

Workshop # 5 & 6 (two sessions): Poster Preparation Training 1: “Basics on Poster Creation” and “Poster Preparation Training 2: “Presentation of Sample Poster by Groups”

Speaker: Ms. Andrea Burrows, Grant Coordinator, NSF Graduate K-12 Fellows Grant STEP (Science and Technology Enhancement Project), College of Engineering, University of Cincinnati

Dates: July 7 and 21, 2008

Times: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon (July 7) and 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon (July 21)

These two workshop sessions were given by Ms. Andrea Burrows, Grant Coordinator, NSF Graduate K-12 Fellows Grant STEP (Science and Technology Enhancement Project), College of Engineering, University of Cincinnati, respectively, on July 7 from 9:00 a.m. to noon (3 hours) and on July 21 from 10:00 a.m. to noon (2 hours). A gap of two weeks was given between the two sessions in order to give some time for the participants to develop a sample poster for their research to discuss at the second session. Ms. Burrows is a doctoral degree student in the College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services (CECH), University of Cincinnati. She returned to do her doctoral degree after serving as a 6-12 science teacher for twelve years and a college adjunct instructor for one year.

This series of workshops was jointly held for the 9 REU participants, 14 NSF RET Site teachers, and 6 NSF Graduate K-12 Fellows. The photograph in Figure 1 below shows Ms. Burrows starting the workshop. The workshops gave the participants guidelines for presenting research in the form of a research poster. A 3' x 5' template was recommended for use for the poster, features of which can be found at <http://www.med.uc.edu/graded/posterprinting>. If the participants choose to change the layout, they were recommended to still use one of the approved UC templates for logos from <http://www.uc.edu/ucomm/branding>.



Figure 1. Ms. Andrea Burrows Welcoming the Participants in the Poster Workshop

The workshop stressed on following points:

- (1) Every presentation should include a 3 panel orientation that includes: title, abstract, introduction, methods, results, conclusion, references, and acknowledgements sections. The audience for the presentation should be envisioned as broadly technical, but lacking expertise in the particular

topic of the research. Accordingly we should avoid using complicated technical jargon specific to our discipline. Do not write your poster just as if it were a scientific paper. Write plainly simply, briefly-never cryptically. A little informality can help but don't get too cute. Stress experimental strategy, key results, and your conclusions. Don't get bogged down in little stuff. Convey the Big Picture. Do not waste lots of precious space on messy experimental details (skip a complete Materials and Methods section) or on irrelevant minutiae. Do not ever supply long tables; no one has the time or inclination to wade through these. And do not ever lift long sections of text directly from your research paper manuscript and use these as a part of your poster. A poster is not a worked-over manuscript.

- (2) Do provide parties with routes into the literature and supply a context for your work. Poster references need not be as extensive as those in papers. Another useful bit of supplementary information to provide is the address of an Internet web site (URL) where more information can be found.
- (3) Text, tables and images need to be clearly visible from a 5' distance. Do recall that a poster should be more telegraphic in style, and also far more accessible. The main body of text should be typed with 1/4" lettering. Title text needs to be scaled to 2"-3" high, with 1/2"-1" subheadings. Sizing of text should be consistent throughout the poster.
- (4) Other design recommendations include leaving sufficient amount of white space for the margins (1/2") and in-between sections of the body to articulate the different parts of the poster and avoid visual clutter. One should substitute graphs for tables to the extent possible. Colors should be used for emphasis where relevant.
- (5) Do not ever expect anyone to spend more than 3-5 minutes (tops!) at your poster. If you can't clearly convey your message pictorially in less time than this, chances are you have not done the job properly.
- (6) Do not leave out the acknowledgments. Write up a short acknowledgment section, including your sources of financial support (e.g., NSF and UC), and everyone who helped you to get this work done.

The July 21st session stressed points of poster presentation aspects such as clear, concise communication regarding the topic and research results. Posters are a terrific way to get scientific suggestions and meet like-minded individuals. Following tips were suggested:

- (1) Make sure you are at your poster during your assigned presentation time.
- (2) Do not stand directly in front of your poster at the session; try to stay close by, but off to the side just a bit, so that passers-by can see things also so that you don't block the vision of people already gathered 'round.
- (3) Do not become so engrossed in conversation with any single individual that you (or they) accidentally prevent others from viewing your poster.
- (4) If you want people to remember you and your work, bring copies of a handout for your readers. It should include a miniature version of your poster and more detailed information about your work, in an illustrated narrative form. Consider doing this on an 11x17-inch sheet of paper, folded in half. This allows three pages of information, in addition to the miniature of your poster.