

A Whole Health Guide to Whole Health Slides: Avoiding 'Lecturalgia'

Imagine a world with almost no pronouns or punctuation. A world where any complex thought must be broken into seven-word chunks, with colourful blobs between them. It sounds like the futuristic dystopia.... But this world is nonfiction—it is the present-day reality of a PowerPoint presentation, a reality that is repeated an estimated 30 million times a day.¹ - Norvig



Mindful Awareness Moment:

What is on your mind when you are presenting at a Whole Health course?

What do we know about slide shows?

- Can be helpful
 - They are OK for problem-based learning.²
 - Students like them, but not clear they learn more.³
 - We are not just auditory creatures, so seeing as well as hearing helps us learn better.
- Can be harmful¹
 - Having key information buried in a PowerPoint may have contributed to the loss of Columbia space shuttle.⁴
 - Slide shows can remove the opportunity for discussion, shut down debate, and make learners passive.
 - Inspiring presentations are harder to offer.
 - Students perform less well on tests after PowerPoints that are more distracting with irrelevant sounds and slides.⁵
 - Slide shows are often reductionistic and left-brained.
 - They may lead to a sense of imbalance of power between presenter and learners.³
 - Slide show presentations force linear structure.
 - They can be subversive –make presenters focus on formatting versus content.
 - Slide shows can imply the issues are already solved or decisions are final.

General Tips⁶⁻⁹

The two basic elements of a presentation are that it is both scientific and entertaining at the same time.¹⁰ – W. van Dokkum

- Remember that you are the main point of focus, not slides.
- Leave time for productive discourse.
- Communication is more important than slides.
- Always practice in advance to make sure you have timing down.
- Go for constructivism over objectivism. Welcome audience participation—aim for at least a quarter of the presentation to be interactive. Students remember better if you do.¹¹⁻¹²
- Methods for engaging students:¹³
 - Ask questions of the group.

- Have people brainstorm.
- Use the “think-pair-share” activity—consider for yourself then share with a neighbor.
- Break into small groups.
- Provide demonstrations.
- Role play (many people not fans—best to keep it real or take it to the level of improv).
- Use problem-solving techniques –give them something to figure out.
- Engage in case-based learning.
- Practice building skills.
- Use directed listening—signal each time you use a word, phrase, or image.
- Give tests and reviews.
- Think about what you like to see in a presentation. Are they provocative, creative, and entertaining? Make sure your presentation has those attributes.

Content

- Organize presentations like a story, with a beginning, middle, and end. As the adage goes, “Tell them what you are gonna tell them, tell them, and tell them what you told them.”
- Make your objectives clear.
- Add an element of drama—pique interest and ‘bring it home’ at the end.
- Focus on 2-5 key points—that is all people will typically remember.
- A good ballpark is 1-2 slides per minute, but some slides may be 10 seconds, some up to 2 minutes.
- Consider writing your summary slide first and working backward.
- Figure you will only have 75% of the time. If you have audience interactions, give 25% of your total time to that, including Q&A.
- When preparing, remember that the average attention span is 15-20 minutes before a person’s mind wanders involuntarily.¹⁵
- Anecdotes work best if they are personal, interesting, relevant, and funny.
- Your lecture should provide more than they can get if they just read a book.
- No nonstandard abbreviations (NSABs).

Overall Design

Tell me and I forget. Show me and I remember. Involve me, and I understand.
—Chinese proverb

- Use the Slide Master option in PowerPoint for consistency.
- Keep color scheme and template consistent. Tips for color schemes:
 - More than 6 colors are tough for people to tease out. If possible, preview how the colors look before you present.
 - Primary colors are easiest to see, complementary less so. 12% of men can’t tell red versus green. Black and white work well, but orange/white, red/blue, and red/black do not.
- Make sure every spoken word and every word on every slide will be important and related to the objectives.
- Think about where the audience’s attention will go with each slide—may want to highlight specific text or specific lines.
- Involving participants leads to enhanced memory and better learning.

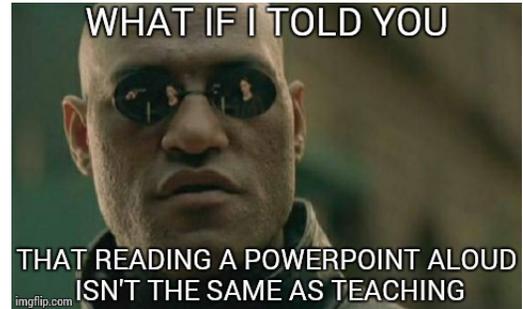
Visual Appeal/Readability¹⁶⁻¹⁸

- Use the Whole Health Template (we have a new one!)
- Bullets
 - Limit use of paragraphs in slides.
 - Keep slides concise: 5-7 bullets max, 5-7 words per bullet. Some suggest just 3 points, because then we can take them into our working memories.
 - Use sentence case for bullets (capitalize first word, lower case for rest).
 - Use active voice.
 - Keep bullets grammatically parallel.
 - Do not just rely on bullets—you do not have to have everything you say aloud in the slide (note, however, that we do that often in Whole Health materials, help presenters-in-training).
- Cover over the footer if the slide is too busy – can right click on text box and then add in a white ‘fill’
- Left justify each slide’s title.
- Leave a margin.
- Line spacing at least half a character height.
- Make indentations consistent.
- Fonts:
 - Use sans serif for reading at a distance, serif if reading up close.
 - Sans serif fonts include Tahoma (especially good), Calibri, Helvetica, Swiss, Arial, Avant Garde, Modern.
 - Whole Health Fonts: Whole Health slides typically use Georgia (titles) and Calibri (body).
 - Text size:
 - Slide title: Use 36 or 40 point font (42 in a group of >200).
 - Slide content: Use 28-point font or more (36 in a group of >200 people. 24 is the absolute minimum limit).
 - Figures: Use 16 points for legends and chart axes.
 - Good rule of thumb: If you can see it on your computer screen from 10 feet away, you are probably fine.
 - Uniform thickness fonts are also preferred.
 - Do not over-rely on bold or italics.
- Break up slides into multiple slides if they are too long and repeat the headings on each.
- Have a slide at the end that says thank you, so you won’t advance beyond that and cut off the show abruptly.
- Backgrounds: keep them simple.
 - Dark room—light background, dark font (not red)
 - Light room—dark background, light font
 - White background if they will be printed
- Do not rely on links for movies. Embed them.
- Honor both space and content. Keep space balanced so slides are not too busy.
- Cover over the footer if the slide is too busy—can right click on text box and then add in a white ‘fill’.
- Crop, use contrast, and remove backgrounds using the “format picture” functions.

- Do not overdo animation effects.
- Account for the angles/sight lines of various participants.

Delivery¹⁹

- Escape the podium.
- Do not rely on notes, and do not karaoke!
- Posture
 - Feet are 6-8 inches apart and parallel.
 - Do not lock knees.
 - Relaxed arms—do not fold in front of you.
 - Raised chin gives sense of control.
 - Gesture with upper quadrants of body.
 - No hands in pockets.
 - Do not wander.
- Proximity
 - In a larger group, 12-25 feet away. In a smaller group, 4-12 feet away.
 - Standing closer gets them to answer questions better.
- First 5 minutes are key with first impressions.
- Show that you love the material. Make sure you really are enthusiastic!
 - Don't forget the Dr. Fox lecture...²⁰ An actor presented a lecture with non sequiturs, neologisms, double talk, and contradictory statements. Despite this, because he was charismatic and funny, he created the illusion of having taught and people liked his presentation.
- Give them time to assimilate information and respond when you wait for answers to questions (takes 7 seconds or more).
- Good presentation style (eye contact, voice, delivery).
 - Keep jokes pertinent.
 - Conversational tone, but audible to all.
 - Modulate speed of speaking.
 - Eye contact in "Z formation."
 - If you have stage fright, deliver to a few people or eat bananas (similar effects to beta blockers for many people) in advance.²¹
 - "Stage fright is a negative term for excitement."¹⁶ – Collins.
 - Remember, you as the speaker are usually the most informed person in the room.
- Make sure your AV supports—versus detracts from—what you are doing.
- Anticipate all possible questions.
- Do not apologize and do not use slides you have to apologize for.
- Don't wave the laser pointer too much. You can use the following shortcuts while in full screen mode.
 - Control P turns a cursor into a pen so you can write.
 - Control A turns it back into an arrow.
 - Control E erases onscreen markings.
 - Control B or W make the screen go blank.
- Be mindful of physical climate.



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