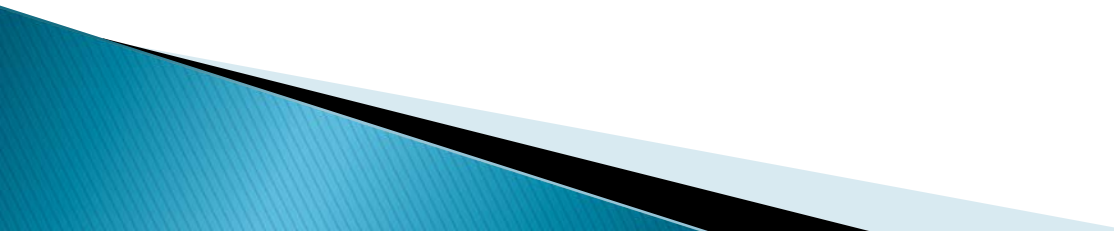


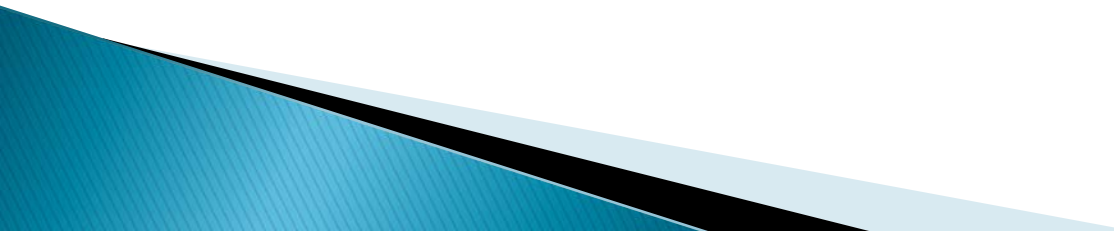
# Poster Presentations

How to Effectively Communicate  
your Information

# What is a Poster Presentation?

- ▶ A poster presentation advertises your project
  - ▶ It combines text and graphics to present your project in a way that is visually interesting and accessible
  - ▶ It allows you to display your work to a large group of other scholars and to talk to and receive feedback from interested viewers
  - ▶ A poster should clearly articulate what you did, how you did it, why you did it, and what it contributes to nursing knowledge
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# Goals in Constructing a Poster

- ▶ Clarity of content
    - Need to decide on a small number of key points
    - Need to articulate those ideas clearly and concisely
  - ▶ Visual interest and accessibility
    - You want viewers to notice and take interest in your poster so that they will pause to learn more about your project
    - Need the poster's design to present your research or project in a way that is easy for those viewers to make easy sense of it
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# The One Question to Ask:

- ▶ “Does each item I place on this poster add to what I am trying to communicate?”
  - Does it make sense?
  - Is it just filler?
  - Does it take away from the content?

# How much information

- ▶ Probably less than you would like!
  - One of the biggest pitfalls of poster presentations is filling your poster with so much text that it overwhelms your viewers and makes it difficult for them to tell which points are the most important
  - Viewers should be able to skim the poster from several feet away and easily make out the most significant points.
- ▶ The point of a poster is not to list every single detail of your project
  - The purpose of a poster is to make people see the value of your project
    - To do this, you will need to determine what you want your take-home message to be
    - What is the single most important thing you want your audience to understand, believe, accept, or do after they see your poster?
- ▶ Once you have an idea about what that take-home message is, you will need to support it by adding some details about what you did as part of your research, how you did it, why you did it, and what it contributes to nursing knowledge

# What should I say if I'm not finished with my project?

- ▶ Scholars often present their work before their projects are complete. If that is the case, you have several options for constructing your presentation:
  - If you have any preliminary results, use them as examples of the kind of results you hope to obtain
  - Discuss the significance of these results
  - Do they suggest that more work is necessary?
  - Do they suggest that the final results will be particularly promising or revolutionary? Do they suggest that you need to revise your approach? Do they suggest that the field as a whole needs to revise its ideas on the subject?

# What should I say if I'm not finished with my project?

- ▶ If you don't have any preliminary results, you can focus on projected results:
  - What do you think you might find when your results are complete?
  - Why do you expect this?
  - What significance would such results have?
- ▶ In any case, whether you have complete, partial, or only projected results, keep in mind that your explanation of those results--their significance--is more important than the raw results themselves

# Writing Differences between papers and posters

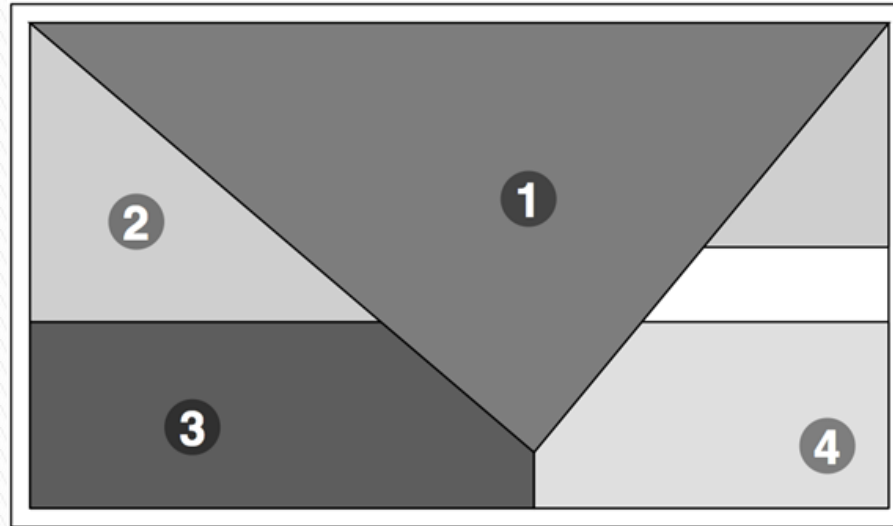
- ▶ In general, you will need to simplify your wording
- ▶ Long, complex sentences are difficult for viewers to absorb and may overwhelm them so much that they give up and move on to the next poster
- ▶ Writing for posters must be concise, precise, and straightforward
  - avoid jargon (the use of big words or field-specific terms in order to make your writing sound “smarter”)
- ▶ Here is an example:
  - Wording in a paper:  
This project sought to establish the ideal specifications for clinically useful wheelchair pressure mapping systems, and to use these specifications to influence the design of an innovative wheelchair pressure mapping system.
  - Wording on a poster:  
Aims of study:
    - Define the ideal wheelchair pressure mapping system
    - Design a new system to meet these specifications

# How long should I let audience members look at the poster before engaging them in discussion?

- ▶ Don't feel as if you have to start talking to viewers the minute they stop in front of your poster
- ▶ Give them a few moments to read and process the information
- ▶ Once the viewers have had time to familiarize themselves, offer to guide them through the poster
- ▶ Say something like:
  - “Hello. Thanks for stopping to view my poster. Would you like a guided tour of my project?” This kind of greeting often works better than simply asking “Do you have any questions?” because after only a few moments, viewers might not have had time to come up with questions, even though they are interested in hearing more about your project.

# How should I lay out my poster?

- ▶ In general, people expect information to flow right-to-left and top-to-bottom
- ▶ Viewers are best able to absorb information from a poster with several columns that progress from right to left
- ▶ Even within these columns, however, there are certain places where viewers' eyes naturally fall first and where they expect to find information.
- ▶ Imagine your poster with an upside-down triangle centered from the top to the bottom
  - It is in this general area that people tend to look first and is often used for the title, results, and conclusions
  - Secondary and supporting information tend to fall to the sides, with the lower right having the more minor information such as acknowledgements, references, and personal contact information



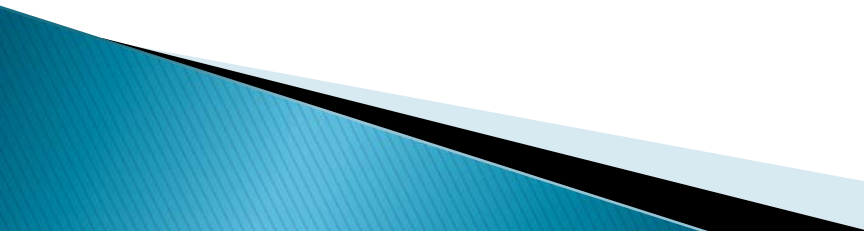
- 1 Main Focus Area**  
Location of research fundamentals: Title, Abstract, Results, Conclusion.
- 2 Secondary Emphasis**  
Location of important info: Intro, Results, Summary
- 3 Supporting Area**  
Location of supporting info: Methods, Discussion
- 4 Final Info Area**  
Location of supplemental info: References, Acknowledgments, Personal information

Best Poster Layout Design

# How much white space should I leave on my poster?

- ▶ White space is helpful to your viewers; it delineates different sections, leads the eye from one point to the next, and keeps the poster from being visually overwhelming
- ▶ In general, leave 10–30% of your poster as white space

# Should I use graphics?

- ▶ Visual aids are one of the most effective ways to make your poster visually striking, and they are often a great way to communicate complex information straightforwardly and succinctly.
  - ▶ If your project deals with lots of empirical data, use charts, graphs, or tables summarizing that data and illustrating how that data confirms your hypothesis.
  - ▶ If you don't have empirical data, you have other options for visual aids
  - ▶ You may be able to incorporate photographs, illustrations, annotations, and so on in order to pique your viewers' interest, communicate your motivation, demonstrate why some aspect of your project is particularly interesting or unique
  - ▶ Make sure your visual aids contribute to your overall message; they should convey some piece of information that your viewers wouldn't otherwise get just from reading your poster's text
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# General Information

- ▶ Note size of poster space allowed by conference
  - Print poster to that size, not smaller
- ▶ All lettering should be at least 3/8 inches high
  - Consultation with a media expert is strongly recommended
- ▶ Instead, make sure that 95% of the text on your poster can be read from 4 feet away
  - If viewers can't make out the text from a distance, they're likely to walk on past your poster without reading it at all
- ▶ Choose a sans-serif font like Helvetica or Verdana, not a serif font, like Times New Roman (and don't use a monospace font like Courier, where every letter has the same width)
  - For large print like the print on a poster, sans-serif fonts are easier to read because they don't have extraneous hooks on every letter
- ▶ Keep labels and captions brief
- ▶ Ensure pictures are appropriate level of resolution

# Bullet Points

- ▶ Using bullet points on a slide is a great way to present the key ideas during a presentation. When selecting a bullet to use, consider these ideas:
  - **Bullet Character** – The most popular choices are a filled circle, filled square, open circle, hyphen and arrow
    - The characters with a large portion of the character filled are easier to see by the audience and are preferred
  - **Bullet Size** – Try to select a bullet size slightly smaller than the font of the text so it does not overpower the text itself
  - **Bullet Spacing** – make sure that there is sufficient space between the bullet and the first letter of the text so that the first word is readable

# Color Combinations to Avoid

- ▶ Some colors should not be used together for a variety of reasons, so here are some combinations to avoid:
  - Red & Green – these two colors clash with each other and are very hard to read
    - Also, people who are red–green color blind will not be able to figure out what you are trying to say on the slide
  - Orange & Blue – another pair that causes a disturbing effect on readers as the colors seem to vibrate against one another
  - Red & Blue – these two colors just do not have enough contrast to be seen well when used together

# Font Effects

- ▶ One way to make words stand out is to use font effects, such as these:
  - **Bold** – makes the lines of the font thicker. A very useful effect and the first choice to make a word stand out
  - **Underline** – places a line under the word. The second choice for making a word stand out; however be careful not to overuse
  - **Italic** – slants the tops of the letters of the font to the right, however, italic font is harder to read, so it should be used sparingly
  - **Shadow** – places a dark gray shadow of each letter behind the letter slightly to the right and slightly below the letter; this is a poor choice to emphasize a word because it is so hard to actually see the shadow in many cases
  - **All Caps** – the word is typed in all capital letters. In the past, this was an acceptable way to emphasize a word, but today all capital words are considered to be shouting at the person and will not be viewed favorably
  - **Word Art** – this feature allows you to distort the letters of the font in a variety of ways. Unfortunately many of these effects end up looking amateur and should be used with caution

# References

- ▶ Dave Paradi, MBA, co-author of "Guide to PowerPoint"  
<http://www.thinkoutsidetheslide.com/>
- ▶ [http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/presentations\\_poster.html](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/presentations_poster.html)