

Lifelong Learner Story Series ►



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- Freelancer
- Completed SGUnited Skills Programme in UX Design and Product Management

Please share with us your professional life's journey and at which point in your career did you aspire to pursue this programme?

I was working in the education and retail industries until I found myself taking sabbatical leave when I had to be the primary caregiver of a close friend who was dying of stage 4 cancer. This jobless period changed my life and it was during this time that I learnt a great deal about social media marketing. After my friend passed away, I became a freelance web content manager to help companies upkeep their social media platforms. When COVID-19 struck, everything came to halt and the companies that I worked for eventually closed down, leaving me jobless again. When a friend sounded me out on SGUnited Skills (SGUS) programmes that may offer career development opportunities, I immediately gave it a shot.

Describe the factors that led you to choose PaCE@NTU.

I was looking to continue my education and upgrade my industry skills and knowledge to further my career prospects. The course content, learning outcomes, job introduction and induction opportunities that PaCE@NTU's SGUS programme offered were very relevant and practical for job-seekers like myself. The fact that the programme was offered by NTU, a highly credible global university made my learning experience more reassuring. Besides, I was interested in the topic of UX design and found that the programme schedule with 3-hour online lessons thrice a week for 6 months gave a sense of disciplined learning structure. Together with the financial support from the government funding and subsidies, I decided to enrol PaCE@NTU's SGUS programme.

Could you share with us some interesting facets of the programme you enrolled?

The classes of the programme were all online and conducted via Zoom due to the pandemic. Attending classes via this virtual platform was definitely a new experience for me that pushed me to learn, communicate and research using new technologies. These were rather challenging for me because it required a lot of critical thinking and writing skills that I didn't acquire from my previous education and training. I also had the chance to interact with a diverse cohort of adult learners with different professional backgrounds and qualifications.

Which aspect of this programme do you like the most?

I like how the programme emphasised process over product and the trainers explained that every assignment could still be an unending "work-in-progress" even though we submitted the final version. Besides, there was no formal grading for each assignment so there wasn't stress to score well to graduate from the programme. This, I thought, mirrored the realities of the design industry where every product is always changing to adapt to the demands and desires of users.

What were the challenges you faced when trying to complete this programme?

As the weeks passed during my study, I realised that my coursemates were not only proficient in their coursework but also competitive. I couldn't keep up even though I was determined not to give up. One of my coursemates noticed that I was struggling and encouraged me to speak to our trainers. A week later, the trainers modified some of the assessment policies and pedagogical approaches to encourage better collaboration and camaraderie, and eventually, I succeeded in getting back on track. I was really grateful to our trainers and coursemates for making sure that I wasn't left stranded in my lonely struggles and insecurities. I also relied on close friends and family for moral and intellectual support. As a cash-strapped learner, I was very blessed to find the help that I needed.