Nanyang Technological University Experience

It was very useful to participate in the group meetings because I developed a much better insight into experimental design by the critiques of people’s presentations. I think the most important concept that I internalized was the importance of the thought experiment to ensure that the experiment will actually prove what is intended. Participating in group meetings improved my reasoning and argumentation skills by listening to critiques of the processes and reasoning in other people’s presentations. For example, one of the things I remember most is something that Prof Sam Zhang said about how if a person’s data can be used to argue against them or their data can be used to come to a different conclusion, then their argument is weak or invalid. This is very obvious once it had been told to me, but I had not thought of it before. Because of the group meetings, I have started to become much more critical of journal articles. I have started to be able to identify arguments that are weak and also those that are very strong, which is essential in determining which sources of information to trust. My reasoning skills have been useful not only academically, but also in everyday life; for example when considering information presented by the media. I think the group meetings have made me a more rational person overall.

I also learned about how to create and perform a presentation. One of the most useful things in learning presentation skills was the large number of presentations that I got to see. During each presentation, I noticed things that the presenter did that contributed positively to the presentation and tried to incorporate those into my own presentation. I also noticed things that the presenter did that detracted from the presentation and tried to avoid those in my own presentation. For example, making sure the text on the axis of the graphs is large enough to be read is a very simple thing, but I would not have normally made a point of specifically considering it.

Being in Singapore was very useful, both in professional and personal development. Professionally, learning about Asian culture is very important because of Asia’s constantly increasing effect on the world economy. In the future, I think the most successful North American companies will be the ones who work with Asian companies, and mutual understanding of each others’ cultures and language (I have started learning Mandarin) will be very important. Personally, learning about the culture and history of another civilization has been very rewarding because it will help me to relate to Asian people better now that I have a better understanding of their background.

Travelling through Southeast Asia will be an unforgettable and enriching experience. I learned many life lessons and saw many things that will have a large impact on the decisions I will make in the future. I like to observe how different people live because it gives me ideas or inspiration to choose how I want to live.

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