

How to Give an Effective MPH Presentation

The presentation of your Master's Paper is a special event meant to summarize your SPH graduate education and experiences. Your paper should be fairly well developed and your faculty advisor should review at least one draft before your oral presentation. The MPH presentation, like the Master's Paper, is based on considerable preparation and effort. A key to an effective presentation is the preparation and planning prior to the actual event. Students may be asked by their advisors to present again if their oral presentation is not satisfactory. The fundamental parts of planning are outlined below.

Early in the Process

- As soon as you and your advisor agree on when you will be ready to present, contact Ms. Rebecca Fields. Available dates are given in the CHS Student Handbook each year. Note that some times of the year are busier than others, and your first choice for a presentation date may not be available.
- Discuss with your advisor what should be included in the presentation.
- Plan what part of your presentation can be omitted if you have less time to present than expected, and what can be added to your presentation if you have unexpected additional time.

Preparing the Presentation

- The following three steps can help you to prepare an effective presentation.
 1. Write the outline for your presentation.
 2. Write the entire presentation.
 3. Write presentation notes on index cards which you will use for your actual presentation.

Experienced presenters sometimes skip the second step, and instead go directly to the presentation notes on index cards. Other presenters prefer to use the outline rather than index cards as their presentation notes. However, the second step can be valuable in ensuring that you have fully developed your thoughts on each of the points you are discussing. In addition, writing the entire presentation can help you to develop the flow of your presentation. Note, though, that you should not read your entire presentation; writing your intended presentation is part of your background work for the presentation.

- Try to balance the presentation in terms of your statement of the problem, methods and procedures, findings, and conclusions. The components of your presentation will depend on the nature of your project; however, avoid devoting most of your presentation to background or statement of the problem.
- Review the outline of your presentation with your advisor. Once you have your presentation notes completed, ask your advisor if he or she would like to listen to your presentation and provide comments and suggestions for revisions.
- Once you are certain of the final content of your presentation, make whatever slides, overhead transparencies or other audiovisual aids you may need. A LCD projector and laptop are available (upon request) for Powerpoint Presentations.

Prior to the Presentation

- Review your overhead transparencies and slides for readability and size. Consider whether they can be easily seen in the presentation room. (MPH presentations are in different classrooms in SPHPI)
- If you have handouts, make enough copies for everyone. (20 copies are usually enough.)
- Rehearse your presentation in advance.
- Time it.
- Ask someone not familiar with the specific topic to critique your presentation.
- On the day of the presentation check the room to be sure that any equipment that you need (LCD projector, laptop, slide projector, VCR, etc.) is present and working.

During the Presentation

- Plan to arrive at the beginning of the presentation session and stay until the end of the session. This is a courtesy your fellow presenters would appreciate.
- Acknowledge those who have contributed to your project; if any of these individuals are present, also acknowledge their presence.
- Relax. Don't rush. Keep in mind that the objective of the presentation is to share your work, not to dazzle your audience.
- It is common for members of the audience to ask questions after your presentation. The questions usually are requests for clarification or for elaboration. Try to consider each question as an opportunity, rather than as a confrontation.

Other Tips for Presentations

- Don't go overboard with slides or overhead transparencies. Ordinarily, you would not want to have more than one slide per minute. The content of your presentation is more important than all the "bells and whistles".
- When presenting findings from a slide or overhead, focus the audience on the most important points.
- Don't present a slide without discussing it and don't just read what is written on the slide.
- Use overheads or slides only to highlight important points. Each overhead should contain only a few words, a few numbers or a figure.
- Create your own tables or figures, rather than using ones from journals or books.
- Before the day of your presentation, check your overheads in the presentation room to be sure that everything can be read from the last row of the room.
- Define any terms that you think some members of your audience may not know.
- Follow time limits. The extra time you take belongs to another presenter.
- If you do reach your time limit, be ready to skip part of your presentation without losing any major points.