

Tony Hyun Kim

6.UAT: Lecture 7 response (March 3<sup>rd</sup>)

**Content of the lecture:** Dr. Schindall spoke on the topic of “Being Effective.” The main focus of the lecture was the claim that to solve real problems, one needs, in addition to his or her technical ability, the skill of being “effective” in an organization.

Dr. Schindall’s argument rested on the grounds that problems in the real world, unlike problem set assignments, are at a scope large enough so that it takes a team or an organization to tackle them. Personally, I agreed with his claim that students do not get many chances to solve problems of the latter type. The assignments I have completed at MIT so far have not required intense coordination among my peers for their solution. Furthermore, I have previously felt that I would be able to successfully handle collaborative work when they arose. However, this lecture pointed out to me that I actually lacked experience in this area, and that I would probably make the same mistakes of Dr. Schindall’s example students.

In particular, I found the following advice to be important:

- **Taking responsibility for one’s work.** This was the moral in Dr. Schindall’s story regarding the engineer who interacted with the drafters in completing his design. I felt that this was an idea I could immediately put to use in my own UROP. Working in a physics lab, I work on electrical devices for various purposes. After completing each piece, I could go as far as to ask how it’s being used in the lab and if there are suggestions for improvement.
- **Responsive communication.** Dr. Schindall mentioned that, as a manager, his mind was constantly full of worries regarding his projects; and that it was greatly appreciated when he could cross one off, as others acknowledged that they were working on the problem. To me this seems to be a small effort that goes a long way.

I will now discuss Dr. Schindall’s delivery.

**Delivery:** I will take Dr. Schindall’s own advice about being critical in reviews. I felt that his slides were not effectively designed. In particular, over the term, Tony has stressed that the slides should be *glance able*. Dr. Schindall’s slides did not abide by these guidelines.

However, the overall presentation was not dampened by the poor slides. Throughout the presentation, he made sure that *he* was the focus of the talk.

In particular, I enjoyed the personal nature of the talk. He based his arguments on personal experience and the presentation moved from one story to the other. He was also notably relaxed – sitting against the table, etc. – as he told these stories, which made them easy to relate to. In a future talk, I would like to attempt this technique, incorporating a personal story in the presentation.