

# HTSCSC Experience

HTSCSC 2009: Reflections on the 6.5 weeks

My six and a half weeks spent at the Home Team SCSC would probably be one of the most memorable courses in my Home Team career. It did seem like an awfully long time to spend away from my team and work - many times I felt sorry for my colleagues who had to shoulder the load I left behind (despite my efforts at trying to stay connected via email access provided by the Joint Training Centre (JTC) staff). However, it is also a meaningful and enjoyable time of relationship building, reflection, growth and development. Hence forth, what we did and learnt in that period shaped our thinking and leadership behaviour in one way or another.

**What we did:** At the start of the course, we had a warm "welcome to the HTA Challenge" reception by CE HTA who assured us that the SCSC would stretch us and build us. Being brave Home Team officers, we were looking forward to the challenge.



True enough, the weeks ahead did make us work really hard. We had many cerebral exchanges with JTC on the need for written assignment and assessments; we argued with our lecturers (including one NMP) on our reading and sensing of current affairs; we tried hard to meet deadlines and stay awake in the afternoon lectures; and we organised

many minor ops (i.e. makan sessions, visits to places) alongside the course. We were exposed to many different



perspectives to crisis leadership (the Home Team Crisis Leadership Competency Framework (CLCF), the TEAM REAL, the 7 S model and many more) and tried to absorb the wisdom of our many learned speakers who ranged from Permanent Secretaries to Commissioners and Directors to Ambassadors to academics. To top off our time in this "challenge", we were also subjected to peer assessments and feedback on our leadership behaviour. How we managed to cramp so much in six and a half weeks was sheer engineering genius on the part of the Home Team Academy organisers.

**What we learned:** I suppose most of what we learned were neither from the power point slides nor from the course reading materials. For me, the greatest learning took place when I had the chance to reflect on the leadership moments shared by the respective Commissioners, Directors and Permanent Secretaries. From their frank and open sharing of their ups and downs, their hopes and visions, their difficulties and victories, their mistakes and near misses, we picked up lessons on what we

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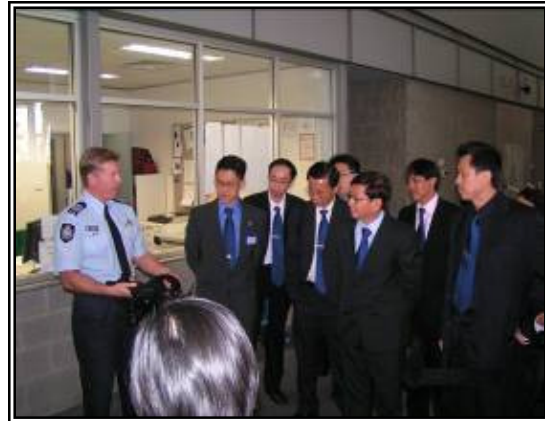
should do in our own capacity as leaders in our respective agencies. The yoke of leadership is heavy and the results often not immediately apparent, but a Home Team Leader must have the courage to make decisions and demonstrate leadership as the safety and security of our people and country depends on our Home Team – even when we do not have all the information and resource needed.

On a more personal level, I also realise that sometimes, the differences in us may be less than the commonalities, if only we bother to look beyond the surface and understand what lies beneath.



I have found a friend in each of my fellow course mates as the six and a half weeks allowed us time to learn more about each other, our likes, dislikes and idiosyncrasies - some of us like harnesses and others love food.

**What we became:** The first day of the course was a strange marriage of sorts as we all gathered in the class in our respective uniforms. Throughout the course, the lines between departments were blurred and the bonds of friendship strengthen as we put our brains and hands together to accomplish projects, manage crisis and organise “operations”.



At the end of the course dining-in, while we don our respective uniforms, we were connected by our friendships, our shared learning and common experiences which went beyond the six and a half weeks of the SCSC. This friendship lives on outside of HTA and from time to time, we get activation from the SCSC class of 2009 to turnout at some of the minor "ops" planned. The last one we had was at Holland Village. I'm sure the bonds we build in the six and a half weeks would serve us well in times of crisis and I am sure future batches of SCSC students would benefit as much as my cohort did. In the words of CE HTA, make the most of your time in HTA as this is the pinnacle milestone course. Good luck!

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