

AEJMC Paper Presenters, Moderators & Discussants

Session Suggestions

This sheet presents basic information for presentations at research paper sessions. Overall, the intent is to create sessions that benefit both the authors and the audience. It is especially important that all involved observe their time allocations, because the sessions could potentially have four to five papers each.

Presenters are allotted **10 minutes** for discussing their papers. To do this effectively, you will need to be organized — be sure to prepare notes or an outline. Within your presentation, consider what information is necessary to set up the context of your paper. Go lightly on relevant literature, concisely describe your methodology, and spend the bulk of the time on results, discussion, and conclusions. Try not to overwhelm the audience with a lot of tables that each take time to interpret. If an overhead projector is available, then you might consider using a few transparencies that can guide the audience through key points. In a nutshell, be an interpreter-of your research rather than simply laying out the facts.

Go over your presentation notes for a general sense of how long they will take, then pare down to your allotted time. The moderator will use some sort of time cards to let you know when time is running low and when your time is up. Make sure to look at the moderator every once in awhile for these cards. Please...wrap things up on time.

Moderators can make or break a paper session. Begin the session (**on time**) by welcoming the audience and stating the division name and the session title. You can also mention how the session will be run. Keep your own comments to a minimum—stick to introducing presenters and their paper titles. It is crucially important that you keep presenters to their allotted times of **10 minutes** per paper. One rambling presenter left unchecked can use up all of the question-and-answer time.

Moderators have a variety of different ways for communicating time use to presenters. One way is to sit in the front row after introducing a speaker, where you can be seen by the presenter when he or she looks up. Bring along time cards which can be read from that distance. As a minimum, have a **2-minute card** and a **wrap-it-up card**. Some people prefer to use a **5-minute card** and a **1-minute card** instead, along with the **wrap-it-up card**. Regardless of your preferences, be tough with presenters who try to continue past their allotted time.

After the papers have been presented, introduce the discussant, who will comment on the papers. The discussant is allotted up to **15 minutes**, about three minutes per paper. Keep track of the discussant's time, alerting him or her when time is running out as you did with the paper presenters. After the discussant, open the session to questions, where you will serve as a traffic coordinator. Finally, make sure that the session ends on time so that the next group can get into the room on time.

Discussants usually speak after all the papers have been presented. A well-prepared discussant can greatly enhance a paper session, so spend time reading the papers and preparing your comments before you leave home. Up to **15 minutes** are allotted for the discussant, about **3 minutes** per paper (although you are not required to go that long) Do not feel compelled, to search for a common thread among the papers, but if there are obvious and real connections, bring them up. Also try to mention the strengths of a paper, besides your suggestions for improvement. One of the big challenges for a discussant is making points that are useful to the authors, yet interesting to the audience. Try to avoid an “insider” discussion that probes small details of a paper. Finally, make sure to wrap-up on time, keeping an eye out for the moderators time cards.