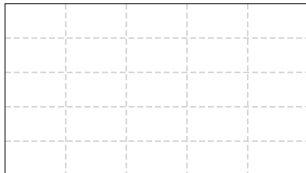# DUAL CODING
WITH TEACHERS
THE COURSE

SLIDES

Ditch the over-crowded, jumbled, over-coloured, over-bulleted slides and discover the rules used by the top communication pros.

PROCESS

① CLARIFY YOUR PURPOSE

As best you can, get to know who your audience is and what bothers them. Pinpoint their problem and fashion your presentation around that. Figure out what you would like them to think, feel and do after your presentation. Acknowledge and integrate emotional as well as intellectual aspects.
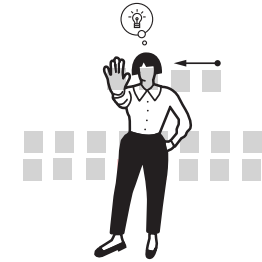
② COLLECT YOUR CONTENT

Use either sticky notes to gather and arrange your thoughts. Or, you can use the built-in light table of your presentation app. But that has its dangers — you will probably be sucked into writing too many words on each slide and bothering about what it looks like. I prefer a fat felt tip with small sticky notes.
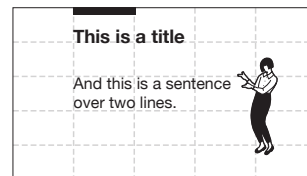
③ ORGANISE A STORY SEQUENCE

The first thing is to cull whatever irrelevant or duplicated points you have collected. Then you will need to chunk the ideas into meanginful groups or themes. And then, you should fashion your narrative, which comes as a sequence. If that breaks the tidyness of your categories, then so be it. Story first.

THE GRID

Use your chosen grid for every slide in your deck. PowerPoint now has guide lines with which you can build a grid. Apple's Keynote has long had them.

Align all the elements on the slide. But you can vary the pattern, of course. Alignment is very important in bringing order and harmony to how the information is presented.

FONTS

This is a title

And this is a sentence over two lines.

- No less than 40 point size — smaller is too hard to read
- Don't use more than two fonts — it looks amateurish
- Don't use serif fonts — the edges are too fuzzy on screen
- Don't use Comic Sans — it's just too corny
- Don't centre your text — too hard to read, use only for titles
- Don't use colour text on top of colour background

RULE OF THIRDS
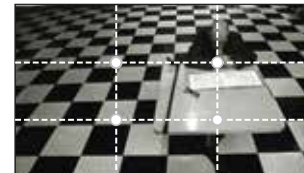
Professional photographers and graphic designers have long known about, and constantly use, the rule of thirds. This is where the screen, canvas or page is divided into three along the height and width, resulting in nine sections. Place the point of interest of your image where these dividing lines meet — the rule of thirds.

SENTENCES NOT BULLETS

It's true that bullets on slides don't kill, but they certainly bore. When used purely for lists, bullets are fine. But in many cases, bullets are used in public as a short-hand *aide–mémoire* for the presenter. They are empty of meaning and, as a result, bore. Instead, write pithy, arresting sentences — like the stand–first sentences seen below titles in newspapers.

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GETTING BETTER

DO
- Work on paper/sticky notes first
- Make your images 'bleed' to the edges of your slide
- Signal higher and lower order text with font weight/size
- Chunk up your presentation into sections

DON'T
- Use all the giddy transition tricks of your software.
- Use low-quality screen shots for images
- Use different fonts and too many colours
- Rely on bulleted lists

TRY
- Break up bullet lists with a pithy stand-first sentences
- Show your sections outline at the start (orientation)
- Create your own simple and consistent colour palette
- Cut all those organisational logos from your slides