The Presenting Experience

WADE SMITH: Presenting at conferences is the best thing a student can do. They get to network, they get to know people from all the different disciplines, different colleges. And they get to practice speaking at a professional area and use a professional tone, the doctoral tone. And it sharpens their research because there’s a lot of folks that are going to ask them questions and they in essence they do a mini defense. It's excellent experience. You learn how to live your field.

ALICE EICHHOLZ: One of the values of presenting at a conference is not only the opportunity to share something that you have experienced in your own research or in your own work circumstances, but to learn from other people and to have that network. I am involved in three professional organizations and I've been involved in those organizations for a number of years. Some of them, two of them are outgrowths of my original doctoral work and one is a new one that I have become involved in. That opportunity to really give voice to the things that you're interested in and to the work that you're doing makes it possible for you to see yourself in a different way than if you're just sitting with yourself in a corner or in an office or in a library working on things. This is an opportunity to expand your horizons and to create other dialogs with other people that you might not have considered before. It's a very rich and important aspect of being a doctoral scholar.

MELANIE BROWN: At a conference, you'll present some of your study to other educators, professionals and like-minded people in your field. Typically, you'll be on a panel with two or three other speakers and you'll each take a turn presenting your work. It can be such an invigorating experience. You're in a room after spending so much time by yourself researching your ideas and writing them down. Now to be able to present them to other people and have them come up and ask you questions and then also at a conference to be able to attend other people's presentations is just so rewarding.

LAURA KNIGHT LYNN: One really helpful experience that I had when I was presenting a poster session at a conference on the work that was my dissertation research was I was presenting it at the proposal phase. And I had received feedback from someone who as quite renowned in the field that let me know that I was missing a chunk of important research in that area, which was something that I wouldn't have known otherwise. And it really enhanced and took me on a – in a different direction and made, helped to make my work more viable

DAVID MILAN: Presenting at conferences is a nice challenge, but at the same time, you have the opportunity to educate others. It helps when you're allowing people to understand what is going on in society, how you can make a positive social change, not only in their lives but letting them take that back and dealing with their communities. It's a very humbling experience because someone takes notice of your background and your education and now you can present what your knowledge is to others and share that experiences with them

DAVID MILAN: If it's, if it feels like it's scary or if it feels like it's a duration test then I would suggest that you stick with it, that you keep yourself motivated, that you keep looking for opportunities. You have to believe in yourself before you can start educating other people. And once you feel that compassion inside yourself to educate others, then you're moving in the positive direction

MELANIE BROWN: It's such a great opportunity to present at a conference and you should take advantage of it as soon as you can. You can talk with your faculty about conference opportunities in your area and how you could build part of your study into a conference presentation. It really can challenge you to take your research to the next level. Not only are you writing it down in a dissertation, but you're putting it into circulation with other scholars in your field face-to-face.