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It's never too late to graduate

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BEING physically challenged did not stop Belinda Chee Jin Wei from attaining a postgraduate Diploma in Education from Wawasan Open University (WOU).

The 38-year-old tuition teacher from Kuching managed to complete her postgraduate diploma in two years and vowed to influence young people through education.

"I was an electronic and electrical engineer for 10 years before I decided to change my profession.

"By being a teacher, I get to influence students from different backgrounds and ages.

"I quit my engineering job and moved to Kuching after getting married.

"I started teaching and now I am a part-time relief teacher in a private secondary school.

"Besides, I have my own tuition classes and just started an art and craft business this year," she said at the 10th convocation ceremony at WOU main campus in Penang.

Chee, who was born with congenital nerve problem which affects the movement on the right side of her body, is the first WOU graduate to do her practical in a government school.

It took septuagenarian Mangayarkarasy Velayutham, 71, only one year to graduate from the Masters of Education programme specialising in teaching English as a second subject at WOU.

The mother of two said she first started working as a measurement technician at a firm in Kuala Lumpur and worked for 15 years before getting married.

"I got bored being a housewife and started giving tuition.

"I am still guiding a small group of students in Johor Baru," she said.

Annie Wong, 72, who graduated with a Masters of Education, said she had no problem communicating with her younger coursemates.

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Septuagenarians among 740 students to receive academic honours

"There is no age gap difference between us as we learn from each other. We exchanged ideas, shared thoughts and experiences, and I learned a lot from the younger generation.

"Besides, I like to listen to their views and comments," she said.

The mother of two daughters and grandmother of five added that she is currently taking up the Doctor of Business Administration programme at the same university.

"It is something different from what I have learnt in the education programme.

"I have to start learning everything from scratch," said the sales and marketing consultant.

Chee, Mangayarkarasy and Wong were among the 740 students who graduated during the 10th convocation ceremony at the WOU main campus in Penang.

Meanwhile, Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu Memorial Prize recipient Chay Foo Soon, 41, who was the best student in the open distance learning postgraduate programme, said this was his fourth time graduating from WOU.

"I graduated with a Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration degree, a Graduate Diploma in Sales and Marketing, Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Sales and Marketing and now, Master of Education.

"There is no secret recipe to success.

"It is just the result of preparation, hard work and learning from failure," he said.

WOU chancellor Tan Sri Tunku Imran Tuanku Ja'afar in his convocation address said it was vital for



Tunku Imran (second from left) congratulating Chay (holding award). With them are Thuang Seng (left) and WOU board of governors chairman Tan Sri Koh Tsu Koon. (Below) From left: Chee, Mangayarkarasy, Chay, Kamalia Tan Abdullah, 76, and Wong sharing a light moment after the convocation ceremony at WOU main campus in George Town. — Photos: MUSTAFA AHMAD/The Star

those in positions of leadership in business, government and civil society to demonstrate openness and transparency.

"Transparency must infuse every level of an organisation, cascading from top to bottom, to ensure that both employees and the public get access to the important information they require.

"The bottom line is that without openness and transparency, society will be affected," he said.

Also present were WOU pro-chancellor Datuk Dr Lim Thuang Seng, Wawasan Open University Sdn Bhd chairman Datuk Seri Stephen Yeap and WOU chief executive and vice-chancellor Prof Dr Lily Chan.





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SUMMARIES

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