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Versatile thinking – path to success

IS a degree in Arts and Social Sciences a dead end to good career prospects? Does it have little value in the corporate world? Monash Bachelor of Arts (BA) graduate Chrishandra Sebastiampillai shares the career experiences of six Monash graduates in the Arts and Social Sciences. "If you're wondering what a BA prepares you for, this article explores that very question through the experiences of six people with very different jobs – all come from similar degree programmes."

A degree in the Arts and Social Sciences is flexible and allows students to incorporate multidisciplinary study from various disciplines, providing the suite of skills that's in demand.

This is the feature of the Arts degree Aaron Lee values most.

Lee graduated with a BComm in 2005 and is now an account manager at Inuity Corp. He appreciates how the BComm encouraged him to develop confidence and opinions that help him in making pitches, giving presentations and dealing with media agencies.

Malati Siniah graduated in 2011 and interned for the BBC correspondent to Malaysia, later discovering the beauty of online media working for a business magazine. She now works at Sledgehammer Communications as chief content officer for *MARKETING Magazine*.

She said, "The BA degree provided a holistic view of the

communications industry. The BA degree equips you with the skills to enter different fields. It also broadened my perspective and outlook in life."

Kelvin Tan echoed these sentiments about how studying for his BA formed his views on many issues and shaped how he expresses himself. As an undergraduate, he came to know about Teach for Malaysia through Monash.

His two years of teaching full-time in an under-performing local school made him passionate about education and he wanted to find a way to make a lasting difference. He joined PwC South East Asian Consulting as a consultant where he meets clients from various industries.

Tan has already embarked on his dream through Project ID: Impianku, Destinasiiku. He credits his BA for strengthening his language skills and analytical thinking – the adaptability his BA had fostered in him, which allowed him to learn the business and management aspects of his job while the communication and people skills learned during his undergraduate experience stood him in good stead with clients.

Amanda Sangeetha Thomas similarly credits the skills she learnt in her BA as vital to her work.

After graduating in 2015, she joined Marcus Evans as a Business Analyst and Conference Producer.

She later moved to Astro in the Gennext department and recently she joined the radio department,

working as the digital content producer for hitz fm and now MIX fm.

Farlina Md Said has taken the ethos of thinking differently to heart. After graduating in 2010, she worked in the Perdana Global Peace Foundation before making the leap to writing advertorials in *The Star*.

She then pursued her Masters in Strategic Studies in Singapore before returning to work as an analyst at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia.

Discourse theory and cultural studies are subjects learnt during her BA, which she regularly applies in her job because it helps her understand individuals and their motivations.

Shazwan Mustafa Kamal, who is currently an assistant news editor with the *Malay Mail Online*, sees the relevance of the subjects he studied daily. The academic training at Monash helped when he left his first job as a journalist at *The Malaysian Insider* to earn his MA in Diversity in the Media in the UK.

Shazwan laments that the BA has an unfair reputation of being purely vocational, or of less worth than professional degrees.

As for Chrishandra, she is currently earning a PhD and hopes to teach the very things she enjoyed learning.

■ For more information on the programmes at the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Monash University Malaysia, log on to www.sass.monash.edu.my.



'Monash provided me the right opportunities and inspired a passion for learning. The BA degree provided a holistic view of the Communications industry,' Malati Siniah shares.