

VASCD Annual Conference 2018:
Tips for Successful Concurrent Sessions

We know that each person who submits a session proposal has great content and ideas to share with our conference attendees. Over the years, we have learned a lot about what makes a proposal attractive to our selection committee, as well as what makes a session draw a crowd at the conference. The following tips are intended to help you craft a successful proposal and plan a session that will make you a star!

Be sure to submit your presentation online by July 15.

1. Plan your session before you submit your proposal.

Of course the session does not have to be planned in detail, but you should know the goals, specific focus, and general outline of your session before writing your proposal. *Occasionally we get proposals that are so general we can't tell what the session is really about or what experience attendees can expect. The session and presenter may be awesome, but the description is so broad as to be vague.*

2. Craft a great title.

A good session title captures the content AND sparks interest. A ho-hum title will drive attendees away from a terrific session. Be as descriptive as possible within the 12 words allowed. Consider these:

Internships for High School Science Students (brief and descriptive but a little boring)

Learning About Science Through Internship Experiences (starting with a verb can be a good idea)

How Internships Taught My Students About Science- and Life! (does your presentation tell a story?)

3. Make your description....um.... descriptive!

This is why you should have your session plan in mind before submitting your proposal. You only have 80 words in which to describe your session, so every word counts. Your description should be clear about:

- Your message. What will participants learn or gain? Are you presenting research? Providing resources? Sharing success/lessons learned from an innovative practice or program? Be clear about your learning goals, just as you would in a lesson plan. Attendees want to know what they will take away from the session.
- Your design. How can attendees expect to participate? Will there be discussion? Protocols? Hands-on activities? Sharing of student work, case studies, or videos?

4. Be honest about your target audience.

The proposal form asks you to indicate an intended audience (elementary grades, building administrators, etc.). We know your session is so awesome that anyone would find it fascinating, but be careful not to overdo it here. Even if your key ideas are applicable to any grade level but your illustrations and examples are all from high school grades, for example, elementary teachers who attend your session will be unlikely to make the connection.

5. Use the conference app.

Once your session has been accepted and the conference app is live, PLEASE create a profile so that attendees can “meet” you virtually. You may or may not decide to use the app to tweet, share resources, network, or promote your session. But we know for sure that many attendees will search for your profile before deciding to attend your session. *Unfortunately, we had a few amazing presenters last year whose sessions were poorly attended because they did not take this important step.*