ATLAS Expo Participation Tips

In just a few days, you and many other students will exhibit your projects, creative works and research to invited guests and visitors attending the ATLAS Expo. These events are one of the ways ATLAS turns our classrooms inside out, but most importantly, the Expo is about you and your work. This is a great opportunity to practice presenting your work, network and make connections.

Tips for Talking about your Projects

**Introduce yourself.** “Hi, I’m Natalie. This is a project I created for my Animation class. Our assignment was to create an animation that explained a new technology.”

**One Sentence.** Can you describe your project in one sentence? Try to distill it down to its essence—what it is and what it does. Your main goal is to spark curiosity.

**And Three Things.** Are you able to guide your audience? If you carefully figure out where to direct their attention ahead of time, you can help them appreciate the significance of your work more easily. What do you want people to notice? Is there something that you think is interesting or especially relevant? This is a chance to inform people and help tell them know what to look at. Think about these ahead of time and write them down!

**Elements of Creative Tech Projects.** Some of you are familiar with critiques in TAM classes. Think about the core of your work as you talk about it.

  - **Technical**
    - Can you succinctly describe how you made the project from a technical standpoint?
    - What software/technologies/languages/materials were used?
  - **Conceptual**
    - What is the overall concept/idea of your project?
    - What problem does your project address, or what is the information you aim to communicate?
  - **Design/Aesthetic**
    - What were your goals in terms of the design aesthetic of the project?
    - How does the design relate to the technical or conceptual aspects?

**Now Get Comfortable.** Is your project ready? Is your name clearly displayed? Have you thought about what you want to share? Can you speak fluently about your project for about one minute?
And Practice! Try introducing your work to someone unfamiliar with it. Note the kinds of questions they ask. Listen to their suggestions.

This is Me! Talking about your work is another way of talking about yourself. Why is this relevant? Did you like this project? What did you learn? Was the assignment challenging? Why are you interested in this topic? Communicate enthusiasm for your work.

Invite Visitors to Learn More. If visitors are hovering near your table, they may be curious. Try saying something like, “Can I give you a 30-second summary?”

Find the Right Level. Be prepared with different kinds of descriptions. If your audience seems familiar with what you’re presenting, she may be an expert. If so, skip the basics and cut to the chase. For others, be ready with a less technical overview.

Open a Door. Are you looking for an internship or a part time job? Are you getting ready to graduate? These conversations can open doors. “This is the kind of work I’m really interested in.” “I learned so much and hope to do more work like this.” See what seems to be getting traction. Networking is an art form and this is a great opportunity to practice!

Continue the Conversation. Think about ways that you can continue the conversation. “Thanks a lot for coming by. It was interesting to talk to you.” “I appreciate your interest and would love to hear more about your work.” “Would it be OK if I emailed you? I’d love to ask a few more questions.”

Be Prepared. You never know who you’ll meet at ATLAS Expo. Guests include students and campus faculty, but also people from the community and local companies. If you want a professional connection, ask for a business card and be ready to write down their contact information if they don’t have one.

Follow Up! It’s the last tip, but it’s important: If you make a connection, follow up. “This is Natalie from ATLAS. I wanted to follow up on our conversation at the ATLAS Expo. Could you please send me information about the internship you mentioned? I’d really appreciate it.”

MAKE THE MOST OF THIS OPPORTUNITY AND HAVE FUN!
You have their attention for about 90-seconds. Be prepared and practice!