

Zero to Hero

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Abstract: This is a collection of personal stories by 54 students from the class of Soil Mechanics & Foundations (Semester 2 Session 2021/22), Faculty of Engineering Technology, UTHM. Coming back to the university after the COVID 19 global lockdown, Zero to Hero'takes us on a semester-long journey of the students in learning the Course, individually told in a double section of Strategy and Self Reflection. Strategies were laid and plans were organised to learn the Course effectively in their uniquely personalised approaches (STRATEGY), which were put through self-review at the end of the semester to gauge the outcomes (SELF REFLECTION). Assessment and grades aside, the most significant outcome is but the students' rise above fears and doubts at the beginning of the semester, grappling with the learning process with utmost grit and determination, coming out of it at the end, triumphant with renewed confidence and self-awareness.

Keywords: Strategy, reflection, determination, process, confidence



ZER to HERO

*Aim for the moon. Even if you miss,
you will still land among the stars.*

Editors

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PREFACE

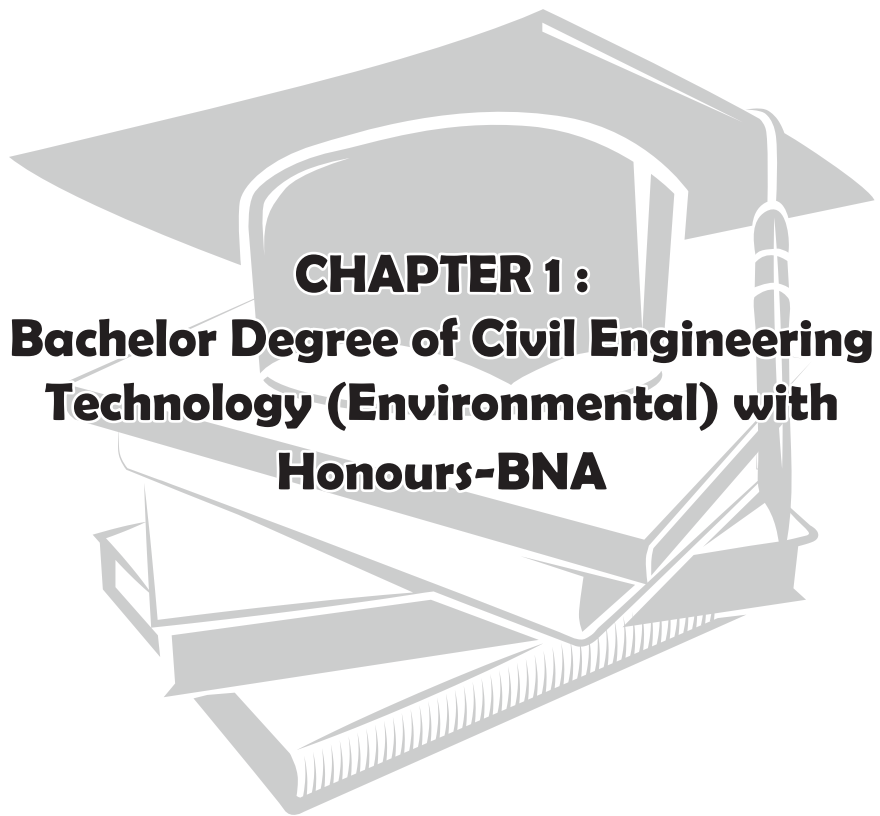
We are all unique as human beings with our very own life adventures. However, our different tales are often interconnected in an uncanny way, creating a complex yet beautiful tapestry. This is the central idea of the *Zero to Hero*. This book tells the story of a group of people trying to adapt with the transition from virtual to physical classes, whose paths intersected and journeys collided in a shared space and time, culminating in ONE journey filled with love, tears, winnings, losses, and above all, invaluable lifelong lessons. Each chapter adds a new dimension of the students' semester-long journey through the Bachelor Degree of Civil Engineering Technology programme, showcasing each character's unique personal characteristics, strategies, tips and tricks in the navigation process. You will be moved as you reflect on your own life's journey, remembering the people who have walked with you... eventually discovering that we are all connected in the larger scheme of things. So sit back, relax, and allow these tenacious heroes take you on an unforgettable adventure.

PROLOGUE

The global COVID19 pandemic situation threw university learning into an unprecedented chaotic mode: Online, hybrid, controlled face-to-face sessions, and more. The technical students got it worse, arguably, with lab and practical work constituting a major part of their programme being conducted without the on site hands-on exposures. 2 years down the road, with the viral infection being declared endemic, the world reclaimed a life of normalcy, or so it seemed. The new norm posed new challenges to the students. Returning to campus for face-to-face learning after almost 2 years of campus life being lived out in the virtual realm is a daunting experience. This is especially so for students who set foot in universities for the first time since their enrolment, where isolated, independent learning had very much dominated their freshman and sophomore years. The ‘culture shock’ was inevitable: Time management for physical classes, communication and social skills in a ‘live’ environment, ill-suited habits cultivated during the lockdown period, and other complications and incompatibilities between virtual and physical learning. Yet, the students prevailed with remarkable adaptability, underlain by an astonishing sense of self worth and awareness as they administered their individual strategies to score A+ for the Course.

This book is a collection of individual 2-part stories, as told by 54 students of *Soil Mechanics & Foundations* (Semester 2 Session 2021/22), captivating us with their keen sense of self-awareness, strategic planning, flexible execution of the plans and review of the outcomes in navigating the ‘tough’ terrains of the Course. Irrespective of the marks and grades, all of them have certainly emerged triumphant, with enhanced growth, confidence and maturity to see them through to graduation.

Let’s hear them out: **Zero to hero**, in the true sense.



CHAPTER 1:
Bachelor Degree of Civil Engineering
Technology (Environmental) with
Honours-BNA

PART 1 : **Strategy**

TRACY SAMBAI ANAK NELSON'S STORY

First of all, let me introduce myself to everyone. I am Tracy Sambai, daughter of Nelson, a UTHM student, originally from Sarawak taking the Soil and Mechanics Foundation subject. As we know, when we step into the university age it is different from when we were still in kindergarten, primary school, and high school. For example, the way of learning is quite different, so of course, we should be familiar with the difference. But, there is one thing in common, which is wanting to be at the top of success. I will briefly comment on what want to achieve for one of the subjects I am taking with the course code BNP20903.

One of my weaknesses is that I am not very good at getting along with large groups, so I have to get rid of that trait because if I am shy to ask, I am sure I will go astray. I also lack the subject of counting. This becomes difficult because this subject has calculations. I need to pay attention in class and raise my hand if there is anything I do not understand to obtain a great grade, which is an A+ for this topic.

I should thus review every day to get acquainted with the calculation component to improve my performance on it. If I do not grasp something, I have to question my friends and the lecturers. One of the things that should be done to improve our ability to communicate and our confidence in our abilities is communication. I should read every day to keep my memory sharp for the theory portion of the assignment. Finally, never give up because those who do are failures and poor strategists who quit before they start a battle.

Finally, I am hoping for an extremely good outcome so that I may be proud of my family members that worked hard to support me financially, morally, and spiritually so that I might reach the top of the mountain. If we work hard, thanks to the efforts of the success ladder, nothing is impossible.

Tracy Sambai Anak Nelson

PART 2 : **Self Reflection**

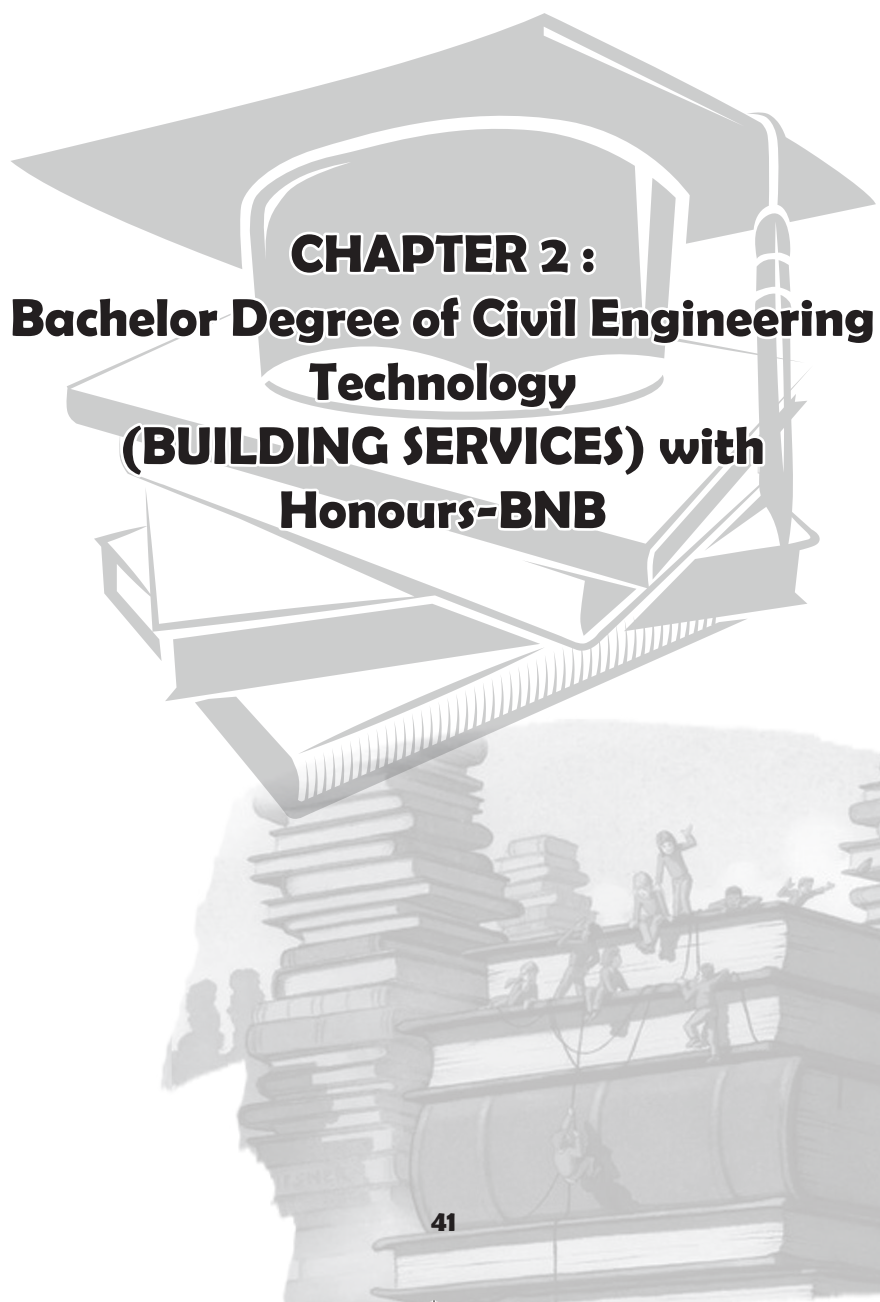
TRACY SAMBAI ANAK NELSON'S REFLECTION

Not felt, as 14 weeks had passed, I participated in hybrid learning while attending university (face-to-face and online). The final examination is approaching. Naturally, I was a little anxious because it was my first time taking a face-to-face exam after attending UTHM. Although there is no final exam for the course Soil Mechanics and Foundation (BNP20903), I still study and provide my best effort in all of my assignments, group projects, and tests.

I need to manage my time wisely first. I have planned a quick study routine in addition to my favorite pastime of watching Netflix's original series. Over this semester's 14 weeks, I have learned a lot. One of them is completing a lab and writing a lab report. Being able to complete the lab in person makes me very happy because it is simpler to understand than studying online. After all, if I do not understand the directions given on the lab page, I can ask the lecturers and lab assistants directly while holding the equipment and materials. Because it is simpler to meet with professors and friends if I do not comprehend an assignment, I feel comfortable studying in person. Therefore, I believe I have more strength because my lecturers and my beloved friends provide me with a lot of assistance in doing the assignments that have been assigned. I also constantly ask God to make learning simpler.

During the 14 weeks I have spent here, my weakness has diminished. This is a result of my enhanced public speaking abilities in front of classmates and lecturers. Since I am our group's leader, I shall do and provide my best for our group. I also frequently inquire about Prof. Chan's comprehension of certain aspects of the instruction project. I was very happy to be able to communicate with Prof. Chan directly and be able to ask questions about the lesson. Therefore, if we are aware of the requirements for the instruction project, our task will be simpler. To avoid getting lost and forgetting what I need to do, I constantly ask my pals.

Over the past 14 weeks, there have been adjustments made here. One of them is that I can meet pals and talk about each work that has been assigned. Because I can go to the video recording of the lesson that



CHAPTER 2 :
Bachelor Degree of Civil Engineering
Technology
(BUILDING SERVICES) with
Honours-BNB

PART 1 : **Strategy**

TASNIM'S STORY

During the past three semesters of my degree journey in Civil Engineering Technology (Building Services) at Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, gave me the experience of the online class and exam going on. But this semester, I need to make a quick adaptation to start class and study using a normal style which is back to university and campus. So, I need to make a strategy to make sure I can give my best and perform my study in this condition. In this essay, I will share the strategy that I plan to use to get an A+ result for Soil Mechanics and Foundation subjects. There are three points or strategies that I want to use, which is, I need to know better what the lecturer has planned for our class, change my study and always make sure that my mental health is in the best condition. These three strategies I will explain more in the next paragraph.

The first strategy that I plan is I need to know better what the lecturer plans for Soil Mechanics and Foundation. It means that I need to clear this subject 'RPP'. RPP stands for Rancangan Program Pembelajaran. When I clear with the RPP I can plan what things that I need to focus on. By doing this, it can help me to be more organized and it gives a sense of direction in relation to the syllabus. From that, I know which part that I can score, which assessment that I need to give more time and more focus. Other than that, it will make me know what chapter or thing that lecturer wants to teach in class. So, I can search for some information about that and read the slides before the class and I can understand more of the things that the lecturer teaches in class.

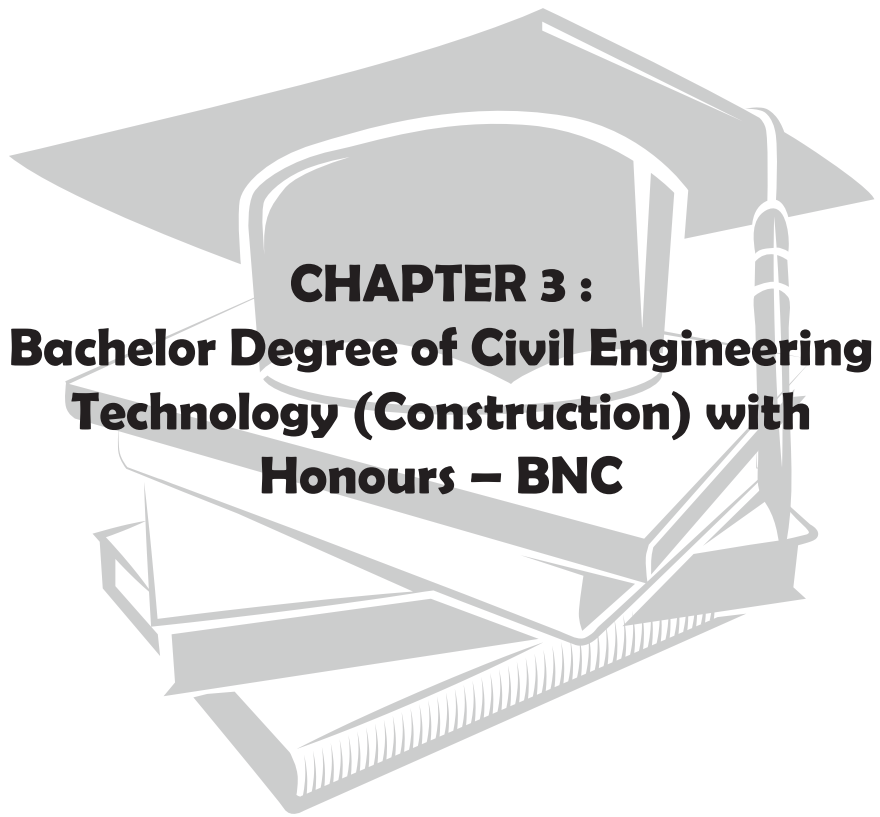
Second strategy is to change my study habits. For sure online classes and face to face class are totally different. In online class, we can replay lecture class if we get confused or if something that we do not understand. But the current study situation makes me think that I need to give more focus during the class session. Besides that, I know that when I do a revision, notes are playing an important role in my

PART 2: SELF REFLECTION

EITHER WIN OR LEARN

When it comes to final exam week, I always think “how fast the time is flying”. Feels like yesterday I just started for this second semester of 2021/2022. Just now I read my own essay talking about my A+ Strategies for Soil Mechanics and Foundations. I was laughing when I recalled the process to achieve it. And in this essay, I will share about my reflection of my own performance in making the strategies come true and about my journey with this subject in this semester.

First, I thought that I will have a face to face class for the Soil and Mechanics subject and I was excited about that. But I felt a little bit frustrated when lecture class is still using google meet but then practical class has cured that feeling. I love when I can go to the Geotechnical Engineering Technology Laboratory, it is the best part of this subject. I can have real life contact with my friends and my lecturers. It is the best part because I can do the experiment in real life and not just using software. Other than that, interaction between me and my group members while doing the experiment also gives me life vibes. It does not mean that we are just facing a fun story while we are doing the experiment, we also have times that we argue for something such as the procedure of the experiment and others, but all of us know it happened because we want to give our best. I remember that one day I was coming late because I went to sleep at noon. I cannot update my situation with my group members because unfortunately my phone ran out of battery. Then, when I arrived at the laboratory, I was a little bit scolded by my groupmate. At that time, I felt awkward doing that experiment together. But things are better again. I also remember when Dr. Hasanah came and asked me and my groupmates several questions to make sure that we understood the experiment and shared the relation between experiment and the lecture in class. For sure not all questions we can answer it and Dr. Hasanah share the answer and give advice for mistakes that we make. When I interact with people, I know that not all things will happen happily because it is life, we will be facing up and down, sweet and sour moments.



CHAPTER 3 :
Bachelor Degree of Civil Engineering
Technology (Construction) with
Honours – BNC

PART 1 : STRATEGY

LAU YIK KHIM'S STORY

In a new semester, how can I get a good grade in a subject, especially in Soil Mechanics and Foundation? Soil Mechanics and Foundation has 5 chapters. This subject has tests, assignments, lab work, and a PBL project. All of these are very important to help me to get a good grade in this subject. Everyone has their strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, we can use these strengths to help us get the best result in our studies and learn how to tackle our weaknesses.

First and foremost, one of my strengths is reading. I always read during my free time. Before I start to do tests, assignments, lab work, or PBL projects, I will read the instructions carefully. Hence, I will not miss any requirements in my work and it will help me to get a nice result. Besides, I will record the notes during class. The reason that I record the notes is so I can do the revision easily after class or before the test.

While one of my weaknesses is my time management is not good. This is because sometimes the work is huge and needs more time to complete. Weak time management causes my work to be delayed. Therefore, starting this semester, I have tried to list out the work that I need to do every day. Another weakness is that I always study alone before this semester. When I study alone, I just can do the practice alone and cannot discuss it with other people. In the new semester, I will start to study in a group. So, I try to find some course mates who can study together. When we face some problems, we can discuss them together and check the mistakes between each other.

In Soil Mechanics and Foundation, I promise that I can get a good grade. Therefore, I will do my best and anything that can help me to get the best result.

Lau Yik Khim

PART 2 : **Self Reflection**

SUCCESS ARE PERFORMED NOT BY STRENGTH BUT BY PERSEVERANCE

After this semester, I gained knowledge about this subject, which is Soil Mechanics and Foundation. Before I start my self-reflection, I would like to thank my lecturers, Ts Dr. Tuan Noor Hasanah, Prof. Dr. Chan Chee Ming and Puan Salina Binti Sani for guiding me in this subject and providing the knowledge for me.

Before this, one of my strengths is reading. It really helps me when I am doing the lab and the project. This is because I always read the instructions before starting doing the lab and the project. While the way to record the notes is not useful this semester. Maybe it was because my time management was not perfect when my university life changed and became physical. Therefore, I need to find a way to record the notes which may help me in studying and get the best result in every subject.

One of my weaknesses is my time management is not good. In my opinion, my time management has become more serious since the event that I joined and some of the classes changed to entities. Therefore, this weakness was not dismissed and became more serious. Furthermore, I still study alone this semester. By the way, I had asked the questions for the part that I did not understand. Hence, I will give more effort to overcome this weakness in the future.

In conclusion, I believe that I have done my best in all the tests, assignments, projects, and so on to get the best result in this subject.

Lau Yik Khim

EDITORS' BIOGRAPHY

CHEE-MING CHAN

I am Chee-Ming, the professor who had the great honour to guide these girls and their coursemates in their adventure of the Soil Story Wonderland. It was a challenging time for any university student post-pandemic, in transition from virtual to physical classes which undoubtedly is as different as an apple is to a pineapple! Nonetheless these kids made it, with style and valour, humour amid tears, and most importantly, true camaraderie and togetherness. Well done too to Tasnim, Darshinii, Asyiqin and Josline: The true heroes behind the scene for this book, without whose tireless efforts this book would remain unpublished and unseen. Kudos too to all contributors to the book, whose uniquely individual stories would forever be recorded in these pages for all to read, as memories that would inspire even as the pages turn yellow with age...



JOSLINE JOHN

Hello there! Here is to introduce myself, Josline John from Lahad Datu, Sabah. I am a 2018/2019 graduate of Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Polytechnic, and upon graduation with the diploma, I have continued my studies at Universiti Tun Hussien Onn Malaysia in the pursuit of the bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering Technology (Building Services). Indeed, if you ask me what I would like to specialize in the civil engineering industry, I would honestly respond that I want to be an assistant facilities manager. My goal for the readers of this book



is that the stories of my pals, of various backgrounds and beliefs, yet of the same shared aspirations, courage and grit, would be an inspiration to others to keep going even when the goings are tough. Enjoy!

TASNIM BINTI ZAKEPELI

My name is Tasnim Binti Zakepeli and I grew up in Machang, Kelantan. I completed my Diploma in Civil Engineering at UTHM in December 2019. I am presently in the final semester of my degree in Bachelor of Civil Engineering Technology (Building Services) at UTHM. My interest in Civil Engineering was founded on a discussion with my secondary school teacher. Also, I often express my views on current affairs, especially those pertaining to university life and youths' lifestyle in my media social platforms. Hence it is a most exciting experience for me to be part of this Book Project, i.e. to finally co-edit my very own book! I am honoured if the story of hardships and courage, tears and laughter shared in this book would inspire you readers to persevere for success.



A. DARSHINII SIVASANMUGAM

My name is A. Darshinii Sivasanmugam, and I am currently pursuing my 3rd. year of studies in Bachelor of Civil Engineering Technology (Building Services) with Honours at UTHM. Before pursuing this degree, I did the Malaysian Higher School Certificate (STPM) in science stream at Sekolah Menengah Sultan Idris Shah II, Gerik. I have much interest in debates, sports, travelling and book-editing since I was in secondary school. I used to be my district's best English Parliamentary Debater. As we all know, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step", which means that even the longest and most difficult venture has a starting point. This book is about the story of my coursemates' struggle in the post-pandemic students' life at university, charting



their personal journey of courage and determination to excel in their respective studies. I hope that you will be enjoy reading this book as much as I have co-edited it. Thank you.

SITI NUR ASYIQIN BINTI AHMAD SAHLAN

Assalamualaikum and Hello, dear readers. The name, Siti Nur Asyiqin Binti Ahmad Sahlan, is hereby announced. Place of origin: Kota Tinggi, Johor. As a graduate of the Johor Engineering Matriculation College (2019/2020 academic year), I continued my undergraduate education at UTHM in pursuance of the Bachelor of Civil Engineering Technology (Building Services) with Honours. I am currently enrolled in year 3 semester 2 of the programme. Since primary school, I have always been interested in writing. In high school, I was appointed the editors in several occasions and have since created a number of written works. I hope the readers would enjoy and gain some new knowledge from the writings of my friends in this book as co-edited by me. Cheers to reading, everyone!

