ALL ABOUT ME

I wasn't always the quiet and aloof person most people see me as. I was born to a very conservative but supportive family. I may not have realized it when I was young, but my parents were very gentle, understanding, and honestly, they made me kind of spoiled. I grew up in an environment where most of my needs were met before I even had to ask. And sometimes, they gave me more than I deserved, which I'm truly grateful for. However, this conservativeness also limited what I was able to do. Although they loosened their restrictions compared to my younger years, I'm still not completely free to do what I want. And maybe that's expected, since we live under the same roof. I can't stay out too late, and I have to constantly update them on where I am or who I'm with. It can be frustrating, especially as I get older and try to make more of my own choices.

Looking back, I realize that these restrictions in my childhood actually made me more curious and rebellious later on. In elementary and high school, I made a lot of questionable and dumb decisions, mostly out of curiosity and a desire to push past the limits I grew up with. I wasn't trying to be "bad," but I wanted to know what I was missing. I was also heavily influenced by the media I consumed. I watched a lot of romance movies and anime growing up, and those stories really affected the way I saw myself and what I thought I needed from others. Because of those movies, I started craving affection, attention, and validation. Not just from my family, but from the people around me. I had so many crushes in Grades 5 and 6, and I honestly became such an attention seeker. I'd try to stand out, make jokes, and act a certain way just to be noticed. At the same time, I was obsessed with characters like Sasuke from Naruto Shippuden. He was cool, mysterious, and people were drawn to him. I tried to act like that too. I was quiet, serious, and a bit emotionally distant. But in my case, it just made me come off as arrogant or even mean. I thought I was being cool and "deep," but a lot of the people I initially clicked with in elementary school ended up pulling away from me. Looking back, I think I came across more like a bully or someone with a bad attitude, even if that wasn't my intention.

These experiences made me realize something important. Sometimes, the image we try to project to others isn't always true to who we are. And worse, it can push others away. I was trying to escape the version of myself that felt restricted or emotionally dependent on others, but in the process, I built a persona that isolated me. I think that's part of the reason why I became the quiet person I am today. After seeing how my old behavior affected my friendships, I started holding back more. I became more careful with what I said and how I acted. I didn't want to come off the wrong way again. Over time, this caution turned into a habit, and eventually, part of who I am. Some people might see me as distant or hard to read, but the truth is, I've just been shaped by past versions of myself that learned (sometimes the hard way) that loudness doesn't always bring connection.

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Over time, I realized that I'm more of an introvert. Even though I like spending time with friends, I have a small social battery, and I get drained easily. I need time alone to recharge. And sometimes, I get worried that my quietness might be misunderstood. Some of my friends might think I'm ignoring them or that I don't want to hang out, but that's not true. I value my friendships very deeply. I just find peace and comfort in being alone sometimes.

One of the things that has really shaped how I think and cope is my love for video games. Since I was a kid, gaming has been a way for me to explore different worlds, solve challenges, and even connect with others. It was more than just entertainment for me. It was a space where I could be creative, make decisions, and be in control. In my younger years, I was especially drawn to Minecraft, where I could build and customize everything. This love for games eventually made me become interested in programming. I wanted to understand how these systems worked, and that curiosity led me to discover my passion for software engineering. I enjoyed my programming classes in high school, and I found satisfaction in solving problems through code. I think I'm someone who finds comfort in structure and creativity, and maybe that's why I got into games and coding. They give me room to express myself with a clear set of rules to guide me. It feels safe and exciting at the same time. But life isn't always like that, so I try to step bit by bit out of my comfort zone once in a while.

One of the people whose helped me with that is my girlfriend. Being with her has taught me a lot about communication and vulnerability. I'm not always the best at expressing myself, but with her, I'm learning how to open up more, to say what I feel even when it's difficult, and most importantly, to listen. And I think a big part of why I'm capable of loving her the way I do is because of the way I was raised. My parents were always gentle, understanding, and affectionate, and I've carried that with me. The patience and care they showed me growing up shaped the way I express love now. I've also come to realize that I am expressive, but only to people I truly care about and feel safe with. That's why I can be so vulnerable with my girlfriend. But when it comes to friends or newer people in my life, I tend to hold back. I think it's because part of me is still scared of being misunderstood again. I'm scared of repeating what happened in elementary school when I acted in ways I thought were cool but ended up pushing people away. So nowadays, I'm a bit reserved. Not because I don't want to connect, but I'm just trying to protect the parts of me I've worked hard to understand.

ALL ABOUT ME
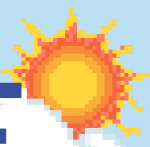
Looking back at my childhood and teenage years, I realize that a lot of who I became was shaped by the people around me. In elementary and high school, I really wanted to fit in with the "cool kids." At that time, being mayabang and siga felt like the only way to be noticed and accepted. Those who were loud, assertive, and a bit rebellious were often the ones that everyone looked up to. I tried to imitate that, thinking that acting like them would make me belong.

In a way, my behavior wasn't just about my personality, but it was a response to my environment. School wasn't just a place for learning; it was a place where we could gain the approval of others. The culture of my peer groups influenced the way I acted. I thought that if I didn't stand out or if I wasn't a siga, I would be left behind or ignored. So, I built a version of myself on what others seemed to value, and not on who I really was.

My family also played a huge part in shaping my identity. I grew up in a conservative Filipino household where respect and obedience were important. Even though my parents were kind and supportive, there were still clear expectations about how I should behave and how I should present myself to others. This created a gap between who I was at home and who I was in school. At home, I was expected to be polite and reserved; at school, I felt pressure to be confident and outspoken. I constantly switched between these versions of myself, not always knowing which one was truly me. It's only recently that I've started reflecting on how these different environments shaped my behavior and my identity.

Today, I've become more aware of how the people around us shape how we think and act. I've learned that identity isn't fixed, but formed in response to the people, norms, and values that surround us. And as I become more knowledgeable about the spaces I stay in and the people I connect with, I'm learning how to stay true to myself.
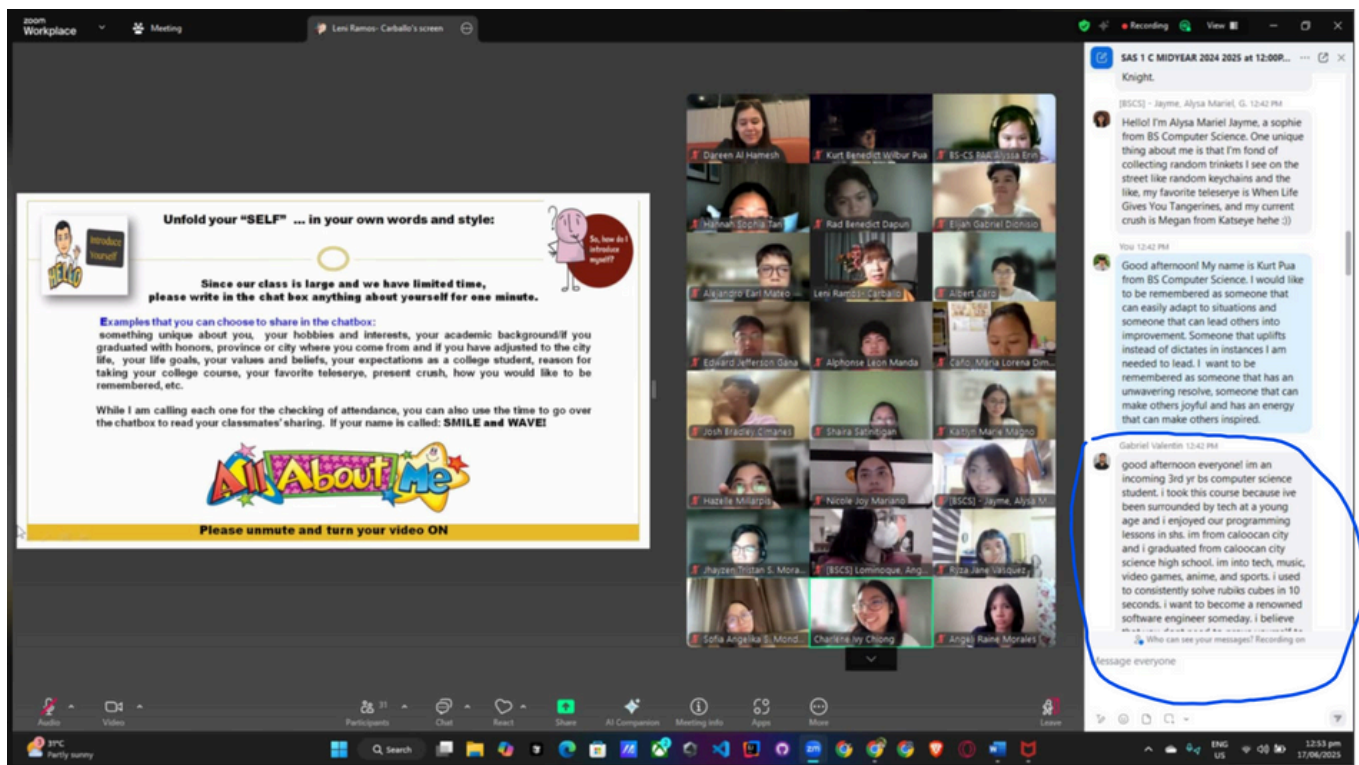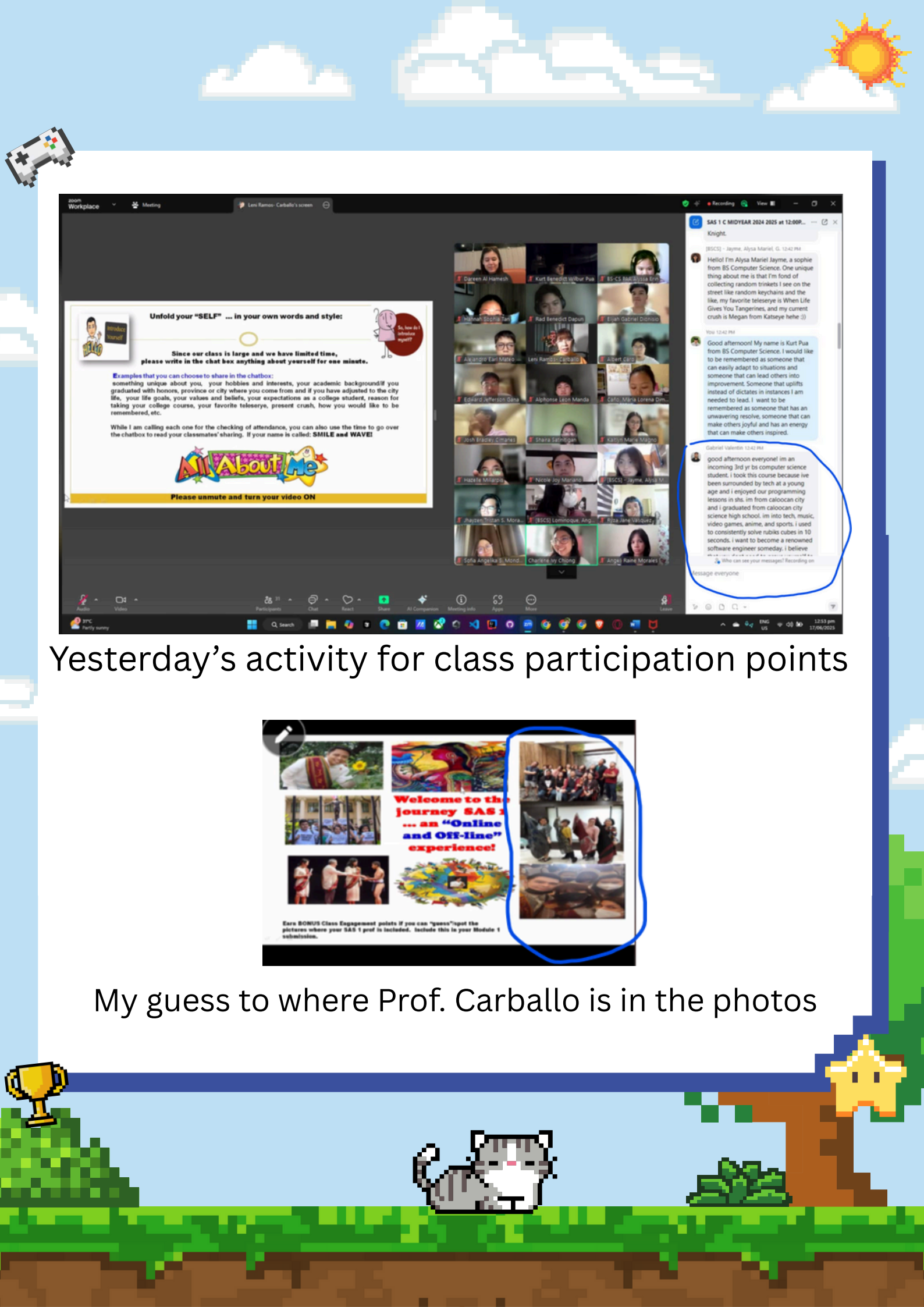
Yesterday's activity for class participation points

My guess to where Prof. Carballo is in the photos