

# Using PowerPoint in the Florida GED PLUS Classroom

With a younger population that is steadily increasing, Florida's GED instructors have to find better ways to capture and maintain students' attention. Bringing technology into the classroom is one way to do that.

Microsoft PowerPoint is the best-known presentation graphics program available. Many adult educators have been less than enthusiastic to embrace this technology that is easy to use and has the potential to grab stu-

dents' attention and keep them focused on the lesson at hand. With animation, slide transitions, graphics, sound effects, and videos, PowerPoint can take any lesson from cut and dried to exciting and thought provoking.

This Technical Assistance paper has been designed to provide instructors with strategies that they can use to build dynamic presentations for the classroom.

## Before You Get Started

Just because the technology is there, doesn't mean it should always be used. Before using PowerPoint, there are some questions that any instructor should ask.

Eugene V. Gallagher and Michael Reder, from the Center for Teaching and Learning at Connecticut College, developed the following questions that instructors should ask themselves before using PowerPoint.

### What is the use of PowerPoint designed to achieve?

1. Address different learning styles
2. Provide a focus for in-class discussions
3. Demonstrate or animate a process
4. Stop students from taking notes and focus them on the discussion
5. Provide a model for professional communication

### Inside this issue:

Before You Get Started	1
Building the Content	2
Adding Special Effects	2
Tips and Tricks	3
More Resources for the Classroom	4
Florida's GED PLUS on the Web	4

### How will you, the instructor prepare to use PowerPoint?

1. Consult the literature
2. Complete a tutorial
3. Learn on your own
4. Use trial and error in class and hope it all works well

### How will you know that you achieved your goal?

1. Test the students
2. Ask for feedback from the students
3. Gage your own feelings
4. Conduct a random survey of students

*Funds for this project were provided through the Adult and Family Literacy Act, Division of Workforce Education, Florida Department of Education*

*John Winn, Commissioner  
Florida Department of Education  
Dr. Bonnie Marmor, Vice Chancellor  
Florida Division of Workforce Development*

*While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this document, it is not an official publication of the Florida Department of Education.*

*Reprinting or photocopying a section of this publication for educational and promotional use is encouraged.*

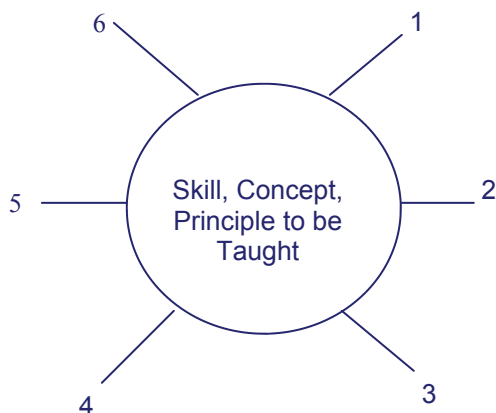
# PowerPoint in the Florida GED PLUS Classroom

## Building the Content

PowerPoint is easy to use. You can add all kinds of bells and whistles (literally) to any PowerPoint presentation. However, bells and whistles are not necessarily going to make a difference in what your students learn. Learning comes from the content that you select. Before you start looking for designs, layouts, and all of the neat audio, clip art, and video you can insert, begin with the end in mind.

### Step 1—Begin with the Purpose

At the end of the lesson, what do you want student to know and be able to do. Use a graphic organizer to pull together each of the elements of your lesson.



This graphic organizer is commonly used by students for writing purposes. It allows them to organize their ideas in a simple and easy-to-use manner. Students use the center of the circle to identify the topic about which they are going to write and the spokes to identify ideas about the topic.

When developing a PowerPoint presentation, use the center of the circle to denote the skill, concept, or principle that you wish to teach. Each of the six spokes radiating out from the circle should include various elements that you will need to include to cover the content.

1. Are there any rules associated with the skill or concept being taught?
2. Are there step-by-step procedures that are needed?
3. Can you provide examples that demonstrate the procedures or rules that have been covered?
4. Can you include practice items that the students

- can complete to assess understanding?
5. Are there real-life examples that can be used so that students can see how the skill can be applied to something that is familiar to them at home, at work, or in the community?
6. Is there a way to assess student mastery of the material, such as a project to complete or a few test items?

All presentations may not need the six elements listed. Adapt the graphic organizer as needed.

### Step 2—Include Three Components

PowerPoint presentations should include the following three primary components:

1. An **opener** that grabs the attention of the learner. This could be a brain teaser or even a cartoon. It should be something that draws the learner into the lesson and if possible be directly related to the content that is going to be covered.
2. The **body** of the lesson which includes elements 1-5 from the graphic organizer.
3. A **closing** which should include element 6 from the graphic organizer.

## Adding Special Effects

Now it is time to add the bells and whistles to the presentation. However, there is a caution attached to this step. Less is more! Too much of a good thing is just too much and can pose as a distraction for the learner.

The research is clear that graphics and sound that are unrelated to the content results in a significant drop in mastery of learning. However, finding just the right photograph to show a specific period in time in history or using the right sound clip so students can hear a famous speech can enhance student learning. Keep in mind that any video or sound clip should be minimal in length. Student attention will wander if they have to listen or watch for too long a period of time.

Transitions between slides or even between bullets on a single slide can draw student attention to important information. However, too much transition and you lose the effect that you want to achieve. In addition, too much transition slows down the PowerPoint and students become bored waiting on the next line of text to move into place. Remember less is more—especially when dealing with slide transitions and custom animation.

# PowerPoint in the Florida GED PLUS Classroom

## Tips and Tricks

### Tired of the Same Old Design?

PowerPoint comes loaded with a wide variety of templates. You can access even more free templates by visiting the Microsoft website where new templates are posted on a regular basis. A search on Google or any search engine can also lead to free PowerPoint templates. Just search for “free PowerPoint Templates.”

### PowerPoint Designs with a Purpose

So you got tired of the same old design and found something new. On screen it looks great and adds just the right touch for your presentation. Print a couple of slides as handouts. Does it print okay or does that neat swirl in the middle come across in black and white as a smudge? Make sure your design template works for the screen and for printing. Remember, you may want to give students a PowerPoint handout so they can take notes.

### Charts, Tables, and Maps—Oh No!

Limit the use of big charts, tables, and maps. Complex graphics just don't show up well on PowerPoint. They can be very hard to read, especially if the chart or table has lots of data loaded into it. Smaller charts, tables, and maps will work just fine.

### Bullets Please!

A PowerPoint is not a book. It is not meant to be read to your students or to contain every word that you want to convey. PowerPoint should be more like a fancy outline. It has the key points included, but allows you the latitude to go beyond what is on the screen and discuss the finer points. There is nothing more boring than having someone read a PowerPoint to those in attendance. Students can read what's on the screen—you don't have to. As the teacher, you get to add all of the good stuff.

### What Color is That?

On your computer screen, almost any color looks really great. Those yellows shine through with no problem. Red type adds pizzazz—until you project it on the screen.

#### Rule of Thumb for Colors

- Use dark blues, grays, and greens for the background.
- Avoid red, gold, or any bright color for the background.
- Use a dark background with light colored lettering.
- Remember that yellow type on a blue background is

the easiest combination to read.

- Do not change color pallets in the middle of a presentation.
- Stay away from white or clear backgrounds.
- Remember that the templates in PowerPoint have been designed using appropriate color palettes.

### How Many Font Styles Did You Use?

- Stay with one or two font styles.
- Avoid the use of underlining. Underlined text should be reserved for hyperlinks to the Internet or to attached files or other documents.
- Use bold for emphasis, such as vocabulary words or phrases that students need to know.
- Stay away from shadowed text. It may look blurry when projected or printed.
- Never use all caps. They are harder to read.
- Use italics for emphasis only and use it sparingly.

### Parallel Is Not Just for Math

- Improve your PowerPoint presentation by using bulleted information.
- Maintain parallel structure when writing bulleted information.

Parallel Structure	Non-Parallel Structure
• Include	• Include
• Review	• Reviewing
• Demonstrate	• Demonstrated
• Assess	• Assessment

### Size Matters

- Use no more than 2-3 sizes of the font that you choose. Example:
  - Titles—48 point
  - Subtitles—36 point
  - Supporting details—24 point
- Never use less than 18 point font.

### Never Underestimate the Power of Proofreading

The content can be wonderful. The choice of design and color can be the best possible. The font size can be easy to read. The print quality can be excellent. However, if you don't edit the material and the presentation has numerous typos and the bullet structure is not parallel, the presentation will be little more than a distraction. After building the presentation, print handouts and do a thorough edit. If possible, ask a colleague to review the material and edit as well. Set a positive example for students and provide the best presentation possible.

# Florida Atlantic University

**Dr. Lucy Madsen Guglielmino**  
**Project Director**

## Development & Research Consultants

**Susan K. Pittman**  
**Bonnie Vondracek**



**We're on the Web!**  
**Visit us at:**  
**[http://](http://www.floridatechnet.org/)**  
**[www.floridatechnet.org/](http://www.floridatechnet.org/)**

## More Resources for the Classroom

### PowerPoint Tutorials and Resources

There are many excellent resources on the World Wide Web for instructors and students who want to learn how to use PowerPoint. The following websites provide tutorials for all levels of learners.

#### PowerPoint in the Classroom

<http://www.actden.com/pp/index.htm>

#### Technology for Teachers, PowerPoint Tutorial, Oregon State University

<http://oregonstate.edu/instruction/ed596/ppoint/pphome.htm>

#### Designing Student Presentations with and without PowerPoint

<http://ctl.conncoll.edu/ppt/pdfdocs/CTL-PP-StudPres.pdf>

#### Jan's Working with Presentations—PowerPoint Tutorial (Basic and Advanced)

<http://www.jegsworks.com/Lessons/presentations/basics/index.html>

#### Keyboarding

Many students lack basic keyboarding skills. If you do not have access to a program such as Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing, you may want to use one of the following sites:

#### Touch Typing (Online or Download Version)

<http://www.senselang.com>

#### Nimble Fingers (Online or Download Version)

<http://www.nimblefingers.com>

#### Animation

The following sites include free animated GIFs that you can download and add to your presentation:

#### GIF Animation.Com

<http://www.gifanimations.com>

#### GIFs.net

<http://www.gifs.net>

#### Audio Files

The following sites includes free audio files that you can download and add to your presentation:

#### Free Audio Clips

<http://www.freeaudioclips.com/>

#### Free Sounds and Sound Effects

<http://www.webplaces.com/html/sounds.htm>

**Clip Art** The following sites include free clip art that you can download and add to your presentation:

#### All Free Original Clipart

<http://www.free-graphics.com>

#### Microsoft Office Clip Art and Media

<http://office.microsoft.com/clipart/default.aspx?lc=en-us>