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news

An Institute Of Distinction

March 2015

No. 91

ISSN 0218-4427



SEEDING TALENT

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Celebrating Tomorrow's Leaders
- 12** **SPECIAL FEATURE**
Teachers' Investiture Ceremony
January 2015
- 24** **ALUMNI**
Thank you NIE

An Institute of



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EDITOR'S SAY



This March edition of NIE News features the theme Seeding Talents. It brings to you a rich serving of campus stories that witness the passion in teaching by NIE staff and students. As in the past editions, it is a testament to the undivided commitment that members of the NIE community bring to schools, classrooms and the wider education community.

You can read about how NIE members actively seek opportunities to create awareness on social and education issues in the Corporate Development section from pages 3 to 17. For example, our alumni's volunteer work at the Singapore Cancer Society (page 17); campaigns initiated by student teachers to show appreciation for members of the wider community (two articles on pages 6 and 8); and staff who invited Pioneer Junior College students to observe what goes behind the scenes at the institute through a work shadow programme (page 5). These accounts showcase how NIE promotes the values of teaching professionals.

NIE's leadership in the educational fraternity is demonstrated with a steady stream of

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NIE News is published quarterly by the Public, International and Alumni Relations Department, National Institute of Education, Singapore.

Design by JAB Design Pte Ltd.

NIE News is also available at : www.nie.edu.sg/nienews
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international conferences organised by NIE, including the International Science Education Conference 2014 (ISEC 2014) and 20th APECA Biennial Conference-Workshop 2014 (see page 10 and 11 respectively). Not forgetting, the recent launch of a \$2 million grant vis-à-vis The Tan Poey Quee Teaching Excellence Fund, which recognizes outstanding and deserving students with scholarship to pursue Doctor of Education programme at NIE, as well as the Practicum Book Prize for student teachers who excel in teaching practicum. You can read more about this fund on the next page.

There are also exciting news about NIE from pages 18 to 23, which includes the latest Campus News happenings, research grant, launch of a new journal and more. In the Special Feature section (pages 12 and 13) we congratulate the new fold of teaching professionals and practising teachers who returned to NIE to continue learning through a part-time bachelor degree in education.

The theme "Seeding Talent" in this inaugural 2015 edition is aptly illustrated by the image of many hands that form one mind, which signifies NIE's collective vision toward achieving greater learning outcomes at NIE.

I wish you happy reading and many more good times to come.

Guest Editor

Associate Professor Tan Seng Chee, Associate Dean, Learning and Instruction, Office of Graduate Studies and Professional Learning, and Learning Sciences and Technologies Academic Group

TEACHING ADVOCATE

By Public, International and Alumni Relations

The newly established Tan Poey Quee Teaching Excellence Fund is a cherished ideal first formed by a pioneer who strongly believed in education and the importance of it.

Through Mr Pang Kim Hin, son of the late Madam Tan Poey Quee, we learn about Madam Tan's passion as he reminisced, "From a young age, I knew my Mother was a visionary. She always said that education opens doors to everything."

Of course this was not the only lesson that Madam Tan, who holds a Cambridge school certificate, had imparted to her children. Like many of our nation's forefathers, Madam Tan also demonstrated great strength, passion and character through hardship. Single-handedly bringing up a household and her children, she impressed upon Mr Pang, now Chairman to Mothercare Singapore Pte Ltd, another value: "family is vital".

These traditions were passed on from Madam Tan to her descendants and even embodied in the corporate culture at the major retail company as it inculcates a strong culture of family within its corporate ranks. To which, Mr Pang heartily admits

he knows all his employees by first name and appreciates their dedication that helped make Mothercare where it is today. His Mother's foresight of education was carried forward as well through professional development at the organisation – right down to mentorship where senior members must nurture younger ones.

Befitting its landmark 30-year anniversary, it was thus not a difficult decision for Mothercare Singapore to decide to support the National Institute of Education. Through its administration, the total sum of S\$1 million in donation was presented to Nanyang Technological University and met with a matching grant from the government. The landmark event was inaugurated at its gala celebration on 14 January 2015 by Guest-of-Honour, Minister for Education, Mr Heng Swee Keat.

Through the S\$2 million Tan Poey Quee Teaching Excellence Fund, it will facilitate one scholarship, student achievement award and book prize respectively for doctoral students in the Doctor in Education programme in addition to a book prize each for the degree and diploma programmes at NIE. The five new accolades given surely promises to encourage more promising candidates who have the potential to make

meaningful contributions in Singapore's future teaching annals.

NIE Director, Professor Tan Oon Seng aptly noted, "The late Madam Tan Poey Quee's passion for education is a further testament that education is a foundation to the success of every nation shared by many of our SG 50 pioneers who helped to forge a nation of independence. Through the Tan Poey Quee Teaching Excellence Fund, we can further instil the teaching spirit in our teacher preparation and professional development programmes at various levels in NIE. We are deeply heartened by the generosity of the late Madam Tan and her family. Our congratulations to Mothercare Singapore on their 30th anniversary. It is an honour for NIE Singapore to be included on this momentous occasion that marks the beginning of a long-lasting relationship to foster greater learning aspirations and fresh education prospects together."

Above (From left): Prof Lee Sing Kong, Dean, NIE International and Vice President (Education Strategies), NTU; Mr Jerry Cull, Managing Director of International at Mothercare plc; Mr Heng Swee Keat, Minister for Education; Mr Pang Kim Hin, Chairman, Mothercare Singapore; Prof Tan Oon Seng, NIE Director



ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

By Ms Jiang Yihui, Ms Tang Celeste, Ms Tan Jia Hui and Ms Tan Yun Ying Felicia, Pioneer Junior College

In the article "Swan Song" published in the September 2014 issue of NIE News, Dr Koh Chong Lek's departure from the NIE community was described as "a hard thing to do". Indeed, we cannot agree more.

We would like to thank everyone who was part of our amazing 4 days at NIE, especially the Public, International and Alumni Relations (PIAR) Department for constantly ensuring that we were

safely accounted for and for putting up with our giggling and "blur-ness". We felt very much at home and are truly grateful for everything. Our time at NIE is a memory that we will never forget.

When we learnt that our Junior College's Work Shadowing Programme was offering an attachment with NIE, we did not hesitate to sign up for it as teaching was amongst our career options. To our delight, we were awarded our choice and anticipation and excitement soon filled our heads as we waited impatiently for the attachment to commence.

During our stay at NIE from 8 to 12 December 2014, we had the opportunity to visit various departments such as the NIE Library, the Physical Education and Sports Science Academic Group, the English Language and Literature Academic Group and the Student Services Centre, where we observed academics and staff at work and the workings of each department. Two of us (pictured below) were lucky enough to sit in a high level conference involving Swedish School Inspectorates, where we learnt about the differences and similarities between the Singaporean education landscape and that of Sweden's. We were also very privileged to meet Professor Tan Oon Seng, NIE Director, who found time for a chat with us on our first day at NIE despite his busy schedule.



Above (From left) Ms Jiang Yihui, Ms Tang Celeste, Ms Tan Jia Hui and Ms Tan Yun Ying Felicia in a visit to the Primary English Language Classroom



Above (From left) Thank you Ms Chew-Oui Lian Ping (middle) for being a great host on our NIE Library tour

QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By Associate Professor Tan Aik Ling, Sub-Dean, Professional Development, Office of Graduate Studies and Professional Learning

Quality assurance (QA) is defined as a process that ensures the standards and quality of courses and programmes offered by an organisation. As part of our continuing efforts to improve the quality of our courses and programmes, the Professional Development (PD) team from the Office of Graduate Studies and Professional Learning (GPL) made a study visit to the Institute of Education, London (IoE) to learn more about implementation details.

The institute had been highly successful in providing a range of PD opportunities while maintaining their QA. Across the institute, the IoE has a quality assurance framework that covers programme design, approval and review, student experience and evaluation of student satisfaction, admissions, assessments and examinations. This QA framework is aligned to guidelines from the National Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), which is the independent body entrusted with monitoring and advising on the standards and quality in the United Kingdom (UK) higher education.

During the visit that took place from 28 to 31 October 2014, the GPL team met up

with colleagues from various offices at the IoE. These included Teaching, Quality and Learning Innovation, Academic Innovation, Quality Assurance, Advanced Educational Programme, Initial Teacher Education, Curriculum Pedagogy and Assessment, and the UK Consultancy and Knowledge Transfer unit.

The interviews and discussions affirmed our beliefs and understanding about the importance of QA in ensuring standards of our programmes. The domain areas of programme delivery that we focused on for QA in GPL are similar to those highlighted above. Considering the learning points from the meetings, GPL will continue our current practice of submitting academic proposals for PD programmes to the NIE Board of Studies for approval.

In addition, a business case can be put forward to determine whether a proposed programme is responsive to the needs of our stakeholders. GPL will also consider a review cycle for all certification programmes and involve faculty members from the academic groups that deliver these programmes on QA matters. QA is expected by all stakeholders of the institute and should be taken seriously as

it has an impact on the reputation of our institute as a whole. Through an enhanced QA process for all GPL programmes, we can ensure that the experiences of teachers and other participants will be a positive and enriching one.

During this visit, GPL and the IoE also discussed about future collaborations on jointly offering professional development courses for educators. These courses will draw on the respective strengths of the two institutions to enhance teacher learning. NIE and the IoE currently have a Dual Award Doctor in Education (EdD) programme.

Top (From left): Assoc Prof Chang Chew-Hung, Associate Dean, Professional Development; Mr Christopher Foo, Programme Manager, Professional Development; Assoc Prof Tan Aik Ling, Sub-Dean, Professional Development; Prof Norbert Pachler, Pro-Director of Teaching, Quality and Learning Innovation, IoE; Dr Jonathan Allen, Director, Initial Teacher Education, IoE; Dr Don Pennington, Head Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Unit, IoE; Mrs Kim Insley, Programme Director, Advanced Educational Programme; Prof Christine Goh, Dean of Graduate Studies and Professional Learning, IoE

NIE CELEBRATES SG50

Akin to this Golden Jubilee, we fondly recall many who relentlessly helped to build this country's education system at the Teachers' Training College (TTC). Over more than 50 years, our journey from a teacher preparation school in the 1950s to an institute of distinction in teacher education and research in the 21st century is one we share heartily with this nation's schools and teaching fraternity. The unwavering contributions have made the

National Institute of Education (NIE) what it is today.

We thus acknowledge the collective contributions of TTC pioneers who had the foresight and courage to make changes and, today's NIE Community members who continue to fly the teaching flag high. As we celebrate a rich tapestry of history and heritage that makes learning experiences even better, we look forward to the next 50 years in igniting tomorrow's generation of



leaders in the classrooms and beyond. We are sure that our centennial in education will be another milestone most worth celebrating; just like the importance of this SG 50 is for NIE.





HEARTS OF GOLD

By Group Endeavours in Service Learning Group Three, Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Secondary), Year 2

A group of 19 NIE student-teachers, from the PGDE (Secondary) programme, came together to set a record for the largest heart-shaped formation made out of message cards in the Singapore Book of Records. As part of our Group Endeavours in Service Learning (GESL) project, we worked with RSVP Singapore – The Organisation of Senior Volunteers, to raise awareness for the organisation and the presence of senior volunteerism in Singapore.

In November 2014, the awareness project officially began with the group visiting various local university campuses, namely the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), the National University of Singapore

(NUS) and Singapore Management University (SMU). After introducing RSVP Singapore and its contributions to society, the students were invited to pen down short messages of appreciation or encouragement for the senior volunteers. Later, the group extended this initiative to the general public. Over two weekends, together with student volunteers from NUS Kent Ridge Hall and various polytechnics, we approached members of the public at Orchard Road and Tampines. In total, more than 4,700 message cards were collected.

The message cards were then compiled into a large heart formation and presented to the senior volunteers on 4 December 2014 during an appreciation dinner at

Tim Palace, SAFRA Toa Payoh. After the presentation of the formation and the officiating of the Singapore record, the message cards were packed and distributed to the volunteers. The smiles on the faces of the senior volunteers present were very heart-warming. We were very happy as all our hard efforts had paid off handsomely. The entire experience was indeed memorable and one that we will always cherish at our time at NIE.

Top: *Kudos to our student teachers for a brilliant effort!*

Bottom: *A big 'thank you' to all who contributed towards the project*



TEACHING SCHOLARS PROGRAMME

Find out more at the

NTU OPEN HOUSE

2015

7 MARCH 9.30am - 6.30pm

Nanyang Auditorium & NIE Campus

The NTU-NIE Teaching Scholars Programme (TSP) is a premier scholars programme aimed at preparing tomorrow's leaders of education who possess the passion and aspiration to inspire, nurture and lead our next generation.

The programme offers a unique opportunity for both personal development and international exposure in interdisciplinary training through seminars, conference presentations, research assignments and mentorships, internships, and overseas programmes. Graduates of TSP will be well-equipped with intellectual rigour, strong leadership skills and global perspectives – ready to fulfil their aspirations in education and make their contribution in shaping the future of the nation.

Programme

- 10.00am - 11.00am Mathematics @ NIE (NTU LT4),
English Language & Literature @ NIE (NTU LT7)
- 11.00am - 12.00pm Teaching as a career by MOE (NTU LT4)
- 11.45am - 2.00pm NIE Campus Tour with Lunch
- 1.00pm - 2.00pm Teaching Scholars Programme (NTU LT4)
- 2.00pm - 3.00pm Science @ NIE (NTU LT4), Humanities @ NIE (NTU LT7)
- 2.45pm - 4.00pm NIE Campus Tour with Tea
- 3.00pm - 4.00pm Teaching Scholars Programme (NTU LT4)
- 4.00pm - 5.00pm Visual & Performing Arts @ NIE (NTU LT4),
Physical Education @ NIE (NTU LT7)
- 5.00pm - 6.00pm Teaching Scholars Programme (NTU LT4)



PROMINENT VISTORS

By Public, International and Alumni Relations

SHOWING GRATITUDE

By Group Endeavours in Service Learning Group One, Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Primary)

The Gratitude Project was about the raising of awareness in the NIE community about the importance of showing gratitude and appreciation of the service and maintenance community in NIE. Facilitated by staff mentor Assistant Professor Leonel Lim from the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Academic Group, this project was conceptualised in the spirit of celebrating Singapore's 50th birthday. The team decided to highlight several of Singapore's lauded traits, such as the country's cleanliness and safety. This led the team to decide to show gratitude to the group of people who help to keep our campus and its surroundings clean, namely our service and maintenance crew.

Through discussions with the liaison from the NIE Development and Estate Department, as well as informal conversations with the service and maintenance staff, we determined that just simple words of gratitude, greetings and smiles were enough to make them happy. They felt

very grateful when they know that their hard work had not gone away unseen. This led to the organisation of a "Gratitude Awareness" week for this cause.

The Gratitude Awareness week was organised during the first week of the school semester in January 2015. A booth was set up in NIE, where our student teachers could write notes of gratitude for our service and maintenance crew. The week culminated with an Appreciation Tea for them. The notes of gratitude, along with goodie bags, were presented to them.

Thank you once again to all our service and maintenance crew for making our campus clean and green!

Top and bottom: A booth was set up to encourage everyone to show their gratitude

Right: A simple gift and words of thanks are all it takes to bring smiles to our service and maintenance crew

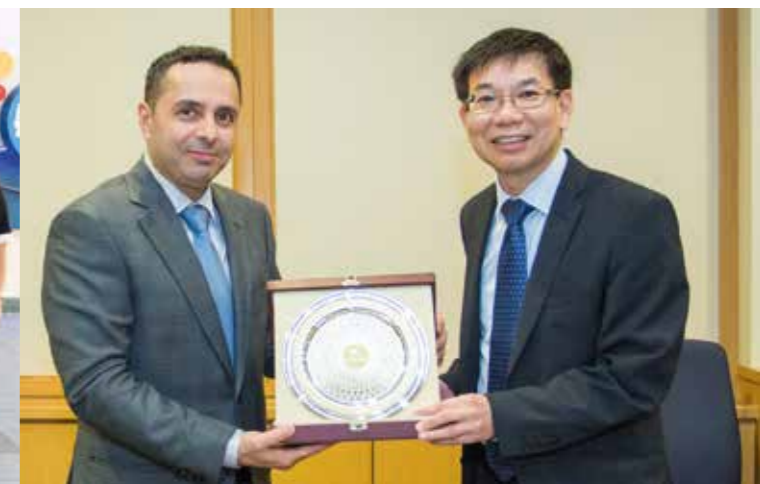


14 January 2015

Mr R.B. Subba (sixth from right), Honourable Minister, Human Resource Development Department, Government of Sikkim, India visited NIE on 14 January 2015 to hear about teacher preparation programmes in Singapore. NIE also shared with the delegation about the work our student teachers had done in Sikkim through their International Service Learning.

12 January 2015

NIE welcomed the visit by Dr Fattakhov Engel Navapovich (middle), Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Tatarstan on 12 January 2015. Accompanied by a team of educators and education officials, the Deputy Prime Minister was given an overview of NIE's Initial Teacher Preparation and Professional Development programmes and also toured the NIE Library.



8 December 2014

NIE hosted a visit by Ms Ann-Marie Begler (fourth from left), Director General of the Swedish School Inspectorate (SSI) and His Excellency Sven Hakan Oskar Jevrell (fourth from right), the Swedish Ambassador to Singapore on 8 December 2014. Ms Begler and team were in Singapore to learn about Singapore's education system. In particular, she was interested in learning about the factors contributing to a high quality teaching workforce, such as the teacher training and competency development programmes.

14 November 2014

His Excellency Dr Mohammed Abdul Waheed Al Hammadi (left), Minister for Education and Higher Education, State of Qatar, visited NIE on 14 November 2014 together with his team from the Supreme Education Council. The delegation was briefed on NIE's Initial Teacher Preparation and Professional Development & Leadership programmes, as well as Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA)'s education initiatives and projects. The delegation rounded off their visit with a tour of the Classroom of the Future and the NIE Library.

PUSHING BOUNDARIES

By Natural Sciences and Science Education Academic Group

The International Science Education Conference 2014, Singapore (ISEC 2014) was held at the National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore from 25 to 27 November 2014 (with a series of pre-conference workshops held on 24 November 2014). This conference was jointly organised by the Natural Sciences and Science Education Academic Group and the Ministry of Education. A total of 556 participants from 30 countries around the world were in attendance. The theme for ISEC 2014, which was *"Pushing the boundaries: Investing in our future"* reflected the aspiration to improve the lives of our children through science education. In the current globalised world piqued with increasingly complex and diverse environmental issues and technological challenges, we need to actively 'push' existing boundaries that confine us in the way we think and the way we approach science teaching and learning. Through paper and poster presentations, the participants deliberated on how science educators can work towards building a connected global community devoted to the aspiration of a better world through science.

Ms Ho Peng, Director-General of Education (DGE), Ministry of Education was the Guest-of-Honour for the conference. Her opening address encouraged science educators to work together in educating our next generation towards more ethical and responsible application of science. She reminded us to see beyond ourselves and think of the greater community that we live in. Her opening address set the tone for the rest of the conference and her message was also echoed by the keynote speeches delivered by Professor Sibel Erduran (Ireland), Professor Steve Alsop (Canada), Professor Wu Hsin Kai (Taiwan), Professor Vicente Talanquer (USA), and Professor Justin Dillon (UK).



Above: Participants engaging in discussion at the pre-conference workshop with Prof Sibel Erduran (right), the first keynote speaker at ISEC 2014

The conference participants were actively involved in deliberating issues that are fundamental to the improvement of science teaching and learning. Meaningful and reliable assessments in science (both small scale and large scale), the engagement students in authentic and applicable science learning, and professional development of science teachers were some examples of the many issues that were discussed and shared.

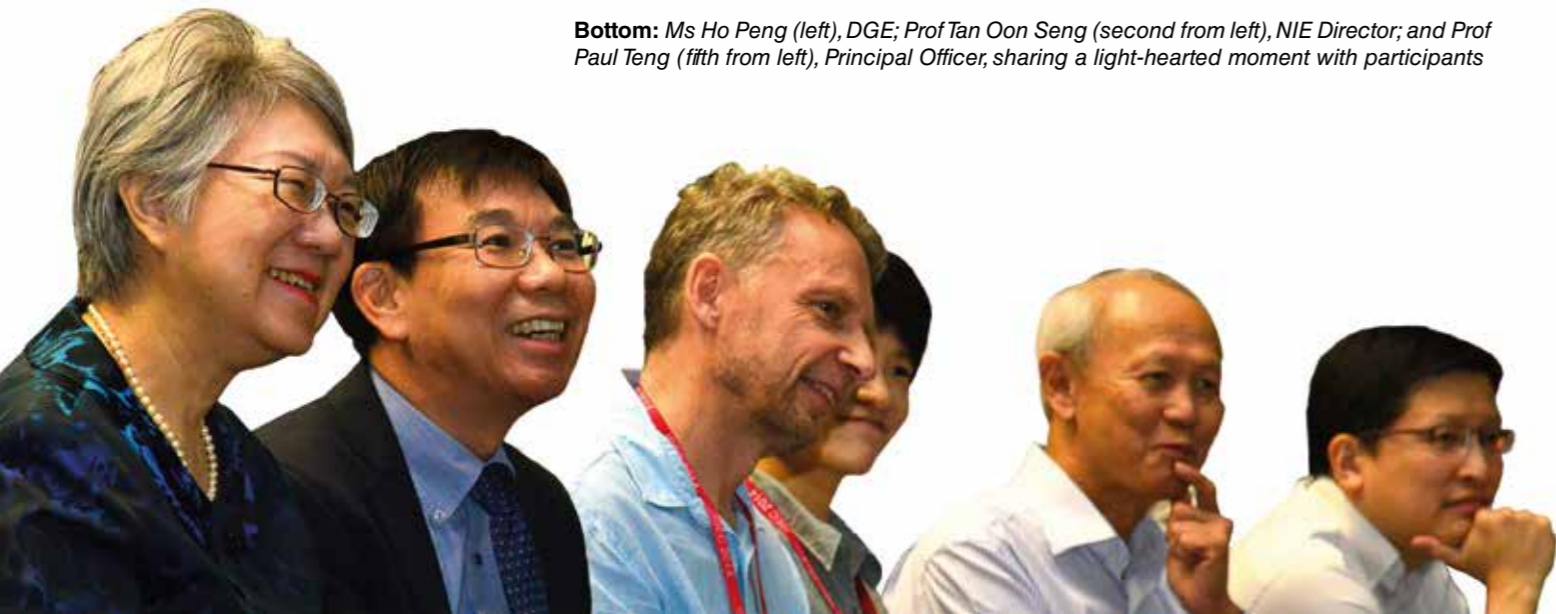
ISEC 2014 was also a platform for discussions of potential research collaborations between universities. For example, post-conference meetings and discussions took place between colleagues from NIE and the University of Johannesburg and the University of Stockholms Universitet. These conversations set the stage for more global collaborations of science education research as we seek to find innovative ways to engage our learners in science learning. Through



Above: Ms Ho Peng addressing the participants at the opening ceremony

ISEC 2014, we have positioned NIE and Singapore as an important centre for science education research in the region. We look forward to continuing our efforts in science education research with our partners and presenting our findings in the next ISEC.

Bottom: Ms Ho Peng (left), DGE; Prof Tan Oon Seng (second from left), NIE Director; and Prof Paul Teng (fifth from left), Principal Officer, sharing a light-hearted moment with participants



SPEAK YOUR MIND

By Psychological Studies Academic Group

The 20th APECA Biennial Conference-Workshop held from 4 to 6 December 2014 brought together counsellors, psychologists, social workers, education experts, teachers, graduate students, and non-governmental and voluntary welfare organisations representatives to discuss and exchange views on the contemporary theoretical and practical counselling knowledge in a scientific environment. About 100 participants from all over the world signed up and attended this event held at the NIE Campus in Nanyang Technological University. Of this number, about 50% of the participants came from six different countries namely, Australia, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and the United States.

There were three keynote speakers namely:

1. Professor John McCarthy who spoke on *"Capturing (more of!) your Creative Counselling Spark"*;
2. Professor Samuel T. Gladding who spoke on *"Creativity within Counselling: A Contemporary and Evidence-based Approach to Health and Healing"*;
3. Associate Professor Maureen Neihart who shared on the topic of *"Could We Be Happier?"*

There were also five skill-based workshops conducted by leading counsellors from different countries to help participants develop creative and contemporary counselling skills.

1. Professor Jerry Cusumano spoke on *"Micro Laboratory Training (MLT): Multi-faceted Approach for Counsellor Training"*;
2. Professor Dato' Dr. See Ching Mey spoke on *"Mindfulness Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Health and Wellness"*;
3. Dr. Kristina Burgetova and Dr. Patricia Bale both shared on *"Race, Class and Culture in Counselling: Increasing our Awareness"*;

4. Professor Dato' Dr. See Ching Mey and Ms Theresa Moo shared on *"Multimedia as a Tool in Gestalt Therapy for Adolescents in the Modern Days"*;
5. Dr. Tan Soo Yin and Dr. Lee Khai Ling spoke on *"Expressions of Colours and Our Emotions"*

There were also three Enhanced Skills training sessions conducted, namely:

1. Dr. Kristina Burgetova – *"Counselling Report Writing Skills"*
2. Dr Cristina Saldivar and Dr. Carol Dahir – *"Standards of Practice"*
3. Dr. Tan Soo Yin – *"Ethical Decision Making Skills"*

About 40 speakers from around the world presented scientific papers during the concurrent sessions held during the three-day conference.

The APECA Board meeting was held on the night of 4 December 2014. All current and past members attended and joined in the discussion pertaining to the directions for the association. A Conference dinner was held on the night of 5 December 2014 at the NIE Conference Room and members of the board and conference delegates attended the event.

Bottom: Keynote speaker Prof Jerry Cusumano (second from left) from Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan seated together with Assoc Prof Lim Kam Ming (left), Assoc Dean, Programme Planning and Management, Office of Teacher Education; Assoc Prof Rebecca Ang (third from left), Head, Psychological Studies Academic Group; Prof Tan Oon Seng (fourth from left), NIE Director; and APECA member Dr J.T. Lobby Loekmono (fifth from left)





A CALL TO TEACH

“While it may be daunting for us beginning teachers, I believe we have the ability to take things in our stride knowing that we have our peers, mentors and school leaders who will guide us in this journey. Let’s strive for the best and stay true to our beliefs that we can make a difference to our students’ lives.”

– Ms Ou Niangtai Janice, Valedictorian



By Public, International and Alumni Relations

There were many expressions of joy and laughter on 16 January 2015 at the Nanyang Technological University’s Nanyang Auditorium as more than 400 newly qualified teachers celebrated their arrival into the teaching fraternity at the first Teachers’ Investiture Ceremony of 2015.

Mr Heng Swee Keat, Minister for Education, took time off from his busy schedule to grace the event as the Guest-of-Honour. Addressing the graduands with an inspiring speech, he encouraged them to believe in their own aspirations so that they are able to bring the best out of their students. He added that he was positive that each of them will make use of every opportunity to grow as educators.

NIE Director, Professor Tan Oon Seng, likewise congratulated the graduands and expressed his hope that their journey at NIE would have equipped them with the right mindset and perspectives to become caring and aspiring educators.



Ms Ou Niangtai Janice, who was Valedictorian of her cohort, gave a rousing speech as she challenged her peers to be ‘bold to make tough decisions’ and to stay ‘adaptable under unpredictable circumstances’ to make an impact on their students.

There was also much to celebrate for Ms Tang Li Hui Donica as she was the only award recipient to bag two awards at the ceremony; the Association of Mathematics Educators Book Prize and the Singapore Teachers’ Union Book Prize.

We wish all our graduands a fruitful and meaningful teaching journey ahead!

“When you believe in yourself, when you keep looking for ways to grow and improve professionally, when you tap on the support and resources of the ministry and your fraternity to reach the next level of your craft, you are bringing out the best in yourself. This is living out the true spirit of lifelong learning.”

– Mr Heng Swee Keat, Minister for Education





NTU INTER SCHOOL GAMES 2014/15

By Mr Ricky Rueban s/o David John, Special Projects Officer, NIE Trainee Teachers' Club

The NTU Inter School Games (ISG) was held from 8 December 2014 to 9 December 2014. It celebrated the talents of NTU as players from various schools challenged one another in 16 different sports. Themed "Sportsmanship Begins with Respect", the event emphasised the NTU Spirit where all players were one student body of NTU regardless of the schools they represented.

This edition of the ISG was rather special for the National Institute of Education (NIE). As the defending champions for the last two years, we had aimed to seal a "hat-trick" victory. Team NIE adopted the tagline of "A Formidable Opponent" which underlined the fighting spirit of the sportsmen. Decked in yellow Team NIE jerseys, our players showed a great deal of skill and substance.

It was a commendable effort as Team NIE emerged as overall runners up of the season, finishing behind Nanyang Business School (NBS). Despite not being able to sustain its victory for the third time in the row, it is notable that Team NIE did put up a good fight. In fact, it will be remembered that NBS and

NIE shared some of the most intensive matches of the season. They had garnered much attention and interest of the other schools.

This year also saw the introduction of the Most Valuable Player (MVP) award. Ms Nadia Binte Sharin, a third year undergraduate majoring in Malay Language, was selected as Team NIE's MVP. Nadia took part in four different sports, namely Netball, Captain's Ball, Floorball and Futsal (Female). Apart from being instrumental in bagging the victories for her team, she was also a role model for many of her peers through her constant encouragement and the initiative to try new sports.

All in all, the ISG was a huge success. Kudos to the Trainee Teachers' Club and the Physical Education and Sports Science Club for a great collaboration!

Clockwise (From above): Formidable team spirit from Team NIE; Showing sportsmanship with a pre-match handshake; Team NIE were no pushovers in every game; Our basketball players taking a break after winning all their preliminary matches



Graduate & Professional Learning

OPEN HOUSE

18.04.2015

Visit www.nie.edu.sg/gpopenhouse2015

for more information and register for a chance to win great prizes at our lucky draw segment!



Join us at the National Institute of Education for a series of exciting and informative activities on our higher degree and professional development programmes and courses that are suitable for both teachers and working professionals passionate about lifelong learning! Be part of our 'Learning Differently, Leading Change' journey!



GPL

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES & PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
Learning Differently, Leading Change

AN INTERVIEW WITH KBS

By Dr Ho Jin Chung, Physical Education and Sports Science Academic Group

South Korea's national broadcaster, Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) visited the National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore to have interviews with experts in the area of Singapore's advanced physical education (PE) and school sports on 31 October 2014. KBS designed a special programme in their popular current affairs documentary for TV called 'Windows (CHANG)' to cover the best practices of Singapore, which has a world-class education system situated within an Asian culture. The interviews were broadcasted to the Korean national audience in December 2014 over two episodes.

Professor Michael Chia (pictured above), Dean for Faculty Affairs, and Associate Professor Govindasamy Balasekaran (pictured below), Head, Physical Education and Sports Science (PESS) Academic Group were interviewed by KBS.

Prof Chia shared about the very synergistic relationship between NIE and the MOE,

where teacher educators are equipped with the knowledge, skills and values to practise their craft in meaningful ways in schools. Prof Chia said that sedentary lifestyles among Singaporean youth are becoming entrenched with research data in different school contexts. It showed that children and adolescents do not meet physical activity guidelines for an accumulation of 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity activity on a daily basis. The revised PE syllabus for schools includes almost a doubling of PE periods per week in schools, a greater exposure to team sport and intra-school competitions and a greater exposure to outdoor education and that PE is taught by only qualified teachers. Prof Chia shared that this is a very strong endorsement that the MOE is serious about the place and potential of PE in schools that PE and sport are an antidote to physical inactivity.

Assoc Prof Balasekaran highlighted the importance of teacher education in Singapore. The PESS academic group

offers a variety of full-time programmes specialising in PE. Student teachers with Bachelor of Science (Education), Diploma (Physical Education) and Postgraduate Diploma (Physical Education) qualifications are trained to teach PE in the schools in Singapore. Further to that, PESS aims to develop them in areas of professional competence and expertise in teaching PE as a major subject. PESS has a wide range of professors and educators from local and overseas with a mixture of expertise and the state-of-the-art sports science laboratories and fully-equipped sports facilities. PESS faculty members are fully committed to educate student teachers to be well-prepared practitioners in the field of physical education, sport science, sport studies and sport pedagogy; who are independent, critical and creative thinkers. Additionally, PESS provides an inspiring and unparalleled learning experience for student teachers with the most updated knowledge and they are infused with the right attitudes and moral values.



MEDIA IN MOTION

By Public, International and Alumni Relations

The role of Media and how it can be a potentially useful way for classroom learning to take place was one of the interesting discussions at two workshops held on 2 and 5 December 2014 at NIE. Focused on Media Literacy, arrangements were supported by the Office of Teacher Education for its Postgraduate Diploma in Education 2014 students to immerse themselves in the specialisation. Conducted by the Singapore Press Holdings' ST Schools editorial team who produces the Little Red Dot weekly supplement and the IN weekly magazine, the activities were well-received.

Comprising five sessions for each day from 9.30 am to 5.00 pm, the workshops were aimed at understanding the role of the media in education today and using newspapers to teach language and values

in classrooms. Students in attendance were also treated to informative and interesting presentations on topics such as "How the News Can Ignite Any Class" and "Pedagogies of Using the News in Class" to name a few. Since similar workshops were conducted for teaching professionals here and overseas, the veteran journalists also offered good insight on what they had encountered from past interactions at these events and personal experiences.

Co-facilitated by the Public, International and Alumni Relations to connect media industry experts to further teaching experiences, the students found a wide range of methods that they could use. They found the question and answer sessions provided a good opportunity to learn how the media works and what goes on behind-the-scenes. We thank the team for their invaluable time and effort to share with NIE and look forward to many more meaningful exchanges in the future.



LENDING A HAND

By Singapore Cancer Society

Singapore Cancer Society (SCS)'s Help the Children and Youth Programme (HCYP) is a free home-based tuition programme that is targeted towards financially needy and academically weak children and youth, who have experienced the impact of cancer in their lives either personally or through a family member.

Made possible with an annual pledge by the Singtel Touching Lives Fund, these children and youths are given a fighting chance to achieve academic excellence in their studies with the guidance of tutors on a regular basis for their basic Primary and Secondary schooling years. As part of the HCYP programme, tutors are also empowered to be the 'eyes on the ground,' which would enable the needs of these families to be met more promptly and efficiently through the involvement of social workers from SCS.

The following is a sharing from one of the tutors in our Tuition Programme who has experienced the wonder of making a difference and providing a sense of hope for the young lives in our care.

Please contact Mr Sebastian Tan at 6421 5864 / 9235 7954 or sebastian_tan@singaporecancersociety.org.sg to register as a tutor today.

“Having taught in a classroom setting for several years, I could only see a community of students going through the process of education and fulfilling certain academic requirements. Even my brief interaction with some students would not provide me the possibility of truly knowing the heart and the home of any individual student.

Since volunteering for the past 10 months with the Singapore Cancer Society as a tutor to a beneficiary, my perspective has changed. I had the opportunity to not only help in an academic aspect but also to impart life skills, be a friend, a mentor, and a listening ear to a 13-year-old boy who desires human interaction outside of school hours whilst his father is out trying to earn a living.

These weekly sessions are truly rewarding, though not without its share of challenges and frustrations. I experienced the joy of simply witnessing the small progressive steps he has made in the English Language: reading, writing, and speaking better English as well as being able to share his weekly highs



and lows in life. To learn what his interests and aspirations are and to see him laugh at his own silliness have been enriching.

This entire experience has not just benefited the beneficiary but also myself. It is heartening to know that I can make a difference no matter how small and yet learn the spirit of resilience from a young 13-year-old boy who, despite his circumstances and academic challenges, exudes a cheerful disposition.

At the end of the day, one may ask: "How much can I impact this young man's life?"

"How much can I help his family?"

I don't think anyone has the answers. But I believe that no matter what, we can still make a difference. Bob Pierce, the founder of World Vision, once said, "Don't fail to do something just because you can't do everything."

I'm glad I did something.
- Ms Lena Ng

BENEFICIAL CHEMISTRY

By Assistant Professor Wong Ka Lun, Natural Sciences and Science Education Academic Group

Arsenic is naturally found in groundwater of many countries. Various anthropogenic activities have also contributed to elevated concentration of this element in the environment. Ingestion of arsenic-containing water will lead to health problems, for example, skin disorders, cardiovascular diseases, and cancers. Around 140 million populations over 70 countries are affected by arsenic poisoning of drinking water.

Inspired by chemistry professors from the Natural Sciences and Science Education (NSSE) Academic Group, two student teachers, Ms Tan Ka Shin and Mr Liu Weillie had been trying to solve the arsenic-tainted problem in a sustainable way. Teaming up with students from Singapore Polytechnic, they have successfully developed a simple yet highly efficient remediation kit using readily available household materials, such as iron rust, cotton and recycled plastic bottles. The low-cost kit may potentially increase the accessibility of clean water for households in remote regions in developing countries such as Bangladesh, which face acute arsenic poisoning. The team has received a

commendation award in Green Wave Environmental Care Competition 2014 organized by SembCorp Marine Ltd. This annual nation-wide competition aims to promote participation of the public, particularly the students, in caring, protecting, maintaining and positively utilising the environment.

Ka Shin and Weillie, who are both in their final year in the Bachelor of Science (Education) programme, have indeed fully seized the opportunity to apply theoretical and practical knowledge learnt during their classes to synthesise products that are beneficial to society. Kudos to them and we certainly hope that they will share their journey in sustainable science with their students in their schools.

Clockwise (From above): Ms Tan Ka Shin (left) and Mr Liu Weillie (right) with their commendation award; Mr Liu Weillie (right) receiving the award from the Guest-of-Honour, Ms Indranee Rajah, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Law and Ministry of Education; Mr Liu Weillie and Ms Tan Ka Shin explaining their work to Ms Indranee Rajah after the award ceremony



A LOVE FOR MALAY

By Associate Professor Hadijah Rahmat, Head (interim), Asian Languages and Culture Academic Group

For the first time in Singapore, an endowment fund was set up at the Nanyang Technological University to support research in Malay Studies. The Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad (MAS) Endowment Fund is named after the prominent 90-year-old literary figure. Its objective is to recognise and pay tribute to Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad for his great contributions and achievements. Dr Ariff, an educator, author and community leader, was awarded Singapore's highest literary honour, the Cultural Medallion, in 1987. He has dedicated a great part of his life to Malay language and Malay teachers' education. He spent more than 40 years teaching Malay in primary and secondary schools before moving to teach trainee teachers at the then Teachers Training College (TTC) and Institute of Education

(IE). He served at IE for two decades before retiring in 1979.

The Fund aims to encourage new research and development in the areas which MAS has always been actively involved in his life. Mainly the Malay language, literature, culture, and its role in education in Singapore and the region. The fund is administered by the Malay Language and Culture Division, Asian Languages and Cultures Academic Group at NIE, NTU. Mr S. R. Nathan, the former President of Singapore, is the Patron for the Endowment Fund. Since it started in 2009, it has collected S\$512,000 amount of public donations. With 1:1 government matching, the Fund has reached more than S\$1 million, its initial target.

On 10 December 2014, the fund raising committee announced that the MAS Postgraduate scholarships and research grants were initiated under the Endowment Fund. The MAS Postgraduate Scholarship and MAS Research Grant are dedicated to generating further Malay language, literature, education and culture corpuses by inviting applicants who are pursuing postgraduate studies in the relevant fields, and researchers who are embarking on academic explorations that elevate Malay cultural studies to cross-cultural and international discourses. The details of the scholarships and research grant and applications are available at the NIE (www.nie.edu.sg) and NTU (www.ntu.edu.sg) websites. Applications are open now.

Bottom: Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad and his wife, Madam Sarinah (seated, right and middle respectively) cutting yellow glutinous rice on his 90th birthday together with Assoc Prof Hadijah Rahmat (second row, centre), Dr Saeda Buang (second row, left), Mr Haji Wan Hussin Zoohri (standing, extreme right), Chair, MAS Endowment Committee and other members of the Committee



THE BASIC KNOWLEDGE FALLACY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

By Associate Professor Manu Kapur, Head of Research, Learning Sciences Lab

In an endeavour to transform classroom practice, I have been working with schools and teachers to design and implement the productive failure (PF) pedagogy in Singapore mathematics classrooms since 2007. Instead of starting with direct instruction (DI) to teach a new concept, PF is designed to create opportunities for students to generate solutions to a novel problem that targets a concept they have not learnt yet. My research shows that this process prepares students to learn better from the subsequent instruction on that concept.

However, transforming classroom pedagogy is challenging, in part because one has to transform strongly held belief systems in the process. These beliefs are so persistent and often contrary to evidence that I call them fallacies.

Here, I focus on one of the most persistent fallacies that I have encountered over the last eight years of working with schools and teachers. I call it the “basic knowledge fallacy”, and here is what this fallacy is:

“Because basic knowledge needs to be taught before more complex knowledge,

it does not matter how you teach basic knowledge. As long as students can be given this knowledge, they can do more complex stuff later”.

While it is true that students must learn the basics before more complex knowledge, it is not true that the application of the basic knowledge does not depend upon how it was learnt in the first place. Simply put, empirical evidence shows that how one learns the basic knowledge has a substantive and significant effect on applying that knowledge later.

For example, in our experiments we have compared learning through PF versus DI. Both PF and DI develop high levels of basic knowledge very quickly. However, when we examined how deeply students understood the concepts as well as their ability to transfer what they had learnt to solve novel problems, PF students held a significant edge over DI students.

Furthermore, PF students showed more creativity in designing solutions to novel problems even before learning the concept. DI students, having learnt the concept were not able to solve the problem in any way but in the way that



was taught to them. What this shows is that how one learns the basic knowledge also has significant influence on the creative use of that knowledge.

If deep learning, ability to transfer, and creativity are important goals that good teaching must accomplish over and above the acquisition of basic knowledge needed to do well in exams, then we must at least start to confront the basic knowledge fallacy.

SEAMLESS LEARNING

By Dr Wong Lung Hsiang, Learning Sciences Lab

NIE researchers have once again put their names on the map of the academic field of “mobile-assisted seamless learning” by publishing what are touted as the first two scholarly books in the world solely dedicated to the exposition of the stated learning approach.

The first book, “Seamless Learning in the Age of Mobile Connectivity”, was published by Springer in November 2014. Dr Wong Lung Hsiang, a Senior Research Scientist of the Office of Education Research, was the lead editor of the book. Two co-editors are renowned mobile learning researchers – Professor Marcelo Milrad from Linnaeus University, Sweden and Professor Marcus Specht from The Open University of the Netherlands. The book collects 24 chapters co-authored by some of the other renowned scholars of the field from 17 countries. The book focuses on describing and reflecting upon the notion of seamless learning with regard to salient characteristics of

learner mobility and bridging of learning experiences across learning spaces.

As NIE is one of the leading institutions engaged in the research on and practices in seamless learning, several colleagues, including Professor Looi Chee Kit, Associate Professor Chai Ching Sing and Associate Professor Aw Guat Poh, have also contributed in writing book chapters.

Written in Mandarin, the second book focuses on a special domain of seamless learning application – seamless language learning. The book “Move, Language Learning! – Exploring Seamless and Mobile Language Learning” was published by Nanjing University Press, China in November 2014. Co-authored by Dr Wong Lung Hsiang (pictured right) and Dr Chin Chee Kuen, Executive Director of Singapore Centre for Chinese Language, the book explicates the theoretical foundation of seamless language learning and how it may constitute as a viable solution to overcome the limitation of

the lack of authentic, contextualised opportunities for language applications that second and foreign language learners typically face. The case studies presented in the book were taken from two OER-funded projects, “Move, Idioms!” and “MyCLOUD” (My Chinese Language ubiquitous learning Days), to demonstrate the practicality and effectiveness of the cutting-edge language learning approach.



AN ELITE CONTRIBUTION

Physical Education and Sports Science Academic Group Professor and Dean for Faculty Affairs, Professor Michael Chia joined an elite group of 16 international researchers and members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) at Lausanne in Switzerland, from 4 to 7 November 2014, in a caucus that focused on issues of talent identification, training and development in elite youth sport. Emanating from the 16-topic discussions that ranged from participation to abuse in elite youth sport, is a comprehensive consensus paper that will provide guidelines and recommendations for elite sport youth development that is holistic and healthy for the immediate future.

Prof Chia presented on the issues that are associated with early identification of sport talent, the inconsistent and irregular use of nomenclature of what constitutes ‘sport talent’, the group of variables that contribute to elite sport success, the validity and reliability of testing for talent, the efficacy of existing developmental models and the need for a more open and broader definition of elite sport success beyond the winning of medals.

In his deliberate discussion of the topic, Prof Chia shared that the long time horizon of between 10 and 15 years from childhood talent detection to adult talent actualisation in elite sport achievement

is vulnerable to the vicissitudes of focus and fickleness in the lives of athletes. The balance of evidence suggests a possible disconnect with mixed results between advocated talent development systems enacted to support future adult elite sporting achievements and the evidence of actual outcomes. Complicating these issues are the differences across country, culture and context and the indeterminate interactions among current unknown and undocumented factors.

He proposed that success at elite level sport performance stems from a combination of numerous factors which vary based on the socio-cultural and politico-economic context of a country. Intrinsic (genetics, aptitude, adaptation to training, motivation, psychological skills) as well as extrinsic (environment, athlete development pathway, coaches, family, educators) factors work in complex synchrony to determine an athlete’s success in sport. Stakeholders need to acknowledge the complexity of these factors in determining an athlete’s level of success and limit ascribing the development of the elite-athlete to singular attributes. An integrated approach, an appreciation of the various contributory factors and a porosity of talent transfer is needed to optimise athlete development and elite sport success.

The discussion that supervened among the international group of experts from Switzerland, Norway, Netherlands, Italy, France, Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, United States of America and Singapore was contentious, controversial and yet collaborative at the same time.

Prof Chia’s summative recommendation to the IOC medical commission is to: “Accept porosity and flexibility of talent transitions in sport as the norm and allow for a wider definition of success (meaningful and life-forming experiences) with the well-being of the elite young athlete as a central focus.”

By April 2015, the group must have a consensus paper on youth athlete development ready for publication in the IOC-supported injury prevention and health protection edition of the “British Journal of Sports Medicine”.

In his words, Prof Chia described his experience at the IOC meeting, “It is a rare honour to be able to represent NIE and Singapore at the meeting of international experts which he described as meaningful and enriching; and he looks forward to this continued collaboration.”

Top: Prof Michael Chia (second from left) with experts from Canada, Australia and the USA

CAMPUS NEWS

- The July 2014 cohort of student teachers showcased their Group Endeavours in Service Learning (GESL) projects on 11 February 2015. With 43 different project exhibits on display, members of the NIE community took time to talk to the student teachers about their experiences. Do check the online edition of this issue for special coverage at www.nie.edu.sg/newsroom/nie-news
- NIE saw the launch of two new Master of Arts programmes on 25 February 2015. They are the Master of Arts in Teaching Chinese as an International Language (MA TCIL) and the Master of Arts in Professional Education (MAPE). For more details, visit: www.nie.edu.sg/studynie/admissions/graduate-studies-professional-learning
- NIE will be hosting the 2015 CJ Koh Professorial in May. The 11th CJ Koh Professor is Professor Fernando Miguel Reimers from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He is currently Professor of International Education and was previously Senior Education Specialist for the World Bank and an Education Specialist at the Harvard Institute for International Development. Look out for the NIE News June 2015 edition for special coverage.
- The NIE Trainee Teachers’ Club is organising a graduation party for all graduands-to-be on 16 May 2015. Titled “The Great Gradsby”, the event promises to be a memorable celebration! We will have a special feature of this event in the NIE News June 2015 edition.

P.E. LENS ACROSS NATIONS

Professor Michael Chia, Physical education and sports science professor and Dean for Faculty Affairs, gave a well-received keynote address at the International Conference on Teacher Learning and Development 2014 with a special focus on Physical Education and Sports Science. The conference was held in Kuching, Sarawak from the 4 to 6 November 2014 at the Hilton Kuching Hotel.

In his conference opening keynote address to more than 300 physical education teachers and coaches from all over Malaysia and the region and with the Director of the Institute of Teacher Education of Tun Abdul Razak Campus, Malaysia in the audience, Prof Chia elucidated on the topic of *"Physical Education and Sports Science in new times - the importance of country, culture and context"*.

His interactive sharing was encapsulated in the following manner: "The world today

in East Asia is not immune to the positive and also the inimical effects of globalisation and interconnectedness, where knowledge is converging and in the context of physical education and teacher education, and where there is the commonality of purpose in ameliorating the ailments of obesity and physical inactivity. However, countries are unique in culture and context, therefore a 'one size fits all' approach toward teacher education will not fit. The varied context of physical education and its associated emphasis across the nations were discussed with criticality and reflection. A case study of Physical Education and Sports Science in Singapore, in terms of philosophy, policies and practice was brought to the fore. Some suggestions for the way forward for physical education in teacher education were explored. Importantly, for PE to prosper, it must be a basket and beacon of bliss. Contrarily, a bastion of boredom and banality will not do."



UNDERSTANDING LEARNING

By Dr Elizabeth Koh and Dr Michael Tan, Office of Education Research

The Office of Education Research is proud to announce the launch of the third NIE journal in March 2015. Published twice a year by NIE and international publisher Taylor & Francis, *"Learning: Research and Practice"* aims to be the journal of choice for outstanding research that pushes the boundaries of what we know about learning.

Learning joins the comprehensive stable of NIE publications that include two other journals. The *"Asia Pacific Journal of Education"* focuses on educational policies and systems, while *"Pedagogies: An International Journal"* examines change and innovation in classroom learning and teaching. *Learning* complements its sister journals by providing a much-needed perspective on the often misunderstood science of learning.

Articles in the inaugural issue include:

- *"Argumentation as Core Curriculum"* by Professor Deanna Kuhn and Dr Wendy Moore, Columbia University, USA.
- *"Different Roads Lead to Rome: The Case of Principle-Based Cognitive Skills"* by Professor Alexander Renkl, University of Freiburg, Germany
- *"Learning from Productive Failure"* by Associate Professor Manu Kapur, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
- *"Becoming Aware: Towards a Post-Constructivist Theory of Learning"* by Professor Wolff-Michael Roth, University of Victoria, Canada



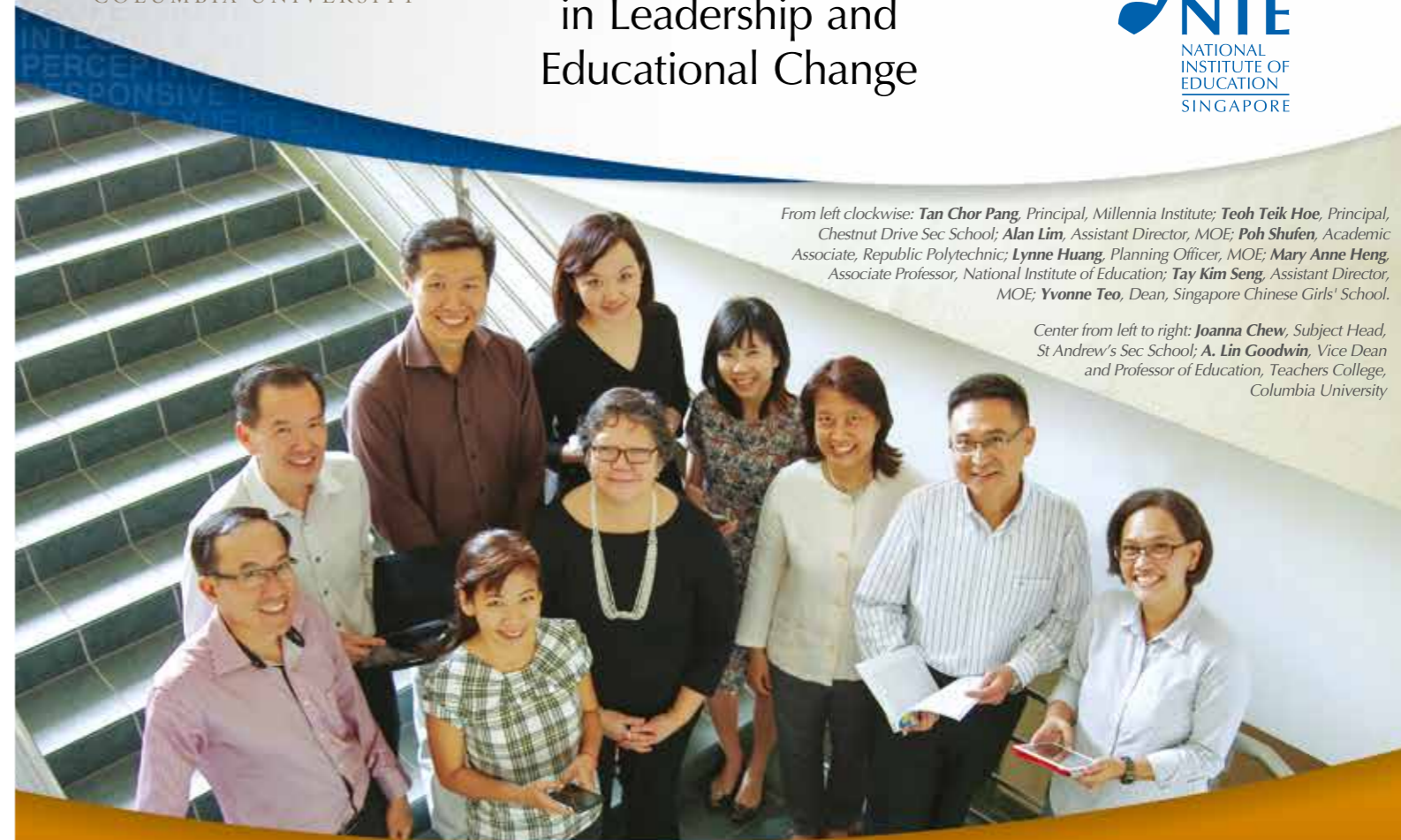
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From left clockwise: **Tan Chor Pang**, Principal, Millennia Institute; **Teoh Teik Hoe**, Principal, Chestnut Drive Sec School; **Alan Lim**, Assistant Director, MOE; **Poh Shufen**, Academic Associate, Republic Polytechnic; **Lynne Huang**, Planning Officer, MOE; **Mary Anne Heng**, Associate Professor, National Institute of Education; **Tay Kim Seng**, Assistant Director, MOE; **Yvonne Teo**, Dean, Singapore Chinese Girls' School.

Center from left to right: **Joanna Chew**, Subject Head, St Andrew's Sec School; **A. Lin Goodwin**, Vice Dean and Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University



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THANK YOU NIE

By Mr Ng Jia Jun Justin, Bachelor of Science (Education), Year Four

I have so much to be thankful for, especially to these inspiring staff who have made my journey at the National Institute of Education (NIE) so memorable. Associate Professor Shirley Lim is one of the most inspirational professors I have met during my course of study at NIE. Her biology classes are never dull, full of energy and she always does her very best to bring her lectures to life. It was her passion and dedication to stretch her students to their fullest potential that drove me to undertake a final year project with her as my mentor. Her contributions to the academia and nation have been recognised as well, having been recently awarded the Public Administration Medal (Silver). I thank her for being the epitome of a true educator.

Ms Phyllis Kok, Mdm Edhurajan Managa and Mdm Tan Bueh Hua from Student Liaison of the Office of Teacher Education are a team whom I would also love to thank from the bottom of my heart.

Through my three years in Trainee Teachers' Club (as Vice-President in Year 1 and President for the subsequent two years) and especially during my third year when I was concurrently the Council Chairperson of NTU Students' Union, their constant support and guidance have nurtured me and transformed me into the better person I am today. I can never express enough gratitude for their constant sacrifices in building a more vibrant and enriching campus for NIE students. Thank you.

I urge everyone to seize every opportunity NIE presents you. They might just be the platform for you to discover yourself, as I have.



By NIE Alumna, Ms Jenneth De Claro-Molinilla

For the meaningful lessons you unselfishly shared in our Science Class...
 For the strategies and techniques you taught us that opened up the creative side of me...
 For being patient in all our questions and shortcomings...
 For the "yummy treat" that was enjoyed up to the last bite...
 For making us feel welcome in your native land that is foreign to us...
 Most of all...
 For being a friend who listened, shared and respected our ideas no matter how it was...

Thank you, Associate Professor Augustine Tan, from the bottom of my hypothalamus!

By NIE Alumna, Ms Saranya Elangovan

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Associate Professor Noel Chia Kok Hwee from the Early Childhood and Special Needs Education Academic Group at the National Institute of Education (NIE).

Assoc Prof Chia extended his insights and valuable feedback while granting me ample room to explore and pursue my writing in the way that I envisioned when I pursued my Masters in Education (Special Education) at NIE. With his guidance, I was humbled to receive two awards, namely the Inaugural Society for Reading and Literacy Research Award 2012 and the Dean's Commendation for Research Award 2013.

Though his schedule was tight, he always made time for deliberations even during weekends. He relentlessly encouraged me to publish, which led me to publish articles as well as co-write books. Besides, he charted the path for me to present my papers at the Institute of Education, London.

Thank you for inspiring me, for being a great mentor and for constantly exploring collaborative initiatives.

By NIE Alumna, Ms Patricia Ng

The training at NIE filled a new chapter in my life with unforgettable events. Knowledge which the staff shared in the classes really helped me understand special education students and sharpened my professional skills. What I did not expect was someone who not only imparted knowledge but actively created opportunities for us to write and publish, teach, embark on research, attend conferences, get connected and present papers.

Along the way, I even got a research award from the Society for Reading and Literacy! Thank you Associate Professor Noel Chia!



By LEP 2011 participant, Ms Sarahflorencia J.M. Kironde

To talk of a single staff is quite challenging given that, the program was strategically designed to bring to participants knowledge and skills on the current trends and innovations in the education sector. All topics were exciting and competently delivered by the team of lecturers with great mastery of the subject content and competent in the delivery methodology.

The leaders and staff of the schools that we visited, namely Bedok Green Primary School, Greenridge Secondary School and Northlight School were all energetic and well visioned to nurture creativity and innovative culture among learners.

The young men who conducted the closing event inspired most. They demonstrated a high level of competence and professionalism in events' management.

Thank you all.



SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

By Public, International and Alumni Relations

Our heartiest congratulations to one of NIE alumna, Ms Eliza Ng, for setting a new national record for the 3000m steeplechase race at the recent 2014 Singapore Athletic Association Track and Field Series 5 event. The long distance specialist set a timing of 12:56:30, beating the previous record timing of 13:29:43 which was set in 2010.

"As a kid, I loved racing with my sisters and neighbours along my house corridor. From that very moment, I fell in love with running," the competitive athlete recalled. Her love for Track and Field eventually became a serious passion when she met Associate Professor Govindasamy Balasekaran from the Physical Education and Sports Science Academic Group. "Dr Bala is truly an inspiration to me in all aspects. Even when I failed to meet his expectations, he never gave up on me and for that, I am eternally grateful towards him. Through running, he taught me to be a better and stronger individual," she quipped.

Indeed, Ms Ng is not one to rest on her laurels. She has already set her sights to attempt to break all the long distance national records. "The steeplechase event is just the beginning of my running achievements. I will run faster in all the events and hope to bring glory to Singapore. I hope to achieve the same success that Dr Bala had in his prime," she said.

Spoken like a true champion. We wish you all the best in your running endeavours and are certain that you will continue to fly the NIE flag high!

Below: Greater things are in store for Ms Eliza Ng (left) with the help and guidance of Assoc Prof Govindasamy Balasekaran



A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE

By NIE Alumna, Ms Ou Niangtai Janice

Selected as Valedictorian of the Teachers' Investiture Ceremony January 2015 graduand cohort and also a recipient of the NIE Gold Medal award, Ms Janice Ou says that one of the most unforgettable lessons for her during her young schooldays were her interactions with her teacher.

"It was not just one moment that resulted in change, but many such moments of positive encouragement and hard work

on my teacher's part that has moved me. I had a Math teacher in secondary school who believed in me and motivated me to strive for the better," she explained. Such bittersweet memories have helped the Postgraduate Diploma in Education top performer admit that she is forever changed in her convictions toward teaching and how she wants to pursue her lifelong career.

She added: "I made the decision to become a teacher because I believe that education

is a means to broaden one's horizons and I want to be a part of that for others; just as how my teacher was to me."

In her valedictory speech, she too encouraged her fellow peers to strive for the best and make a positive difference in their students' lives.

Bottom: Ms Janice Ou (right) receiving her graduation certificate from Ms Chan Lai Fung, Permanent Secretary (Education), Ministry of Education



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

EVENT	DATE	VENUE	CONTACT
Graduate Studies and Professional Learning Openhouse	18 Apr 2015	NIE Singapore	Mr Clement Ng Email clement.ng@nie.edu.sg Ms Imelda Binte Rostam Email imelda.rostam@nie.edu.sg
Curriculum Forum	8 May 2015	NIE Singapore Block 5, Level 1, Lecture Theatre 2	Assistant Professor Leonel Lim Email leonel.lim@nie.edu.sg
Learning Forum for Mentors	28 May 2015	NIE Singapore	Mr Sunny Siteo Email sunny.siteo@nie.edu.sg
Redesigning Pedagogy International Conference 2015	2 - 4 June 2015	NIE Singapore	Email rpcsec@nie.edu.sg