

GD Study skills assignment

by Gabriel Dunning

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Study Skills Assignment

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L4 - Study Skills

ACDA4021

Electrical & Electronic Engineering Degree
Apprenticeship

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Section 1: Presentation Skills

The author of this report is named Gabriel Dunning, as per the presentation he delivered, he is 23 years old, works for DSTL, and grew up in Swindon along with his younger brother. He's worked at DSTL for 5 years and now lives with his girlfriend with whom he's looking to move in with soon. He claims to have an interest in music, of which his favourite artist is The Cure and his favourite genre is Alternative/Post-Punk. He also has an interest in films, with his favourite being Spider-Man 2, other favourites include, the 'Evil Dead' series as well as Star Wars Episode 3: Revenge of the Sith. In terms of personality, he describes himself as an upbeat and positive person, with a tendency towards humour and jests, though at times his mood can swing in the opposite direction and he can become quite unsociable and reclusive.

After delivering the presentation, the author was given two sheets of feedback, the first was from a peer whilst the other was given by the lecturer. The feedback from the peer was overall, very positive. They stated that in terms of the quality of the actual PowerPoint material, it was very well put together and easily legible as well as praising the usage of images for humours purposes. In addition to these, they also provided positive feedback on the delivery of the presentation, stating that it was "clear and organised" as well as mentioning that it seemed to meet the 5 minute timeslot provided by the lecturer.

The feedback that the lecturer gave was also largely positive, it terms of the presentation content, the commended the introduction page as well as fact that the slides themselves were "very clear and easy to read" as well as complementing the usage of photos "to entertain and inform the audience", however the lectured also advised that the presentation could have used more slides at the end, as the final part of the presentation was just talking with little visual information to support it. In regards to the feedback received for the actual delivery of the presentation, the lecturer stated that the delivery was "confident" and "humorous" and also kept closely to the 5 minute time target, clocking in at 4:51. However they also suggested that, whilst "the style was ok for this particular presentation, make sure you don't do things like keep your hands in your pockets for future presentations." The author intends to take this criticism to heart for future presentations.

In terms of the key points the author has learned when trying to put together a successful presentation, they have learned that it's very important to try and keep an audience somewhat entertained during a presentation, as it contributes to maintaining their attention, should a presentation be very dry and machine-like in its delivery, it would have a lot of trouble getting the audience to engage with the contents and information delivered. The author has also learned that, whilst it's good to inject humour into a presentation, as it helps maintain the audience's attention and engagement, it's also possible to inject too much humour, which could have the opposite effect. Too many jokes or gags during a presentation can often lead to the audience disengaging as they could believe that, since the presenter is doing so much comedy, they shouldn't take the information presented so seriously. In addition, too much humour included in things like slideshows can often backfire

as it can lead to sub-par jokes taking up valuable slide space that more pertinent information could use to better effect.

The Author also feels that their ability to present was hindered by a lack of sleep when the presentation was delivered, so they've also learned that it's not just important to ensure that the physical presentation is ready to deliver, but that it's equally as, if not more, important to ensure that the person delivering the presentation is also well prepared and ready to deliver since, as the author has found, an effective presenter can elevate a mediocre or average set of PowerPoint slides.

In summary the author feels that, in order to improve their presentation delivery skills in future, it's important that they limit the amount of humour in their delivery, perhaps including a few, more impactful, jokes rather than the barrage they are normally tempted to include. They also believe that in future it's important that they look after themselves prior to delivering a presentation as not doing so could have a large impact on their ability to effectively present.

Section 2: Personal Research on Skill Sets

When it comes to succeeding in a higher education environment, there are a variety of skills that are useful to have, these often sit outside the realm of the subjects being studied in a particular programme and instead are more general purpose skills that are very useful for anyone to have in their skillset. Two common skills that are useful to have are Critical thinking and time management skills. Well-honed critical thinking skills can enable a person to create effective arguments and strong cases for arguments. They'll be able to be logical and rational in their thinking, and this will enable them to research more effectively, being able to make sound judgements on the validity or quality of sources used [1]. Critical thinking is also a valuable skill for performing self-driven research, not just when looking for sources, it will allow them to ask important questions about the way they're conducting their research, like if their sample sizes are representative or if they're aware of any unconscious biases they may have whilst conducting the research [1]. Having effective time management skills allows a person to efficiently block out their time and manage their workload, this is especially useful when someone has multiple work pieces that need to be done, all with different deadlines, as it ensures that all the work pieces end up getting equal attention and that none end up falling by the wayside. Some people suggest the use of an Eisenhower matrix to assist with time management as it allows someone to easily prioritise their workload into Urgent/Not Urgent and Important/Not important sections [1]. Time management is also important in the long term too, especially in an employment environment as being able to effectively manage tasks and output good quality work in a timely manner will lead to a better professional reputation as well as possibly increasing opportunities for workplace progression as a result [2]. Effective time management is also beneficial to a person's personal life as it helps craft a preferable work-life balance by ensuring that work doesn't bleed into a person's own time and is relegated to the specific time slots a person sets out for it [2].

Other skills that Employers may look for in prospective candidates in professional occupations are skills like the ability to effectively communicate and work as part of a team. This skill is particularly important in professions where people find themselves working on large, multi-person projects, so much so that employers often look specifically for “team players” when recruiting [3]. Another Important skill is Problem solving, whilst these are deemed to be less important in less skilled jobs as well as with junior staff, as the scope of problems they’re expected to deal with is often fairly limited [3]. However in a profession such as engineering, where technical problems are frequent, it’s a valuable skill that employers look for, though many are also aware that this is a skill that develops with experience [3].

Section 3: Self Evaluation and Action Planning

Another important aspect of working is knowing about yourself and the kind of person you are, this helps as it allows you to work in ways that best fit you and your personality as well as well as enabling you to identify areas of yourself that you may need to improve on, such as being a procrastinator or not enjoying working in silence. Initially the author believed themselves to be very outgoing and social, along with being a diligent worker, however, they were also aware that they have a bad habit of procrastinating heavily and not getting enough work done in the time slot they set out for it, this often leads to them feeling unsatisfied with the work they have done and adds unnecessary stress upon their shoulders.

After undertaking some online tests, the author found that their results largely backed up their pre-existing view of themselves. Upon completing the Myers-Briggs personality style test, they found that they were classified as an ENFP, this personality type is described as Optimistic, Sociable, carefree and contemplative. The strengths of this personality type also seem to align with what the author believes their own strengths to be, namely, a perceptive and curious mind as well as an easy-going and positive nature. Likewise, the weaknesses described also match closely with their own perceived weaknesses, the most important being disorganisation and a lack of focus, as well as being quite restless [4]. After some evaluation, the author believes that something they need to work on improving is their focus and organisational skills, improving organisation will likely lead to an improved ability to focus. This will likely be achieved by making an effort to equally space out work during specific time-slots so that an equal amount of time is taken on each piece of work to ensure that progress is made on all of them.

In terms of personal Short term goals, the author is currently looking to move into a home with their partner, as well as beginning to seek assistance with dealing with various personal issues affecting them. On the professional side of things, they wish to continue developing their technical skills, taking advantage of the degree course to improve their knowledge-base and enable them to work at a more advanced level.

In terms of longer term personal goals, the author would like to integrate going to the gym into their day to day routine, they'd also obviously like to graduate the degree course with a good classification. On the professional front, they'd like to begin working on their leadership skills, as this will enable them to take on a more impactful role at work by leading work packages and engaging in higher level meetings and discussions about work.

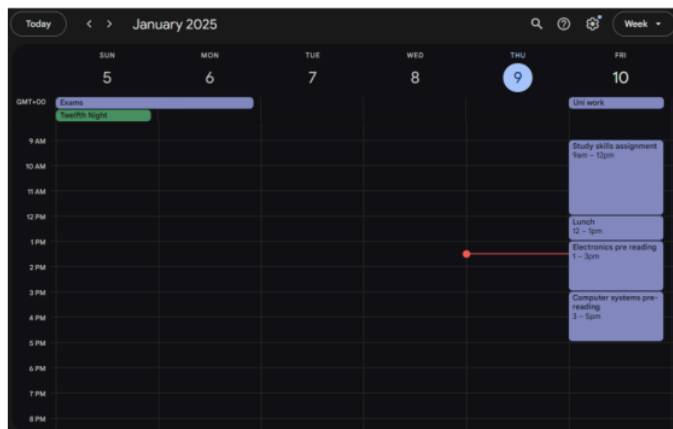
Section 4: Application

a. Looking After Your Data

When it comes to backing up data, the author's main strategy is to adhere to the "three separate places" philosophy, data is always saved locally first, this is normally to the laptop being used to do the work on. Secondly, the data is saved to a OneDrive folder, which is stored on the cloud, this means that any data saved there is accessible from anywhere with an internet connection, this means that there is no longer a single point of failure in this system should the physical PC the work is saved to breaks down, it also means that not only is the data not lost, but it can continue to be worked on from an alternate device without losing time. Finally, the data is also backed up to a USB drive which is stored separately to other electronics, this is a "last resort" measure in case the original machine breaks down and the OneDrive it's saved to is also inaccessible. Though largely unnecessary, a fourth layer can also be implemented by also backing up data to an external hard drive kept separate from all other devices, this should protect the data in case the main computer is infected by some kind of ransomware like Cryptowall, as, if the drive is kept separately, then the ransomware cannot encrypt the data on it.

b. Time management and Self Organisation

In order to increase his productivity as well as improving his time management, the author has decided to specifically set aside one day during the week in order to keep on top of university work, he will utilise this day differently depending on what work he has due at the



time, If he has assignments due then he will spend the time working on those assignments and reports but if not then he will spend the time doing pre-reading for upcoming classes in order to get ahead of the curve in regards to his studies.

The author has also completed a personal development plan via his

workplace which is called "my impact". This development plan consists of a series of goals and targets that the author aims to hit within that year. Some examples of goals included in

the author's "my impact" are, to attend a high impact writing course in order to assist with their ability to write technical reports to a suitable standard, one of his goals was to complete an Open University Maths module, in preparation for him starting his degree. This is a goal that has already been completed and confirmed as such with the author's line manager. Another example of a goal included in the author's "my impact" is to begin engaging with the project he's working on at a higher level than he's normally used to, this is to develop his view of the greater project and to begin developing his leadership skills. The structure of this PDP is also supposed to incorporate quarterly reviews with the author's line manager where he will be graded against his goals and feedback from colleagues as either "Underperforming", "Performing" or "Over performing". At his most recent quarterly review he was graded as "Performing" indicating that he is performing well and on-track to meet his goals.

Section 5: Conclusion and Evaluation

In conclusion, over the course of writing this assignment, the author has learned a great deal, namely about what makes an effective presentation and how their own presentation style could be changed to make their delivery skills more effective in the future. The author also learned a lot about themselves and their own personality via undertaking psychological tests, they weren't aware of what their Myers-Briggs personality type was, however they now understand that they're an ENFP. Hopefully this knowledge enables them to make small lifestyle changes that more closely align with who they are as a person. An area of further research that the author would like to pursue is how to more effectively manage their time, this is mainly due to the fact that the author has a lot of competing demands being placed on their life and they believe that better time management skills would help them manage these competing pressures.

References:

- [1] R. Needleman, "What are the 6 essential skills for university students," 11 December 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.uniadmissions.co.uk/application-guides/6-essential-skills-for-university-students/>. [Accessed 13 December 2024].
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- [3] S. P. L. G. S Dench, "Employers Perceptions Of Key Skills," The Institute for Employment Studies, Brighton, 1998.
- [4] 16Personalities, "Campaigner ENFP Strengths and Weaknesses," NERIS Analytics Limited, [Online]. Available: <https://www.16personalities.com/enfp-strengths-and-weaknesses>. [Accessed 20 12 2024].

Appendices:

Results summary

Your results from the IPIP Big Five Factor Markers are in the table below. The table contains a raw score and also a percentile, what percent of other people who have taken this test that you score higher than.

Factor	Factor label	Raw score	Score percentile
I	Extroversion	98	
II	Emotional stability	4	
III	Agreeableness	87	
IV	Conscientiousness	15	
V	Intellect/Imagination	80	

Big five personality trait scores calculated by openpsychometrics.org

<https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/IPIP-BFFM/>

Jungian/Myers-Briggs Personality Type is based on four preferences, that when combined produce personality type. This page will first cover your scores for each of the preferences then finally give a description for the type that they produce.

Introversion (I)		Extroversion (E)
Introversion-Extroversion is your cognitive orientation. Introverts centre themselves inside their bodies. Extroverts centre their attention outside their bodies. [more]		
Sensing (S)		Intuition (N)
Sensing-Intuition is the first pair of cognitive functions and the preference for how your prefer to be served information; through the five senses or from the subconscious. [more]		
Feeling (F)		Thinking (T)
Feeling-Thinking is the second pair of cognitive functions, the judging functions, which are used to evaluate goals; either through personal values or objective principles. [more]		
Judging (J)		Perceiving (P)
Judging-Perceiving is what pair of cognitive functions your prefer to use; Judging is a preference for a structured lifestyle and the use of feeling and thinking while perceiving is the preference for a flexible lifestyle and the use of sensing and intuition. [more]		

<https://openpsychometrics.org/>

Action Plan

My goal is improve my organisational skills _____

Date to finish	How will I measure my success?
Sept 2025	I will measure my success by how overwhelmed I feel by my workload, if I'm able to remain not overwhelmed with <u>Uni</u> work and regular work, I will have achieved my goals. This aims to give my work more structure to help me better handle my workload.

Steps to Achieving my Goal

Description	Time Estimate	Completion date
Begin creating a small task list for work at the beginning of each day, approx. 3-4 items, by the end of the day I should have achieved all of these.	~ 3 months	March 2025
Be more specific in how I block out my time, I already have a dedicated day for <u>Uni</u> work, but I should further divide that time down into smaller blocks.	~ 6 months	June 2025
Ensure I'm totally clear on timelines for my work so that I can break these down into smaller milestones at regular intervals that I can work towards.	~ 2 Months	February 2025
Obstacles that may arise	How I will respond	
Shifting priorities at work may mean that what I'm working on may change with little warning.	Ensure I set aside adequate time to re-orient myself and being the planning process for the new work rather than throwing myself into it headfirst.	
Helpful Tools		Helpful Resources

Action Plan

My goal is to begin developing my leadership skills

Date to finish	How will I measure my success?
April 2026	I will measure my success by looking at the position I'm taking within my work. If I'm regularly given roles of responsibility within my work. <i>i.e.</i> leading on a piece of work, then I will have achieved my goal.

Steps to Achieving my Goal

Description	Time Estimate	Completion date
Begin engaging with projects on a more macro scale than my usual "narrow" technical area.	18 months	April 2026
Volunteer to present technical info and updates to the customer and high level project staff e.g. programme managers	18 months	April 2026
Attempt to engage with planning future work and inputting with SORs	18 months	April 2026

Obstacles that may arise	How I will respond
It'll likely be difficult to break into top level discussions on projects due to my current level	Attempt to build a reputation as someone knowledgeable and reliable, and continue to try and engage in these areas to hopefully break in.

Helpful Tools	Helpful Resources

Action Plan

My goal is to deal with myriad personal issues affecting me

Date to finish	How will I measure my success?
Ongoing Yearly review	I will measure my success by taking a note of the state my life is in currently, then review where I am in a years' time to assess how much progress I've made, no real definitive ending, however constant improvement is what is being looked for.

Steps to Achieving my Goal

Description	Time Estimate	Completion date
Engage with a doctor and speak to them regarding these issues and hopefully establish a plan of action, perhaps also including a stop-gap solution in the meantime (medication).	< 1 month	27 th Dec 2024
Look to begin some form of therapy to support my mental ~~fortitude~~ .	~ 8 months	August 2025
Try and begin to structure my life more effectively, plan to do things on specific days	~ 6 months	June 2025

Obstacles that may arise	How I will respond
I'm quick to spiral when I take a knock	Being open and honest with my support network can help mitigate the effects of this.

Helpful Tools	Helpful Resources

Action Plan

My goal is: To improve my technical skills

Date to finish	How will I measure my success?
August 2028	I can measure my success by doing a yearly review of the types of work I've been involved with that year and compare the difficulty and complexity of it to work from previous years.

Steps to Achieving my Goal

Description	Time Estimate	Completion date
Utilise a task list made at the beginning of the day to keep a record of work completed.	>1 month	Jan 2025
Study hard and engage with resources on the degree course to extract as much knowledge as possible	4 years	August 2028
Utilise the knowledge of others in areas I'm unfamiliar with in order to learn from them and increase my own knowledge base.	4 years	August 2028
Try to engage with a variety of new tasks and methods in order to learn new skills that can be applied to other pieces of work.	4 years	August 2028

Obstacles that may arise	How I will respond
It's very easy to get pigeonholed into one role at work	Take advantage of the fact I have 2 project managers with a lot of connections to different areas and use this to seek out new challenges.
Helpful Tools	Helpful Resources

Ransomware Report:

Introduction:

The following report is a short piece on malware and more specifically the ransomware known as Cryptowall.

Main Body:

Cryptowall infects unsuspecting machines by being transmitted via infected emails, being hidden as PDF files, which typically disguise themselves as things such as invoices, bills or other miscellaneous documents. After these documents are opened, the virus installs itself on the infected PC and the installer begins searching for data files it can encrypt. [1] [what](#) makes Cryptowall different from a lot of other ransomware is that it is coded to run on both 32 and 64 bit systems which increases the total system base it can infect [1]. The first recorded instances of attacks using Cryptowall took place around 2014-15 where it was found that it had evolved from a different ransomware named Cryptolocker [2] and it quickly became one of the most prolific types of ransomware encountered online due to the fact that it's being continuously updated to take advantage of software vulnerabilities as well as better communication with its command and control centre [2].

Cryptowall has gone through a variety of iterations over the years, with each iterating and expanding on the previous versions. Cryptowall 2.0's main difference from its predecessor was that it no longer used HTTP for its command-and-control communication. This update reduced the ransomware's vulnerability to analysis as well as enabling it to be spread through website ads and targeted unpatched software [3]. Cryptowall 3.0 was distributed via phishing email which would contain a link to a downloader, upon running this, the ransomware would then encrypt files and scan the network for open shared drives [3]. Version 4.0 was released in 2021 and improved communication with its command-and-control server and had increased resistance to antivirus detection. This version would also spread via phishing emails and would disable the victim's ability to restore their system [3]. Finally, Cryptowall 5.0 is the most recent version of the ransomware and uses code taken from something called [HiddenTear](#), another piece of malware. Version 5.0 also uses a different type of encryption to previous iterations. [2]

Upon being downloaded to the local machine, the malware files are executed, upon execution, Cryptowall will scan the local machine for a variety of file extensions, with any files matching the extensions being automatically encrypted [4]. Cryptowall also embeds itself into the windows operating system in a bid to destroy any ability to recover the encrypted files via functions like the [start up](#) repair function [4]. After this the private key is generated and sent to the command and control server along with information about the infected system. Cryptowall then stores three files on the local machine which are text, HTML and a PNG version of the Ransom note. [4]

Bibliography

- [1] KnowBe4, "Cryptowall Ransomware," KnowBe4 Inc, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://www.knowbe4.com/cryptowall>. [Accessed 08 01 2025].
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- [3] Insights Desk, "Deciphering CryptoWall Ransomware to Plot a Cyber Defence Blueprint," DemandTalk, 17 07 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.itsecuritydemand.com/insights/security/deciphering-cryptowall-ransomware-to-plot-a-cyber-defence-blueprint/>. [Accessed 08 01 2025].
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GD Study skills assignment

GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

GENERAL COMMENTS

53/100

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GRADING FORM: GJ_2019

ENGAGEMENT WITH LITERATURE

-  Only 4 references cited - this is insufficient (10-20 was specified in the brief) and ALL areas covered in the report should have external material referenced to back up any work or opinions etc made. **30**

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

-  What is written is sensible and correct, however the lack of reference to external literature sources hinders the demonstration of K&U **50**

COGNITIVE AND INTELLECTUAL

-  Very capable analysis demonstrated, however again, relating your decisions to researched material would have allowed higher marks here. **65**

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

-  Reasonable evidence of the application of some productivity tools and methods - action plans very good. **60**
However no e-portfolio shown?

Limited evidence of time management (to-do lists etc)

Personality tests could have been far more extensive

No inclusion of the 'about me' powerpoint slides as requested in the brief.

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS



Written skills are good, however as a report, you shouldn't rely on such big, wordy paragraphs - use lists etc where appropriate.

Should have used the

1.1

1.2

Style of layout.

Overall - what's there is good, but you've left a lot out!

60