Learning objectives

Participants will be able to:

1. Describe the purpose of using posters to present research and innovative programs
2. Name 5 do's and 5 don'ts of poster design
3. Identify 3 non-visual components of a good poster presentation

Purpose of research poster sessions

- Highlight your research to create
  - Interest
  - Excitement
  - Connection

- Relaxed environment to present and discuss major findings
  - Meet new colleagues

- Select 3 main messages you want the poster to communicate
Three main messages

1. Filling the Gap
   What is the significant gap in knowledge that your research addresses?

2. Innovative Methods
   Are you employing innovative research methods? What are they?

3. Next Steps
   Will your findings inform future interventions, programs, or dissemination strategies?

Value of research posters

- Opportunity to engage with others (networking)
- Good way to disseminate your work
- Receive constructive feedback, suggestions, helpful critiques
- Exchange ideas for future research and collaboration
- Help educate those outside your field
  - Spark multi-disciplinary teamwork!
  - Provides an interesting backdrop to your presentation

Consider your audience

- Consider your target audience and what their interest in your work may be
- Prepare for a multidisciplinary audience
- Ask for feedback from those unfamiliar with your work
- Practice your elevator speech and engaging questions
Poster size and specs

- Review the conference poster guidelines
  - Typical poster sizes are 4 x 6 or 4 x 8

Guidelines will typically include dimensions, set-up and dismantle instructions, and design recommendations

Paper and image quality is important

- Use high resolution images
- Have others proof read before printing poster
  - Check and recheck your spelling!
- Avoid glossy paper
- For those with a larger budget, consider printing on cloth
  - Spoonflower.com: A more economic option

General layout

- Leave negative space
  - Don’t fill every inch of the poster
- Organize and align your content using headers and columns
  - Use consistent spacing between sections and columns
  - Align corners along vertical and horizontal lines
  - Section headers should be distinct from body of writing
- Organize top-down, left-right
- Take inspiration from infographics!
Text: what to include and exclude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Include</th>
<th>Exclude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Clear and concise, descriptive title</td>
<td>• Abstract (this is our opinion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Author details and contact info</td>
<td>• Jargon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Section headers, bullet points, and bolding</td>
<td>• A lot of paragraph text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Images, charts or graphs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Text critique

Choosing fonts and colors

• Don’t use too many fonts OR colors
• Use contrasting colors for text and background combinations
• 2-3 colors; 1-2 text font types
• Sans Serif fonts are usually easier to read

Pleasing Font Combinations:

* Helvetica / Garamond
  * Caslon / Univers
  * Futura / Bodoni
  * Garamond / Futura
  * Gill Sans / Caslon
  * Minion / Gill Sans
  * Myriad / Minion
  * Caslon / Franklin Gothic
  * Trade Gothic / Clarendon
  * Franklin Gothic / Baskerville

[Text critique image]

[Choosing fonts and colors image]
Font size and organization matters!

Guide:
- Titles – 96 pt
- Authors – 48 pt
- Headings – 36 pt
- Font – 24 pt

Poster critique

Poster critique
Title and author information:

- Use a catchy title
  - Concise but descriptive
  - Could be a question or focused on an important result
  - Should be able to read the title from ~20 feet away

- Include author and institution information
  - Doesn’t necessarily have to be at the top of the poster
  - Include contact info for (at least) the first author

Background section:

- Abstract
  - Omit! (But this is our opinion)

- Background
  - Summarize and avoid jargon
  - Highlight significant gaps
  - Create a roadmap using bulleted points

Purpose and methods sections:

- Research Questions, Purpose or Objectives
  - List only main question(s) or objective(s)
  - Should be its own section

- Materials and Methods
  - Present the basics
  - Sections can include (as applicable):
    - Study design, past studies
    - Theoretical foundation
    - Data collection methods, instruments, intervention
    - Data analysis
Results and conclusion sections:

• Results
  • Limit to relevant or interesting findings
  • Use tables, charts, graphs, pictures

• Conclusion
  • Big picture?
  • Practice implications?
  • Recommendations for policy?

Additional sections (as applicable):

• Future Directions
  • Include suggestions for future research
  • Connect with your audience

• Acknowledgements and Funding
  • Those who contributed to your study
  • Source(s) of funding, grant # when appropriate

• References
  • Include but can be smaller font

Engage your audience during the session

• Have 2-3 short questions ready to help you engage and read your audience

• Prepare an elevator speech that summarizes your study

• Help your audience navigate your poster by providing a path for them to follow
  • Make key words stand out by using bold, italics, underlining or a different font type

• Create and practice an interesting story
Quick guide: how to write an elevator speech

- **Topic:** I am trying to learn about (working on/studying)… [your topic]
- **Question:** Because I want to find out… [who, what, when, where, how, whether or why]
- **Significance:** In order to help my reader… [insert your target audience] understand how, why or whether… [insert rationale/focus of your research]
- **Example:** I am trying to learn about behavior change from a school-based nutrition and activity program because I want to find out how differences in program implementation and individual variation in self-regulation affect program outcomes. This is important because it will help researchers and program developers design more effective programs.

Network! Network! Network!

- **Network and Share**
  - Ask others about their research
  - Compile business cards; sign-in sheet
- **Follow-up with an email that includes any or all of the following:**
  - "Thank you for stopping by my poster about XYZ"
  - "It was a pleasure to speak with you about XYZ"
  - "I would like to learn more about your research/teaching/publications/XYZ"

...so what are examples of GOOD posters?

Good posters are…

- Visually interesting from ~20 feet away
- Draw readers in by balancing components
- Visual complements to your verbal presentation
For more information:

1. 10 Simple Rules for a Good Poster Presentation
2. University of FL – 7 Reasons why you should present posters at a conference
3. UC Davis – How to Make an Effective Poster Presentation
4. Rice University – Cain Project: Guide to Designing a Poster
5. George Mason University – The Writing Center: Developing Poster Presentations in the Social Sciences