

Preparing Presentation Media for Teaching

Whether you are a seasoned presenter or are looking for some basic tips and techniques, this guide will help you create and deliver effective and impressive presentations.

Organize your Material

1. Use the title of your presentation as a guide to your discussion.
2. Look over your material and focus on important key points.
3. Prioritize content to ensure that you cover the most important aspects of your presentation.
4. Organize your presentation to include time for questions and answers. Or, if you are giving a more formal presentation, ask the audience to hold their questions to the end of your presentation to ensure you cover your material.
5. Leave about ten minutes for questions and answers.

Arial
San Serif
Typeface
28 points

Figure 1

Electronic Presentations Materials

Creating an effective PowerPoint presentation is not as complicated as you might think. By following the points below, your PowerPoint presentation will be effective, efficient, and engaging. Overhead transparencies can be just as effective by following applicable points below.

Limit slides – typically, show one slide per minute.

1. Use color for emphasis. Dark backgrounds such as blue, purple, green and brown and light typeface such as white or beige are easy to read in a large room. Conversely, using a light background such as white, yellow, or beige with a dark typeface such as black, dark blue, or green can be used for a different look.
2. Use a sans serif typeface such as Arial, Calibri, or Tahoma (see Figure 1). These are monotype letters—they are the same thickness throughout each letter and do not have the fine lines seen at the edges of letters in serif typeface. Serifs are fine lines which finish the end of lettering (see Figure 2). Letter clarity can be reduced by using serif typefaces, thus making the presentation look potentially fuzzy when used in projected media (see Figure 2).
3. Ensure the typeface is large enough. Titles and headings should be no less than 32-40 points and the subtext should be no less than 28 points.
4. Use clip art (graphics) sparingly and only when they support the content being projected. Inappropriate or too many graphics interfere with the message being relayed.
5. Photographs can be effectively used to add realism. They can be used to fill an entire slide or incorporated in a slide with text
6. Add motion, sound, or music *only* when necessary.
7. Check for spelling and correct word usage.

Times
Roman
Typeface
28 points

Figure 2

Times New
Roman
Serif Typeface
18 points

Figure 3

Print-Based Handouts

Many participants like to have something to read and write on. As stand-alone documents, paper handouts can effectively outline your presentation and provide a summary of important points. Print-based handouts can also augment electronic presentations. As with any document, consider the following points:

1. If you plan to distribute PowerPoint handouts, use the Print Handouts option, with three to six slides per page. Or, consider distributing the outline of the presentation rather than a number of slide per page.
2. Limit the amount of text on the page and chunk like-information in bullet points, boxes, or paragraphs.
3. Use headings to organize and emphasize material.
4. Use a serif typeface, such as Times New Roman (what you are now reading). See Figure 3.

Presentation Tips and Techniques

Learning new presentation tips and techniques can help you become an even better presenter in front of your students and colleagues.

1. Consider the diverse make-up of the audience and the need to address a variety of expectations, points-of-view and personal feelings.
2. Use humor sparingly and with discretion. Avoid the use of slang or inappropriate language.
3. Keep your voice strong and dynamic.
4. Use an active and positive voice.
5. Maintain eye contact with everyone in the audience.
6. Move during your presentation – approach the audience to engage them.
7. Use a laser pointer instead of your finger when pointing to projected material.
8. Consider the use of color or graphics such as lines, grids and charts for visual emphasis.

Resource Materials

If you plan to provide references and resources for your participants, keep the materials brief and organized. Consider providing a URL for Web sources.

1. Include your name on all electronic and print materials.
2. Bring your business card for future contacts.

Summary

Effective presentations can be achieved through careful planning and incorporating simple yet helpful design techniques. Carefully proof your work and ask a colleague to review your final presentation to check for accuracy and errors. Finally, make notes of your presentation once it is over to refine it for future use.

Selected Resources

Diresta, D. (2010). Speak with power and confidence. Retrieved from <http://www.diresta.com/>

Fry, P. L. (2007). Presentations with a punch: When words don't say it all. Retrieved from http://members.shaw.ca/toasted/new_page_2.htm

Hindle, T. (1998). *Making presentations*. East Rutherford, NJ: Penguin Books, Ltd.

Williams, R. (2004). *The non-designer's design book: Design and typographic principles for the visual novice* (2nd ed.). Berkeley, CA: Peachpit Press.