

Michelle M. Murphy

Pecha Kucha Presentation

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Project link: Project link:

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/9mlr1qu2xfvq2g/Pecha%20Kucha\\_MMurphy.mp4?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/9mlr1qu2xfvq2g/Pecha%20Kucha_MMurphy.mp4?dl=0)

Also on YouTube (change resolution to 720HD for best quality in settings)

<https://youtu.be/OeTIESPesbw>

## Overview

I created a Pecha Kucha presentation highlighting the mental health benefits of hiking. I used the presentation as a motivational and instructive tool to encourage people to take up hiking. According to a report published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, “More than 50% of people now live in urban areas. By 2050 this proportion will be 70%. Urbanization is associated with increased levels of mental illness, but it’s not yet clear why” (Batman, 2015, para. 1). “Participants who went on a 90-min walk through a natural environment reported lower levels of rumination and showed reduced neural activity in an area of the brain linked to risk for mental illness compared with those who walked through an urban environment.” (Batman, 2015, para. 1). Researchers in the UK focused on group walks in nature. They found there were significant benefits to the emotional, mental and social well-being of the study’s participants. “Group walks in nature were associated with significantly lower depression, perceived stress, and negative affect, as well as enhanced positive affect and mental well-being...” (Marselle, 2015, para.3). There is even a branch of psychology called ecopsychology, which *Dictionary.com* defined as the study of “the relationship of humans to other species and ecosystems” (ecopsychology, n.d.). I have been a trail runner and hiker for years and have personally experienced the positive effects on my mood and general outlook on life after spending time on a trail. I shared my personal reflections, scholarly evidence from professionals in the field of psychology, and testimonials from other hikers in the Pecha Kucha presentation.

I created this presentation to inform the audience of the many benefits of hiking, with an emphasis on mental health. I encouraged people to take up hiking as a form of exercise and mental therapy. I used my own narrative to create a story and included testimonials gathered from a variety of hikers. I included information about how to get started hiking, what clothing

and equipment were helpful, where to find local hiking groups to join, and local trail information. My audience was anyone who was physically capable of walking outside on a nature trail, but could be expanded to include physically challenged individuals who had access to paved trails in a natural environment.

After viewing my presentation, a prospective hiker would know how to:

1. Locate local hiking groups and trails.
2. Understand the benefits of hiking in nature.
3. Know how to begin hiking either alone or in a group.

I used a DSLR camera and iPhone to capture the images for the project. I recorded narration and testimonials via an app on my iPhone. I utilized Adobe Lightroom, Photoshop, iMovie, and Quicktime to assemble the final Pecha Kucha. I have used these programs in the past knew they would be appropriate for this project. I uploaded the final presentation to YouTube.

## Design Decisions

I made five deliberate design decisions when creating the Pecha Kucha. I made many of my decisions to accommodate the format of the project. I also took the learning objectives into consideration. I made design decisions to communicate the overall message, which was to motivate people to take up hiking not just for the physical benefits, but also for the mental health rewards gained from being active in nature.

## Design Decision 1

I used the Japanese concept of *Kanso* to guide the overall project. It means simplicity or the elimination of clutter (Reynolds, 2014, p.231). I used *Kanso* to emphasize clarity in my photographs. I eliminated anything in the composition that wasn't essential to the image when composing the photographs. I also made my script for the narrative succinct and to the point. Additionally, I used the *Kanso* concept to help reveal the core of my message, which involved "stripping an idea down to its most critical essence" (Heath & Heath, 2008, p. 28). I elicited an "I want to do that" response from each photograph in the Pecha Kucha.

## Design Decision 2

I embraced the constraints of the Pecha Kucha format. Reynolds (2014) wrote "Constraints can be inspiring and liberating" (p. 12). I created a storyboard to guide me in the production of the piece. Previsualization is an important concept in photography and filmmaking, and involves seeing in one's head what the photograph would look like before capturing it. Ansel Adams pioneered this concept during his career (Dunn, 2013). I utilized this technique to effectively work within the constraints of the project format. Pre-planning was essential for the successful completion of the Pecha Kucha due to the 20 image limit.

## Design Decision 3

I resisted the urge to add unnecessary text and effects to the presentation. Reynolds (2014) stated that it was important to create visuals that communicate only what was necessary. Keeping visual clutter out of the piece was key to allowing the viewer to absorb the presentation's message (p.15). In their book, *Made to Stick*, authors Chip and Dan Heath (2008) wrote "Our messages have to be compact, because we can learn and remember only so much

information at once” (p. 51). My compact message was *Hiking will make you happy*. I presented each piece of the Pecha Kucha this message in a clear and uncluttered way.

#### Design Decision 4

A major challenge for me was to stay focused on the message and not the tools used to create the Pecha Kucha. I had worked extensively with photographs and digital imaging software in the past, but I had not worked much with voice-over creation, especially not with my own voice. Reynolds (2014) wrote “obsess about ideas- not tools” (p.16). I kept this in mind as I worked on the piece and made sure that all the technical elements worked together while I ensured that communicating the core message was the primary objective. In the past, tools have been a distraction and I forced myself to think about my overall message and how effectively it was being communicated. I found a meaningful definition of effective communication on the website for Clinical Research Education at The University of Pittsburgh (2016). Effective communication was defined, as “Communication is a transaction between two or more people, with all participants having an active role in the process. A speaker transmits a message and must ensure that the message is delivered clearly. A listener takes delivery of the message and must be an active listener. Effective communication takes place only when the listener clearly understands the message that the speaker intended to send.” I made sure my message was clear and the primary focus, not the tools used to create the presentation.

#### Design Decision 5

My fifth decision was to tell a story through the design of the presentation. I had certain pieces of information I needed to convey about the benefits of hiking and its positive effect on mental health. I created a personal narrative and shared my own experiences. I wove a story of a personal nature that many people were able to relate to. Reynolds wrote (2014) “Ditch your ego

and focus on the meaning of the solution” (p.15). He also wrote of the importance of moving into details after the general story was introduced (Reynolds, 2014). In *Made to Stick*, authors Dan and Chip Heath (2008) wrote “A good story is better than an abstract strategy statement” (p. 264). I used my personal story to illustrate hiking in nature has improved my mental health, physical health and overall sense of well-being. My primary goal was to motivate people to start hiking.

## Peer Review Questions

### Peer Review Question 1

What was your first impression of the presentation?

Reviewer 1:

*My first impression was a feeling of peace. The pictures of the outdoors instantly calmed my mind and relaxed me.*

Reviewer 2:

*My first impression was that your presentation was beautiful. The pictures you picked are lovely and really made me want to go on a hike. I liked the title growing out at you at the beginning then seeing the picture zoom into the mountains.*

Considerations:

I was relieved to find my message had been effectively communicated.

### Peer Review Question 2

Do you believe the presentation was successful? Why? If not, what would you change about it to better communicate the message?

Reviewer 1:

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*Yes I think it was successful. I like that you explained why the topic was important to you and how it helped you personally. I also like how you brought other people into the presentation to talk about the positive effects on their lives of hiking in nature. By doing so, you made it relevant to more than just your own experience. I think it's sometimes easier for people to relate when a presentation feels like it's more than just one person's perspective. There are also some people who would be influenced by hearing the expert opinion of the therapist; it brings additional credibility to your story.*

Reviewer 2:

*I thought it was successful. As I mentioned above the initial visual impact is very good. I liked the variety of images. You made the outdoors look very appealing. I felt that the message was clearly communicated. You had a great variety of sources. I thought that even if a part did not appeal to one segment of the audience, they would find another part that did.*

Considerations:

I had made an effort to be very thorough in considering multiple viewpoints to communicate the message of the presentation. I'm happy to find this was successful in the eyes of my reviewers.

### Peer Review Question 3

Is anything missing? Conversely, is anything there that shouldn't be?

Reviewer 1:

*I don't think there is anything missing. The hiking with dogs section won't be relevant to people who don't have or like dogs, but I feel you balanced it well with the information about hiking groups. You also covered gear, resources and how to get started. Had you not done that, I would have suggested it.*

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*I'm on the fence as to whether soft background music would add or detract. The presentation is very mellow and relaxing to watch but soft music might help the flow. I would try it if you have time. And if you don't like it or it changes the dynamics for you, take it out.*

Reviewer 2:

*I didn't think anything was missing. I thought going over the gear, while relevant, did not add much to the presentation. The picture of just hiking gear by itself wasn't interesting to me. I think that circling gear on a picture of a person hiking would be more visually interesting.*

Considerations:

I debated about adding music. It can make or break a presentation. I had so much information to present I was afraid it would detract as well as distract from the overall presentation.

I stand behind the photo of gear. I felt that in one image I was able to clearly show examples of equipment a hiker may want to consider if they intend to advance in the sport.

#### Peer Review Question 4

What elements in this presentation are not as effective as they could be?

Reviewer 1:

*I had a slight issue with dizziness when watching the presentation. It started with the picture of Jim. I've watched it a few times and I can't tell if the issue is the slides with people or just that most slides move so I don't get a chance to recover. You might want to consider either slowing down the movement on any slides that have people or alternating slides that have movement with slides that don't.*

Reviewer 2:

*I already mentioned the gear picture. The only other piece I thought could be more effective was the slide at 1:40. At the start the man's head was about halfway cut off. I found this very*



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*distracting, and as the top of him was slowly revealed I found myself concentrating on that and not the narration. I suspect this says more about me than your presentation, but I wanted to mention it.*

Considerations:

I agree with both reviewers. I knew the same thing bothered me but I couldn't put my finger on it. I removed the effect, which zooms in on the image and left it as a static image. I also had done that for different reasons with the first portrait of the psychologist. I think this change improved the presentation.

### Peer Review Question 5

One of my design decisions was to create a motivating story. Did you feel motivated to take up hiking by the Pech Kucha presentation?

Reviewer 1:

*I do feel motivated to make a change. Honestly I've been having a feeling of constant high stress and anxiety that I can't seem to tackle no matter what I do. I work long hours frequently and I rarely have time to decompress so I know that's part of it. But walking used to help, and it's not bringing me the relief it used to.*

*Your presentation made me realize I've been feeling this way since I moved to the San Francisco Bay area. I grew up in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and now I'm surrounded by concrete, traffic and hordes of people every day. When I walk, it's usually in a neighborhood, office park or parking lot. The part of your presentation that talked about urban settings being linked to an increase in mental illness struck a nerve. I'm stuck in this area for now because of work, but it may help me considerably to drive a bit and find some peaceful spaces when I do have time to walk.*

Reviewer 2:

*I did. What really impressed me about your story was how personal it was. I felt that I knew someone hiking had helped, and that I too could try it. I liked both the pictures and the sense that something so lovely could also benefit a person.*

Considerations:

These responses were very gratifying to me. At first I was hesitant to *put myself out there* in terms of sharing my personal story. In the end I think that's what helped viewers connect to the story.

## Lessons Learned

I learned a lot about tenacity working on this project. Creating the project was fairly easy for me, the greatest challenge came in organizing myself and prioritizing the steps to create the presentation. I finally came to the conclusion that I had to assemble the images first, and then write a script for each image that I could record. I found some gaps, which required me to go out and create additional photography to make the story line work. Creating the voice-overs was where the tenacity came into play. I found that I could speak roughly 62 words in 20 seconds. Knowing that, I wrote a paragraph for each slide of that length and practiced recording the narratives until they were exactly 20 seconds. I learned more about working with audio and trimming by working on this project.

I was hesitant to bring my personal life into the project, but I found that more people connected with it (and me) as a result. I'm very happy with the final result and plan to include it, as well as the infographic in my final portfolio.

The papers are still a source of frustration for me. I don't quite get the point and find it odd to write in past tense about something I've not even done yet. I find I spend more time on the paper and am scrambling to get the project done, having to take time off work in order to complete everything on time.

I feel prepared to take on the video project and am looking forward to its creation. I've rented a video DSLR for the project and am looking forward to expanding my creative skillsets.

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## Appendix

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