

Everyday Psychology

MDIS student applies psychology course skills to his daily interactions

HIS course has helped him counsel and support his dementia-stricken mother.

Research executive Low Kim Heng, 26, has always had an interest in people's behaviour, like why people tend to gather round victims of accidents instead of helping them.

So he is pursuing a Bachelor of Science (Honours) Psychology with Counselling course at Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS). The degree is awarded by University of Bradford, UK.

Mr Low enrolled in the course in September last year and will graduate in September 2014.

The youngest of seven children said: "My secondary school classmates were surprised when I opted to study Biomedical Sciences at Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) as they thought I was more inclined to the Humanities in school. At NP, I used to spend my free time reading books or online articles on popular psychology."

After graduating from NP in 2007 he went on to do his national service stint. Upon completion of his NS stint, Mr Low took up employment as a clinical coordinator at Tan Tock Seng Hospital from 2009 to 2011, before becoming a research executive.

Mr Low is also active in voluntary work. He is vice-president of the Society for Associated Inter-Tertiary Debaters, a non-profit organisation that organises events and trains high school students overseas in debating skills. He is also Vice-President (Education) of Toastmasters Club of Singapore.

Mr Low said: "Various private education institutions (PEI) offered top-up degrees, where I would study for a year or two and then be awarded a degree. But I felt the Honours component was important.

"My choices narrowed down to MDIS and another PEI. I chose MDIS as its curriculum was good and its programme coordinators were very helpful during the MDIS roadshow last year."

Mr Low finds his course exciting and challenging.

He said: "Most of the lecturers are (psychology) practitioners too,

and they usually accompany their lectures with case studies to help us understand the subject better.

"The small teacher-student ratio (1:15) ensures we get personal attention, while the lab sessions, discussions and computer work all help us learn better."

Older and more mature students in the cohort, some of whom are in their 40s, expose Mr Low to a variety of work and life experiences which enrich his life and studies.

Useful skills

Mr Low said: "The course teaches us how to study and take notes, and this is useful when I train the high school students as they need to take notes and think on their feet during debates.

"The listening and reflection skills I've learnt help the members of the Toastmasters Club to open up during meetings. The counselling skills help me support my 71-year-old mother at home when she becomes depressed.

"These skills help me empathise with other people, and that helps them open up and talk about their problems."

Said Mr Low: "I like the modules I am studying now, and may consider a career in psychotherapy or counselling in future."

Entry Requirements:

Applicants for Mr Low's course must have one of the following:

- Full A levels with at least one B and two Cs or higher

- Diploma in Psychology awarded by MDIS

- A diploma from other recognised local/overseas polytechnics or PEIs may be considered on a case-by-case basis

Applicants for the course must also have a C6 in O-level English and Elementary Mathematics.

Applicants who do not meet the English requirements have to:

- Pass the English Entrance Test conducted by MDIS, or

- Score at least Band 6 in International English Language Testing System conducted by the British Council, or

- Score 213 points



(computer-based), 79 points (Internet-based) or 550 points (paper-based) in Teaching of English as A Foreign Language.

Applicants without a C6 pass in O level Elementary Mathematics have to take the Mathematics Entrance Test set by the University of Bradford, UK, at MDIS.

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The psychology course provides...

- The ability to critically evaluate and analyse research findings

- Strong knowledge of how people behave in various circumstances which will allow you to understand their motivation and goals

- The ability to verbalise complex issues and communicate orally and through written works of your ideas and thoughts.

■ Low Kim Heng, 26, uses what he has learnt so far to train high school debaters, to improve his Toastmaster interactions and also help support his mother, who has dementia.