

Active Poster presentation

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Abstract—To complement traditional presentations, a method named Active Poster has been developed to increase the value of the presentation sessions linked to student papers. The method has been positively evaluated by students and will definitely be used further by the author.

Index Terms—Paper presentations, presentation method

I. INTRODUCTION

The Active Poster presentation is a method for presentations of shorter student papers developed by the author. This paper describes the method, and provides an analysis of its usefulness including evaluations from participating students.

The intention underlying the development of the Active Poster presentation has been to increase the value generation and student learning associated with presentations of student papers. There can be a tendency for paper presentations to become if not plain boring or a necessary evil then at least rather inefficient as learning tool considering the time allocated to it by students and teachers. Thus, this is an effort to address this inefficiency, to spur creativity and make presenting sessions more fun. If nothing else, it will provide an additional instrument in the teachers' toolbox, allowing some variation in the every day job of students and their teachers when appropriate.

The class where Active Poster was developed was in a 20-student group of fourth-year students from various engineering schools at Lund Institute of Technology. The papers under scrutiny were for 2 credits within a 5-credit course on Industrial Environmental Management. The papers were prepared in groups of 1-3 students and ranged 3000-8000 words, depending on group size and topic.

II. ACTIVE POSTER INSTRUCTION

The Active Poster method is executed as follows.

Student instructions prior to the session:

- Write & hand in paper
- Prepare a poster presentation and post it on the designated wall space prior to the Active Poster session [Avoid too much small text; use figures, graphs and tables]

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- Prepare a one-minute in-class marketing speech for your poster: why should people come to view your poster? [Haven't you always wondered if... We have the answer!]

Teacher instructions prior to the session:

- Ensure logistics (collection of the student papers, re-distribution of papers to opponents, venue, etc)
- Read and evaluate the papers in order to give feedback in the session

Instructions for the opponent group:

- Study the assigned paper
- Prepare a written feedback on the technical aspects of the paper; submit both to the author(s) and to the course teacher prior to the session. Issues to be covered include layout, referencing, spelling, language, sectioning, headlines, tables, figures, etc.
- Prepare a five-minute presentation on the core achievements of the paper, in order to convey this to the rest of the class; what are the main merits of this paper in your eyes? Bringing up new, related issues, for discussion is OK.

Setting of the session:

- Appropriate poster equipment
- A seating arrangement allowing "round-table discussion", both for the short start-up phase with general introduction and marketing speeches by the respective poster groups, and the presentations by the opponents and final discussions
- Poster arrangement allowing the people in the class to move around and scrutinise the posters.
- Suggested intensity: three papers for a two-hour session

Session:

- Pre-session: collect written opposition on technical issues of the paper
- Sit down: Explain the structure of the session; Marketing one minute per paper
- Move around: Poster session; up to half an hour; mingle and explore the posters
- Sit down: Opponent presentations followed by responses and full-class discussion on the topic + tentatively other related issues that arise; quarter of an hour per paper

Post-session:

- Feedback to the respective authors of the papers, based on your reading, impressions during the

session and the written comments from the opponents. Give instructions for potential improvements to be made.

III. WHY IS THIS AN INTERESTING WAY TO PRESENT STUDENT PAPERS?

Well, classic presentations have a risk of boring the audience by telling everything they have done in their paper, the audience sits passive during the main part of the session, and uniformity in presentation methodology in itself tends to make sessions less interesting. What is sought for in the suggested method is:

- Avoiding to have the author present his work; the role is reduced to answering questions and explaining. What is discussed becomes market-driven, not supply-driven.
- Greater responsibilities for the opponent; analysing the main merits of the work and presenting those to the class.
- High activity from the audience; allowed to explore others work based on their own interests.
- Allows three different settings for the teacher to interact with the author over the paper: by the poster to better understand details and limitations what has been done, in full-class to ensure that everybody understands the context and the big lines the work, and in the feed-back to comment on quality of the work and possible elaborations.
- The authors of the paper get more feedback on what they have done: in the poster session from both students and teachers, in the opponent's description of what they have done, and in the more formal feedback from the teacher.
- Physical activity and variations in the session; increases attentiveness in both active and seated parts.
- Fun to vary the presentation method and not always use the traditional paper presentations. Taking students by surprise may increase attentiveness and thereby student learning.

IV. CHALLENGES WITH THE METHOD

The challenges that came up in the first try-out included the following.

- Poster sessions can be slow at times; you may need to engage and drive them with your presence and input. It has in this context also been useful to invite interested colleagues for the poster part of the session.
- The author risks feeling that his work, or details thereof, is not given the attention it deserves, for example if the opponent is not doing a good enough job. The examination you give the paper in the poster session must be solid enough to avoid any such sense of lack-of-interest from the audience in general and

the teacher in particular. This is probably even more important for the evaluation of the paper you communicate to the author(s) in the post-session.

V. STUDENT EVALUATION

In the course evaluation performed after the course (response rate 76%) the students were asked to rank the most valuable elements of the course, choosing from a list of approximately 20 course items. Presentation of papers was ranked top-three, just behind 1) A course component on Cleaner Technologies, and 2) Discussions in general along the course.

A specific question on the Active Poster methodology gave the following response.

Redovisning med sk Active Poster var nyutvecklat från min sida; betyg? Kommentera gärna hur det påverkade ert lärande från det kursmomentet som helhet jämfört med om man kört med traditionella presentationer.

	%	#
1	0%	0
2	0%	0
3	18.8%	3
4	75%	12
?	6.25%	1
Summa	100%	16
Medelvärde		3.8

Comments:

— Roligt med en annorlunda typ av redovisning. Lärde mig mer än vad jag hade gjort om det hade varit vanligt, traditionellt

— Bra mycket bättre redovisningsmetod än att presentera massa arbeten traditionellt. Tyvärr drog det ut lite på tiden, skulle kunna haft högre tempo.

— Det var en intressant redovisningsform där man själv kunde fråga om det man ville veta och inte lyssna på sånt som man tycker är mindre intressant.

— Vid vanliga presentationer kan man koncentrera sig på 2-3 arbeten resten går in genom ena och ut... Active poster gjorde att man intresserade sig för ALLA arbeten och hade chans att ställa frågor i "realtid".

— Mkt bättre än vad jag förväntat mig! Man var mer aktiv under "presentationen" för att vara lite trevligare mot sina kompisar. Under en vanlig presentation är det ju lättare att "gömma sig". Bra med diskussion och opponering efteråt!

— Man fick lära sig mer aktivt. Det blev inte så stelt som en t ex powerpoint redovisning blir.

— Man tvingas inte lyssna igenom alla arbeten med ett halvt öra. Med den här metoden kunde man ställa frågor angående det man tyckte var mest intressant och på så sätt tror jag att man lärde sig mer.

— Gillade det starkt! Normalt när man redovisar arbeten för kursare sitter man bara och suckar för att man är dåligt insatt i ämnet, så det var trevligt att få läsa igenom en annans arbete och så presentera det. Kan ev. utvecklas ytterligare att redovisa mer än som det i många fall blev enbart opponering

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VI. CONCLUSION

I am happy to have the Active Poster method in my “teachers toolbox”. The tests I have made with it have been positive, with good student response and promising influences on student learning. It will not replace traditional presentations but serve as a useful complement. Further, the opportunities to develop the method are plentiful.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thanks to colleagues at the IIIIEE, foremost Jaakko Kuisma, who started using regular poster presentations for student papers and thereby inspired to the Active Poster.