Developing A Professional Poster Presentation

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International
Transplant Nurses
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You have just received a letter that has made your day. Your abstract has been accepted for a premier transplant nursing conference. You plan on preparing a poster presentation, but you've never been involved in doing this before and you are not sure where to start. Don't worry! The following steps will make it easy for you to prepare a successful poster presentation.

Step 1

Carefully, review the poster guidelines from the conference. Underline key points such as the date, time, and location of the poster presentation. Also, note the size of the area which will be available for you to display your poster, and what materials will be provided for you at the conference (McDaniel, Bach, & Poole, 1993). It is especially important to know if your poster should be mounted to hang as a single or separate components on a wall, bulletin board, or carpeted display board. Most guidelines are written clearly and concisely, but if you don't understand something in the guidelines, either contact the conference personnel or ask someone who has experience with poster development to explain any questions that you may have.

Step 2

Determine what resources are available to assist you in creating your poster. Your institution may have monies available to cover some or all of the costs you may incur while developing your poster. If you are not sure whom to contact, the educational department at your facility is a good place to start.

The educational staff will be able to direct you to available support services such as the graphic design staff. Using regular poster board and letter stencils are no longer appropriate for producing a poster. Professional poster presentations often incorporate computer technology for designing and producing the final product.

You should begin developing your poster about 2-3 months prior to your conference. This will allow you plenty of time to create a professional poster. You can anticipate developing several drafts of your poster before it is finalized. If you work with a graphic designer, he or she can format the poster. The only thing that you will need to provide is the information for the poster which usually includes the poster title, names of the authors/investigators, their place of work, text, tables and/or graphs.

Step 3

We have all passed by a poster that has too much information on it. As you develop your poster, try to remember how overwhelming that poster was and avoid making the same mistake! Try to put yourself in the shoes of the person who is walking toward your poster.

You want to attract viewer's attention and interest first with your catchy title and then easily lead the viewers through the poster with your organized content. The goal of the professional poster is to clearly and concisely inform the viewer regarding your work in about five minutes.

When you are deciding what content to include in your poster, consider the following information — What will be my title? What will be my content? The title, which will also be printed in the conference brochure for the attendees, should contain:

     1) the variables studied
     2) the sample studied
     3) the design or type of study.

The title is typically placed at the top and center of the poster. Just below the title, the names, credentials, titles and affiliations of investigators are placed. You should consult with each of your co-investigators to confirm their details prior to finalizing the poster. The content of your poster typically answers the questions of why, who, what, when, where, how, and so what (Ryan, 1989).

Each of these questions flow from your research plan. Table 1 links these key questions to sections of your poster (Ryan, 1989).

you in conveying your message quickly and effectively (McDaniel et al., 1993).

If you are presenting results from a qualitative research study, please review the article by Russell, Gregory and Gates (1996) in the reference list. While the principles for qualitative poster development are similar to those for quantitative posters, there are several notable differences for you to consider.

Step 4

Once you have selected the most important information that can be reviewed in about 5 minutes, you must decide on the appearance of your poster. Several rules can guide you. The lettering, usually about 1 inch high, should be able to be easily legible from 4 to 6 feet away (Miracle & King, 1994). Block or Roman type is the easiest to read and should be used. Headings are usually bold and 2 to 3 inches high (Ryan, 1989). The poster is organized from left to right. Should you decide to incorporate the abstract into the poster, this document is usually placed in the upper left corner of the poster. Limit your use of bold and italics as well as bright and multiple colors. These can distract from your poster's message. Selecting two colors that work well together is recommended.

Table 1
Key Questions and Associated Poster Sections

Key Questions	Associated Poster Section
Why	Purpose, Research Question/Hypotheses
Who	Population and Sample
What	Variables and Instruments
When	Time period of data collection
Where	Location of population and sample
How	Methods, Procedures, Implementation
So What	Results, Future Implications, Evaluation, Conclusions, Benefits

Remember that the information you present on your poster should be brief but clear. Presenting too much information and incorporating many subject headings will result in a complex and disorganized poster that will not be viewer friendly. You will likely need to edit the information you have used to address the poster sections in Table 1. Short sentences and incomplete sentences are acceptable (Ryan, 1989). For example, in the results section a table or graph may be used to represent the findings with a few brief summary phrases below each. Pictures and figures, used sparingly, may also be used to enhance your poster and may assist

Step 5

Prepare any additional materials that you may want to distribute to your viewers. You may want to have a handout available for them to take for later reference or to share with colleagues when they return home. For example, you may want to have copies of your abstract available for interested viewers to take. You may also want to have your business cards available for viewers as well. A manila folder works well to hold copies of your abstracts; a small envelope can hold your business cards.

Step 6

Plan how you will travel with your poster. Always keep your poster with you during your travels. Never place it in with your luggage! If your poster is large, in one piece and rolls, you may want to carry it in a tube. Remember to place your contact information on the outside of the tube, just in case you misplace it. If your poster is in pieces, a brief case may be the best method of transporting it. If you need pins to secure your poster to a stand-alone board and you are traveling by airplane, you will have to place the pins in your luggage, since you won't be able to carry them with you on the plane. If your poster has a velcro mount, pack some extra velcro in your carry-on luggage.

Step 7

Have fun with your poster! You will enjoy talking with others who are enthusiastic about and interested in your work. You never know, through your discussions at your poster, you may find a new colleague for collaboration on your next project, or you may make a new friend, or better yet — both!

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McDaniel, R. W., Bach, C. A., & Poole, M. J. (1993). Poster update: Getting their attention. *Nursing Research, 42* (5), 302-304.

Miracle, V. A., & King, K. C. (1994). Presenting research: Effective paper presentations and impressive poster presentations. *Applied Nursing Research, 7* (3), 147-157.

Ryan, N. M. (1989). Developing and presenting a research poster. *Applied Nursing Research, 2* (1), 52-55.

Russell, C. K., Gregory, D. M., & Gates, M. F. (1996). Aesthetics and substance in qualitative research posters. *Qualitative Health Research, 6* (4), 542-552.

Additional Helpful Resources

Biancuzzo, M. (1994). Developing a poster about a clinical innovation: Creating the poster...part 2. *Clinical Nurse Specialist, 8* (4), 203-7.

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Brooks-Brunn, J. (1996). Poster etiquette. *Applied Nursing Research, 9* (2), 97-99.

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Our Mission

"ITNS is committed to the promotion of excellence in transplant clinical nursing through the provision of educational and professional growth opportunities, interdisciplinary networking and collaborative activities, and transplant nursing research."

Membership Profile

Position descriptions

- 42% of ITNS members classify themselves as transplant coordinators
- 23% of ITNS members classify themselves as staff nurses
- 15% of ITNS members classify themselves as charge nurses/ team leaders/ supervisors/ instructors or nurse administrators
- 10% of ITNS members classify themselves as clinical nurse specialists
- 4% of ITNS members classify themselves as nurse practitioners
- 2% of ITNS members classify themselves as research
- 2% of ITNS members are employed by pharmaceutical or medical equipment/supply companies
- 2% of ITNS members have responsibilities related to procurement and working with donor families

Geographical Reach

- 77% of ITNS members reside in the USA
- 12% reside in Canada
- 10% reside in the UK and Europe
- There are also members in Mexico, South America, Asia, New Zealand, and Australia

Organ Focus

- 64% have a specialty interest in renal transplantation
- 52% have a specialty interest in liver transplantation
- 40% have a specialty interest in pancreas transplantation
- 33% of our members care for pediatric patients
- 24% have a specialty interest in heart transplantation
- 19% have a specialty interest in lung transplantation
- 13% have a specialty interest in small bowel transplantation
- 7% have a specialty interest in islet cell transplantation
- 2% have a specialty interest in bone marrow transplantation

Focusing on skills

- **ITNS** offers transplant-specific education targeted to all transplant health-professionals from the novice transplant nurse through the seasoned clinician at its annual symposium and regional workshops.
- **ITNS** educational endeavors provide transplant nurses with clinical practice updates and methods to improve patient care at all levels.
- **ITNS** provides regular immunomodulation updates on both new and existing products as well as dosing and side effect issues.
- **ITNS** offers opportunities for clinicians to present papers, research findings, and case studies at its Annual Symposium.
- **ITNS** provides grant funding for Transplant Nursing Research.
- **ITNS** provides educational and membership benefits to transplant professionals who are in non-traditional nursing roles such as case mangers, home health care, and corporate representatives.
- **ITNS** provides networking opportunities with other transplant professionals around the world.
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