

Student reflections: the transition to conferencing through the British Conference for Undergraduate Research (BCUR)

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While studying at university, I was always aware of the importance of my final year research project with regards to the overall classification which I could achieve for my degree. However I was unaware of the opportunities following graduation that would arise from producing a 1st class research project.

Following my graduation I was nominated by Staffordshire University to put forward my research project to the British Conference for Undergraduate Research (BCUR). This is the first of its kind to be held in the UK, and involves poster presentations, spoken presentations and workshops by UK Undergraduates from all fields. For me, the nomination from the university itself felt like an achievement; to know that my research project was seen by senior members of staff as good enough to represent the university. It made all the hard work, time and effort that I put into my project even more worthwhile. After looking more in depth regarding the requirements for the conference, I was advised to submit my project as a spoken presentation. At this point I did not know the chances of my project being accepted by the BCUR so, even though the prospect of performing a spoken PowerPoint presentation for 10-15 minutes was really daunting to the extent I was really worried about the process, the opportunity to present my own original research at a national conference was really exciting and this outweighed the prospect of undertaking a public presentation.

On receiving the confirmation that my project had been chosen, I was thrilled that my work had been recognised as making a contribution to my field research. I felt proud of what I had achieved through the hard work and consistency at university and that I had the opportunity for my research to be seen and heard on a national scale. Adding to this was the chance to be involved in the first BCUR event, which had both positive and negative aspects. As this is the first event of its kind, attendees would have no expectations of the conference; therefore this reduces the pressure on me. But on the other hand, it is hard to know what to expect and this will have a negative effect on my preparation for the presentation.

The research project I completed was 'The Dietary Analysis of Female Regional Gymnasts with Special Reference to Macro Nutrients and Body Composition'. From being a gymnast since a young age, this was a subject area which I am really passionate about and I felt really lucky to be able to combine this interest with my research project. Thus being

accepted and being able to present my research was very important to me. It will also give me the opportunity to meet other undergraduates and learn from the work that they have done, and to learn small things such as methods used to produce excellent presentations. I hope that seeing and discussing new research subjects and areas which other undergraduates have completed will be inspirational to my future.

In the near future I am hoping to begin teacher training at primary level and, for this, I will have to develop lesson planning. I feel that the experience of the preparation for my spoken presentation will be very beneficial to this. Furthermore, due to my apprehension, I feel that accomplishing the spoken presentation, will aid in my personal development towards achieving my future career plans with respect to my self-confidence. Moreover I can add this experience to my CV as evidence that I have experience of public speaking and I can produce work of sufficiently high calibre to represent a University.