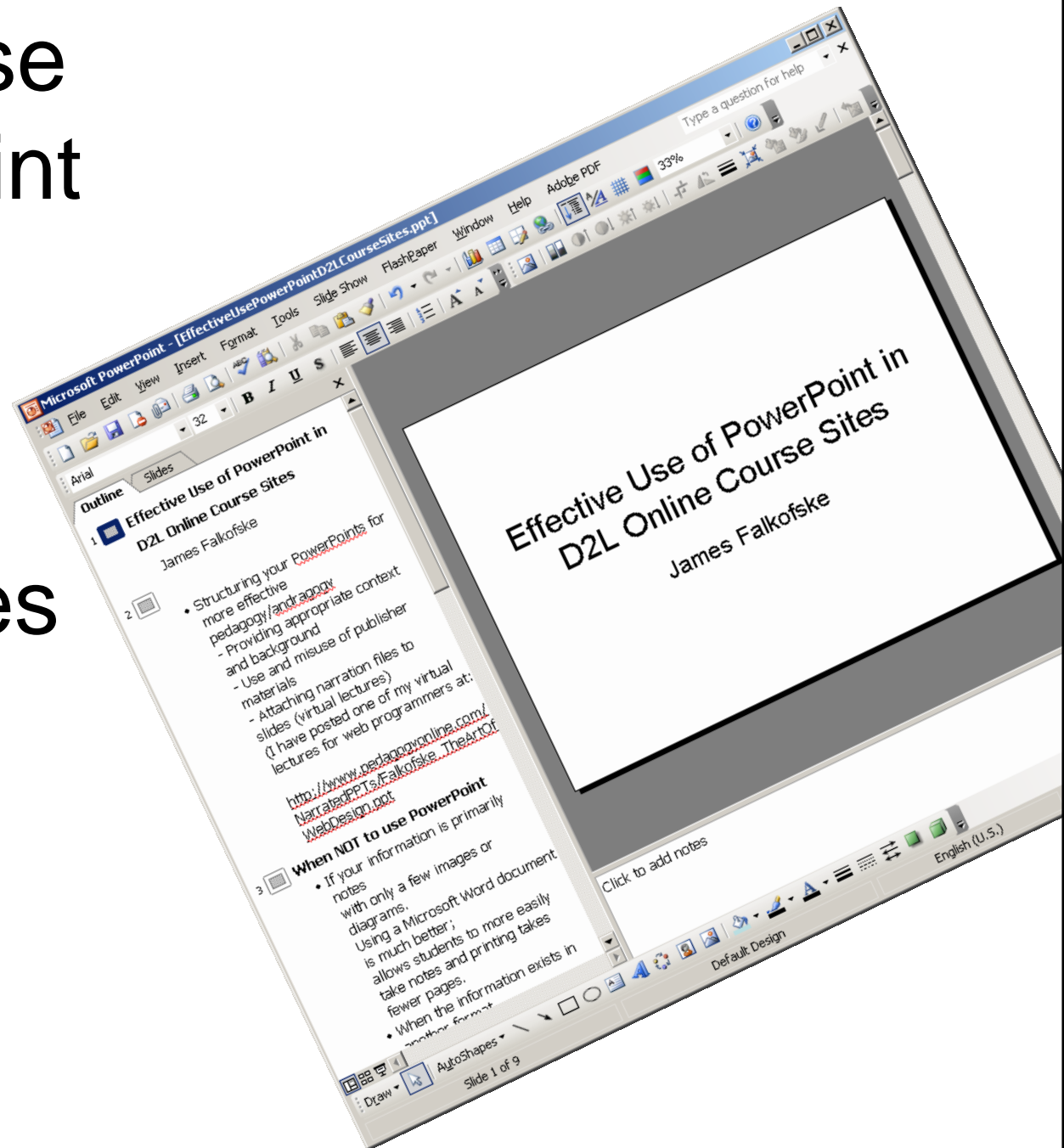# Effective Use of PowerPoint in D2L Online Course Sites

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Session Description

- Structuring your PowerPoints for more effective pedagogy/andragogy
  - Providing appropriate context and background
  - Use and misuse of publisher materials
  - Attaching narration files to slides (virtual lectures)

Sample virtual lecture for web programmers at:

http://www.pedagogyonline.com/NarratedPPTs/Falkofske_TheArtOfWebDesign.ppt

When NOT to use PowerPoint

- If your information is primarily notes with only a few images or diagrams.
  Using a Microsoft Word document is much better;
  allows students to more easily take notes and printing takes fewer pages.

- When the information exists in another format
  When possible, refer students to source documents (such as textbook).

- When students have to "do something" with the information
  It will be easier for the student to directly use the information in a Word, Excel, or other application format.

The Problems of PowerPoint

- 6x6 just doesn't "cut it"

- Paper wasting format

- Server Hogs

- Super-Click = information doesn't stick

- Often has no "activity" to measure understanding

6x6 is not enough

- Where is the context, history, and application information?
  When used in a classroom, the instructor explains the context, relationships, history, and applications of the information with his/her voice. This is typically absent in online PowerPoint slide shows.

- Most 20-slide PowerPoints could be condensed to a 2 page outline
  How valuable is the information when it consists of a quick outline that students should be hand-writing themselves to build up memory (through kinetic activity) of the information and major points?

- PowerPoints are designed for viewing at a distance (lecture halls).
  Online students are inches away from their monitors, and most students are able to read small font at that distance. Reading for comprehension requires full presentation of ideas – not just quick points of reference.

- ***Recommendation***: Higher Information Density
  For each point, write out a description and/or provide examples to give students the context of the content.

Paper Wasting Format

- Students print out full slides rather than handouts

  Many students do not know how to print Handouts, so they end up printing out hundreds of pages each semester in order to have copies of the notes.

- ***Recommendation***: Keep number of slides low but the content value high

  Reduce the number of slides but provide a lot of information on each slide. When possible, delivery the information in a better and more usable format, such as a Microsoft Word document to which students can add their own notes and observations.

Server Hogs

- Images Not Compressed = HUGE FILES

  Many faculty place digital photos and other large images directly into PowerPoint shows (textbook publishers and students also do this a great deal). Sometimes a 20-Slide PowerPoint is 80MB large (taking a student with a dial-up connection 320 minutes (5-1/3 hours) to download). The same file, with properly sized photos would be under 1MB (4 minute download on dial-up).

- *Recommendation*: Resize all images OUTSIDE of PowerPoint, then Insert

  Photos and images should be reduced to "web size" using Microsoft Office Picture Manager or similar tool BEFORE those images are included in the PowerPoint. The sizes of PowerPoint files should be checked before they are loaded into D2L. Remember that each MB equals 4 minutes of download time.

Super-Click; It Just Won't Stick

- Click, Click, Click, Click, Pretty Picture, Click, Click, Click, DONE!

  IF you watch most students who are viewing an instructional PowerPoint, they rapidly click through all the slides in under a minute. No real "thought" goes into the activity – and therefore, it serves little purpose.

- Slowing Students Down

  Students have to be responsible for "doing something" based upon the information they are reviewing. Filling out a worksheet or looking up something on the Internet (or in their textbook) will help keep them engaged in the materials.

- *Recommendation*: Virtual lectures

  Transcript and voice-record the context information for each slide (separate recordings each slide). Then use REHEARSE TIMINGS to set the slides to advance automatically. This will set the pace for the learning activity.

Did They Even See It?

- ## Is it required, or optional?
  Unless it is a required activity, students will likely ignore the PowerPoint. However, many presentations SHOULD be optional – and available to help students improve and assess their understanding of the content.

- ## Is there a follow-up activity?
  Just like "eat your vegetables," you cannot rely on students doing something just because it is good for them. Each required activity needs to have some type of deliverable (homework/quiz) to demonstrate the students know the skills and information presented in the PowerPoint.

- ## Is there a self-assessment?
  Students should be able to check their understanding of the materials while viewing the slide show, and they should also be presented with references for more information. Having a series of questions posted on slides throughout the presentation and the last page holding the answers (for self-assessment) is one method to gain engagement.

- ## *Recommendation*: Check Your Knowledge worksheets during presentation, and short quizzes following each presentation

Publisher Materials

- ## Check the License (Pat in Library)
  If you have a CD with instructor's companion materials, do NOT assume that you can post this to an online site. Check the licensing. Often it is not permitted to post the materials, because students will be able to make a copy of the files (and also, you are violating copyright, because you are making a copy of the materials for others). Find out who your publisher representative is and get written statements about what you can and cannot do with instructor companion materials.

- ## Edit Carefully
  Assuming that you have permissions to use and edit the materials, add the narratives, comments, and assignment tie-ins to the publisher slides in the same manner you would if you were creating the slides yourself.

- ## Verify File Sizes
  Before uploading materials, make sure that no file is larger than 5MB. If it is, try getting help in resizing the images or breaking the file into smaller components.

- ## Is a Student Companion CD Available?
  Having students buy a companion CD will greatly reduce the chances that students will be frustrated by slow-connections, incompatible browser plug-ins, or missing media. Publisher CDs have all the plug-ins and other resources needed, so students simply load the disc and they get to access the content. ALSO – it takes the instructor out of the copyright concerns.

Demonstrations

- Recording Audio File

- Attaching Audio File

- Setting Automatic Slide Advancement