

Best Practices for Narrated Power Point Presentations

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Organize and prepare. Before beginning narration, print out your slides and write a script or notes cards for them. This will help you know which slide is coming up and be prepared for it. Speaking into a microphone can often be more difficult than giving the presentation to a live audience. Be organized and know what is coming up next.

Write in point form, not complete sentences. If you write too many words the learners will spend too much time reading and not listen to the elaborative content you are providing with your narration. Visuals often provide more memorable representations of content when appropriate.

Start strong. Your first slide should be your title slide, which you can use to introduce yourself and provide some preliminary information about the structure and scope of your presentation. Do not start by saying, "Um, well, I guess we should probably get started." Instead, say, "Hi, I'm Dr. Smith. This lecture focuses on"

Let your personality show. Narration done well, especially when it includes a picture of you, can help facilitate the teacher-student connection.

Don't read, talk! Your main goal should be to keep your listeners interested and focused. Nothing is more boring than listening to someone read to you what you can read yourself. Pretend you are actually lecturing to a class. Place a photograph of your family or pet near your computer and pretend you are talking to them.

Use good slide design. Use standard fonts. Use different size fonts for main points and secondary points. Limit number of fonts, size of fonts and color of fonts to 3 per presentation. Capitalize only when necessary. Proofread your slides. Limit use of animation.

Engage the learner. Ask questions and pause for the learner to think about the answer, give examples, or tell a relevant story. When you say something important, leave a gap after it. Let it hang there for a few seconds. Here is an example: "You know what I think? (pause...two...three.) I think Bush is bankrupting this country for the next twenty years. (pause...two...three) Here's why..."

Only take 1-2 minutes per slide. The longer the presentation, the longer the download wait, and some students still are using dial-up. If you have more to say, break the slide up into more than one slide.

Eliminate extraneous noise. Turn off your phone, shut the door, move from vents, etc.

Check your sound quality. Record your introduction slide. Stop and play the slide to check the sound quality before going on. It is best to use an external microphone or headset to get clear, consistent sound. Keep the microphone a few inches from your mouth to avoid hearing breathing sounds.

You can stop your narration and return to it later. Don't think that you have to record narration for the whole presentation at once; you can do it slide by slide if you want to and come back and finish later.

Preview your presentation. Record your narration for the entire presentation as if you were presenting it. Then run your presentation, and sit back and listen. You get an entirely different perspective when you pretend to be the audience. Listening to your presentation enables you to pick up on awkward moments, unclear passages, and boring spots much more easily. You cannot edit the narration in the middle, but you can choose to re-record narration on any of the slides.

"Good pairing of written text and on-line presentation materials. And not just a rehashing of the text, but real clarification of the known complexities and "sticky points" associated with the topic."

"I absolutely enjoyed the PowerPoint w/ audio - a good stand-in for a real lecture. I could sense the professor's PASSION about the topic."

"Some of the reading, especially in the Leuthold book was confusing, but the instructor's explanations accompanying the PowerPoint's clarified some of the topics with which I struggled. I, therefore, found them, a very useful tool."

Provide students with a downloadable printable version. Using the "Print Handouts" option create a PDF handout students can print and upon which they can take notes while listening. You may even want to consider blanking out some information to encourage note taking.

Getting Breeze Presenter:

The Breeze license purchased by UNL allows free download, installation and use of Breeze Presenter:

1. **Register for an Account:** Faculty account creation is handled by Lisa Bogus (472-9050, lbogus3@unl.edu). She does not provide any training or support.
2. **Install the Breeze Presenter software:** once you receive your account information, you need to download and install the Breeze Presenter software. <http://breeze.unl.edu/common/help/en/support/startmain.htm>
Click on the *Install Macromedia Breeze Presenter* link. You will be prompted to enter your Breeze username and password. Once you enter that information, you can download the software. Breeze Presenter is installed as a menu in Microsoft PowerPoint.

Other PowerPoint Resources

How to record narration

Using the PowerPoint Breeze Presenter Plug-In: <http://tinyurl.com/bn6cj>

Directions for Recording Narration in Powerpoint: <http://tinyurl.com/8oeh8>

Directions for Converting and Existing Narrated PowerPoint to Breeze Presenter: <http://tinyurl.com/b7vmx>

Handout on Breeze account info, FlashPaper and CutePDF Writer: <http://tinyurl.com/cj2w6>

Interactive quizzes using PPT:

Powerpoint Game Instructions: <http://www.coastal.edu/education/ti/interactiveppt.html>

Breeze Presenter Quiz Instructions: <http://tinyurl.com/8l433>

The Cognitive Style of Powerpoint by Edward R. Tufte

"In corporate and government bureaucracies, the standard method for making a presentation is to talk about a list of points organized onto slides projected up on the wall. For many years, overhead projectors lit up transparencies, and slide projectors showed high-resolution 35mm slides. Now "slideware" computer programs for presentations are nearly everywhere. Early in the 21st century, several hundred million copies of Microsoft PowerPoint were turning out trillions of slides each year.

Alas, slideware often reduces the analytical quality of presentations. In particular, the popular PowerPoint templates (ready-made designs) usually weaken verbal and spatial reasoning, and almost always corrupt statistical analysis. What is the problem with PowerPoint? And how can we improve our presentations?"

http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/books_pp

"But, formats, sequencing, and cognitive approach should be decided by the character of the content and what is to be explained, not by the limits of the presentation technology."

–Tufte

Creating Graphics for Learning and Performance: Lessons in Visual Literacy by Linda Lohr

Prentice Hall ISBN# 0-13-090712-X

"It's all here! Everything teachers and instructional designers need to know to produce effective, efficient, and appealing visuals for classrooms and training/performance settings—including web-based training and distance learning. This text explains the process of graphic design, exploring not only the rules that apply to designing graphics, but also the thinking, experimenting, and evaluating that goes into a good design. Blending information from such diverse sources as instructional design and architecture, graphic arts and ergonomics, the author provides a wealth of examples, exercises, and hands-on activities that reinforce content. Underlying everything is information processing theory and an emphasis on the importance of designing visuals that not only appeal to the eyes, but also support cognitive processes by helping learners select the most important information, organize that information, and integrate it into memory."

<http://tinyurl.com/b89vc>