Presenting Your Capstone Project

All participants commit to presenting their project in a variety of venues. This will be roughly a 30 minute presentation: 20 minutes to present, 5 minutes of audience questions, 2 minutes for you to close your presentation (we will call this dessert) in your style and so you get the final words. The oral presentation can be supported by a poster or powerpoint. Below is guidance to help you format your product. We will discuss how the action plan fits into these formats depending on individual projects.

1. In class peer presentation for practice
2. Group presentation in front of 3 selected teachers and one peer (one teacher of your choosing)
3. RHS STEM Fair
4. Global Issues Network Fair
5. Vermont State Science, Math, Engineering Fair (recommended, for additional STEM credit, project must meet format)

**Poster vs. Powerpoint**

**Posters**

**Examples at:** <http://www.uvm.edu/~epscor/new02/?q=node/1285>

A research or academic poster provides a means of communicating your research at a conference or research symposium. Posters are printed 3’ by 4’, horizontally or vertically aligned. This will be printed to our school plotter printer and then mounted to a foam board for display. For ideas, use the “Designing Conference Posters” website and to download poster templates: <http://colinpurrington.com/tips/academic/posterdesign>

Choose a background and text color scheme. No need to go crazy: a white/light poster with black/dark text is often much easier to read than a multi-colored poster. Use cool/muted colors, solid colors, a color gradient, etc.

**How to create a poster using Powerpoint**

1. Open powerpoint
2. Click the “design” menu/tab at the top of the screen and select “page setup”

Change the dimensions of the slide from the default setting to: Width=48; height=36 (for horizontal poster), or Width=36; height=48 (for vertical poster). This is an important FIRST step- if you change the dimensions after putting content on the slide, you will have to re-format all text boxes, graphs, tables, photos, etc.

1. Critical poster elements:
	* Title, author, affiliation
	* Abstract/summary (optional)
	* Introduction/background: a brief but important overview to secure the viewer’s attention
	* Materials and methods: a brief description of the processes and procedures used, photos (optional) should be > 300dpi
	* Results: outcomes, findings and data displayed through text, tables, graphs, photos, etc.
		+ Bulleted lists (rather than paragraphs) may help the reader understand the most important findings
		+ Tables, graphs, photos should have captions. Graphs should have a legend, avoid 3-D graphs as they are hard to interpret
	* Discussion/conclusions: summary or discussion of the significance and relevance of the results, identify possible future research
	* Action plan
	* References
	* Acknowledgments
2. Lettering can make a difference in how easy-to-read your poster is. Here are some suggestions:
	* Title: at least 72 pt., bold preferred
	* Section headings: at least 48 pt., bold preferred
	* Body text: at least 24 pt
	* Avoid using all capital letters
	* Use sans serif (Arial) for titles and headings
	* Use serif (Times New Roman) for body text
	* Use bulleted lists where possible instead of paragraphs
	* Use italics instead of underlining
	* White or light colored lettering is hard to read on a dark background when printed. Use black lettering instead on a light colored background
	* Don’t forget to include logos of organizations that may have helped make the research possible

**Examples at:** <http://www.uvm.edu/~epscor/new02/?q=node/1285>

**Powerpoint**

Example powerpoints from the 2013 VT EPSCOR Student research symposium:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~epscor/new02/?q=node/1283>

Presenters often use the general rule of “1 slide per minute”; however the number of slides needed varies based on the complexity of the content of the slides.

* Title, author, affiliation (if needed) (1 slide)
* Outline, optional (1 slide): overview of the structure of your talk, some speakers prefer to put this at the bottom of their title slide, audiences like predictability
* Introduction/background
	+ Motivation and problem statement (1-2 slides): why should anyone care? Most researchers overestimate how much the audience knows about the problem they are addressing.
	+ Related work (1-2 slides)
	+ Methods (1 slide): cover quickly in short talks
* Results (4-6 slides): present key results and key insights. This is the main body of the talk. Its structure varies greatly as a function of the research conducted. Do not superficially cover all results; cover key results well. Do not just present numbers; interpret them to give insights. Do not put up large tables of numbers as your audience will not have time to take in that much information at once.
* Discussion/conclusions (1+ slide): summary or discussion of the significance and relevance of the results, identify possible future research.
* Action plan (1+ slide)
* References
* Acknowledgements
* Logos for any organizations that may have helped make your research possible

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<http://www.uvm.edu/~epscor/new02/?q=node/1283>