

Best Practices Moderating a Session at ATA 2016

Before the Session

- Plan to moderate actively. Discussion time is valuable for both attendees and presenters. Read all the abstracts in advance. Prepare 1-2 questions on each presentation, to be ready to start discussion. Read over the speaker bios and prepare some questions you might ask if none come from the audience.
- At least two weeks prior to the conference we recommend connecting with each panelist, introduce the panelists to each other, state your objectives for the panel, define precisely how much time each speaker has to present, how much time you want for audience participation and how you are going to manage the time for the session.
- Remind panelists their presentations may not endorse any commercial product or service, that they must disclose any financial support or conflicts of interests and the objectives for their presentation.

Kicking off the Session

- Involve the audience early if possible and ask them their experience with this topic area.
- Introduce the panel members in the order listed in the program at the beginning and keep the introductions brief and relevant to the topic. It is not necessary to read the full bio provided by the speaker. Think of yourself as the audience's advocate and get to the presentations fairly quickly.

During the Session

- Sit at the head table with the panel and interrupt / stop presenters if they are going over their allotted time. If the presentation is confusing, be prepared to summarize the key 2 or 3 main points as you start the discussion.
- Tweet highlights and photos via the app during the panel if you can, or pre-arrange for someone in the audience to do so.
- Coordinate the questions to the most relevant panelist and ask your own questions if you think the audience will be interested with follow up questions if necessary. Do not

contradict the panelists but if they make mistakes, ask clarifying questions, or ask another panelist for their thoughts.

- Ensure speakers and audience participants speak into a microphone to ensure quality audio capture.
- Wrap up and end the session on time. Remind everyone to complete an evaluation of the session on the app and ask them to tweet and comment on the panel via the conference app.
- Close the session by thanking presenters and the audience for their participation.

The goal of moderating these sessions is to foster interesting discussion and helpful feedback on presentations.