Poster Design

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PSYC 4200 Human Factors: Technology and Behaviour

Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Agenda

- Handout
- Introduction
- Layout
- Text
- Color
- Graphs/Pictures
- Inclusions
- Activity
- Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

- Advantages of Posters
  - Allow students to practice scientific communication
  - Students can learn from classmates
  - Focus is on data rather than writing skills
  - Can be viewed publicly and leisurely outside class time
- Previous Strengths of Posters
  - Strong sectioning (Intro, methods)
  - Inclusion of most major elements (abstract, summary)
  - Inclusion of handouts

Source: Nalbone & Christopher (2003)

INTRODUCTION

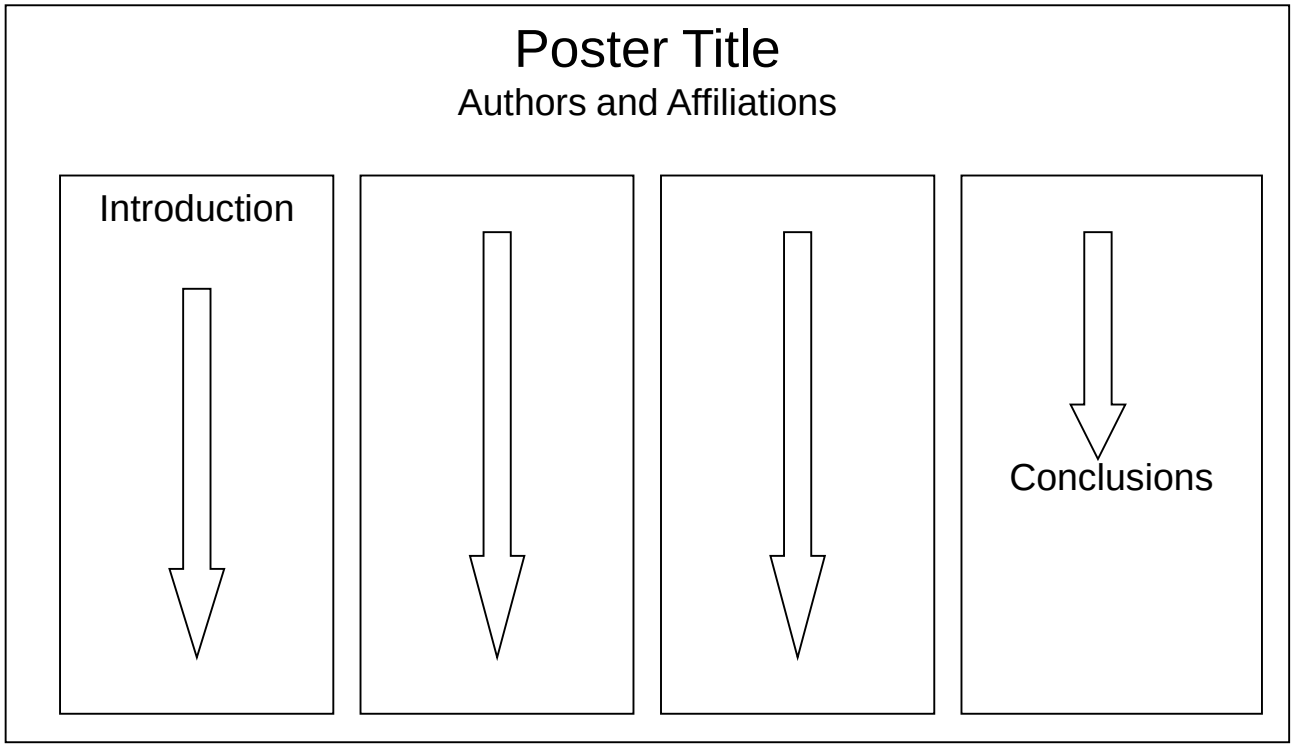
- Previous weaknesses of posters
  - Too much background detail
  - Failure to discuss implications
  - Small font size
  - Confusing tables or graphs
  - Poor overall organization

(Welch & Waehler, 1996).

LAYOUT

- Use headings to help readers find key sections
- Balance placement of text and graphics
- Use white space to define flow of information
- Follow reader gravity that pulls eye from top to bottom, left to right
- Column format makes for easy reading. Most posters are 4 columns wide

LAYOUT


Poster Title
Authors and Affiliations
Introduction
Conclusions

TEXT

- Minimize text
  - Keep text in blocks of no more than 50-75 words
- Use bullets instead of full sentences
- Text is usually single spaced
- Avoid technical jargon depending on audience
- Use sans-serif font (Arial or Helvetica) for text
- All text should be large enough to read from 1-2 meters
  - Use at least 20-point type for text and 48-point type for the title
- Titles should be of larger text
- Bold text can be used to highlight general conclusions

Wickens, Lee, Liu, and Becker (2004), Nicol & Pexman, (2002)

COLORS

- For optimum readability, best to use black text on a white background
- Use a light background and dark letters for contrast
- Keep lots of empty white space to enhance effect of colored sections
- A dark background with light letters is very tiring to read and induces eye strain
- Empty space between sections could be a solid color other than white
- Avoid patterned backgrounds as they are distracting

COLORS

- Bright colors attract attention but are distracting
- Choose two or three colors and keep them consistent throughout poster
- Use color to highlight key words
- Use strong, primary colors such as red, blue, and yellow
- Red has very high visibility
- People who are color-blind find it hardest to distinguish between red and green

GRAPHS/PICTURES

- Graphs should communicate relationships quickly
- Graphs should be simple and clean without gridlines
- 3-D graphs and pictures are distracting, stick to simple 2-D images
- All text in figures uses same style font and shouldn’t vary by more than 4 points in size
- Figure captions are descriptive

GRAPHS / PICTURES

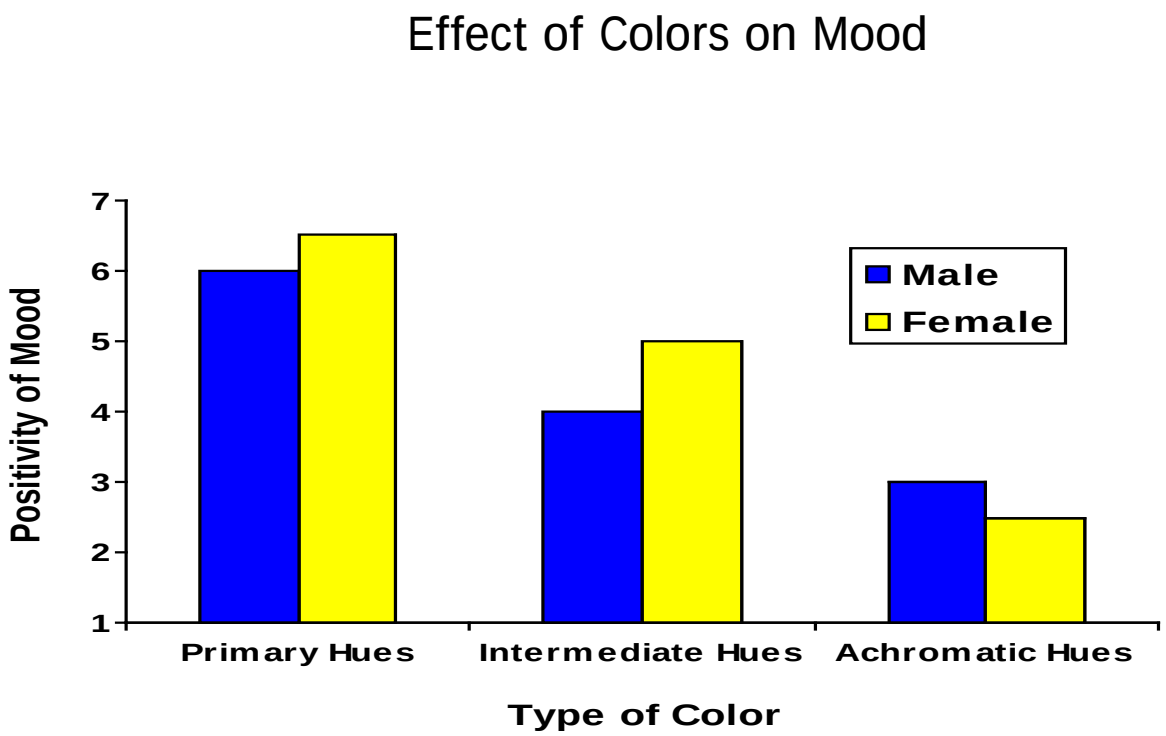
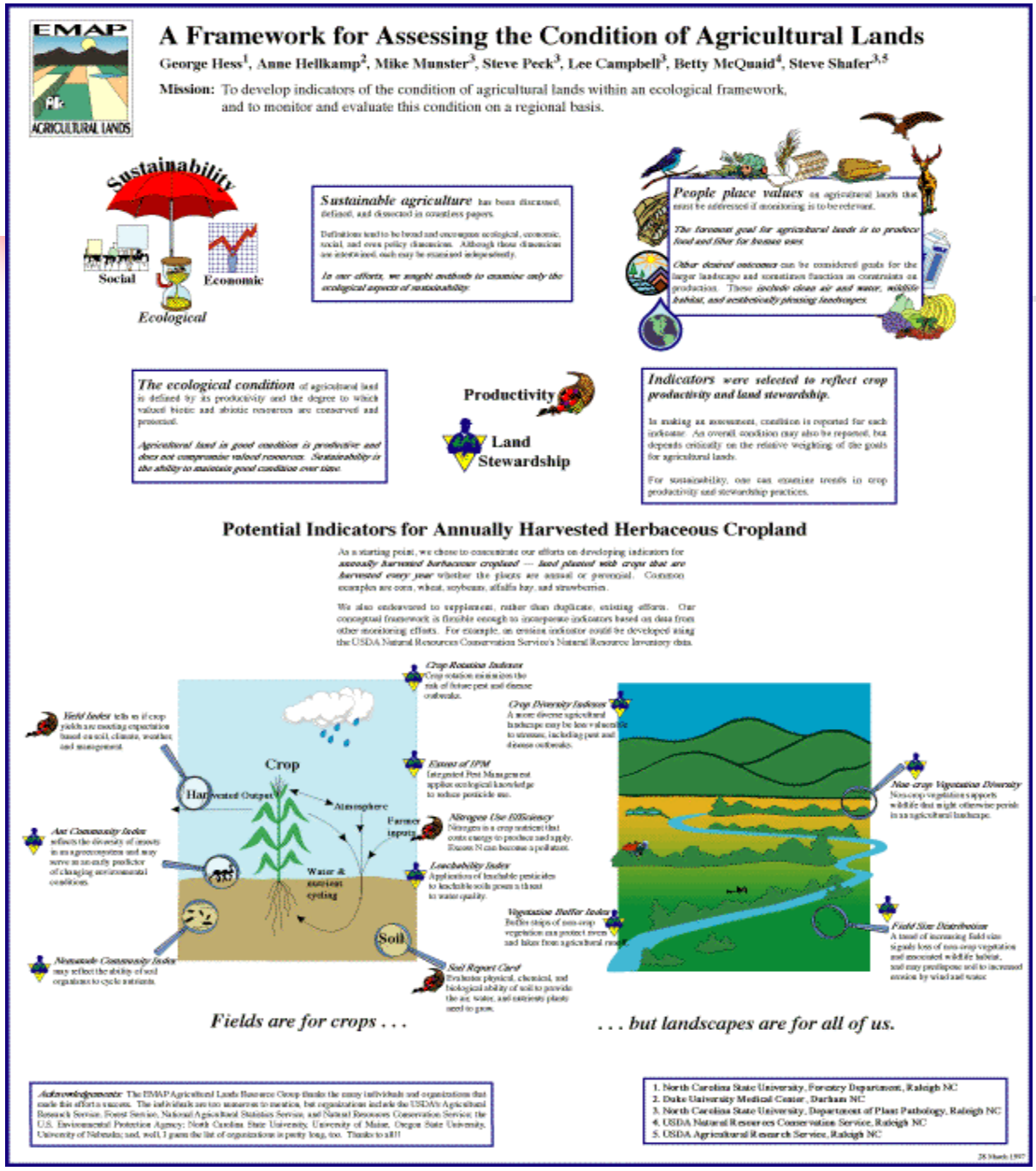


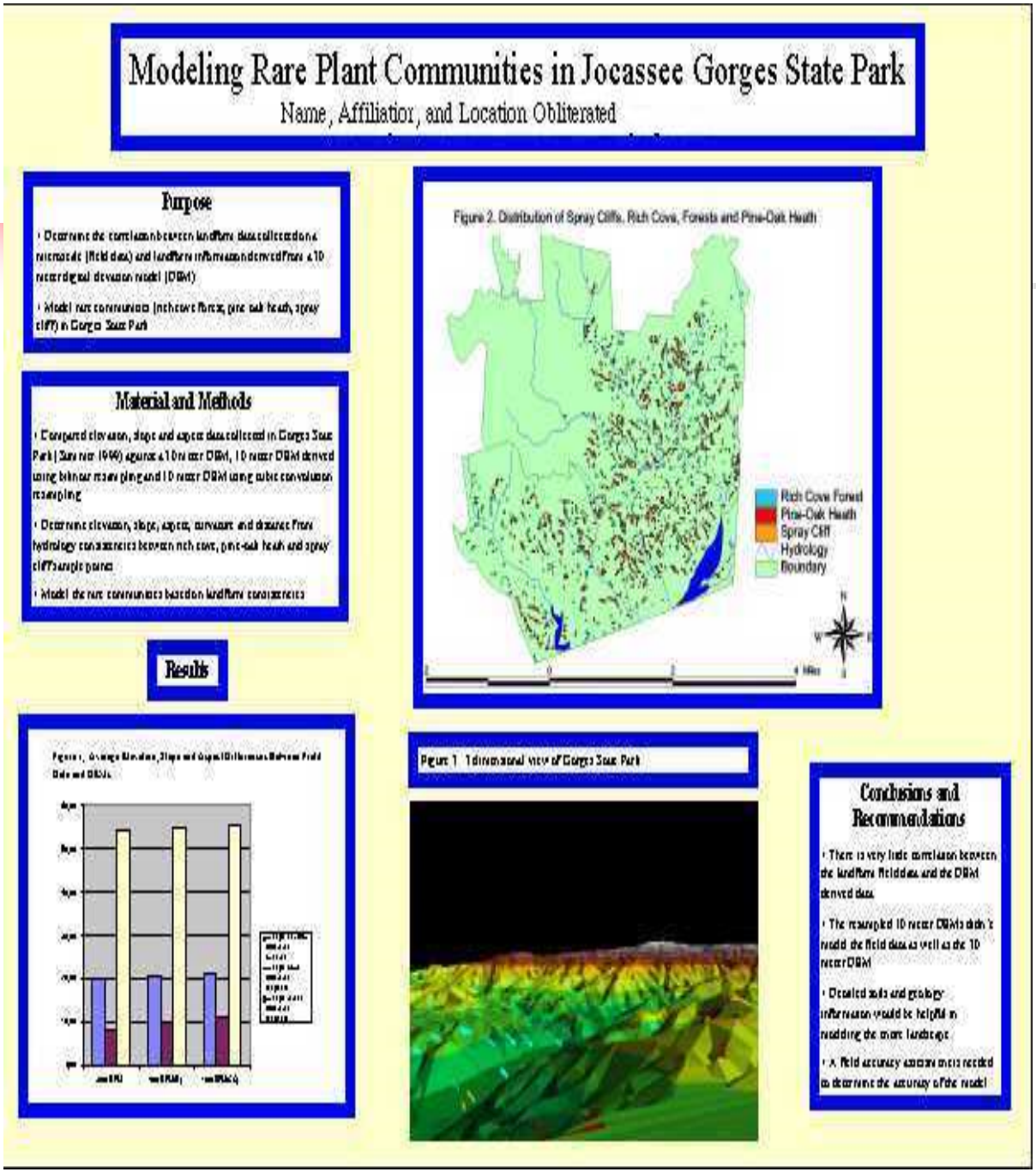
Figure 1.2. Mean mood positivity as a Function of types of hues

INCLUSIONS

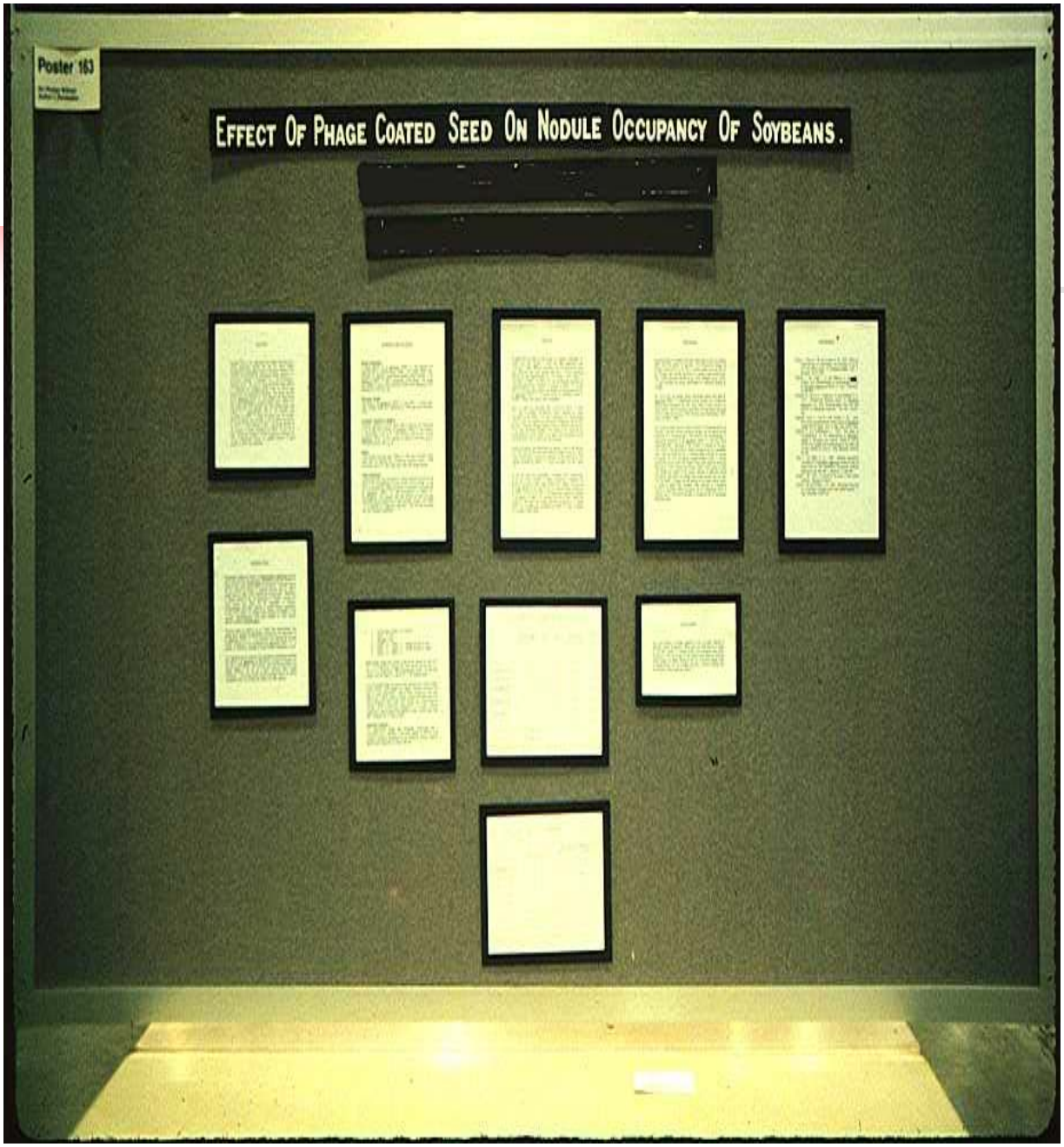
- Reference lists are often presented in a smaller font than the rest of the text
- The reference list sometimes can be left out if space is insufficient
- Handouts that are similar to the poster can be given to the audience so they can follow along during the presentation



- GOOD
  - Colorful graphics
  - Very attractive
  - Concepts and themes defined
  - Good mix of text and graphics.
- BAD
  - Organization unclear
  - Difficult to follow.

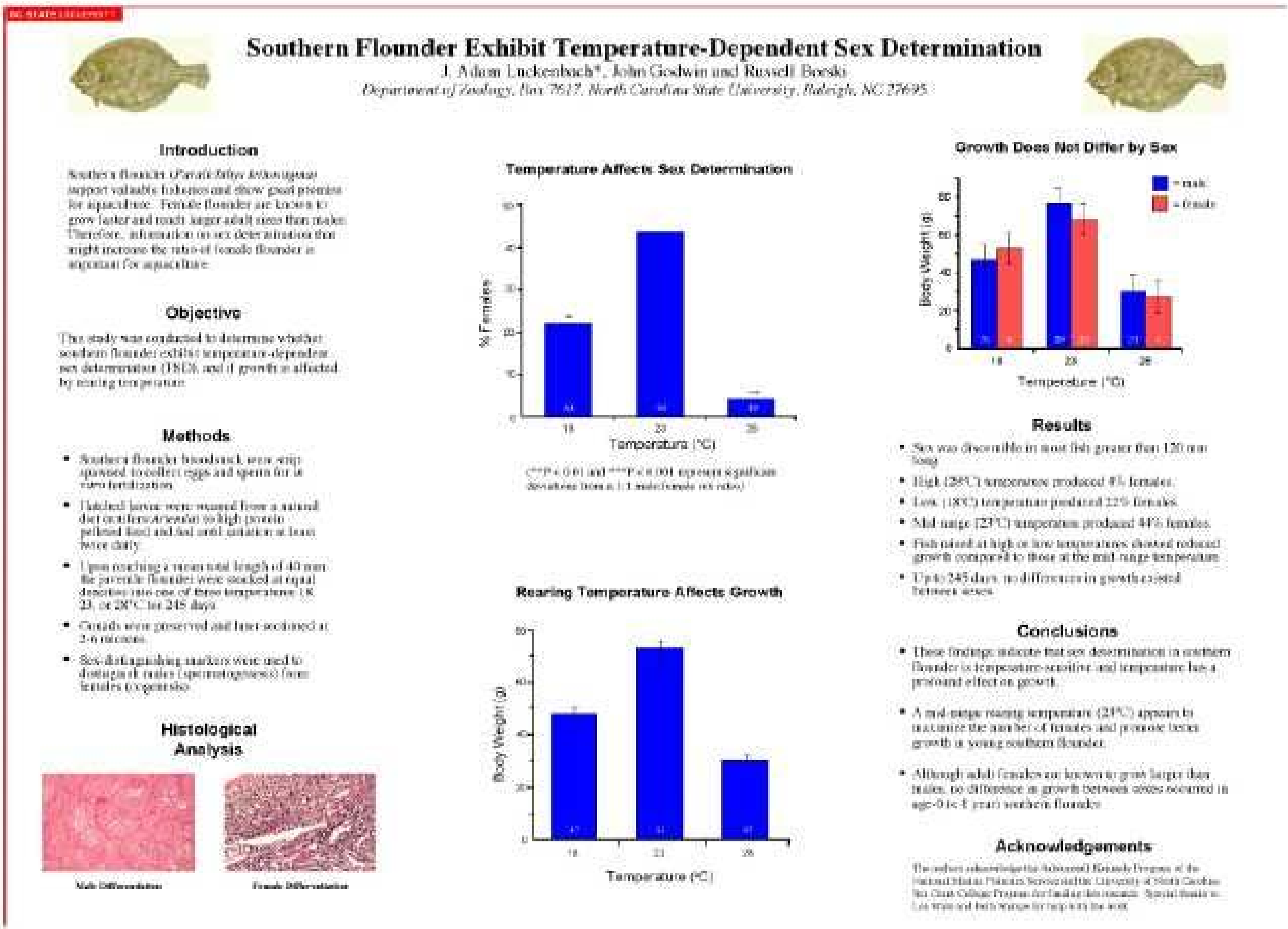


- GOOD
  - Colorful graphics
  - Font size easy to read
  - Key points identified and titled
  - Good mix of text and graphics.
- BAD
  - Figure 2 comes before Figure 1 (reader gravity)
  - Graph is too distracting with gridlines



- GOOD
  - Large Title
- BAD
  - Too much text
  - No pictures
  - Writing too small
  - This problem is often seen at conferences

Example of an award winning poster



Conclusion

- A poster is simply a large-format presentation of an otherwise written up paper, but...
  - Allows for creativity
  - Is a visual form of displaying one's findings.
- Ultimate goal of the poster
  - Viewers to understand the topic and subject matter being displayed.

A GUIDE FOR EFFECTIVE POSTERS

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- Use sans-serif font (Arial or Helvetica) for text
- Posters are usually viewed from at least 3 ft. away. Use at least 20-point type for text and 48-point type for the title
- Titles should be of larger text so they can be visible from a further distance
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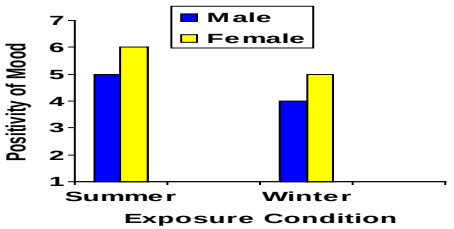

Figure 1. Mean mood positivity as a Function of seasonal exposure condition

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