

Pecha Kucha – VMP

Gardening in the City: Successful Gardening in an Urban Environment

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Source Link:

<https://youtu.be/SGFUysljUPA>

Overview

There has been an increased interest in what we eat and how it is grown over the last several years. A food-based social movement has developed and is centered around issues like food security, biotechnology and chemical applications in agriculture, the rising cost of food, and the disconnect between people and the food system, particularly among those who live in cities (Turner et. al., 2011, p. 489). This social movement has given rise to restaurants with a focus on locally sourced foods, community supported agriculture, and community gardens, and urban gardening.

In the United States, the prevailing belief has been that farming was only exclusive to rural areas (Brown & Jameton, 2000, p. 20). According to McClintock (2010), the economic crisis in the late 2000s fostered an increased interest in urban gardening as a way to lower food costs (p. 1). Urban gardening had used limited spaces, such as balconies, rooftops, and yards to grow and harvest crops and even raise livestock (USDA). On a larger scale, community gardens have been an increasingly valuable way to use vacant space in cities to increase food security (Hallberg, 2009, p. 2). Community gardens have been defined as parcels of land gardened by a group of individuals, either using individual plots or shared space, and can be on either public or private lands (Marin Master Gardeners, 2017). These parcels of land have produced vegetables, fruits, herbs, or ornamentals, and have been located in neighborhoods, parks, or connected to places such as churches, hospitals, and apartments (Marin Master Gardeners, 2017). The benefits of community gardens have included increased social cohesion, as well as reduced crime and vandalism and lowered health care costs (Hallberg, 2009, p. 3).

My Pecha Kucha presentation was about my journey into urban gardening. I grew up in a rural small town with plenty of opportunities to garden. When I moved away from my hometown to a bigger city for college, I struggled with not having access to a growing space due to living only in apartments and townhouses. Luckily, I moved to Corvallis, Oregon, a city located in the agricultural heart of the state, and one that has been progressive in sustainability. Corvallis has created opportunities for residents to get involved in many types of gardening. My Pecha Kucha presentation took the audience into my urban gardening journey, from my background growing up in a rural area, all the way to my latest foray into community gardening. My intended audience was urban residents who were looking for ideas and opportunities into becoming involved in this agricultural movement.

Design Decisions

I designed this Pecha Kucha presentation with several things in mind. First, I wanted to connect to a wide audience. I wanted to tell a story of how I got involved in urban agriculture and provide tips and ideas for someone who is living in a confined area but wants to get involved in gardening. I believed that telling a personal story about my beginnings as a gardener would create a sticky message for the audience. To further this personal connection, I included many of my own photographs. Although they are not as high quality as they could have been due to them being taken casually several years ago, I thought that using a full bleed on as many of them as possible would provide the audience with greater details and insight into each image. Along with my sticky message, I also wanted to convey emotion. My grandma has been the biggest influence on me in gardening, and I wanted to share this connection with my audience. Last, because of the time constraints in a Pecha Kucha project, I naturally was inclined to create a concise presentation.

Design Decision #1 - Credibility

I demonstrated credibility in my message. According to Heath & Heath (2008), credibility in a message leads to stickiness in an idea (p. 17). I displayed credibility in my presentation by showing original images taken by myself that proved I was an accomplished urban gardener who successfully grew a wide variety of vegetables, fruits, and flowers in very confined space. Reynolds (2010) noted the work of Dr. John Medina, who stated that the human brain has a great ability to process and understand images rather than text (p. 97). The detailed images I presented allowed me to gain credibility with my audience and assisted them with comprehending my message.

Design Decision #2 – High Quality and Full Bleed Images

I selected higher quality images from my personal collection. Reynolds (2010) stated that the use of high quality images allows designers to become “true digital storytellers” (p.95). I originally captured images of the community garden on a gloomy and rainy day, but after seeing the lack of color and quality, I went back a week later on a sunny day to retake them. This completely changed the look of my presentation and provided a higher quality appearance. I also used full-bleed images on almost all of my slides. Jung (2012) stated that filling an entire workspace with an image is best, and to assume that your audience could be sitting in the back

of a room and would need to be able to see it. According to Reynolds (2010), full-bleed images provide an ultimate impact (p. 100).

Design Decision #3 - Stickiness

I began with a personal story to make my message stick. Heath & Heath (2008) stated that a method to enable an audience to remember a message is to tell a compelling story (p. 18). I started by explaining how I was unable to fully immerse myself in gardening due to the constraints of living in an apartment. Reynolds (2010) said “story is about imbalance and opposing forces, or a problem that must be worked out” (p. 181). I began by telling a story of moving to a city from a rural town and how I became involved in urban gardening through patio and community gardens.

Design Decision #4 - Emotion

I used emotion to tell my story. According to Reynolds (2010), visuals reach the intended audience at the emotional level (p. 27). I began my presentation by telling a story about how my 92-year-old grandmother influenced my passion for gardening when I was young. Heath & Heath (2008) stated that in order for people to care about an idea, they must feel something (p. 17). My grandmother has lived to garden, and if she cannot garden due to the weather or health, she becomes very depressed. I have felt the same over the years due to living in apartments and townhouses. I conveyed the emotion I felt when I couldn't garden, and the emotion I felt when I began my patio gardens and later when I joined the Willamette Park Community Garden.

Design Decision #5 - Conciseness

I utilized the Pecha Kucha time and space constraints to produce a concise message. According to Heath & Heath (2008), simple messages are core and compact (p. 46). I narrated and edited the audio portions of my presentation to include only the essential information, and I used Audacity software to ensure I met the appropriate time limits. Reynolds (2010) stated that more is less, and exercising restraint in the content is beneficial to the message (p. 174). Editing my narrations for conciseness was a valuable learning experience in assessing content's importance.

Formative Evaluation Response

Peer Review Question #1

My first few slides open the story by explaining my background and influences in gardening, and they also set up the story of my problem with a lack of gardening space due to apartment living. Is this a good way to open my presentation?

Peer Reviewer A: This is a little hard to judge as the opening image is missing and you haven't recorded the narration yet. As a concept, it sounds like a good way to connect to your audience. This puts a face/name to the "problem" and gets your audience to emotionally invest in the outcome. Including the script for your narration would have helped me judge the effectiveness of this design decision better. If you add it later or record a draft with the narration, I would be happy to look it over and provide feedback.

Peer Reviewer B: That is a great place to start. It establishes the point from where you start and presents the challenge you faced.

Considerations: I opened my presentation with some background information on how and why I got involved in gardening early on in life, to help the audience understand my reasons for getting involved in urban agriculture later on.

Peer Review Question #2

I am unable to retake some of my images, such as those of my patio garden from several years ago. I have run into a problem with the image being too tall to create a full bleed image, and as a result I filled in the rest of the space with a color background and brief text. Is this an appropriate way to show this image?

Peer Reviewer A: I didn't find the colored backgrounds very noticeable. Google Slides does let you crop the images so they will fit in full bleed, depending on if cropping it would be appropriate for what you want the image to display. One thing – when I see an image framed like Slide #3 with text, it creates an expectation for me that other slides similarly framed would also have text on them. You may want to take advantage of that expectation or crop the images to to prevent frustration on the part of your audience.

Peer Reviewer B: If you use a background color consider keeping it the same throughout. Supporting text on the slides may not be necessary. Don't add text to just use up space.

Considerations: I found many photographs of my past urban garden projects to use instead of the ones that were not allowing me to use a “full bleed” on the slide.

Peer Review Question #3

Due to the season, the images of the Willamette Park Community Garden do not show any human activity of people working in the garden. The garden itself is only a year old and is still very underused. Is there a way I can convey more emotion in these images? (note: I am retaking photos on 3/16/17 as it is sunny and I believe it will show more emotion and color).

Peer Reviewer A: The emotion from your Pecha Kucha will come through the words you use in your narration and the tone in your voice. I also think that your images need you showing your involvement and investment in the garden. That will connect you to the story and the story to your emotions in a much stronger way. Having you in the images would also put a clear, human face on the story.

Peer Reviewer B: I would convey emotion through your narration. There is not much to add visually if the garden is new and the pictures were taken during a slow time of season. You could try new pictures with people if the opportunity exists.

Considerations: I retook the photographs of the Willamette Community Garden on a day that was sunny, which provided color and emotion to my Pecha Kucha project.

Peer Review Question #4

Do my images seem to flow in a logical order to tell my story?

Peer Reviewer A: Without having a clearer idea of what your story is and how you will tell it, that’s a little hard to judge. Independent of that, it comes across as a random collection of images. There does appear to be some story of arriving at the garden and exploring the facilities, but I’m not sure of what you’re doing per se. I expect your narration will create a more linear element to your story.

Peer Reviewer B: The pictures share your story and it will really come together when all the photos are present. I would suggest using a picture with you [sic] hands in the soil or similar to help bring a personal touch to your story.

Considerations: I changed my project topic a bit since the peer review and placed my slides in sequential order from the beginning of my foray into urban agriculture to currently. I included narration that created a linear element to the visual story I told.

Peer Review Question #5.

Should I have someone take a photo of me working in the community garden?

Peer Reviewer A: Yes! As I said in my answer to your third question, having you in some of the pictures would literally put you in the center of the story and provide a “face” for the audience to connect to emotionally. It’s your story and you should play a big part in it. You don’t have to be in all of them, but a few well-chosen shots would make the story about you and your experience.

Peer Reviewer B: Yes! That would be a fantastic idea to add additional personalization.

Considerations: Since I changed the topic slightly from the peer review draft, most of my slides were from several years ago. I recently joined the new community garden, so there was no chance to have any photos taken of me working in the garden yet.

Lessons Learned

This project was valuable to me as a learner for both positive and negative reasons. Initially I encountered several problems with the direction I wanted my topic to go, and ultimately changed my topic right before the peer reviews were due. I also learned that it was much more difficult to compact the most important information to twenty seconds per slide than I initially thought. In hindsight, I wish I had thought out my topic earlier in the process.

I had multiple issues involving software throughout this project and never found the ideal solution to completing this project in a smooth manner. Initially, I was going to use Windows Movie Maker, as my peers had been describing positive experiences with this software. However, I found that the software was discontinued in January 2017 and I was unable to download it. I used PowerPoint 2007 to create my presentation, and after spending a great amount of time creating and editing the narrations in Audacity and uploading them to each slide, I found that my version of PowerPoint would not allow me to save my project in a video format so that I could upload it to YouTube. I sent my file to my spouse who had PowerPoint 2010, which does allow projects to be saved as videos, but unfortunately it did not transfer over any of my narration files. I ended up having to capture a screenshot of my slide presentation playing on my screen using TechSmith’s SnagIt 13. SnagIt13 has very limited ways to crop a video, but I was able to make do with its limitations.

My advice to a future student completing a Pecha Kucha project is to research your topic thoroughly and ensure they either have the photos of their topic readily available, or the ability to

take high quality images about their topic. I would also advise the student to ensure he or she has the correct software readily available to use and the knowledge to use it successfully before starting their project. I was fortunate to have prior knowledge on how to cut and edit audio clips, but for some without prior experience, it would likely be a steep learning curve to try and learn new software in such a short amount of time. I would also suggest learning what their software's limitations are before beginning the project. I was unaware that PowerPoint 2007 files could not be saved in any video format and that would have saved me a very large period of wasted time if I had known beforehand.

If I were to look back ten years from now on this project, the most important things I learned would be to always research my software's limitations before beginning a major project in order to save myself time and frustration. I would also have learned that one of the most important things in a project is to be as concise as possible, and to limit as much unnecessary information as possible in order to convey a message as efficiently as possible.

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