

Reducing ‘Death by PowerPoint’

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Framework

PowerPoint use in the classroom has increased dramatically in the last ten years, although not always successfully. When PowerPoint presentations take precedence over lecture material, students lose interest and feel that they are being read to, not taught. Numerous studies show that overuse of PowerPoint actually decreases student – teacher interaction in the classroom, as instructors focus on the presentation and not the class, while students are afraid to interrupt the “flow” of the PowerPoint with questions or comments.

Making it Work

To help increase student interaction, only use brief bullet points in your PowerPoint, as opposed to putting all the information on your slides, so that you have to explain the material to the students. More importantly, after each main point or every 3 to 4 slides, include a blank slide. This serves as a “discussion” slide, which allows students the opportunity to ask questions or engage in interaction and forces the instructor to turn away from the PowerPoint to face the class and get feedback.

Audience: any class in which PowerPoint is used

Tools: PowerPoint presentations

Implementation: Immediate. Requires no additional work beyond adding extra slides to PowerPoint presentations.

Future Implications

Outcomes/Assessment:

Outcome: Increase student engagement and student-teacher interaction

Assessment: Assessment may be achieved by comparing tests/quiz results before and after changes to the use of PowerPoint

Hybrid/Online contexts: When PowerPoint presentations are posted online for students but won’t be discussed in person, replace the “Discussion” slide with a “Questions” slide. This would include questions over the material just covered. Make it clear that if students struggle to answer any of the questions, they can contact the instructor for further clarification.

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