

“Genuine learning always involves dialogue and encounter.”

~ Clark E. Moustakas

WANTED

PGSA Members

Do you want your voice heard by the University management on matters concerning postgraduate studies and your welfare and to have a channel to link up and to exchange views with fellow postgraduate students in the HKU as well as in other local or overseas universities?

We, PGSA, invite all postgraduates to join our big family. Indeed, we enthusiastically need your participation, involvement and contribution so that the PGSA will accomplish fruitful results. Membership application forms are available from the Postgraduate Common Room (Room P408) and the Graduate School Office (Room P403) in the Graduate House. The forms can also be downloaded from our homepage: <http://www.hku.hk/pgsa>

POSTGRADUATE BADMINTON TEAM MEMBERS

Are you a badminton fanatic? No matter yes or no, you are cordially invited to join our Postgraduate Badminton Team. We are sure you will discover more in addition to badminton technique.

Since the formation of the team, several activities have been organized, e.g. regular practice on every Saturday afternoon, friendship competitions with U-team and City-U CSSA team. Regular practice on Saturday afternoon has attracted the attention and interest of many graduate students. Both team players

and non-players coming to the regular practice all feel that the team formation and the activities it has organized provide opportunities for postgraduates to meet one another, to exchange ideas, and to alleviate routine burdens in work and study. More and more postgraduates are eager to join the team.

The team managers are targeting to launch wider publicity on badminton events among postgraduate students, to improve team members' skills through organizing both theoretical workshops and field practice, to extend exchange from within HKU to within HK and even to outside universities. We hope that more friends will show an interest in playing badminton and come to join us in our future activities.

Some badminton enthusiasts even feel that playing badminton is like the froth in cappuccino, without which life seems so boring. Do you feel like the same? Take action now! Do not miss this chance! All are welcome to visit our temporary website: <http://web.hku.hk/~yangzy/>



The badminton lovers participated in the 1st HKU Postgraduate Badminton Tournament held in 2000.

The following is a public address to all graduates and graduate students by Professor Vincent W.S. Leung on October 26, 2000 at the University of Hong Kong. Professor Leung, who is an emeritus professor of the University, is the Master of the Robert Black College which accommodates about seventy graduate students in addition to some sixty university visitors.

The Making of a Favourable Impression

INTRODUCTION

Prof. Ng,

Thank you very much for your kind introduction. You seem to know more about me than I know about myself.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I know that in giving this seminar, once again I am going to tarnish my humble image. So let me first of all explain to you how I got myself into this embarrassing situation. Several months ago, I had a casual conversation with Prof. C.C. Chan, the then Head of Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering of the University of Hong Kong. Being not so humble as his predecessor, Prof. Chan told me what a great job he was doing in his department. He then shook his head and lamented that he felt very sorry for the graduates and graduate students in his department and in Hong Kong generally. He continued to say, and I quote: "Many of our graduates are really very able and they know a great deal, but unfortunately they don't know how to present themselves on important occasions. As a result, they don't do justice to themselves and it is such a great pity." Prof. Chan and I immediately agreed that a seminar such as the one given here to-day was badly needed by the graduates. Prof. Chan and I also immediately disagreed as to who should give the seminar. I thought Prof. Chan should give the seminar because he is senior to me, being the President of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers at the time. On the other hand, Prof. Chan thought that I should give the seminar because of my being senior to him in age, even though I look much younger than he. So, we started to have a heated argument.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Now you know who has won the argument. I have specially designed this seminar today for all university graduates in Hong Kong, but I hope the seminar will also be useful to those of you who are still on the way up your career ladder. I have a feeling that that means most of you in the room since you all look very ambitious to me. By the way, I am very glad to see so many young faces here today. You remind me of the days when I was young once upon a time. Let me return to the subject of today's seminar, which is about the making of favourable impressions. Here is a picture of a beautiful young lady on the screen. We can of course make a favourable impression on others by our appearance. Next is a photo of a handsome young man on the screen. In presenting to you the second photo, I want to show you that men too, can make a favourable

impression by their appearance. However, I do not deny the fact that in this respect, women have an advantage over men because they have more to show. Nevertheless, appearance is only skin deep. Generally speaking, a favourable impression made by your good appearance is an asset in your career only if you are in the show business or if you are a model. In any case, I cannot help you very much on the subject of appearance as I am not very good at doing a facial for you. In all other professions, what you say weighs much heavier than how you look. So, I shall now drop the subject of good appearance and go on to talk about what you should say to make a favourable impression on others - in other words, to say the right thing, to the right people at the right time. Before going into the topic of the seminar, let me say how happy I am today to be making a modest contribution to the University in the names of the Robert Black College and the Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering. To these two units of the University I have given the best years of my life. At this juncture I would like to express my deep appreciation to Ms. Queenie Chan, Ms. Anita Siu, Mr. Sam Wong, Ms. Rita Woo and Mr. Lam Fung for organising the seminar for me.

TO BE KNOWN

Ladies and gentlemen,

I shall now go on to the subject of the seminar and I shall begin by quoting a Chinese proverb, which says :

在家靠父母
出外靠朋友

meaning that : At home we rely on our parents.

Away from home we rely on our friends.

To the above proverb, I would like to add :

立業靠人識

meaning that : To establish ourselves in society we rely on being known.

By the way, the third line is not part of the Chinese proverb but is a creation of mine for the seminar. But if after its birth today, it is repeated again and again, it may one day become part of the Chinese proverb. It is very important that you are known by important people. Here is an example. In the photo on the screen, the young man in the centre is supposed to be me, although I don't look like him any more. The young lady shaking hands with me in the photo is the Queen of England. The only reason why I show you this photo is that I want you to have confidence in what I am going to say on making yourself known to important people and that what I say is based on fact and not imagination. By the way, please do not get me wrong. I am not encouraging you to make connections with the rich and the powerful (otherwise known as 搞關係) in order to " enter the house by the back

door” (otherwise known as 走後門). I would consider this kind of behaviour highly deplorable as it is against the noble principle of fair play.

CONFERENCES

Cocktail Party

Ladies and gentlemen,

As a new graduate or a junior member of a profession, one of the best opportunities for you to impress the right people lies in your attendance of conferences. You will have plenty of such opportunities as the world to-day is full of conferences. I shall now discuss with you what you can do to impress other delegates in a conference. Let me take the example of an international conference and I shall begin at the beginning. The first function of an international conference is probably a welcome reception in the form of a cocktail party. Cocktail parties are part of Western culture but they are new to the traditional Chinese way of life. One of the major purposes of holding a cocktail party is to enable the participants to get to know each other. The drinks and the food are of secondary importance, so don't spend too much time eating and drinking at the party. In the cocktail lounge, the hosts and guests usually form themselves into small groups. People standing in each group will chat among themselves although they may not know each other. You should go from group to group, giving priority to the groups where there are people you wish to meet. After introducing yourself to a group you can “break the ice” by asking the views of the people in the group on some current affairs in the news. If you are interested in getting to know a particular person in a group, you can exchange name cards with the person before you move on to the next group. Do not linger in any particular group for too long and do not spend too much time talking to people you already know very well. Otherwise, you will not be making the best use of your time at the cocktail party. After the party, you can examine the name cards you have collected and decide on the desirability and possibility of keeping contact with some of your new acquaintances.

Plenary Session

Ladies and gentlemen,

Assuming that you did not get drunk at the cocktail party, you will probably be attending the plenary session of the conference the following morning. The plenary session is the big meeting of the conference open to all conference delegates to attend. There will be the opening speech and the keynote speeches. You should read the texts of one or two of these speeches the night before the plenary session if they are already printed. Form your opinion on one or two issues raised in the speeches. Try to arrive early at the plenary session and find a seat just behind the rows of reserved seats at the front so that your hand can catch the chairman's eyes when it is raised at question time. Gather

sufficient courage to be the first or second person to raise your hand in response to the chairman's call for questions after one of the speakers has just finished speaking. Make a short and sharp prepared statement on some points made in his speech. Although you have already read the text of his speech, you should make your statement to appear to be spontaneous. The statement should either be constructive, i.e. with suggestions supplementing the ideas put forward by the speaker or be controversial, i.e. with criticisms and reservations on his ideas. If your statement is made with a sense of humour, it will be even more impressive. When the chairman first calls for questions, there is usually a moment of awkward silence in the room. He will be more than happy to let you have the microphone: However, if you have waited and your hand is among a number of hands raised, the chairman will choose to give the microphone to someone senior to you or better known than you despite your raised hand. Also the audience will pay more attention to you if you are the first or second "questioner" to speak at the meeting.

Ladies and gentlemen,

What I have said about speaking at a plenary session of a conference came from an experience I personally had when I was a very junior member of staff of the University of Hong Kong. Let me share my experience with you. Many years ago, I was the most junior member of a four-man delegation from the University of Hong Kong to attend the Commonwealth Universities Congress in Sydney. Each university delegation was led by its Vice-Chancellor. At the congress, there were over 1,200 delegates and over 120 Vice-Chancellors and Presidents. Since I was a small fish among many big fishes, I was not assigned any duty to perform at this high-powered congress. As I believe that in life we should give and take, I decided to justify my attendance of the congress by speaking briefly at the plenary session. So, I sat on a strategic seat at the session, raised my hand as soon as questions were invited from the floor and made a seemingly spontaneous controversial statement on the theme of the congress which was:

The Need to Expand University Education Universally

While all the speakers spoke in favour of changing some current sub-degree courses into degree courses, I put forward a critical view and I urged that in university education, we must not promote quantity at the expense of quality. Being a controversial view, a leading Australian newspaper picked it up and used my brief remarks as the heading of its article on the congress the following morning. The newspaper heading read :

Academic from Hong Kong Urges Upkeeping Standard in University Education

That was the only time during the congress when the word "Hong Kong" appeared in the Australian press reporting the congress. Incidentally, our Vice-Chancellor at the time was one of the most broad-minded Vice-

Chancellors in the history of the University of Hong Kong. Instead of telling me off for stealing the limelight, he congratulated me for what I did in making the name of our University known by the Australian public. Whether he shared my controversial view on the issue I would never know.

Parallel Sessions

Ladies and gentlemen,

After the plenary session come the parallel sessions where you will probably be one of the speakers. These sessions are relatively small and each of them is attended by delegates with the same specialised interests. I shall now discuss with you what you can do as a speaker to impress the audience in a parallel session. Your presentation may be divided into four parts, namely :

1. Preparation
2. Opening Remarks
3. Core of the Paper and
4. Closing Remarks

I shall speak briefly on each part in turn. First the preparation: By preparation, I don't mean the preparation of your paper or the audio-visual materials which are of course also very important and you have to prepare them well. By preparation here, I mean your psychological preparation. As you walk into the meeting room, you should build up your confidence by reminding yourself that this is the moment you have come to the conference for, that you will soon be the star on the stage, and that you are going to shine. In your opening remarks, your first couple of sentences should be designed to catch the attention of your audience. In my opening remarks today, you may remember that I started by cracking jokes on Prof. Ng, myself and Prof. Chan. These jokes are meant to catch your attention. Let me give you one example of humorous opening remarks with which you can begin your presentation in a parallel session. Here it is :

"Ladies and gentlemen, I have good news and bad news for you. First the bad news: The bad news is that the senior author of the paper, Professor Lee, is busily engaged in Hong Kong and cannot join us here today. I am sorry you have to put up with me. Now the good news: The good news is that Prof. Lee has promised to stand by with his mobile phone in Hong Kong for the next three hours to answer your questions. But you have to pay for your telephone calls to Hong Kong."

Next, your first video projection should also be designed to catch the attention of the audience. You may remember that my first video projection to-day was a beautiful young lady. I hope I have succeeded in catching your attention by showing you what you did not expect to see, namely the photo of a beautiful young lady on the screen. Now I shall

move on to the next part of your presentation which is the core of your paper. In order to impress the audience, try not to bore them with details of your work. Just point out to them the following : anything significant in your research, any new knowledge you have found, any new techniques you have developed or any discoveries you have made. The audience will be impressed if you have pushed forward the frontier of knowledge, if you have advanced the state of the art in the subject, if you have established new theories, or if you have discovered new applications on existing theories. Since the nature of a paper differs from paper to paper, you have to decide on the salient points in your paper and present them to the audience.

After the core of your paper come your closing remarks. Since these are the last words of your presentation, they are very important. In this part of the presentation, you should talk about your future plan and where your present work will lead to. The idea is that you want to interest some delegates in the audience to work in your field or even to collaborate with you in your research. There is a tendency today that all major research projects in the world are carried out by a group or a team of researchers. Also if you succeed in getting someone in the audience interested in doing work related to your field of research, your work will be quoted as a reference. As you know, the more your work is quoted, the better known you will become in your profession. Finally, the last sentence in your closing remarks should be a sentence for the audience to remember. Similarly, you should also design your last video projection in such a way that it will stay in the mind of your audience for a long time to come.

During the rest of the parallel session, you will be part of the audience. Since the audience is rather small, asking a question at the end of a presentation in a parallel session may not produce a significant impact. If you are interested in getting to know one of the speakers, you should prepare a question to put to him at the coffee break after he has presented his paper. You may begin your conversation by congratulating the speaker on his presentation before asking your question. He will be charmed by your praise and he will be happy to get to know you. An exchange of visits between you and the speaker may follow and the visits may even lead to co-operation and joint projects.

Head Hunting

In certain countries such as the United States, it is well known that large commercial and industrial companies from time to time send their head hunters to major conferences to look for suitable heads to hunt to fill vacancies in their companies. These head hunters usually look for their targets among the speakers in the parallel sessions. After they have identified their targets they will approach them at coffee breaks. Personally, I had one such experience first-hand many years ago when I

was still in my employable age attending a conference in New York. At the coffee break after I presented my paper, I was approached by a head hunter who was interested in my head. Our brief talk was followed by a rendezvous in a restaurant where I was offered a job in his company on the spot. It seems to me that something like that has happened to our recent Dean of Engineering. His head was hunted after he had made several favourable impressions on the little superman of Hong Kong. We all wish him good luck in his new post as Senior Vice-President in the biggest telecommunications company in Hong Kong.

Conference Dinner

Towards the end of an international conference, there is usually a conference dinner held in an elegant restaurant or banquet hall. I know some of you may find the conference dinner rather expensive. Nevertheless, you should make a point to attend the conference dinner even if you have to borrow money to pay for it. You see, the dinner will provide you with another good opportunity to impress some more conference delegates you are interested in. You will probably be given free seating at the dinner since you are not senior enough to be seated at the head table. By this time, you will have in mind several conference delegates whom you would like to impress but you have not yet had a chance to do so. When the dinner bell rings and the guests begin to approach the dining tables, you just follow one or two of the guests, whom you have chosen to impress, to their table and find a seat close to them, i.e. close enough to be able to engage in a conversation with them. Since the dinner will last for a couple of hours and your conversation cannot last that long, there will be moments of awkward silence at the dining table. This is your opportunity to impress all the diners at your table by telling them one or two dinner jokes.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To show that I practise what I preach, I shall now tell you a couple of jokes which I have told at conference dinners. Here is the first joke : Several years ago, I attended an international conference at a famous holiday resort and I was a speaker at a morning parallel session. After registration, the first morning session began and there was a full audience in the meeting room. As the first speaker was presenting his paper, people in the audience began to leave the room, presumably turning themselves into tourists. By the time the first speaker finished his presentation, half of the people in the audience had left the room. I went up to the stage as the second speaker of the session to present my paper. As I was very absorbed with my presentation, I did not notice the continual disappearance of the audience. When I finished my presentation and switched on the light, I saw only one person left in the audience sitting in the front row. I put up a brave face, walked towards the person, shook his hand and said to him : "It is so nice of you to stay on to support me. I am glad that at least one person is interested in my

presentation.” The man said in his reply: “Dr. Leung, please do not be mistaken. I am not interested in your presentation at all. I have to stay on in the room because I am the next speaker.”

Let me tell you another joke related to conferences. On another occasion, I attended an international conference in Nice, in the South of France. Being a family man and a good husband, I wanted to send an e-mail home to my wife in Hong Kong. As I did not have a notebook computer with me, I wrote my e-mail message on a piece of paper and gave it to the conference staff to send it to my wife. My e-mail message read : “Darling, I am having a wonderful time. Wish you were here.” When I returned home, my wife greeted me at the door with two slaps on my face. I was puzzled and asked her what the matter was. She showed me the e-mail she received from me which read : “Darling, I am having a wonderful time. Wish you were her.”

INTERVIEWS

Ladies and gentlemen,

I shall now leave the subject of conferences and go on to discuss with you how you can make a favourable impression at an interview. You will probably have to pass over the hurdle of an interview when you apply for a job, a promotion, a grant or loan and a fellowship or scholarship. Firstly when you go to attend an interview, you should assume that you have a reasonable chance of success. My guess is that your chance is between 1 in 2 and 1 in 5. As the interviewers are very busy people, they only want to see candidates who have a chance to succeed. Whether your application is a success or a failure almost entirely depends on your performance at the interview, in other words, on how favourable an impression you can make on the interviewing panel. Preparation for the interview is therefore of the utmost importance. An interview is like an oral examination. Find out the personal data of the interviewers from their homepages and other sources. From their background and interests you can anticipate all the possible questions and think of the answers the interviewers are interested to hear. Treat the interview as a dialogue. Keep your eyes on the interviewer whose question you are answering. Do not speak for too long on any particular question and allow time for other interviewers to ask their questions. If you have questions to ask or requests to make, refrain from doing so unless you are asked to do so. You can always reject an offer if your conditions for accepting the offer are not met. Remember it is much better for you to reject their offer than for them to reject your application.

ELECTIONS

Next, I shall turn to the subject of elections. Some of the administrative positions in many institutions, associations, societies, or even educational establishments are elected posts. I shall now discuss with you how you can impress members of an electing body in order to obtain their votes. Your first objective is again to make yourself known to members of the organisation. You can do so by making very brief remarks once (preferably only once) at each of the regular (i.e. monthly or bi-monthly) meetings. For example, you will be appreciated if you can put forward a compromise between two different solutions advocated at a meeting. Next, you should make a contribution to the organisation by making a constructive proposal at one of these meetings that will benefit the members or the organisation as a whole. If the proposal is accepted, be prepared to offer your voluntary service to implement your proposal. If the time you make your proposal is near an election of the organisation, so much the better. When the election for a key position comes, you will appear in the minds of the electorate who will be inclined to give you their votes. So far I have been saying that you can make a favourable impression by what you say. That is not to say that you should say something for the sake of saying something. Indeed, you can make a fool of yourself by saying the wrong thing. As a Chinese proverb says, 獻醜不如藏拙, meaning that "It is better to make no impression than to make a bad impression."

IMPRESSIVE WRITING

Speaking is of course not the only means by which you can make a favourable impression on others. You can impress others by your writing as well. To do so you will have to have a good command of the language in which you write. You have to use articulate words, phrases, clauses and sentences when you write your letters, notes, messages, e-mails and publications. I believe that language skill, in both English and Chinese, can be acquired by self-learning up to a reasonably high level. The way to do so is to imitate the good writers, in other words write the way they write. This you can do by reading a paragraph, say of several hundred words, of an article written by a good writer every day for a period of time. After reading the paragraph, put the article away and try to write in your own words the same message in the paragraph you have just read. After you have written your paragraph, compare yours with that written by the good writer. Observe the difference and rewrite the paragraph in the form written by the good writer. Try to remember to use the new way in expressing yourself in writing. If you do that daily for several months, you will become a reasonably good writer yourself. A well-written document is undoubtedly a great asset when it comes to impressing others. But you have to make an effort to acquire the skill.

CHANGING TIMES

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have just described to you some techniques I have personally used to make favourable impressions on various people whose paths I have crossed in my career. I know that time has changed and I know that you and I hold different views on the meaning of life. While you and I may share the common belief in hardworking which is a traditional virtue in Chinese culture, we probably attach different values to our lives. For example : In my time, people believe in saving hard for the rainy day. But to-day, you believe in paying hard with your credit card. Also, in my time, people were more conservative. But to-day, you are more liberal, with your body and soul. Many of the ways and means I have used to impress others have been found to be effective, at least in my time. If you are convinced by what I have said, you may first try them out and if necessary modify them to meet the needs of your era.

FROM ORDEAL TO PLEASURE

Ladies and gentlemen,

I realise that some of the measures I have suggested that you should take may be chores or even ordeals to you. Let me put your mind at ease by telling you one of the stories of my life. I have a brother, and when we were young we used to encourage each other. Like me, he was rather thoughtful but unlike me, he was very wise. Once my brother gave me the following advice. He said: "In life, sometimes we have to force ourselves to do things that we don't like to do. But after we have done the chores seriously for a while, the chores will become routines and before long we shall begin to enjoy the routines. For example, we may hate to take the initiative to talk to stranger after stranger at a cocktail party. But after we have done so a few times we shall get used to the routine, and soon we shall begin to enjoy the routine. Hopefully before too long, others will take their initiative to talk to us to try to impress us at the cocktail parties." For those of you in the room who are on the giving end of favourable impressions, you can be comforted by the thought that your period of agony will not be so long. I can assure you that any effort you make in this direction will be well rewarded. For the others in the room who are already on the receiving end of favourable impressions, I thank you kindly for your patience and endurance during the last hour. The time for you to make your contributions on the subject is about to come. We are all very eager to hear your views which I am sure will greatly enrich the seminar.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you all very much for coming to support the function.

I WISH YOU A VERY BRIGHT FUTURE.

祝君 前途似錦

