

A Well Written Proposal

Proposal Name: Death by PowerPoint: Alternative and Innovative Techniques for Engaging Learners in Presentations

Abstract: When tasked to give a presentation or lecture, the first thing that often comes to presenters minds is how their material will be transferred to PowerPoint slides. This is a direct result of the impact that PowerPoint has had on the way we teach and deliver content. There is no question that PowerPoint is a highly useful tool that is a necessary component in our teaching toolkit. However, PowerPoint is not without its limitations and is not well-suited to every presentation type. PowerPoint has been regarded as a method to heighten interest during presentations, but in the age where our learners are demanding more interactive and customized experiences, this technology can fall short and there are several other options which can be explored. This session will review the appropriate uses for PowerPoint and demonstrate innovative and alternative techniques for engaging learners using other tools which are currently available.

Full Description: PowerPoint is a ubiquitous tool accepted as the de-facto method for presentations using visual aids. Its many strengths include ease-of-use, templates which improve consistency, and providing the presenter with a means for illustrating complex content while enhancing interest and retention when used appropriately. However, it is not without weaknesses. Most notably, the structure of PowerPoint is not suitable for all types of presentations and can inhibit engagement, interactivity, spontaneity, brainstorming, and the exchange of ideas. This limits PowerPoint in areas which are tenets to the new paradigm of experiential and active learning. Because most faculty are not trained in design, the technology can be overwhelming and result in presentations that are cluttered, distracting, or overly textual. Finally, a continual dependence on PowerPoint can steer presenters toward bullet-point driven, staccato summaries of content which diminish the pedagogical quality of the material. Effective presentations involve what Aristotle referred to as all the available means of persuasion. For the average instructor, this might mean using a combination of illustrations, web pages, videos, and documents in addition to discussion and other methods. The highly-structured nature of PowerPoint makes it difficult to design presentations with these different formats and preserve the flow of teaching. Other tools have evolved to give instructors more flexibility in creating engaging presentations. Some, such as Apple Keynote, give the presenter improved design, layout and media packaging options. Google Presentation and other web-based tools allow for improved collaboration. Other tools, such as Prezi, do not follow the traditional linear slide

presentation path and allow the presenter to share information in a more interactive way, changing paths according to learner response. This seminar will be accomplishing true engagement by selecting the best vehicle for the learning context, demonstrating alternative tools, and matching the tool/technology to what is required to ensure learning.

Learning Objectives: Upon completion be able to identify alternative presentation methods to PowerPoint.
Distinguish between different learning contexts and match to applicable presentation formats.

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Target Audience: Emerging Educator (0–3 years)

Learning Focus: Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum Development