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1. Description

My first encounter with an issue regarding my academic and digital skills was when I had to create a presentation on time management using software, particularly Google Slides. The problems I encountered were creating and designing the slides and then memorising the notes needed to present my slideshow without reading off the slides. I was not used to using presentation creators, as I had not presented an academic presentation before and was unfamiliar with many of the features and tools of Google Slides. Furthermore, I was not used to summarising slides and converting them into notes due to my lack of experience, so I found it difficult to not read off the slides while practising. I had to practice presenting numerous times before producing a script I was satisfied with that related to my slides while not explicitly being a transcript of what I had put on the screen.

2. Feelings

At the time, I was feeling quite anxious and nervous, which was natural due to it being the first time I had presented something in an academic setting. This sense of anxiety was worsened by my unfamiliarity with using Google Slides or PowerPoint (Mind, 2020). Not only was I stressed about presenting, but this feeling was further intensified by being unable at first to produce a slideshow that sufficiently portrayed my ideas and knowledge. Numerous attempts at trying to figure out how to create a polished slideshow also led to me feeling somewhat irritated and perhaps demotivated me slightly.

However, I continued my efforts in creating a satisfactory slideshow. My journey to becoming proficient at creating a PowerPoint was supported by countless online tutorials and discovery guides, which guided me step by step on how to master the use of the software (Jisc, 2021). After using online resources to improve my digital skills and finish creating a slideshow, I felt much more confident and motivated to continue learning and memorising my lines and talking points using tips from a website (New York Film Academy, 2023). I also began to feel proud that I had overcome the fear associated with trying something unfamiliar. The sense of achievement after completing the presentation outweighed the initial nerves and

anxiety, which reminded me that stepping out of my comfort zone is often necessary for growth.

3. Evaluation

The experience could be viewed as a negative one due to the stress and anxiety that I felt at the time. The struggles I faced in mastering the Google Slides software led me to feel demotivated and could have significantly impacted the quality and length of my final presentation. However, by being resourceful and searching for ways to improve my skills rather than continuing to be restricted by a lack of digital knowledge, this experience became very rewarding and ultimately a positive one.

The issue became a learning curve, where I was able not only to expand my knowledge to successfully complete the presentation and task at hand, but I am now able to transfer these skills to future tasks in education or the workplace where I may need to present a slideshow (Cottrell, 2015). I gained invaluable transferable digital and personal skills from this task, particularly resilience and resourcefulness, which will undoubtedly benefit me in the future (Dweck, 2006). Furthermore, I was able to identify an area in which I had significant room for improvement — a crucial indicator that will help me maximise my potential by practising and learning to fill gaps in my knowledge (Gibbs, 1988).

A further positive was that I learned the importance of concise and visual communication. I had to adapt my content to suit a visual format, learning that simplicity often enhances clarity in presentations. This is a vital skill for the modern workplace, where professionals must often communicate complex ideas efficiently using slides or infographics. On the other hand, the poor time management at the beginning of the process exposed a clear weakness in my planning and prioritisation skills. Another limitation was my hesitance to seek help; I was reluctant to ask classmates or tutors for advice due to a fear of looking incapable. This experience taught me that collaborative learning and peer feedback are often key to overcoming personal limitations.

4. Analysis

The difficulties I encountered were primarily due to a lack of familiarity with digital presentation tools and a limited understanding of how to effectively summarise information for an audience (University of Leeds, 2020). My procrastination also played a minor role, as I underestimated how long it would take to create a high-quality presentation and memorise the corresponding notes (Covey, 1989). Had I started earlier, I would have had more time to experiment with different tools and rehearse more effectively.

Additionally, the anxiety I experienced stemmed not just from the newness of the task, but also from a lack of prior preparation in developing these skills. The academic and digital skills module, had I applied its guidance earlier, could have alleviated many of these issues. For instance, if I had used the module's recommended digital tools or time management frameworks such as SMART goals, I could have structured my workflow more effectively (Doran, 1981).

The issue also made me more aware of how important reflective learning is. Through reflection, I was able to pinpoint the exact causes of my initial difficulties and how they could have been avoided. This aligns with Kolb's learning theory, which highlights the value of experiential learning and continuous reflection for personal development (Kolb, 1984). In addition, my unfamiliarity with converting detailed research into concise, visual material also points to a gap in academic communication skills – an area this module is specifically designed to support. These skills are not just vital for academic success, but are also essential in the professional world, where visual presentations are a common method of sharing information. A further factor was the lack of time I allocated to revision and rehearsal, which affected my fluency and confidence during practice sessions.

5. Conclusion

Looking back, there are several things I could have done differently. I could have asked for support from a tutor or peer who was more experienced in using presentation software (Cottrell, 2015). Additionally, I could have explored alternative tools such as Canva or Prezi, which may have offered more intuitive design features

and templates that could have made the process smoother. Using the academic and digital skills resources earlier – for example, attending a workshop or viewing university guides on presentations – might have improved both my confidence and technical abilities (Jisc, 2021). Also, forming a study group or practising in front of others could have helped reduce my anxiety and allowed me to receive constructive feedback before the final presentation.

Another approach I could have taken was to implement a time audit or planner to structure my week in the lead-up to the presentation. Tools like the Eisenhower Matrix or a Pomodoro timer could have helped me better prioritise tasks and stay on schedule (Tracy, 2007). I now realise that taking small steps each day, even as little as 15 minutes spent experimenting with the software, could have built my confidence gradually and prevented the last-minute stress. Moreover, engaging in active learning techniques, such as peer teaching or recording myself and watching the playback, could have significantly enhanced my memory retention and delivery skills. Ultimately, these alternative strategies would have saved time and improved the final quality of my work.

6. Action Plan

In the future, I will adopt a more structured and proactive approach when completing tasks that involve digital tools and presentation skills. I plan to start my preparation earlier and set clear SMART objectives to break the task into manageable stages, such as slide creation, script development, and rehearsal (Doran, 1981). I will make full use of university resources, including digital skills workshops, online guides, and one-to-one tutor support to strengthen my abilities (Cottrell, 2015). Additionally, I intend to explore different presentation platforms, such as Canva or Prezi, to find the one that best suits my style and needs.

To build confidence and reduce reliance on notes, I will practise presenting in front of peers or record myself to identify areas for improvement. I also plan to join academic support groups or peer mentoring schemes where I can share experiences and learn best practices from others. I will integrate time management strategies like weekly planning and SMART goal-setting to ensure consistent progress and avoid

last-minute preparation. I also plan to incorporate reflective checkpoints during future projects to reassess my progress and adjust plans if needed.

Furthermore, I will use a reflective journal to log each academic task I complete, focusing on what went well and what I could improve. This habit of continuous reflection, as suggested by Gibbs (1988), will enable me to track my development and build on each experience. I will also attend additional digital literacy sessions offered by the university to enhance my confidence with emerging technologies, ensuring I am not just improving academically but also becoming more employable in the digital age (HEA, 2011). This structured and reflective approach will help me produce higher-quality work while reducing stress and increasing my confidence in future academic or professional presentations.

7. SMART Plan

Specific- I will improve my digital presentation and public speaking skills by creating and delivering a practice presentation using Google Slides or Canva, focusing on concise content, effective design, and confident delivery without reading from the slides.

Measurable- I will evaluate my progress by rehearsing my next presentation at least three times in front of peers or recording myself, and seeking feedback on my clarity, confidence, and visual slide design.

Achievable- This is achievable by dedicating 30 minutes per day for one week to research, design, and rehearse the presentation, while making use of university resources such as online tutorials, digital skills workshops, and academic guides.

Relevant- This goal is directly relevant to my academic development, as strong digital presentation and communication skills are essential for university assignments, group projects, and future career presentations.

Time bound- I will complete this SMART goal within 2 weeks, ensuring the final rehearsal and feedback review is completed by 21/07/2025.

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