ACTFL Tips for Practice-Oriented & Research-Oriented Paper Presentations

Papers - Paper presentations are 15 minutes in length (10 minutes for the presentation with five (5) minutes for questions and answers). Three (3) Papers will be grouped in a session so it is very important for each paper presentation to end on time. Presenters should avoid reading papers and/or study results, and instead present the valuable information in an engaging format.

Pre-talk Preparation
- Plan to get into the meeting room a few minutes early to set up for your presentation. An LCD projector and screen will be provided but you must bring your own laptop with your presentation loaded. A lectern microphone will be provided if the room size warrants.
- DO NOT ask attendees to rearrange the furniture in the room since the same set-up is to be used by presenters following you.
- Dress appropriately for your audience.
- Silence your cell phone and ask others to do the same.
- Please repeat an audience question at the lectern microphone so everyone can hear the question as well as your response.
- Ask attendees to respond to the presentation survey in the mobile app.

Length:
- End on time! There is likely another presentation following yours in the same room.
- Paper presentation sessions are 45 minutes in length, often featuring three 15-minute papers.
- Allow time when planning your presentation for audience interruptions and questions.

PowerPoint Slides:
- Feel free to use the ACTFL 2024 PowerPoint slide template available in the Presenter Media Kit on the "For Presenters" page on actfl.org. You may also use your own template.
- Let the pictures or graphics in your PowerPoint slides tell the story – don't overload with text and/or data. Too much text makes the slide unreadable.
- The aim is to have a few powerful PowerPoint slides.
- Prepare an Agenda or Table of Contents slide.
- Proofread everything, including visuals and numbers.
- Font size must be large enough to be easily read. Size 28 to 34 with a bold font is recommended.
- It is distracting if you use too wide a variety of fonts.
- For a long presentation, you may want to change background designs when shifting to a new topic.
- Animation effects can be interesting when used in moderation.
  - Too much animation is distracting.
  - Consider using animated clip art.
  - Consider using custom animation.
- You can insert video and audio clips into PowerPoint.
- Don't read the slides aloud. Your audience can read them far faster than you can talk.
- Be sure that you give credit to any sources used in your PowerPoint slides.

Numbers
- Numbers are usually confusing to the audience. Use as few as possible and allow extra time for the audience to do the math.
- Numbers should never be ultra-precise:
  - "Anticipated Revenues of $660,101.83" may look silly. Are your numbers that accurate? Just say $660 thousand.
  - "The Break-Even Point is 1048.17 units." Are you selling fractions of a unit?
  - Don't show pennies. Cost per unit is about the only time you would need to show pennies.

- If you have more than 12-15 numbers on a slide, that's probably too many.
- Using only one number per sentence helps the audience absorb the data.
- Consider presenting data in chart or graph form, which is more easily understood than a chart with numbers.

Statistics
- Use the same scale for numbers on a slide. Don't compare hundreds to thousands.
- Cite your source on the same slide as the statistic, using a smaller size font.

Charts
- Charts need to be clearly labeled. You can make more interesting charts by adding elements from the drawing toolbar.
- Numbers in tables are both hard to see and to understand. There is usually a better way to present your numerical data than with columns and rows of numbers. Get creative!
- PowerPoint deletes portions of charts and worksheets that are imported from Excel, keeping only the leftmost 5.5 inches. Plan ahead.

Backgrounds
- Backgrounds in PowerPoint slides should never distract from the presentation.
- Using the default white background is hard on the viewer's eyes. You can easily add a design style or a color to the background.
- Backgrounds that are light colored with dark text, or vice versa, look good. A dark background with white font reduces glare.
- Colors appear lighter when projected. Pale colors often appear as white.
- Consistent backgrounds add to a professional appearance.

Opening:
- Jump right in by stating the question you will answer.
- Give your rehearsed opening statement; don't improvise at the last moment.
- Use the opening to catch the interest and attention of the audience.
- Briefly state the problem or topic you will be discussing.
- Briefly summarize your main theme for an idea or solution.

Speaking
- Talk at a natural, moderate rate of speech.
- Project your voice.
- Speak clearly and distinctly.
- Repeat critical information.
- Pause briefly to give your audience time to digest the information on each new slide.
- Don't read the slides aloud. Your audience can read them far faster than you can talk.

Body Language
- Keep your eyes on the audience.
- Use natural gestures.
- Don't turn your back to the audience.
- Don't hide behind the lectern.
- Avoid looking at your notes. Only use them as reference points to keep you on track. Talk, don't read.

Questions

- Always leave time for a few questions at the end of the talk.
- If you allow questions during the talk, the presentation time will be about 25% more than the practice time.
- You can jump directly to a slide by typing its number or by right-clicking during the presentation and choosing from the slide titles.
- Relax. If you've done the research, you can easily answer most questions.
- Some questions are too specific or personal. Politely refuse to answer.
- If you can't answer a question, say so. Don't apologize. "I don't have that information. I'll try to find out for you."
- If someone in the audience asks a question, please repeat it so everyone in the room hears it.

Demeanor:

- Show some enthusiasm, as nobody wants to listen to a dull presentation. On the other hand, don't overdo it.
- Involve your audience. Ask questions, make eye contact, and use humor.
- Don't get distracted by audience noises, movements, or latecomers.
- You'll forget a minor point or two. Everybody does.
- If you temporarily lose your train of thought, you can gain time to recover by asking if the audience has any questions.

Handouts:

- Presenters are advised to prepare a handout when giving a PowerPoint presentation. Be sure your name and e-mail address are on the handout.
- Presenters are advised to post handouts by <u>Monday, November 18, 2024</u> in the presenter Ready Room and refer attendees to the mobile app and the Online Convention Program to download at the beginning and ending of the presentation. Remind attendees that this saves paper and makes for a "green" presentation.
- If you upload handouts to your Ready Room while onsite at the convention, please note this can take ~1 hour to appear in the mobile app.

Conclusion:

- Remind everyone to complete the survey for your paper presentation in the mobile app.
- Be considerate of the next presenter and end on time; you may give attendees an email to follow up with questions or speak with them in the hallway after the presentation ends.