

Resources for Presenters – Paper Sessions

Papers are the bread and butter of academic conferences. But the first thing to keep in mind when presenting at IUT is that this is a VERY friendly conference, so some of the standard rules may not apply. For example, nobody will chastise you for missing a critical reference to an obscure piece of work published years ago. If anything, audience participants will help you out if other participants in your session start to get a bit “persistent.” That said, this group has LITTLE tolerance for people who make things up on the spot. Prepare well, be honest with the group, and have fun with your session.

Please plan your presentation to fit into the time allowed. If you are unsure just how much time that is, then check with the session moderator or the conference organizers (iutconference@gmail.com). If need be, practice to be sure your timing is accurate. Every session at the conference could be expanded to allow for more detail and more discussion, and every session could be shortened by eliminating some supporting material or reducing the number of major points. There is no value in lamenting to your audience that you do not have enough time to cover the material. No one does. This simply frustrates the participants. Please know that we would have given you more time if it were possible.

The use of PowerPoint is justified if you rely on it to convey major points and graphical material. Please do NOT fill PowerPoint slides with text and do NOT read the slides to the participants. (They can read, too.) Again, if you use PowerPoint for text, use it only for major headings.

Please bring at least 10 copies of a handout for participants. If someone wants a copy and you have run out, get their contact information so you can email it right after your presentation. Keep in mind if you do not email the handout **within 7 days of the conference**, the likelihood of the request getting lost increases significantly. Research also suggests that the impact of the handout diminishes in direct proportion to the elapsed time since your presentation. So don't delay.

The participants at the IUT conference include experienced teachers who bring a good ideas to the sessions. Not everyone in your audience is a neophyte. Your presentation will gain by leaving time enough to tap into their expertise.

The following points may prove helpful:

1. Preparing for your presentation

A. Session Content: What is the principal message you are trying to get across? Be sure you are supporting your main message and that you have appropriate examples to offer. Concrete examples are your friends.

B. Handout: This should include the major points of your session with elaboration on some of the main issues. Please be sure to include any references

or links to resources you used for your paper. Bring at least 10 copies of the handout with you to the conference. If you use PowerPoint, your handout may be a copy of your slides if you wish. The point of the handout is to counter information overload. Many people will be exposed to a great deal of information at this conference in a very short period of time. Handouts help individuals to digest and process what they have learned at greater leisure once the conference is at an end.

C. Audience: Your primary audience members are college and university faculty from throughout the world. Most have taught for a few years, but some will be relatively new faculty members. Administrators make up the second largest group. As noted above, IUT conferences tend to be relaxed and informal. Your presentation can also be a bit informal. One thing for certain it is that this group **DISLIKES** being lectured to for the full length of the session. The participants know a great deal. Although they will respect you as the authority of the issue you are presenting, they will also much appreciate the opportunity to share and participate.

D. Questions: Think of possible questions that might arise during the question and answer period and practice answers to those questions.

2. Preparing your visual aids

A. Keep your PowerPoint slides or overheads simple. It is best to use these only for abbreviated outlines or visuals to demonstrate a point. It is typically best to **NOT** include cute animations or sounds.

B. Check ahead of time for errors (particularly spelling) so they don't detract from your presentation.

C. Backup: If the use of a projector is critical to your presentation bring some form of backup in case the projector does not work. This does **NOT** mean bringing copies of all your PowerPoint slides or overhead transparencies. Summarize your main points into a single page and include that with your hand out. This could serve as a backup if you experience difficulties with the technology. Although we strive to make IT as reliable as possible, there is no such thing as **COMPLETELY** reliable IT, so be forewarned.

3. Practicing your talk

A. Especially if you are new to public speaking, please take time to practice your presentation. Be sure that if you can speak slowly and clearly, you still finish in the allotted time. Some members of your audience may not be native English speakers, so clear diction is especially important for them.

B. Activities: Also practice any activity you plan to use at the conference. Try a variation of it in a class or meeting. The IUT conference is **NOT** a good place to try something for the very first time.

4. Presenting effectively

- A. Be ready to set-up when the session before yours ends. Show up at your session room at least 10 minutes before you are scheduled to begin to allow yourself time to check the equipment, meet the moderator, and get your materials in order.
- B. As noted above, please try to speak slowly and clearly and allow yourself and the audience time to process what you are saying.
- C. Do NOT read to the participants from your slides, unless it is a powerful quote and you can bring a special emphasis. This includes notes and PowerPoint (especially PowerPoint). Reading is the fastest way to create a boring presentation. Incorporate a more conversational tone as well as visual aids for an interesting presentation.
- D. Finish On Time. The most consistent complaint of the moderators—those whose job it is to keep sessions moving along on schedule—is that paper presenters lose all sense of time once they begin speaking. Don't make the moderators' job harder than it already is. That is to say, please end your session on time. This means leaving a few moments toward the end of your session for questions. Do not plan on using the time between your session and the next presenter's session, as this time is needed by the next presenter for setting-up.
- E. Wear a watch and keep an eye on the time yourself rather than leaving timekeeping exclusively in the hands of the moderator. This will help you to stop yourself in time to answer questions. If you are unsure how much time remains for your part of the paper session, ask the moderator.

5. Answering questions

- A. Paraphrase all questions to ensure they were heard correctly by both yourself and other audience members. Not infrequently what we think the question was is not, in fact, what the questioner wanted to know.
- B. Be clear: Answer questions clearly and concisely. If you don't know the answer, the best thing is to say so. You can always promise to look it up and send an answer later via email.
- C. Speak to the entire audience, not just the person who asked the question. Do not be afraid to let the group know you don't know the answer to a question. It might work to ask if anyone in the group has a good answer to the question, or simply note it is a great question and you will need to look into that issue. In that case, try to get contact information from the questioner so you can get back to them later.

NB: If you have any questions regarding your paper presentation, please let us know by emailing Janina Lenger or James Wilkinson at iutconference@gmail.com

