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The new paper

Now that she's back in school...

# Life's back on track

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**S**HE spent the last 10 years "sleep-walking" through her life. By her own admission, she had no ambition.

But it's a case of better late than never for Ms Jaime Ong.

**Nudged by her brother to upgrade** herself, the 27-year-old is doing a diploma in business administration at PSB Academy and plans to do a degree later if possible.

Said Ms Ong, now working as a clerk: "I regret not studying harder in secondary school. I was too playful. I should have started (doing this) earlier."

## JOB HOPPED FOR YEARS

Ms Ong, who took six O levels in 1997, managed a pass grade for all her subjects except English. That meant that she could not proceed through the normal route of a junior college or polytechnic, as English has to be included in the aggregate points for admission.

So she got a part-time job as a waitress and told herself she would resume her studies when she had more money.

But that didn't happen and for eight years, she went from one part-time job to another, working as, among other things, a clinic clerk and a music shop sales assistant.

Why did it take so long for her to wake up to the need to improve herself?

Ms Ong said: "I just wasn't interested. I had no aims and felt empty. I just hung out with friends."

It was her brother who got her back on track.

"He has done several courses at PSB Academy and told me I needed to do some courses and (get) on with my life."

She also knew that she had to address her Achilles heel — English.

**"You need to have good English**



Picture: DAVID TAN

**as you need to be able to communicate with people well."**

So she makes a special effort to improve her English when she does group work.

## DIFFICULT

Ms Ong admitted that studying again after a long break away is difficult, especially when it comes to memorising.

"Sometimes I can't catch up or do the exercises fast enough."

But she's determined to succeed with the part-time course, which covers English, basic economics and accounting, and she now spends half her weekend studying and doing research for projects, instead of hanging out with friends as she used to.

**Explaining her resolve to work hard since she started the course a few weeks ago, Miss Ong said: "There are people much older than I in the course. If they can do it, so can I."**

She hopes to take more courses and eventually go into teaching, something that's been her dream for a long time.

"It's never too late to do anything. Life is long and you can do many things in this world," she said.

*I regret not studying harder in secondary school. I was too playful. I should have started (doing this) earlier.*

— Miss Jaime Ong  
(above)