Tips & Tricks for Creating Engaging Posters

Jacalyn Kremer
Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library

Thank you to Barbara Ghilardi & Matt Bernstein of DiMenna-Nyselius Library, Fairfield University for the use of their work.
Title
Your Name

- Title largest and most prominent
- Name/affiliations below title
- Readable from 10ft away (1.5 inches tall)
- Use Sans Serif fonts (ex. Arial, Helvetica)
In the body...

- Use Serif fonts like Times New Roman
- Use high contrast between the background and text
  - Dark text on a light background is easier to read than light text on a dark background
- Key parts of text can be in color to draw the eye
- Bullet points are better

Dark borders can be helpful around boxes or figures on your poster to help the information stand out.
Layouts with a good flow

Should read from left to right, top to bottom
Avoid too much text!

- Leave space between sections
- 300-800 words
- Keep different kinds of **fonts** and **colors** to a minimum
- Avoid **underlining**, use **bold** instead
- Use relevant pictures or graphs to help illustrate your point

Ask yourself - does the picture or graph help me tell my story?
Some examples...
Pigs in Space

Effect of Zero Gravity and Ad Libitum Feeding on Weight Gain in Cavia Porcellus

Colin B. Purrington

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ABSTRACT:

One ignored benefit of space travel is a potential elimination of obesity: a chronic problem for a growing majority in many parts of the world. In theory, when an individual is in a condition of zero gravity, weight is eliminated. Indeed, in space one could conceivably lose fat or even gain an arm and the only side effect would be the need to upgrade stretchy pants/exercise pants). But because many diet schemes start at very good vegetables to be fed is not harmful, we tested our predictions with a long-term experiment in a colony of Guinea pigs (Cavia porcellus) maintained on the International Space Station. Individuals were housed separately and given unlimited amounts of high-calorie food pellets. Fat, eggs, fruits, and vegetables were not available in space so were not offered. Every 30 days, each Guinea pig was weighed after dinner. It was found that individuals, on average, weighed nothing. In addition to receiving nothing, we also performed a randomization test over the course of the protocol. If space continues to be gravity-free, and we believe that assumption is sound, we believe that losing the overweight and those at risk for overweight in...
Barriers, enablers and related strategies in relation to supported post-secondary education for people with mental health challenges: a pilot organizational case study

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Abstract

Introduction

1. Psychiatric enrolments are required by 5.1% of the college student population (McShane et al., 2003).
2. Access to education is the most important result for students with psychiatric disabilities in higher education (Lundberg & McEwan, 2005).
3. Students with mental health challenges may face personal, environmental, and organizational challenges, which may contribute to their increased costs of education (Gardiner, 2006).
4. Supported post-secondary education (Spence & McTavish, 1998) can help!!!! students from withdrawing from college but has a high attrition rate (Karr, 2000).
5. Although there have been some promising studies regarding supported post-secondary education outside of Canada (e.g., Spence & McTavish, 1998; McEwan et al., 2005; McEwan, 2005), there is a need for more research on the Canadian context to be performed.
6. With a better understanding of barriers and enablers of supported education for college students with mental health challenges, various departments at the college may look into ways to support their own students who face these challenges. The result could be a lower dropout rate and an even higher enrolment rate.

Objective and Questions

We wanted to explore how college students with mental health challenges experience the educational experience at Fanshawe College in this pilot study. The components of the study objective are: what barriers, what enablers and what are the suggested strategies to address these barriers.

Results: Review of Documents

1. Policies 2-1.91.b and the College’s response to the requirement of the Ontario Human Rights Code, explicitly stipulate that individuals have the right to education. The policy states that the college is committed to providing a supportive learning environment for all students. However, it does not explicitly address the needs of students with mental health challenges.

2. Direct Evidence from Other Sources

We conducted a review of documents, including college policies, programs, and information on the Fanshawe College website. A series of interviews were conducted with the college employees to identify any gaps or issues and to develop a comprehensive understanding of the college’s approach to supporting students with mental health challenges.

Results: Interviews with College Employees

1. Barriers

- Lack of awareness and understanding of mental health issues among students and employees
- Limited availability of resources and support services
- Stigma and discrimination towards students with mental health challenges

2. Enablers

- Access to support services, such as the Mental Health Support Team and counseling services
- Awareness and understanding of mental health issues among students and employees
- Availability of resources and support services

Discussion and Conclusion

1. The college’s approach is still in its initial stages and there is a need to develop a more comprehensive framework to support students with mental health challenges.
2. The research suggests that a multi-faceted approach is necessary to address the barriers faced by students with mental health challenges. Additional support services and resources should be developed and made available to students.
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**Loren Ipsum, MS, RD, CDN, CDEL**  
Berkeley University, California USA

### Introduction

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### Materials and Methods

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### Results

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### Conclusions

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### References

Title, formatted in sentence case (Not Title Case and NOT ALL CAPS), that hints at an interesting issue and/or methodology, doesn’t spill onto a third line (ideally), and sn’t hot pink

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Introduction
Congratulations: a reader was mildly intrigued by your title. Now you have 3-5 seconds to hook him into reading more by describing what your question was and why the answer might be of general interest. Gratifying background information will cause them to walk away if you’re missing something next to your name, which can be awkward.

Typographic research has shown that body text is easier to read if it is set in Times “not so tight” font such as Times. But don’t forget font is great for titles, headings, figure legends, etc. Research that shows that fully justified text (this paragraph) is slightly harder to read even though it looks really cool.

Figure 1. A photograph in your introduction can help here people to your otherwise non-photogenic research. It’s not your image, ask photographer for permission to use, and cite him/her.

Materials and methods
Few people, if any, really want to know the gruesome details of what you’ve been up to, so be brief. Use lightly-annotated photographs, drawings, or flow charts to visually convey your general experimental approach. To better engage viewers in your protocol or system, try attaching actual objects such as study objects (dead specimen), research glass, photo flip book, or a short movie (attached on smartphone with Viscom)

Figure 2. Hire an artist to illustrate the important step in your protocol. A photograph of you actually doing something might be your best, too. [Image by John Snow, 1852]

Results
The overall layout in this zone should be visually compelling, with clear axes on how a reader should travel through the components. Be creative. You might want a large map with inset graphs, or have axes on left with answers and supporting graphs on right. Be sure to separate figures from other figures by generous use of white space. When figures are too crowded, viewers get confused about which figure to read first and which logical gaps with which figure.

If you can add small drawings or icons to your figures, those visual cues can prevent folks in estimating viewers. And use colored arrows or calipers to focus attention on important parts of graphs. You can even put text annotations next to answer to tell readers what’s going on in that interesting section to how the hypothesis is being evaluated. E.g., “This outlier was most likely caused by contamination when I sucked into tube.” Also, don’t be afraid of using colored connector lines to show how one part of a figure relates to another figure. These tips might induce gaps for published manuscript, but posters can be more personal and thus better guide viewers.

Figures are preferred but tables are sometimes unavoidable, like death. But try to keep them concise, they look professional. Look in a respected journal and emulate the layout, line types, line thicknesses, text alignment, etc., exactly. Again, use colored text or arrows to draw attention to important parts of the table.

Paragraph format is fine, but so are bullet lists of results:

- 8 out of 12 brainstem-related rate survived
- Brainstem-related rate is low
- Control rate completed faster, on average, than rate without brains

Acknowledgments
We thank I. Glee for laboratory assistance, Mary Jone for advice, and the Ark for meals, and the Ark for meals. Funding for this project was provided by the Department of Thistle, which is because scientists are probably most interested in reading your figures and legends.

Further information
More tips (and templates) can be found at “Designing conference posters”.

http://colinpurrington.com/tips/poster-design
Middlesex Community College Honors Poster Symposium