Tips for Constructing a Poster

FONTS STYLE: Use a clear, traditional font. "Fancy" fonts are inappropriate because they make posters difficult to read. San serif fonts (like Arial) are easier to read. Choose one font and use it throughout the poster changing the size and boldness for emphasis. Limit the use of italics, as it is difficult to read.

FONT SIZE: The poster (all headlines, text, etc.) should be readable from 3 feet away. Use a large enough font (typeface) so that people can read from a distance. Generally speaking, the title should be approximately one inch high, headings should be at least 36 point type, and text should be at least 24 point type.

FONT COLOR: Choose a dark color that is easy to read. Light colored text, even on a dark background is difficult to read.

TITLE: Poster titles can be in all caps (traditional) or not, but the title should not be excessively long. Typically, a title can fit on one or two lines. Longer titles occupy too much poster space and detract from the information you hope to present.

HEADINGS: Headings should be consistently styled, whether in all caps or initial caps, boldface or underlined, flush left or centered. Choose one style/color and be consistent throughout the poster. Use the headings appropriate to your discipline/research (such as introduction, methods, results, and conclusion). Generally, poster presenters limit their headings to six or fewer.

TEXT: Avoid thick blocks of unbroken prose. This makes it difficult for viewers to identify your main points. Rather, identify your main points and whenever possible use lists and bullets, especially in the methods and conclusions sections. You can always elaborate as part of your discussion during the poster presentation.

COLOR: Typically, the text sections of the poster are the most legible when printed on white. However, some students, will use their school colors or a symbolic color related to the research (e.g., political spending = green). Still others make use of color theory: warm colors (red, orange, yellow) are considered higher in visibility than cool colors (blue). Remember that overuse of color detracts from a poster's overall effect because it emphasizes style over substance. Generally speaking, black is the best color for the text itself, except in graphs.

POSTING: Usually posters are put up with T-pins or thumb tacks on a corkboard. Alternatively, you may decide to place Velcro tabs on the back of your poster - be sure to use plenty of Velcro if you’re your poster is laminated, as the extra weight will make require additional Velcro to hold the poster in place.

STAFFING: You should be at your assigned space during the designated time to discuss the work presented. Be prepared to respond to questions concerning all aspects of the project. A handout with references is always a good idea.

ORGANIZATION: Read through your paper, extract the main points, develop an outline and put that outline onto individual sheets. A typical way to present your ideas in poster form is to include an introduction; a brief description of your method/procedures; an outline your results; and the implications of your findings. Include a clear statement of the research question and why your research is significant or important. There is no need to include an abstract.

Organize the elements of your poster using the five “W’s” (who, what, when, where, why):

- Introduction section: describe what you are studying, why it is important, and how your analysis will add to the existing literature in the field.
• Data and methods section: list **when, where, who, and how** the data were collected, **how** many cases were involved, and **how** the data were analyzed. For other types of interventions or program evaluations, list who, when, where, and how many, along with how the project was implemented and assessed.

• Results section: present **what** you found.

• Conclusion section: return to **what** you found and **how** it can/will be used

If you have room, you may want to include a section of acknowledgments (mentor's name and department) as well your references.

VISUAL IMAGES: Use simplified charts, graphs, photos or other visual elements to enhance your poster. You may want to even consider including an institutional logo. You can download the academic N or UNL logo at: http://www.unl.edu/ucomm/ucomm/toolbox.shtml#font