

# Suggested conference session formats

## ● Work in Progress: Brown's Eight Questions

### Suggested session format/structure

Work in progress sessions are designed as a forum for presenter(s) to work on a draft paper with interested colleagues and to receive constructive suggestions to help them to move their work forward (ideally towards completion and submission).

Work in progress sessions are organised with the following in mind:

- The sessions may be organised around a theme or kept open.
- Each session requires a convenor/chair who is prepared to act as overall time-keeper and to remind participants of the process.
- Each presenter requires 30 minutes to present, receive and engage feedback.
- Sessions can be tailored to accommodate 2, 3 or 4 presentations sequentially if participant numbers are small (i.e. all participants feed back on all presentations) and time permits. Alternatively, sessions can involve 2 blocks of 3 simultaneous presentations or multiples thereof if numbers are large (i.e. participants are divided into small groups who work with just one presenter).
- If numbers are small, the room can be organised into the usual presentation format - speaker at front. If numbers are large and simultaneous presentations are being made, then several small circles of chairs including presenters can be distributed around the room.

This session format is based on *Brown's Eight Questions*.

### Preparing the session

Session organisers may issue an open call for works in progress or propose key thematic areas. Intending presenters should read through the session guidelines (and *Brown's Eight Questions*) so they can submit a working title for inclusion.

*Brown's Eight Questions* are:

1. Who are the intended readers? (list 3-5 names)
2. What did you do? (50 words)
3. Why did you do it? (50 words)
4. What happened? (50 words)
5. What do the results mean in theory? (50 words)
6. What do the results mean in practice? (50 words)
7. What is the key benefit for the reader? (25 words)
8. What remains unresolved? (No word limit)

A public call for works in progress may include:

- a short title and abstract for the session, explaining the purpose and the conference for which it is being organised
- a brief description of the session process
- names and addresses of the session convenors in case of questions
- submission and preparation guidelines for presenters - what information they should send, to whom, by when.

Depending upon whether session convenors intend to sequence or run simultaneous presentations (and how much time is allocated), they may group like titles/topics so that these thematic areas can be identified in the conference programme.

### Before the conference

Four weeks prior to the conference, presenter(s) commit to prepare notes in response to Brown's eight questions and send these to the session convenor(s).

Note that for these sessions, PowerPoint presentations are actively discouraged and the emphasis is placed on presenters talking through the paper, or using hand outs. (This is because there may be more than one presentation happening simultaneously in the same room.)



## Running the session on the day

Session convenors act as host and time keeper. It is important that the session runs to time. Presenters who over-run their allotted time will reduce the time available for the remaining presenters. Suggest that presenters practice and time their presentation before the session.

Session convenors ideally briefly outline the session process and ask for volunteers from the participants to take notes for each presenter from the discussion/feedback.

Each presenter(s) takes 10 minutes to systematically work through their responses to *Brown's Eight Questions* with their group. They talk through their responses, and may include a short hand-out where appropriate.

Question eight identifies the issue/question/gap/problem that is yet to be resolved, on which the presenter(s) seeks input from session participants. Advise presenters that most time should be allocated to this question.

Participants then take 15 minutes to actively engage with the presenter, to provide helpful suggestions to help move beyond the unresolved issues identified. The volunteer note-taker in each group should record questions and suggestions so that the presenter(s) can focus fully on the discussion and ideas generated.

Once 15 minutes of feedback has finished, the presenter(s) take 5 minutes to respond to participants' suggestions and identify what they might do next.

## More information

This session format is based on *Brown's Eight Questions*.

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