How to Use PowerPoint More Effectively:

Some Rhetorical Strategies
PowerPoint – Good or Bad?

PowerPoint is a good tool, but should be used carefully.

PowerPoint can bring about oversimplification
Some Practical Suggestions

Limit the number of slides

Limit the number and type of effects

Limit the type of transitions

From Laura J. Gurak and John M. Lannon’s
A Concise Guide to Technical Communication, 3rd Ed.
And
Gerald J. Alred, Charles T Brusaw, and Walter E. Oliu’s
What is good?

Blokzijl and Naeff (2004) found that good layout/legibility and use of diagrams, pictures, and graphs were design elements that students appreciated most.

Discussed in Jo Mackiewicz’s “Perceptions of Clarity and Attractiveness in PowerPoint Graph Slides” – *Communication 54*(2)
Dealing With Text

Limit the amount of text on the slide
Limit lists to four or five points
Limit small font sizes

Use parallel lists
Use key words
Use 40-45 words

Gurak & Lannon and Alred, Brusaw, & Oliu
Fonts

Choose fonts for readability and effect

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS FONT

Is this a serious topic?
Images are Important

Use visuals that reinforce your content
Avoid distracting visuals
Use consistent visuals
Avoid overusing visuals
Graphs and Charts

Use graphs and charts for data and trends
Use graphs over charts
Use 2-D graphs and charts for clarity

Discussed in Jo Mackiewicz’s “Perceptions of Clarity and Attractiveness in PowerPoint Graph Slides” – Communication 54(2)
Backgrounds and Colors

Contrasting colors are easy to read

See What I Mean

Choose your colors for a reason
Choose harmonious colors such as warm colors and cool colors

Discussed in *The Principles of Beautiful Web Design*, by Jason Beaird
Warm and Cool Colors

Warm and Cool color shades are archetypal

**Warms** colors enthusiasm and excitement

**Cool** colors are calming and more attractive

Use cool colors over warm colors
Color and Web Design

**Red** is stimulating—anger and love

**Orange** is happy

**Yellow** is energy and happiness

But yellow can be overpowering

---Beaird
Color and Web Design

Green is natural, growth, freshness, and hope
green and black techy

Blue is openness, intelligence, and faith
sometimes bad luck

Purple is wealth and extravagance

White is clean

Black is power and strength
sometimes negative

--Beaird
The Big Idea

Audience is crucial:

Know to whom you are speaking and how you want them to react and design your slides accordingly.