Accessible Presentation Guide

If you plan to read a paper to your audience:

- During your writing process for the conference presentation paper, avoid technical jargon when possible, and consider providing your audience members with rhetorical cues that make your paper's structure as clear as possible. For example, you might identify the parts of your essay up front so that audience members are able to easily follow the arrangement of your essay.
- Make extra copies of your complete script. These copies should include large font copies (17 point or larger) and regular size copies (12 point font). Remember that you can always collect these copies after the presentation if you have concerns about distributing your work in process.
- Bring a list of technical terminology or jargon (in the event your panel has CART services or a sign language interpreter). CART services (Communication Access Real-time Translation) provide real-time captioning of everything that is being said during the presentation. The captioning is typically broadcast on a large screen adjacent to the speaker. Because the CART provider relies on shorthand, providing them with technical terminology ahead of time can prevent captioning mistakes. Sign language interpreters often fingerspell technical terminology, so providing interpreters with a list of these terms ahead of the presentation can help them prepare for accurate interpretation. It can also help interpreters sign/fingerspell words that might have been missed otherwise.
- Make your presentation accessible to screen readers by providing captions or alt-text for any images or JPGs of text, and by including traditional document formatting in Microsoft Word.
- Consider creating extra handouts that present an outline of your presentation to help people follow your main points and key evidence. You might also use a handout in lieu of a script. This allows you the flexibility of speaking off the cuff. Some also prefer not to read a script because they feel that speaking extemporaneously allows you to better connect with your audience and prevents some of the common pitfalls that come with reading directly from a scripted paper (e.g. lack of eye contact, monotone voice, losing your place, going over time, etc.). Considering whether or not you prefer handouts, scripts, or a combination can help make you the most effective speaker possible. Maximize your strengths as a presenter by focusing on which styles make your content most accessible for a wide range of perceptive abilities.
- Repeat out loud any questions that audience members ask you during Q and A.

If you plan to use technology (such as projected images/words, presentation technologies such as Prezi or PowerPoint, use of video or audio, etc.):

- Make any text you plan to show large enough so that people in the back of the room can see it.
- Make informed and effective colour and arrangement choices in your design for any and all media.
- If you create a Power Point or Prezi presentation (or plan to show any type of image), you should rehearse rich, auditory descriptions of any images you plan to show to your audience. A rich auditory description will begin by providing basic, standard information of the image (ex. "This is a picture of a two women sitting at a computer desk, looking at a document on a desktop computer. The picture was taken by me at the university writing center on November 14, 2009.") After providing this information, you should then provide rich details about the image (colour, shape, orientation, style) using specific vocabulary and vivid detail. You might also consider drawing on other senses to enhance your verbal description of the image (ex. "The room looks as if there might be some background noise, people talking softly to one another. The two women both have jackets on the backs of their office chairs, indicating the room is comfortably warm. The older woman on the left is laughing, and they are sharing a bowl of popcorn that is halfway empty.").
- Create an alternative format (such as a hard copy handout that takes a reader through the points on each slide/projection/image).

As you rehearse your presentation:

- Practice the accessibility announcements that you plan to make before, during, and after your presentation.
    - o Before your presentation, announce your commitment to accessibility and your distribution of materials (such as large font copies, outlines, or slide descriptions).
    - o Build in moments to assess your audience as you rehearse your presentation. Examples of "assessing your audience" might include asking if everyone can hear you okay or if you are speaking slowly enough.
    - o Presentation rehearsal should also include attention to accessibility in your closing remarks. An example of this attention might include inviting audience members to approach you if they would like electronic access to your presentation.

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