

Guiding Questions for Planning a Presentation at a Learning and Teaching Conference

1. Who is your audience? How much prior knowledge will they have of your topic? How do you allow for members of the audience who come from different countries and cultures?
2. What equipment will you need? Communicate in advance with the conference organizers about computers, internet access, projectors, flipcharts, lapel or roving microphones, etc.
3. Do you need a set of PowerPoint slides? If you think they are needed, limit the number of words per slide and use images to stimulate thought. Avoid reading from the slides during your session.
4. How long do you have for your session? How will you split this between talking and activities? To ensure that the session is interactive, aim to have an activity at least every 15–20 minutes.
5. How will you structure your presentation? How will you grab the attention of the audience at the beginning? How will you maintain their interest during the presentation? What key messages will you leave them with at the end? Consider telling stories to illustrate your talk, and think about your talk as a conversation you are having in a café. Ensure that your contribution and argument are clear to participants.
6. What activities will you include to engage participants with your topic? These can be individual as well as group activities.
7. Would it help your audience to have a copy of your slides (if you use them) or a handout in advance, or should you lay them out on chairs or hand them out at the door?

8. What is the physical layout of the room? Do you want, if possible, to move the chairs to encourage group discussions? Do you need to ask the participants to sit next to some others, perhaps near the front, to encourage discussion?
9. How will you deal with the unexpected? It is best to practice the presentation out loud so that you can get the timings right and plan what you would cut, or add, if the unexpected occurs.