

CAREERS

‘We should look at every student differently, because every student grows differently’

Art teacher tells CHEONG CHEE FOONG how going back to school expands his horizons and reminds himself what it is like to be a student

After spending five years as an art teacher in Marsiling Secondary School, Mr Muhamad Lokman Mohamad, 35, found himself back as a student in 2020 at Lasalle College of the Arts.

“I wanted to explore out of my comfort zone, and remind myself what it’s like being on the other side of the classroom,” the father of two said, speaking to IN before his commencement ceremony.

He had been pursuing a bachelor’s degree in fine arts for the past three years, and graduated on Aug 4.

Mr Lokman said: “Also, Lasalle is an institute where teachers and staff themselves are practising artists.

“I’m also actually networking with teachers and key players (in the industry), like gallery owners, and can even go to other artists’ studios and exhibitions.”

He added: “By coming here, I’m actually increasing (my own) capabilities and growing holistically. I hope to expose my students to works from local practising artists.”

Returning as a student was not without its challenges. As he was learning alongside classmates who were 10 years younger than himself, there was some distance between Mr Lokman and his peers in the beginning, especially as lessons were often hybrid ones – sometimes online, and some in person.

But things got better as they warmed up to one another over time.

“As long as you are genuine in what you want to pursue, your peers will understand even if there’s an age difference, we are all just (fellow) students who want to learn and improve,” he said.

It was not easy for him to juggle his responsibilities as a student and father. Over the course of his studies at Lasalle, he had to take some time off from his studies to take care of his daughter.

He thanked his lecturers for being understanding of his situation, as well as his wife.

“The two of us share the role of being a parent and juggle our re-



Mr Lokman earned a bachelor’s degree in fine arts and graduated with first-class honours, and his students at Bukit Panjang Government High School are now reaping the benefits of his drive to improve himself. ST PHOTO MARK CHEONG

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Mr Muhamad Lokman Mohamad on how he related to his Lasalle classmates despite their age gap

sponsibilities together. Some situations when she is unavailable, I’ll take over, and vice versa.”

He has earned a bachelor’s degree in fine arts and graduated with first-class honours. He was also the winner of the Lasalle Award for Academic Excellence.

Now, he is back to teaching, this time at Bukit Panjang Government High School, and his students are reaping the benefits of the lessons he learnt at Lasalle.

He said: “Lasalle has taught me that if you want to reach the (high) level you want, start with something easier first, and give information in bite-sizes.

“For example, beginning with simple materials (for artwork) like paper. Because it is easier to understand in terms of the material and

structure, what you can do with it, and what forms it can take.

“Afterwards, you can advance to more complex materials like plastic.”

Apart from scaling the lessons in terms of difficulty, he was also reminded about the importance of differentiated learning.

“We should look at every student differently, because every student grows differently. And what we (should) do as a teacher is to ensure that even though these differences exist, everyone should learn something at the end of the day,” he added.

