Tips for Avoiding “Powerpoint Poisoning”

Student Seminars in Nanoscience
Chem 560D

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Plan Your Presentation

What is the purpose of your talk?

5 questions to answer *before* making your slides (same as writing a paper)

- What is the problem?
- Why should people care?
- What is the approach?
- What is new?
- What is the impact?

(don’t forget to consider your audience and venue)
Limits of the Format: aka TIME

Plan to convey only ONE key idea
What is your ‘thesis statement’?

Be concise
Plan for 1 *real* slide/minute
Don’t give your advisor’s talk

Age old advice:
“Tell them what you’re going to tell them.
Tell them.
Tell them what you told them.”
Preparing Slides

• BIG clean fonts (18 point Arial bold should as SMALLEST)

• Don’t clutter slides unnecessarily (use clean backgrounds)

• One idea per slide

• Animations and sound effects are distractingly
Preparing Data

1) Thick lines and dark colors only (don’t use Excel defaults)
2) LABEL all curves (instead of using a legend)
3) NEVER more than 2 graphs per slide
4) Always *introduce* the graph: ‘Y vs. X acquired with a gizmo’

![Graph showing DNA linker comparison](image)
Practice Your Talk

1) Rehearse your talk with a watch

2) Think about your slide-to-slide transitions

3) Critically evaluate the role of each slide in the talk

(rehearsal tip: print out your slides)

Don’t Give A Meaningless Overview

1) Introduction
2) Experimental Design
3) Results
4) Summary and Conclusion
Speaking Tips

1) Be excited about your work, but be yourself

2) Do NOT memorize, use notecards or use powerpoint cues

3) Talk to your audience, not the screen

4) Use motion, but sparingly

5) Bring water but don’t use it unless you lose your voice

6) Be excited about your work, but be yourself
Questions

1) LEAVE TIME
2) Don’t get bogged down on 1 question
3) Prepare a few ‘just in case’ slides
4) “That’s an interesting comment”
Summary

• Plan your presentation and your ‘message’

• Keep your slides simple and clean and your data BIG

• Rehearse and stay on time

• Don’t answer questions like Dogbert

• Visit www.imaging.org for more guidelines
Hardware Advertising

- ALWAYS have a backup
- Having your own pointer is nice
Class Format

• Two talks / week

• ~18-20 minute talks

• 5-7 minute question/comment period

• point is for everyone to improve—
  the audience and the speakers, ask tough questions,
give constructive criticism as well as positive feedback