Presenting at the Cognitive Psychology Section Annual Conference 2016: Hints and Tips

Before the conference

· Keep it clear and brief
  - Seminar/paper presentation: 20 minutes: 15 minutes’ presentation + 5 minutes for questions and discussion
  - Symposia – Time allocation outlined in the programme

· Structure your presentation, focusing on giving a clear message e.g.
  - Introduction relating the relevant background – include key theories and research findings to introduce your hypothesis(es)
  - Method – participants, data collection, measures, analyses
  - Results – main findings
  - Conclusions – a few statements to highlight the contributions of your study in terms of findings and implications
  - Give some thought to your audience – their interests, level of knowledge

· Use of PowerPoint
  - You will be expected to use the computer equipment provided and produce a PowerPoint presentation. You can email your presentation for pre-loading to cogsec_conf@bps.org.uk, deadline 4:00pm Wednesday 24 August, please also bring along a memory stick with your presentation on – it’s essential to have a back up.
  - Around 15-20 slides is a guide for the number of slides you can get through in 15 minutes
  - Remember you are presenting a clear message – aim for maximum impact with minimum words. Simple bullet points are good.
  - Do a spell check and ask someone else to proof read for errors that wouldn’t get picked up.
  - Use a decent font size: 40 is quite good for titles, 24 for slides

· Rehearse!
  - Some people like to use the PowerPoint ‘notes’ and print these out to have during their presentation, others like to make notes on record cards – either way, try to make notes using key words rather than writing out a speech.
  - Present to people who don’t know your research to check you are focusing on the important themes and giving a clear message!
  - Check you are running to time – there are a lot of presentations happening at the conference and there will be a chairperson to ensure everything is running to time. This is good practise as it is the norm at all major conferences
  - Even if you think you work better at the last minute, arriving at a conference without having rehearsed will make you nervous – practising will build your confidence

At the conference

· Find your room and familiarise yourself with the equipment/layout before your slot
  - Check your memory stick works! Bring a back-up.
  - Work out where to stand in relation to the screen (make sure you don’t block it!)
  - Work out how loud you need to speak so that people at the back will hear your exceptionally clear message
  - If you have any queries, do not hesitate to ask a member of the BPS Conference Team– they will be easily identifiable and happy to help
  - Make sure you load your presentation on the relevant computer in the break before
· **This is it – your presentation!**
  - Arrive at the room in plenty of time before your slot.
  - There will be several sessions running at the same time – do not be offended if people leave the room to go to a different paper, everyone has different areas of interest.
  - It is likely that you will be presenting to around 20+ people (these numbers are a very rough guide)
  - There will be a ‘chair’ for each session who is there to support you. Introduce yourself to the chair, as they will be introducing you.
  - The chair will also keep you to time, control the flow of questions and encourage a supportive atmosphere
  - Presenting – speak loudly and confidently (even if you don’t feel it!) to deliver your **clear message**.
  - It is recommended to hold record cards or have your notes in front of you on the desk when speaking – use them as prompts but don’t read from them.
  - Engage your audience – you may find it easier to focus on a few individuals, and preferably have a friendly face present.
  - Your chair will indicate when you have 5 minutes to go. There will be an opportunity for the audience to ask questions for 5 minutes. These will not be designed to trip you up – if this looks like it may happen, your chair will intervene.
  - If you don’t know the answer to a question (which happens to us all), or you disagree with a point someone makes, think about how you would deal with this. Statements which reflect/deflect the point are often a good way of responding: “Yes, that’s a really interesting point”, or “That would be a great avenue to consider in future research” for example.

· **If things are not going to plan**
  - Stay calm and keep smiling. Everyone loses their train of thought or stumbles their words at least once. Remember that the audience are sympathetic, they are on your side and they want you to succeed

*By now, you may have spotted a theme throughout these hints and tips – this is your opportunity to deliver a **clear message** about the contribution of your research! We very much hope that you enjoy the opportunity to do this and look forward to seeing you at the conference.*