2013 Graduate School Workshop Series
Student Professional Development: The Conference Paper

FACILITATORS:

MARIA LUISA GONZALEZ, PHD
KEITH MCNEIL, PHD
ARTURO OLIVAREZ, JR., PHD

MARCH 11, 2013
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
The Conference Paper Workshop

Content of Presentation

A. Responding to a Call for Research Proposals: Dr. Keith McNeil

B. Preparing the Conference Research Paper: Dr. Arturo Olivarez, Jr.

C. Presenting the Conference Paper & Publishing it: Dr. Maria L. Gonzalez

D. Questions and Answers
The Conference Paper

Responding to a Call for Research Proposal

Dr. Keith McNeil
Preparing the Conference Research Paper

Dr. Arturo Olivarez, Jr.
The Conference Paper

General Structure of the accepted Paper Presentation

1. Title and Abstract
2. Introduction/Background Information
3. Statement of problem
4. Literature Critical Review (Theory)
5. Methodology
6. Results and Discussion
7. Conclusions & Recommendations
8. References
9. Appendices (Back matter)
The Conference Paper

• Title

  1. Title should communicate what your study is about
  2. Title should be concise for journal articles but longer for theses and dissertations
  3. The title should described what and who was studied
  4. The title may be in the form of a question
  5. The title should be consistent
  6. Avoid clever titles. Make indexing difficult
Abstract

- An abstract is a brief summary of study objectives & results
- An abstract vary in length, typically one double-spaced typed page. Journals may dictate a specific number of words
- An abstract identify the sources of data
- An abstract describe its participants
- An abstract summarize key findings
- An abstract summarize key point in the discussion
- An abstract summarize key conclusions and implications
The Conference Paper

- **Introduction/Background of problem**
  - Includes extant background of the problem
  - Includes statement of the research problem or topic
  - Includes brief critical review of literature
  - Includes the need, the gap, or innovation of the study
  - Includes the assumptions
  - Includes limitations of the study
  - Includes delimitation or scope of the study
  - Includes definition of terms, if need be
  - Most important and difficult section to write
  - It is recommended to write it last, after you finish your study
The Conference Paper

- **Statement of Problem**
  - A concise description of the topic or issue to be tackle
  - Generates questions or hypotheses the researcher hopes to answer
  - Its an active challenge faced by practitioners and/or researchers
  - Describes potential venues for explanation or increase understanding of the phenomenon at hand
  - Explains the problem within the theoretical framework or line of inquiry
  - Limits scope by focusing on key variables and leads to the need for the study
  - Statement of problem needs to stand out and easily recognized
  - Questions or hypotheses are use to give more specificity to problem statement

“"A well stated problem is half answered"
The Conference Paper

- **Literature Review/Theoretical framework**
  - A summary of what is known about the problem or topic
  - Helps demonstrate familiarity within a body of knowledge
  - Helps establish credibility and competence
  - Shows a path of prior research and to learn from others
  - Helps future researchers to not “reinvent the wheel”
  - The review is a research method itself. It takes raw data (annotated bibliography) and converts it into information (a critical appraisal)
  - Expand on theoretical constructs to be used in study
  - Helps synthesize finding from previous research
  - Helps find areas of contention or controversy
  - The least related references are discussed first leading to the most relevant
Steps for a Literature Review

- Step 1. Identify topic and key terms
- Step 2. Identify databases and access software
- Step 3. Conduct actual search(es)
- Step 4. Identify source as primary or secondary
- Step 5. Evaluate the quality of your sources
- Step 6. Summarize & analyze primary sources
- Step 6. Organize & write review
The Conference Paper

- **Methodology**
  - The methodology section of a research paper provides the necessary information by which a study’s validity is judged. A clear and precise description of how the study was conducted is required.
  - It should describe what was done to answer the research question(s), describe how it was done, justify the selected participants, research design and instrumentation.
  - It should explain how the results were obtained, what data analyses techniques or approaches were used, what and how materials were used in the study.
  - It is the most important section of a research paper! Validity and replication of study are judged here.
The Conference Paper

- Key Sections in the Methodology
  - Participants (how many? How were they selected?, IRB issues)
  - Research design (justification for selection)
  - Instrumentation (validity and reliability issues)
  - Description of study variables (operational definitions)
  - Data collection procedures
  - Data Analysis (ANOVA, regression, grounded theory, etc.)
  - Methodological assumptions
  - Different research approaches may required different methodology formats
**The Conference Paper**

- **Results and Discussion Sections**
  - Presentation of your research finding and your analysis of those findings
  - These sections should address:
    - What are the key answers or new acquired knowledge?
    - Where there gains or losses observed? No interpretations
    - What are the most salient findings that are address the research question or problem? Use of tables and figures recommended.
    - What do these results mean?
    - What are the implications of your solution or answer? Your own interpretation in the context of the study and the extant literature.
    - Is there a need for further research?
The Conference Paper

• Conclusions
  ○ Is there any thing else to say? Yes.
  ○ A strong finish will impress your readers
  ○ The conclusion section should return to the introduction
  ○ It should examine the original problem statement or purpose
  ○ It should tie up all the trains of thought that have been presented. It should provide a sense of completeness
  ○ It helps you evaluate if you have accomplish what you set out to accomplish. It leaves a final impression on the reader
  ○ It addresses the long- and short-term implications of findings
  ○ It does not need to be long!
  ○ It is not a place to bring new ideas or ran out of gas.
**The Conference Paper**

- **Recommendations**
  - **Policy recommendations**
    - Specify what should be done
    - Steps required to implement the policy and resources needed
    - Discussion of benefits. What problems would be corrected or avoided
    - Discussion of feasibility of proposed policy
  - **Further research recommendations**
    - Discussion of future actions for other researchers
    - Discuss the kinds of additional research suggested by your study
    - Discuss alternatives that are best supported by your study
The Conference Paper

• Reference section
  ○ Describes the bibliographic sources used in your study (books, articles, encyclopedias, conference papers, etc.)
  ○ Gives credit to those authors whose ideas you have referred to or quoted
  ○ Presents information your readers can use and access
  ○ Gives your paper scholarly authority
  ○ Avoid having to track down missing information by recording necessary information by using current computer software (Refworks, Endnote, etc.)
  ○ Adhere to specific citations styles in your area (APA, MLA, Turabian, Chicago Style, etc.)
The Conference Paper

- **Appendix section**
  - It is ideal for the inclusion of graphs, maps, calculations, diagrams, apparatus set ups, tables, etc.
  - It allows for the audience or readers to examine your results more thoroughly
  - Start collecting information for this section at the beginning of the research project (i.e., tests, scales, measures, etc.)
  - It should be well-structure and understandable to your readers
  - This is typically original work not a copy of past studies.

Remember “one picture is worth a thousand words” Imagine several figures and tables in the appendix
The Conference Paper

The Logistics of Presenting at a Conference & Publishing

Dr. María Luisa González
The Conference Paper

Steps in Presenting & Publishing the Paper

- Before the Conference
- During the Conference
- After the Conference
Before the Conference

- Communicate with Paper Session Organizer
- Keep to timeline for paper submission to Organizer
- Format Paper to Conference Specifications/Expectations
  - Paper is your professional image—edit, edit, edit
Before the Conference

Assess AV Needs

Develop Presentation Format

- Edit, edit, edit and
- Practice, practice, practice
- Keep to time allocation
Questions to ask “Session” Organizer

- Am I presenting alone?
- Who else is presenting?
- How long is the section?
- How much time for each paper?
- How much time for Q&A?
- How many copies of paper to take?
- What about electronic availability of paper?
- What types of AV available?
• At the Conference

• Prepare mentally for a positive experience
  o Visualize your presentation
  o Visit the conference room
  o Allow time to network before and after the session
The Conference Paper

• At the Conference
  • Be ready to be friendly
  • Double “check” your checklist
    o Take your set of organized notes
    o Take your business cards
    o Take paper copies/flash drive
    o Other?
  • Arrive early and look prepared
The Conference Paper

• After the Presentation

• Welcome Feedback
  ○ Take notes from discussant comments & assess paper modification
  ○ Take notes from audience comments & assess paper modification
  ○ Respond to discussant critical review
  ○ Build your network!
After the Presentation

- Network at the national level
- Find opportunities for collaboration with fellow presenters & audience
- Allow time to mingle
- Discuss possibilities for publishing paper
The Conference Paper

- Publishing the Paper
  - Take notes about paper from audience & discussant
  - Get input from faculty on journals
  - Look at journal & types of articles
  - Find the right journal & look at specifications
  - Edit, edit, edit paper before journal submission
• Publishing the Paper
  ○ Fit manuscript to the journal specifications
  ○ Contact the editors if no contact
  ○ Different articles to different journals
  ○ Rejected/accepted?
  ○ Review, Revise, & Resubmit
  ○ Stay Focused and Be Positive!
Questions & Answers
Conference Paper Workshop

Facilitators’ e-mail addresses:

mlgonzalez6@utep.edu
kmcneill@nmsu.edu
aolivarez3@utep.edu
Selected References

