

Yellow Brick Road to learning

Students performing the Wizard of Oz
in dance and song



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Learn globally, play seriously

ACQUIRING a global education is a highly desired goal for college students who no longer seek knowledge for knowledge sake. Students want to have experience that are global in nature. This raises the question of what global education means, and how universities go about investing resources, faculty and funds to provide it.

Prospective students today are far better informed on what they want, when seeking such a global education experience. It’s more than studying academic majors with a global slant. Students equate experience with exposure, i.e. exposure to different cultures and customs and even different ways of doing things. For the locals, this exposure is realised through mixing with students of other nationalities, and signing up for study trips and oversea internship and even spending a semester abroad.

An important consideration is the fact that enlightened employers too prefer students with global orientation. As Dr KC Lee, the CEO of SIM Global Education puts it, employers are looking for graduates who, through their exposure while in school, have developed the agility and confidence to be deployed to different locations and lines of business across the globe. Hence, a globally-educated graduate, by definition, is one who moves across boundaries of geography, culture and language with aplomb. Read more on “Moving comfortably across borders”. (Page 4).

Education, of course, is not the sole prerogative of young people on campus. Folks in the work world too undergo constant training and re-education, so that they are aware of, and can use the latest mind tools in order to plan, strategise, and innovate on behalf of their company. Among the most striking and unusual methodology to unleash your inner creative force is Lego Serious Play. Yes, you read it right, those colourful Lego bricks for assembling Han Solo’s Millennium Falcon, can also be manipulated by your fingers to develop solutions to corporate challenges and even to boost productivity.

Lego Serious Play has been popular with many Scandinavian companies and is gradually accepted by other businesses and organisations across the globe. Nearer home, one of SIM’s top professional development trainers teaches this intriguing but powerful methodology where folks learn to “think through their fingers”. Two SIM GE student writers spent an afternoon with the trainer, playing Lego. They share their thoughts and insight on how Lego Serious Play can improve business. (Page 8). - *Judy Wong*

Editorial panel, left, Francis Chin (Publications Manager & Deputy Editor), Jolene Lee (Publications Executive & Editorial Consultant) Dr Aaron Tan (Director, Teaching & Learning, & Editorial Consultant), Judy Wong (Marketing Director & Editor), Lydia Irene Yeo (Student Development Manager & Editorial Consultant)

VIBES serves as a platform to highlight the achievements of SIM Global Education (SIM GE) students, alumni, as well as campus trends and happenings to industry partners and fellow students. VIBES is a bi-annual publication by SIM GE. The research articles are by students who are undertaking the various programmes offered by our partner universities:

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Left, Dr KC Lee with student writers Desmond Tan and Jain Arunima

Moving comfortably across boundaries

GLOBAL EDUCATION is more than teaching students concepts of globalisation. It is about equipping them with the agility to comfortably move across boundaries of geography, culture and language, says Dr Lee Kwok Cheong.

As the Chief Executive of SIM Global Education, Dr Lee understands full well the importance of this skill set, which employers look for in graduates.

"Employers would certainly seek out graduates with the agility to be deployed to different locations and lines of business and the ability to work with different customers, suppliers and partners," says Dr Lee. "Our students should go beyond telling employers that they have received 'global education' at SIM. They need to demonstrate specific experiences and competencies like working on projects overseas or organising activities for students from different countries."

With the popularity of courses on International Trade, International Relations and other cross-border subjects, the public perception seems to be that enrolling in these study programmes makes one "global".

Globalisation is more than a subject to study and pass exams, Dr Lee explains. He advises students to "seek out activities and actions that let them develop respect and understanding of diverse cultures and experience the world beyond the comfort of home".

Highlighting the spectrum of programmes and activities available to students studying in a global-linked campus, he encourages the students to make friends with lecturers and with students from different countries. "Without knowing it, you would become more global-ready and you would have developed a global network!"

Studying a semester abroad

Education programmes with a global slant emphasise the study of cultures and the issues faced by different nations and communities, and seek to develop skills and attitudes among students as active global citizens. As part of their curriculum, many students go abroad to study one or more semesters. Usually they returned with fond memories of their experience and the bonds of friendship they formed abroad.

One former SIM-University of London student, Pow Poh Wun, recalls, "I did a summer exchange in Sungkyunkwan University in South Korea. It not only broadened my horizon on global accounting practices, it also provided ample opportunities for me to network with people from different countries and to understand their diverse cultures as well."

Poh Wun, 25, graduated in 2013 with a BSc in Accounting and Finance (First Class Honours) and now works as an accounting trainee with Singapore Press Holding. He experienced the different teaching style and student culture in Korea, and he found Korean students to be very hardworking. For instance, most of them were learning three languages in addition to their normal curriculum, he says with admiration in his voice.

Learning one or more foreign languages is definitely a smart way to fit into the global workplace, says Chia Yong Hong, an SIM-RMIT University student who completed his studies early in 2014 and now works in business consultancy.

"My priority now is to learn business Mandarin well, considering how vast and important the China market is," says Yong Hong, 26. "After Mandarin, I want to continue with Spanish, not so much as to chat up senioritas but just in case I find myself doing business with Latin America!"

Eye-opener work experience

As part of her own global education, Aw Mei Shan, 28, once worked overseas as a student intern for three months in 2008. The place was Seaworld's Aquatica theme park in Orlando, Florida, that opened earlier that year. It was an eye-opener for Mei Shan to serve American customers in the theme park. They were more vocal than many Asians in expressing their appreciation for good service.

"You feel that your services were being appreciated.

It was great to see CEOs and ordinary folks enjoying themselves. The park brought families together, including those with handicapped children," says Mei Shan, a graduate of the SIM-RMIT Bachelor of Business (Marketing) programme in 2008.

"I did not know what I wanted in my life before my stint in the US. When I was there, I was living my own life and making my decisions away from my parents. I had to cook, wash my own clothes and shop for groceries. Living away from home has made me learn more about myself. I made decisions about what I really like to eat and should I go to a party or work overtime."

Accepting the whole of human society

A global perspective frees students from the shackles of racial, provincial and nationalistic prejudices, the "us-vs.-them" attitude, so that their thinking and problem-solving takes into account the whole of human society and the diverse environments we live in. Students develop the consciousness and willingness to accept the other – i.e. individuals of different backgrounds, race and religion.

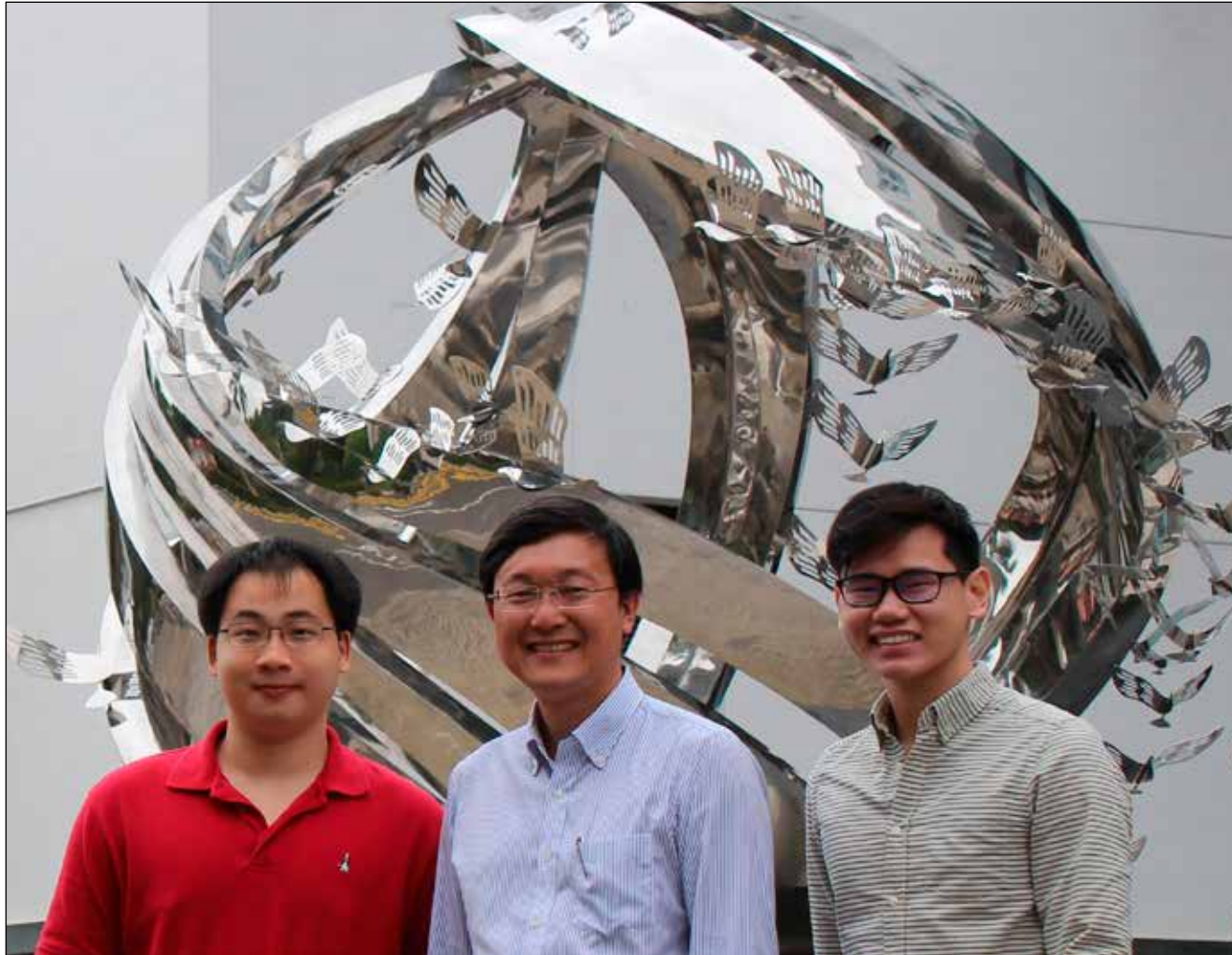
In their course of study, the students get many opportunities to explore social change, poverty and wealth, rights and responsibilities, identity and diversity, peace building, sustainability and global justice. They learn to respect and trust the stranger beyond the horizon, and are willing to offer help when communities beyond their shores are in crisis.

Hence, despite the not insignificant sum that goes into study trips and overseas semesters, parents have identified global education as a worthwhile investment for their children. They are willing to put up the fees to support their children's pursuit of global education either locally or in foreign institutions. The hope is for their children to undergo the valuable experience a global education can provide and gain socio-cultural insights.

Thus, the importance of global education cannot be understated because of the vast exposure it can provide to students. Not only can a global education facilitate the broadening of international perspectives and development of global empathy, it also gives students the competitive edge in the working world.

- Desmond Tan, Jain Arunima

Students who are competent, work-ready



Dr Aaron Tan (centre) and student writers Amos Chan (left) and Joel Soh. The newly-installed sculpture in the background depicts SIM graduates as young eagles soaring over the swirling global workplace

A UNIVERSITY education today is more than an activity to funnel knowledge into the student's cranium, ending with a piece of paper to say the funnelling is complete. Graduates also acquire certain attributes – qualities of character and mental capabilities that will stand them in good stead when they step into the work world.

Possessing the right attributes increases the chance of them being employed. If the hirer is looking for people to complement a project team, for instance, then graduates of programmes where there is strong emphasis on team projects may be a good fit.

If the work culture emphasises self-directed individual performance (as in managing a marketing campaign or handling a bank's investment portfolios), then those from programmes that

encourage independent studies would be suitable.

Researching graduates' attributes

To determine the graduate attributes of students enrolled with partner universities in the US, UK and Australia, a study was recently conducted by a team led by Dr Aaron Tan, Director of Teaching & Learning at the Singapore Institute of Management Global Education.

According to Dr Tan, the study was conducted via focus groups and one-on-one interviews with several employers that included Great Eastern, Showa Denko HD, Pathlight School and Borneo Motors. The study also included perspectives from recent final-year students, graduates, SIM GE staff and lecturers. One challenge in such research is to pin down a definition of "graduate attributes" which can be rather



Attributes of SIM graduates include resourcefulness, resilience and a practical approach towards life and work, says Dr Aaron Tan, in conversation with Amos and Joel.

ambiguous. An attribute is a quality or a characteristic inherent in or ascribed to someone or something. Its meaning ranges widely from possessing practical and technical skills to character and personality.

In this context, "graduate attributes" are a range of characteristics and qualities inherent in the individual as a result of his or her university experience. Often a student possesses personal attributes that may be enhanced over time in the university environment. It is therefore important to consider two factors, the student and the environment, in assessing the kind of attributes that identify graduates of a particular institution.

Over the years SIM GE has invested a lot of resources to provide an environment that is conducive for students to develop the desired qualities and attributes. Students are spoilt for choice in joining the various special interest clubs dedicated to sports, the arts, intellectual pursuits, ethnic cultures and recreation. Participation helps develop a cooperative attitude, leadership traits and logistics skills (for instance in organising a concert or a charity programme). In addition, there are a variety of workshops, talks and contests, and regular overseas study trips.

According to Dr Tan, through the rigorous academic programmes and these structured activities and events, SIM GE aims to foster among its students:

- **Core attributes** – Through workshops, CCA involvement and related activities, students at SIM

GE develop qualities to be resourceful, resilient and pragmatic, and socially responsible;

- **Professional competence** – Through the rigorous academic programmes, students acquire deep competency in their chosen disciplines and are able to continue learning throughout their lives; and
- **Corporate readiness** – On graduating, they are ready to start work, leading confidently in their own contexts, being good team-players, problem-solvers, and effective communicators across all levels within and outside of their organisations.

While SIM GE provides the right environment and platforms for development, students must take the initiative to participate. Such an environment helps to build a self-reliant culture, where students are equally responsible for their own personal development.

A crucial issue to address is whether these attributes are desirable to employers. Ascertaining the desired attributes perceived by employers is no easy task. Requirements of job markets often vary between industries, so this process has to be an on-going one.

Nonetheless, Dr Tan believes the SIM core attributes will always provide a strong foundation for future development and good performance. He reminds students: "We can bring you to the starting line, but how you finish the race is up to you."

- Amos Chan, Joel Soh

Playing seriously to improve business



The lego bricks only have meaning assigned by the players, says Arul John Peter (right), as he coaches student writers Shaun and Lionel

MOVE ASIDE, kids. Clear your Lego Star War Millennium Falcon plane and Emerald Night train set. Grown-ups are taking over your colourful bricks to help them plan, find solutions to business problems and even change the way they do things.

Since 2001, managers, consultants and MBA professors are using Lego parts during meetings to clarify their thinking, add imagination to their ideas and even to develop a closer bond among colleagues.

The idea of playing with Lego bricks in the workplace started in 2001 among business researchers looking at more effective ways to help companies develop strategies, improve communication, boost productivity and change mindset, says corporate trainer Arul John Peter, who holds both an MBA and a certified facilitator qualification in this technique.

Arul, a recipient of the SIM Trainer Excellence Award in 2013, uses elements of Lego Serious Play or LSP, in many of his professional development and management workshops. An associate trainer with the Professional Development Unit, Singapore Institute of

Management, Arul teaches the acclaimed Job of the Manager (JOMAN) course conducted by SIM both as a public programme and corporate in-house training.

Playing with Lego parts is similar to the sandpit set-up by military leaders. Officers use toy figures to represent their own positions and those of the enemy, and mounds of sand to represent the terrain. "When soldiers gather around the sandpit, they are able to visualise the situation, appreciate the challenges and difficulties and work out solutions to them," says Arul.

"In the same way, participants in a Lego session connect the bricks to make all kinds of structures that represent their perception of the situation. They bring their constructions together and tell stories about them. This process helps to clarify thought and open the mind to new solutions and creative ideas," he adds.

Research origins

The idea of Lego for grown-ups originated from research in the mid-1990s. Professors Bart Victor and Johan Roos at IMD Business School in Lausanne,

Switzerland were seeking new ways to help companies develop strategies. Dr Roos, now dean, professor and managing director of Jönköping International Business School, and Dr Victor, used Lego bricks instead of the traditional methods in their research. The "serious play" concept was explored among participants from Tetra Pak, Hydro Aluminium and TFL during an IMD programme for 300 leaders. After the research, Dr Roos and Dr Victor produced their findings in a short article published by IMD.

The article caught the attention of the Lego Company and convinced owner Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen to develop the Serious Play idea into a full-fledged product. It started off as a training method for Lego's own staff but it was further developed into a coaching and consultation method that can be used by other organisations. As its popularity grew, Lego decided to make the contents of the consultation open-sourced, which allows outsiders to receive training to become consultants using this methodology.

Besides Lego parts, the repertoire later includes books and more bricks to conduct private "serious plays". A compact version is Lego Retrospective, which shortens the two-day course into a single session. In Singapore the main consultant is Miss Kris Tay, who works at Rasmussen Consulting Group which specialises in conducting Lego Serious Play for companies, and training trainers in the methodology.

Play, Constructionism, Imagination

Three areas of the research form the core of LSP: Play, Constructionism and Imagination. Play requires players to have an activity based on rules and limitations that they have agreed on. Constructionism is based on the research that uses the participants' understanding to take part in the activity. The final portion is strategic imagination, which is the interplay of creating, describing and challenging something.

The basic values in LSP are the belief in the potential of people and the belief that everyone in an organisation can contribute to the outcomes. For example, a play session can be arranged whereby a leader gathers all senior executives in the organisation to work on complex tasks such as developing strategic plans, resolving conflicts and conducting market research on competitors.

Another belief is that everyone can contribute to the discussion, as leaders don't have all the answers. It can be used, for instance, to establish a shared vision for a new project.

In most meetings, it is not unusual for people leaving the room without a sense of what has been accomplished. This fuzzy feeling means nobody is truly concerned with the issue or task under discussion, because nobody has contributed much in the meeting.

The solution is to ask all participants to share their insight, knowledge and ideas fully at the meeting. When they have contributed in full, it is easier for them to feel responsible and committed. Management folks who played with Lego parts during meetings also created stronger social bonding among themselves.

LSP is used for a broad range of purposes, including strategy development and exploration, organisational development, innovation and product development as well as change management.

Let your fingers do the thinking

In a typical training session, participants are encouraged to "think through their fingers". They build landscape models with the bricks and make up stories about what they have built. They also engage in free and honest exchange of opinions, allowing conversations to flow without the fear of treading on personal feelings. Real issues are addressed and the participants learn to see things from someone else's perspective.

Experience has shown that the LSP methodology is excellent in resolving conflicts, integrating diverse cultures as well as solving issues through discussions in difficult areas such as mergers and acquisitions, branding campaigns, and leadership and team development.

More than 250 organisations and thousands of people worldwide have gone through coaching and training using LSP. The core process covers these four steps:

- Step 1: Posing the question
- Step 2: Building the model (construction)
- Step 3: Sharing the model
- Step 4: Reflection

What others say

Senior executives who have played seriously with Lego were enthusiastic. "The Lego Serious Play experience inspires the imagination and creativity that we all possess but sometimes we unknowingly keep too deep beneath the surface," says Lance Saunders, Sr., Vice-President of Leo Burnett, Canada.

Daniel McGoey, executive director of Wesway, a Canadian non-profit respite care centre, says he and his team of over 30 people attended a full-day LSP session to re-energise and discuss ideas and thoughts about the organisation. "The workshop was a powerful approach to unlock the full creativity of staff. The progression of skill-building exercises creates a uniquely grounding experience of three-dimensional self-discovery interwoven with genuine team values. It was wonderful to see how working with Lego Serious Play process allowed staff to tap their creative potential," he says.

- Shaun Pang, Lionel Lim



Dance with Dorothy and gang

On the Yellow Brick Road

In SIM's newly-opened Performance Art Theatre, Dorothy, Tin Man, Scarecrow and the Cowardly Lion are the first to occupy the stage. The lively two-day performance in August 2014, by 90 students of SIM's DreamWerkz Dance Club is an adaptation of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz by L Frank Baum (1900). Dances include Hip Hop, Locking and Street Jazz, says Cowardly Lion Byran Lau, president of DreamWerkz.

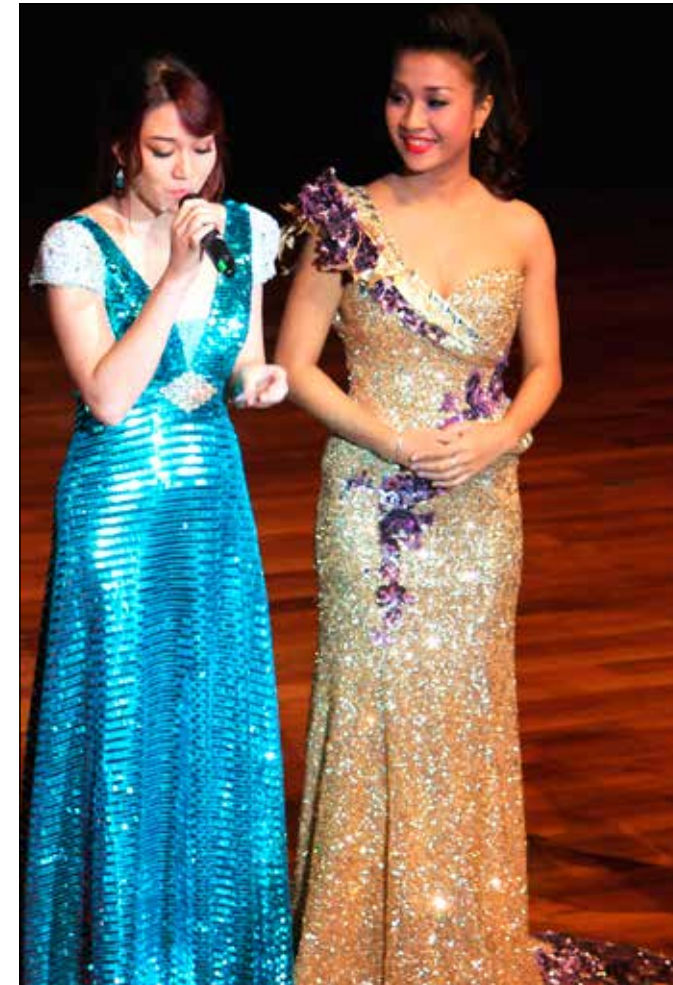


Surviving working life: In school you live according to a timetable for lectures, tutorials, assignment deadlines and exams. But when you graduate and start work, there is no timetable to structure your life. So how do you manage time? The answer, says Dr KC Lee, the CEO of SIM Global Education, is to join an internship programme and do part-time work while still a student. This experience will help guide you in time management when you graduate and start working. Dr Lee (back row, in black jacket) is speaking at the annual CEO Dialogue (Nov 11, 2014) organised by SIM GE scholars (in dark jackets).



Champions of wind and waves

The region's annual windsurfing championship, sponsored by SIM Global Education, takes place in January 2015. In the tertiary students' events, SIM GE collects five medals while Singapore Management University has nine. Windsurfers from Japan, India, Myanmar, Thailand, the Philippines, Hong Kong, China, Indonesia and Malaysia take part in the Asian championship. SIM's Alicia Ng (picture) won the gold in the Novice Women Division.



Beauty and talent from Vietnam

Songs, belly-dancing and a parade in evening gowns and traditional Ao Dai charm the 400-strong audience at a beauty contest organised by SIM's Vietnamese Students' Club on Jan 31, 2015. Beauties from other tertiary institutions also take part. The winners are (left) Miss Talent, Thien Trang (SIM) and overall winner Mai Linh (NUS). Not in picture is third winner, Miss Ao Dai, Ly Phuong Dung (SMU).



50 years educating Singapore's work force

The Singapore Institute of Management opens a Heritage Gallery to showcase its 50 years of training and educating working adults and school leavers. Artefacts include sepia photos, yellowed certificates and degrees, dog-eared textbooks and hand-scribbled assignment sheets, and even a manual typewriter. A silver-grey Time Cube seals away 50 learning & teaching items used in 2014.

Picture top: Marketing director Judy Wong who helps to helm the Heritage Gallery project, highlights some artefacts to SIM Chairman Tan Soo Jin. **Picture below:** SIM staff and member of the gallery project team Cheah Fook Loy studies the books and knick-knacks of a scholar's desk, circa 1980.



My Heart Will Go On

Listening to the tuneful movie song, My Heart Will Go On, is a moving experience at the fusion concert in December 2014.

The repertoire of arrangements are from both classical and pop pieces. In all, there are 74 performers from the Guitar Club, the Film and Performing Arts Society, the String Ensemble club and the Esprimere Singing Club. Weikai, president of the Guitar Club, says all the songs are from the movies, across different genres and eras.

Managing sports as a career goal



Managing sports events is a demanding but exciting career option

SAIL on a boat to Kusu Island, run for your life with zombies on your heels, and camp under the stars, are some outdoor events that are gaining in popularity among Singaporeans.

In race running, for instance, there has been a surge in the number of such events. According to Jackson Bay, general manager of Infinitus, a sports event organiser, there were 61 organised runs (where you paid a fee) in 2012, 74 runs in 2013, and 98 last year.

Jackson's company manages some well-known runs such as the JP Morgan Corporate Challenge 5.6km team run, SGX Bull Charge charity run,

Speaking at a sports entrepreneurship talk at SAFRA Mount Faber in January 2015, Jackson says there is a trend towards not just more runs, but runs based on endurance, lifestyle themes and corporate team-building goals.

Managing sports and outdoor leisure events, however, is physically demanding, so you need passion to stay motivated in the job, says Arthur Lin, CEO of Action-X, another speaker at the SAFRA talk. His company organises the Run For Your Life (while chased by zombies) events in Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

Passion enables you to overcome the obstacles, Arthur says. But you also need to be knowledgeable with the many issues surrounding outdoor events, such as the terrain, safety and crowd control, traffic flow, timeline-management and even the medical conditions of your participants. Advanced skills would include drawing up business plans to entice sponsors and investors, and recruiting volunteers.

Career considerations

If your career ambition is in this industry, the first consideration is that you must be in good physical health.

Another consideration is your passion and strong interest in sporting and outdoor events. You may also want to consider signing up for a course of study that focuses on acquiring knowledge and a skill set relating to this activity.

Sport management has been developing steadily over the years – from the domain of amateur volunteering to the highly specialised profession it is today, says Professor Gerry McCormac, Principal & Vice-Chancellor of Stirling University in Scotland. In response, the industry is demanding well-trained managers with in-depth knowledge of the sport and leisure industry and an understanding of the challenges involved with making sports participation a viable business, he adds.

If your ambition is to work in this dynamic industry, gaining a BA (Honours) in Sports Studies and Marketing is a great starting point, the professor advises. Stirling offers this degree programme at the SIM campus, delivered jointly by eminent and experienced academic staff from the university's School of Sport and School of Management.

One appealing option in this two-year programme is you may choose to spend one semester studying in Scotland. This will provide you with the opportunity to expand your knowledge and understanding of sport outside the context of Singapore and establish a network of contacts that may be useful in your future career in sport, he adds.

Some of the modules in this programme are Understanding Consumers, Understanding Supply Chain, Managing the Business of Sport, Sports Work Experience, Sports Marketing, Sport Governance, and Research Methods in Sports Studies.

The first intake in 2015 starts in June. Visit www.simge.edu.sg for more details.

Diploma lays golden foundation for Hui Fang's degree course



"During intensive study periods, I focused solely on the task at hand and ignored the siren call of leisure activities," says Accounting Diploma's golden girl Hui Fang

TEENAGER Gwee Hui Fang has been in love with Accounting since secondary school days. "I was always curious about how businesses operate, and why similar goods from different companies are priced and branded differently," says the 18-year-old who won the Gold Award in SIM's Diploma in Accounting in 2014.

She studied Principles of Accounting in secondary school and her results boosted her confidence to continue pursuing this field at the tertiary level. Hui Fang is now enrolled in the BA (Hons) in the Accounting and Financial Management programme at SIM-Sheffield University, graduating in 2016.

Her choice of SIM both for the Diploma and degree courses, she says, is because of the institution's well-established reputation, and the fact that its campus facilities are well-maintained and equipped for lectures and students' use. "I feel secure in regards to completing the programme without any major obstacle or delay."

Practical skill set in business, accounting

"The programme equipped me with broad knowledge and a practical skill set in both business and accounting. Since most of the SIM lecturers were also lecturing in the universities, they knew well what we had to learn that would prepare us for university courses."

Other than tutoring students based on the planned

syllabus, the lecturers also provided help and advice to increase the students' understanding of each modules. "I feel that the lecturers did a very good job in providing the bridge between secondary and university education."

"As a result, the Diploma course served as a very good foundation for my current degree programme, and I think the knowledge I gained would also be useful in future jobs."

Among the different topics, Hui Fang found Commercial Law and Company Law and Practices to be the most interesting modules. "I felt that learning about law enforcement rules for businesses is interesting."

Work hard, play hard

"Work hard, play hard" is her motto. Abiding by this sensible philosophy was how she managed to do well in the Diploma studies, says this soft-spoken girl.

"But it is important to have a balance between work and play," she says. "I worked hard when necessary in assignments, tests and exams. During the intensive study periods, I focused solely on the task at hand and ignored the siren call of leisure activities. But when the study period was over, I rewarded myself by 'playing hard'."

"I don't believe in studying every day because it is too overwhelming for any one person."

Hafiz wins Silat championship despite injuries



Hafiz (red belt) faces NTU opponent Khairul at the Silat University Games 2014

WITH lightning reflexes in his kicks and punches, Mohamed Hafiz Bin Mohamed Azhar gave a stunning demonstration of his Silat martial art skill in front of an appreciative crowd from SIM Global Education, NUS, NTU and SIT, and guest-of-honour Masagos Zulkifli Bin Masagos Mohamad, Senior Minister of State, Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs.

Hafiz was the Best Male Athlete in the Inaugural Silat University Games 2014 organised by SIM GE. At the prize presentation on January 5, 2014, at Yishun Sports Hall, Mr Masagos praises the participants and says practising Silat instils sportsmanship, resilience and respect for others.

Hafiz, 25, who has done his SIM-RMIT Bachelor of Business (Economics and Finance), has been practising the sport for 16 years. He was a Gold Medallist in the Silat World Championship 2007. For the Silat University Games, Hafiz won Gold for both Artistic Male Single and Match Class D categories.

"I'm grateful for the support given by my family, coaches and team mates," says Hafiz. "The faith that they put in me drove me to perform to my best."

He has not been competing for a few years due to injury and he was not confident of getting this far, he reveals. Hence, winning the Best Male Athlete was a bonus for him. His opponent for the final match was Khairul Faizal from NTU.

NTU's Silat team put up a strong performance, winning the Overall Champion and Best Female Athlete.

Coincidentally, the SIM Silat student leader responsible for organising the event was Hafiz's wife, Syaza, 25, studying in SIM University's Bachelor in Mathematics programme.

On the success of the games, Syaza says: "It was quite a feat considering that the committee was made up of mostly part-time students who are working full time. There were a lot of challenges in planning this event especially for me as I am a primary school teacher and I had to learn to divide my time well."

Work and part-time study

Hafiz works in the day and studies Economics and Finance in the evening because he believes a knowledge of these subjects will help him advance in his career. "Sooner or later, everyone will have to have a degree," says Hafiz.

"Three times a week I will rush to class at 7pm. And when I finally reach home, it would be around 11pm as I live in the east, a long way from the SIM campus in Clementi in the west."

Hafiz completes his studies at end-2014, at the same time as his wife, Syaza, herself a teacher in East Spring Primary School in Tampines. She holds a Diploma in Education from NIE and an Advanced Diploma in Primary Music Education.

Hafiz's word of advice to young people who have stepped out of school and are not sure if they should go on to tertiary education or go to work: "Continue studying and don't lose the momentum because if you waited too long after secondary school, you might not be able to pick up the pace later."

Kelyn asks tough questions on business success

WHEN and why did you decide to become an entrepreneur? How did your family show their support? How did you put together the resources needed to start your business?

Asking business owners tough but necessary questions, and capturing their answers accurately and coherently won Kelyn Tan Po Yin the Best Student Interviewer award.

Encourage a spirit of enterprise among students

Kelyn herself also aspires to be an entrepreneur. Now studying at SIM-University of Birmingham's BSc (Hons) Business Management with Communications programme, the 21-year-old is one of two winners of the Spirit of Enterprise-Charles & Keith Best Student Interviewer 2014 award.

The Spirit of Enterprise or SOE is a privately-funded initiative founded in 2002 to encourage young people, especially students, to become entrepreneurs through knowledge-sharing and interaction. Each year SOE gives out awards to outstanding small and mid-sized businesses based on student interviews that captured their success stories.

Kelyn, for instance, asked and wrote out detailed perceptive answers from Vincent Ha, CEO and co-founder of Gushcloud, an influencer marketing network that connects brands to social media celebrities with large followings. The transcript covers 12 pages of dense print. One question was on the reasons for choosing to do business in this particular industry. Vincent's answer was revealing:



Kelyn gains global exposure at the Birmingham programme at SIM campus

"We learned that a lot of youth marketing success is driven by alpha males and females. Back then, we did not know what we had, but knew there was something there, as we were using them to get their friends as a way to engage people to come down for parties and events. When we started the Barnett group, we crystallised the idea that influencers are a core part of the digital marketing mix for brands. Barnett was a social media marketing agency. We help companies to grow their Facebook presence through influencers' participation in their Facebook pages, getting them to blog on the brands.

"Before we knew it, we the young social media company are already winning big brands like Citibank, National Library Board and Nanyang Polytechnic," Vincent added.

Disney recognition

Outgoing, resilient and resourceful, Kelyn took up a six-month internship at Disney's All Stars Resorts and Disney's Colorado Springs Resort in Orlando, Florida. She did such an outstanding job during the internship that she was given 22 recognition notices from guests as well as the Disney management team.

In 2013, Kelyn completed a poly diploma course. After her diploma, she did a one-semester preparatory course in Business at SIM Global Education before enrolling directly as a second-year student with Birmingham. She is graduating in 2016.

Passion for communications

Her choice to include Communications in her Birmingham programme reflects her passion for working in the media, entertainment and social network industries. "Communication plays a big part in businesses both the internal and external aspects," she says. "Thus I feel it would be a useful skill to hone so that I could leverage on this strength in whichever career I eventually work in." Another attraction is Birmingham's teaching style. The course is held in SIM's campus in Singapore but the lecturers are from England. "This allows me to gain global exposure when they share their experiences and widen my horizon. It also teaches me how to adapt to their teaching styles and communicate with foreigners which are both skills that are very beneficial to have in the globalised business environment today."



Joyce working part-time at a skin-care outlet

Joyce manages time well in leadership projects

RAISING FUNDS for a children's charity, organising an orientation camp for freshly enrolled students and managing a students' beauty pageant are all in a day's work for Joyce Sup Yee Hua, the indefatigable president of the RMIT Student Council at SIM campus last year.

"For RMIT students, we have so many activities going on," says Joyce, 22, a petite bundle of energy as she moved from one meeting to another. The student council has just held the Orientation Camp at mid-year for more than 300 new students. "I was overseeing the planning team headed by my vice president, Jonathan. I was also overseeing some other teams concurrently," says Joyce. "It was time-consuming because there were many details to take care of."

The objective of the council, she says, is to enrich all RMIT students' lives and create opportunities to help them de-stress outside their studies.

Time squeeze

Wise time management was therefore crucial to her. "I pack my meetings back-to-back so I don't waste the day," she explains. "For instance, if I am having a meeting with someone at SIM at 3pm, I would arrange another meeting at 12 noon (depending on meeting agenda and purpose), also at SIM. And by squeezing in lunch, I would have accomplished several tasks in sequence."

The personal organiser she used is Google Calendar which allows the calendar to be shared. Google Calendar was particularly handy when Joyce was supervising various task forces working on the Mr & Miss RMIT pageant on October 2, 2014 at Zouk. "We have 14 sub-groups totalling 120 student volunteers working on this bash. I have to ensure everyone is performing their tasks as they are supposed to. So far, there were only minor issues and progress is smooth."

Some of the tasks, she says, included scouting

among the 7,000-strong RMIT students at SIM campus to pick five male and five female beauty participants, selling tickets for the event and signing up sponsors for goodie bags.

To add to her hectic schedule, Joyce was also holding a part-time sales job at a skincare retail outlet in West Gate mall in Jurong.

Joyce graduates this year with a Bachelor in Business (Management). "I chose business management because I feel the modules would equip me with the knowledge I need to work both here in Singapore and overseas," she says.

"My short-term goal after graduation is to get a job immediately to gain work experience for at least three years. After that I may sign up for a post-grad course to develop expertise in a more specialised profession."

Nutrition knowledge to eat well

Another strong interest that Joyce has is the study of nutrition science. "My dad once fell seriously ill and this started my desire to know everything there is about diet and how to stay healthy by eating healthy food." This desire led Joyce to take up a poly Diploma in nutrition studies before her RMIT enrolment.

Joyce uses her knowledge of nutrition to advise family members and friends on the nutrition value of food packages, and to tell them whether a particular type of food is good for them.

One advice she gives is on whether ordinary people should consume multi-vitamins. "If you eat a proper diet you don't need multi-vits because they can slow down food absorption," she says. "But of course if you have a hectic lifestyle, and you're too busy to sit down for a proper meal, then you may consider some health supplements like vitamins."

She prepares the news to wake up Singapore

BEFORE the sun is up, she is already at work, doing what she has always loved doing even when she was still a student – helping to report the news.

Laila Humairah, 24, works as News Assistant at the live news broadcast at CNBC. She prepares visual materials that go with the stories for presentation by the news anchor (the individual who faces the camera).

Laila who graduated in 2012 with a BA in Communication at SIM-State University of New York at Buffalo, started at CNBC in July 2013. "I work on a live news show that goes on air from 6 to 7am, requiring me to be at work by 3am," she explains.

Putting stories together

"I'm not a News Anchor. Sometime in future though, I definitely hope to break into reporting the news on television. But what I do now is an essential part of broadcasting. My task is to prepare the visuals (video clips, audio clips, lower thirds and text slates) that go along with these stories written by the producers.

"I also put together and edit longer, two- or three-minute stories (what we call packages) that reporters from our US or UK offices send to us in Singapore, so that everyone in Asia will be able to watch these stories too.

"Occasionally, I write scripts based on wire stories (i.e. reports sent in by Reuters and other news agencies)," she adds.

What makes this job interesting despite the graveyard hours is how unpredictable news can be, and the

adrenaline that comes with working on a live news programme, Laila says. "There is no room for error or inaccuracy, but such an intellectually stimulating environment pushes me to keep improving every day."

Singapore is CNBC Asian regional headquarters. Bureaus from the region, including Beijing, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Sydney, contribute to seven hours of live news programming. The programmes follow market action from the US and provide real-time information on the Asian markets as it unfolds, as well as a preview on the markets as they open in Europe.

Editor-in-chief at SIM

Laila's involvement in student editorial work while studying at the SIM campus certainly prepared her for real-world journalism. In her first semester after enrolment, she joined the school newsletter as a writer, filing reports on school and external events. The following year, she became editor-in-chief of the same publication, leading an editorial team of 10 and taking charge of three issues before she graduated.

Communication course

At UB, the Communication course offered the most suitable path for her to pursue her interest in journalism. "I knew I wanted to do something related to writing and journalism, and felt that the programme was a good starting point.

"What I loved the most about the programme was that the majority of the modules had a real life application, such as the public relations, advertising and journalism modules."



Laila at the CNBC news studio at Level 2 of the SGX building



Soh He Kheng with serried rows of cherry tomato plants in his farm in Sembawang

The boss who loves to attend classes

LIFE might not always be full of cherries, but it is always full of “cherry tomatoes” for Mr Soh He Kheng.

Mr Soh manages a farm at Bah Soon Pah Road, off Sembawang Road, that produces cherry tomatoes. Entering the farm is like travelling back to the 1960s when huge swaths of land in Singapore were covered with vegetable plots, fruit trees and coconut palms.

Mr Soh is there to show you around. But unlike a traditional farmyard, there are no barking dogs or scampering chicken. There is in fact none of the smell and sound of a farm. Instead, you see tall wooden sheds covered with plastic sheet roofing, and underneath, rows of cherry tomato plants. A unique feature of the plants is the roots do not touch the ground but are encased in a lump of treated coconut husk in a black plastic fold. This method prevents other nearby unwanted plants and weeds robbing the tomato plants of the fertilizer.

An automatic watering system of PVC pipes of various sizes run alongside the plants. Water is periodically drawn from various in-house reservoirs and together with liquid nutrients delivered to the plants at a controlled rate.

“The water and nutrients flow into the husk fibre in slow drips,” explains Mr Soh. “You don’t see us watering the plants like what you see in an ordinary farm. There is great saving in time, cost and effort.”

There are more than 10,000 tomato plants to look after but the farm employs only five workers whose tasks include shifting the young plants from seedling beds to the wooden sheds, plucking the ripe tomatoes and packing them into boxes for supermarkets. Each day, about 100kg of tomatoes are

sent to the 37 Cold Storage supermarket outlets. Mr Soh intends to develop a statistical model to provide data that tracks the process from seeding, plant transfer, daily harvesting, and replanting. He is also trying out stacking the plants in a two-storey deck. If it works, he can double his output without increasing the farm size.

Besides being CTO (“chief tomato officer”), Mr Soh, 62, is also managing director of Chen Guan Builders which constructs private residential buildings and other small-scale construction projects. He doesn’t seem to run at the frenetic pace of business people in Singapore, rushing from one activity to another.

“It has been my daily routine to check on the farm every morning, brief the workers of any specific assignments and leave the routine to them to manage. I then drive off to my office and visit various construction sites which my construction firm is involved in,” he says.

Back to school

Mr Soh believes knowledge is wealth, and he has managed to attend many business and management courses (conducted in Mandarin at the Singapore Institute of Management). The Chinese newspaper, Zaobao, in an article, dubbed him “The boss who loves to attend classes” (March 1, 1998).

His academic achievements at SIM were the Certificate in Business Management (November 1996), followed by a Certificate in How to Prepare a Marketing Plan (December 1996), Certificate in Overcome Human Hindrance in Project Management (March 1997), Diploma in Business Management (October 1999), and Advanced Diploma in Business Management (May 2001). It culminated with a Master of International Management awarded by the Australian National University in July 2004.



Desmond Tan, 22, is a first-year student with SIM-University of London’s Diploma in Economics Programme. He is keen on meeting new people to hear about their life stories. As an avid sports fan, Desmond aspires to be a sports journalist.



Lin Lianghe Lionel, 24, is a second-year student in the SIM-University of London Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Economics and Finance programme. He plays football, writes economic articles, does software programming and learns new languages during his free time. He is looking towards a career in the finance sector.



Jain Arunima, 20, is currently doing her SIM Diploma in Management Studies and is planning to pursue her Economics degree from UOL next year. Apart from being an active member in the academic clubs in school, she is also a student blogger and writer, who hopes to pursue a career in the financial sector.



Phang Yun Zhe Shaun, 24, is a second-year student in the Bachelor of Business (Marketing) programme at RMIT University. He has diverse interests and is passionate in break-dancing, soccer, paintball as well as attending live music concerts and sports events. He has acquired skills in filmmaking and photography during his internship at TODAY newspaper and hopes to work in the media industry.



Amos Chan Jia En, 22, is a first-year student with SIM-University of London’s Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Business and Management. An avid reader and writer of both fiction and non-fiction, he believes that ‘to grow is to live’.



Joel Soh, 22 is currently a third-year student at SIM-University of Manchester, pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in management. He enjoys reading and writing and hopes to further his studies in the UK after his degree. His ambition is to become a social entrepreneur.



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