Interactive PowerPoint Tips

While Microsoft PowerPoint offers a convenient way to visually deliver course content, below are a few simple ways to encourage student interaction when using the program for in-class presentations.

Use PowerPoint as a visual aid: A key element to making PowerPoint more interactive is to think of PowerPoint as a visual aid instead of a content delivery method. Create slides that visually help clarify a key points, provide an illustrative example, simplify material, or serve as an anecdote. For example, the *Assertion-evidence presentation method* to slide creation moves away from the stock bulleted-list templates in order to build presentations where slides use graphics and images to visually support key points and concepts. All slides include references and the note sections of each slide include text to provide evidence and context (Alley, 2013).

Let slide design promote interaction (Design consistent slides informed by good design principles): While PowerPoint offers a number of templates, there are other approaches to slide design that both adhere to good design as well as help reduce cognitive load. For example, Garr Reynolds' "big four" principles for slide design include: contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity. Design slides where text and images are visually *contrasting*; use easy to read san-serif fonts and limit the number of bullet points; *repeat* similar elements in your slides (throughout each lecture); *align* text in a location of a slide where it is easy to read; and place slide elements together in *proximity* to one another to show they are related (Top Ten Slide Tips, 2016).

Know a few tricks to promote interaction: PowerPoint has a few shortcuts that can help encourage interaction. For example, use the letter "B" on the computer keyboard to create a blank screen in order to help shift the focus away from the PowerPoint presentation screen and back to the instructor. Consider numbering slides and using the computer keyboard's keypad to enter specific slides. These simple tricks can help create an opportunity to present slides in a non-linear fashion allowing an instructor to focus on content.

Build active learning strategies into slides: Create slides that offer students a chance to interact. Make a slide that includes a two or three question quiz on the previous material; offer a reflection slide or a "muddiest point" slide after each section ("Basic Active Learning Strategies | Center for Educational Innovation", 2015).

Resources

Alley, M. (2013). *The craft of scientific presentations. [electronic resource] : critical steps to succeed and critical errors to avoid*. New York : Springer, 2013.

Basic Active Learning Strategies | Center for Educational Innovation. (2015). *Cei.umn.edu*. Retrieved 8 June 2016, from http://cei.umn.edu/support-services/what-active-learning/basic-active-learning-strategies

Top Ten Slide Tips. (2016). *Garr Reynolds Official Site*. Retrieved 8 June 2016, from http://www.garrreynolds.com/preso-tips/design/

For more information or to discuss how you might incorporate these ideas into your courses, contact the Reinert Center at cttl@slu.edu.