20-Min Session Transcript

Video length 3:03

Hi, I’m Todd Zakrajsek, director of the ITLC Lily conferences, and offer your congratulations on the acceptance of your proposal. It'll be so exciting to see you at the conference presenting your work. Now, the proposal you have is 20-minute time slot. 20-minute time slots are not less valuable than 40-minute time slots. I hear that a lot at the conference. The length of time is not the value of the session; they do different things. Your slot is a 20 minute one, making it probably the most difficult of all the slots, quite frankly. Mark Twain once said “I'm sorry for the length of this letter I didn't have time to write you a shorter one.” The same sentiment has been done by Henry David Thoreau, Pascal, going back to Cicero. This quote from Cicero! The idea of being able to condense work down to something really tight is a challenge, so you do have a challenge with this one. And given that, I have a couple of tips for you.

#1- just be careful of the content. Think about it in terms of teaching a class when there's different units of material that you cover. If you think about how a class is broken up, oftentimes I would look at a 50-minute class and like 3 chunks of material, well that be like 15 minutes each. So, chunk it out like that so you've got 20 minutes’ worth of material, don't try to do anything too big. Keep it tight there.

#2 on these, you want to be careful about getting off on sidetracks because you don't have a lot of time. So if you think of something else while you're presenting, “Hmmm, this reminds me of…” just try to stay away from those, there just isn't much time in there for extra things.

Third thing. Don't talk faster just because it's a shorter time slot. I've had people who thought they had 40 minutes’ worth of material they just had to put it in 20 minutes. That's not what this is does. What you want to do to condense the material so that you have enough that you can talk at a regular pace, as you would for any other session, and the idea here is be careful it doesn't just sound like you're just running through a really really fast. It's an important concept.

The other part is, as you're finishing, it's wonderful if you can leave a little bit of time for questions. At disciplinary conferences I've often been presented with situations where they were 12-minute sessions, and they would say in your 12-minute sessions please two or three minutes for questions. Well, that means I've got a like an 8–9-minute presentation with a couple of questions at the end. So just be careful on how that's done but leave a little bit of time if you can that would be ideal have a 15-to-17-minute presentation with 3 to 5 minutes for questions at the end. Now, really important at the end is to end on time. The next person coming in is going to be looking to set up and people do tend to do very well with this but just be careful and end on time. The last thing I would mention is it's helpful as you're finishing, if your last slide has your contact information. That way if a person does want to follow up with you they have a way to contact you.

So, overall, I really look forward to seeing you at the conference. It is a tough slot but if you pull it together, I think it will be fantastic experience. I look forward to seeing you.