

BIOT 952 Scientific and Technical Communication in Biotechnology

Summer 2017

Instructors: Patricia Lynne and John Wing

TR 6:00 pm – 9:20 pm

Poster Presentation of a Scientific Article

Assignment: Prepare a poster presenting the research from your assigned article and deliver a short presentation in which you either (1) explain the key findings of the research or (2) explain your process for converting the article to a poster format.

Audience: Other researchers interested in either the research (for Option 1) or creating posters like this (Option 2)

Draft Due: June 20th for work in class

Final Due: June 22nd for presentation in class

Length: 3-5 minutes

With your work on the rhetorical analysis, you have been focusing on how an article works in written form. In this assignment, you will take a different rhetorical approach: converting the research to a poster form and providing an accompanying presentation. Poster presentations are a very common method for sharing research, particularly at professional conferences, and creating one will allow you to explore the strengths and limitations of this format.

Preparing Your Poster

Your poster will need to present the key findings from your assigned article. In class, we will discuss criteria for strong posters, and we will look at some examples, both in the textbook (pp. 166-172) and around Hemenway. You will use PowerPoint (or a similar program) to prepare your poster, and we will go over both the conceptual work that goes into posters and technical how-to procedures.

You will need to prepare your poster in time to have it printed by FSU's Copy Center, which means you must submit your poster order form and PDF file by 9:00 am on June 21st at the absolute latest to have the poster ready for the formal presentations on June 22nd. Further instructions for placing the order and picking up your poster will be provided in class.

Preparing Your Presentation

Poster presentations usually involve the researcher standing by their poster ready to explain the research and engage in conversation with interested viewers. Normally, researchers should have at the ready both a long version of a presentation (10-15 minutes for those who want to understand the research and your work more thoroughly) and a short version (3-5 minutes for those who are moving quickly and who will only be able to give you a few minutes of their time). Since you have already done a long individual presentation, you will only prepare the short version for this assignment.

You may choose one of two options:

Option 1: You will explain the key findings of the study. This option will be best for those of you who feel reasonably comfortable with the science in the article you have been working with.

Option 2: You will explain the process by which you converted the article to a poster, with a focus on what this medium allows you to emphasize and how you overcame any difficulties in converting the research from one medium to another.

The option you choose will determine the content of your presentation. You will need to make decisions about items such as the following:

- What does your audience already understand? Do not waste time telling your audience what they already know.
- What is your audience likely to find significant? Keep in mind that while key findings or adjustments/obstacles are obviously important, you need to make sure you are explaining the significance to an audience who may not find the same points obvious.
- For Option 1: How much detail do you explain? While your poster should have sufficient detail, how much of that detail do you need to talk about and how much can you talk about in 3-5 minutes?
- For Option 2: How much detail about your conversion process will your audience care about? Be careful about treating this as a narrative: Stories about a process can take a while to get going and 3-5 minutes is not a long time.

Delivering Your Presentation

On the 22nd, we will mimic a formal poster session. That is, multiple posters will be up and multiple students will be presenting at the same time. This will provide you with practice in managing this kind of atmosphere, including ways of handling newcomers joining a presentation in the middle -- though you will be evaluated on your full formal presentation.

As before, length matters. Your presentation should be between 3 and 5 minutes long, and as noted in the individual oral presentation assignment, presentations that respect the audience and other presenters run neither long nor short. As before, presentations that are under or over the allotted time will be penalized, and while we won't stop your presentation this time, we will walk away from presentations that run longer than 6 minutes.

As with the individual oral presentation, practice is crucial. Your audience is interested in hearing you, and they want to be engaged with your presentation. You will have time to practice with peers in class on June 20th. Here, too, you may find recording yourself valuable.

Evaluation

When we evaluate your poster presentation, we will be looking for both the visual and oral elements of this presentation. That is, we will evaluate how well you have designed and presented the information from the research article in poster format, and we will evaluate how clearly organized and polished the oral part of your presentation is.