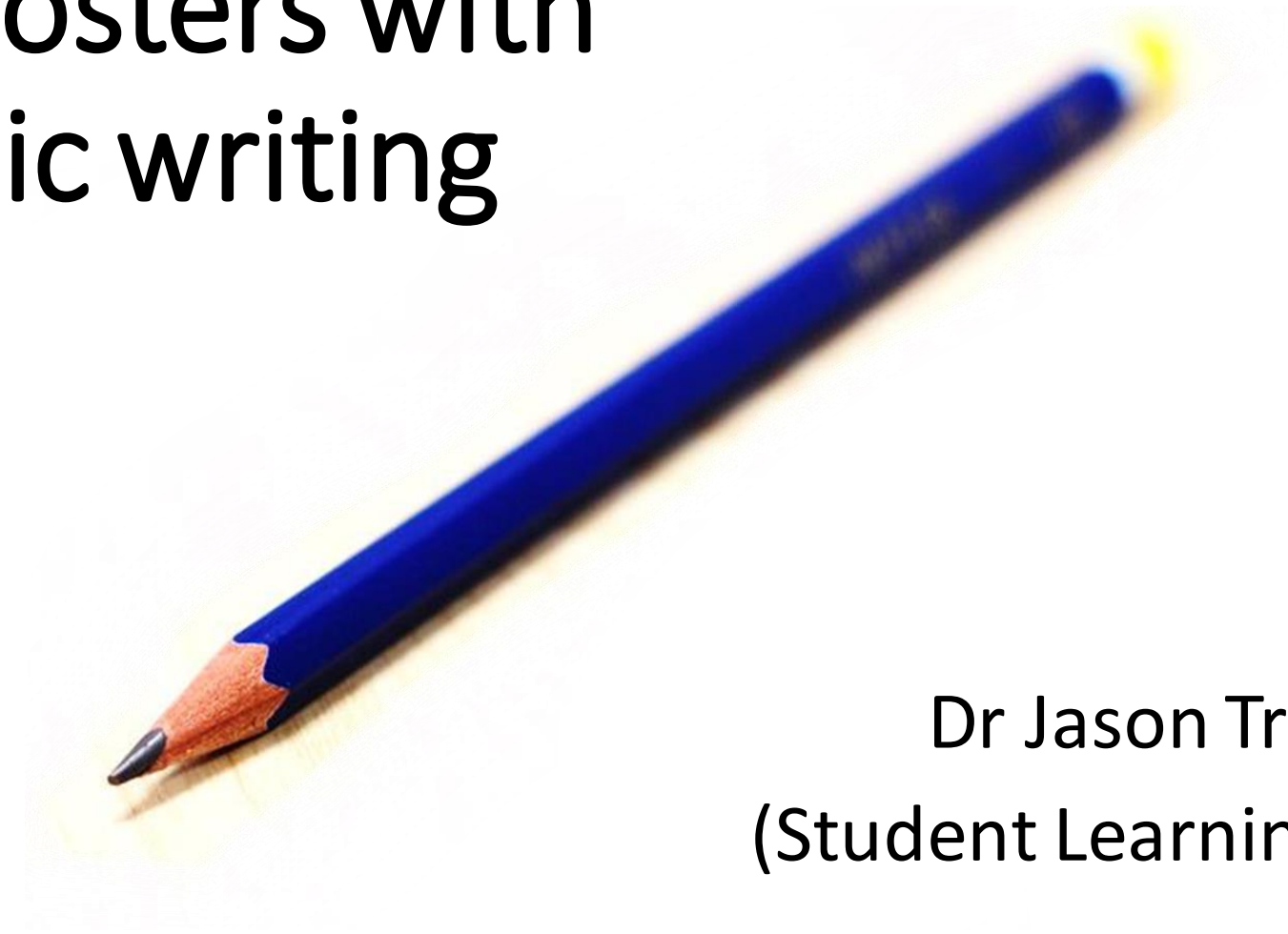
Creating posters with academic writing



Dr Jason Truscott

(Student Learning Services)

Contents

- Quick recap – where Student Learning Services can help you
- What is a poster?
  - Academic posters
- Learning from what we know
- Constructing posters
- Questions
- Examples of posters
- Sum up and end of session

The ‘Digital’ Writing Café

- Drop in (no booking!)
- 1pm – 4pm Mon-Fri (Semester time)
- Via Zoom moving to in person
- Student writing mentors – breakout rooms
- English as second language support on specific days.

www.plymouth.ac.uk/learn

Look out for these lanyards

Where to find additional support

These are available throughout your University experience:

- **Speak with an Advisor (Jason)**
  - Bookable 30 min session – individual or groups
- **Study guides** and **digital resources (e.g. Help videos)**
- **Email**: studentservices@plymouth.ac.uk
  - questions and advice
  - Contact the 01752 587676
  - or go to the **Student Services Hub** (**Charles Seale-Hayne Library**)

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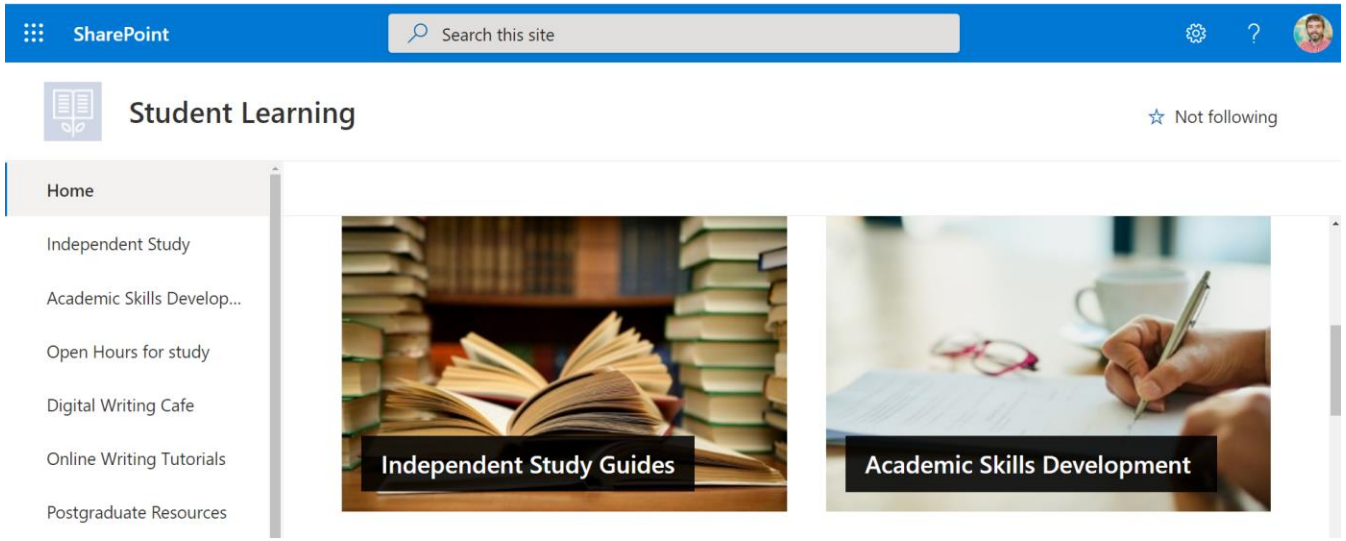
Further details here:



www.plymouth.ac.uk/learn – External (anyone)

https://liveplymouthac.sharepoint.com/sites/x77 – Internal (Your UoP login)

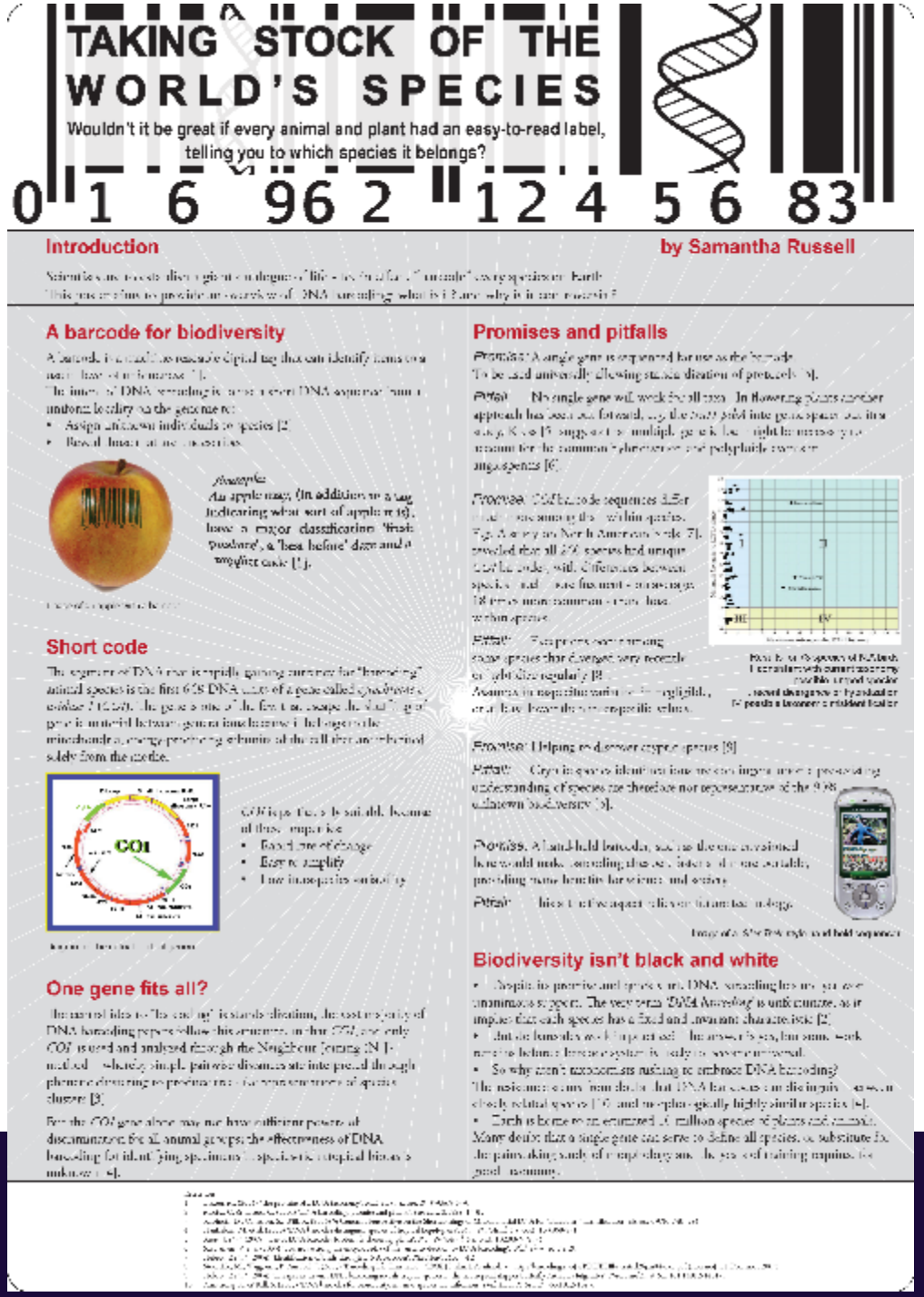
What is a poster?

Your thoughts

We all have
an ‘image’
of what a poster
might look like…

Some might NOT be
suitable.

… perhaps it is not always as we imagine an **academic** poster would be.



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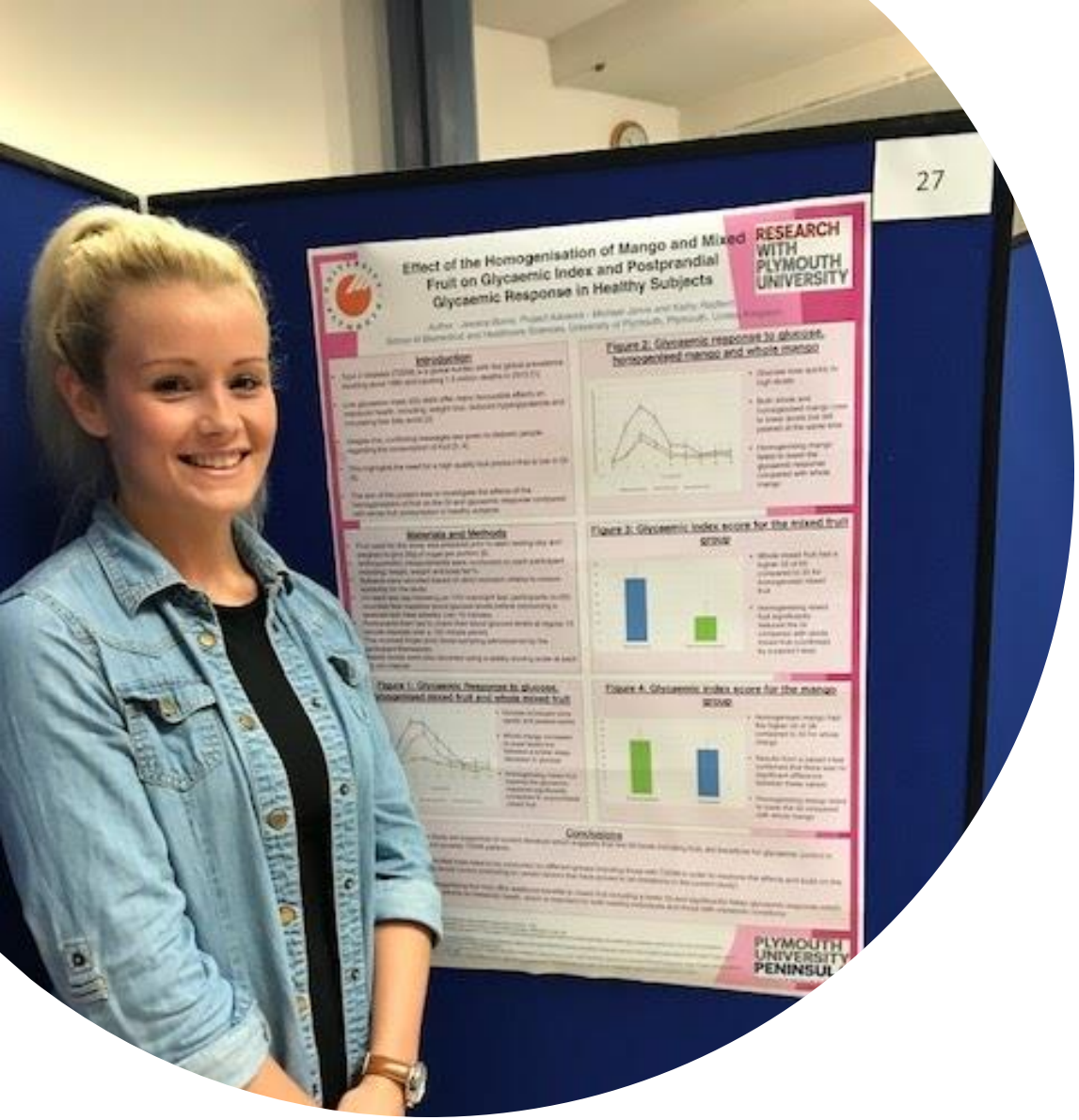


SCIENTIFIC POSTER

- A large poster used to communicate research results at conferences
- Highly visual method of presentation
- **Summarises** key points briefly on a single page
- Can be used as a tool to initiate conversation or stand alone display
- Usually includes information on methods and outcomes, graphs and figures, are typically referenced.

‘Abstract’ texts are often good model for posters

- Very brief summary of a paper/research
- Usually around 500 words (essentially very short)
- Typically contains:
  - Very brief introduction of topic/aim
  - Most significant findings from the discussion
  - Summary of the ‘main’ conclusion of the paper

Academic posters

- Typically, keep it ‘visual’ with less text
- Puts across the main points
  - Structured contains Introduction, methods, results and discussion
- ‘…**show** what we want to **tell**’

Rowe, N. (2017) *Academic & Scientific Poster Presentation: A Modern Comprehensive Guide*. Springer International Publishing.

Before we go further

- Not everyone has experience of creating posters
  - Don’t panic!
- Consider the ‘context’
  - What is the audience and purpose?
  - Are there any specific rules? Assignment brief
- Use the Critical Thinking model
  - Good also for writing approach
- Looking at examples often helps (research)

Assignment brief

Consider the requirements

Assignment requirements:

see COMP1004 assignment brief for further details!

Create a poster illustrating the key features of your application and the architecture.

The presentation and poster should be pitched at an audience that is scientifically literate, but non-expert in this particular subject specialism.

You should communicate:

- What has been done so for the whole course of the project.
- A summary of project results/discussion

Assignment requirements:

see COMP2003 assignment brief for further details!

You should ensure that the following team created items are complete in your GitHub repo and the poster submitted to the DLE submission point:

- **a poster illustrating the key features of your application and the architecture.**
- This **must be uploaded to the Final Poster (Team) submission point**.

Note: the poster is digital! JPG?

The poster should be pitched at an audience that is scientifically literate, but non-expert in this particular subject specialism:

It should communicate:
• The rationale for the project and the project aims (with any essential background information).
• What has been done over the course of the project.
• A summary of project results/discussion.
• The main project conclusions.

Assignment requirements summary

- **Title –** something that reflects your project vision
- **Your project vision** – What is it? What is the problem it will solve?
- **Provides a glimpse into the technology** – Why or How it tackles the problem?
- **Image format**
  - Do you need to convert it to JPG file format

Let’s look at typical poster structure

This will helps you to be, selective, purposeful and critical of texts

Components of an academic poster

Also good for the basic structure of reports of essays!

Title: A typical poster

Your name – might included institution / company etc

Introduction

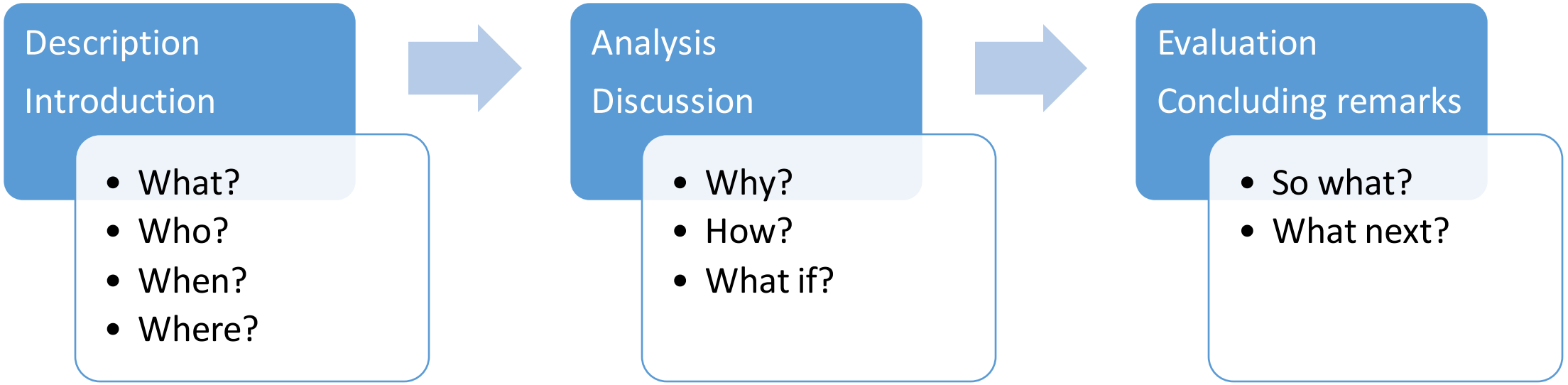
Discussion

Conclusions

References

Critical thinking for posters
‘Every’ main point/argument/claim…

- Uses this approach



Look for key characteristic for posters: description, analysis and evaluation

Introduction - Description

- Introductory phrases – outlines aims of project and or problem/s to solve
- Highlighting and stating facts (might be supported by references)

Discussion points - Analysis

- Often referred to as 'critical analysis' (might be supported by references)
- Asking questions
- Compare and contrast – how and why it works or is better. How it solves the problem

Conclusions – Evaluation (a summary)

- Often referred to as 'critical evaluation' (not typically supported by references)
- Summary of main findings (only after analysis)
- Final remarks
- Concluding remarks
- Future work

Describe, Analyse and Evaluate

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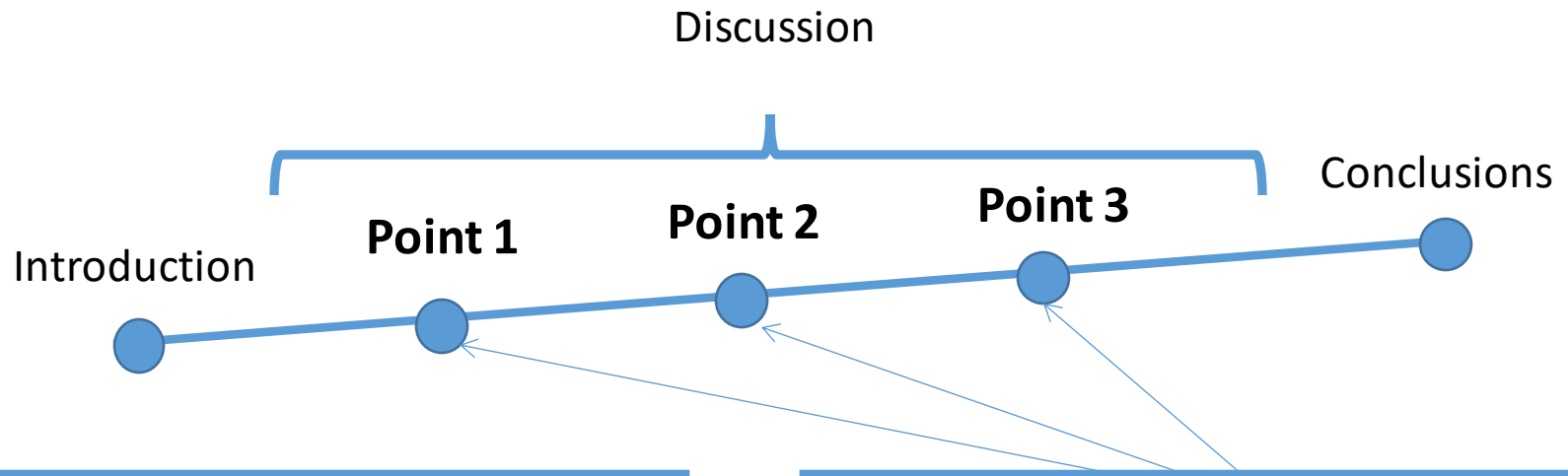
Looking at agile software development processes (ASDP) for any software company,…it is particularly important to consider … (Peters, 2016). According to Matthew (2015) this should always… Certainly Peters (2016) gives effective approaches for usability improvements… [text removed]

However, looking first at…there are concerns that poor ASDP practices can lead to…, therefore…(Harrison, 2016). Certainly, ASDP need proper implementation, to ensure… as also suggest by Adams (2006). Although, **one major drawback** of this approach is that… (Peters, 2016). Therefore, in order to ensure that the outcome is favourable…, a new approach was introduced to counteract these issues… Brian (2016) provides a solution whereby ASDP was are able to… **In contrast** others were not able to implement a new structure, due to the constraints…that Jacobs (2017)…

Having considered all the important issues associated with ASDP in…, there is clear evidence that more needs to be done…, particularly… Making these changes would not only improve software usability, but also…. These were clearly proven in a number of cases and situations, particularly… Therefore, it is recommended that…

PLEASE NOTE: if you use any acronyms, make sure they are explained within the text!

Writing structure, flow – visual comparison



Document structure

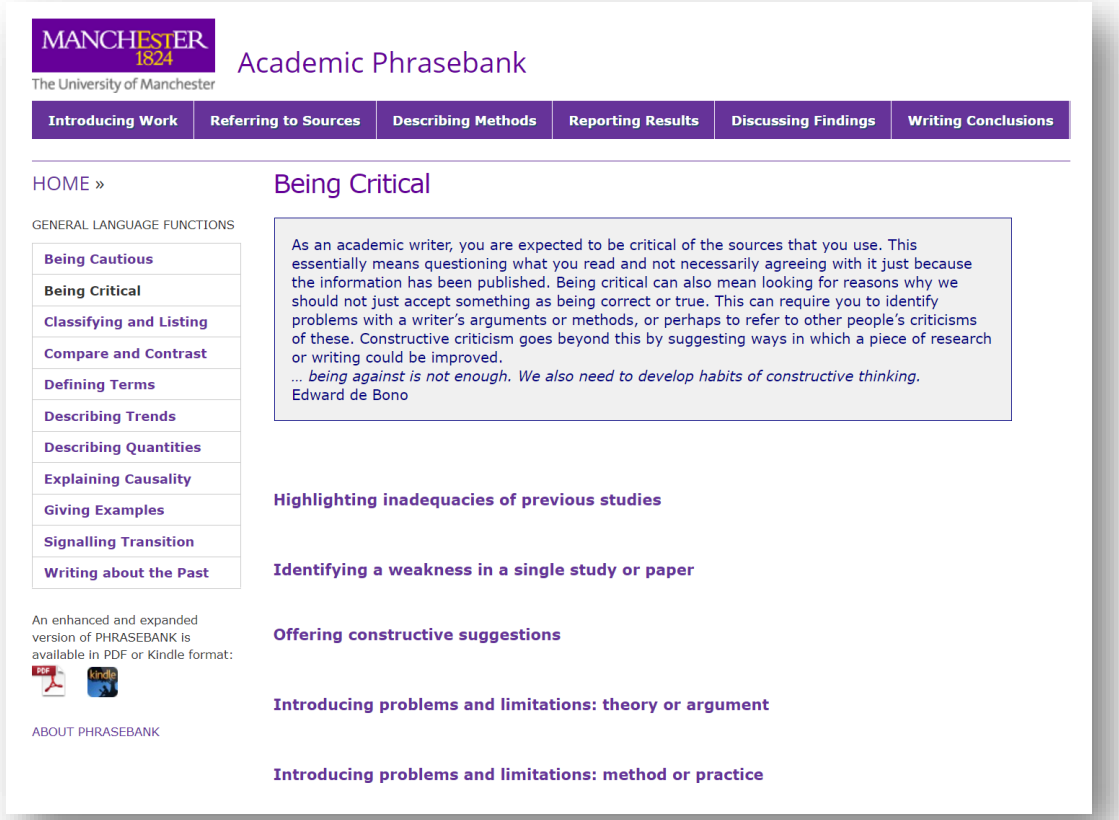
- Introduction
- Discussion
- Conclusions

Critical thinking

- Describe
- Analyse
- Evaluate

Each point has ALL three elements

Critical language



The Manchester Phrase Bank:
www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/being-critical/

Sizes for posters

- A0 841 x 1189 mm
- A1 594 x 841 mm
- A2 420 x 594 mm
- A3 297 x 420 mm
- A4 210 x 297 mm
- A5 148 x 210 mm

Consider sizes based on whether you are printing on paper and/or digital

- Top two are most commonly used
- Either in landscape or portrait
- A1 is the most common, so consider this as your first option.
- As digital software allows scaling (plus the ratios are the same), it is often easier to create an A0 but print it to A1 or less.
- N.B. A4 to A0 is a bad idea, unless you use vector graphics!!!

Title: A typical poster

Your name – institution / company etc

Introduction

Discussion

Conclusions

References

Landscape OR Portrait

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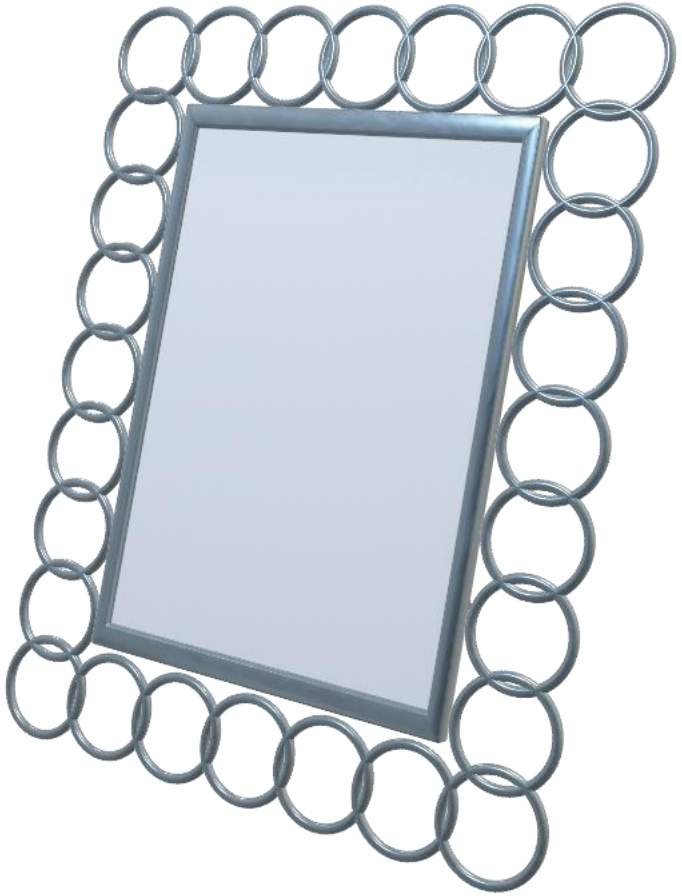
What about images?

- Images for the sake of images?
  - They have to be meaningful
    - Consider the theme of your project
    - How connects ideas?
- Types of images?
- Royalty free images
  - free images = used many times already?
  - unsplash.com
- Consider taking your own photos
  - Screen shots



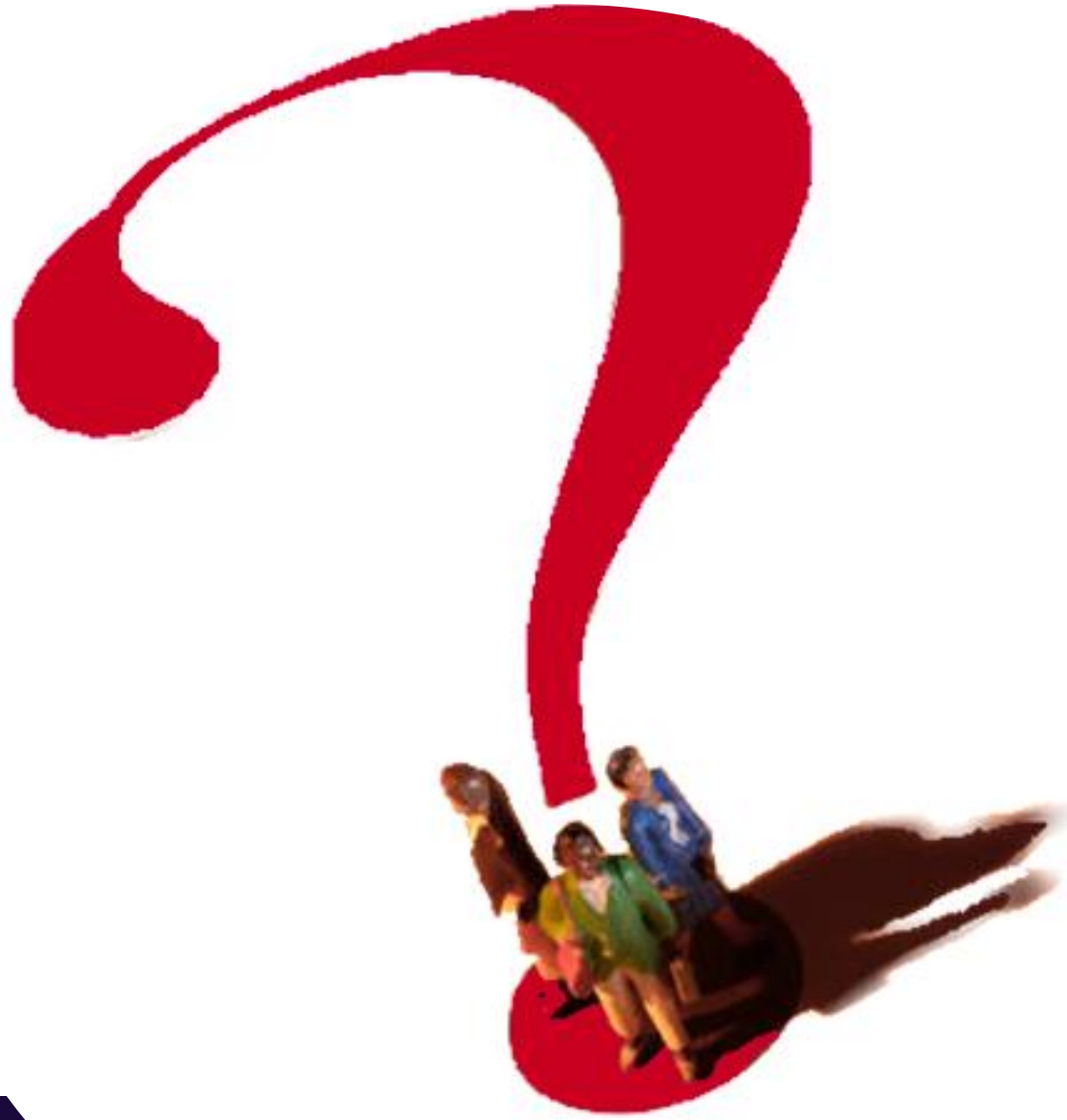
Visual impact…

Good posters have visual impact

Quick look at options

PowerPoint

Questions so far



Posters for discussion

Research!

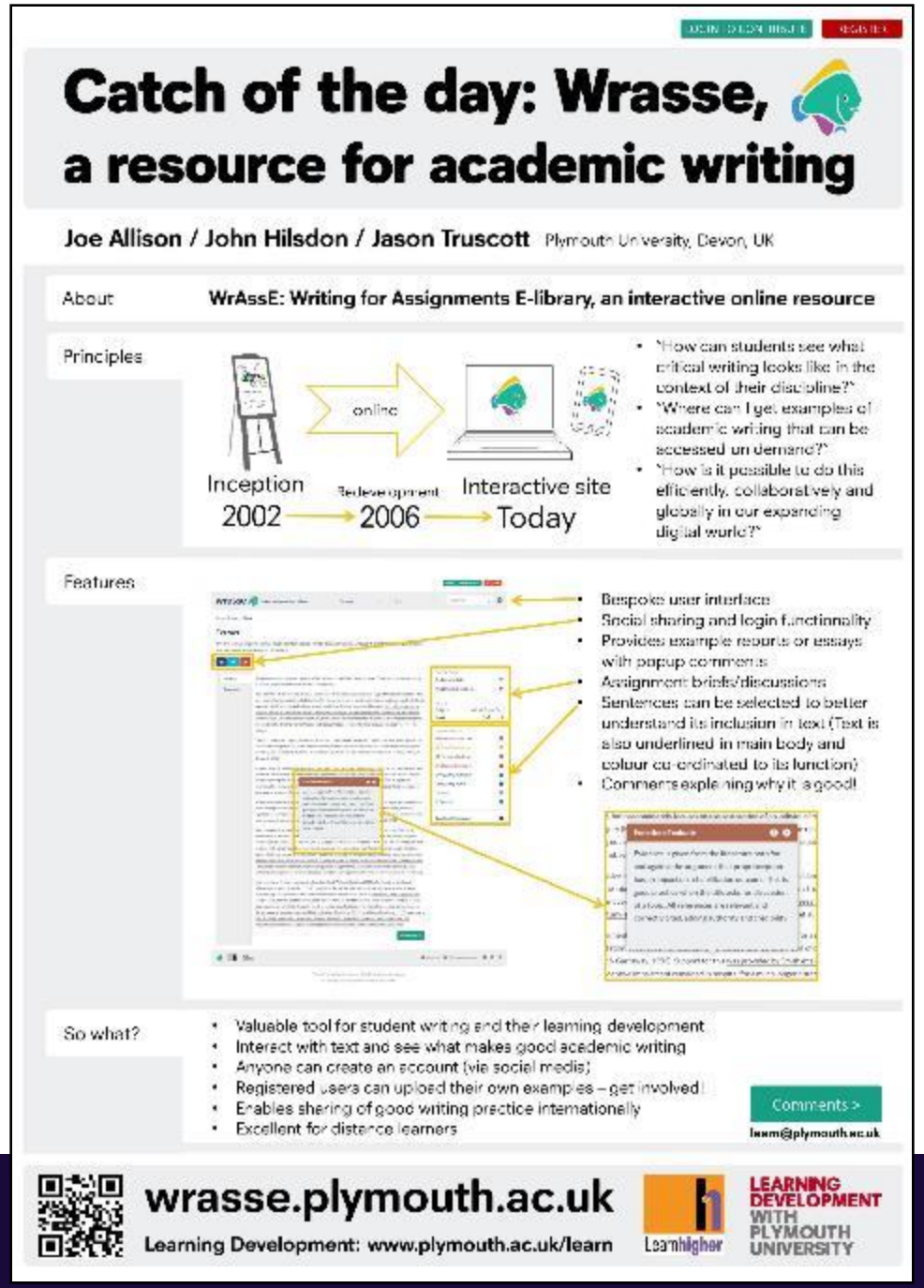
Critical synopsis*

1. Why am I reading this?
2. What are the author trying to achieve?
3. What are the author saying that is relevant?
4. How convincing is the author?
5. Visually stimulating?
6. Conclusion, did I learn anything new?
7. Does it work as a poster?

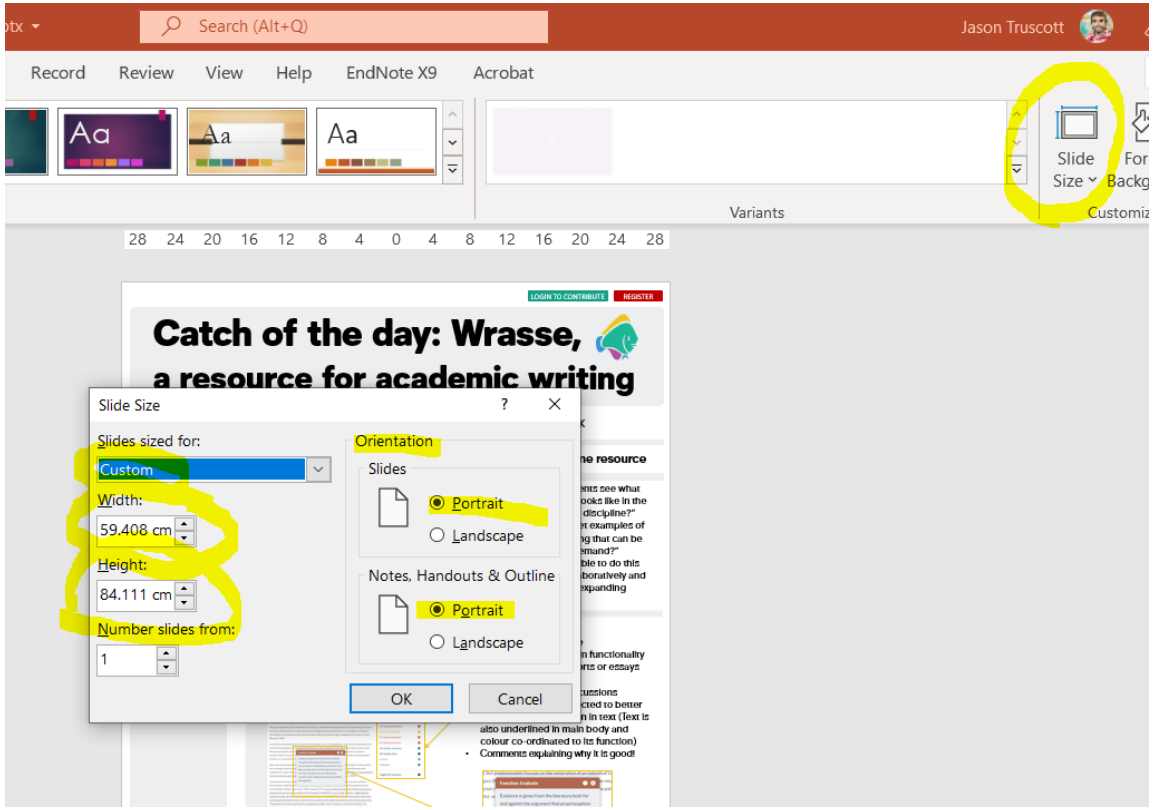
*A critical synopsis is a condensed ‘critique’ of what is known.

Posters for academia

- Example poster created by me for a conference a few years back.
  - Has a computing theme
  - Highlighting software
  - Reasonable balance of text and imagery?
  - Clearly more focused to marketing the software



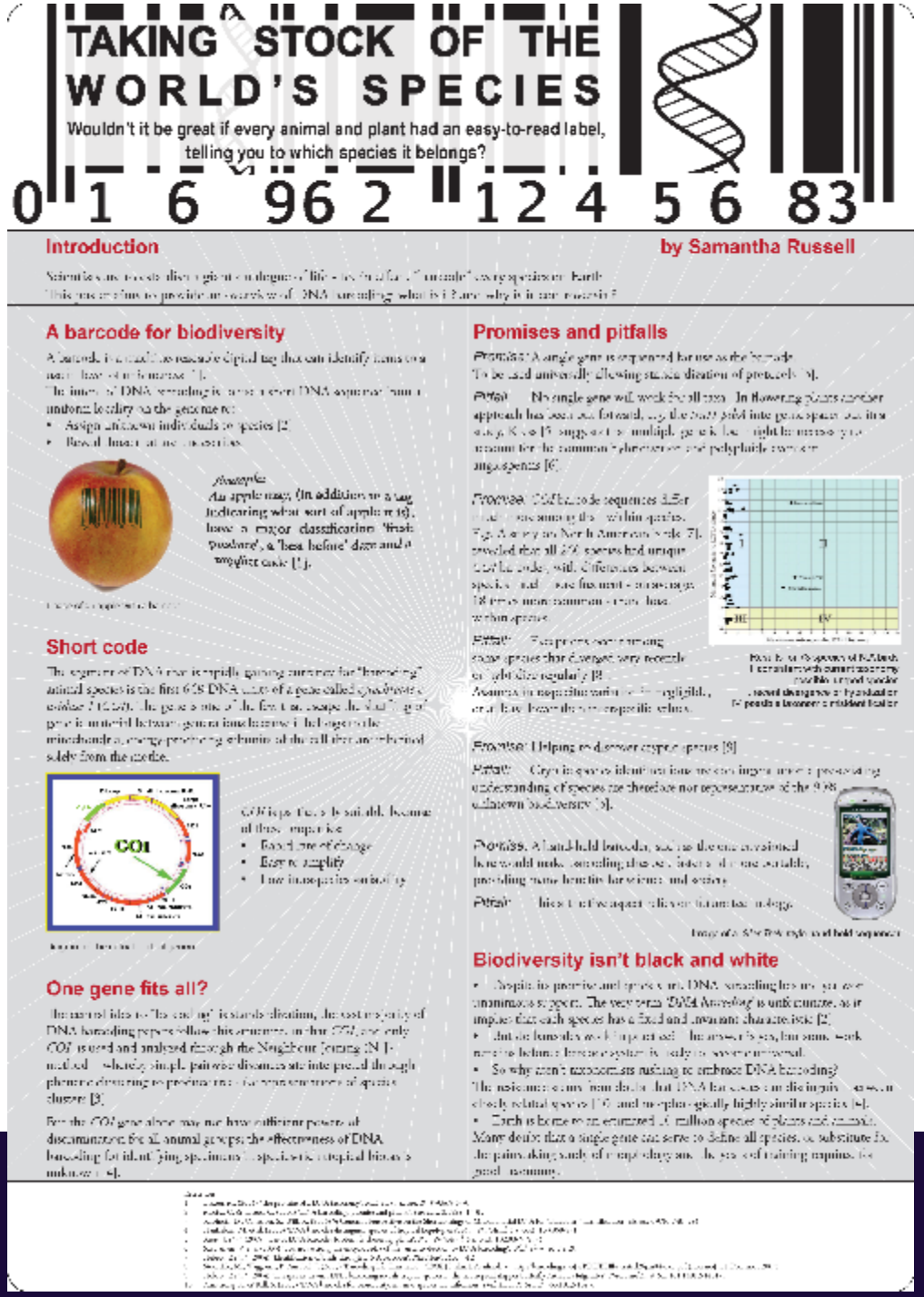
About Jason's poster construction



- Note in screen capture is set to A1 on my poster:
- A0 841 x 1189 mm
- A1 594 x 841 mm
- Deliberately set as A1 it was the maximum I would ever need.
- Later printed off A3 and A4 handouts. As ratios of the paper are identical!

Posters for academia

- This is a poster from 2008
- Created by a student
- Hosted on ‘The Plymouth Student Scientist Journal’ website https://pearl.plymouth.ac.uk/handle/10026.1/13821
- Text rich, but with complimentary imagery

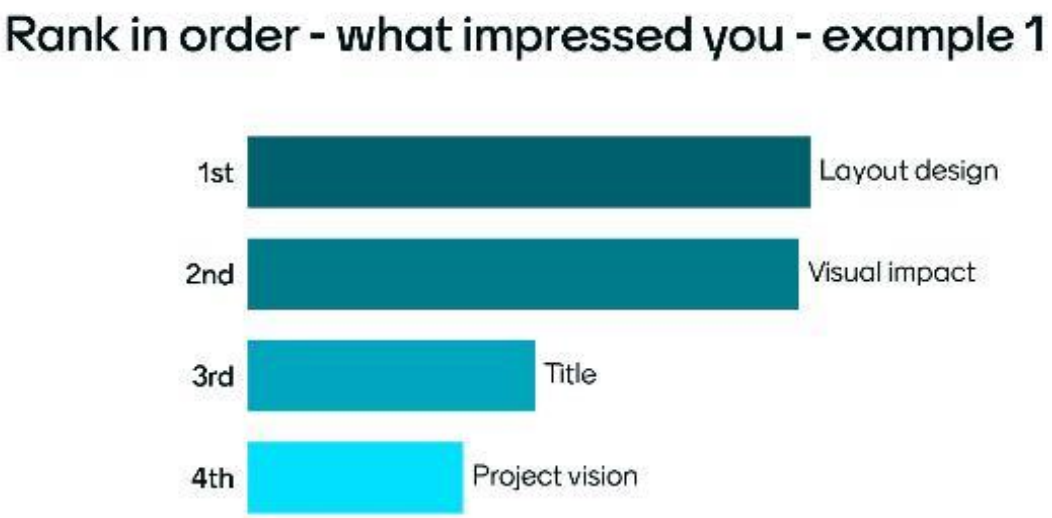


Russell, S. (2008) 'Taking Stock of the World's Species [POSTER]', The Plymouth Student Scientist, 1(2), p. 354.

Getting a ‘sense’ of how others view posters

The academic writing/content is VERY important – However poster creation can be ‘subjective’ and visual impact can also play a part in how effective your poster is to other viewers at a conference

Example posters from others, with rankings



Consider (from a 'viewers' perspective):

1. Layout design
2. Visual impact
3. Title
4. Project vision

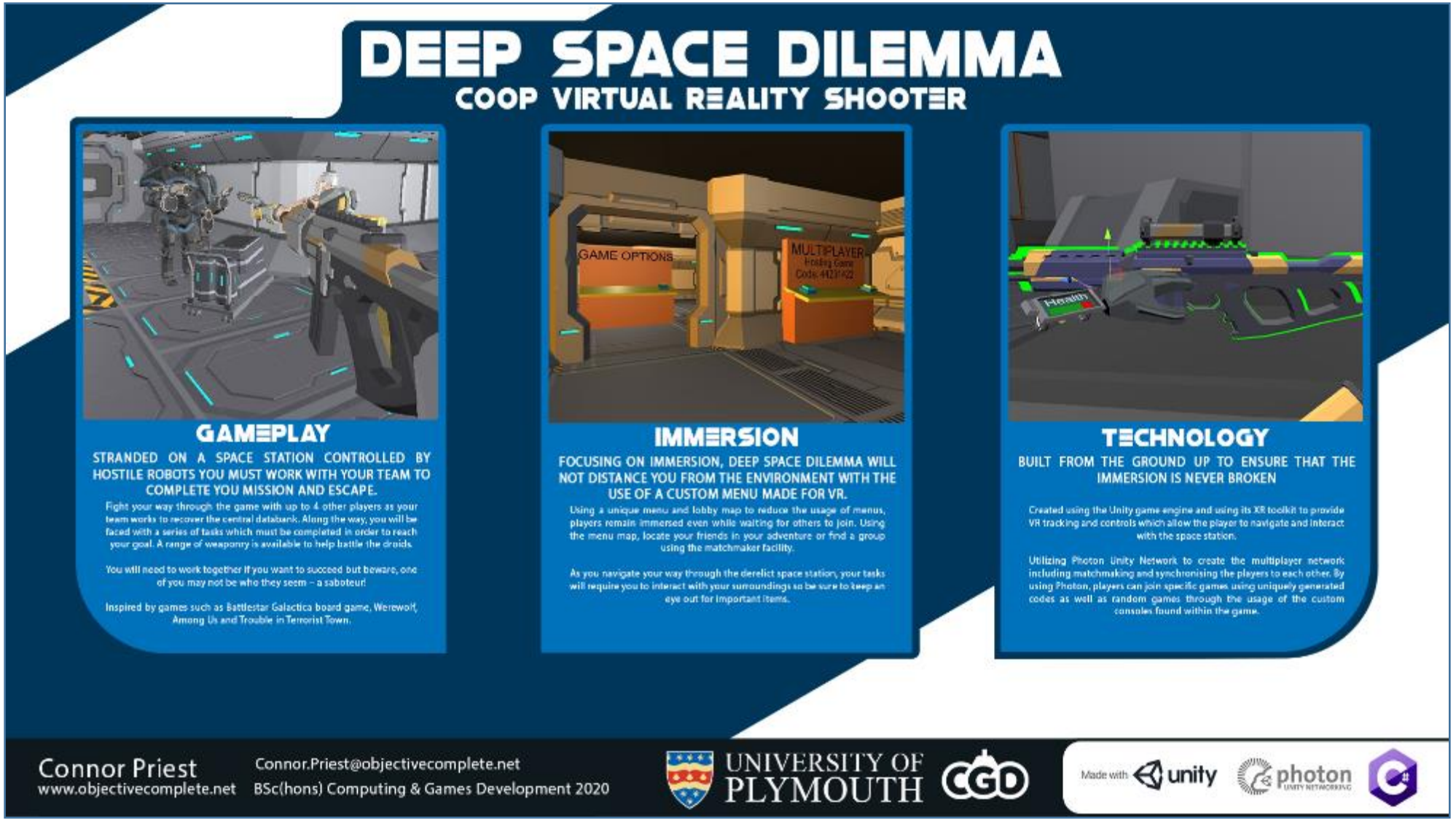
- N.B. PLUS keep to your brief!

Example 1

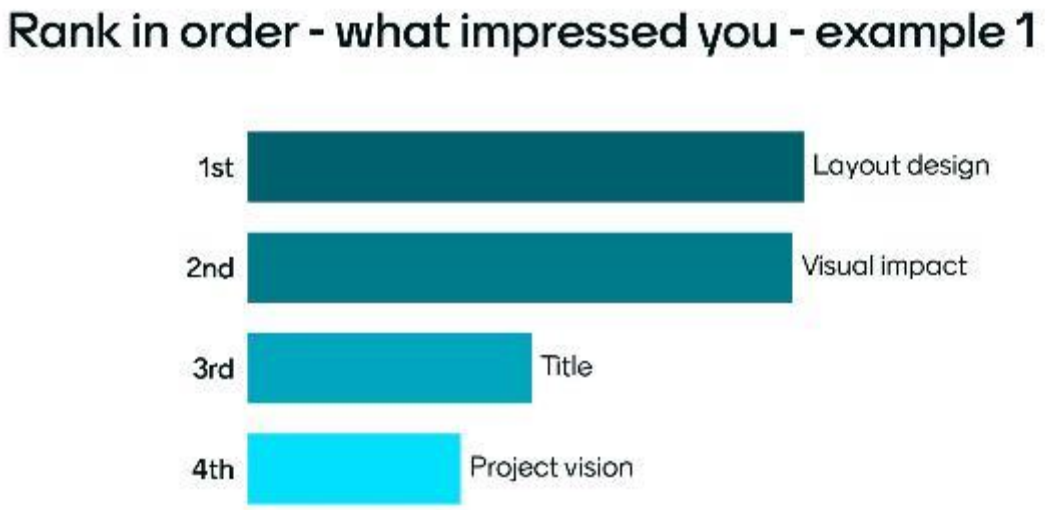
http://web.socem.plymouth.ac.uk/secam/public/cgd.php

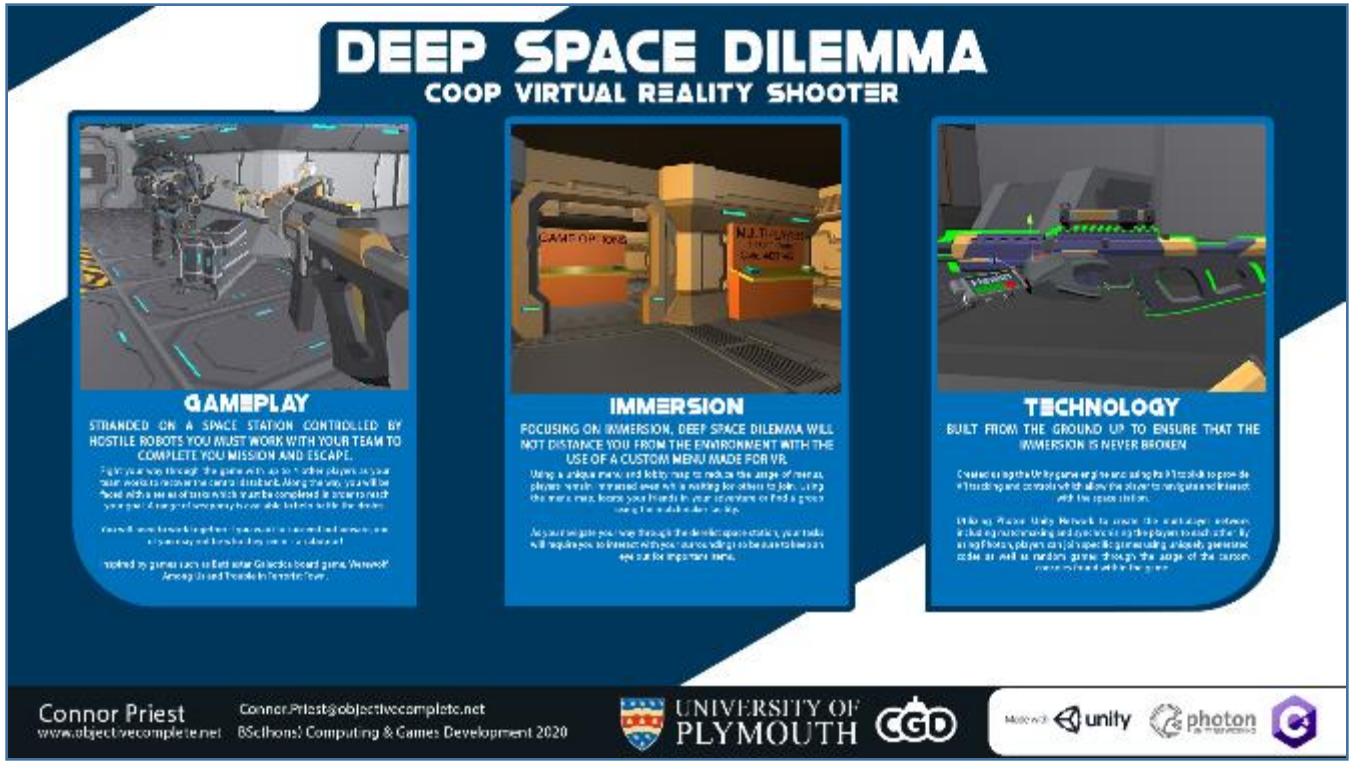
Direct link - Priest

http://web.socem.plymouth.ac.uk/secam/assets/posters/10552787.png



How did it rank? Results from students





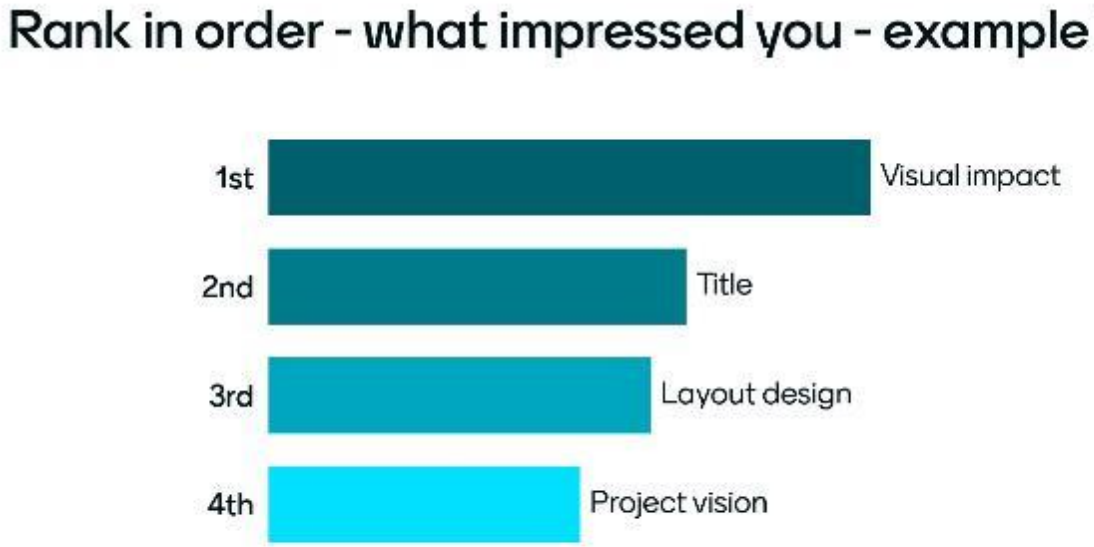
Example 2

http://web.socem.plymouth.ac.uk/secam/public/compsci.php

Direct link - Broughton

http://web.socem.plymouth.ac.uk/secam/assets/posters/10548629.pdf

How did it rank? Results from students



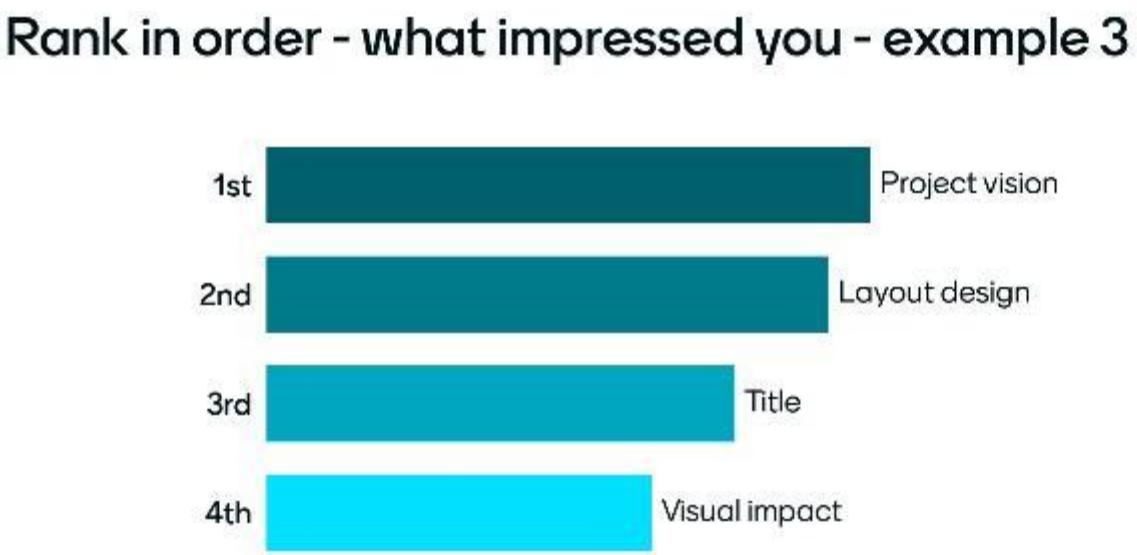
Example 3

http://web.socem.plymouth.ac.uk/secam/public/cis.php

Direct link - Carthew

http://web.socem.plymouth.ac.uk/secam/assets/posters/10552471.jpg

How did it rank?
Results from students



Example 4

http://web.socem.plymouth.ac.uk/secam/public/cis.php

Direct link - Walters

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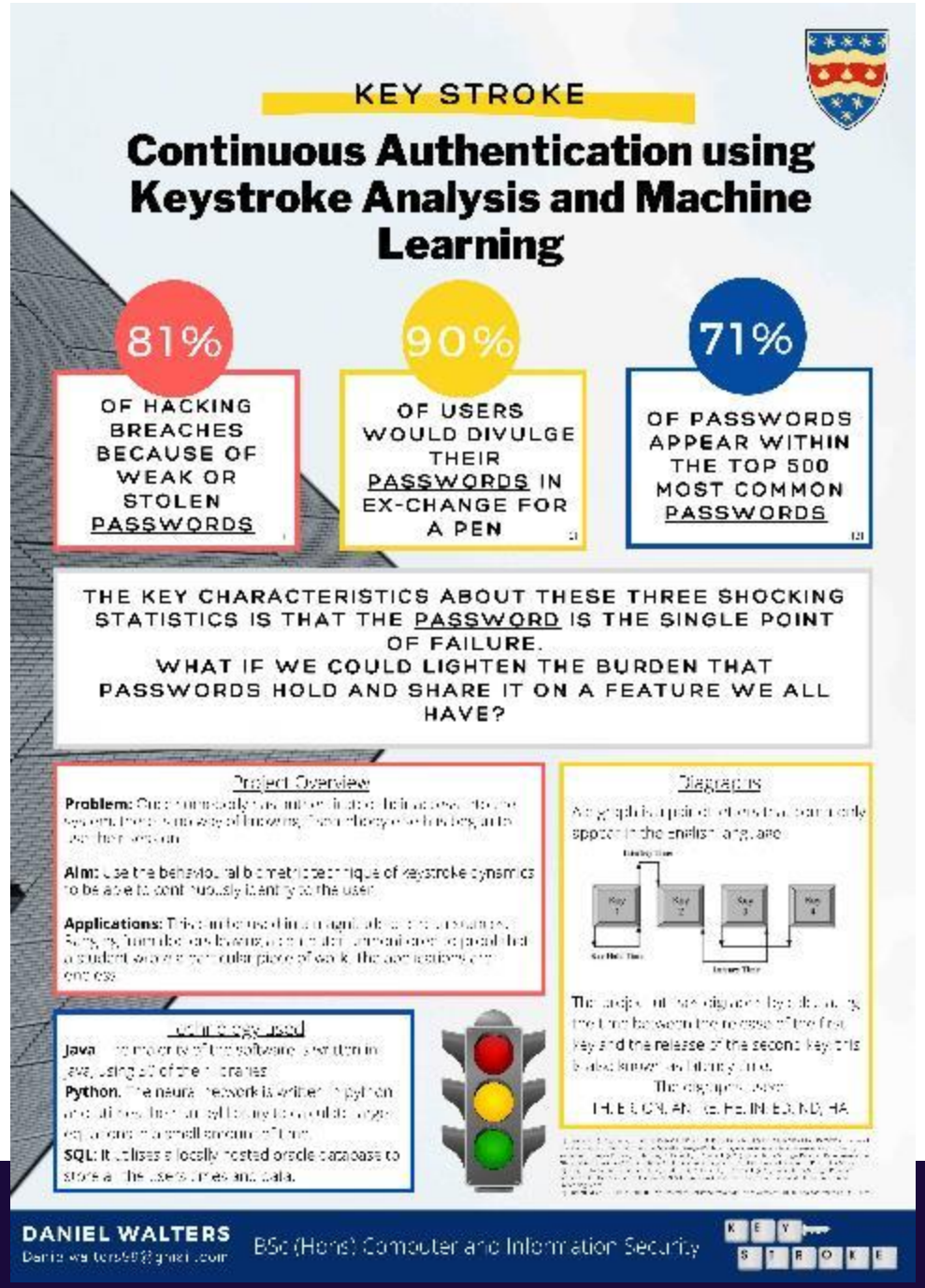
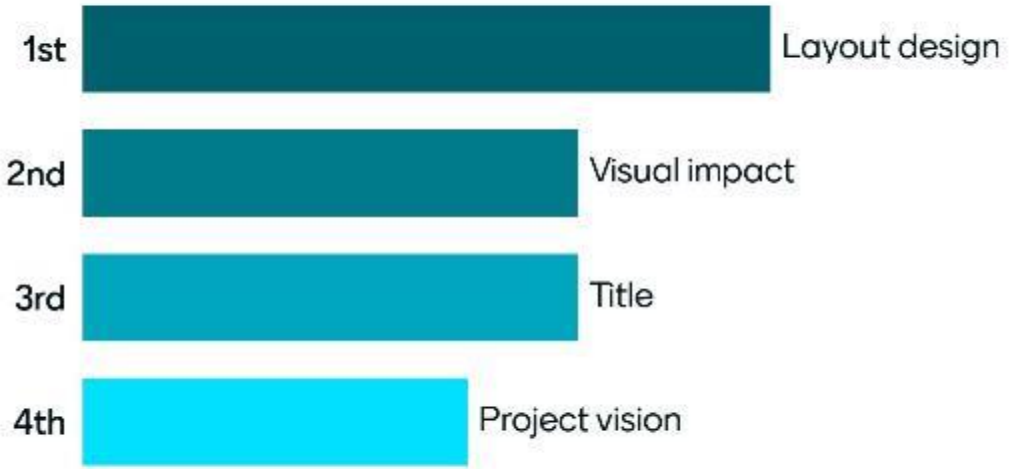
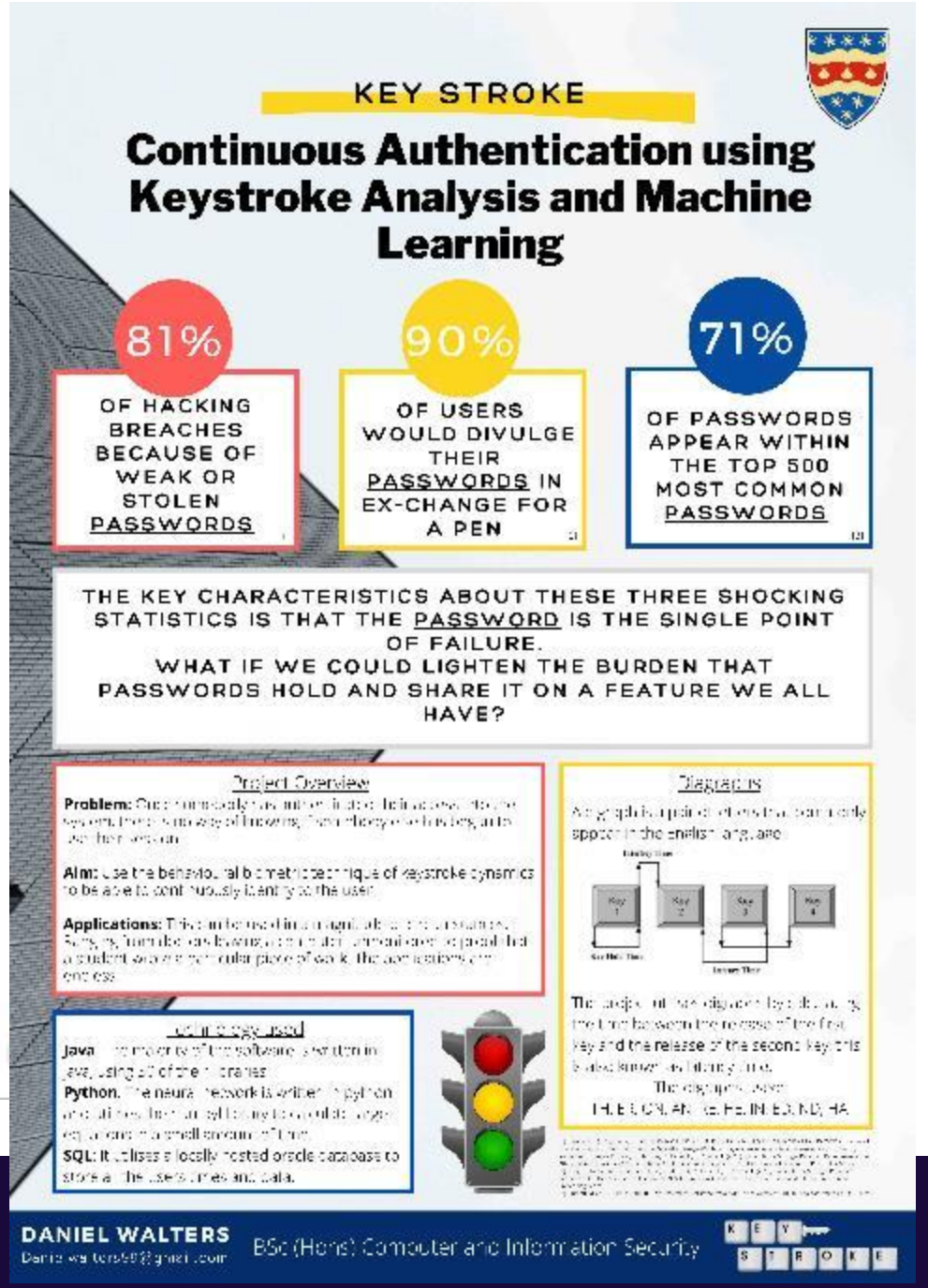


How did it rank? Results from students

Rank in order - what impressed you - example 4





Summing up

Suggestions to develop good posters

- Do some research – look at examples from others
  - What really stood out for you?
- **Plan your content**
  - **Ensure you keep to the criteria of the assignment brief**
  - **Keep the posters simple – and easy on the eye**
- **Ask others their opinion**
  - Also ask others, to give constructive feedback!
    - **Perhaps visit the Writing Café or book to see me for a chat!**
  - Just saying “I don’t like it” is not constructive
    - Offer ‘suggestions’ for improvements

Putting your poster to the test - can anybody understand:
What your project is about?
How you are putting your software together?

PLUS ‘Win a prize feedback’ for Jason’s session

- The **Student Services** feedback form:

bit.ly/3mQO9ox

Select option: ‘Learning Development’

Every response – **we send a donation to the ‘War Child charity’**
PLUS you get entered into a prize draw (you need to provide your email address for the draw).

Feedback on Jason's workshop

tell us what you think...

bit.ly/394fLnG

Enter in web browser

Questions?