The Misuse of PowerPoint

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The PowerPoint slide has a dynamic layout comparing reading scores throughout the district, which you would have seen if I remembered to bring a spare projection bulb.”
PowerPointlessness

- a term first coined by Jamie McKenzie in 2000
- defined as "any fancy transitions, sounds, and other effects that have no discernible purpose, use, or benefit" (McFedries, 2001). Focusing on graphics, animations, or sound effects more than course content, classroom discussion, or effective communication is a pitfall into which many educators and students fall when giving a PowerPoint presentation.
The research, from the University of New South Wales, suggests that we process information best in verbal or written form, but not in both simultaneously. As so often, it has taken the best efforts of brainy academics to prove what most of us instinctively knew. Trying to follow what someone is saying while watching the same words on a screen is the equivalent of riding a bicycle along a crowded train. It offers the appearance of making extra progress but is actually rather impractical.
Are We Wasting $250 Million per Day Due to Bad PowerPoint?

- We Can’t Figure Out the Point of the Presentation
- We Can’t See What is On the Screen
- We Can’t Understand the Points
- We Are Distracted By What Is On The Screen

http://www.thinkoutsidetheslide.com/articles/wasting_250M_bad_ppt.htm
Animated Graphics Not Relevant

- Graphics not related to content
- Too many choices of animated graphics
- Viewer pays more attention to graphics than content
Spelling get pushed into the background because of focus on designing not content

- Smelling and grammar errors are easily overseen
Communication Skills are Different

- PowerPoint ≠ excellent communication skills
- PowerPoint design skills are different from effective communication skills
- Columbia crash
  “...ineffective communications
  ...PowerPoint presentations.”
Oversimplifies concepts

- Topics
- Are
- Not
- Always
- Best
- Presented
- In
- Bulleted
- Format

- Oversimplifies
- The
- Connections
- And
- Nuances
- Among
- Topics
- Older students are insulted
- Research suggests that information is processed best either in written form OR in verbal form, not both
Glorified Poster Board

- Visually pleasing presentation
- Cut and paste content from Internet

- Sources not cited
- Lacks depth of understanding
- Looks cool but doesn’t say anything
Time well spent…?

Preparation:
- 3 days in computer lab…or more
- What are they learning? PowerPoint?

Presentations:
- 31 students
- 15 minute presentation each
- Equals 465 minutes of “instruction time”

PRICELESS!
Ignores the Audience

- Presenter may be tied to computer (*no remote mouse*)
- Lack of mobility may result in less eye contact with students
- Presenter focuses on the technology and ignores the students
- Back to audience
Teacher focuses on technology and not on class/students

“It is an unacknowledged rule of emerging technology that the easier you make it to generate product, the more rubbish gets generated by said technology.” (Waller)

Grade based on appearance not content
• Students are not taking an active role in their learning
• “edutainment” (Healy)
• “Simply selecting and watching a screen is a pallid substitute for real mental activity (Healy)"
CRITICAL THINKING LOST

- PROCESSING INFORMATION IS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN THE LEARNING PROCESS
- STUDENTS BECOME TRANSCRIBERS OF INFORMATION ALREADY PROCESSED
Bibliography

  http://www.lifescied.org/cgi/content/full/3/3/160

#REF3
References

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Don McMillan – Life After Death by PowerPoint video