

Developing a Winning Poster Presentation

Adapted from a presentation given by Hiatt Career Center,
Brandeis University

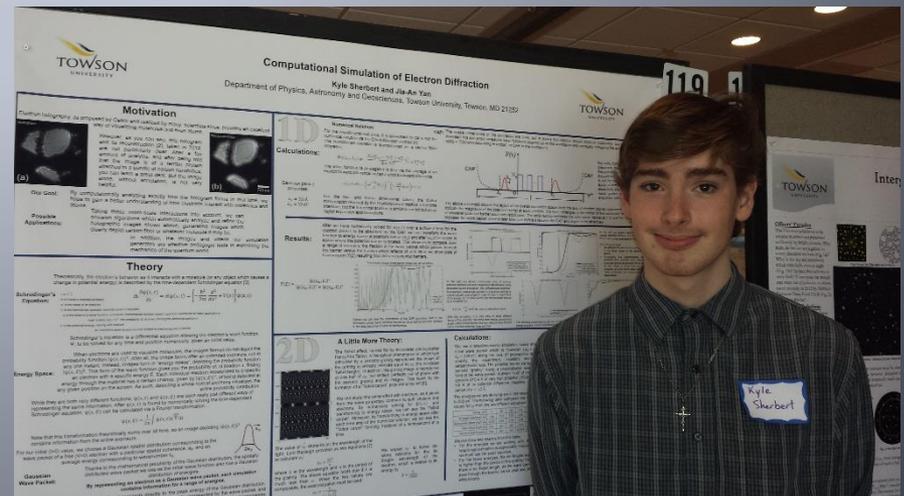
Why present your poster?

Poster presentations are a great opportunity for undergraduates to:

- Gain experience in presenting your work in a formal setting
- Receive feedback from faculty and peers
- Share ideas and learn from other students
- Enhance your resume

Posters:

- A large printed poster
- Mounted to a tri-fold board (or another method depending on the conference guidelines)
- 48" x 36"
- White or black
- Project Title
- Name
- Year
- Contact Info



Posters: What's your story?

- What did you do?
 - Why interesting? Important?
- But not ONLY about what you did
 - Outcomes? Who was affected?
 - Reflection? How were *you* affected?
 - Helpful information/advice to share with others?
 - Why would others want to know about this?

Goals of Experiential Learning

When creating your poster, remember Experiential Learning is:

1. An Intellectual Challenge

- Tackle real-world problems for which there are no answers in the back of the book.
- Challenge your powers of observation, analysis and creative thinking.
- Test theories against the concrete; experience, create, and prove new theories.

Goals of Experiential Learning

When creating your poster, remember Experiential Learning is:

2. A Practical Experience

- Explore the world of a professional in the field.
- Ask yourself, “Is this field the right fit for me?”
- Sharpen applications for graduate school and employment by documenting skills and experience.

Goals of Experiential Learning

When creating your poster, remember Experiential Learning is:

3. Opportunity for Personal Growth

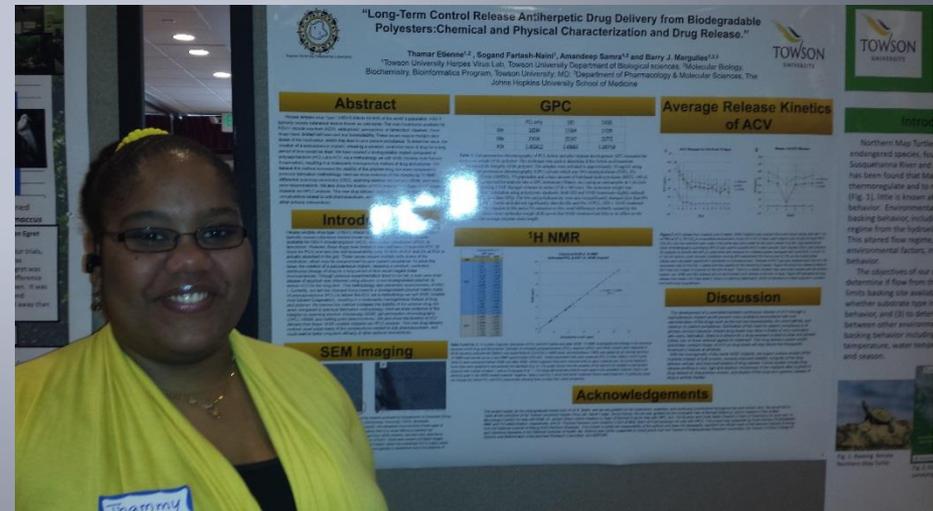
- Develop skills to work in groups or independently.
- Appreciate differences in learning style, values, and world view.
- Practice taking informed risks, and learn from mistakes as well as successes.

Make an Outline:

- Begin to make a mental outline
 - What journey do you want people to take?
- What were the biggest issues?
- ...Unexpected results?
- ...Proudest achievements?
- ...Lessons learned?
- ...Most significant insights?
- What are your next steps and future plans?

Effective Posters:

- Readable
- Legible
- Well-Organized
- Succinct



Effective Presentations: Readable

- Limited time to convey your message to your audience
 - May have less than 3 minutes per person
 - What are your most important points?
- Choose one memorable message
- Avoid grammar & punctuation mistakes
- Do the topics resonate with the audience?
 - Why should they know this?
 - The “grandmother” rule: Would she understand it?

Effective Presentations: Well-Organized

Spatial organization makes the difference between reaching 95% rather than 5% of the audience.

- Audience shouldn't have to hunt for main idea/takeaways
- Space in-between sections; Visually neat
- Good flow of logic
- Impactful, short titles
 - Avoid jargon
 - Borders or mounting sections of text help

Effective Presentations: Succinct

- Don't overwhelm them, entice them!
 - Think of 1-2 sentences to say to everyone
 - What are your most important points? Your one memorable message?
- Keywords and section headings that make an impact
- Pictures and graphs instead of paragraphs

Keep in Mind...

- Show, don't tell
 - Less (text) is more
 - Bullet points
- Photos & figures speak volumes and break up sections
- Use of color (if you can)
 - Printing
 - Border/mounting



Suggested Headings/Sections:

May differ depending on the type of poster
(Science Research vs. others)

- Personalized Titles
- Methods
- Outcomes
- Research Topic/
Problem
- Organization/Lab
- Challenges
- Successes
- Lessons Learned
- Highlights of the
Experience
- Next Steps... where is
this taking you?

Finalizing your Presentation

- Proofread!
- Get feedback from friends or mentors before printing
 - Clear & easy to understand?
 - Clean & well designed?
 - Memorable message?
- Know what you most want to tell people
 - 1-2 sentence version; 2-3 minute version
 - Prepare a handout that summarizes the poster and your findings



During your Presentation

- Dress professionally and wear comfortable shoes since you will likely be standing for a long period of time
- Your body language should be open and inviting for people to stop when they walk by.
- Be sure to speak loudly enough to be heard, slow enough that you think your are speaking too slowly, and without fillers like “um,” “uh,” “like,” “you know,” and “okay.”