Poster Presentation Tips

Adapted from a presentation given by Prof. Angela Gutchess, Department of Psychology

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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:

- Usually 1 foam board
- No tri-folds
- 40” x 30 or 32”
- 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?
When creating your poster, remember Experiential Learning is:

**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.

**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.

**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.

www.brandeis.edu/experientiallearning/for students/index.html
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?
- What are your next steps?
Effective Posters:

- Readable
- Legible
- Well-Organized
- Succinct
Effective Presentations: Readable

- Limited time to convey your message to your audience
  - May have <3 minutes/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?
Studies show you only have 11 seconds to grab and retain the audience’s attention.

- Aim for “visually clean and pleasing”
- Can they read it from 6-10 feet away?
- A poster is not a cut-up essay
  - (Again) What are your most important points?
  - Large font!! (30+ point)
  - High contrast font colors
  - Borders or mounting sections of text help
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
- A good flow of logic
- Impactful, short titles
  - Avoid jargon
  - Borders or mounting sections of text help
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
Show, don’t tell
  • Less (text) is more
  • Bullet points

Can you use organization’s handouts?

Photos & figures speak volumes and break up sections

Use of color (if you can)
  • Printing
  • Borders/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; 3 minute version
A Few Posters from Last Year

Last year’s Experiential Learning Symposium program

Brandeis University Presents

2010 (EL)²: Experiential Learning, Engaged Learners Symposium

March 16-18, 2010

g@brandeis.edu/el2
Students present their posters during a poster session on Experiential Learning.
• Clear sections

• Colorful borders

• Clean and easy to read

• Not too overwhelming

• Interesting graphics

• “Grabbing” Keywords
‘DeisBikes: Brandeis’ Bicycle Rental Program

What is ‘DeisBikes?’

‘DeisBikes is the bicycle sharing program of Brandeis University. Our mission is to promote bicycling as a desirable means of transportation in a greater effort to strengthen a culture of sustainability on campus. Based out of the Shapiro Campus Center, bikes and helmets can be rented for a maximum of one day, free of charge, and are maintained weekly by student mechanics.

How does ‘DeisBikes’ serve the Brandeis Community?

The idea for ‘DeisBikes began as an environmental sustainability initiative on the Brandeis campus. Currently the BranVan, campus shuttles, and personal cars are the most common modes of transportation for travel around campus and Waltham, but these emit carbon dioxide and other pollutants that are damaging to the environment. Previously, biking was an untapped transportation resource at Brandeis, and we wanted to fill that void. ‘Deis Bikes provides a convenient way to get to class, encourages off-campus exploration, and promotes a healthy body and environment.

What We Learned:

• We learned to apply our academic knowledge of principles of environmental sustainability to make a direct impact on our campus community.
• We learned to operate effectively as a group and in conjunction with campus partners to achieve a common goal.

Beginning in the Fall 2008 semester, members of both the Student Union Senate and Laura Goldin’s Greening the Ivory Tower class formed the ‘DeisBikes Team to begin planning a bicycle rental program. During regularly scheduled meetings we discussed the logistics of the program and read about bike-sharing programs at other schools to help us get started. After approval and funding from the Student Union Senate, we purchased each bike used from Craigslist and brought them in for an initial tune-up at the local bike shop, Spoke N’ Wheel. We also purchased tools, locks and helmets. This project would not have been possible without the collaborative efforts of:

• Jenna Cohen-Rosenthal, Campus Sustainability Coordinator
• Mark Collins, Vice President of Campus Operations
• Dennis Finn, Facilities
• Professor Laura Goldin, Environmental Studies
• Stephanie Grimes, Student Activities
• Frank Spinola, Spoke n’ Wheel

Process

Newspaper article

• Simple design
• Colorful/use of contrasting colors
• Basic but important Sections (What We Learned)
• Supporting graphics
• Newspaper article
Living the Conflict: Bringing Positive Change to Arab-Israeli Relations

Marnina Cowan
Class of 2010

The Project
During my all semester abroad at the University of Haifa, I ran an intensive English leadership program for Arab teenagers in Northern Israel. I worked through the organization “Makom Bagail” and their “Shemesh” (Neighbors) program. In my weekly meetings, I planned discussions and activities centered on identity and about what being Arab in a Jewish country means.

The Villages
Jedeida-Makr Group
- Arab-Israeli teenagers (male and female high school seniors)
- 10 Arab girls (8 years old) doing Shurut Le’umi (2 years of volunteer service through Israel)

Outcomes
- Students became increasingly comfortable in English
- They took initiative in the discussions and began arguing with each other
- This was one of the first times that the students individual opinions were emphasized (in their communities decisions are collective)
- Students benefited from dialogue for many, this was their first encounter with an American

Personal Reflection
“Goodbyes are never easy... As their bus pulled away, one of the students opened the bus window and they all yelled “We love you!” I had tears in my eyes. I wish others could have been there to witness an American Jewish university student crying as she waved goodbye to a group of Arab teenagers. The goodbyes was so hard, because I felt as though I was losing a part of myself. It’s hard to believe that in just three sessions, during a month and a half, a few can get so close to a group of Arab students. What made this goodbye especially hard was that I finally understood that both the students and I were leaving the semester as changed individuals. We found a basis for Arab-Jewish dialogue and most importantly, for friendship.”

- Mareena Cowan, December 2008
http://eng.makom-bagail.org.il

- Artistic borders
- Personalized title
- Quotations
- Colorful
- Impactful sections:
  - Personal Reflection
  - Goals
  - Outcomes
Working in the Emotion Lab: Student Perspectives of Learning, Growth, and Opportunity

Dawn Schwartz & Jonah Cohen
Psychology Department, Brandeis University

What is the Emotion Lab?
The Emotion Lab is a psychology research laboratory at Brandeis University. The lab, under the principal investigator Professor Devorah Lerman, examines the connection between emotions and attention across the adult lifespan. To investigate this link, the lab employs eye-tracking technology to look at the different processing techniques of emotionally prominent stimuli. This technology helps to unlock the connection between perception and affect - as we use and see how we feel.

Meet the Lab Members
Component of post-doctoral fellows, PhD students, and undergraduates.

The Lab Community
The Emotion Lab is a truly dynamic community. The lab culture supports and promotes a sense of community, where members share ideas and experiences. Members are encouraged to collaborate, discuss, and explore new ideas. This creates a unique and supportive environment.

Past and Current Research
A major theme within the lab’s research involves the role of attention in the processing of emotional information and how performance is influenced by experience and training. This theme is directly relevant to the lab’s main focus, which is to understand the relationship between attention and emotion.

Experiential Learning and Opportunity
The Emotion Lab offers a variety of hands-on experiences for undergraduate students. Below we examine two ways in which students can engage with the community, resources, and research of the lab.

The Role of a Research Assistant
- Typically enter in their sophomore year and continue through the duration of their college career.
- Can collaborate with an individual research project.
- Participate in analyzing data, running and scheduling experiments, giving presentations to the lab team, and other organizational duties.

A Look Inside a Current Honors Thesis

"More about Less: Why do Older Adults Prefer Fewer Choices?"

Abstract

Results

The above represents a sample of the work done on the Emotion Lab. In line with our predictions, there was no overall main effect for age. The interaction between age and decision making was significant, F(1,44) = 4.20, p < .05, 2.9% of the effect size. As can be seen in the graph, older adults showed an increase in the number of choices preferred, whereas younger adults showed a decrease. Overall, older adults are more likely to prefer fewer choices than younger adults. Given the results, we conclude that the preference for fewer choices increases with age.
Species Identification: Saving the World One Nematode at a Time
Lisa Rice, Arthur H. Rice, Jr. and Lawrence Brown, Department of Biology, Brandeis University

Background:

Abstract:
Limited genetic information is essential for species identification. DNA barcoding utilizes short sequences of DNA to identify species. The COI gene is the most widely used barcode for many organisms. However, it is not suitable for all species. A LATE-PCR was developed to amplify the COI gene in nematodes. This technique allows for a high-resolution analysis of nematode DNA. The resulting sequences can be used to identify species and monitor populations. The COI gene is specifically designed for nematodes and is highly conserved among these organisms.

Technology:

LATE-PCR Amplifies DNA
- The LATE-PCR technique is used to amplify the COI gene in nematodes.
- The amplified DNA is then sequenced and compared to existing databases.
- This process allows for the identification of new species and the monitoring of existing populations.

Results:

Translation Signatures into Barcodes
- Translation of DNA sequences into barcode signatures is essential for species identification.
- The barcode signatures are then used to identify species and monitor populations.

Barcode of Life Initiative
- An international project to develop DNA barcodes for species identification.
- The goal is to create a comprehensive database of DNA sequences for all known species.

COI Genes
- Understanding the COI gene in nematodes is crucial for species identification.
- The COI gene is specifically designed for nematodes and is highly conserved among this group of organisms.

Nematodes
- Nematodes play a significant role in the ecosystem and are essential for various ecological processes.
- They are often used as models for studying biological processes.

Conclusion:
- The LATE-PCR technique offers a promising approach for species identification.
- Further research is needed to refine the technique and improve its accuracy.

• Professionally printed
• Clear sections and results
• Good use of photos & graph
• Clear & easy to read
• Sections are bordered with color
• Title encompasses presentation

• Simple concepts; make one want to stop and listen

• Graphics/Arrows show progression

• Creative section titles: - Personal Journey - Corporate Journey
How will you share your summer experience?

Questions?
 experientiallearning@brandeis.edu