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Designing Instructional Aides for Online Learning

Overall

- Begin with a welcome screen that covers the date, time, title, and speaker(s)
- Include a course outline and objectives to address the major points of the presentation
- Include navigational elements (slide number, presentation or section title) in the footer to help cue learners about where you are in the presentation.
- Organize the presentation according to your outline and objectives
- Treat the PowerPoint as a visual enhancement for your presentation
- Copyright permission is required for all content that is not original to the presenter. Acknowledgement must be written on each slide (picture, graph, chart, drawing, cartoon).
- Refer to [Copyright Basics](#) in this toolkit for more information.
- Step back 6 feet from your monitor to view slides for readability or try the Squint Rule: (Squint eyes and look at screen, whatever you can see will be what your learners will take away.)

Basic Visual Design Tips for PowerPoint

Colors and Fonts

- Use a simple background and color patterns or combinations.
- Use dark text with a light background or light text on a dark background.
- Limit the number of colors and fonts per slide and stay consistent throughout.
- Use color sparingly for emphasis within text.
- Avoid using greens and reds as instructional cues (for colorblind learners).
- Have font sizes 24 points or larger.
- Select san serif fonts like these:
 Arial Helvetica Trebuchet MS Franklin Gothic Book
- Don't use decorative fonts like these:
 ALGERIAN *Blackadder JTC* **Magneto** Tempus Sans ITC Times New Roman
- Allow for plenty of white space on the slide.

Graphics and Data

- Use bullets of key words or short summaries. Highlight one bulleted item at a time as you're discussing it with the audience. Dim other bulleted items to avoid learner distraction.
- Use pictures, graphics, and videos only when appropriate.
- Display data using graphs and charts.
- Include a list of references using [Zotero](#) or other source management systems.

- Don't embellish slides with your organization's logo - use once or twice at the beginning and/or end of the presentation. To brand your PowerPoint, try incorporating the organization's logo colors into the theme.
- Only use all CAPS when writing slide titles.
- Remember 7x7 for body text – No more than 7 words per line, 7 lines per slide.
- Use short, informative headings to describe the content on a slide.
- Keep text clear and concise when paraphrasing an idea. Use an active voice and apply the same syntax to all information displayed on the slide.
- A list should contain two or more bulleted items.

Design Principles

1. **Use spatial relationships to present information clearly.** The design concept of proximity holds that items next to each other appear related to each other. Items distant from each other appear unrelated.
2. **Use alignment to create a visual focus.** Place text and graphics on the page so that they line up to create a unified whole. Alignment creates a visual focus that ties the different elements together.
3. **Use repetition to establish patterns.** Graphics and headers should appear in the same place on each slide, and they should have the same design features. Footers should also be consistent on every slide.
4. **Use contrast.** Make your text stand out against the background. Use graphics or colors to signal important information.
5. **Use moderation.** Using too many colors will confuse your audience. Filling every inch of the screen with information will overwhelm your audience. Including meaningless graphics or sounds will annoy your audience.

["Preparing Presentation Slides: A Tutorial by John Battalio"](#)