



Presentation Skills and Communication

The Open Space Sessions was a major highlight of the Linking and Learning Event organized by Cognito and NINE at the Nike Lake Resort, Enugu. This open space session was on Presentation Skills and Communication which I would like to also call the _"Come as You Are"_ session. You may be wondering why I refer to it as the 'Come as You Are' session. Well, an open space session is a different kind of session which creates a safe space for participants to share their thoughts freely and confidently. It also presents an avenue to learn, unlearn, and relearn. Although it is a session where everyone gets to share their thoughts, there is always a facilitator so this session was facilitated by Davidson Nwaonu from the Center for Social Awareness, Advocacy, and Ethics (CSAAE). The session started by mentioning salient points on what makes a great presentation. These include: - Know what works for you: What works for an individual could be memorizing, reading, or even storytelling. If memorizing works for you, then utilize it in your presentation, and if you prefer telling stories, then make use of that during your presentation. In other words, just DO YOU! - Use the

right language for the right audience: To carry out an efficient presentation, it is important to know your target audience, as this will enable you to know the kind of language you will employ. This involves using the right words or slang and also using social media jokes. For example, to pass a message to a group of young people, you can use memes, jokes or familiar adages, which the particular audience segment can relate to. - Research the topic: Before giving any presentation, speakers should carry out extensive research on the topic so they are able to pass across the right information and respond to questions appropriately. - It is important to facilitate and not teach, lecture or preach. In facilitating, knowledge is shared, co-created and exchanged. It is a two-way communication scenario which allows others participate in order to gain a better understanding. Some other tips were shared on how to communicate effectively. These comprise of the following: - Keep the presentation simple. - Storytelling can be used to engage your audience. - Make eye contact. - Rehearse in front of a mirror. - Don't give a wrong answer. Word fillers are described as presentation killers and participants were therefore advised to ****_pause intentionally_**** to avoid word fillers like 'ermm...', 'ah...', 'you know...' and the likes. We also reflected on different speaking styles including Barack Obama and Chimamanda Adichie's communication and presentation styles. We reflected on how Chimamanda utilizes adjectives to engage her audience as well as how she maintains eye contact with her audience. We also noted how Obama talks in a very calm, collected, and confident tone. This very engaging session ended with a question from one of the contributors who asked how to answer tough questions, especially when you do not know the answer. The facilitator advised that the presenter needs to first ascertain the context of the question in order to give an accurate response. It was also shared that responses can also be solicited from other participants.

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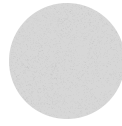


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