

Presentation guidelines - Personal presentations

Research Report

General information

Each RR presentation will be allotted a total time of 40 minutes: 20 minutes for the oral presentation and 20 minutes for questions and comments. A chair will be assigned to your session. He or she will introduce you, and moderate the discussion after the presentation.

Come to your session in good time, so you can test your presentation, talk to your chair about how he or she may introduce you, and express any concerns you may have about your presentation (e.g. use of technical equipment, photographs and video recordings of the session). Be sure that you have a back-up copy of your presentation somewhere else, not only in your pen drive.

Your presentation

The main point of attention in your presentation is to be very strict in the timing. Your chair should not allow you to speak for more than 20 minutes, so as to give opportunity to the audience to react. Given the limited time, it is worth reflecting beforehand on what you really want to tell in your presentation, and what can be left for the audience to discover in your research report or elsewhere.

While you give your talk, the chair will help you keep track of the time, giving you an alert as to how much time you have remaining. Pay attention to these alerts.

Less is more! By being selective on what you will talk about, you make sure you don't have to rush through your slides, and are able to cover all aspects of your study (introduction, background, method, results, conclusions) before time is up. A good way to avoid timing issues is to aim at no more than one slide per minute.

Avoid preliminary meta-remarks - such as how pleased you are to be presenting your paper, how helpful the reviewers were, how you will try hard to stay within the time - that have no immediate bearing on your paper. These might help you relax but can easily take 2 minutes, which means that 10% of your time has gone before you come to the point.

Here are some rules of thumb that could be helpful in composing your slides, and stick to the timing:

- The first slide should introduce the title of your talk, who you are and where you are from.
- The second slide can prime the audience by introducing the main question, or a task or finding that is central in your study.
- A slide could be included to outline the flow of the talk and provide a sense of structure.
- Background can be covered in two or three slides asserting the problem statement, reason why you are interested in the question, and prior work. You should be very selective, and include background literature only that is essential to comprehend the study you conducted. All other literature that you relied on can be found in your paper in the proceedings.
- Methods can be covered briefly in two or three slides (additional information can be provided later if requested).
- The great majority of your talk should be focused on the results. If you run out of time when you are presenting the results you will feel disappointed (and people in the audience too).

- Finally, one or two slides can be dedicated to discussing future work or limitations.

Some hints to keep the attention of the audience can be as follows:

- Practice your presentation beforehand! This not only helps in sticking to timing. You will know much better what points to address for every slide, and bring out the "take away" points in clearer wording if you rehearsed beforehand. The more comfortable you feel during a talk, the clearer your message will be to the audience.
- It is highly preferred that during your presentation, you do not read out loud the content of the slides. If you feel uncertain about your mastery of English, it may be advisable to practice your talk extensively beforehand, using a literal script. If you want, you can also use the script during your presentation, but avoid projecting this script literally on the slides.
- Slides should not contain lengthy quotes (in text, audio, or video) in your theoretical background and your results. Your audience wants to hear your ideas and conclusions, not what you have gleaned from other researchers, nor to hear in great detail what participants in your study have said or written. In qualitative studies, longer quotes may be useful, but again, more should be done than merely showing and reading them.
- Structure your talk around 3-5 "take away" points you want the audience to remember, which can be repeated several times. This will help keep unnecessary details to a minimum and allow you to highlight your primary message more clearly.
- A picture (or graph) is worth a thousand words. Keep your slides light on text and heavy on figures, but avoid overly complicated figures that are hard to comprehend. The purpose of you giving your talk in person is to explain what the graph illustrates in an easy-to-understand manner.
- Try to use the suggestions that reviewers have made concerning your paper. They may have pointed out things that were not clear. If the reviewers misunderstood some aspects of your paper, the audience may do so as well, unless you address these in your presentation.
- Remember using colors that have sufficient contrast between text and background!

Questions and answers

Although you may feel nervous about answering questions, rest assured that PME participants are generally very supportive, and that no one is more of an expert on your study than you are. The questions and answers give you a chance to elaborate on something that was not clear, or cover a topic that everyone wants to know but you forgot to include. The discussion helps the audience feel that you are an approachable colleague.

The role of the chair is to moderate the discussion, to make sure it is not dominated by only a few members in the audience, and keeps a broad focus.

A useful way to deal with questions you are not prepared for at that moment is to say you want to think about the insightful question and are willing to discuss it in more detail individually after the presentation.

If you are asked a question that your research did not address, do not be afraid to say so.

The Q & A time is in principle not meant as a chance for you to start presenting more data. Your responses should thus be rather brief. It is advisable, though, to have some extra slides available, which show information (such as test items or figures and tables containing further analyses) that you were unable to present, but that may be helpful in answering questions.

Short oral communication

General information

SO communications will be presented in groups of three. As far as possible, SOs with something in common (methods, focus ...) are grouped together, but sometimes this cannot be achieved.

A chair will be assigned to your session. He or she will introduce you, and moderate the discussion of the presentations.

Each individual SO is allocated 10 minutes for the oral presentation. *Normally*, when all three presentations are completed, a 30 minutes period is devoted to discussion on all three presentations i.e. the timing is 3x10+30. *However*, the chair may decide that it would be better to have 10 minutes discussion of each paper immediately following the 10 minutes presentation i.e. 3x(10+10). He/she will tell you in advance which pattern is being followed.

Come to your session in good time, so you can upload and test your presentation, talk to your chair about how he or she may introduce you, and express any concerns you may have about your presentation (e.g. use of technical equipment, photographs and video recordings of the session). Be sure that you have a back-up copy of your presentation somewhere else, not only in your pen drive. Installing slides before the start of the session is crucial, as there will be very little time to switch between speakers.

Your presentation

The main point of attention in your presentation is to be very strict in the timing. Your chair should not allow you to speak for more than 10 minutes. Given the very limited time, it is worth reflecting beforehand on what you really want to tell in your presentation. If you have a more extensive version of a paper, or online materials, you can refer the audience towards it during your talk.

While you give your talk, the chair will help you keep track of the time, giving you an alert as to how much time you have remaining. Pay attention to these alerts.

Less is more! Be aware that you can tell very little in a short oral presentation, and only give the audience a general overview of your study and/or highlight specific findings. By being selective on what you will talk about, you make sure you don't have to rush through your slides, and are able to cover all aspects of your study (introduction, background, method, results, conclusions) before time is up. A good way to avoid timing issues is to aim at no more than one slide per minute.

Avoid preliminary meta-remarks - such as how pleased you are to be presenting your paper, how helpful the reviewers were, how you will try hard to stay within the time - that have no immediate bearing on your paper. These might help you relax but can take a substantial amount of the 10 minutes available for your talk.

Some hints to keep the attention of the audience can be as follows:

- Practice your presentation beforehand! This not only helps in sticking to timing. You will know much better what points to address for every slide, and bring out the "take away" points in clearer wording if you rehearsed beforehand. The more comfortable you feel during a talk, the clearer your message will be to the audience.
- It is highly preferred that during your presentation, you do not read out loud the content of the slides. If you feel uncertain about your mastery of English, it may be advisable to practice your talk extensively beforehand, using a literal script. If you want, you can also use the script during your presentation, but avoid projecting this script literally on the slides.
- Slides should not contain lengthy quotes (in text, audio, or video) in your theoretical background and your results. Your audience wants to hear your ideas and conclusions, not what you have gleaned from other researchers, nor to hear in great detail what participants in your study have said or written. In qualitative studies, longer quotes may be useful, but again, more should be done than merely showing and reading them.
- Structure your talk around a few "take away" points you want the audience to remember, which can be repeated several times. This will help keep unnecessary details to a minimum and allow you to highlight your primary message more clearly.
- A picture (or graph) is worth a thousand words. Keep your slides light on text and heavy on figures, but avoid overly complicated figures that are hard to comprehend. The purpose of you giving your talk in person is to explain what the graph illustrates in an easy-to-understand manner.
- Try to use the suggestions that reviewers have made concerning your paper. They may have pointed out things that were not clear. If reviewers misunderstood some aspects of your paper, the audience may do so as well, unless you address these in your presentation.
- Remember using colors that have sufficient contrast between text and background!

Questions and answers

After the three presentations, the chair will open the discussion with the audience. The role of the chair is to moderate the discussion, to make sure it is not dominated by only a few members in the audience, and is focused on all three presentations. Preferably, the chair will also look for themes that are common to two or all three presentations.

Although you may feel nervous about answering questions, rest assured that PME participants are generally very supportive, and that no one is more of an expert on your study than you are. The questions and answers give you a chance to elaborate on something that was not clear, or cover a topic that everyone wants to know but you forgot to include. The discussion helps the audience feel that you are an approachable colleague.

A useful way to deal with questions you are not prepared for at that moment is to say you want to think about the insightful question and are willing to discuss it in more detail individually after the presentation. This approach is also advised if questions are highly specific to your paper and not at all related to the other papers in the session. After the session, you can talk further to members of the audience who want to see some materials in more details, such as items or figures and tables

containing analyses. If you are asked a question that your research did not address, do not be afraid to say so.

Poster presentation

General information

For each poster presentation, a visual display must be prepared to fit into a maximum of 100 centimeters high by 90 centimeters wide stand in a specific location designated for this purpose. Posters will be on display in the poster area.

In some conferences, posters can remain on display throughout the entire conference. When this is the case, it is advised to put up your poster already at the beginning of the conference, and leave it there until the end, rather than to wait for the poster presentation session.

There is no formal oral presentation associated with poster presentations, but a poster presentation session will be provided in the conference timetable. During this session, presenters are expected to be available by their posters for discussion with conference participants.

There are many advantages of poster presentations: Visitors see and hear more presentations than in the equivalent time dedicated to paper presentations, and there is an opportunity for close conversation with presenters. However, these advantages only hold if presenters pay sufficient attention to their poster presentation.

Your presentation

Although it may seem evident for many, the major point of attention is that you (or one of your co-authors) are near the poster throughout the poster presentation session. This way, you can introduce the highlights of your research, fill in details that are not visible in the poster, answer questions and discuss with the audience.

It is always helpful if you have a few copies of your poster in a smaller format (e.g. A4) available for interested persons, making sure that your e-mail address and institution are included. For those participants who pay special attention to your poster and engage in discussion, you may get related papers ready for distribution.

The idea of a poster is a visual display of your research. Of course, textual elements will be present on your poster, but overloading a poster with textual information will make it difficult to process. Telegraphic language and bulleted outlines just like in slide presentations are much easier to process during a poster session. Make sure that the main points can be read at eye level. Remember that you will be there to present your poster, tell the story that is in it, and fill in any missing details!

It may be useful to reflect beforehand about the key message that you want to give to the poster viewers. This should not be overwhelming, but enticing poster viewers. If you think about one or two initial sentences to say to everyone who comes to view your poster, you may get their attention and give them the opportunity to see the details on your poster, before a discussion can start.

Some further tips are:

- Plan a coherent story for the poster viewer, containing
 - o the research context and some theoretical background
 - o your research method in some detail, including test items if applicable

- an idea of your results, preferably in a graphical format
 - the main conclusions and implications
- Make it easy for the viewer to follow the flow of information, for instance by visual hints (arrows, borders...).
- Use a sufficiently large font (30+ point) to make sure the poster is readable from a distance. This also allows multiple viewers to process your poster simultaneously.