large group (3 or more students) you will have 40 minutes per group.
- Ask for help. Remember, your professors are a resource for you; if you are having difficulty developing your conference presentation, don't hesitate to ask for help.