>> Hello, everyone. Welcome to AUCD Community Education and Dissemination Council webinar on designing a template for accessible conference poster presentations. My name is Susanna Miller-Raines and I work at the Center for Leadership and Disability at Georgia State University as well as I am currently the vice-chair of the AUCD Council CEDC and I am presenting today with my colleague Dr. Erin Vinoski Thomas, and I'll let her introduce herself.

>> Hi, everyone. This is Erin Vinoski Thomas. I work at The Center for Leadership and Disability with Susanna. I'm the director of health and wellness and a faculty member in our school of public health at Georgia State.

>> Several years ago Erin and I both attended the AUCD conference with our CAC vice-chair, Community Advisory Council vice-chair, who has a visual impairment. He was very upset after the poster presentation and we began talking about how to make accessible posters a priority for our center and work with AUCD to work on accessible posters. Erin and I began work on this probably five or six years ago and finally about a year ago after all the buzz that was going around there was a student in Michigan who had started to put together templates. We put together what we found as our template for our center for accessible posters. We're going to show you what we put together and then we'll have time to share resources and answer questions at the end.

Right here as you see on this screen is a poster. There is a large accessible poster picture on the screen and it is divided into sections with the title, it has introduction, it has methods, it has results, it has tables and graphs, an area for discussion, as well as references and contacts. All those are traditional pieces of a poster but on our poster, they're much smaller. [laughs]

There's a new piece that's in the middle that is the sentence of what. What is your research about? We called it 'the so what, give a little bit more about what your research is about. Then you can give people a way to access the research through a QR code. We'll talk all about every single piece of this but we wanted to show you the whole poster first.

There is the traditional title and authors. We have that and we did a lot of research on what are best practices for sizes of fonts and things. The title should be no smaller than 88-point font. On the poster that you saw earlier, it is 88-point font. Then the author's names, the text should be no smaller than 72-point font. It can be fun to try and fit everything in but you can do it. I know you can. There's also the section headers and body and Erin is going to go into more of how to pick what to showcase on your poster and I'm going to talk more about the sizes and those accessibility features.

There's every section header. The text should be no smaller than 60-point font. I have references on the right side that are photos of art pieces of our poster. I'm showing you what we have for the reference section and the contact section. There's a body of text that should be no smaller than 36-point font and in plain language. Erin's gonna talk a little bit about plain language later and we'll have resources at the end so people can become more familiar with that if they need to.

There is also this supplemental information such as what is on the screen, the reference section and the contact section. That text should be no smaller than 36-point font as well. We have the pictures of our reference. Use three to four key references. If you have more you can add them on the site for the QR code. We'll talk more about the QR code later in the presentation.

Then contact, if people want more information, just give them the information to contact you. Here it says, "If you're interested in learning more about this work please contact-" put in the lead author's name and then put in the researcher's email. All right, I turn it over to Dr. Vinoski Thomas.

>> Thanks Susanna. This is Erin speaking now. Now we're going to talk about how to really develop the main content sections of your poster which usually include the introduction, the methods, the results, and the discussion. Of course, there are going to be posters that are not describing research and those posters may of course have totally different section titles but the information that we will present to you today for each of the sections is going to be applicable and adaptable to any poster that you might design with some creativity.

For the introduction, it's important to limit this background or introduction section to provide just the key information that's supported by key references as applicable that someone visiting your poster needs to understand the general overview of the work that you're presenting.

I know from experience that it can be really hard for those of us who are trained in research to keep this part short and really to keep the whole poster brief but we really want to be sure not to overload people with kind of the minutia of what we're presenting. Save that for your excellent manuscript or your technical report or your evaluation report but keep revisiting the fact that a poster is not just a giant manuscript. That's not the purpose of it. It's really to present the key pieces of information so that someone who has an interest in your work can get a general idea and strike up a conversation with you later.

Using bullet points in the introduction and throughout the posters section can help organize the key information in a way that is easier to understand and that is also visually accessible and that's part of the purpose of a poster and in this section and again of course throughout the whole poster it's helpful to keep the text simple and keep it understandable by using plain language. Two resources that I recommend for plain language are the plainlanguage.gov website and then several of the resources developed by the Center for Plain Language and we have those links listed in our tips and

tricks slide later, I think season already mention that so we can talk a little bit more about that when we get to that slide next slide please.

The next section in a research related poster which again might be different for your poster, this would be the method section or the what you did section and this can be really important for helping your audience to understand exactly what you're talking about. My main tip to increase accessibility is to not only name the main methods but also to describe the main methods that you use so for people in my field for example, I can state that I conducted a thematic content analysis and that might be enough for people who have the same level of training or the same background for me but it's really not going to mean much to a more general audience so it's important to also describe the methods.

When you're doing that, consider again using bullet points and keeping text simple and understandable using plain language. To describe that thematic content analysis, I might say something like, "We read each interview transcript, we looked for common topics across participants and we categorized those topics into major themes." If I wanted to really punch the point home I would have put those statements in bullet points to show just how sort of logical and understandable a bulleted list can make things for folks. Next slide please. In the results section, again it can be helpful to really focus on those key results or key findings so what I like to do is to provide a one sentence description of each main result or finding. Again you'll hear me say this 5 more times probably, I'm using bullet points and brief plain language statements to do so is going to be the most accessible and the most effective way to communicate your information and of course tables and charts can be helpful to demonstrate research or program findings. Very generally it's important to avoid using red and green color contrast as a courtesy to those of color blindness, you'll also want to be sure to add alt text every graphic including tables and charts that you use that you put on your poster and Susanna is going to talk more about tables charts and graphics in a bit. Last point on this slide, it's important to again just consider your audience when presenting results and findings. Long lists of data points and statistics that are not going to be accessible to people outside of, maybe your smaller field won't communicate the information very effectively to the whole audience.

When I think of AUCD, especially, I think of a conference that's incredibly interdisciplinary. We love that about AUCD. We want to be sure that the work that we're presenting at the AUCD conference. Hopefully all of the other conferences that you attend can be effective and sort of communicate to a more general audience.

Next. The discussion section is generally where you will interpret your findings. You showed people what the findings were and here's where you're going to communicate to them what that actually means. You might also here consider describing the strengths and the limitations of the research or the work that you're presenting, to provide more context to your audience. Lastly, you'll discuss your future directions or tell people where you see it heading next. This is where a lot of really important conversations can come from in a poster presentation, even when it's held virtually I know.

Make sure that you talk about sort of where you see this going and who can be involved in where it's going? That's the really exciting stuff that makes those connections at a conference happen. Next slide. The middle part of the poster template that we showed at the beginning of the presentation showed a big blue box in the middle of the poster. Think about this big blue box as the place where you're really going to highlight that 10 second version of your project elevator speech for the work you're presenting. At the top of the box, this is a guideline. This is how we do this. Of course, again, this can be adapted for the work that you're doing.

We like to first describe the what of the poster, which is kind of one sentence that sums up the research or program findings using plain language. We like to follow that with the, as Susanna described it, the so what? Why does it matter? I use this as a place to provide one or two sentences that explain why the findings matter to the world and who they matter to. Again, using plain language. This right here, is really likely to be the first piece of information or maybe the only piece of information that your audience digests from your poster. Depending on how quickly they're moving through, either the physical conference venue or perusing through files online.

Really make these sentences simple and make them punchy, to grab your audience's attention. Make them provocative, if you can find a way to do that. That's what's going to draw people in and want to discuss your work further.

>> Thanks Erin. I'm going to talk a little bit now about images, figures, tables and graphs. All of these can convey messages better than words. We use them a lot to show results from evaluations or to show how we did methods. To the right on my screen is a figure that is a flowchart to show things. We want to make sure that people understand what you've done as well and see pictures and are engaged in a different way than just having to stand there and read a bunch of words. We're not trying to take away from all the hard work that everyone is doing with their research. We're trying to help you think through how you can share this with as many people as possible.

Then pull them in for more information if it's something that they're interested in. It's really important when you're using all these different images or figures, tables to use alt text on everything. If you're not familiar with alt text, there will be some more information towards the end on how to truly dig deeper into it. Typically, what you can do is right click on an image in one of the Microsoft products. There's a drop down for alt text and it'll give you a pop up in the bottom right. The real secret to alt text is being able to tell people what they need to see in the picture. You don't have to write down every single element, especially with pictures what are you trying to convey?

Think through, what is this picture trying to convey or you don't have to talk about every single bar on your graph. You could write in there the numbers. This bar represents this number. Just being aware that people who are using screen readers and people who might have a learning disability or need to use screen readers for another reason, it is really helpful to have alt text. Once again, you're just trying to get to the gist of it. What you want people to get from the actual image or what you want people to get from the flowchart, the graph, whatever you're doing. Just being able to really explain that.

Another thing, which is just one of my pet peeves. I like the way things look, but is to if you're going to use a photo. We would love for everyone to have photos and just things on there to really engage people, make sure it's pixelated correctly. It's the appropriate size and scale to fit. Just a quick tip, if you're trying to change the size of a photo and you don't really when you pull it, it kind of distorts it. All you have to do is click on the photo, hit the shift key, go to the bottom corner, the top corner the side, whichever and drag it till it gets to the size you want it and it won't distort the picture.

Not everyone knows that, I've been doing. I was a newspaper editor in high school. I started doing this things back then. I've come to realize it is a tip and trick that not everyone knows. Just think about that. You want your poster to look professional, to look the best it can. Having a photo that's not distorted or that is very fuzzy, it can really change how people see your poster. QR codes. I think they're really handy. Our phones have come a long way. If you don't know what a QR code is, it is a code that is generated. You generate it online. There's websites that are QR code generators. I have a link to one at the end and use to.

You would have to get a special app on your phone that you would use to read the QR code. Now, all new model phones. Some of you who might have an older model phone, you might still need to download an app. All newer model phones, it's embedded in your camera. If you just turn your camera on and hover it over a QR code, it'll populate it and it'll take you to the website. That's what QR codes do. They take you to a website. For this case, the QR codes that we are suggesting would take you to more information. It would first take you the ideal setup for a website or a web page for where your QR code would lead, would be to have layers of the manuscript.

Have the text of your poster and the alt text all in a document that someone can just go to, have their phone, read it right there. Tight then in there. It doesn't have to be something you upload to your computer and have your screen reader read it. It would be, people who use the technology of text to speech on their phone could go to the QR code, take them to the website. Then it would read aloud the basics of your poster. We then would encourage that you put a PDF picture of your poster below that. Then we would suggest that you put links to more information on your research.

It could be where your manuscript is, if you have information on this website or you have findings. Any of the other stuff that you would typically throw at people on your posters, you would have it but it would be if people want more, it's on that website. This is a picture to the right of the QR code on our sample poster, which leads to a beautiful picture of Aaron and I. I think it's our second AUCD conference together. It's one of our favorite pictures, but it takes you to the sample site. We have a website that we use through the Weebly platform.

We've also used our CLD website, our university website, but we've noticed that we've changed websites three times, the providers or the platforms and we've lost pages to where the QR codes link. We decided it's better to just have a free site that we just manage and throw things on as needed so we don't lose those things when we have things printed. This is a screenshot of what the top of it looks like, it just starts with title, what the title is. This is an actual from one of our AUCD posters several years ago, but we've been using this method of QR codes for a while and we've finally brought our poster into the modern era as well. That is QR codes and how we use them on our posters. Now we have some tips and tricks and Erin and I found out new things as we were prepping for this and we've been working with our staff on accessible PowerPoint presentations and we're finding new things all the time.

One of the things is, if you didn't know this already about PowerPoint because most posters are made in PowerPoint, is that there is a natural sequencing of panes that happens, even you don't know that that's happening, but it helps you, some of you might know that already, but Erin and I didn't. It will take every single piece of your PowerPoint and it will put it in order [coughs] and the natural way it puts it in order is how you've added it to your page and so it might not be linear and you could change how it's linear through using this. There's a picture on the right hand of the screen and if you're on your homepage of your PowerPoint, there's an Arrange button and that's where the first arrow is pointing. You click on the Arrange button and it takes you down to pane selection and then it opens this box in the right hand corner, [coughs] or the right side. It has every single box of things that you have in your PowerPoint in that and you can rearrange it, so you just drag and drop.

That way, if someone is using a screen reader for your PowerPoint slide, it will take it in the right order. If it doesn't, it will just say this slide earlier had one of the arrows and then the picture and then the text box, so it would just say blue arrow, whatever the alt text that I had for this picture is, then it would say blue arrow and then it would go back to as you're making your poster. It's just something to be known that this is going on in the background and that it is helpful if you control that and we were retro-doing it and it was really difficult. Knowing that from the beginning can help you at least when you're setting things up to set them up in an order that is helpful. Erin, I'll let you talk a little bit about resources for plain language.

>> Sure. Thanks. This is Erin. I mentioned two resources that I've used for plain language in the past, I use these with my undergraduate students for an assignment that they are assigned in my course and they found them pretty helpful. These are folks who are really new to writing with plain language, so I think they're pretty universally wonderful. There's the plainlanguage.gov site and then there's a whole center for plain language and on the Center for Plain Language website, you can find resources for understanding what plain language actually is. It by name sounds like something that we would all be like, "Oh, yes, of course, plain language." But there's more details about what goes into plain language and also why it's really important to use. There are also tools on that website about how to check the language of a document or whatever it is that you're working on. I know in the past I've used the tool in word that's the Flesch Kincaid grade level.

That can be a tool, it's okay but there are other resources that can help to promote using plain language and help you figure out how to do that better, which is always great. I encourage folks to visit their website and I know my email address pops up at the end of our presentation, if there are specific questions that you have about plain language that you would like to talk with one of us about, please feel free to reach out and I'd be happy to engage with you about that.

>> Thanks, Erin. I'm going to switch the screen I shared to talk about this next piece, but Microsoft is really moving forward with lots of great accessibility tools, some of which there are available to you right now and you might not have even noticed, some of you might have noticed, but there's a whole webpage, the Microsoft PowerPoint accessibility tips webpage. What's my new favorite feature is the Microsoft accessibility checker. I'm going to switch to my PowerPoint document, I'm going to share it and show you guys where it's at. I moved everyone over. Here we go. Share screen. At the bottom of this document, the PowerPoint, you can see right here that it says the accessibility and it says investigate. If your presentation is 100% accessible, it'll say something like good to go. Well, there's a few things in this presentation that Microsoft doesn't think are accessible. I'm going to click it and it'll show you over to the right what the errors are.

Number one, my slide two, this one, I didn't have a title on it, but all it is is a picture and I described the picture so I didn't think it needed a title. Then there's warnings, it tells me what pages that there are not words on for reading. There aren't words from pages 13, 14 and 15, but that'll help you, it'll let you know when there's no alternative text to your pictures. That's actually how Erin and I found out about the pain order, was because it gave us an error there. It's a really great tool to use, whether you're working on a poster or you're working on a PowerPoint presentation. We're just really big fans of how accessible PowerPoint has become. I'm going to take it over to the next slide, this will talk a little bit more about alt text, if you want alt text information. It really just helps you understand that you don't have to describe everything, but just how to pick the things to talk about. Then this is, you can go to the QR code generator website right here and you just put in the website you're trying to use and you can use it on a lot of different things.

You put in your website and then it'll generate a QR code, which you can download as a picture, you can save it and then put it on the document that you need it for. That is what Erin and I have for creating accessible posters. We have, I just want to open it up, if people have questions, you can ask them in the Zoom chat, or you can raise your hand. We're happy to answer any questions that you might have. Well, there seem to be no questions. I'm going to pull up an example of one that, this is not the example. Let's see, here's one that we have done for one of our projects and there were questions about if we were going to share this. AUCDL have this on the CDC webpage, wherever they put webinars that are archived and I have the list of who are registered and I'll send out our template and I will send out this PowerPoint.

Here's one that we did for our Latino Community of Practice. It's just really quick, really brief, just shows you the information. Erin, I'm going to ask the question and then I'll let you answer, and if I

have anything else to say, I'll add to it. As many conferences move virtual, have you seen any creative ways that poster sessions have transitioned online that's interesting and accessible?

>> That's a great question. I've seen the use of breakout rooms in virtual conference platforms be one of the more accessible ways to engage people around posters. To do exactly what we're doing here, which is share screen and have the accessible poster be visually accessible to the folks in the room who access information that way, and then to also provide-- Again, you can use the QR code feature even when it's on a screen. You can actually access the information on the QR code, even though you're in a virtual conference.

Then one thing that I think we found at our center, we have a couple of conferences that we support, is that having breakout rooms can be an accessible way for folks who aren't tremendously comfortable communicating in larger spaces to engage in conversation and dialogue around the work that's being presented in a poster presentation, in a smaller format. I think there's two answers there.

One is the visual accessibility of the poster, and then the accessibility of the session and the information and the dialogue that happens. I'm looking forward to finding out new ways to make virtual conferences better and more accessible. I think we have some folks who are definitely gaining a lot of expertise in that as the year goes on. I'll be looking forward to conferences during this fall conference season to see what everyone's been up to over these past six months.

Suzanne, I don't know if you have anything to add, or if anyone else in the audience has anything to add about that.

>> I don't have anything to add. The conference that I attended that had posters, it was a come as you are, look at the PDF. It wasn't very interactive. I like the breakout rooms and having the poster presenter there and having people being able to pop in and pop out. Then having it in the room but then having it accessible through a PDF or the PowerPoint for people to pull it up and look through it.

Are there any other questions? Yes, it's been the non-interactive poster. All right. Well, here's our information. If people have questions, and once again, I will be sending out information. Melanie said, "Some conferences I attend have all of the handouts and materials available prior to the session and on a web page to download." That's ideally, what would happen and then have some space for people to interact.

All right. Well, if there are no other questions, we've all gained 25 minutes in our day. Please, please, please feel free to email Erin or I. Once again, I'll send out the link of this recording and I will also send you our template and the PDF of this PowerPoint presentation.

>> Thanks everyone.

>> Thanks everyone. Have a great afternoon, evening. Whatever time zone you're in. Be well.