CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

What's the Purpose?

Presenting research at a conference is a way for your client to:

- articulate the importance and goals of their research
- receive constructive feedback on their work
- network with people in their field of study
- situate your work within the larger discourse community they are trying to enter
- practice communication skills

Tips for a Client who is Presenting at a Conference:

- For people who have posters or PowerPoints: the visual should not be doing the work for them! The mark of a good poster is one that invites questions, not one that confuses people. Use our big TV if your tutee has a PowerPoint; you can also record them with our video camera if they so choose
- Advise them to practice their "elevator pitch" in response to the common question, "Can you tell me a little bit about your project?" (without looking directly at poster or paper)
- Write down your questions throughout the presentation, referring to specific slides, and save them until the end. Your client most likely needs to be prepared to answer questions on the spot. (Tip: Sometimes the Q&A sessions are sources of stress. Reassure tutees that they don't need to sound like an expert; engaging people thoughtfully and creatively will reflect well on them as a presenter. In addition, it is always possible to relate a question back to something they *are* familiar with. Even if something is outside of the scope of a tutee's project, they might be surprised at how much they know when prompted by someone's question).
- It might be helpful to use notecards in lieu of your physical paper when talking about your work. Engagement with your audience will be easier if you're not looking down at your paper.
- Most presenters need to slow down; advise them to take a breath! If your tutee needs to make a specific time requirement, time them and figure out places where they can cut or extrapolate on material
- Make sure your tutee is using signaling phrases that will effectively "wake up" audiences and alert them to the major findings of their research
- An effective research presentation will focus on many of the same elements as an effective IMRaD genre: Abstract, Intro, brief Methods, Results and Discussion