Quick Tips for Giving a Strong Oral Presentation

Content: It is better to cover two or three points deeply and clearly than to try to cover ten points and do so superficially. This may mean cutting out a lot of the content of your original research paper but this is an important part of the process.

Visuals: Use appropriate and effective visual aids (e.g., PowerPoint). Visuals should provide minimal text (bullet points rather than long passages of verbiage) and should include engaging images, clear graphs, useful diagrams, etc. At all times, your visuals should *support* your talk, never detract from it.

Technology: If you use a Mac computer to create your visuals, make sure that the file is compatible with a PC, too. Check this and recheck it on various different computers.

Backups: It is always smart to bring your presentation in multiple formats: on a laptop, on a flash drive, etc. You can never be sure about what hardware and software will be available.

Delivery: Never read your talk. Your visual aids will help to guide you from one point to the next, and certainly note cards are fine, but do not plan to read your talk. At the same time, don't try to memorize your talk. That makes it sound canned. You want your presentation to be engaging, like you are teaching it, but not like it's memorized.

Timing: Be sure to practice your talk and time it over and over again. (Note separate sources of conference information for the times available for different types of presentations.) If your talk is running long, then cut something out. DO NOT plan to just talk faster. It is always better to run a minute short than a minute long. The extra minute can always be used for Q&A.

Handouts: You might consider creating a one-page summary of your research and bringing 20 copies with you to hand out to people who are interested in your work. Include your name and MiraCosta clearly at the top (preferably the MCC Honors logo). However, we recommend that you not include your personal contact information.

Professionalism: Dress for success. You want to look professional, as if you were going to a job interview. Nothing too flashy – you want them to remember your presentation, not your clothes.

Prepping: Get to your presentation room early, in plenty of time to meet the moderator and load your file onto the computer's desktop so everything is ready to go. Many students like to go and check out the room before their session even starts. That's a good way to start imagining yourself making your presentation in that space. But be sure to arrive five or ten minutes before your session begins!

Confidence: Don't forget that you are the expert in the room – nobody knows more about this subject than you do! Be confident. Speak in a loud, clear voice, not too fast, and make eye contact with your audience. Own the room!