

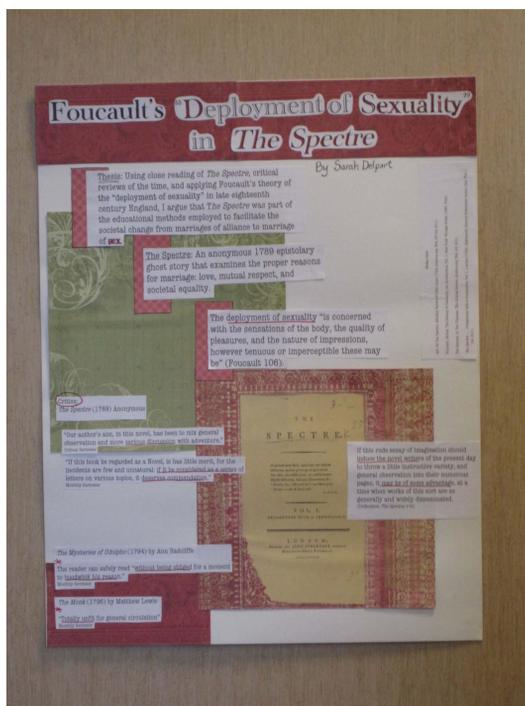
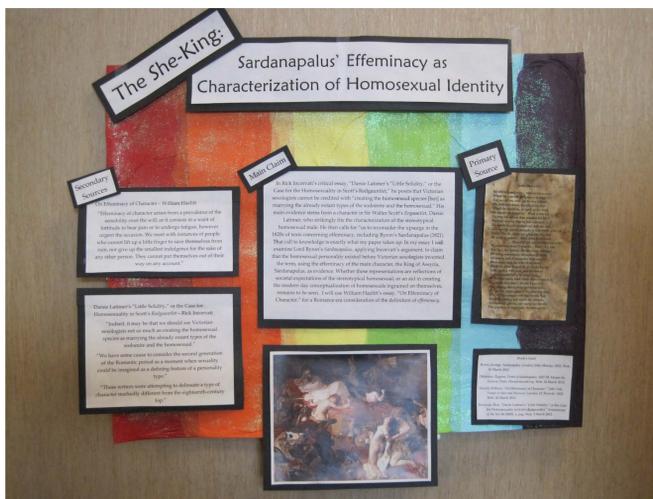
Embedding Research Posters in the Humanities Classroom

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Summary

This project examines research posters embedded in two senior-level English courses before the final papers were due. Although research posters are not a common form of dissemination in the Humanities, they can enhance student learning, especially when students are allowed to experiment with format. With the posters, students had the opportunity to visualize structure, receive feedback, and distill main points; they also began to see themselves and each other as producers of knowledge.



Details of Research Project

4th year literature seminar with focus on original undergraduate research: 17/23 participants (74%)

3rd year literature class with some research support: 18/27 participants (67%)

Data collected:

- Posters
- Two written reflections about poster process
- Research papers
- Ten semi-structured interviews after the courses

Why Include Research Posters in a Humanities Classroom?

Posters allowed students to

Visualize structure of essay:

- only 6/35 mention specifically
- but many essays followed organizational pattern of posters

Receive peer feedback on ideas:

- students offered suggestions, especially in 4th year course
- most suggestions involved resources or theories
- students were less likely to criticize ideas

Revise argument because of presentation:

- creating the poster was less important than presenting the poster for many students

“Through repeatedly discussing my text—repetitively presenting and subsequently revising my ‘spiel’—I soon realized the trajectory I wished to take with my paper and the necessary claims and information which it required”

Develop confidence in own authority:

- 10/17 students in 4th year course talked about how they realized how much they know and how other people could be excited by their topic
- students disregarded suggestions that they felt didn't fit into the scope of their papers
- students identified poster sessions as a step towards an academic community

They “allowed us to gain a collective respect for each other.”

Demonstrate rhetorical awareness through aesthetic choices:

- 22/35 students talked about matching the posters' aesthetics to the content
- They tried to control how someone would view their poster through color, texture, pattern, and composition

Focus on Research Processes rather than Products

Since most undergraduate students do not continue on to graduate studies, what do we hope undergraduate research will achieve? If it is to help students understand and shape their world, we need to focus on research processes rather than products. Posters make some research processes visible.

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