

Dr. Janett Naylor Presents on How to Make Successful Poster
By Jessica Lynn Robbins

Dr. Janett Naylor of the psychology department met with a group of students in the Stouffer Lounge in the Memorial Union during the 2012 National Undergraduate Research Week. She discussed successful techniques for making posters to present at academic and professional conferences.

Her first tip was to know your audience. Ask yourself who will actually see your poster. Knowing your audience allows you to tailor your poster accordingly.

For example, at a statewide conference of students, you should use simple language and avoid jargon that many of the students are not likely to understand. Pictures or definitions can also help other students to understand your poster. "If they need to have special knowledge or skills to understand your poster, they are just going to walk by," said Naylor.

At a national conference for professionals in the field, you should use more jargon because you can assume the professionals know the language of the discipline.

Also, Naylor suggests discussing only one main point on your poster. Don't attempt to present everything your research or scholarly activity entailed. Instead, pick one point to present. "People try to do way too much on one poster," Naylor said.

Poster sessions usually last one or two hours and involve people wandering through a room looking at dozens or hundreds of posters. You must make your poster eye-catching, well organized, readable, and succinct, according to Naylor. Using bullet points is acceptable.

The organization of your poster will depend on your discipline. Ask your mentor how your discipline organizes information. You can get a good idea of how others in your field present their research or scholarly activities by attending a conference first to see examples.

Naylor suggests actually creating your poster as a PowerPoint slide, adjusting the settings to fit the poster size and format requirements of the conference where you are presenting. After you have created the poster in PowerPoint, Naylor recommends saving it as a PDF file before printing.

Make sure to set enough time aside for the printing of your poster. It might take as long as a week for it to be printed, dried, and cut to the right size in a print shop. The cost can be as low as \$30 for a poster with little or no color and few complicated graphics and as much as \$45 or more if you do use color and graphics.

Remember that your poster is only a part of the presentation. You or someone in your research team will be standing next to the poster during the poster session. When it's your turn to do this, you must know the information very well and be prepared to talk about it and answer questions. Sometimes people want to read a poster on their own, but sometimes they would rather hear

about your project from you. Review your poster closely so that you are familiar enough to discuss all of the points you are presenting.

A final piece of advice from Naylor: “Work ahead. That’s some of the best advice I can give you.”