Preparing to Deliver Conference Papers
What are you hoping to hear about?
What are your experiences with conference papers?
Why is this such a troubled genre?
Papers are written under crash circumstances
Without considering one’s audience
Delivered without Practice
and read in monotone to underwhelmed audiences
...by people who blow right through their time limit.
...and who are caught wholly unprepared by Q/A
Then it’s over, and one thinks one will never have another idea again.
Conference papers achieve finite goals.
Conference Goals

I)  Get feedback
II) Learn about the field
III) Learn how to publish
IV) Meet other people
V) Replenish motivation
Conference Success

I) Preparation
II) Performance
III) Pfollow-Up
Conference Success

I) Preparation
II) Performance
III) Pfollow-Up
Preparation I: Audience
Preparation I: Audience

- Know the conference
- Know the co-presenters
- Know the discussant
- Know the format
- Know the venue
- Know the tech situation
Preparation II: Writing
Preparation II: Writing

- Write to be heard
- Mark up drafts
- Spend 2 mins per page
- Precise, not sweeping
- Asides, not meanders
- Give listeners a break!
Preparation II: Writing

- Start with the drama
- Questions/stakes
- Openness, not certainty
- Contribute vs. Intervene
- Do not reference “the longer version”
Preparation II: Writing

- I plan to; I argue...
- I do so by...
- To illustrate my point...
- In other words...
- Before moving on...
- To sum up...
- Alternatively...
- From here, I plan to...
Kill your darlings and your semicolons.
Preparation III: PowerPoint
Preparation III: PowerPoint

- Clear header/footer
- No long quotes
- No dense data tables
- Include questions slide
- Map out argument
Don’t write your dissertation on a slide.
Preparation IV: Practice

- ...to yourself
- ...to others
- ...to non-experts
- Content AND Form
- “Game time” scenarios
- Q/A
Preparation IV: Practice

- Argument
- Structure
- Evidence
- Clarity

- Eye contact
- Posture
- Pacing
- Tone
- Gesture
- Facial Exp.
What does this all mean?
Practice.
Makes.
...less terrible.
Conference Success
I) Preparation
II) Performance
III) Pfollow-Up
Performance I: The Props
Performance I: The Props

- Business attire
- Preferred hydration
- Pen / Pad
- Size 16 font copy
- Business cards
- Tech (USB, dongle)
- Preferred Time-Keeping
Performance II: The Stage
Performance II: The Stage

- Active listening
- Eyes/Expressions
- Posture
- Note-taking
- Avoid “the coma”
Performance III: The Act
Performance III: The Act

- Do NOT go over time
- Do NOT talk about time
- Thank the organizers
- Thank panelists
Performance III: The Act

- YOU are the expert
- Speak slowly, clearly
- Size of audience does not matter...
- ...eye contact does
- Don’t apologize
Performance III: The Act

- Assign critics
- Invite feedback
- Thank everyone (only) twice
Act like you’ve been there.
Delivery III: Q/A

WHAAAAA?!?!
Delivery III: Q/A

- Prep vs. push
- “Great question”
- “Acknowledge/Pivot”
- “Uh huh, right, right.”
- “What do you think?”
- “Let me write that.”
Conference Success

I) Preparation

II) Performance

III) Pfollow-Up
Pfollow-up I: Conversation

- Follow through
- Initiate emails
- Ask before sharing
- Plan and invite
- Check in with progress
- Keep things positive
Next Steps
I) Abstract review
II) Practice at GSA
III) Find a practice group
IV) Present at CAS
V) Set reasonable goals
Questions?