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Executive Pathways



Asian International College



PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

Passion for working with children

Full-time student Maegala V. Ramachandra pursues a dual accredited diploma at Asian International College to become an early childhood educator

BY MIKE LEE

MS MAEGALA V. Ramachandra has been cultivating her passion for working with children since her secondary school days, when she was a volunteer with the Singapore Children's Society.

"The feeling of bringing joy into the children's lives with my slight contribution was just overwhelming," she says.

"Thus, I decided I should do something that revolves around children."

The 23-year-old is taking the Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education — Teaching at Asian International College (AIC).

She says of her choice: "I believe that, as one of Singapore's leading educational institutes for Early Childhood Education, AIC would be the most suitable platform to carve out my career as an early childhood educator."

She sees its dual accreditation as advantageous in her career advancement in the near future.

The diploma is accredited by the Early Childhood Training and Accreditation Committee under the Early Childhood Develop-

ment Agency. It is also the WSQ Professional Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education under the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualification system.

Full-time course

Ms Maegala is taking the course full-time. Currently, she is deployed at Learning Vision pre-school centre at Nanyang Polytechnic as a co-teacher in the toddler class in the mornings. She has classes at AIC in the afternoons.

She notes: "I enjoyed the opportunity to work in the centre half day and return to school to continue my studies."

"This allows me to impart relevant knowledge I have gained during my studies, while I am attached to the centre."

She has been able to work with children in various age groups, from toddlers to Kindergarten 2, and observe and learn classroom management techniques practised by different teachers.

"My practicum has been very fruitful, she says. "I started the practicum with the mindset to learn as much as I can. Till now, I am still learning and I will still continue to improve myself to provide the best learning experi-

ence for the children."

The diploma requires students to complete 300 practicum hours, on top of 900 classroom hours. Those taking the course full-time complete in 18 months, while part-time takes 30 months.

She recalls that she took a while to settle into the course, grasping aspects such as methods to assess pupils, meeting assignment deadlines, as well as faculty expectations.

Constant support and encouragement from her classmates helped her to cope well in school. She also credits the lecturers, who are "very cooperative" and ever ready to answer any queries or doubts raised by students.

As highly experienced practitioners in the field, the lecturers are inspiring role models themselves.

"Being educated by various lecturers who have been in the industry a long time is a blessing indeed," she says.

"It was definitely nice to hear them share their experiences when they taught young children."

"Seeing how much they have achieved over the years gives me the motivation to follow in their footsteps and push myself to attain my goals."

Art of storytelling

Among the lecturers who inspired her is Ms Kamarunisa, who taught the art of storytell-

ing as part of the Language Arts curriculum module.

Ms Maegala learnt about the importance of storytelling details like choosing age-appropriate and suitable books, using props and even how the storybook is held up while reading it to the children.

Her course practice came in useful when she read a story to a Kindergarten 1 class during her first practicum month.

"With all the practice I've had in school, I was able to conduct the storytelling session smoothly and confidently. Seeing the children's captivated looks while I was reading motivated me to bring more interesting books to read to them."

Her advice to others with a similar passion for working with children and participating in their growth and learning journey is to "go all the way to achieve it".

She says: "For myself, I will always listen to my heart. I will not force myself to do something that does not interest me."

"There will definitely be many obstacles along the way, but keep reminding yourself that you are doing what you are passionate about and no one can stop you from achieving your goals."

"Most importantly, your children are your top priority. Respect them for who they are and give all your best to make their learning journey a fruitful one."