

Academic Posters

Writing Centre Learning Guide

A poster is a visual presentation that showcases your scholarly research. The purpose of a poster is to present a piece of work that colleagues can easily view and which can stimulate an exchange of ideas between the presenter and the audience reading the poster. A poster is different from a paper or a talk, and so distinct techniques need to be employed in its preparation.

Introduction

Academic posters are often displayed at conferences and other academic forums, with times allocated for presenters to be available to discuss the content with attendees. A poster is an excellent way for presenters to introduce their scholarly work to peers and can allow for valuable networking opportunities.

When you prepare an academic poster, it is important that it be eye-catching and readable from a distance of 2-3 metres. Most of your audience will spend a limited amount of time scanning your poster and will only stop and read it in more detail if something catches their attention.

Developing your poster - General considerations

There are many features of an academic poster that should be taken into account. Consider the following:

- Adhere to the presentation requirements i.e. poster dimensions, mandatory content inclusions and method of fixing poster to the display.
- Critically review other discipline-specific posters for academic design, clarity and layout.
- Decide the main message you want to convey to attendees and brainstorm the information you want and/or need to include.
- Consider the interests and academic levels of the audience, and be gender inclusive.
- An attractive poster takes time, so it will be necessary to give yourself ample opportunity for its design, creation and production.
- Experiment with different layout concepts and develop them in the actual size of the poster to give yourself a realistic idea of how the completed poster will appear.
- Irrespective of how you create and produce your poster, you will need to work through a series of drafts to guarantee the quality of the final product.
- Explore computer programs that will assist you in the preparation of your poster, save you time, and enhance the overall quality of the final product. PowerPoint, Publisher and Excel by Microsoft are usually available to students in university computer labs; Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign by Adobe may need to be purchased and can be expensive.

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Poster text

- The main idea and title of your poster should be identifiable from approximately 2-3 metres.
- Font sizes must be legible from approximately 2-3 metres i.e. at least 96-100 point for main heading, 30-36 point for subheadings and 18-24 point for standard text.
- Recommended typefaces include Arial, Verdana, Tahoma and Times New Roman.
- For emphasis underline, italicise or colour highlight text, but do not CAPITALISE as this is often considered the equivalent of shouting.
- Blocks of text should not exceed three paragraphs and should be left-aligned; avoid centred and right-aligned text.
- Use dot points, lists or tables to increase clarity and quantity of information.
- Avoid abbreviations, acronyms and jargon, unless it is pertinent detail specific to your discipline.

Poster colours

- Use a light coloured background with dark coloured text for contrast. Avoid dark backgrounds with light letters.
- When possible, stick to a theme of 2-3 colours that are thematically linked e.g. water = blue.
- If you use multiple colours, use them in a consistent pattern, otherwise viewers will spend their time wondering what the pattern is rather than reading the specifics of your poster.
- Overly bright colours will attract attention, but may become visually overwhelming or distracting on the eyes.
- Consider people who have problems differentiating colours, especially when designing graphics. One of the most common problems is an inability to tell green from red.

Poster graphics

- Use only high quality graphics (i.e. graphs, illustrations and photos) as the centrepiece of your poster, as they need to communicate themes and relationships quickly.
- Present numerical data in the form of graphs rather than tables, as graphs make trends in the data much more evident. If data must be presented as a table, keep it simple.
- Avoid 3D graphs unless you are displaying 3D data, as 3D images can be difficult to interpret.
- Text on graphs must follow the same guidelines as all other text on your poster, in order to be visible.

Just in Time Teaching (JiTT) revisited: Using e-assessment and rapid e-learning to empower face-to-face teaching

Allan Carrington & Ian Green
University of Adelaide

Introduction

Today's educational technologies allow an educator to more readily develop quality digital teaching and learning materials. By also integrating regular formative e-assessment into these learning objects, teachers can obtain a better understanding of the needs and knowledge students bring to the classroom, and can just in time adjust their lecture plans accordingly.

JiTT v1

Integrated Assessment
The Just in Time Teaching (JiTT) system for the University of Adelaide was developed in 2006, 2007, and 2008. It is a formative e-assessment system that allows teachers to assess their students' understanding of key concepts in real time. The system is designed to be used in conjunction with face-to-face teaching.

Potential

There are several potential advantages to the JiTT system. First, it allows teachers to assess their students' understanding of key concepts in real time. This allows them to adjust their lecture plans accordingly. Second, it allows students to receive immediate feedback on their answers. This helps them to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Third, it allows students to learn at their own pace. They can spend more time on topics they find difficult and less time on topics they find easy.

Rapid e-learning

The JiTT system uses a combination of e-learning and face-to-face teaching. The e-learning component is used to deliver content and assess students' understanding. The face-to-face component is used to provide additional support and clarification. This combination allows teachers to deliver high-quality instruction in a more efficient and effective way.

Conclusion

The JiTT system is a powerful tool for educators. It allows them to assess their students' understanding of key concepts in real time and adjust their lecture plans accordingly. It also allows students to receive immediate feedback on their answers and learn at their own pace. This combination of e-learning and face-to-face teaching is a more efficient and effective way to deliver high-quality instruction.

Quality assurance in detecting and preventing plagiarism: A mainstream educative strategy

Ursula McGowan
Deputy Director Learning and Teaching Development Unit
The University of Adelaide, September 2004

Plagiarism as cheating

- Copying a whole paper from a fellow student
- Purchasing a paper - stolen from an obscure source - in one's name
- Buying a paper online
- Copying an entire page from a friend's notes
- Copying an entire page from a friend's notes

Detection and prevention

- Increased vigilance & discipline
- Assessor's knowledge of sources of Electronic sources (e.g. Turnitin.com)
- One student's information
- Provide clear referencing guidelines
- Assessor's formative feedback

Inadvertent plagiarism

- Paraphrasing or summarising without referencing
- Using exact words without the use of quotation marks
- Not understanding conventions of referencing for the need for citation
- Lack of experience of appropriate language

Genre Analysis

Using their reading to improve their writing. Learning the language of the genre. For some students this is an unrecognised process that is an educative strategy. Fostering a conscious approach to internalise the process.

EDUCATIVE STRATEGY

Take into account that students with no experience of university need MORE THAN clarification of rules and practices in referencing. It is needed to induct them into the culture of research and the LANGUAGE for doing it.

A student's 'own words'

- A student's 'own' language is not prior experience
- Learning to write is a process of borrowing
- Learning to write is a process of borrowing
- Learning to write is a process of borrowing

HOW TO DO IT

- Analyzing the structure of the genre to use it 'model'
- Examining and identifying the text
- Examining and using the language features typically occurring at each stage

During the process

Use the process to assess the student's understanding of the genre and to provide formative feedback.

Scenario + Rapid e-learning = Powerful learning

Tristram Lawson, The University of Adelaide

Introduction

The integration of rapid e-learning software with situational learning pedagogy can empower education to create innovative learning modules together with rapid e-learning and rapid e-learning to produce challenge modules that are more interactive and immersive but also understanding of the subject matter.

Rapid e-learning software

The use of rapid e-learning software in developing educational content quickly and effectively by using materials developed by subject matter experts. This approach is driven by the need to develop high-quality learning materials that are interactive and immersive but also understanding of the subject matter.

Powerful learning

How and why is the blending of rapid e-learning software with situational learning pedagogy more powerful? It is more powerful because it allows students to learn at their own pace and in their own way. It is more powerful because it allows students to receive immediate feedback on their answers. It is more powerful because it allows students to learn at their own pace and in their own way.

Engaging - highly interactive

ACADEMIC ISSUES FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

in the growing cultural and educational diversity of universities: a staff and student development agenda

The politico-economic context
The need for higher education is a result of a globalisation of the world and the need for lifelong learning (Hobson 2002)

The institutional context
The need for higher education is a result of a globalisation of the world and the need for lifelong learning (Hobson 2002)

Learning and teaching centres
The need for higher education is a result of a globalisation of the world and the need for lifelong learning (Hobson 2002)

Theoretical framework
The need for higher education is a result of a globalisation of the world and the need for lifelong learning (Hobson 2002)

Issues for first year students

- Discussion and action associated with:
- poorly informed choices, inadequate preparation, unrealistic expectations
- lack of continuity between school and university
- difficulty in adjusting to university teaching styles
- lack of goal purpose, direction
- sense of isolation, alienation
- lack of motivation, interest
- time spent in employment

Staff and student development

- Possible future directions
- increasing integration of all aspects of the transition process prior to and during first year
- development and implementation of appropriate transition strategies (institutional policies, transition programs, web sites, mentor schemes)
- multi-modal delivery of information, services, courses, resources
- ongoing institution-specific research to inform policy and practice in relation to the first year experience

Implications

- What happens prior to university is critical in terms of:
- information
- choice (and bases for choices)
- goal setting
- approaches to teaching and learning

Key intervention points during first year transition:

- orientation
- orientation
- first semester learning and assessment tasks
- before second semester

Select Bibliography

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Overall poster presentation

- Leave a 3-5cm border around the entire poster to frame your work.
- Eye movement should be neutral i.e. vertically-down columns, horizontally-along rows, top to bottom. Use font sizes, arrows, letters or numbers to clarify a sequence.
- Colour selection should be simple and pleasing to the eye to help unify the poster.
- Intense colours can be used for borders, contrast and emphasis.
- Keep the layout basic and the text brief without overloading the poster. More material can mean less communication. Text should be balanced with graphics, about 50 : 50.
- Include blank space to create a visually attractive poster that is not too 'busy'. Viewers will be able to recognise the most important information if it is not buried in the poster.
- Visuals should be uncomplicated and bold. Leave out unnecessary details and ensure that visuals can 'stand alone' i.e. that graph axes are properly labelled, that maps have north arrows and distance scales, and that symbols are self-explanatory or explicitly explained.
- Make sure that the text and the visuals are integrated i.e. figures are numbered and labelled consecutively according to the order in which they are found in the text and are in close proximity to the corresponding text.

Other recommendations

- Create a handout for your readers that includes a miniature version of your poster and more detailed information about your work. Consider doing this on A4 paper, folded to A5. This will allow for three pages of information and one page for your poster image.
- Provide your contact information, such as an email address and/or a URL, where the viewer can download a PDF version of your poster and additional information on your research. Place handouts and business cards nearby e.g. on a table or in an envelope hung with the poster.

Useful resources

Websites

<http://depts.washington.edu/uwmcnair/Poster%20Design%20Workshop2007p.pdf>

<http://www.essex.ac.uk/myskills/skills/presentations/doingPosterPres.asp>

<http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters/>

http://www.staffs.ac.uk/schools/sciences/learning_and_teaching/SSposter.htm

http://www2.napier.ac.uk/getready/writing_presenting/academic_posters.html

Poster Templates

http://www.makesigns.com/SciPosters_Templates.aspx

Online Tutorial

<http://connect.le.ac.uk/posters>