Using PowerPoint for Learning

1. **Use your experience of boring PowerPoint presentations to create your own approach.**
   Make a list of all of the mistakes that you've seen others make, and then avoid making them yourself – it is better to learn from the mistakes of others than to repeat them yourself!

2. **Develop your own presentation style.**
   While there is no single 'magic recipe' it is important to remember that you are the presenter and PowerPoint is a visual aid to support you. Check your 'boredom rating' with your audience – if it works for them then it works for you.

3. **Use PowerPoint for images.**
   PowerPoint is a visual medium, unlike this written list. Images are far more memorable than text. Don't drown your audience in too much text. Use PowerPoint as an 'image processor', not a word processor. Aim for only a few words per slide.

4. **Avoid reading from the screen.**
   Unless your audience cannot read for themselves, you don't need to do it for them. So don't. If you have to use the occasional quote or phrase, let folks read the text for themselves. Aim for key words and phrases, rather than text-heavy sentences.

5. **Forget nothing – use PowerPoint as an aide memoire.**
   Careful selection and use of multiple slides and images, plus any key words/phrases will give you the structure of your presentation, without the need for notes when you present (this is a skill that you can develop with practice).

6. **Think about the learning value of 'bells and whistles'.**
   Learning theory tells us that it is harder to 'process' information that is unnecessarily complicated. Strive for simplicity while avoiding oversimplification, to avoid 'information overload' for your audience. With PowerPoint, less is more. Only use animation and other features where this aids learning.

7. **Think about the learning value of handouts.**
   The conventional PowerPoint handout is not an aid to active learning. If you feel that you must use handouts, then try to use them actively – e.g. leave gaps for students to add notes, based on what you say in your presentation.

8. **Think about the learning value of publisher's PowerPoint slides.**
   While such slides may be provided free of charge by the publisher, you should aim to be highly selective in what you use and how you use it – for example, aim to use slides with figures and images from textbooks, rather than text. Consider point 1 again, in terms of the type of slides used in boring presentations.

9. **Model good practice – always cite the source of images that aren't your own.**
   Some presenters may simply cut-and-paste images from the web, without attribution. This could infringe copyright and is certainly not modelling best practice to your students (what would you do if students did the same in their assignments?) So... (i) avoid using copyright-protected images without permission and (ii) cut-and-paste the URL of any image from the web into your PowerPoint slide, to show the source of the image – you might use smaller font and grey text so that it's present, but not distracting.

10. **Use online resources to improve your approach.**
    For example, YouTube and other websites: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbSPPFYxx3o , or http://michaelhyatt.com/how-not-to-use-powerpoint.html or http://ltlatnd.wordpress.com/2011/02/01/seven-resources-for-better-powerpoint/ ....and there are many, many more). Remember that an hour or so of online learning and reflection could save your students a lifetime of boring presentations!

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