

Self-reflection (Yiu Tsz Kiu)

This was my first time getting involved in a construction project, and I was delighted to gain so much practical experience about building construction as a civil engineering student.

Witnessing stages of construction was a valuable opportunity. Not only had I seen real-life examples of how material be used like constructing falsework and formwork for concreting, I had hands-on experience contributing to the construction of the library. For example, I tried laying bricks and steel fixing. I also learnt about building sequences management. Usually, construction sequence is about which superstructure to be built, but it is important to know how to facilitate the building process. For example, the walls were built with some bricks missing on top on purpose to allow room for bamboo to act as a horizontal support of falsework. I can only learn this on site but not in lectures.

Apart from construction, through the reading habit survey and needs assessment, I explored the research methods used in the social study. The collaboration with social sciences and comparative literature students has deepened my thoughts on providing aids to the needy. Take the children in Trung Dung Primary School as an example, sometimes what they need is not merely some hardware like a library with books. To improve their reading habits, we also need to find out their daily routine to understand their obstacles in reading under local context like lack of time due to housework. It is interesting that we take different approaches to tackle the same problem and how well they can be integrated.

The cultural exchange between us and the locals in Vietnam has also enriched my knowledge about the community. I understood the context for some of our similarities and we embraced our difference. I appreciated them being so amiable to foreigners like us. I learnt the importance of being locally adaptive. It is also a possible direction of how we as Hong Kong people may help the community in other countries. All in all, I am grateful for the kind support received throughout the whole project.