

## Guidelines for CEC Seminar Presentations

Office of Experiential Education

University of Kentucky, College of Pharmacy

For many P4 pharmacy students, the CEC Seminar may be the first chance to give a research or specialty topic seminar in front of an audience. This is an opportunity to be taken seriously for two reasons. The first is that seminars of this sort are an important part of professional pharmacy practice and represents an opportunity to hone the skills of presenting an important practice related topic that attracts the interest of your audience. The second reason to take the seminar seriously is that you have an audience of P4 pharmacy students, pharmacists, faculty and preceptors. These are a group of bright, technically knowledgeable people with an interest in the topic or research you have done. Presenting a good seminar to them may help you, through the questions and discussions that follow, to gain new insight into the issues or practice related problems that we are facing. Presenting a poor seminar, on the other hand, will merely be seen as waste of both their time and yours.

The guidelines listed here should be used by presenters when they are preparing their seminars. They are intended to emphasize some of the important aspects of a good seminar that first time speakers often overlook.

- A. ***Know your audience and present at their level.*** In this case, your audience will be mainly P4 pharmacy students, faculty, pharmacy staff and preceptors. While many will not know as much about your specialty topic, these are technically knowledgeable people, and for that reason it is important that the technical level of your talk be high enough to challenge and interest them. However, this does not mean that you can plunge straight into specialty topic without providing some proper background and motivation. You should think carefully about what your audience knows and be careful to neither insult them by over-simplifying the material nor frustrate them by omitting relevant details.
- B. ***Motivate your work in the context of the healthcare world at large.*** We work in very specialized areas of healthcare being experts in medication therapy management (MTM) and we should know how our expertise contributes to the big picture. *Describing the motivation and background for your research topic is essential to a good seminar.* There is no reason why you cannot spend half your time just presenting a summary of an extensive literature review if it is necessary and relevant.
- C. ***Know your stuff.*** If you present something, you should expect to be asked questions about it, and that means that you should understand it. Do not put up a figure from someone else's paper unless you completely understand the details of that figure. When practicing your talk, you should go through each slide and jot down a list of every question you can think of that someone may ask. Then you should make sure that you can answer them. Sometime, it helps to make some extra slides that go into more detail. These extra slides will not appear during your talk, but you can use them in the question period if a certain question should come up. In general, if you have any doubts, the audience will be left with the same doubts, but they will ask you to clarify them!

- D. **Organize your presentation.** There is no single presentation format that can be used for all seminars, but you should decide on a clear and logical organization for your seminar and help the audience to follow it. Below are some suggested format outlines, but presenters should not feel constrained by these examples.

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction</li> <li>▪ Applications</li> <li>▪ Hypothesis</li> <li>▪ Approach</li> <li>▪ Results</li> <li>▪ Conclusions</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction</li> <li>▪ Literature Review</li> <li>▪ Research Plan</li> <li>▪ Expected Contributions</li> <li>▪ Conclusions</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction</li> <li>▪ Problem Statement</li> <li>▪ Analysis</li> <li>▪ Recommendations</li> <li>▪ Conclusions</li> </ul> |
|--|---|---|

If your seminar represents a research project, and you do not have all the results, or the conclusions of your project are not clear that is okay. Therefore, it may be important to separate in your mind the conclusions of *your work* from the conclusions of *your seminar*. There is no reason why you can not give an excellent seminar based solely on a thorough literature review and background reading.

- E. **Prepare a clear presentation.** Make sure your PowerPoint slides are clear and easy to read from the back of the room, that your voice projects adequately and that you know how to operate the presentation equipment. Choose font sizes, symbols and colors that are easy for audience to see. Pay particular attention to the clarity of your diagrams and graphs. Visit the seminar room in advance and make sure you know its layout. Figure out where the light switch is and where you can stand without blocking anyone's view. (see attachment for PowerPoint presentation instructions)
- F. **Consult with your preceptor.** It is strongly encouraged that you discuss your seminar with your preceptor(s) well in advance of your presentation, during the first week of your rotation. Set up a meeting and bring an outline of your presentation topic for preceptor to review. It is expected that references used in your seminar are from legitimate scientific publications. You are expected to use a minimum of four (4) primary source articles to research your seminar. You can certainly use books as references, but they will count as a primary source.
- G. **Practice.** You should rehearse your seminar before you present. If possible, it helps to practice your seminar at least once in front of friends. Your seminar should fit within the 30 to 40 minute time limit.
- H. **Have fun.** Hopefully you are interested in your work and excited about it, and if you can convey that to your audience it will improve the seminar. If you are well prepared for your presentation, you will be more confident and relaxed. This will make the experience much less of an ordeal and perhaps a little more fun.

# Creating Visual Aids That Really Work

## Designing Effective Slides Using PowerPoint

Used wisely, PowerPoint® and similar programs can be an effective tool to help audiences remember your message, while allowing you to prove, reinforce, and support your claims.

Used unwisely, PowerPoint becomes a distraction that upstages the presenter and buries the message. With its tumbling, whooshing, flying, singing and screeching graphics, PowerPoint can take on a life of its own.

All these bells and whistles can disconnect the slides from the presenter and destroy the reason for using them in the first place--to provide an audience with at-a-glance comprehension to support the presentation.

PowerPoint can represent essential data to support points in a way that boosts clarity, credibility, and retention. PowerPoint incorporates a wide variety of tools for selecting colors, fonts, formats and styles.

You can import content from word processing programs or charts from spreadsheet applications.

PowerPoint also lets you create your own graphics and tailor the data to meet your own special needs. PowerPoint has a range and flexibility that allow you to quickly pull together some great visuals or to invest hours simmering a cauldron of confusion stew. The key is to know how to use it wisely.

## Use Visuals Wisely

Ideally, visuals should provide your audience with at-a-glance comprehension of material to support your main points. "At-a-glance comprehension" means that the audience understands the visual quickly because it is simple and clear.

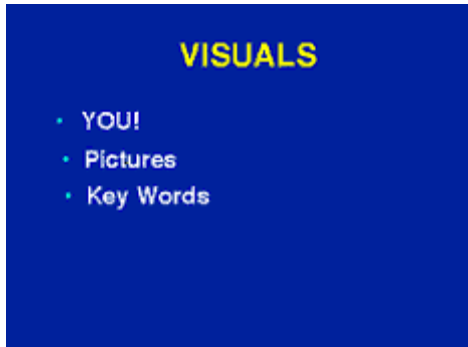


**Figure 1.**  
Dense visuals obscure the message.

Too many presenters cram so much material onto a slide that it becomes impossible to read. Dense visuals garble the message and bury the point (Figure 1).

Save density for handouts. You can fill in all the details in the "Notes" pages in PowerPoint or prepare one set of visuals for presentation on the screen and another set, with more detail, for the audience to take away at the end of the presentation.

Effective visuals serve the audience's needs and not the presenter's. This is why visuals should not be designed as a script for the presenter. Rather, they should be designed to help the audience understand a point or idea.



**Figure 2.**  
Using “key words only” supports the message but also lets the audience focus on the presenter instead of reading dense text.

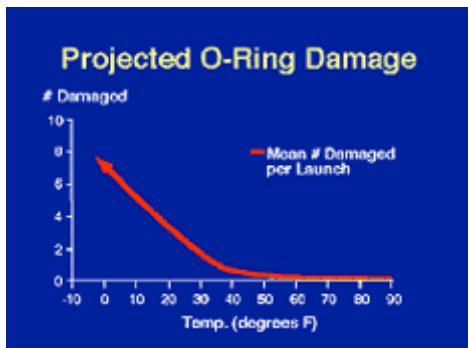
People grasp pictures more quickly than words. Whenever possible, use pictures and graphics to support or prove a point. If you are using words, keep them brief. Use key words only, not full sentences (Figure 2).

Avoid more than six lines of text on a visual and try not to dilute graphic visuals with lots of words. If the graphic requires written words to explain it, it may not be an effective presentation graphic. Save it for the handout.

The worst visual is a projection of a black and white typewritten page. Your visuals should complement your spoken words, not replicate them.

### Use Color Wisely

Many studies support the benefits of using colors wisely when presenting. The effects of color choice are often subliminal, but they can have a powerful impact on audiences. Consider red. Red has associations with some strong negatives, particularly in business and science. It typically represents financial loss and danger (Figure3).



**Figure 3.**  
Red is often used to show danger.

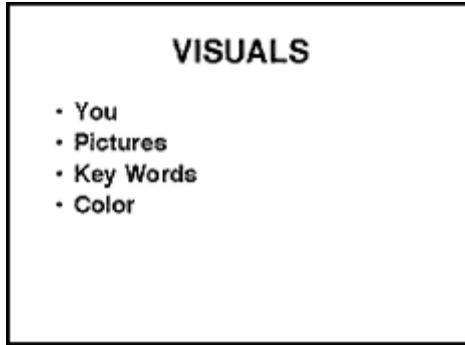
The color of stoplights and stop signs is also red. A wise presenter would use it to represent a negative trend or, perhaps, a competitor. In addition to its negative connotations, red can be hard to see, particularly over a distance. For this reason, avoid using any lengthy red text.

Beyond red, PowerPoint lets you tap into a vast palette of colors. Here is a list of wise color choices for creating presentations.

#### For Background:

Dark blue (solid, no gradient)

- vs. Black: Easier on the eye (softer contrast).
- vs. White/Clear: Eliminates screen glare.

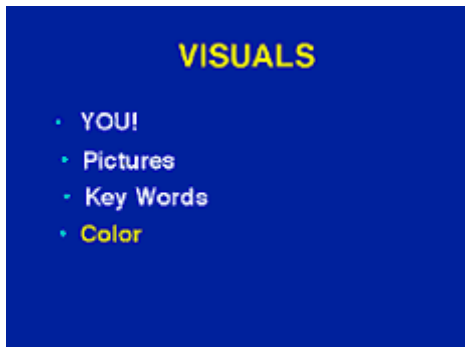


**Figure 4.**  
A white or clear background can create too much screen glare.

**For Text:**

Antique gold or Yellow

- Best contrast with dark blue.
- Tends to be the most prominent element.
- Best for shorter text, such as titles.
- Works well for highlighting and emphasis.



**Figure 5.**  
Use white and yellow as text colors.

White

- Very good contrast with dark blue.
- Grabs less than yellow.
- Good for longer text, other than titles.
- Neutral color.

## Use Fonts Wisely

In Office 2000, the defaults on PowerPoint are approximately the right size for headlines and text. However, if you want to know precisely what this means, here is a representative list of preferred font sizes:

### Font Sizes

- Titles: 44 points +/- 4
- Body: 32 points +/- 4
- 2 inches (5 cm) of character height for every 20 feet (6 m) of distance between the visual and the audience.
- 8-foot rule: Print out your visual. Tape it to the wall. Step back 8 feet (2.5 m). If you can read it easily, it's the right size.



**Figure 6.**  
Size fonts at between 32 and 44 points, +/- 4.

### Fonts and Font Styles

It is impossible to define absolute rules for selecting fonts and font styles. Different presentations have different requirements, ranging from the feeling they need to create to the need to fit maximal content onto every slide.

What follows are some good suggestions but not an ultimate answer to font choices for every possible presenter or presentation. One good principle to keep in mind is that *sans serif* fonts such as **Arial** work better than serif fonts on a projected image. *Serif* fonts, such as **Times Roman**, have thin lines that are harder to read across a distance.

### Titles/Headers

Flush left. Capitalize the first letter of every word (Title Case).

### Body Text

Flush left. Capitalize only the first letter of the first word in each sentence (Sentence case).

- Font: Bolded Arial or Arial make good body fonts.
- Font Size: 28-36
- Color: White

### Bullets

- Font Size: Same as body font size (28-36)
- Color: Antique Gold, yellow or other bright color

### Animation

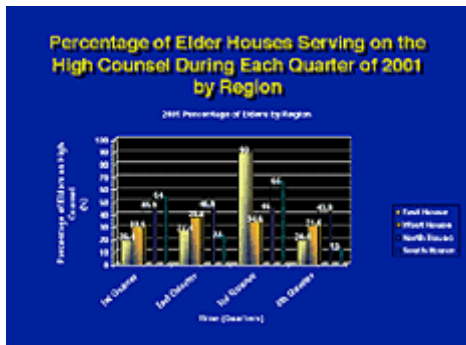
Transitions and builds, if any, should be simplest ones. Use fly-ins (of key words, for example) sparingly.

When considering fly-ins, ask yourself why you want to use them. If the answer is because they look “cool” or because they add life to your presentation, do not use them.

Use your own personal energy to add life to the presentation. **You** are the most important visual in your presentation.

## Charts/Graphs

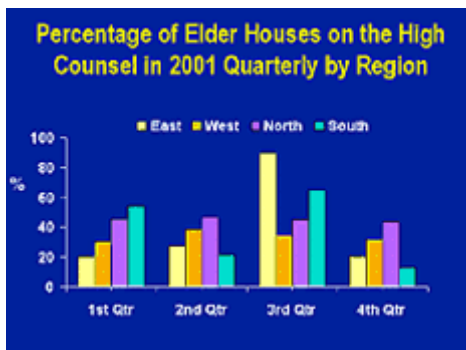
Graphics should provide at-a-glance comprehension with minimal distractions. Avoid legends by labeling lines directly whenever possible.



**Figure 7.**

Cluttering charts and graphs with too much detail can make them difficult to read and comprehend.

Eliminate anything unnecessary or distracting, such as “minor” tick marks, 3D bars of 2D data, background lines and boxes on graphs, and high-contrast grids on charts.



**Figure 8.**

Simplified charts and graphs communicate more clearly and effectively.