Exercise 2: Reading a Project Poster

For our second exercise, we're going to simulate the effect of having to read about someone's project on a poster, rather than being given the luxury of listening to them describe it.

1.   Get into *new* groups of three.

2.   In the space below, write a one-sentence summary of the goal of your project. Follow that up with a 2-4 sentence description of what your project will entail. This step shouldn't take more than three minutes.

3.   Pass around your sheets and read what each of your group members wrote about their own projects. This shouldn't take more than a two minutes.

4.   Based on reading the brief descriptions, tell your fellow group members what you think their projects will entail. Be sure to make this a dialogue—ask questions about how your project was perceived, and what could have been done to make your description more accessible to non-specialists. Write down any notes in the space below.

5.   As a group, discuss with one another what you'd have to do to make your project accessible to the following audiences. What features would you discuss and which would you omit? What details would it be important to highlight? In what context would your project be framed (i.e., scientific application, product design, how it will effect a person's life, etc.)? Write down a few ideas beneath each audience.

A scientist or engineer in another field

Your English or Communication instructor

A person reading Newsweek

Your parents