

# Poster Making Tips for Success!

## **Why use a poster:**

- To provide visual assistance in disseminating ideas
- Engage others through discussion
- Advertise and summarize your work
- To reach across a broad collection of people

## **Characteristics of effective posters:**

- Readable (from a distance)
- Highly visible
- Organized
- Deliver a clear and concise message

## **Starting from “Square One”**

- Work closely with your faculty presentation advisor
- Have a clear understanding of your intended message
- Include pertinent research / scholarly information

## **What’s your point?**

- In five minutes or less, how would you describe your topic? Answer the “So, what?” question!
- How well does the content of your poster match your scholarly / academic work or research?

## **Know your audience:**

- *Experts:* Individuals with a relatively high level of disciplinary knowledge and interest. Can engage in in-depth conversation; using jargon and technical language in the discussion.
- *Wide-ranging discipline:* Individuals who may have some general familiarity with the field (or in related disciplines), but not enough to be considered an expert. Using minimal jargon and technical language is best.
- *General audience:* Individuals with little to no familiarity with the subject matter. Explain your work to them in the most basic way possible, completely avoiding jargon and technical language.

## **Academic/Research information to include:**

- Your academic/research poster is a succinct description of your work. It essentially sets the tone for the discussion. Good posters should include:
  - Title heading
  - Student’s Name, Presentation Advisor’s name (with appropriate title)
  - Institution’s name or logo
  - Abstract
  - Context/background (if applicable)
  - Objectives
  - Methods / Protocols (depends on project and discipline)
  - Results/outcomes – (data summary if applicable)
  - Conclusions
  - All appropriate citations and documentation

**\*\*POSTER COMPONENTS LOOK DIFFERENT FOR EACH DISCIPLINE – DEFER TO THE ADVICE OF YOUR PRESENTATION ADVISOR**

**Creating a poster overview:**

- Avoid excessive text; use phrases rather than full sentences. Keep each text element to approx. 50 words or less
- Avoid jargon
- Use graphics sparingly
- Use images only if you are citing the images
- Obtain Defiance College logos to include on the poster from Rena Rager in the McMaster office
- With graphs, use easily distinguishable colors
- Don't forget the most important aspect: the work itself!

**POSTER MAKING 101:**

- Most students choose to use Microsoft PowerPoint to create their posters
- Open Power Point
  - Go to Design
  - Go Slide Size then Customize
  - Use the 24" x36" and designate either portrait or landscape
- Hints
  - Maintain organization (with headers, numbers, bullets, etc.), avoid clutter
  - Stay away from the edges by leaving a generous border to prevent text or images from running off of the page when it is printed
  - View the poster details, alignments etc. by checking the 'slide' in the VIEW window and zoom in
- Fonts
  - For titles, use a large font between 72-120 points
  - Section headers (Abstract, protocols, etc) us 36-72 points
  - For text use 24 -48 points.
  - DO NOT USE MORE THAN 1(preferred) – 2 font styles – forget the word art
- Backgrounds
  - Use LIGHT colors!
  - Options
    - Color gradient
    - Image
    - Design templates offered with a custom color palate that is notably lighter
- While it is not mandatory to list references on a poster it is usually preferred so check with your faculty presentation advisor
- Organize your poster with a color palate of text boxes but too many different colors detract from organization and contribute to chaos – keep color themes to 2 – 3 colors

**Presenting your poster:**

- Bring handout for your visitors. Include detailed information about your work in a narrative form, your bio, as well as your contact information
- Have a 3-5 minute presentation prepared
  - Avoid *reading* your poster. Instead, describe it. Explain the key points, the importance of your research, the posters images, and the overall "big picture."