**P3 Time: A Retrospective**

It’s now P3 time, and I have just presented my P3. Before I talk more about that, however, I want to reflect on what has happened so far with my P1 and P2 performances.

When I gave my P1 interview, I had a few issues. I was using a lot of filler words, I was planted in one spot, and I was apparently smacking my lips. I did not even know that lip smacking was *habit to have*, much less one that *I* have. These are details that were written in feedback on my presentation, which is the only reason something like lip smacking could have been brought to my attention. In addition to that there were some quirks that I noticed in myself that I was not expecting to have to face. I was talking to the screen, I was fumbling over my words, and my transitions were very awkward. This was not helped by the fact that I was having PowerPoint technical issues, but that is something that I have covered before. In general, I should have been ready for that.

As I prepared for my P2, I wanted to keep some of these details in mind so as not to repeat them. A key word in that statement is **prepare**. Where I did not even warm up for P1, I spent a good amount of time planning what I would do and talk about in P2. Since P2 involved a kinesthetic demonstration, in my case dicing an onion, I even bought a couple of extra onions during my weekly shopping trip to sacrifice beforehand. Since I prepared for P2, I felt like I had a very clear control over the direction of my presentation (but why wouldn’t I) but more importantly I had gained a kind of ability to foresee where my presentation should be in the near future, say like 5 seconds ahead. This must be the magic of preparation, and it allowed me to adapt and pre-process the next likely scenario. Unfortunately, though I learned this marvelous new trick called practicing, I was not able to “work on” many of the criticisms I received from my P1. This is because P2, the way I saw it, was more focused on how the demonstration is presented than on how the presenter delivers a speech. There was no PowerPoint focus or even assistance really, which is one reason I think I did well on the P2. I did not get much of a chance *not* to stay planted in one spot, or transition smoothly between slides. Actually, I think the lack of an accompanying PowerPoint slide set was beneficial – I feel like PowerPoint slides restrict me to presenting one way. Anyway, I think I did improve on what I could demonstrate, such as a reduction in filler words and tongue clicking (only 2 instead of 6, wow!). In general, It seems like I improved.

The next question someone might ask me, after having read my explanation of my “improvement” since P1, is how I now feel about presenting “in front of colleagues.”

I personally do not feel like my attitude towards giving presentations has changed all that much. I said this before P2 and I am holding to it: P2 is a completely different staging environment. With P2, the amount of context provided around *what* my presentation is and what I will be talking about is minimal – there is only the one PowerPoint slide and the props that I put up. P1 was a completely different mode. For that presentation, I had to put together a whole PowerPoint presentation with a pretty narrowly-defined criteria for material that is expected or required. Once this presentation is put together, I really do not have much creative room for my presentation – it must reflect the PowerPoint. While, yes, practicing the presentation before makes a difference, it does not change the fact that whatever content is placed in the PowerPoint is guaranteed to show up at some point in the presentation and **must** be covered. Any material included in a PowerPoint presentation that does not get touched on or otherwise referenced in the speech risks being an unnecessary and avoidable distraction. This is my fundamental issue with most presentations that simply did not happen to apply to P2. So, in short, no: my opinion about presentations has not changed greatly. I still really dislike them.

**P3 Coming Up**

With all of the reflection gotten out of the way, I can finally talk about the next presentation. Specifically, what am I going to do to make it “*fabulous*” and make sure I avoid the critical errors that were previously discussed in one of our textbooks and in class?

I have already done my P3 presentation. For this presentation, we were supposed to convince some finance people in our “company,” with some fictional credibility behind us, to purchase a product or service for the benefit of the enterprise. I, personally, role played as a researcher at a tech research and development firm that produces specialized technology for “technical professionals.” I gave my presentation as though I had the intent to expand the scope of the company’s industry to outside of professional tech products. The product I proposed investing into research for is called Dynaboard, which just so happens to be my senior design project. I picked it for that reason – I had better be able to convince a room of wealthy executives that this product is worth something because I will be doing just that at the end of this term.

The Dynaboard is a mechanical keyboard that has a screen in each individual keyboard cap that can be configured to display any arbitrary character. I marketed this presentation in the direction of targeting multilingual individuals because I believe they actually would be the primary consumer for something like this, and the struggle of blindly typing in a character set other than the one displayed on a keyboard is a struggle that I identify with closely. Due to this pretty personal connection with the topic, I was pretty confident in what I was saying and I found it easy to produce convincing arguments and statistics. I had to be careful, however, in doing this. One of the critical errors that I needed to make sure to avoid was including too many technical details and losing the audience as a result. This personal relationship with the project means that in some ways I knew “too much” and had the potential to run away with speaking about irrelevant specifics. Fortunately, it does not seem like this was a problem at all. In fact, my presentation happened to get voted as #1 for the day – a surprise indeed. This leads me to believe that I must have been pretty good about avoiding the critical errors, because my presentation obviously had some measure of impact on the audience as I won the day in what I would call a landslide victory.

Overall, I had a good experience with this presentation. However, an amusing idea to consider came into my head soon after those presentations ended:

What if the audience voted for my presentation, not because they thought the presentation itself was technically good, but because they liked the product I was suggesting? I think that this case is pretty likely, as there were more people who told me to patent my project or go on Shark Tank than those who said anything along the lines of “Hey, your presentation was good!”

Either way, I will graciously accept the five point boost.