**Faculty of Arts and Education**
**Higher Degree by Research**

**Tips on Poster Presentations**

*PURPOSES*

- To educate others about your research findings;
- To get feedback/critique from peers before submitting a manuscript for publication;
- To network with other scholars who are interested in the same research; and/or
- To promote one's work and one's self prior to applying to graduate school or going on the job market

*ADVANTAGES OF POSTER PRESENTATIONS OVER ORAL PRESENTATIONS*

- A poster session has potential to reach larger numbers of people than a typical oral presentation
- An appealing poster can interest people who walk by who might not be in your specific field of research.
- A poster presentation allows you to interact one-on-one with people interested in your research.
- There is more time to present your research at a poster session; versus the 12-20 minutes allotted in most oral sessions.

*ETHICAL & PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR*

- Do not list your name on a poster as a co-author/presenter unless you had an active role in the research and development of the content of the presentation
- Give citations on a poster when paraphrasing other's work just like you would in a manuscript.
- Use an appropriate style (e.g., APA) when citing.
- Be on time for your poster, and be sure to take your poster down at the end of the time.
- Stay close to your poster during the session so that you are available for discussion.
- Wear your nametag
- Smile and make eye contact with people who pass the poster.
- Greet viewers with "*hello*" and offer to answer any questions they may have.
- Allow the viewers time to read the poster without interruption.
- If they ask you a question or look like they have a question, then that is your cue to engage them about your research
- Don't get too involved with one person and ignore others who might want to discuss your research.
- Have a rough draft of the paper as a handout (e.g., hard copy, disc, electronic copy) for interested scholars
- Don't take criticism personally.
- One of the purposes of a poster (or oral) presentation is to get critique prior to submitting for publication

- Staff and peers who attend the poster session may be offering constructive criticism as a way to help enhance your professional development.
- If you do not know the answer to a question, one option is to mirror the question back
  - For example, if a person asks "*Don't you think the variable A could be related to B because of C?*" You could respond with, "*Hmm interesting. Please tell me a little more about your reasoning.*"
- If a person offers a constructive critique, then take his/her advice into consideration. For example, if a person asks, "*Have you thought about running blank analysis?*" or "*Maybe A is related to B because of E.*" You could respond, "*That is interesting. I had not thought of that. I will definitely consider that.*"
- It is okay to admit you do not know some.


### *SECTIONS OF THE POSTER*

- **Heading**
  - Title of the poster
  - Authors of the poster
  - Title, major/department, and institution of the authors

- Introduction
  - A poster should not be a research paper tacked on a board! It should be a concise, visually pleasing, illustration of your work
  - Avoid visual clutter/chaos. Use a logical structure that guides the reader along the main points from beginning to end
  - Remember, you are on display as well as your poster!

- *Poster Presentation Tips*
  - Justification/Rationale – Why did you do this study? Who could benefit from the results?
  - Invest time in explaining a compelling reason for the study rather than just showing past literature that found similar results
  - Purpose – Exactly what did you do?
  - Null or alternative hypotheses – If you are making a predication, then you should present the alternative hypotheses. If there is no previous research or theory on the topic, then use null hypotheses. Note: If the study is exploratory, then you may want to provide research questions

- Methodology
  - Sample characteristics
    - Sample size
    - Gender
    - Age range and mean (or median if the age is skewed)
    - Ethnicity
    - Any other characteristics that may be of interest to the study or viewer/reader
  - Procedures – How were the data collected?
  - Variables and measurement – How were the variables operationally defined?
    - List variable, scale, number of items, response choices, and reliability (if

applicable)

- Results
  - o Analyses – briefly provide the rationale for the analyses conducted
  - o Findings – provide the findings in easy-to-read table(s) or concise bullets

- **Discussion** – identify the most interesting findings and provide an explanation/rationale
  - o Why did this study get the results? Is it similar to past research? Can theory explain the findings? Is there something
  - o about this data collection that made the results different?

- Implications
  - o Implications for practice – How can the findings help others (e.g., practitioners, educators, policy makers)?
  - o Implications for research – Based on the results and/or limitations of this study, what should future studies in this area do?

- Acknowledgments
  - o Briefly and succinctly acknowledge the following:
    - ▪ Individuals who assisted with the project/poster (e.g., statistical advice, critique of poster, fieldwork/lab help)
    - ▪ Funding sources; and/or Conflicts of interest

- *FORMATTING*
  - o Wording
    - ▪ Use appropriate grammar and spelling
    - ▪ Use phrases instead of sentences as much as possible
    - ▪ Use active, not passive, verbs
    - ▪ Use bullets
  - o Avoid visual chaos that distracts the reader (e.g., numerous jagged edges, various-sized boxes and font sizes, gratuitous images)
  - o Provide visual cues to guide readers through your poster
  - o Make it aesthetically pleasing (because it enhances a person's desire to read it)
  - o Use figures, diagrams, graphics, or easy-to-read tables to explain/illustrate ideas or findings
    - ▪ Note: Using graphics downloaded from the Internet will often look terrible when printed; especially if you make the image bigger
    - ▪ Make sure images you use are public domain. Just because it is on the internet does not make it public domain
    - ▪ Images should only be used when they complement/explain the subject matter
  - o Avoid background graphics that make the text difficult to read
  - o Use plenty of white space
  - o Maintain logical column alignments
  - o Colour - Colour is encouraged, but limit the number of colours to create an overall theme for the poster
    - ▪ Use a light-coloured background with black or dark-coloured text printed
    - ▪ Avoid dark backgrounds with white letters because it uses a tremendous amount of ink

- Use large enough print, graphs, charts, or designs to be read easily from a distance
- Fonts
    - Do not use ALL CAPS
    - Don't mix a large number of fonts. Instead, make the headings/title a sans serif font (e.g., Arial, Helvetica) and the bodytext a serif font (e.g., Palatino, Times New Roman). Note: Serif fonts are easier to read, especially at smaller font sizes.
    - Use common fonts (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri) because you may not know which fonts will be on the computer that is used to print your poster
- All type should be a **minimum** font size of 16 – preferably bigger
    - Font at the same level (e.g., heading, first level bullet) should be the same size and type throughout the poster
- Try to consolidate as much information as possible
- If separate analyses found similar results, then try to consolidate the results into a table or concise summary of results

*ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES FOR POSTER PRESENTATIONS*

Colin Purrington
Creating Effective Poster Presentations | An Effective Poster

Last updated September 2019