Effective Posters, Presentations, and Abstracts

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Posters vs. Oral Presentations

**Posters**
- Roaming audience
- Interactive discussion: small groups or often 1-on-1
- More informal, not structured
- Flexible content, depending on listener
- ~5 minutes

**Oral Presentations**
- Audience focused on speaker
- Content is targeted toward the specific audience
- Formal and structured
- Set amount of time to present (~12 minutes)
- Q&A session at end
Structure of a Poster or Presentation

- Title and names
  - What is your research about and who is involved?

- Introduction and Objective
  - Why did you do this research?

- Methodology
  - How did you do the research? What steps did you follow?

- Results
  - What new information did you learn? Use figures to illustrate.
Structure of a Poster or Presentation

- **Summary and Conclusions**
  - Why are your results important and how do they contribute to the bigger picture?
  - What are the key things that were learned. Use bullet points

- **Future Directions**
  - What studies should follow from your work?

- **Acknowledge** sources of financial and technical support
Poster Presentation Tips

- Be prepared—know more than is displayed on your poster
- Don’t assume prior knowledge of project
- Try to figure out the level of understanding of the listener

Content should be easy to see
- Explain graphs and figures
- Engage your audience
Font Choice

- Big enough to see from 4-6 feet away!
- Highlights with Capitals, bold, color or *italics*
- But: Don’t **use too many fonts** on same **page**
- Use bullets instead of numbers
- **ALL CAPITALS ARE HARD TO READ** AND GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF YELLING.
Common Poster Mistakes

- Font size is too small to be useful
- Too many *design* features
- Too much text
- Poster elements exceed space
- Graphs or data charts are not labeled
- Elements of the poster appear randomly
- Assumes too much knowledge of audience
What researchers usually put on posters

- Abstract
- Email addresses
- Institutional logos
- Detailed methods
- Funding sources
- Reference list
- Lab website

What viewers care about

- Title
- Author’s names
- Data
- The question
- Take-home message
Pointers for an Effective Oral Presentation

- Be nervous!
- Practice your introduction
- Speak slowly
- Don’t be afraid to tell a conclusion up front
- Don’t read directly from the slide or notes
- Use the pointer properly
- Don’t relax when you are done – there are likely to be questions!
- Let the person ask their question fully, repeat the question if necessary
Common Talk Slide Mistakes

- Font size is too small on slides
- **Overuse of color or too many design features**
- Poor choice of background and text
- Too much text on slide
- Presentation is too long
- Slides have more information than necessary

- Images are not labeled
- Titles of slides do not give a take-home-message
- Overuse of animation
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Abstract Writing

- A short description of what you did and learned
- Should be interesting and informative
- Keep to the requested format (for UROP, 300-400 words)
- Write for a broad audience: explain key concepts briefly and spell out abbreviations on first use
- Don’t assume reader knows why your work is important
- Don’t get caught up in numbers - include only those that are most important
Abstract Layout

- **Introduction**
  - 1 sentence placing the study in context
  - 1-2 sentences explicitly stating what the study investigated and why it was special
- **Body**
  - 1-3 sentences summing up the approach, or the most important methods used to investigate the problem
- **Results and Discussion**
  - 1-3 sentences that summarize the MAJOR results and potential future applications
- **Summary**
  - 1 sentence that summarizes why your results are significant and perhaps what you will do in the future
Common Abstract Formatting Mistakes

- References to other literature
- References to figures or images
- Overuse of abbreviations or acronyms
- Repetition
- Including unnecessary or vague sentences
- Going over (or way under) the word limit
- Not following the abstract guidelines (font, length, title, authors)
Abstract Submission

- Abstracts are due **Thursday, August 23rd**
- Follow the abstract format **EXACTLY** for inclusion in the symposium booklet
  - Formatting instructions and template will be sent via email and will be available at www.bu.edu/urop
  - Your abstracts will be submitted via email to urop@bu.edu
- Abstracts absolutely **must not** exceed one page (~300-400 words)
15th Annual UROP Symposium

- Tentative: Friday, October 19, 2012
  - Parents Weekend
  - GSU Metcalf Ballroom
  - 11 am - 2:30 pm
- Poster Presentations
  - (two 1-hour sessions)
- Prizes for best posters
- Booklet cover design
  - volunteers

Poster design by Jacqueline Strawbridge
14th Annual UROP Symposium
BI495: 2-credit course

- *BU students* should sign up for BI495 by Friday, Aug 10
  - Course Requirements
    - Attendance at UROP summer workshops
    - Participation in UROP Symposium
    - A 10-20 page research paper due ~October 15, 2012
  - The course is “taught” by Dr. Gilmore
  - To sign up, send an email with your name and BU ID # to urop@bu.edu
  - You will be registered for the class in early September
  - You will receive a grade for the course at the end of the fall semester. The grade will mainly be based on your report, but may be affected by attendance at Monday workshops and symposium.
Student Evaluations

- Be sure to complete an evaluation of your summer UROP experience
- An email with a link to the evaluation will be sent to you later this summer
- Please complete evaluations by the end of August
Thank you all for a great summer!