Making an Effective PowerPoint Presentation

Visual aids help your audience follow your presentation by emphasizing key points and concepts. Many workplaces (and the JJCBE) encourage the use of PowerPoint as a visual aid because it offers an effective platform for displaying text and images to a large or small audience. Use the following tips to create effective PowerPoint presentations. (These concepts apply to other digital visual media aid platforms, like Prezi, as well).

- Limit the amount of text on each slide.
  - Use the 6 X 6 rule—no more than six bullet points per slide and no more than six words per bullet point.
  - Each slide should include only one key point.
  - Remember: The audience cannot read and listen to you at the same time, so too much text is distracting.

- Use relevant images.
  - Limit images to one or two per slide, so as not to distract your audience.
  - Remember: Too many images will make your presentation slow to load, so use images wisely.

- Use contrast.
  - Use light text on a dark background or dark text on a light background to make your text stand out.
  - Remember: Our eyes are drawn to bright objects, so light text on a dark background will be easiest for your audience to see.

- Be consistent with transition and animation effects.
  - If you use effects to transition between slides, use the same one every time.
  - Remember: Too much movement on your slides will distract your audience from the point you are trying to make.

- Cite your sources.
  - Use in-text (parenthetical) citations on your slides when necessary.
  - Include a ‘References’ slide at the end of your presentation.
  - Remember: Plagiarism can occur in oral presentations and plagiarism damages your credibility as a speaker.

- Be prepared.
  - Practice your presentation. Use the space and technology where you will give your final presentation whenever possible.
  - Bring a hard copy of your slides to your presentation.