What does a presentation mean to me? Coming into cs2101, I had a strong belief that a presentation is about the topic which the presenter wants to share. Be it a breakthrough innovation or an inspiring event, the presenter should share this knowledge to inform as many people as possible about the said content.

This understanding had me confident going into OP1, knowing from past experiences that I am able to deliver my speeches with confidence. While preparing my script, I had the realisation that I had to share much more information compared to the 5 minutes I was allocated. I decided to challenge myself to deliver my speech quickly, spending most of my time amending my script and practising it dozens of times. This meant that my slides were quickly done without much consideration, simply following the template given and adding a picture every few slides.

After OP1, I had a good feeling, being able to pull off the presentation. Although I had some hiccups during the Questions and Answer section, I believed that I was able to score well for OP1. Receiving back the results for OP1 was disappointing as it was indicative that I was missing something huge. Unable to deduce why, I had to ask my tutor. During the consultation, I found out that although I had good delivery, it was not pleasant to listen and follow along. This feeling required those listening to my presentation to actively listen and decipher how the images or words on my slides correspond with what I was saying.

Then it hit me, my preconceived notion of presentations was wrong. A presentation should not just be about how well the presenter is able to speak but also how easy it is to follow and listen to the presenter. My entire preparation for OP1 was focused on myself, ensuring I was able to deliver my speech well within my allocated timeslot. Throughout the entire process, I did not consider how the audience would feel while listening to me. A good presentation should allow the audience to naturally engage with the presentation. Much more thought should have gone into my preparation.

Looking at the knowledge taught during cs2101 lessons again has led me to realise that I had not considered using a Motivated Sequence Pattern within my presentation. This section details how to capture the attention of an audience, to ensure that a presentation is not a simple information sharing. In the case of OP1, I had to first describe how the different interview question types could catch us students off guard and panic, without answering the question properly. Then show how listening on would give them more techniques on how to tackle the myriad of interview questions without apprehension.

I was motivated to bring my new insights into the next presentation OP2. While preparing for my pitch, I completed a more comprehensive needs analysis on the scenario presented. I was more careful against writing my script hastily. Understanding the context, audience, and my purpose of the pitch, which is to get a mentor, I inferred the need to be cohesive, coordinating my pitch with my slides and the vision of my team. By using better signposting language, I gave myself an opportunity to utilise animations to make obvious how our product, Simplst, would solve current solutions. Before this, I would only have considered finding a static photo which might had been confusing. I believed that the pitch went smoothly and feedback from the tutor concurred with my feeling.

What does a presentation mean to me now? Instead of just a one-way sharing, a presentation is just like all other forms of communication, which is a two-way dialogue between the presenter and the audience. A good presentation should focus on making the audience experience a fun one, where it would be easy to listen and learn. This in turns allow the audience to engage with the presenter in the form of their questions and their takeaways after the presentation. Moving forward, I know that is still much to learn and if OP2 is any indication, I will be taking my newfound knowledge in the right direction to be a better presenter.

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