



Resources for Presenters – Roundtables

A Roundtable session provides an opportunity for you to speak to a small group of conference participants about a specific point or teaching idea. In past years, Roundtables have drawn from a few to 15 participants. Most have 5-8 participants. The table will literally be a round table with 8 chairs. (If more chairs are needed they will be made available.) These sessions are 45 minutes long, which should give you enough time to cover your topic AND invite discussion.

Please try to involve the conference participants as much as possible in the session. This should be a discussion, NOT a lecture. (Evaluations from past conferences laud Roundtables that promote discussion and slam presentations that leave no time for anyone but the presenter.) Accordingly, please try to cover your material in 15 minutes or so and then leave the remaining 25 minutes to get reactions from participants or—better yet—invite them to offer comments as your presentation unfolds. The best Roundtables are conversations among peers. The IUT conference tends to be relaxed and informal. Your presentation can be equally informal, especially if you are chatting over coffee. The conversation is made easier by the fact that your audience has a lot to contribute. Though some will be new to the profession, most have taught for at least a few years. Therefore you can count on most everyone at your breakfast table to have something useful to say.

It will get a bit noisy in the room, so you will need to speak clearly and slowly enough for participants to hear you. This is somewhat unfortunate, but a byproduct of the type of session. The idea is to have a lot of energy in the room. Since English is not likely to be the first language of some of your participants, clarity is all the more important.

The following are some general tips to assist you in making the best Roundtable presentation possible.

1. Preparing for the session beforehand

- A. Take time to identify and outline the major issue(s) to be discussed. Try to anticipate some of the possible questions, and include a direct application so that participants might be able to use the information some time in their courses during the coming year.
- B. Have references prepared that might be useful to attendees after they leave the session.



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C. Handout. This should include the major points of your session with elaboration on some of the main issues. Please be sure to include any references or links to resources you used for information. Bring at least 10 copies of the handout with you to the conference. The point of the handout is that many people will be exposed to a great deal of information at this conference in a short period of time. Handouts are helpful because they allow participants to process this information at greater leisure after the Conference.

2. Facilitating the discussion

A. Give a very short introduction to the topic of the session. Highlight a few issues you wish to cover in the discussion. Mention that there will be ample time for comments, and suggest that attendees note down questions or possible contributions while you speak.

B. When it comes time for the others to chime in, make notes that will help you to further facilitate the discussion. Note individuals' names and important comments.

C. Where appropriate, ask for clarification. Not all comments will be crystal clear the first time they are offered. You should feel free to make suggestions and expand on others' ideas and encourage the same from other attendees.

3. Concluding with a summary

A. Complete the session by highlighting topics that were covered along with any revelations that were made during the discussion. Refer attendees to your handout for more information.

B. Ask for additional ideas or a "last word" from the participants. Keep in mind there is an impressive amount of teaching experience at this conference. Ideally you will learn something new about your own topic before the Roundtable ends.

NB: If you have any questions regarding the Roundtable format, please contact Jim Wilkinson at iutconference@gmail.com.