



CS2101  
Effective Communication  
for computing professionals

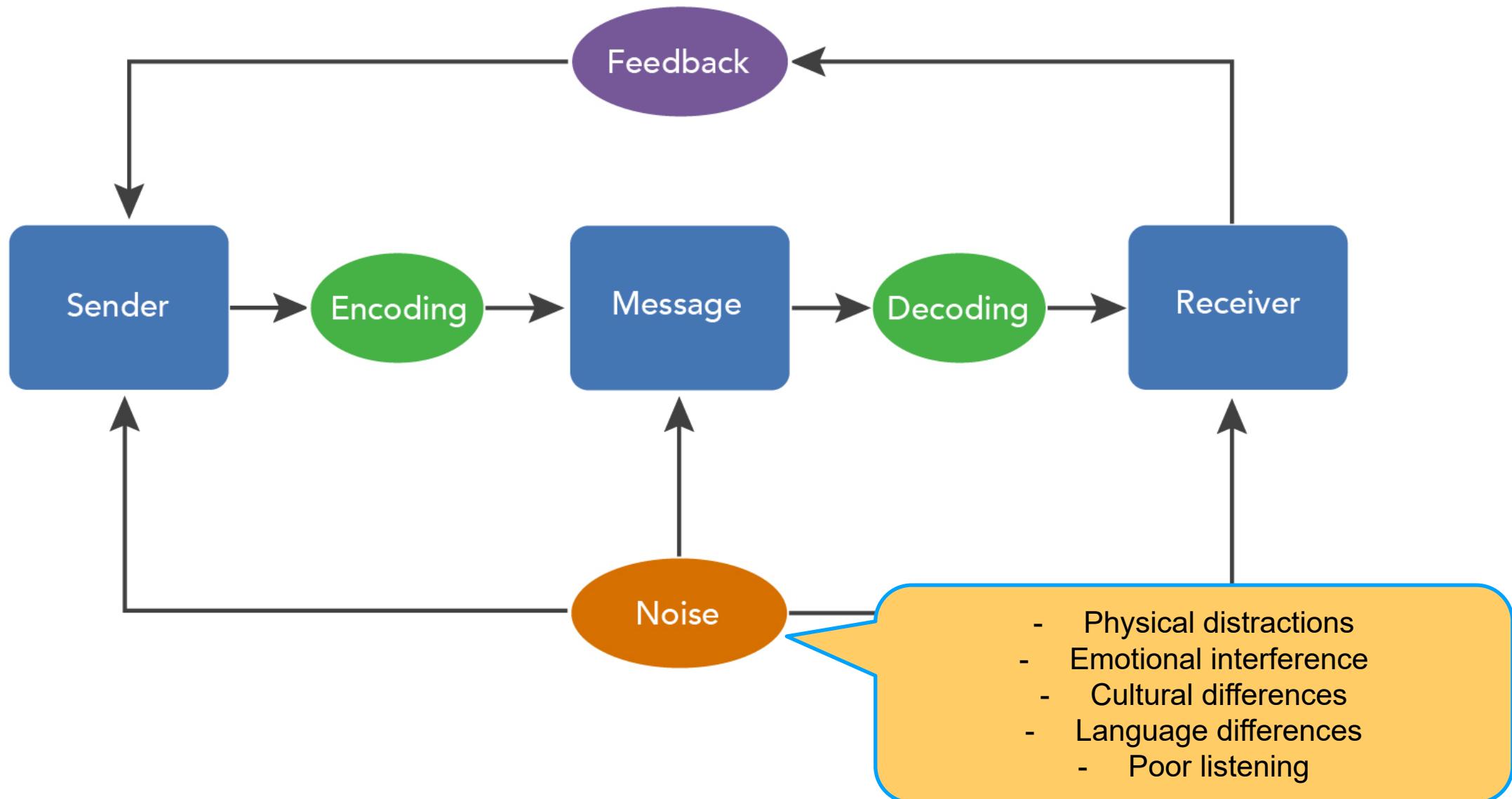
Q&A:  
**Thinking on your feet**



## Recap

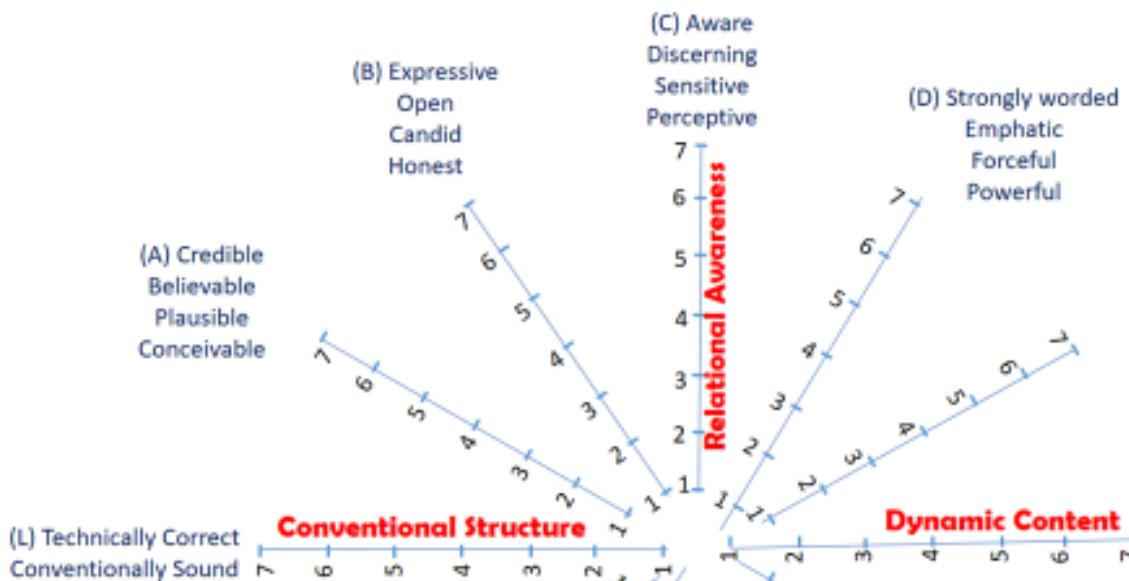
What did you learn in  
the first session?

# The Communication Process

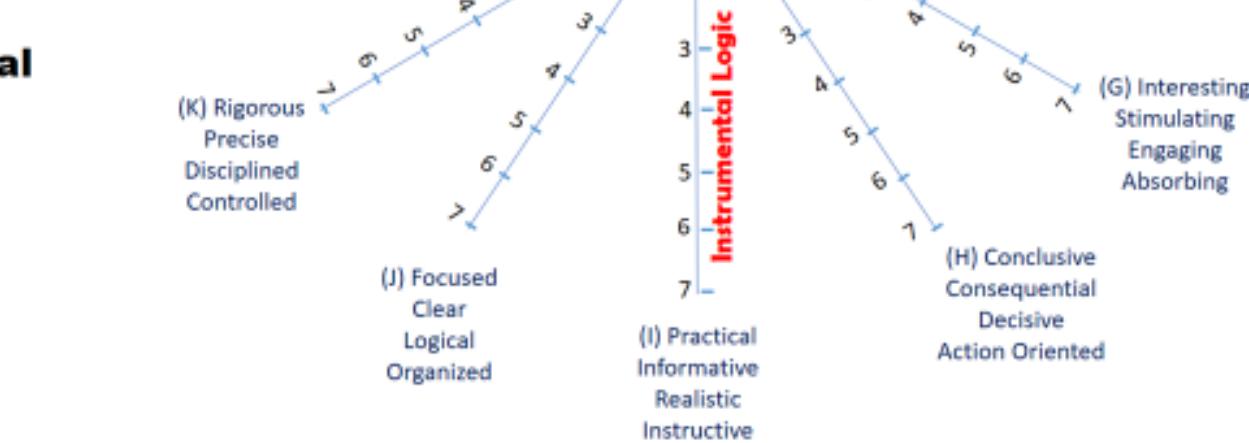


# Competing Values Framework (CVF)

## **Relational Aspect**



## **Informational Aspect**



## **Transformational Aspect**

(E) Insightful  
Expansive  
Mind Stretching  
Visionary

(F) Innovative  
Creative  
Original  
Fresh

## **Promotional Aspect**

(G) Interesting  
Stimulating  
Engaging  
Absorbing

(H) Conclusive  
Consequential  
Decisive  
Action Oriented

Quinn, R., Hildebrandt, H., Rogers, P., & Thompson, M. (1991]. A Competing Values Framework for Analyzing Presentational Communication in Management Contexts. *The Journal of Business Communication*, 28(3), 213 – 231.

Discuss:

Using the CVF framework, rate each communication task.



PRINTER MANUAL



COMMUNICATING  
WITH THE PRESS AFTER  
AN INDUSTRIAL  
ACCIDENT



NEGOTIATING WITH  
SUPPLIERS/VENDORS  
FOR A NEW CONTRACT



PITCHING A NEW  
PROJECT IDEA TO  
HIGHER MANAGEMENT  
TO SECURE SUPPORT

## Needs Analysis

Context

Audience

Purpose

Content

Organisation

Central Message

- Information
- Reasons
- evidence

Frame our thoughts

- Logical
- Coherent

Delivery

Verbal cues

Non-verbal cues

Visuals

# In this session, you would:

- ❖ Discuss the types and levels of questions.
- ❖ Identify the central issue of a question
- ❖ Learn strategies for the Q&A session
- ❖ Consider how you should give feedback or ask questions

# Activity 1a

- ❖ You will be sharing an insightful/ interesting industry trend with a peer.
- ❖ Consider the Context, Audience and Purpose. Then, consider what to say and how to say it.

## Needs Analysis

Context

Audience

Purpose

Content

Organisation

Central Message

- Information
- Reasons
- evidence

Frame our thoughts

- Logical
- Coherent

Delivery

Verbal cues

Non-verbal cues

Visuals

# Activity 1b

- ❖ Speaker: Share an insightful/interesting industry trend that you have found.
- ❖ Receiver: Please give some feedback by commenting on what has been shared or by asking a question.
- ❖ Swop over

# Think about it (1/2)

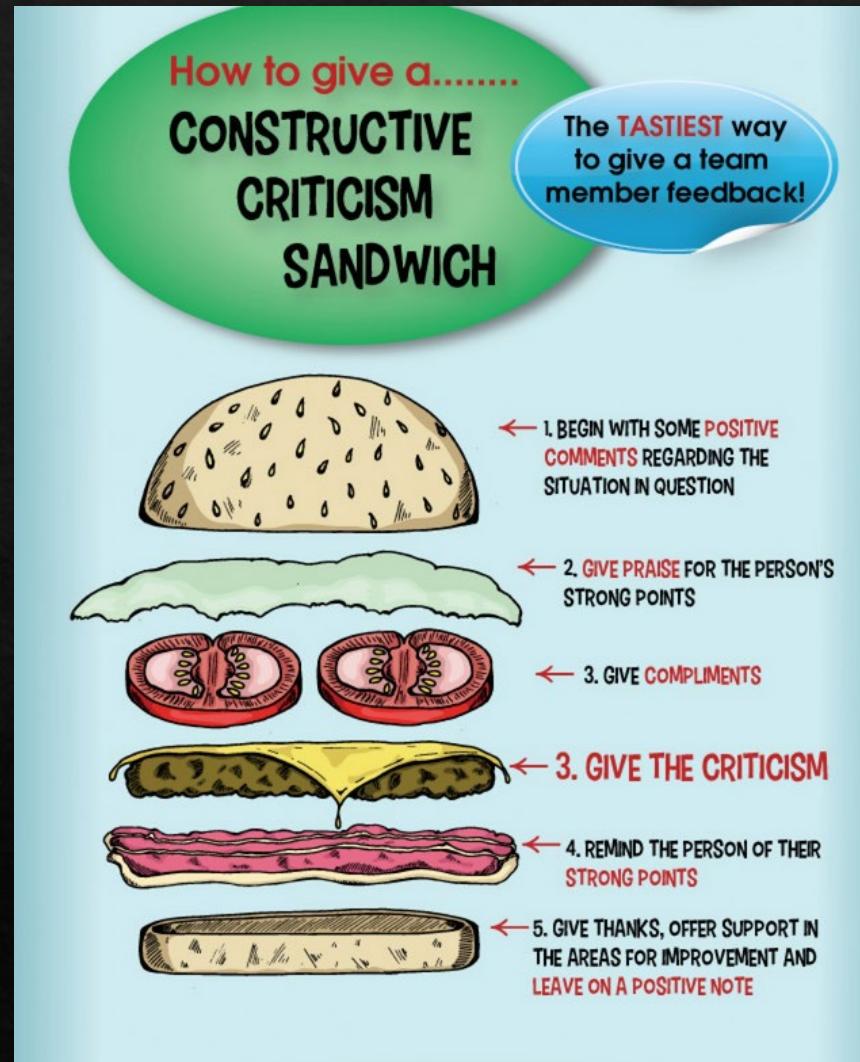
- ❖ How did your peers give feedback?

# 5

## Criteria for effective feedback

1. Was the feedback provider **credible** and trusted?
2. Was the feedback **conveyed with good intentions**?
3. Was the feedback **given in an interactive manner**, instead of a prescriptive manner?
  - ◆ (e.g., Would you consider... vs You should...)
4. Was the feedback **specific, clear and evidence-based**?
5. Was the feedback **helpful**?

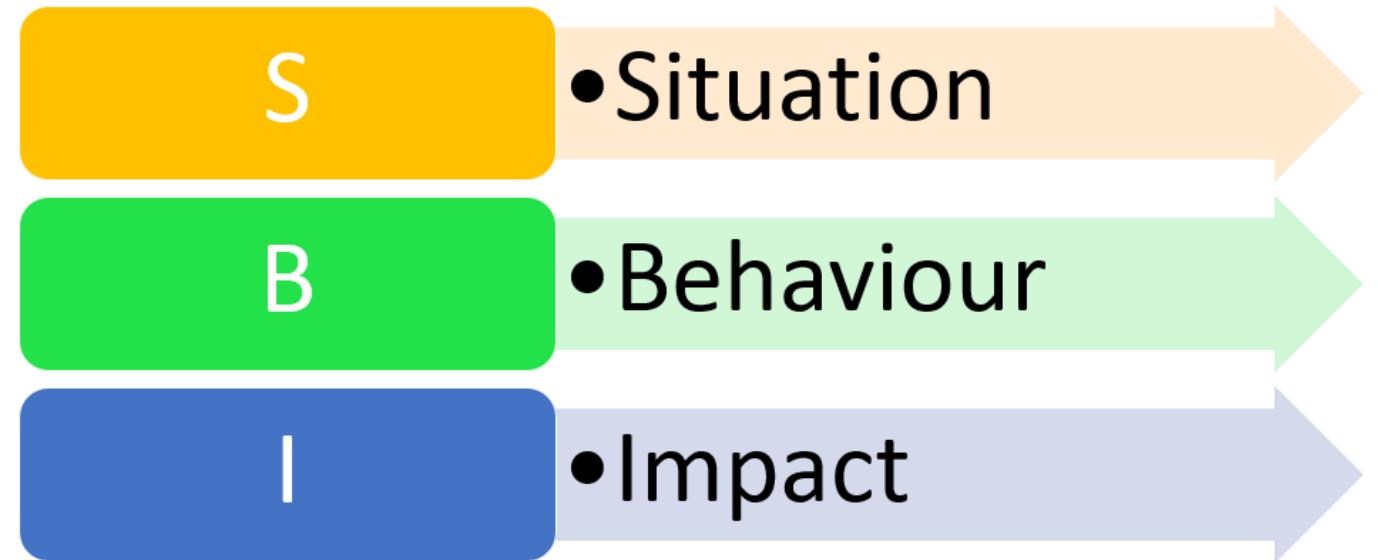
# How do you give feedback tactfully?



# Softeners

- ❖ One thing that could make this even better is...
- ❖ I was thinking that I would really like it if...
- ❖ I was wondering if you might consider...
- ❖ Would you consider...

How do you give feedback to your peers based on their performance?



# The SBI method

## ❖ Situation

- ❖ During your segment...

## ❖ Behaviour

- ❖ I saw that you made it a point to stand close to the audience, instead of near the white board.

## ❖ Impact

- ❖ I thought this helped you come across as more approachable and friendly.

- Situation

- In the introduction...

- Behaviour

- you approached several individuals to ask them a question. (state observation, without judgment)

- Impact

- I thought this was an interesting way to engage the audience. Maybe it's just me, but I was somewhat uncomfortable when you approached me and stood very close to me.

- Suggestion

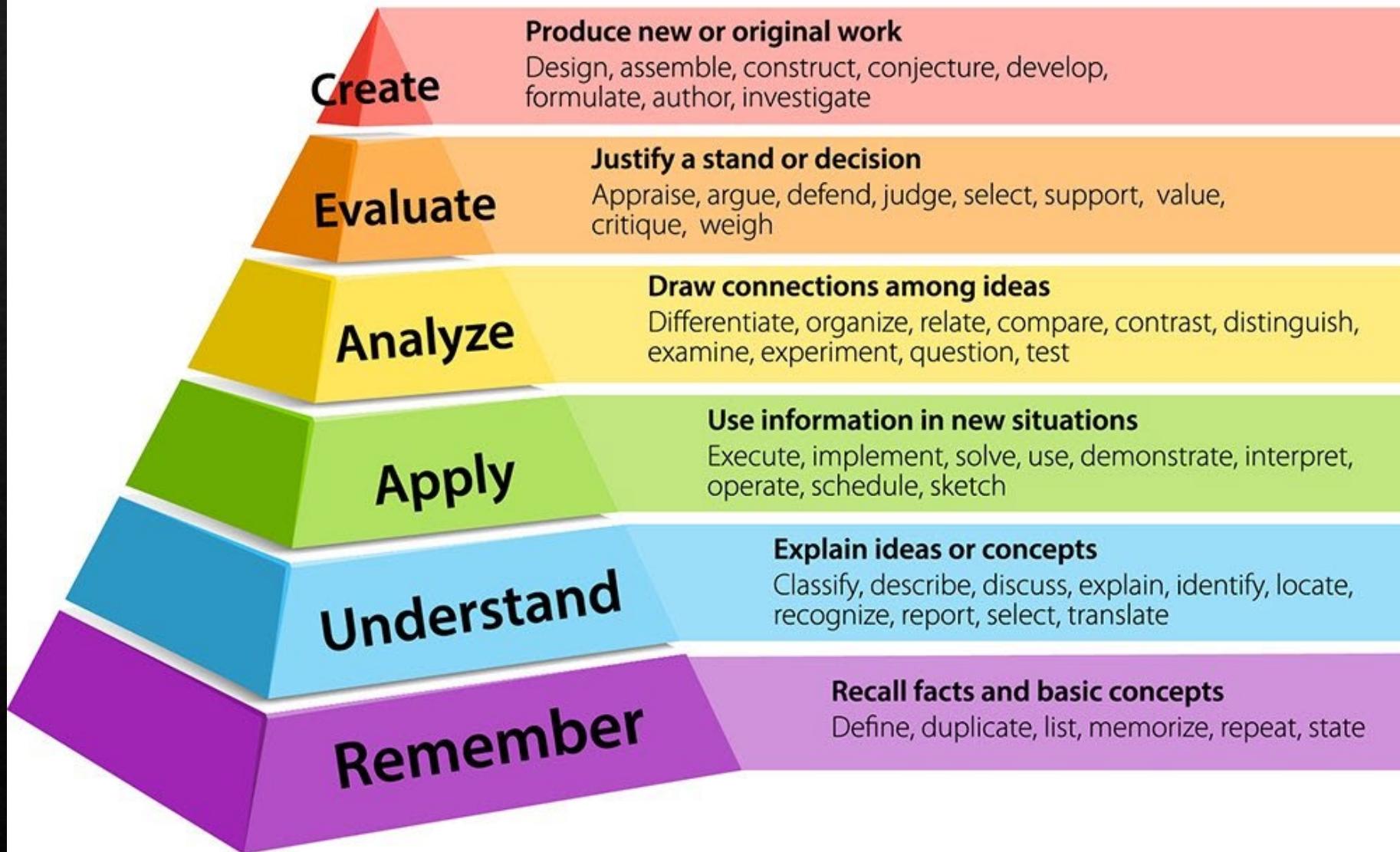
- Perhaps it may have been less scary if there was maybe an arm's length distance...

## Think about it (2/2)

During your discussion with your peers about an industry trend...

- ❖ What type of questions did your peers ask?

# Bloom's Taxonomy



# Types of questions

Questions that seek clarification	Questions about viewpoints and perspectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do you mean by...?</li><li>• Is this your main point?</li><li>• Could you put it another way?</li><li>• Why did you say that...?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does this benefit the [stakeholder]?</li><li>• Would the [stakeholder] think that...?</li><li>• Who benefits from this? What's in it for them?</li><li>• Why is it better than...?</li></ul>
Questions that probe assumptions	Questions that probe implications and consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are you assuming that...?</li><li>• What are you assumptions about...?</li><li>• Is this always the case?</li><li>• Does your reasoning depend on...?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When you say... are you implying?</li><li>• But, if that happened, what else would happen as a result? Why?</li><li>• What are the implications of that?</li><li>• So... how does this...?</li></ul>
Questions that probe reasons and evidence	Questions about the question/problem
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How would we know/do we find out/determine if it is...?</li><li>• Why do you think that is...?</li><li>• What evidence are you basing that on?</li><li>• Do you have any evidence for...?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why is this issue/problem important?</li><li>• How can we find out?</li><li>• Are there other questions we need to ask? Other (more pertinent) problems we need to address?</li><li>• Can we break the question down a bit?</li></ul>

# *Dialogue for deeper understanding*

## **1. Ask questions**

- ◊ Why did you include this? What do you mean by ...? What is the connection between ... and ... ?

## **2. Observe what the other person might have missed**

## **3. Elaborate with the impact**

- ◊ The evidence supports ... but not ... part of your assertion. This can make your assertion appear less credible.
- ◊ The intro is appropriate for the audience but doesn't seem aligned with the purpose. What is your needs analysis?

## **4. Suggest after dialoguing**

## Activity 2 (Swop partners)

- ❖ Speaker: Share an insightful/interesting industry trend that you have found.
- ❖ Receiver: Please give some feedback by commenting on what has been shared or by asking a question.

# Let's discuss

- ❖ In what situations does one take part in a Q&A?

Let's discuss:

What do you think is important during a formal  
Question & Answer session?

# What do questioners seek?

“When I ask questions, I don’t really have to have the full answer because I can’t know the subject as well as the presenter. What I look for is whether the presenter has thought about the question, been candid, thorough, and direct and how the presenter handles himself or herself under stress; if that person has the passion of ‘fire in the belly’ and can stand tall in the line of fire.”

David Bellet

Chairman of Crown Advisors International (in early 2000's)

One of Wall Street's most successful investment firms



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# What should presenters aim for?

“... to establish a positive perception with your audiences by giving them the confidence that you can manage adversity, stay the course, and stay in control.”

Jerry Weissman

Author of “*In the line of fire: How to handle tough questions ... when it counts*”



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## Activity 3:

How would you respond to the following difficult comments?

### Comment 1

“There are dozens of little start-ups doing exactly what you’re doing! Then there are all those big guys, with their entrenched market share. It’s a jungle out there, and you’re only just getting off the ground! What on earth makes you think you can survive?”

### Comment 2

“Wait a minute! You tell me that your product is going to save us money, and then you quote a price that’s twice as much as your competitor asks! That’s outrageous! Where do you get off charging so much?”

### Comment 3

“You look like a kid! I doubt that you’ve been in the business very long. I’ve been in the industry since before you were born, and now you come in here and tell me how I should run my business. Where do you get off telling me what to do?”

### Comment 4

“Your new solution appears to be very effective, but you’ve only just released it. You don’t know if it has any kinks (flaws). I’d like to see it field-tested before I commit. It’s not for us at this time.”

Let's look at some possible strategies when we make a response.

# Which answer would you choose?

Paraphrase Strategy 1:  
Deflect the challenge & control the meaning

Q. “There are dozens of little start-up doing exactly what you’re doing! Then there are all those big guys, with their entrenched market share. It’s a jungle out there, and you’re only just getting off the ground! What on earth makes you think you can survive?”

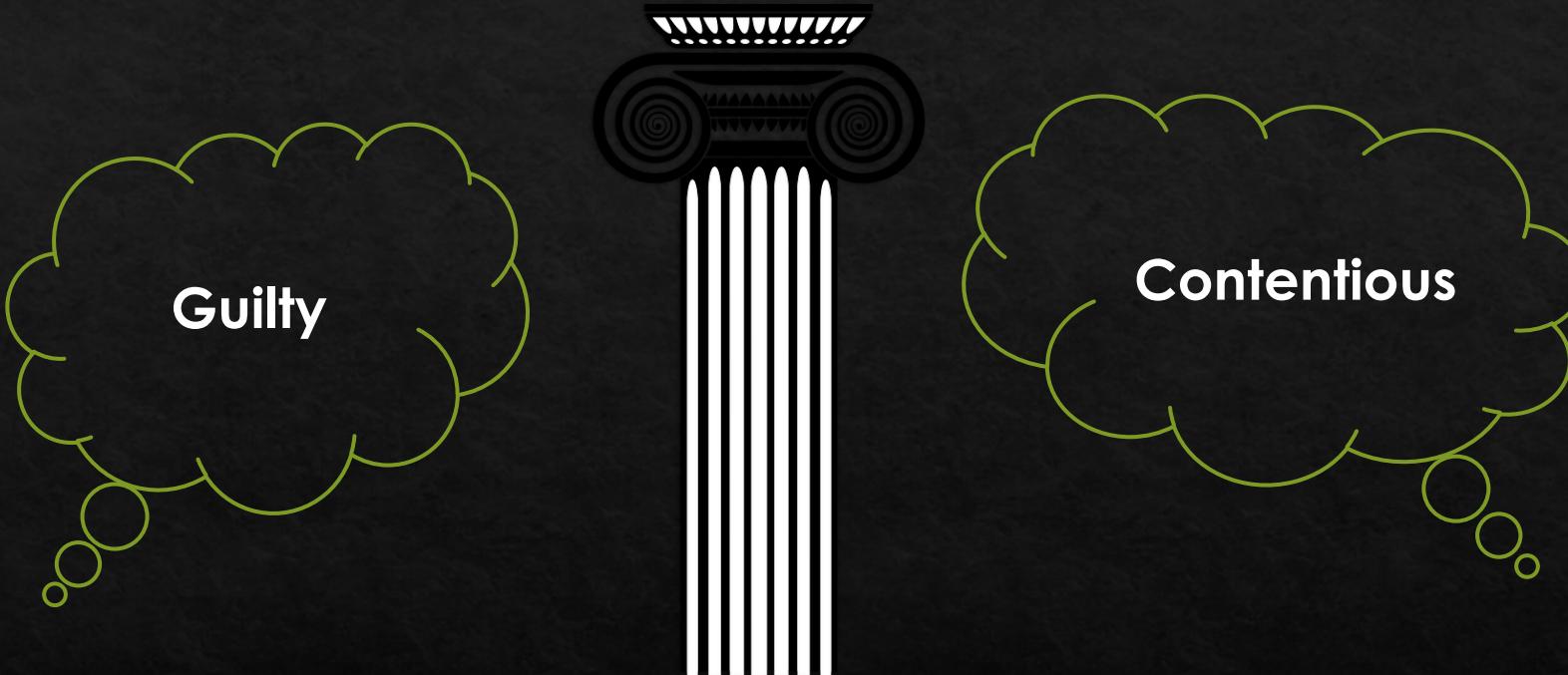
- A. What on earth makes me think we can survive?
- B. Why will we succeed in this jungle?
- C. What is our competitive strategy?
- D. How do we compete?

Validates  
doubt = Guilty

Contentious

Identify central issue  
= ability to  
compete

# Paraphrase Positioning



Validate/Repeat

Reverse/Invalidate

# Which answer would you choose?

Q. "Wait a minute! You tell me that your product is going to save us money, and then you quote a price that's twice as much as your competitor asks! That's outrageous! Where do you get off<sup>1</sup> much?"

Paraphrase  
Strategy 2:  
Avoid repeating  
charged words;  
neutralize the  
hostility

A. Are you saying that our prices are too high?

Validates doubt

B. I think the prices we charge are commensurate with the quality products that we provide ...

Invalidates

C. What is our pricing rationale?

Identify central issue

D. How did we arrive at the price?

# What do you think about the answer?

Paraphrase Strategy 3:  
Use as few words as  
possible in your paraphrase

Q. “You look like a kid! I doubt that you’ve been in the business very long. I’ve been in the industry since before you were born, and now you come in here and tell me how I should run my business. Where do you get off telling me what to do?”

- A. What are my capabilities to offer you solutions?
- B. Am I capable of offering you solutions?

# What do you do when you receive a question that is not a question?

Strategy:  
Be Concise:  
Convert charged statements into questions

“Your new solution appears to be very effective, but you’ve only just released it. You don’t know if it has any kinks. I’d like to see it field-tested before I commit. It’s not for us at this time.”

You can , turn the statement into a question:

“Why adopt our new product now?”

# Structure - PEEL



**P**oint – make your point



**E**vidence – present your evidence or example



**E**xplanation – furnish the explanation



**L**ink – link the answer back to the key point

# Summary of Strategies for Difficult comments

- Identify the central issue
- Paraphrase effectively
  - Take control of the meaning
  - Avoid repeating charged words: Neutralise hostility
  - Be Concise: Use as few words as possible
- Convert charged statements into questions
- Apply the PEEL structure

But... what do you do if there are no questions or comments?

# Tips

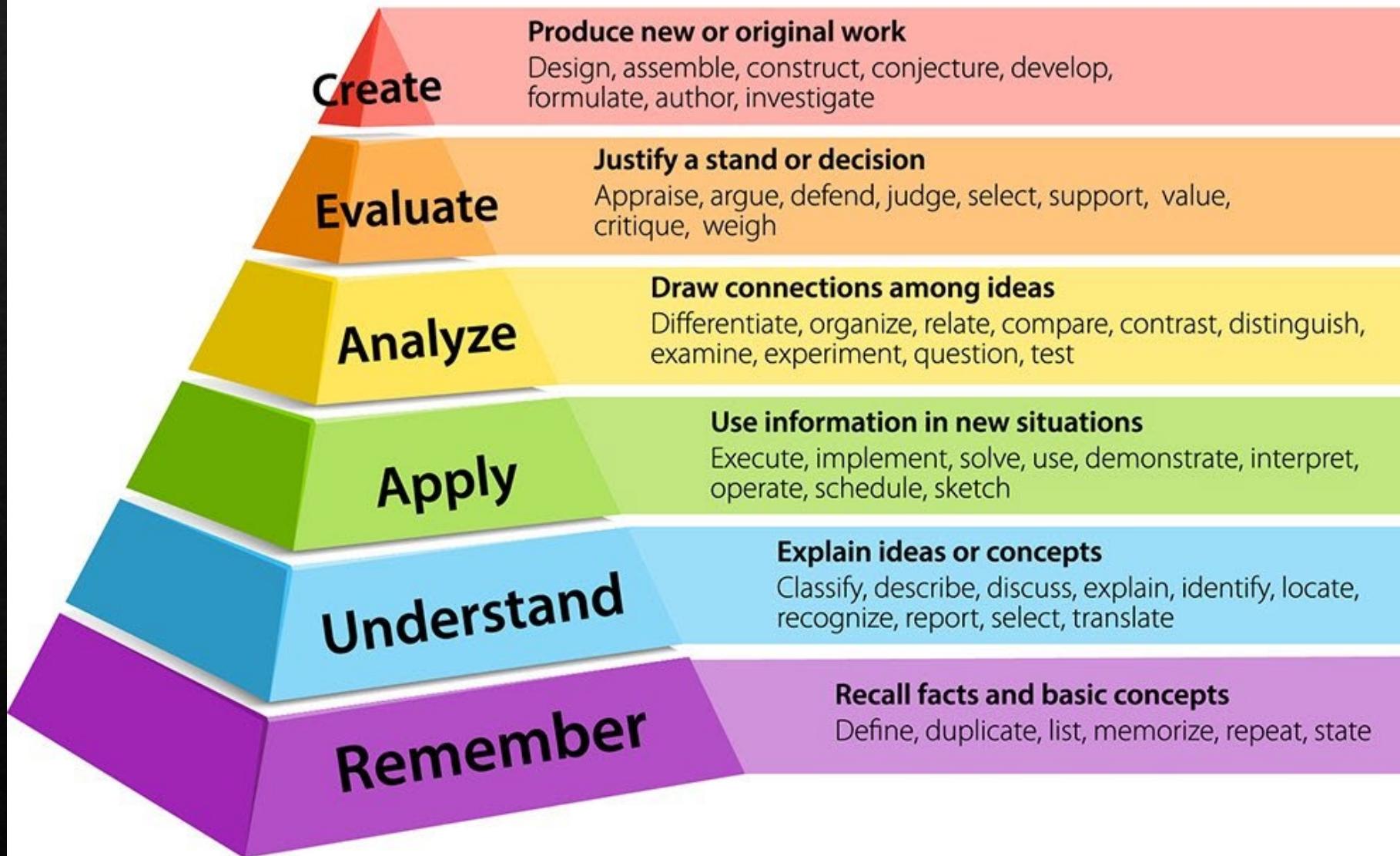
1. YOU define the topics for Q&A:
  - ❖ *Have you any questions on the four principles I've outlined?*
2. Decline to answer questions that fall outside the perimeters of your talk:
  - ❖ *I'm afraid that really falls outside today's presentation. Let's discuss more after this session.*
3. Don't be afraid to admit you do not have some info; offer what you do have

Q: What kind of impact is your enhancement expected to have on the profit margin?  
A: I don't have the answer to that right now; the marketing team will have to get back to you with the math. **But what I do know right now is** that similar apps that offer this feature are selling for twice the price of our app. **What this means is** people are willing to pay for this feature.
4. Listen to the full question before answering.

## Let's try! (Final Activity)

- ❖ We are going to form new pairs/groups.
- ❖ Please take turns to share more about the industry trend that you have found and ask higher level or more challenging questions.
- ❖ Take this opportunity to practice what you have learnt.

# Bloom's Taxonomy



# Types of questions

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# Summary of Strategies for Q&A

- Identify the central issue
- Paraphrase effectively
  - Take control of the meaning
  - Avoid repeating charged words: Neutralise hostility
  - Use as few words as possible
- Convert charged statements into questions
- Apply the PEEL structure

In the next session, we will focus on...

- ◆ a written mode of communication -  
Technical Portfolios

In the meanwhile....  
do start thinking about your Project Teams

# CS2103T/CS2113T Project Team Formation

Form ONLY 4 teams in total.

4-5 pax per team.

No 3-pax teams, if possible.

Conditions:

1. Form INTERNATIONAL teams (mixed nationalities).
2. If there are not enough international students, multi-ethnic teams are acceptable.

## Team composition

- We allow some freedom in choosing team members, subject to these constraints:
  - **All team members should be in the same tutorial.** Delay forming teams until your place in a tutorial is confirmed. We do not allow changing tutorials to team up with your preferred team mates.
  - **Teams of single nationality are not allowed** unless the only language common among all team members is English. e.g. an all-Singaporean team that include both Chinese and Malay students. Rationale: to train you to work in multicultural teams, to ensure that English is used for all project communication
  - **No more than one exchange students per team** Rationale: to increase interaction between exchange students and NUS students.
  - **Same gender teams are discouraged but allowed.** Rationale: to train you for mixed-gender work environments.
- **We may modify teams** when circumstances call for it. There is no avenue for you to object. Staying with your preferred team is not guaranteed.

<https://nus-cs2113-ay2122s1.github.io/website/admin/tp-teams.html>

<https://nus-cs2103-ay2122s1.github.io/website/admin/tp-teams.html>