



Creating Effective Presentations

FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING



COFFEE BREAK GUIDE

1

WHEN PRESENTING IDEAS to students, or to peers, you will often prepare some form of visual aid or handout to accompany your presentation.

Here are some tips for creating visual aids that add a punch to your presentation.



ALWAYS DO THIS:	WHY?
Get familiar with the software and hardware you will be using well ahead of time.	You'll build confidence in your ability to run the session smoothly and iron out any technical problems ahead of time.
Keep text to a minimum – no more than 6 lines per page, using the largest font size possible.	Bulleted ideas on which to develop your presentation puts the focus on what you are saying. Never just read from your visual aid without adding additional information or insight.
Use images, embedded videos or external links to illustrate your point and introduce ideas and concepts.	Images, videos and web links help to break up your presentation and appeal to different learning styles.
Include examples in your presentation.	Examples help to link theory to practical application and help your audience understand.
Save time by inserting hand-drawn diagrams into your presentation ahead of time instead of starting from scratch on a whiteboard in class.	You can go over the diagram while facing your audience instead of trying to present with your back to them as you draw or write on the board.
Use complementary colours for the background and foreground.	Colours that are opposite each other on the colour wheel provide the greatest contrast, are easiest to see – even in poor lighting conditions – and reduce eye strain.
Use a font style and background that is appropriate for the audience.	Font styles and background images or colours help to set the tone for your presentation.
Use the largest font size you can fit on the slide so everyone in the room can see it.	Your audience will tune out if the text size is too small to read. (It's like speaking so quietly that only some of your audience can hear you.)
Put non-important information (like a logo or decoration) on the bottom of the slide if it's not visible from the back of the room.	If the presentation room has a flat floor and the screen isn't elevated, people seated at the back will only be able to read the top 2/3 of the screen.
Use a projector mounted overhead whenever possible.	Permanently-fixed projectors reduce wires and cables, and you don't cast a shadow by passing in front of the projector.

What software can I use to prepare presentations?

Presentation software allows you to include text, audio, images, animations and videos. Popular software programs include:

- Microsoft PowerPoint
- Smartboard Notepad.

Use the essay structure

- Tell them what you're going to tell them.
- Tell them.
- Tell them what you've told them.

Use this essay structure in your presentations:

- Make your first introduction slide and your last summary slide similar in message, tone and design.
- Use a consistent flow of information through the presentation, linked from the introduction.
- Each new slide is like a new paragraph in an essay. In the essay structure, each paragraph should only introduce one new thought or concept. Keep each new concept on its own slide.

Design for absentees

Your presentation should have notes attached so absentees can make sense of the material at a later date. Your notes should also include additional information that can be used for review after the lesson.

Design for interactivity

Consider introducing interactivity into your presentations by starting with a skeleton presentation for some slides and adding to it as you go – you'll bring the audience along with you and create a less "canned" presentation.

Here are some ideas:

- Pose questions for students to answer in class.
- Present unfinished diagrams and complete them as part of your lesson.

Design for readability

As you design the presentation on your computer, check whether you have included too much information on the screen, or used too small a font size. Sit or stand 2–3 metres from your monitor. If you can still read everything clearly, that's about the right size for presenting that slide to a room full of people.

Be smart with transitions

Keep the audience interested by using transitions between slides to reveal information slowly, as you need it.

You can also create and embed presentations in a learning management system such as Moodle, Blackboard or Web CT.

TIP

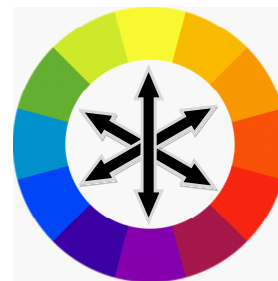
Create image-only galleries and slideshows using Microsoft Image Viewer or other slideshow programs.

Design for visual appeal

Other than black and white, colours opposite each other on the colour wheel provide the greatest contrast. These are called complementary colours.

To find the complementary colour for any primary colour (red, blue, yellow), just work out what mixing the other two primary colours together would produce:

- Red + Blue = Violet complements Yellow
- Blue + Yellow = Green complements Red
- Yellow + Red = Orange complements Blue



Be consistent

Make your presentation look professional – use the same fonts, text styles, punctuation and colours.

TIP

A mixture of upper and lower case is easier to read than all upper case (capital letters).

Don't make it too busy

Be wary of using too much detail in diagrams. Will it be seen by everybody in the room?

Get copyright clearance

Make sure you have the correct permission to use any images or media you want to use in your presentation. Many organisations give permission for their created works to be used in an educational setting, but proper permission must be requested and granted first. Most institutes have a resource centre, library, learning commons or information management centre that can help with any copyright issues.