Guidelines for Paper Presentations

A paper presentation is an excellent way to gain valuable experience presenting your work in front of an audience. This is a skill that every psychologist should practice as conference presentations are an important part of your professional work. Presentations should be about 10-12 minutes long, with an additional 3 minutes for questions. Some tips to help improve the quality of your presentation and enhance your ability to communicate within the discipline of psychology include:

1. **Do not read your paper.** Although this is a "paper" presentation, it is not meant that you should literally read a paper. You must present your research to the audience in an interesting and informative manner. Use notecards or an outline of your talk as a guide and practice your oral presentation skills ahead of time:
   - make the information interesting as well as informative
   - make eye contact with your audience
   - pace yourself, don't talk too quickly or too slowly
   - avoid "um's" and "ah's" as you speak
   - prepare to be nervous so practice your talk ahead of time
2. **Choose what information to present.** You cannot present everything about your work in 10 minutes, so don't try. Try to communicate in simple terms what you did, why you did it, who you did it to, what you found, and what it means.
3. **Use visual aids.** Make transparencies or slides of some of your information (such as hypotheses, experimental conditions, main findings, etc.) and use figures or tables when possible. A/V equipment should be requested in advance. PowerPoint presentation equipment and overhead projectors will be available, but be sure to bring your presentation on multiple media just in case (e.g., floppy disk, zip disk, flash drive, etc.)
4. **Visual aids should be visible.** Use a large font (e.g., 18 point or better), label axes on graphs, add color, etc., but don't clutter with too much information on one page.
5. **Be professional.** This is, afterall, a professional conference so look and act the part. Dress nicely and be prepared to discuss your work with colleagues and peers. Attend other talks or presentations and engage your peers in interaction.
6. **Practice your talk in front of others.** A 10-minute talk can easily be rehearsed a few times so take advantage of your friends and learn from the feedback they provide.