

From CS2101, I've gathered and learnt about the importance of effective communications, as the communicator and the communicated.

In the first half of the semester, we focused on understanding how to communicate effectively from a third person perspective. My presentation in the Oral Presentation 1 on intercultural competence still stuck by me at the end of the semester, as I am more aware to the differences in our cultures, as well as learning to overcome such situations in day-to-day scenarios. This particular presentation, as well as the others presented by my peers, taught me to observe my surroundings and to be conscious of any potential differences, and how to resolve them. Even though it may take two hands to clap, being aware of the difference can steer one away from misunderstandings.

One particular event which allowed me to apply this skill was through an ASEAN leadership workshop in the middle of the semester. My group consisted of youths from other ASEAN countries, yet I realized that due to our different social, financial and educational backgrounds, we have varying expectations and ideas in the same event. I noted and sought to be conscious of the words I speak, in order to prevent misunderstandings due to intentions which could have been lost in translation. The lack of cultural tension helped me secure my initial impression with them and allowed a much easier formation of friendship.

After further reflection of the application of intercultural understanding, I realized that I can use it to my advantage – to always be genuine and care about the other person's background. It coincided and reinforced my own principles - to have an honest and professional approach with anyone and everyone I meet.

As a recipient of communication, a listener must also learn to listen, understand the intentions and take action to continue the conversation. In this semester, I believe some of my teammates and I have tried to empathize and communicate with our teammate who may have difficulties with this module. I can understand the workload which might have been put on by other modules. As learnt in lessons, we tried to prompt him, asking for his opinions on our project, and asked if he might need any help with his portion of the project. Unfortunately, I learnt that an outreached arm or well-meant approach can only do so much to one who may not have the ability or willingness to be helped.

While it's not commonly seen in the workforce, I believe we should engage in actively helping out those who need help. As a method of overcoming differences, some cultures, in Asia particularly, have a habit of trying to do their best and fit into other people's expectations. As with the wealth of material goods and knowledge, I believe that it is the responsibility of those who are able to do better, to extend a helping hand to those less able. This outreach will determine the progress of people as a whole, rather than individual successes. If I can understand better and choose to be selfishly store my knowledge away, how can I say that I understand the other person who may not be speaking out because they're shy or afraid to ask? This aspect of social work has become an extension of my professional stance with friends and family, as well as with teammates, and future colleagues.

This module has made me more aware of intercultural and even personality differences, equipped me with tips to overcome conflict. At the present, I'm more empathetic and proactive in listening and encouraging others to share their opinion. In the future, I want to equip myself with soft skills to communicate my ideas promptly and most importantly, try my best to be understood across all backgrounds, regardless of culture and upbringing.