

1st Namibian JEDI Astronomy & Space Science Workshop Report

Workshop Report

30th June 2014 – 06th July 2014

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Background:

I arrived at the conference centre (Greiters conference centre) June 30th 2014, 14:40p.m filled with so much excitement, curiosity & anticipation as to what I'll have to uncover, learn and apply from the coming week's activities.

Being a student in my final year of Software Engineering, I had an eagerness to learn and activate a passion (Physics-science in general) which has driven me and been a source of inspiration for all my software systems. I did not know what to expect but I felt the fear and walked into the conference room anyway.

What I learnt:

Though not having the sharpest insight of more than half the topics addressed, I was pleased to find a field I'm fairly good at-Python programming. Even though I had the programming knowledge I needed to understand the physics/science behind what exactly it was that I was doing-Problem Solving Skills.

Problem Solving Skills was one of the first concepts that grasped my attention. Understanding the physics behind almost everything helped a lot with modelling/ implementing a problem. i saw it as a SDLC(Software Development Life Cycle), Analysing, Designing, Development & Testing

Research methodology was another one I had learnt. One of the most important concepts in any field I'd say. I most definitely can say I have a clearer way of conducting my research as compared to that in the past. For every curiosity it is up to you to first understand the problem, formulate the answer then conduct research "It could be that we are wrong 99% of the time, but the more we are willing to correct our mistake after every failed attempt the 100th is what makes it all worthwhile"-**Dr.Mark G Jackson**. Point is to never give up. Determination & passion are some of the driving factors.

Communication and Presentation skills- This more or less encapsulated all concepts learnt throughout the week. Being able to stand in front of a crowd everyday of the week presenting what we have spent hours researching and applying been all worthwhile. Being a born speaker, I can say I have mastered my presentation skills. Communication also played a major amongst fellow group members, being able to share views and establish common grounds, finding solutions and again solving problems.

Self esteem and confidence- over the past week I've been in a cloud, over analysing my incapability's and downfalls, focusing on mostly what holds me back in life and not living up to my dreams in the present. Having a joint discussion with participants and tutors alike has helped me reconnect with my inner self, radiate that and live by it every single day. The many brain teasers (compliments of Prof Bruce Bassett) each day have helped greatly in solving (my) problems and being patient with how things play out. The support I have received in realising my strengths is so great I thank each of the tutors (Dr Nadeem Oozeer, Mr Eli Kasai, and Kai Staats) for the hope and capabilities the saw in me, it has helped me greatly.

Conclusion

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Looking back over the week that was, the workshop came at just the right time. Not only was it entirely on Physics and space sciences, but on growing as a person, being a leader, patience, communication skills, presentation skills, analytical skills, team building, all leading to the inspiration that drives us in being better scientists. I've walked away with a better "me" who is more inspired and eager to learn. It was a life changing experience and hopes in attending many more alike to come, to share in my area of expertise and help so many alike, as much it has helped me. The whole experience has helped me in community outreach too, in sharing what I know and have learnt, with many other future scientist out there who are equally confused and trying to find meaning in life as a whole. To Dr Michael Backes, Dr Laura Richter, Mr Ragin Ramphul and Mr, Isack Davids, I say thank you, for their continuous support, patience throughout the week, tons of gratitude.

The JEDI has helped in my continuous run to reach for my star, my drive (physics), though only a few months away, it is still a dream I intend on chasing. This was the perfect reminder, at just the perfect time. I'd recommend this initiative to so many students across the African continent if not worldwide.