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In preparation of a conference and/or text

A student conference is an opportunity for students with similar interests; motivated by their willingness to express themselves on a particular subject, presenting their points of view and the results of their research. The duration is usually quite limited and normally does not last longer than 30 minutes. After the presentation, a discussion takes place where the public has an opportunity to ask questions of the presenting individual, while also simultaneously providing a critique. Usually following the conference, the presented research is modified based upon mutual discussion and subsequently published. In preparing for a student conference, the presentation of one's research requires a dual-track approach. On one hand, a person must prepare the research and presentation itself, while on the other hand, a method and manner with which this presentation will be carried out in front of the public. In both cases, it is imperative to commence with a clear and precise statement outlining the main subject matter, which means clarifying (narrowing) the topic into a lucid scientific problem. The point of the text is therefore the ability to conquer this difficulty. Failure to identify relevant questions leads to the work only appearing scientific, unless it is dedicated to a very limited or narrow topic, then the problem is replaced by the objective. Working without problem / objective essentially means accidental gathering of information, which in turn inadequately motivates one to conduct research as well as engage in their individual reflections.

The topic should not be too broad-this is because the student can be easily exposed to being accused of favoritism on certain issues, while

simultaneously omitting others. Umberto Eco¹⁹ suggests that the topic should rather be quite narrow. He believes that the more we reduce the thematic scope of our subject, the better we are able to work and the more stable our foundations. It also seems that the theme should be well formulated so that the author, in fulfilling his research on a subject could simultaneously fulfill himself and his interests. The student should therefore better clarify the topic, better define it, so that throughout his work he is able to put forth a research question and of course aim to answer it. The student should be able, therefore, to formulate thoughts in such a way that the summary was a response to the question that serves as the objective of the response.

The preparation of a written response should be based upon three stages. The main content-oriented first stage, or the output stage, is to formulate questions that the author of the paper wants to answer. This is equivalent to defining the objective of further work. Preparation of the work therefore, relies upon solving a specific problem, providing answers to specific questions which firstly the author must ask of himself.

- chose a topic
- identify the problem
- break down the problem into a series of sub-issues
- formulate additional and aiding problems
- search for information and auxiliary means
- search for an optimal solution
- conduct practical experiments or engage in thought processes
- try to suggest several consecutive solutions to a hypothesis
- develop more or less a detailed plan of action

The work arrangement should be logical and well defined on the basis of content. To achieve this, it is advised to follow three guidelines:

¹⁹ U. Eco, *Jak napisać pracę dyplomową. Poradnik dla humanistów*, Warszawa 2007.

1. principle of completeness – taking under consideration all important elements and avoiding unnecessary ones.
2. principle of subordination – every aspect of work must result from a formulated thesis topic and the concept of solving a problem. Every additional aspect of work must consist of continued and consistent logical continuation of the previous parts.
3. principle of exclusivity – this same issue should not be discussed many times in many places of work (every issue should be presented once in a logical and comprehensive manner).

The second stage consists of attempting to answer the fundamental, targeted questions while keeping in mind the necessity to adhere to the content and to not make too many allusions, and to not deviate from the problem. A common mistake is a gap within the argument and suppressing of opposing views, or leaving them unanswered. It is important to keep in mind the volume of work, which is usually small. It is estimated that twenty-minute speech is eight standard pages of double spaced text. The most important part of this stage is finding solutions or providing a statement of failure. The final stage is to summarize all considerations, verifying that all solutions are in fact correct, while also empirically verifying the theoretical approach. Throughout this stage it is also advised to develop an edited text.

- check it in terms of content and style
- correct errors
- insert footnotes
- present all quotations accurately
- create a bibliography.

Umberto Eco suggests that editing of work consists of identifying of utilized terms, except those that are obvious or commonly used. He

emphasized that the work should not be written using lengthy compound sentences, but rather short and concise and thus easily understood. Too comprehensive and complex sentences often slow down the pace of speech and often blur the transmitted content. The hallmark of a scientific text is carried within relative clauses - they are first to be used in scientific and erudite texts. Meanwhile, complex coordinated statements are rather used to report loose observations, describing experiences but without interpreting them. It is worth dividing the text into multiple paragraphs and using impersonal, rather than writing in first person singular or plural. Eco also writes that it is necessary to quote. He emphasizes that quoting fragments of sources should not be too broad, and that quotes should not serve merely as an ornament within a text. The essay should be cited only if it supports or confirms the thesis of the author. The quotes are to be faithful. If the author disagrees with the point of view expressed within the quote, that the quote should be followed by an appropriate critical commentary. The authors and the sources of every quotation should be clearly marked. Reference to an author and work must be clear, easily understood and justified. Another example of using an author's ideas is through paraphrasing, or summarizing in your own words the views of a given author. It is however imperative to always remember to credit a proper source if the view is not one's own. Cited works should always be found in a bibliography located at the end of a paper.

It seems that the ideal form of a text is in the form of an essay, which involves formulating a thesis or hypothesis (meaning formulating a problem or putting forth a question), outlining relevant arguments in support of one's thesis as well as abolishing it, the weighing of these arguments and

subsequently confirming or rejecting the thesis. Jarosław Rudniański²⁰ suggests that while working on a paper, to foremost write down all incoming thoughts, including those which could potentially but not definitely find themselves within the work, as well as those which should or must be included. These ideas can be written in a non-stylistically fashion. The objective of jotting is in fact supposed to stimulate thinking in a certain direction, the so called thought process startup. After some time, go back to the jottings and review notes supplementing them. After each consecutive reading, you should write down a short outline of your text (the subconscious mind has already been made to develop this material) or write it down as a draft. This type of initial draft writing will enable systematization of thoughts. Only following this process should you write a finalized version of your text or read the draft out-loud while making corrections in your finalized work. Rudniański also mentions activities aimed at stimulating the writing process: conversations about the subject of your work, realization of problems that require solutions, formulation of a clear objective. Following the writing of the text, it is recommended to proof-read the work by another author.

In assessing the text, it is important to take into account the correctness of the content matter, as well as its factual and logical layout. The objective of the text is to gradually come closer to the answer sought after by work's fundamental question. Every next part of the work should make sure of the previous one. The last assessing criterion is editorial corrections. The very same criteria are taken under consideration during the assessment of a conference presentation. The presentation can but does not have to utilize multimedia aids. This form of presentation allows the transmittance of information in an easier and more interesting manner. It usually consists

²⁰ J. Rudniański, *Jak się uczyć?*, Warszawa 2001.

of a slide show (Powerpoint). Preparation of this type of presentation requires developing a plan and an outline, the content and choice of tools, design, text and graphics. It should be remembered that this type of presentation should only be used to reinforce the transfer of a specific message or idea, and not the idea itself. Therefore, each slide should not include too much information but rather definitions and bullet points which elaborate further the author's ideas. A successful presentation is one that is fully thought out, logically and consistently. It is better to use 'simple' fonts, utilizing sentence equivalents, uncomplicated graphic and video, as well as avoiding of unnecessary elements - presentation should focus the attention of the audience, rather than distract it. During the presentation, there should be no reading directly from the screen, but merely referencing or commenting on the information presented within the slides. It is equally encouraged to anticipate the following slide. It is a waste of time to concentrate on things that are obvious. It is important to remain within the allotted time frame. The manner with which the presentation is delivered is also very important. A well-made presentation is one that serves as a visual aid during speaking, pictures or key words allow you to stick to the story and follow the outlined plan or sequence of the presentation. Just like the slide show, one should rethink their appearance. For this purpose, it is recommended that you answer yourself the following questions:

- what do I want to convey?
- who is my audience?
- in what way do I want to address the audience: formally or informally, seriously or jokingly?

Just prior to the presentation it is recommended to remind yourself of its content. It is better to firstly practice your appearance in front of a mirror or tape it and review it, in order to correct any mistakes. It is

important that the content of your presentation is legible, easily understood and interesting. It is imperative to stick to the content, speak clearly and be convincing. Throughout the orientation it is recommended to smile but not excessively. Smiling encourages the listener to cultivate a positive attitude. The presentation should contain a clear synopsis of the problem - specified and precisely identified problem, assumptions, arguments, systematized results, comparison of results with those previously forecasted. After its introduction, you should commence a discussion - encourage questions and provide answers. You can indicate to the audience the most problematic elements. It is also wise to accept criticism from the remaining groups or to carefully listen to their analysis, introduce your own analysis of the results, which will serve to prepare your subsequent appearance.

In order for the student to properly prepare himself for an appearance during a student conference, he should have received topic considerably prior to the presentation, required number of pages to be written, editorial parameters, the amount of time allotted as well as assessing criteria.

Below are examples of evaluation criteria:

- development of hypothesis/ thesis statement 5 pts.
- autonomy of work – 5 pts.
- the effort and work invested in preparation of the presentation – 5 pts.
- choice of presentation format and its structure – 5 pts.
- ability to analyze and interpret sources – 5 pts.
- ability to express individual judgment, presentation of a distinct point of view and an ability to independently draw conclusions – 5 pts.
- logic of independent conclusions – 5 pts.
- considering the prospect of the future– 5 pts.
- information on sources / literature review – 5 pts.
- developed appendix– 5 pts.

- scientific approach to the project– 5 pts.
- scientific approach to project presentation during the conference – 5 pts.
- the manner of answering questions from the participants– 5pts.
- discussion participation during the conference – 5 pts.
- objective assessment of others – 5 pts.
- self-evaluation – 5 pts.

MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF POINTS - 80

GRADE	POINTS
6	80
5	79-68
4	67-55
3	54-40
2	39-30
1	29-0

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