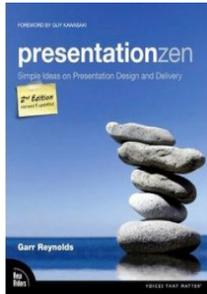


A dozen challenges for presenters

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tags: [design](#), [presentations](#), [teaching](#), [visual learning](#)

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A few years ago I developed a workshop based on Garr Reynolds' book, *Presentation Zen*. One of my handouts is a set of challenges aimed at helping faculty break the “Death by PowerPoint” mold. I presented the session yesterday and decided to share part of it here. The ideas are intended as goals, not absolute rules.

1. **Focus on one thing** – concentrate on your learning goals – what you want students to remember most.
2. **Tell a story** - it can provide added meaning and give context. There's nothing like a good metaphor! See Nancy Duarte's book, *Resonate*.
3. **Don't hand out slides** – students should be following you, not a piece of paper. Use handouts for details and extras.
4. **Embrace the space** – don't crowd the screen. Surround objects with empty space to group them or make them stand out. There's a popular design text called *White Space is not Your Enemy*.
5. **One concept per slide** – make one point at a time.
6. **Six words per slide** – reduce cognitive load by limiting text on the screen. This will help students concentrate on the words you are *saying*.
7. **Drop the bullets** – get away from lists. People may like them in blog posts, but they get old quickly in presentations.
8. **Use images** – they can convey so much! Use the highest quality you can find. Try [Flickr](#), [Pixabay](#) , and [stock.exchg](#) for starters.
9. **Keep charts simple** – minimal data points and no special effects. Read this on [Powerpoint numeracy](#) or see what Reynolds says about [Signal vs. Noise](#).
10. **Move away from the podium** – use a remote and mingle in the crowd. I like use the [Keynote Remote](#) and present from an iPad.
11. **Keep the lights on** – let the students see you and their notes.
12. **Never go over time** - respect your students' other time commitments and leave them wanting more.