

CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

How to Make the Most of PowerPoint in Lectures

A Teaching with Technology Seminar

Monday, September 12, 2011

Tips for Effectively Utilizing PowerPoint in Lectures

When to Use PowerPoint:

- To convey visual ideas such as graphs, tables, images, processes, and relationships
- To summarize a reading, fact, or idea
- To present examples of specific concepts
- To pose interactive questions that encourage active discussion and class participation

Instruction-Student Interaction

- Be aware of how students are responding to the information; Ask if there are questions at regular intervals
- Focus on the students, not on the PowerPoint screen
- Provide students with printable slide outlines for note taking that support your lecture, not replace it
- Support your lecture with other forms of communication in addition to PowerPoint, such as classroom discussion, handouts, and videos, and invite questions frequently

What to Stay Away From:

- Too much text on a slide
- Distracting images
- Reading directly from slides
- Full sentences; limit text to short phrases

Delivering PowerPoint Presentations:

- When lecturing, allow at least 1-2 minutes for viewers to absorb everything on screen
- Avoid standing behind a computer or at a podium when presenting PowerPoint (use laser pointers or remotes)

Slide Design:

- When including text, consider the "6x6 Rule": 6 bullet points with 6 words or fewer per slide
- Use large, simple, non-script fonts (32 point font or larger is recommended)
- Use high-contrast slide colors; avoid color combinations that could be difficult for color-blind viewers to see
- Keep pictures, animations, sounds, and distracting slide transitions to a minimum
- Consider what you want students to focus on

Sample Presentation Slide Order:

- Title Slide
- Attention-Getter
- Preview Slide
- Content
- Transition
- Content
- Conclusion
- Questions

Some thoughts on Utilizing PowerPoint in Lectures...

"The key element in the use of PowerPoint as a presentation tool is its potential to increase and maintain student interest and attention to the lecture when combined with active teaching and student involvement." (Clark, 2008, p. 39)

"When used correctly, PowerPoint can be an effective way to communicate ideas, share data, and transfer knowledge. The key is to incorporate visual elements that enhance what is being said by showing contrast, flow, hierarchy, unit or proximity." (Bart, 2009)

For further information on these tips and more, please contact the CTE at:

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