

I chose to explore presenting and critiquing design as my topic for this module because I believe that it is arguably the most important step in developing a great project. Regardless of the work put into the design, if you cannot present and critique it leading up to presenting, all of the hard work put into the design could potentially go to waste. In this brief paper I will be highlighting the key takeaways I took from my research.

One of the first tips I discovered that I wouldn't have known prior to my research was that you should aim to present your design in the image that the user will be viewing it. For web design, this is typically a computer screen or a mobile device. This is valuable because those watching your presentation will not be able to fully envision the user experience if you simply present a screenshot of your design. For mobile devices this is increasingly important, as often design can be formatted differently. The second key takeaway I discovered was that setting context is critically important. While presenting your design you should continually reiterate why you made the choices you made, and how they align with the initial goals of the project, along with prior feedback given. For example, if you ultimately chose to eliminate a certain attribute from the navigation and instead chose to put it in another area of your site, explain why you did this and how it aligns with the goals of the project/feedback given from colleagues. To build off of this, it is also important to clearly communicate what the goal of the presentation is and what areas you are looking for feedback in. If you do not give your viewers direction as to what you are looking for from them, you may quickly end up being flooded with feedback that is not constructive. Clearly iterate what areas are set in stone, and what areas you are open to hearing constructive feedback in.

The second area I focused on was how to give balanced, constructive criticism/feedback. The first key point I found was that asking permission prior to giving feedback can be important. Often, when you give feedback without asking permission first, it may not be perceived as well as you had maybe hoped. By asking permission, you are not only being respectful, but you are creating a social situation where the other party *wants* to hear what you have to say. Along with this, your language while giving feedback is equally as important. Avoid using the word "you," as this can cause the party on the receiving end to be defensive. Separating the design from the person can be helpful in avoiding this. The last key takeaway I found was that you need to balance good feedback with critiques. If you have two positive notes and five critiques, maybe only point out two critiques for now. If you throw too much criticism without acknowledging the good work that has already been put in, you will quickly find that the receiving end will shut down and not be receptive to your feedback.

In summary, the research I have done on presenting and critiquing has been valuable for my future career, regardless of what route I choose to take. Effectively presenting information to an audience, as well as giving feedback is common in the professional world regardless of what industry you may be in. These takeaways will also prove to be valuable in future situations I find myself in within my internship position I am working in right now. My department is very much centered around giving and receiving feedback, and now I have more tips on how to contribute to the conversation.