

TOP CLASS

the edupreneurs

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Education Revolution

How online courses are opening
up education to the masses

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A COMMUNITY OF LEARNING

TERTIARY education is a minefield. Everybody is able to navigate through the first 11 years in school fairly equally (unless you hated turning up in class) but once we're out of uniforms and 7.30am assembly times the probability of taking a wrong turn in our education journey rises in tandem with the cost of education. Plus, it can be bloody hard to get into the university you want.

Massive online open courses (MOOC) will hopefully change all of that. Our cover story takes a look at the MOOC phenomena and explains why this recent development is not only growing exponentially, it could pave the way to cheaper and better education that can be accessed by almost anyone from anywhere there's an Internet connection.

Better yet, it turns out that Malaysia is spearheading the move towards accepting MOOCs as an integral part of our education system and we're also the only ones to have a qualifications agency working on guidelines for a seamless credit transfer process. In a few short years, the number of Malaysians undertaking university courses could therefore increase dramatically, which can only lead to a better and more educated workforce.

There are however numerous steps that has to be taken before we achieve such a vision. Universities for instance have to come up with creative ways to assess students (aside from the usual exams) to ensure they've achieved the required level of understanding. There also has to be some structured hours with lecturers in the form of tutorials and group meetings to keep the learning process on track. Still, when you look at the overall picture, the education industry could be on the cusp of taking its next big leap into the future.

This month, we also take a look at addressing generational gaps in the work place as well as how a company is attracting and retaining young workers in its work force. Both matters are related and prove that blending workers with different sets of values and priorities is more difficult than just forcing them to get along. For those who can get it done though, the competitive advantage benefits are high, so perhaps it's worth your time to get to know your new, younger colleagues.

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Anthony Raja Devadoss, managing director and vice-president of BTI Consultants

Grooming global leaders

Registration is now open for the first global leadership programme

BTI Consultants, a global leadership consulting firm specialising in board and executive search, talent management, and leadership development, and INSEAD — the Business School for the World have announced that registration remains open for the first global leadership programme (GLP).

The programme is aimed at enhancing leadership capabilities in an effort to develop next generation leaders across Asia Pacific. Participants will be put through powerful learning and very stressful situations to prepare them to manage intense crisis situations and make solid decisions under time pressures.

The GLP will use a real-time "reality show" format where participants go through the acquisition and running of a troubled company in a turnaround scenario. It will challenge participants by forcing them to confront crisis after crisis in the form of practical lessons and learning that are relevant to their development as an effective CEO. The immersive, highly interactive and hands-on programme will build on personal strengths and abilities.

The role-play will use internal and external players such as past CEOs and successful entrepreneurs; while professors would deploy Socratic methods of meetings in group sessions to foster critical thinking and use cloud-based dashboards for scheduling and transacting events. Participants will also learn valuable lessons on managing crisis situations, enhancing decision-making qualities and executing better business strategies.

"This course is unique and powerful and will provide invaluable experience as it will train participants on how to perform as the CEO, production director, finance director, sales director and human resource director, as well as place them in a turnaround situation at the company. More importantly, it is a test to see whether or not high potential individuals are equal to the task of top leadership jobs," says INSEAD's global leadership programme director and professor, Paul Kewene-Hite.

The five-day residential course is scheduled to take place from May 15-19 at INSEAD's Singapore campus and is priced at SG\$14,000 per student. ■

Reward for high achievers

ExxonMobil recognises Terengganu students and schools for STEM excellence

AS part of continuing efforts to promote high achievement in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education among students in Terengganu, ExxonMobil Exploration and Production Malaysia Inc. (EMEPMI) presented STEM Awards to recognise students and schools that achieved excellent performances in pure science subjects (Add Maths, Physics, Biology and Chemistry) in the 2016 SPM examination.

The event was officiated by Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Haji Ahmad Razif Abdul Rahman. Also present were Terengganu state education director Haji Shafruddin Ali Hussin and Sukiman Mohamed, EMEPMI's general manager — public and government affairs.

"As a global oil and gas producer, ExxonMobil depends on technology and innovation to help meet energy needs. It is critical to develop STEM education, not just to ensure a supply of human talent for highly technical industries like oil and gas, but also because the challenges of the 21st century requires an understanding and appreciation of science and technology," said Sukiman at the closing ceremony.



ExxonMobil has supported excellence in STEM subjects in Malaysia for over 30 years

For the STEM Awards, a total of 60 students received RM1,000 each for their excellent results in the STEM subjects. Four secondary schools that received RM1,500 each for the most outstanding results in pure science subjects were SMK Chung Hwa Wei Sin for Add Maths, SMK Bukit Sawa for Physics, SMK Belara for Chemistry and SMK Rantau PETRONAS for Biology. SMK Chung Hwa Wei Sin also received RM3,000 for being the overall best performing school for STEM subjects while Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah Kemaman received RM1,500 for the highest number of STEM candidates in the state.

The STEM Awards programme was originally known as the Esso Student of the Year Awards when it was first established over 30 years ago for primary and secondary students in Kemaman district, Terengganu. In 2008, the programme was expanded to cover all schools throughout the state and renamed as ExxonMobil Best Student Awards. In line with the focus and emphasis on STEM education, EMEPMI and the Education Department redesigned the programme as ExxonMobil STEM Awards beginning 2016. ■



(L-R) Tan Sri Dr Yahaya Ibrahim, Shafiqe Badril, Mohamad Ridwan Othman, Tan Sri Syed Jalaluddin, Syed Salim

Improving teaching quality

Agile signs collaboration to promote excellence in learning and teaching practices

ADVANCED Global Institute of Learning Excellence (Agile) and Yahaya Ibrahim Educational Services Sdn Bhd (YI) have signed a memorandum of understanding to promote excellence in learning and teaching practices for the education and corporate community. The collaboration would see Agile introducing, exploring and implementing projects such as organisational performance analytics, competency mappings, job matching, learners' and staff profiling, tracking and measuring using data-driven solutions as well as technologies to YI's clients in the country and abroad.

At the same time, Agile will design and conduct capability development programmes for potential clients to help build new skills and capabilities and digital literacy in their staff and educators. Agile vice president, Mohamad Ridwan Othman, said there is a gap in providing quality programmes for educators, corporate staff and their leaders today.

"In a lot of conversations in Malaysia and across Asia, we must not forget the teachers and the school leaders. They are still the biggest factor in

producing quality learning for educational institutions and organisations. Hence, there is a need for our programmes. Partnerships with organisations like YI help to ensure that such innovative approaches will help us reach out to a wider community across Malaysia and Asia," he said.

He added that not one particular entity would monopolise all the good ideas and best practices.

"So we must leverage on each other's strengths. We have some expertise and YI has some expertise, so let's work together."

Meanwhile, YI chief executive officer Shafiqe Badril said their main purpose in working together with Agile was to promote and conduct corporate training, workshops in the field of teaching and learning, holistic education, learning technology, leadership and personal growth.

"We plan to conduct various programmes at various companies, learning institutes, corporate entities and others. This will only be possible via our partnership with Agile," he said. ■



Andrew Walker, the new president and pro vice-chancellor of Monash Malaysia

The new boss

Monash Malaysia welcomes new president and pro vice-chancellor

MONASH Malaysia appointed Prof Andrew Walker as the president and pro vice-chancellor (Interim) in April this year. After more than 20 years at the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra, Walker joined Monash Malaysia as vice-president (Academic) in November 2016.

An anthropologist specialising in the society and culture of Southeast Asia, moving to Monash Malaysia is an opportunity to combine Prof Walker's two passions — Southeast Asia and education leadership. Over the past 25 years he has been a regular visitor to the region, conducting research on cross-border trade, environmental management and rural

development. An author of three books, he is currently writing another one about a rebellion that took place in the borderlands of Burma and Siam in the early nineteenth century.

Walker has a strong interest in higher education leadership. He served as a member of the executive committee of the College of Asia and the Pacific at the ANU from 2009-2014; and was the deputy chair of the ANU University Education Committee from 2013 to 2014, pursuing a wide range of education reforms. Prior to his academic career, Walker worked in Australian government agencies, at both Commonwealth and state levels. ■

Addressing change

INTI hosts talk on how education is affected by technology

IN conjunction with the partnership between INTI International University & Colleges and Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) to establish their 4+0 American degree programmes in Malaysia, SNHU president Dr. Paul LeBlanc, gave a talk on "Innovation in Education for a Dynamic 21st Century".

In his talk, he compared the changes in the higher education industry to the music industry and highlighted the evolution from buying albums to the birth of Napster, to a new business model by iTunes and now the ability to have more songs in a device than you do on your shelves. He then explained how the higher education industry is also relooking their business models and exploring new ways to serve students with the rapid pace of technological change enabling innovation in teaching and learning.

"Online learning is the most common trend but what has changed is that 15 years ago, we would ask 'can we make our online classes as good as traditionally-delivered classes' whereas today, we are asking 'can we make traditional classes as good as the best-designed online classes'.

"Secondly, in addressing the dramatic impact of technology on the future workforce, the higher education industry is also looking at ways to make their students competent and workplace-relevant. One such example is the growth and organization of micro-credentialing or performance-based assessments that recognises the skills educators have and ensures the quality of education professionals."

The most important characteristic of competency-based education is that it measures learning rather than time. Students' progress by demonstrating their competence, which means they prove that they have mastered the knowledge and skills (called competencies) required for a particular course, regardless of how long it takes.

He added that the biggest paradigm shift when heading towards competency-based learning is that students will be assessed on whether they have mastered the competencies rather than the time spent in the course.

"This major change is already well under way — as seen with SNHU's College for America, the first university in the United States to be approved for federal financial aid under the U.S. Department of Education's direct assessment provision," he said. ■



Southern New Hampshire University president Dr Paul LeBlanc

Rewarding excellence

Tune Libra scholarships worth RM20 mil to be awarded to deserving students



Epsom College is a full residential college teaching the IGCSE curriculum

STUDENTS who have an excellent academic track record now have a chance to obtain a British secondary school and pre-university qualification without having to burden their parents with school fees.

The Tune Libra Scholarship offers deserving and academically excellent students access to British boarding school, Epsom College in Malaysia, by providing RM20 mil in scholarships. Founded by Tan Sri Tony Fernandes, Datuk Kamaruddin Meranun and Lim Kian Onn in September 2016, the fund aims to help committed and talented students, who would otherwise not have this opportunity, by paying for their education at the school.

"The Epsom College education is like no other. Students receive not only a quality education to prepare them for the best universities around the world, but also the opportunity to develop extra-curricular excellence in a caring and supportive community. We aim to shape students beyond

the classroom, by instilling ambition, humility, and leadership," said Martin George, headmaster of Epsom College in Malaysia.

Two scholarships are available. The Seed scholarship is a full scholarship for students applying to undertake 18-month and two-year A-Level programmes. Recipients qualify based on academic merit and financial hardship so they will need to secure straight As in the SPM exams and IGCSE, have participated and excelled in co-curricular activities and are able to show proof of financial difficulties.

Branch scholarships are partial scholarships for the last two years of the IGCSE programme as well as for those taking A-levels. Scholars will be selected based on academic merit and financial need so they will need to show strong academic record and the need for financial assistance. Applications for both scholarships are now open for the September 2017 and January 2018 student intake. ■

FEATURE

Attracting MILLENNIALS

Club Med is ensuring it has the right work culture to attract a new generation of workers

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com

Did you know that millennials now account for the largest proportion of the workforce? As their numbers grow, they're also bringing new perceptions about the office environment and how relationships between employers and employees should be structured. It's therefore important for employers to create a millennial-friendly workplace because they will represent about 75% of the workforce by the year 2030. At the same time, it would also help bridge the generation gap between current and future employees, which could affect productivity.

Club Med, the French vacation giant specialising in all-inclusive holidays, has never seemed to have an issue when it comes to getting young people to work for them so we met with Club Med Asia Pacific learning and development manager, Marie Louf, to talk about their initiatives in engaging millennials at their resorts.

In the six decades they have been in business, the formula for success has never changed. Club Med has always and will always rely on their *Gentils Organisateurs* (club ambassadors or GOs) as the pillars for every resort. Louf says the company has about 15,000 employees consisting of more than 100 different nationalities with more than 30 languages spoken at 75 Club Med villages located in more than 40 locations around the world, which is proof that they offer an attractive working environment that is almost universally appealing.

"In recent years we have seen a significant number of millennials joining Club Med. We find that they value our ownership business model and the personal development provided with the job. We also think that we provide our GOs with a solid work and life experience that will benefit them throughout their entire life," says Louf.

The work culture among GOs is defined by five strong values; kindness, multicultural, pioneer, freedom and responsibility. Louf explains that kindness is one of Club Med's key values that GOs must have.

"To be kind is to be attentive to the needs of those around you and to take pleasure in pleasing and servicing others. To be kind at Club Med is one of our signature traits as it represents the G in GO that marks our difference compared to other resorts."

She adds the GOs are trained to be open and available while providing a warm and friendly approach in dealing with clients and their team members.

"We teach our staff that to be kind is to look after and care for others through communicating with kindness and benevolence, to be useful and sincere and to learn how to say no and be diplomatic," she says.

In terms of multicultural, she explains that Club Med encourages their GOs to promote their cultural backgrounds and to welcome those of different cultures.

"This can lead to good personal growth and a better multicultural environment. It is also important that everyone is proud of their origin and culture and takes pleasure in sharing it with others as it will help cultivate open-mindedness while encouraging individuals to adapt and be flexible while learning tolerance to manage the different nationalities we encounter," Louf explains.

She adds that in terms of personal growth, GOs are given opportunities to lead the way by coming up with innovative ideas and implementing them in order to respond to a client's needs that is both essential and not yet fulfilled.

"This encourages our GOs to fight for their ideas and defend them among their peers in a safe environment. We want to provide them a platform where they can test out new ideas, daring to create surprises and learning how to take risks. At the same time, it will give them confidence and to be aware of their value at Club Med."

GOs are also given the freedom to be autonomous, allowing them to fully achieve their aspirations while showing respect for themselves, others in the company.

"By giving them the freedom to decide on their job scope, it helps to integrate, train and delegate tasks thus allowing the GOs to work together autonomously in order to get the best out of each person. At the same time, it helps develop co-responsibility as they work together on projects. Meanwhile, freedom also flourishes in an open environment where the GOs are able to define the work rules, to follow them and en-



Club Med
Cherating Beach
chef de village
Youseff Tobrouki



Kristina Choo
works at Club
Med Kabira
Ishigaki, Japan
as a assistant
receptionist



Elaine Tan, gentil organisateurs of
Club Med Cherating Beach

courage others to follow them," Louf adds.

She also says that freedom is also a form of confidence as it teaches the GOs to respect themselves and others, as well as providing room to make mistakes so they can learn from their errors in order to succeed.

"Lastly, responsibility is about GOs being responsible in doing their job in a competent and conscientious manner where they show their commitment and respect for the task given to them. Our staff are taught to take full responsibility for their decisions, admitting their errors and deal with them immediately. We do not promote authoritarianism and a slave driver management style or transferring stress and problems without dealing or delegating them," she adds.

GOs at Club Med are assigned to run the villages and are given opportunities to shine in areas they are passionate in according to the skill sets that they bring.

"Through the freedom and versatility we offer, GOs are able to pick up or improve their skill sets while taking on new responsibilities that would help advance their careers with Club Med or for future career endeavours. At the same time, we have an incomparable personal development programme for our staff where they have the opportunity to tie in their passions to their job. It is important to maximise talents or help discover new ones as this will also provide an opening to new horizons and cultures," says Louf.

She adds that due to these factors, millennials will benefit from their working experience with

the company as it will help with their future endeavours.

"Our GOs will gain a sense of service, autonomy, versatility, creativity or open-mindedness and kindness that would be their springboard into the future."

Finding yourself with Club Med

Youseff Tobrouki, who is the chef de village (general manager) of Club Med Cherating shares that he came to know about Club Med through his parents who worked for the resorts as GOs.

"My parents had worked for Club Med for 42 years and that's why I decided to start my career as a GO with the aspiration to become a chef de village of a Club Med resort. I would consider myself privileged to have the opportunity to experience working at Club Med at a young age as I have learned what the Club Med spirit is and the values upheld by the resort," he says.

He also shares that what continues to motivate him to stay is the opportunity given to staff to travel and work in all their resorts around the world.

"We are given the opportunity to transfer to other Club Med villages after a year of service at our current village. With such opportunities is something I look forward to as I enjoy meeting new people from different cultures who will share their work experience from other Club Med villages around the world."

Meanwhile for GO Elaine Tan, 24, she chose to work at Club Med because of the opportunity to be able to travel the world and to improve herself as person.

"That being said, even though I have only been here for about six months, my manager has given me the responsibility to be in charge of the fitness activities, which is something that I am passionate in," she says.

Tan shares similar sentiments with Tobrouki that every day at Club Med is a unique working experience, which makes her love her job more as she sees it as a chance for her to grow and improve herself to be a better person.

Kristina Choo, who works as an assistant receptionist at Club Med Kabira Ishigaki, shares that her experience working for Club Med has always been fulfilling.

"In just four years with Club Med, I have travelled to five different countries and got to know people of different cultures and backgrounds. Right now since I am in Japan, I have managed to learn to speak Japanese. The experience Club Med provides their GOs is something unique and it has kept me inspired to continue working with them. We are also given the chance to perform after working hours, which is something that most if not all of us look forward to," Choo shares.

Judging by the experiences shared by the GOs, Club Med knows how to attract and retain their youthful staff. Perhaps other companies should use them as an example of what to do in order to attract workers of the future. ■

Club Med does not only provide GOs a solid work experience but life experience that will enrich their time working at the resort that would benefit them throughout their lifetime ■

—Marie Louf, Club Med Asia Pacific learning and development manager

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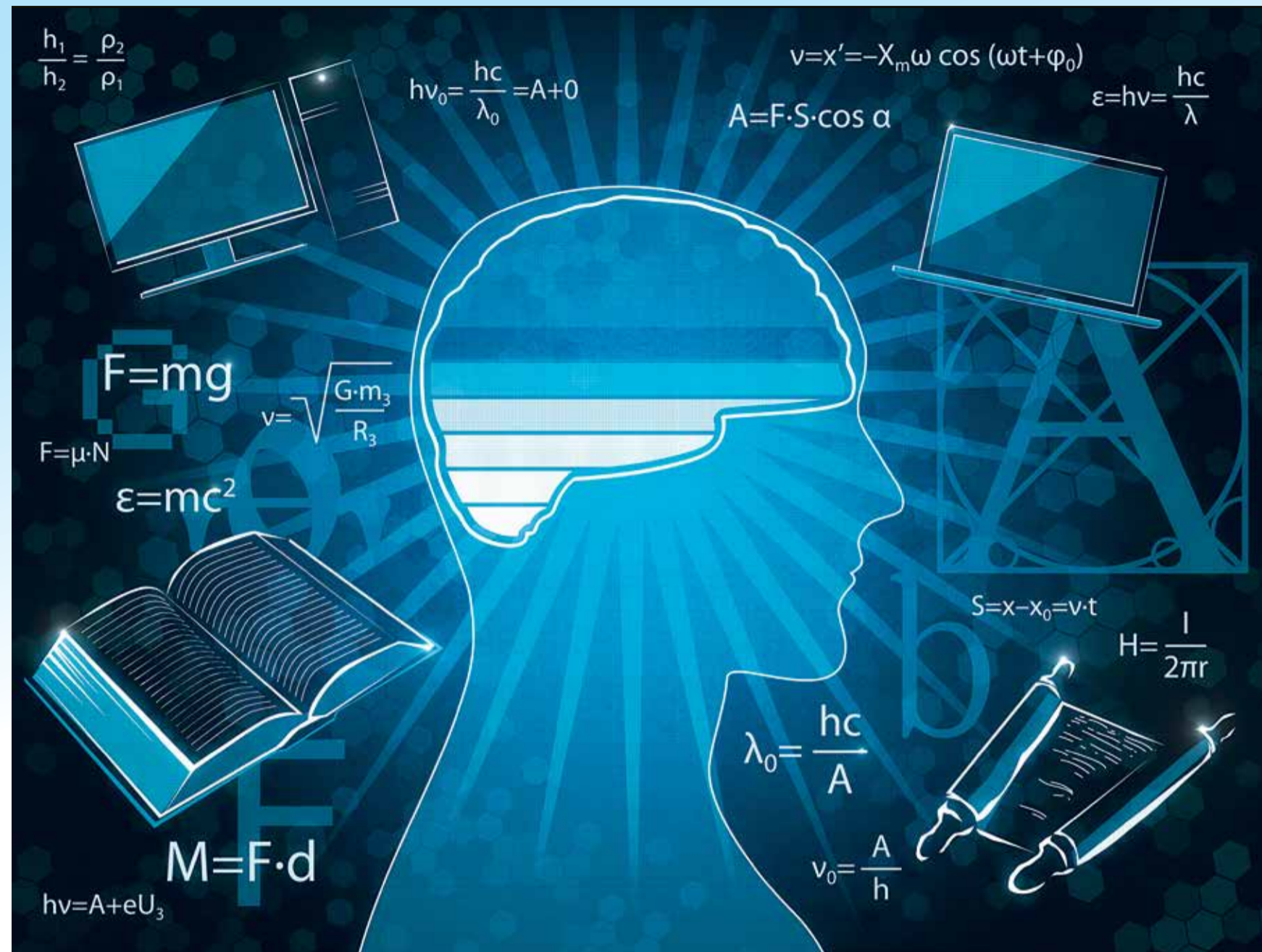
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COVER STORY



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Adam Brimo, CEO and founder of OpenLearning

The packed lecture halls on university campuses could soon be a relic of the past

Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh of the Ministry of Higher Education has tasked OpenLearning to develop MOOCs for Malaysian public universities



Here's a scenario every student faces after they're done with secondary school. The question that always comes up is what should I do next? There are thousands of courses available out there and unless you're someone who has always known that you wanted to be in a specific profession (e.g. doctor, lawyer or engineer), deciding on what to study in university has always been a case of trial and error.

That's not very reassuring because tertiary education is expensive. There is nothing worse than signing up for a course, paying the fees and then halfway through realising you hate what you're studying, yet thousands of students make this mistake every year. If only there was a way to sample a course first before committing to it.

Well, thanks to the Internet and a change in the mindset of education stakeholders, students can do just that and more. The catchphrase everyone needs to know is MOOC.

A MOOC or massive open online course is an online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the web. In addition to traditional course materials such as filmed lectures, readings, and problem sets, many MOOCs provide interactive user forums to support community interactions among students, professors, and teaching assistants.

It sounds revolutionary but the history of distance learning can be traced back to the 19th century when correspondence courses were introduced to overcome the issue of students not being able to overcome the physical barriers to attend lectures in person. Of course this was at a time when it took nearly a year for a student in Malaysia to get to a university in England so learning through the mail was the only feasible solution.

Substitute snail mail with the instantaneous and unlimited reach of the Internet and the potential to engage students becomes literally limitless.

That was something OpenLearning founder and chief executive officer Adam Brimo was betting on when he founded the company in 2012 together with University of New South Wales (UNSW) computing science professor Richard Buckland and former UNSW research student and tutor David Collien.

"David and I were students at UNSW and Richard was our lecturer in the first year. It all started when Richard uploaded his lectures on You-

Revolutionising EDUCATION

Thanks to the advent of MOOCs more people can gain access to education without having to sit in a lecture hall

Text by FAISAL SHAH | faisalshah@hckmedia.com

Tube and he got about 3,000,000 views. That in itself wasn't so surprising because he's an entertaining guy and he gets a lot of people attending his lectures, a lot more in fact than the number of people enrolled in his course, but what makes his course special is not so much the lecture but the community that he builds where students end up working together outside of the classroom.

"So while there were only a few hours of lectures, students often work 10-20 hours per week with fellow course mates solving problems and understanding the basics of computer science from the ground up. This was achieved by using creative activities, projects and lab questions, which would stimulate discussions.

"Although his lecture videos were popular, Richard was disappointed that viewers weren't able to get the full course experience. Yes they were entertained but they weren't really learning

anything either. So that is why the three of us decided to build a platform that would enable us to bring that style of community and project based learning online," says Brimo.

Learning online wasn't a new thing as learning management systems, blogs, wikis and social networking had been around for a while but Brimo says there wasn't really anything that fused the content and the community together in a way that made it possible to design good learning activities.

"When we started, David was doing his PhD on online learning communities with Richard but his passion was really in education and he had been a lecturer and tutor at UNSW for some time. I had been a tutor too while I was studying there so we all had a shared a passion for teaching," he adds.

Brimo also adds that there were two key rea-

sons why they started the company. The first one was to increase the quality of education because university education was just too dry, focusing mainly on lectures and tutorials.

"We found that most students hardly ever attended lectures in Australia but yet they were still graduating despite the poor attendance numbers. That showed they were obtaining their knowledge through other avenues like shared knowledge and out of class activities. So we wanted to build the OpenLearning platform to make it easier for people to build courses and to guide them to do it," he says.

The other key reason was to improve access to education by overcoming physical, financial and cultural barriers.

"By providing people access to a course building platform for free, we asked that the course builders make those courses free as well. Our view is that the best courses don't have to come from the biggest brand names that charge the most to access their content and we also wanted to make the knowledge accessible to everyone," adds Brimo.

By making the course content transparent, OpenLearning aims to spur competition to create better courses. They also allows students to try similar courses from different institutions to find out which one suits them the best, without having to make a huge financial investment first.

Since launching their platform at the end of 2012, the company has expanded its range of tools while promoting a learning philosophy called social constructivism. It sounds like new-age mumbo-jumbo but the theory is that human development is socially situated and knowledge is constructed through interaction with others. Meaning that students learn better and are more engaged when they are empowered to add their points of view and use projects and course work to demonstrate what they have learned.

Brimo and OpenLearning are now heavily involved in Malaysia's education scene because the company is a major player in the Malaysian higher education blueprint 2025.

"The blueprint calls for an increase in the number of students in public universities but doing so raises a lot of issues. One of the solutions is to use MOOCs. Malaysia has 20 public universities and they have decided to work together via the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and OpenLearning to develop standardized course content. So, rather than 20 universities designing 20 similar courses one or two of them can take the lead but then students from all the institutions can sit for the same course by using a MOOC.

"This saves money but it also increases the quality of the MOOC because the universities are not wasting resources trying to do the same thing. Instead, each can focus on their area of expertise and create better content that is then shared with the others," says Brimo.

Because physical space in Malaysian public universities is in such short supply, MOOCs improves access to education by allowing students to take courses without having to actually be on campus. Furthermore, as part of the efforts to achieve the blueprint, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) aims to



allow up to 30% of all course content (up from the current 15% allowed in 2015) to consist of MOOCs, meaning that students will be able to study their entire first year off campus.

"In that situation, if everyone did it the capacity of the university would increase by 30% meaning they could increase student numbers without having to invest in new buildings. Not only the numbers increase but the quality of the education would increase as there would be more student interaction and discussion to increase the amount of learning each student receives. It's also more transparent because through MOOCs the public can now take a look at the course content each university has so it encourages them to do better," he adds.

Malaysia is actually a global pioneer when it comes to MOOCs because no other country has a national policy around blended learning and MOOCs. Nobody else has a qualifications agency working on guidelines for credit transfer from MOOCs to traditional universities either, which is why the rest of the world is keeping a close watch on how the country implements and integrates these courses into its national education blueprint.

Brimo's efforts have also been noticed by his alma mater. In April this year, UNSW announced they had signed an agreement with OpenLearning to move 600 courses to a blended learning model in which online learning replaces lectures as part of its five-year \$100 mil plan to overhaul teaching at the university. This will include the big, standard first and second-year courses, which can have enrolments of more than 1000 students, and where a major investment pays off because the courses do not change very often.

Will MOOCs ever replace the traditional lecture hall and tutorial sessions in universities though? The short answer is no. Education is a lucrative industry and while more big-brand name universities are joining the MOOC movement, the courses offered are usually pathways to joining full programmes instead of replacing them completely. However, they do lower the overall cost of getting a tertiary education and in the future, they could make it possible for a student in the depths of the Borneo jungle to sit for a business leadership course at Harvard Business School without ever leaving his home.

Education without borders. That's a goal worth striving for. ■



FEATURE

Quality ASSURED

Peninsula International founding principal Clive Rogers is focused on ensuring his teachers deliver a quality education

| Text by FAISAL SHAH | faisalshah@hckmedia.com

Clive Rogers has 38 years of experience in the teaching profession. Starting life as a PE teacher, his vocation allowed him to travel the world teaching students from many different countries and sometimes it wasn't just about teaching students. Rogers was even involved in professional football, working with the late Graham Taylor when the latter was England manager, and though his role was related to developing leadership qualities, not many principals can claim to have worked with English Premier League stars after they had left school.

Having worked for an international school in Malaysia in the past Rogers now makes his return to the country as founding principal of Peninsula International School Australia (Peninsula), which is set to be the first school in Malaysia to offer Australia's Victorian Curriculum for primary and secondary students.

"I think Malaysia has a wonderful mix of cultures, which is one of the main draws for me, but I also think that Asia in general is also undergoing a transformation in terms of international education. Malaysia in particular has opened its doors to international schools so it shows that education is now very high on the agenda of not only the government but also parents who are thinking about what they need to do to prepare their children for an ever changing global environment," he said.

The Victorian Curriculum offered at Peninsula is equivalent to the Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Curricula when it comes to preparing students for tertiary education and Rogers thinks by being the first school in the country to award the Victoria Certificate of Education (VCE) locally, Peninsula is offering Malaysian parents more options in an increasingly globalised education industry.

"Peninsula has a wonderful school in Austral-

ia with a great track record of preparing students for a future without borders and we're confident of being able to replicate that at the Malaysian campus especially since there are many connections between the two countries. Parents are also looking for alternatives to IGCSE and IB in the search to give their children the best level of education possible and I am confident they will find the VCE to be just as comprehensive as other curriculums.

"I also think it's advantageous when two partners with a substantial amount of experience in education (Peninsula and HCK Education) come together to build a school and put the education experience ahead of the profit expectations to ensure students are given the best education possible," he adds.

Because international school fees are fairly high in Asia, Rogers says that the main concern of parents is the quality of teaching offered in the schools. One of his jobs therefore is to ensure the teaching staff at Peninsula lives up to the promise of the brand and delivers high quality education to their students.

"After 38 years in the international educational business, I know what traits a good teacher needs to have and I have been more than happy to get involved in the hiring process to ensure that Peninsula hires the very best teachers possible for each subject taught. Aside from meeting the benchmarked academic requirements we set, we also look at their interna-

ional teaching experience while earmarking those with a strong background in pastoral care as well as a track record for working outside of the classroom because we believe in the holistic development of every student.

"On top of that, we will also perform extensive background checks on every applicant that has been shortlisted for a teaching position at Peninsula and do a thorough screening of their qualifications to ensure the safety of our students and that every teacher has the required knowledge, experience and in some cases, licence to be a member of our faculty. Finally, I will also have a face-to-face interview with each potential teaching hire, which helps ensure we can work together as a team," says Rogers.

On the subject of teaching methods, the founding principal of Peninsula is a believer that schools should teach the way children learn.

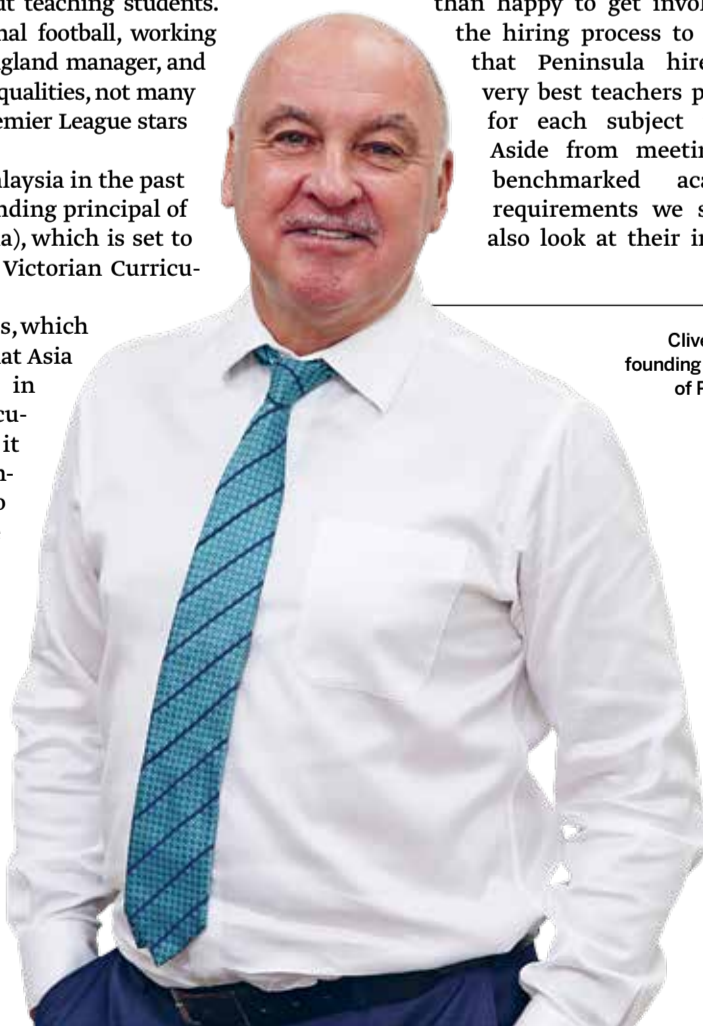
"I think that teachers and schools need to adapt their method of delivering knowledge to suit the needs of their audience. Therefore, there will be a lot of information technology incorporated into our classrooms but there will also be group discussions and other methods to increase the effectiveness of each lesson. It's important to remember that we will be preparing students today for jobs that aren't there yet, so we need to ensure that they will be able to understand and absorb the information they need to perform in their future working lives," he adds.

Many parents tend to compare the quality of various curriculums and schools to get some idea of where to send their children but Rogers is wary of such direct comparisons.

"Each international curriculum has its own set of merits and emphasises different areas of education so a direct comparison isn't accurate as each parent has a different set of priorities that they want to be fulfilled. Having said that, I think awards or recognition from external bodies and the administrators of the curriculums do carry weight because they are based on like-for-like comparisons.

"Ultimately, I think that when Peninsula opens the doors to its Malaysian campus in 2018, it will offer students and parents a viable alternative to other international schools and curriculums and I will work at overseeing its operations to ensure that we deliver on their expectations," says Rogers.

By having passion and clear dedication for teaching as well as understanding the need to focus on the details, Clive Rogers hopes to set Peninsula on the right path to delivering excellent education to its students. Though the first term only starts next year, it's abundantly clear that the first steps to ensure a quality educational experience have already been taken. ■



Clive Rogers,
founding principal
of Peninsula
Malaysia

FEATURE

In the working environment today, there are four distinct generations in the workforce, each with their own world view and work ethics. Based on research undertaken by VitalSmarts, they found that more than one in three people has reported wasting five or more hours in a week just on conflict between different generations.

The issue of the generation gap in a workforce is a very real problem and is especially acute between baby boomers and millennials as they seemingly have the most difficulty in working together. Problems they encounter range from dismissal of past experience, a lack of discipline, lack of focus, lack of overall respect and the resistance to change or unwillingness to innovate. At the same time, the study showed unaddressed resentment between baby boomers, Gen X and millennials have sapped workplace productivity by as much as 12%.

With such negative effects, it's apparent that this new phenomenon has to be addressed before the situation continues to deteriorate and one company is spearheading efforts. CrucialSkills Leadership Centre Sdn Bhd (CLC) will be hosting four-time *New York Times* bestselling author, dynamic keynote speaker and leading social scientist for business performance, Joseph Grenny, who will address the issue of the Great Generational Divide.

CrucialSkills executive director M. Prakash Dass shares that the topic Grenny will be talking about focuses on the research that VitalSmart has done in regards to the generational gap in the workforce.

"Many organisations have found a huge gap with regards to talent management where on one hand, there is the issue of recruiting new and competent talents and while conversely they are also working at retaining current high-value employees at the same time. Therefore, organisations are increasingly looking into how to manage them (talents).

"Every member of each generation in the workforce follows a certain type of value system based on their life experiences. So each of them comes to work with different types of emotional baggage that they will use at work," he adds.

Dass also shares that the first part of Grenny's presentation on the Great Generational Divide will be on the research done to bridge the gap between generations.

"We all know that this is a growing issue but to what extent has this become a big problem in the workforce? So through the sharing of the research, it tells organisations that they are not facing the problem alone and highlights the causes of generational gaps in the workforce.

"The second part of the talk will focus on how organisations deal with the issue. This is where Grenny will talk about the tools that are needed in order to address and bridge the gap and this is what most organisations are looking for, quick and practical solutions to the problem," he says.

Highlights for participants of the Great Generational Divide workshop conducted by Joseph Grenny include him teaching methods to aligning accountability with dialogue skills to bridge the gap between

BRIDGING generational gaps

Companies need to address differences in values among employees to boost productivity

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com



Prakash along with his CrucialSkills team.

generations in organisations. The event will take place on July 17, 2017 at Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

CLC is a training and consulting company that specialises in organisational leadership and behavioural science and dialogue skills and is the exclusive licensee for VitalSmarts USA in Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam. The Vi-

talSmarts products and services were previously under the stewardship of Leadership Resources (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, CLC's sister company. With the growing popularity and client engagement for VitalSmarts programmes and products, CLC was established to enable better focus and solution execution to clients with a dedicated team in place. ■



Many organisations have found a huge gap with regards to talent management where on one hand, there is an issue of recruiting new and competent talents, while retaining talents is another issue. However more importantly, organisations are looking into how to manage them (talents). ■

— M. Prakash Dass, CrucialSkills executive director

FEATURE

Ensuring a HEALTHY virtual life

As children spend more time online parents need to become aware of their cyber wellness

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com

Accessibility to information has become limitless through the power of the Internet. On the other hand it has also created a dire need to educate children on Cyber Wellness (CW). CW refers to the positive well-being of people using the Internet where it involves an understanding of online behaviour and awareness on how to protect oneself while in cyberspace.

Seeing the needs of CW, Yayasan Generasi Gemilang (GG) answered the call and became one of the pioneers to introduce CW in Malaysia. The aim of CW is to educate students to be positive and responsible digital users when navigating the cyberspace and to demonstrate respect for themselves and for others. At the same time, it wants to equip adults with the appropriate skills and knowledge to mentor children in the area of digital citizenship.

In an interview with *Top Class*, GG director of services Nick Foong, he talks about the CW programmes organised by the foundation, the challenges and the importance of parents playing a role in their children's wellbeing in cyberspace activities.

Top Class: As GG sees the need and importance of CW, could you share what activities/seminars the foundation has been conducting to educate students on cyber wellness?

Nick Foong: We run a programme called CLUTCH (Changing Lives Using Truth, Character and Hope) where it mentors and encourages students to be positive online users and have a balanced lifestyle consisting of both online and offline activities.

The programme helps them understand how they can be shaped by developments in the cyber world and discuss topics including cyber bullying, social networking, gaming and pornography. It is designed in a way to encourage youth to be responsible users and challenge them to be a positive influence online and offline.

We strongly believe CW is not just about internet security but to be able to live in a balanced reality. Hence, we go beyond safety and security; we address the values behind that and believe that family relationships are vital in dealing with cyber issues.

And because we believe relationships are important, we also run the MiGO2 (Mentoring the Internet Generation Online and Offline) programme that help parents and teachers to gain a better understanding of the next generation's motivation for internet activity, how to mentor more effectively and build better relationships.

Through the MiGO2 programme, awareness is built in both adults and children where the objective is to bridge the digital divide between them and to help them understand the fundamentals of the Internet today relating to social networking and gaming.

How important is CW in today's digital age?

It is imperative that both children and parents are made aware of the inherent risks involved in today's digital age and to know how to navigate the cyber world efficiently. As for children, the concern is about safety and security risks, as well as the consequences of their digital footprints on their future, imparting of values and character

According to MyCert Incident Statistics, Cyber-security Malaysia, cyber bullying cases are increasing and becoming a worrying trend. In 2015, MyCert recorded 442 cases, in 2016 it recorded 529 cases. The latest cases recorded until March 2017 is 150. However, incidences reported are for urban areas since children have greater access to the Internet as compared to rural areas.

Could you share some cases of cyber bullying known to GG?

As of 2017, we no longer handle CW counselling cases. However, when we discover cases during the running of our school programmes, we will recommend them to seek help from someone they trust (school counsellor, teacher or parent) while raising it to the counsellor or teacher in charge. At the same time, we would direct them to call Childline 15999, a confidential 24-hour helpline for children to seek the help that they need.

Could you share of the milestones achieved by GG through the CW programmes?

In 2016, we have worked with over 8,000 students and over 3,500 parents and adults in 23 schools (international/private/local) and seven organisations through the running of our CW programmes. We've also had the privilege to partner with key like-minded organisations to broaden our impact.

Back in 2011, we were invited by the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry to talk about CW at a child protection seminar which later led to us being part of their taskforce (with over 40 government ministries and key industry players) to discuss and develop child online protection policies in 2013. We also had the opportunity to work together with MDEC to reach 3000 students in schools in the Klang Valley to educate them on CW.

And just last year, our partner DiGi gave us the opportunity to leverage our expertise in cyber wellness to develop two key events to drive awareness and capacity building on the importance of digital safety and responsible digital citizenship. The DiGi Customer Open Day where we brought parents and children through an experiential learning process helping them understand the effects of cyber-bullying and how to address it. And at DiGi's first ever CybersAFE Digital Citizen Camp we educated over 100 school children about current digital risks and their role in contributing towards a safe and positive digital lifestyle.

What are some of the challenges that GG faced in terms of cyber wellness? How did GG overcome them?

As a pioneer for CW, one of our biggest challenges initially was the readiness of schools to adopt such programmes into their curriculum. However, through the positive feedback from both students and school counsellors over the years, we have managed to establish a strong track record among schools across the Klang Valley.

In the area of counselling cases for families, one of the key challenges is the willingness of parents to invest the time to mentor their children. CW issues stem from problems within the family relationships, therefore if families are not willing to make certain changes it could affect their children's recovery from these issues.

How supportive is the Ministry of Education in Generasi Gemilang's efforts to educate children on cyber wellness?

We are currently a part of the same Child Online Protection taskforce at the Education Ministry where we share our on-ground experience and expertise whenever possible to add value to their policy-making. ■



Yayasan Generasi Gemilang director of services Nick Foong



PHOTOS BY JONATHAN LOI

to help govern these decisions. It includes being responsible, taking ownership and self-control, striking a balance online and offline and being a positive user by sharing good information

Meanwhile, for parents, it is about the importance of building a relationship with their children in order to mentor them in digital use, because very often relationship problems that are the cause of cyber-related issues we see. That being said, parents play a key role in mentoring children in making good decisions online and offline.

So how should parents play a role in educating their children on cyber wellness?

It is important to invest time in building relationships with their children as when they do they will also build trust with the children. With trust and openness, there's more room for dialogue to happen about challenges and issues that children may be facing.

The root of cyber issues usually stems from a relationship challenge that the child is facing. Building strong relationships also helps parents mentor their children to make better decisions online. We always say that rules without relationship lead to rebellion.

At the same time, it is important to be Internet savvy and understand the current trends. It is also important to build a strong family culture where children are moulded because it is where they learn values and principles, right from wrong.

What is the situation of cyber bullying in the country?

CAREER ADVICE

ARCHITECTURAL digest

Being an architect sounds like a dream job but how tough is it?

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com

Like most adolescents, Wong Wei Ping was not sure what he wanted to do in terms of his future career. Epiphanies come in many forms though and after his elder brother enrolled into an architecture course, Wong found the vocation he wanted to pursue as a career. It wasn't any particular eureka moment, but after observing the coursework, drawings and beautiful scale models his brother built, he was inspired to follow in his footsteps to be an architect. So what's it like to be architect in Malaysia? Read on to find out.

Can you share how you got yourself into architecture and how supportive your parents were of your decision to follow in your brother's footsteps?

Wong Wei Ping: I would consider myself lucky as my parents were supportive of me when I told them that I wanted to take up architecture as my course of study. I then enrolled myself in the Building Technology course at Tunku Abdul Rahman College.

Upon graduating from college, I immediately joined the Welsh School of Architecture in Cardiff University in Wales, United Kingdom. I am glad that my parents were supportive of me and I think they were relieved when they learned that I wanted to become an architect just like my brother instead of my childhood dream of being a comic artist.

What sets you apart from other architects with similar experiences?

I believe that I am more playful in nature in the sense that I never have two architectural projects that would look the same. Most of my projects have a story behind them. I believe it is important to tell a story of the concept of the project. My company and I are particularly interested in the narration of space where it is rather unconventional for many architectural firms to do so.

What are some of the challenges that you face as an architect and how do you overcome them?

One of the biggest challenges that I face is when we are halfway through a project and to find out that my team and I might not be the right architect for the job or the client who engages us because they do not have the vision we do. It might be an oversight from both our side as architects and the clients at the beginning of the project where no one seems to notice. However, ultimately, we have to decide the best way to go about it. Hence, we either shorten the contract or carry on with the project until completion while setting different goals and expectations all together.

How do you keep yourself motivated in what you do and where do you find inspiration to come up with new designs?

In every project that we undertake, there are always their ups and downs. At the end of the day, we are getting paid for our services and we have to do our very best. I do not need to keep myself motivated in what I do because I really love what I am doing. In terms of inspiration, it can be found everywhere. We just need to keep our eyes and minds open. Even looking under the carpet could be a source of inspiration as we tend to hide lots things under there.

What are you most proud of in your architectural career?

My biggest milestone as an architect was when my team and I were invited to give a talk on social urbanism at an event organised by the Malaysians Institute of Architects in 2016. I would call this my proudest moment because our efforts in the Malaysian architectural scene are being acknowledged despite my team and I being a non-registered architectural design firm.

What are your thoughts on how the architectural service sector in Malaysia is faring?

I think the industry has been doing quite well in the past decade. The younger generation of architects have a wide scope of aspirations and different design trends have been emerging. Topics on architecture have shifted from focusing purely on aesthetic, form and function to more a community orientated and social issues outlook. In short, architects are no longer working in silos as we're involving the people who work and live around our projects in our designs too.

Do you see an increase in the numbers of local architects?

Definitely. Just by looking at the number of job applications I receive weekly tells me about the increasing numbers. I think in general, the public are now more aware of what architecture is and what architects do. In the past, people believed the buildings are designed by the engineer while the architect's role was just to draw up the blueprint and plans. From my observa-

tion today, parents are more encouraging when their children want to take up architecture as a course compared to the past.

What is one piece of advice you would give students who are pursuing a course in architecture?

Please take up architecture only because you want to make a difference to build a better place for everyone. ▣



CAREER UNUSUAL

Making people PRETTY

Stars and celebrities only look fabulous because of her

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com

PHOTOS BY JONATHAN LOI

I believe what sets me apart from other makeup artists is how I am based in creative and theatrical makeup rather than beauty and bridal makeup.

Ever imagine of having a career where you get to make people look beautiful for a living? That's what self-employed makeup artist Pearl Tan does. Let's discover how she got into the business and what a typical working day for a makeup artist is like.

Top Class: What made you decide to become a makeup artist and has it always been your passion to be one while growing up?

Pearl Tan: Before I became a makeup artist, I was a professional Latin dancer and that was where I started learning how to apply thick stage makeup for myself from a very young age. As I learned how to put on more makeup for my dance performances, my interest started to grow in the art of makeup as it is fun to mix different colours and create different looks. Hence, that was when I decided to pursue a career as a makeup artist. However, I knew that I needed to learn the ins and outs of makeup. Actually, as a child, it was not my passion to be a makeup artist as I wanted to be a lawyer instead as I was told that I'm quite talkative.

How did you manage to juggle your studies while providing makeup service? Also, what were you studying and did it help with your work?

Through good time management and it was very crucial. I had to work as I was supporting myself to pay for my school fees. So during the weekdays, I would be studying and finishing up my assignments. And during my weekends, I would dedicate my time to do my makeup jobs. I graduated with a double degree in international business and management. In a way, what I studied help me as a self-employed makeup artist, as I learned how to build a brand and manage everything from marketing to finance.

Did you also attend classes to learn how to apply makeup?

Yes I did and I enrolled in part time courses at SUB International Makeup Academy for a year. It definitely gave me the confidence boost to

do makeup on other people other than myself. Prior to that, even though I knew how to apply makeup, I wasn't very confident that it would be good or people will like it. That being said, where I am today, I would say the makeup courses that I attended will benefit aspiring makeup artists.

As for the challenges that I faced, one was to be able to find models for makeup competitions and exams. This is because in the course that I took - creative makeup, it takes hours to perfect the look. The models that I worked with had to spend more than five hours just for me to get the look I wanted, and not many models would have the patience for it.

Are your parents supportive of your career choice? Did they try to impose their desire for you to study something else?

My parents are the most supportive people I have in my life. I mean, they are still worried as I am a freelance makeup artist, and income varies every single month, but they never once forced me to change my career. I appreciate their trust that I know what is good in my life. However, they do want me to have a backup plan, which is why I did my double degree. And once I received my qualifications, they allowed me to do what I wanted. Passion is always first and the money will naturally follow.

What are some of the challenges you face as a makeup artist?

Rather than saying as a makeup artist, I think the biggest challenge, and I think I speak for all creative professions, would be payment processes. In my line of work, payments can get delayed from a month to more than one month. It is difficult to plan when the payment would come in and this has an effect on my day to day life.

What sets you apart from other makeup artist?

I believe what sets me apart from other makeup artists is how I am based in creative and theatrical makeup first rather than beauty and bridal makeup. When I first started out, for a year, I only worked with creative makeup looks for clients and test shoots. Following that, I started a Youtube channel for makeup tips and producing concept videos on creative makeup. These things that I do on the side help further distinguish me from other makeup artists.

How do you keep yourself motivated in what you do?

By knowing that I am blessed to be able to do what I want, in the manner that I want with full support from everyone around me. The love and support that I receive has kept me going and I do not want to let anyone down.

Where do you find inspiration for creativity?

Through exploring the world I can see the many different colours that other countries use. At the same time, through the Internet, especially Pinterest where I get most of my ideas from. And once I feel inspired, I will just pick up my brush and play around with makeup until I get a look that I am imagining in my mind.

What is it like to be in the shoes of Pearl Tan for a day at work?

It will be hot to be in my shoes. At the end of a day of work, my feet burn as I do not get to sit down for long. That being said, the satisfaction from a full day on set is euphoric and so I sleep better on those nights.

Could you describe your job as makeup artist in three words?

Colourful, fun and insane

Could you share your proudest moment as a makeup artist?

As a makeup artist, the proudest moment is when I receive recognition for the makeup work I do. It is when I am truly happy as my hard work and dedication have paid off.

What are your dreams and future goals?

I hope to be able to launch my own makeup line and hit 10,000 subscribers on my YouTube channel. At the same time, to inspire people to just have fun playing with makeup. I just love to dream big. ■