

165s Oyehan Tajudeen Adeyinka Saudi Arabia Journal

English: Second language

Renewed Experience with GEE

This year GEE competition proved to me that participating every year will always give renewed opportunity to learn new ideas, new cultures, and new technologies and to meet new people. This is my third time of taking part in geebiz, during my two previous involvements I was in Nigeria. As a new student in graduate school outside the shore of my country, I did not want to apply because I wanted to have time to adapt to my program and climate. However, I publicized it wide and persuaded my friends and colleagues to apply. I was so insistent on the myriad opportunities this competition offers that I could not resist the conviction myself to apply. I thank God I did though not without some pains.

When I received email that I was in Team 90, I was surprised with the large number of participants this year and that I am in the last team (uniquely having two assigned leaders). I quickly sent email to all my fellow members to familiarize with them. Few days later, we were on Facebook and Campfire chat. Our first challenge was to get convenient time for all members to meet. This appeared impossible initially until some of us agreed to botch our night sleeps. Two members from Rwanda and one from Nigeria could not show up after a week. I had to call their mobile phones and their recommenders'. Unfortunately, they could not make it in the end.

Numerous term papers, presentations and exams nearly gagged me from participating fully. In fact, I had to reduce my hours of daily sleep to less than 3 hours per day during the last two weeks. I used my nights to communicate with my teammates and used my days to go to class, prepare and present presentations, and prepare for semester exams at the same time. In my two previous participations (while in Nigeria), I had very limited access to internet. I thought having internet access is all it takes. I was wrong because perpetual sleepless nights make my eyes red and my body always warm. A day to the last day of submission, I worked on the laptop for almost 24hours, no food, and no sleep until we finished the proposal in the afternoon. I left for class immediately. I was about entering class when I collapsed. I regained consciousness in the clinic 2hours later and I begged for access to my laptop to write my personal journal.

My stress was so much in this competition because the idea (Global Dialogue Network) we chose was completely novel to me and as the most experienced in terms of number of time of participation, questions are always directed to me so I was under pressure to offer my best. This enabled me to gain more. In addition, I learnt very well how to use internet tools such as *Dropbox* and *GoogleDocs* which really helped a lot.

Our assigned leaders (Helene and Sanna) were great but Chris from Canada stood in as leader due to their English proficiency. Chris is adept, I am happy to work with him. Kenneth Loo, Chan and Eric were also very committed. I am sure we will work more together to transform our idea into reality. You guys are wonderful. I wish it is not over.

Lastly, I want to say thank you to the organizers and judges of this competition. In particular, I appreciate the eager-to-help spirit of Deb, she is a mentor. I wish we meet someday.

See you next year!