

# Tips for Effective PowerPoint Presentations

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# Develop a visual storyboard

- Start by developing a structured framework of the session content
- Develop a logical flow for the material, considering the topic, learning goals and objectives

# Use sound and video only for educational purposes

- Is a theme apparent?
- Should the text include illustrations?
- What multimedia resources are appropriate?

# Provide relevant 'learning cues'

- The use of a **color** or icon (🔑) may be used to cue participants to a main point or action

# Select a standard sans serif font

- Serif fonts (i.e. Times New Roman) with different thicknesses of lines are difficult to read
- Sans serif fonts (i.e. Arial and Helvetica) are easier to read
- Use a maximum of 2 fonts (one for headings and one for body)

# Consider the size of the room when choosing font size

- *Classrooms > 200 seats*
  - *Headings: 42 point Main text: 36 point*
- Classrooms < 200 seats
  - Headings: 36 point Main text: 28 point
- Rooms seating < 50
  - Headings: 32 point Main text: 24 point

# Choose predominantly lower case letters

- The eye recognizes letters by the shape of the upper half which is easier in lower case letters

# The rule of six

- Present **one** idea per screen and limit the number of words on the screen
- **Six** lines per visual, and **six** words per line



# Color

- Can be used for highlighting key messages, providing learning cues, emphasizing relationships or discriminating between topics or objects
- Maximum of 4 on any one slide
- Be consistent
- Select colors for audience meaning (i.e. red and white stop sign)
- Should complement the background (i.e. white or pale text against a dark background; black or blue text against a lighter background)
- Consider cultural significance and psychological effects

# Use the Build Feature

- Create layers of 'slide builds' to reveal each point line by line
- Useful for question-answer format
- To allow audience to absorb information one step at a time

# The picture superiority effect

- Pictures are remembered better than word – especially when people are exposed to the information for a very limited time
- People will tire quickly if you show slides of bulleted lists, one after another
- What information could you replace with an image or graphic?
- Using images of faces can be effective for getting viewer's attention



# Pictures and art should enhance presentation message (not provide a distraction)

- Limit the number of pictures on each slide
- Avoid covering text or layering
- Choose pictures relevant to the topic
- Create a path for the eye, dividing space in an interesting way and keeping slides organized

# Signal-to-Noise Ratio

- The ratio of relevant to irrelevant elements and information
- If an item can be removed without compromising the message, then minimize or remove it (i.e. lines in grids, tables, footers, logos, etc)
- Empty space gives the few elements on the slide their power

# What Makes Messages Stick?

- Simplicity – stick to the key point
- Unexpectedness – ask questions that expose gaps in knowledge
- Concreteness – give real examples
- Credibility – support your claims
- Emotions – use vivid images and tell stories
- Stories – great presentations tell a story

# Resources

Holzi J. Twelve tips for effective PowerPoint presentations for the technologically challenged. *Med Teach*. 1997;19(3): 175-179.

Reynolds G. *presentationzen: Simple Ideas on Presentation Design and Delivery, Second Edition*. Berkeley, California: New Riders, 2012.