



Towards an Institute of **Distinction**

NIE
NATIONAL
INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

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(From left) Assoc Prof Cheah Horn Mun, Assoc Prof Philip Wong, Prof Leo Tan & Assoc Prof Quek Jin Jong



An Institute of **Nanyang**
Technological University

Congratulations to our Teachers

This year, three NIE teachers were among the 11 recipients of the Teacher of the Year (TOY) Awards. They were presented with the awards by Dr Su Guaning, President of Nanyang Technological University at a ceremony on 9 April 2003. It was an occasion to recognise our colleagues for their excellence in teaching.

Our heartiest congratulations to



Assoc Prof Anneliese Kramer-Dahl
English Language & Literature



Assoc Prof Augustine Tan
Natural Sciences



Assoc Prof Pamela Sharpe
Specialised Education

Interview with TOY Winners of NIE

NIE News: How do you feel winning this award?

Assoc Prof Kramer-Dahl: Encouraged and surprised. I did not expect to be among the winners given that so many capable colleagues from NIE, two from my own Academic Group, had been nominated along with me.

Assoc Prof Tan: My first feeling is that of sincere thankfulness to the persons who have taught or guided me in many different beneficial ways especially my strict mother, my understanding wife, my interesting colleagues in Natural Sciences, my students who provided me with their feedback for me to improve over the years. I am also very grateful to Prof Leo Tan (Director, NIE), Assoc Prof Diong Cheong Hoong (Head, Natural Sciences) and other administrative staff for providing the infrastructure for a conducive teaching environment in NIE.

Assoc Prof Sharpe: I find this kind of question difficult to answer. I feel humble but honoured and I really hope that I deserve the award once more.

NIE News: What inspired you to be a teacher?

Assoc Prof Kramer-Dahl: My mother, who as the girl among six boys in the family during hard pre-World War II times in Germany, had to make way for the boys to enter higher education and hence to forego her wish to become a teacher - a wish she talked to me about it from my youngest days. There was also my elementary school teacher, Frau Mandt, who made teaching language and literacy look like the most desirable and rewarding of professions.

Assoc Prof Tan: It is the calling to share knowledge, compassion, ideals and attributes of living life to the full, with the young. In my school days in a mission school, I was truly inspired by the total dedication of the missionaries.

Assoc Prof Sharpe: Being taught by good teachers who were able to maximise my strengths whilst at school. Other reasons would include taking the opportunity to join a profession that earned much respect in the deprived northern UK community in which I was brought up.

of the Year

NIE News: What are the attributes of a good teacher?

Assoc Prof Kramer-Dahl: For me, most importantly, conviction, disciplinary knowledge, and the desire and ability to connect with students.

Assoc Prof Tan: A good teacher must have a solid foundation in certain areas of knowledge while keeping up-to-date with the current and future development in knowledge. A good teacher should also teach knowledge of the future. A teacher teaches only when a student learns. So, in a holistic sense, a good teacher should consider the physical, social, and emotional aspects of the learner, in addition to that of intellectual. A good teacher cooperates with students to create a healthy learning environment. Actually, a good teacher in all sincerity must have a passion, love and commitment to teach and learn.

Assoc Prof Sharpe: I am not sure that I am describing myself here but I would look for characteristics of honesty, empathy and generosity, genuineness and integrity. Good teachers would also be competent and skilful in their subject/content knowledge. Good teachers would also need to uphold their professional responsibilities to all involved in the education system. A good teacher should be a good listener, approachable and should never stop learning. I do hope I don't sound pompous.

NIE News: How would you motivate teachers to excel in teaching?

Assoc Prof Kramer-Dahl: By making them aware of the immense importance of their profession: not merely to prepare our future workforce but to shape well-informed, committed, critical and socially responsible citizens who determine the character of the Singapore of the future.

Assoc Prof Tan: A few weeks ago, when I visited a medical clinic, I met a doctor who was my former student in a junior college in 1988. He remembered me and my efforts in trying to make the lecture interesting by doing some demonstrations in thermal physics (I was a 'green' teacher, then). Suddenly, I was reminded of the serious impact of teaching on human lives. I realised that every student

remembers his teachers probably for the rest of his life. I always try to understand my students and help them to enjoy learning. Therefore, what motivates you to do well in your teaching is knowing that your students will remember you as a person, your concern for them and your sound knowledge, probably for the rest of their lives.

Assoc Prof Sharpe: I would provide and expect them to welcome feedback. I would encourage reflection and discourage complacency. I would hope that teachers would be able to observe and value the learning and development of their pupils, as in the case of one of my preschool teachers who was astounded by the keen observations of a three year old child from a PAP Community Funded Centre, who commented, "When the river is green, the fish die but when it is blue, the fish are happy." Another noted the observations of a four year old from another PAP Community Funded Centre. When she asked about his drawing, he responded, "I draw the airplane in the sky and the ship in the water because this is what I see when in the cable car at Sentosa." When my teachers value such comments, then I feel that they are excited by their teaching.

NIE News: Any words of advice for aspiring teachers?

Assoc Prof Kramer-Dahl: To respect the rich histories and resources of their students, and to try to anticipate the worlds in which they will live later.

Assoc Prof Tan: Aspiring teachers, strive to be patient with yourself, your students, and the system for the teaching world is never perfect. Refresh your knowledge constantly, develop good communication with your bosses, colleagues, and students, and nurture your love for teaching by trying novel teaching methods, learning from senior teachers. While you are busy teaching in schools, do find time to return to NIE for in-service courses to upgrade your knowledge and interact with your lecturers.

Assoc Prof Sharpe: In addition to my earlier comments, I would add the following: (a) listen and be sensitive to the needs of pupils (b) teach according to their needs and value their achievements however, meager and (c) avoid the 'one-size-fits-all' approach to teaching.

Dean Awarded Australian College of Education Medal

By Public & International Relations

Prof Allan Luke (Dean, Centre for Research in Pedagogy & Practice) was awarded the Australian College of Education's (ACE) College Medal for outstanding contribution to Australian education on 9 July 2003. He was conferred the award at an hour long ceremony in conjunction with the ACE National Conference 2003. He is the 14th recipient of the award, which was initiated in 1980.

The College Medal is awarded to Australians who are considered to have made an outstanding contribution to Australian education. The Award was

presented to Prof Luke for his 20 years of service to Australian education as a teacher educator, dean, literacy and language education researcher, and as Deputy Director General of Education for Queensland. Prof Luke was recognised for his extensive in-service work with Australian teachers, and for having driven key reforms in the areas of critical literacy education, new approaches to curriculum and assessment, and the current national focus on pedagogy.

On the same occasion, Prof Luke addressed the gathering on the topic of

the challenges for teachers in an era of globalisation. He spoke about pushing beyond national and state visions for teaching and teacher education and the possibilities for a 'cosmopolitan' teacher who spanned borders, cultural and linguistic barriers, and worked to educate students for critical engagement with new economies and cultures.

The conference themed *Quality Teachers, Powerful Learners, True Professionals* took place from 9 to 11 July 2003 in Queensland's Sunshine Coast, Australia. Prof



Luke has previously been awarded the Educational Press Association of America's Merit Award for Outstanding Scholarly Essay and, in 2002, was inducted in the International Reading Association's Hall of Fame for lifetime contribution to literacy research.

By Public & International Relations

School Psychology Review's Outstanding Article of the Year



Asst Prof Rebecca Ang's *Essay Differential benefits of skills training with anti-social youth based on group composition: A meta-analytic investigation* was named Outstanding

Article of the Year 2002 by *School Psychology Review*, a refereed journal published by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) in the USA.

The award is conferred by NASP, the national organisation serving more than 21,500 school psychologists and related practitioners in North America. The selection of the outstanding article was based on the following criteria: contribution of the article to research and practice in school psychology, interest of the article to the readership of *School Psychology Review* and overall contribution of the article to advancing the profession of school psychology.

Asst Prof Ang, an academic staff with the Psychological

Studies Academic Group, received her doctorate in School Psychology specialising in clinical child psychology from Texas A&M University. Her primary research interest is in the area of developmental child psychopathology. She is particularly interested in studying characteristics of aggressive children, correlates of aggression and how to effectively intervene with aggressive children.

Interested parties can contact Asst Prof Ang at email address: phrang@nie.edu.sg to request for copies of the article.

By Asst Prof Ng Aik Kwang,
Psychological Studies

The Psychology Clinic: An Oasis to Replenish Oneself in these Tough Times

It is not easy being a student or a staff on campus these days, as globalisation intensifies the competition among universities, the new economy calls for novel ways of teaching and learning, and terrorism keeps everyone vigilant. Throw in an epidemic like Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and campus life takes on a surreal quality, as both students and staff join forces to keep an invisible but lethal enemy at bay, even as they attempt to carry on with business as usual. Brave souls all of us are, but human nonetheless, and especially in these tough times, we look for a shoulder to lean on.

The newly set up Psychology Clinic at NIE promises to be an oasis for these

wearied spirits to replenish themselves. According to its director Assoc Prof Russell Hawkins (Psychological Studies), the Clinic's two complementary goals are to provide an extensive range of psychological and counselling services to Nanyang Technological University students, staff and the general public; and to provide a supervised training opportunity for postgraduate Psychology and Counselling students who can offer quality services to potential clients at an affordable fee.

The Psychology Clinic is staffed by Master of Arts (Applied Psychology) trainees at NIE. These trainees have many years of experience working in the teaching and health-care professions. Qualified staff viz registered psychologists supervise their work with clients in the clinic. Utilising the latest know-how in Psychology, these trainees assist clients to overcome vexing problems in a variety of areas. These include

educational and learning difficulties, relationship difficulties, family problems, depression, fears, phobias and panic, children's behaviour and management problems, as well as vocational and personality assessment.

The concept of this Clinic has a short past but a long history, traceable to the Bukit Timah campus era. Back then, stressed trainee teachers would be welcomed at The Open Door, a counselling unit of the Psychological Studies Division. When NIE shifted to the Yunnan Garden campus, two good ideas were brewing: one was to resurrect The Open Door while the other was to develop and enhance the NIE Student Advising and Counselling Service. Rather

than duplicate efforts, a decision to integrate these two ideas was made, in the form of the Psychology Clinic.

The founder of the Psychology Clinic, Assoc Prof Esther Tan (Psychological Studies), was inspired by these words of Marie Curie, a tenacious scientist who won two Nobel Prizes for her path-breaking research, "make of your life a dream, and make of this dream a reality." As the realisation of a dream, the Psychology Clinic cannot come at a better point in time for every one of us, as we wrestle with the challenges of living in a new millennium, filled with terrorists and bugs. Since its inception, the Clinic has seen a steady flow of clients passing through its doors. If you are looking for a shoulder to lean on, look no further; the Psychology Clinic is an oasis where you can replenish yourself in these tough times.

The Psychology Clinic is housed in 2-B1-01, NIE and operates on an appointment basis between 9.00am and 9.00pm. These appointments are arranged by phone (Tel: 6790 3318) and each session lasts about 50 minutes. The number of sessions required will vary in accordance with the complexity of the challenges faced by the client, who will be charged a small fee for using the service. In addition to these individual services, the Clinic also provides group counselling and crisis intervention services.



A counselling session
in progress

DNA Workshops for Members



(Seated, from left) Dr Wang Kai Yuen, Mr Hawazi Daipi, Mayor Othman Bin Haron Eusofe & Mr Andy Gan
(Standing, from left) Mr Ahmad Mohd Magad, Mr R Ravindran & Prof Leo Tan at the DNA Workshop

The workshops ended with a panel discussion on a range of current topics and ethical issues in the Life Sciences, such as cloning, stem cell research and genetically modified foods.

The workshops were well-received, with all participants being actively engaged in the discussions and hands-on activities. Dr Wang Kai Yuen, MP, Bukit Timah and Chairman, Government Parliamentary Committee for Education, Dr Amy Khor, Hong Kah Group Representation Constituency (GRC) and

The DNA Centre@NIE organised DNA Science Workshops for two groups of Members of Parliament (MPs) on 3 and 10 May 2003. In total, 31 MPs attended the workshops.

The goals of the workshops were to enable the participants to understand what modern Life Sciences entailed, be aware of the important laboratory techniques of the Life Sciences and their applications, and appreciate the potential benefits of the Life Sciences and the ethical issues involved.

Each workshop began with an introductory presentation on the historical development and essential concepts of the Life Sciences. This was followed by laboratory sessions, during which participants were guided through a series of experiments designed to illustrate and reinforce concepts discussed in the introductory session. The MPs extracted DNA from their cheek cells, amplified the DNA by polymerase chain reaction, and analysed the amplified DNA by gel electrophoresis. They also cut DNA using 'molecular scissors' called restriction enzymes. The relevance of these experiments to biotechnology and the detection of the SARS virus were also discussed.

Applications of DNA technology were further exemplified through a series of demonstrations, which showcased research work done in NIE: gene therapy against cancer by firing DNA into cells using a 'gene gun', use of genetically modified, resveratrol-producing vegetables against cancer and cardio-vascular diseases, and the production of glowing plants by the insertion of a firefly gene.

Deputy Chairman, Government Parliamentary Committee for Education and Mr Zainudin Nordin, MP, Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC share their views on the DNA Science Workshops.

NIE News: Please give us your overall assessment of the DNA Workshop, particularly in terms of content delivery, duration, and whether it met or even surpassed your expectations.

Dr Wang: The workshop exceeded my expectations. I am happy that not too much basic theoretical stuff was presented. The practical orientation of the course kept the day interesting and fun.

Dr Khor: The course was excellent, well organised and interesting. I liked the hands-on, interactive and experiential approach adopted which made me feel at ease after about 30 years away from a bunsen burner and pipette.

Mr Zainudin: Overall, it was an eye-opener. The workshop was well conducted and filled with just enough interesting and useful information and knowledge. At the same time, the practical sessions were challenging but yet do-able within the time allocated. I would rate it as very good and would encourage others to attend. It was better than expected.

of Parliament

By Asst Prof Yan Yaw Kai, Head,
DNAC Centre@NIE &
Public & International Relations

NIE News: Are there interesting or useful aspects that you may like to highlight?

Dr Wang: I think the Alu identification was fantastic. Maybe a longer elaboration of the migratory pattern of early men based on DNA evidence would be very interesting to me although I probably read most of the articles in the popular journals.

Dr Khor: The additional lecture on virus was very timely as it helped me understand more about SARS. The lecture on changing the genetic makeup, say of plants, was also very intriguing. When reduced to the basics in the lectures, it made me better appreciate the usefulness and value of Life Sciences. Prior to this, Life Sciences seemed something very complex and beyond the comprehension of laymen.

Mr Zainudin: The history of the progress/development in the field, the main players/scientists and the laboratory sessions were great.

NIE News: How do you find our laboratory facilities?

Dr Wang: Great.

Dr Khor: For someone who has not stepped into a laboratory for 30 years or more, I certainly found it very advanced and user friendly compared to when I was a school girl. I was then even wary of lighting up a bunsen burner which used gas then. They were prone to spurts when you attempted to light them. Also, the pipette is now so much easier to use. Previously, I occasionally found myself tasting something sour or weird.

Mr Zainudin: Excellent!

NIE News: What, in your views, can schools do to make Life Science teaching more meaningful and interesting to students?

Dr Wang: The linkage between DNA evidence and evolution of species would be great. Perhaps, we can highlight that SARS virus is evolution happening right under our noses.

Dr Khor: You must constantly relate the Life Sciences to everyday life and applications and adopt a hands-on experiential approach. For example, you could do a public hygiene lesson and let the students see the amount of germs, viruses on surfaces and their hands before washing and after. This is especially ideal for very young children.

Mr Zainudin: What you did for us was very good but maybe it may need some more tweaking to the right level, though the contents can be similar. The use of multi-media and internet should be encouraged. Cartoons, visual graphics and enlarged models would also facilitate learning and understanding.

NIE News: The DNA Centre is a culmination of longstanding efforts in laying the foundation for Life Science teaching in NIE. Going forward, what recommendations then, for future Life Science programmes in NIE?

Dr Wang: Personally, I think teachers should be able to address questions arising from better understanding of Life Sciences in relation to religions especially between creationism and evolution. It would be useful to inculcate in young children that Life Sciences should not be used to look for eternal life or human cloning as that is the realm of the creator.

Dr Khor: These programmes should be made available not only to Science teachers but also to all teachers who want to have some understanding of Life Sciences so that they can help inject even more interest in this area. NIE could work with other Life Science research organisations to develop the programme further and keep up with new developments in this fast changing and developing subject. You could get commercial organisations to support and sponsor the Centre and collaborate on research and teaching efforts.

Mr Zainudin: The DNA Centre is a very good model and learning experience. Moving forward, it would be worthwhile to explore specific areas of Life Science that need more focus. It is good to be general but relevance to industry would certainly help NIE formulate programmes.



(From left) Dr Ong Chit Chung, Mr Hawazi Daipi, Mr Timothy Tan, Prof Leo Tan & Dr Ong Seh Hong actively engaging in a hands-on experiment

Director's Message



The new academic year is upon us. Welcome home to NIE, Nanyang Technological University (NTU)! It has been an exhilarating and productive year despite the disruptions to normalcy during the recent health scare. I wish to acknowledge the valiant efforts of the NIE, NTU SARS Committees and the frontline heroes of NIE - the security personnel, staff who volunteered to do temperature checks on students taking examinations, the cleaners and the canteen operators in particular, for keeping us psychologically and physically safe.

Three major initiatives were brought to fruition between February and July 2003. The DNA Centre@NIE (DNAC) was officially launched in February to support teachers in the teaching of the Life Sciences. It houses state-of-the-art laboratories and provides both experiential learning and a one-stop resource centre for teachers to meet their needs in continual education and in the development of course and project materials for schools. The response from teachers and schools has been tremendous! Well done, Graduate Programmes & Research Office, Natural Sciences and Science & Technology Education Academic Groups and staff of DNAC.

The Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice (CRPP) became operational in March 2003. The result of two years of planning and preparation, this Centre serves to emphasise the importance of educational research in the life of academics and school teachers.

The CRPP has a specific mandate to undertake research initially in three niche areas viz Language Literacy (including Mother Tongue), Mathematics and Science Education and Information and Communication Technologies in Education. The CRPP aims to provide an innovative and substantive research base to assist in educational policy formulation and implementation and pedagogical initiatives within the Singapore school system.

One of the key strategies of CRPP will be to engage individual schools in research projects. The involvement of the principals, heads of department and teachers in the schools will be strongly encouraged. In this way, a good programme of information collection involving the whole school can be ensured as against collecting fragmented information from teachers across many schools. I hope that research findings generated by CRPP and all the Academic Groups of NIE will help provide solutions to school-based issues. The partnership with schools is vital.

The third major initiative was the completion in May of the wireless technology infrastructure in NIE to provide both staff and trainee teachers access to network facilities via mobile computing devices. This campus-wide network offers greater accessibility, mobility and flexibility in teaching and learning.

This academic year sees the launch of a new initiative - the introduction of the part-time undergraduate degree programme. The BA/BSc (Education) programme caters to serving non-graduate teachers who aspire (and qualify) to pursue a degree with minimal disruption from their work.

Together with my colleagues, I look forward to welcoming our pioneer batch of part-time undergraduates and all new trainee teachers from our various programmes into the NIE, NTU family. Together, we will create innovators and leaders for the teaching profession. Together, we will provide care and concern for all we interact with. Together, we are committed to producing the best teachers there can be!

I wish everyone in the family a rewarding and healthy year ahead!

Appointment C

The following staff assumed their respective roles in NIE



Assoc Prof Cheah Horn Mun

Dean, Foundation Programmes (FP) (previously Divisional Director, Academic Computing & Information Services (ACIS))



Assoc Prof Quek Jin Jong
Dean, Academic

(previously Principal Officer)

NIE News: Tell us your vision, goals and objectives for your respective offices.

Assoc Prof Cheah: Our vision is to establish NIE as a choice institution for initial teacher training. The Office's goals and objectives are to:

- further strengthen the ties and communication between the FP Office and the Academic Groups (AGs);
- in line with Operational Process and Change Review and Applications Implementation Steering Committee recommendations, continue to review FP processes to make them more efficient, relevant and responsive to changes; and to effectively support programme needs of faculty staff;
- further strengthen international and local ties to raise profile and increase recognition of FP programmes;
- continue to build trainee teacher interactions and enhance sense of belonging;
- establish a counselling and trainee teacher development unit; and
- establish a strategic engagement framework and unit to provide timely information, forward planning and chart direction for the pre-service teacher training programmes.

Assoc Prof Quek: The broad goal of the Dean, Academic's Office is still to work closely with AG Heads to support the Programme Offices through quality of teaching, research and supervision. Prof Koh Tai Ann, the founding Dean, has set up the infrastructure to facilitate the processes over the last three years and they are working quite well. I will fine tune and enhance the processes with my team of Heads, where necessary.

Assoc Prof Wong: We want to help academic staff in the pervasive use of technology to support them in instruction, research, and administration. Our trainees will experience the effective use of technology for teaching and learning. We want to excel in our service standards in technical, information services and instructional development. We are working towards a common goal ie to deploy technology effectively to improve the various facets of our job and work environment.

Changes ... In Conversation

Effective 1 July 2003:



Assoc Prof Philip Wong
Divisional Director, ACIS
(previously Head, Instructional
Science Academic Group)

NIE News: Would you like to highlight any forthcoming plans which your office will be embarking on?

Assoc Prof Cheah: The FP Office is planning for a substantial review of the curriculum of all pre-service programmes. We intend to jointly work with the Graduate Programmes & Research Office and look at the pre-service and in-service programmes as a continuum. The review aims to consolidate and streamline pre-service and in-service programmes to achieve better synergy and make the *trainee*

teacher-to-teacher transition seamless.

The FP Office also intends to review and revamp the approach to teaching practice, with the possibility of integrating ICT to enhance the learning experience of trainee teachers undergoing Practicum.

Assoc Prof Quek: Besides strengthening the core areas of our work, my immediate task is to work closely with the Human Resource Department to ensure that the process of succession is firmly in place. Some of the AG Heads will be completing their second term of office and possibly going on to the third. We must ensure that we have the next generation of leaders ready to lead in the academic disciplines and support NIE for the challenges ahead.

Another area for me to look into is to evaluate if the present malleable boundaries of AGs and their core work are achieving their goals. If necessary, we will re-define the configurations of AGs to ensure that we will be able to support the Programme Offices and the Centre for Research in Pedagogy & Practice more efficiently and effectively.

Assoc Prof Wong: We are working on a number of projects both for administrative and instructional purposes. In terms of administration, we are developing a staff portal whereby the work flow and access to resources in administration will be streamlined. A pilot should be up in a few months' time and will be implemented within a year.

In terms of instructional support, the revamped Centre for IT in Education will assist faculty staff in using technology to help their teaching. We are trying ways to encourage e-learning and we will be rolling out a video-based learning system by the end of the year. This will allow video-based teaching through the internet and learning can be done outside the campus as well. In terms of infrastructure, we will be launching our wireless network in middle of July and we are encouraging academic staff to explore the use of this technology for their teaching and learning. In conjunction with this, ACIS is launching a project called 'Learning without Limits through Wireless@NIE'.

In this project we are assisting faculty staff by providing technical support and equipment. To cater to a mobile lifestyle and work environment, desktops for academic staff will be replaced with notebook computers when the computers need to be replaced. We will be doing this in phases.

NIE News: Share with us some of the proud moments in your previous appointment.

Assoc Prof Cheah: There are a couple of things I am somewhat happy about. These include:

- (a) achieving a sufficiently matured ICT infrastructure in NIE to support administrative, teaching and learning needs of staff and trainee teachers;
- (b) building a reasonably strong team spirit within ACIS, thus enabling the achievement of excellent feedback on services rendered by the ACIS Helpdesk; and
- (c) encouraging an increase in the adoption of ICT in teaching and learning within NIE.

Assoc Prof Quek: I will just mention two and they are both related to the move to our new Yunnan Garden campus in NTU.

Firstly, the occasion on 8 January 2001 was to commemorate our physical move to this campus. About 40 of our staff and students jogged all the way from the Bukit Timah campus with the NIE flag and handed it over to Mr Chiang Chie Foo, Chairman of the NIE Council, Dr Cham Tao Soon, the previous NTU President and Prof Leo Tan, Director of NIE. As they jogged down the Triangle, to the tune of 'Chariots of Fire', many of us were moved to tears. At the same time, we felt proud to be a part of the NIE/NTU family.

The second was the official opening of the NIE Complex by Rear-Admiral (NS) Teo Chee Hean, Minister for Education, on 26 January 2002. It was a grand occasion attended by many of the education fraternity. The event which involved hundreds of our students, alumni and staff, will feature clearly in my mind, and in the minds of those present, for many years to come.

Assoc Prof Wong: I was formerly Head of Instructional Science AG. I had a wonderful experience interacting with my staff, both academic and technical staff. I had a chance to re-organise the new computer laboratories as we just moved to our new campus. We introduced many new e-services within the AG to help us in our administration and professional work. Curriculum reviews and development are part and parcel of academic work and we constantly undertake the process and our courses are well received by the participants. We also started two programmes - a Master of Arts in Instructional Design and Technology and we are already in our fifth year. The response has been great from participants. Another programme was our Specialist Diploma in e-learning Instructional Design. This was a call by the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore and Ministry of Manpower to launch a programme to re-train and re-equip our workforce in e-learning instructional design and we have so far trained about 150 workers. In terms of research and publications, I am glad to see lots of activities within Instructional Science AG and we were involved in many funded research projects.

Tamil New Year Celebrations

By Mr Kalaimani Retnasamy,
Asian Languages & Cultures

As part of its racial harmony initiatives, the Tamil Language & Culture Division of the Asian Languages & Cultures Academic Group celebrated the Tamil New Year on 17 April 2003 by organising a concert. Prof Leo Tan (Director, NIE) was the guest-of-honour.

The inclusion of the traditional Bharathanatyam, folk and modern dances with a drama brought cheer and excitement to the audience. A quiz on the Tamil New Year and Indian culture that imparted knowledge and understanding of the ancient traditions was well received. This resulting euphoria would hopefully continue to boost racial harmony in Singapore's multi-racial and cultural society.

The concert was followed by a sumptuous buffet lunch consisting of cuisines usually consumed on special occasions. The 100 odd guests thoroughly enjoyed the show and the



Performance at the concert

food. NIE staff can expect to participate in more of such activities in the future.

Paid Parking at NIE's Car Parks

In response to feedback from trainee teachers, in-service course participants and visitors that they are unable to find car park lots on the NIE campus, paid parking has been introduced in selected parking facilities to alleviate this problem.

Since 23 June 2003, Car Park 2 and part of Car Park 3 have been operating on an automated paid parking system using the cash card. All other open car parks remain free.

Paid parking operating hours and rates are:

Operating Hours

Mondays to Fridays
5.00am to 5.30pm

Saturdays
5.00am to 2.00pm

Parking is free for other times, on Sundays and Public Holidays.

Rates

\$1.00 per hour
\$3.00 for more than two hours

By Asst Prof Shawn Lum,
Natural Sciences

Boardwalk



All but the most unobservant visitor to the NIE canteen would have noticed a big change of late - a wooden boardwalk has been built, allowing one to visit the previously inaccessible inner reaches of the NIE canteen 'rainforest'. While the NIE rainforest has over the past two years matured into a rather handsome piece of landscaping, the new boardwalk now allows people to experience the forest, as opposed to

looking at a thick wall of luxuriant vegetation.

A number of the trees are of considerable botanical interest, including a few species that belong to the meranti family, majestic forest giants that are also valuable timber species in the region. In the centre of the boardwalk network is a sapling of the beautiful jelutong tree, which is among the most elegant - in some people's opinions,

at least. Plans are afoot to label some of the trees and to also continue to add new plants to the forest, thus increasing both its educational as well as aesthetic value. Take a few minutes before or after your next canteen meal to walk along the new boardwalk to admire the palms, trees, ferns and the lush undergrowth that make our NIE 'rainforest' such a special place.

The Book *A Linguistic Study of a Minority Language in Tamil Nadu*

By Asst Prof R Velmurugan,
Asian Languages & Cultures

The book entitled *A Linguistic Study of a Minority Language in Tamil Nadu* has been written by Asst Prof R Velmurugan.

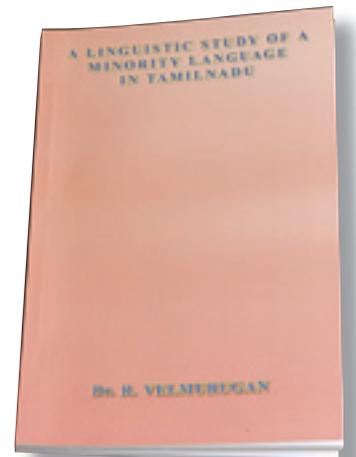
Language is a symbol of social identity which people from diverse social settings and regional backgrounds use to associate themselves with. In the context of multi-lingual India, such social and linguistic identification among linguistic minorities is a known phenomenon. Studying linguistic minorities in a socio-linguistic perspective leads to an understanding of the various sociological facets of the language. The present

study describes one of the Kannada dialects, spoken as a minority language in a Tamil dominated environment. An elaborate description of this dialect will enable researchers to understand the fashion and nature of changes taking place due to the influence of a regional language and the restricted domains in which this dialect is used.

The present work also attempts to unearth some linguistic variations found in four Kannada dialects viz Anuppa Kannada, Devanga Kannada, Vokkaliga Kannada and Kurumba Kannada spoken in the Madurai District.

The comparative view of those linguistic variations with standard Kannada will in turn help to infer the quantum of language loyalty, type of attitude of Kannada linguistic minorities by observing the ways in which their speech varieties have changed their original colours.

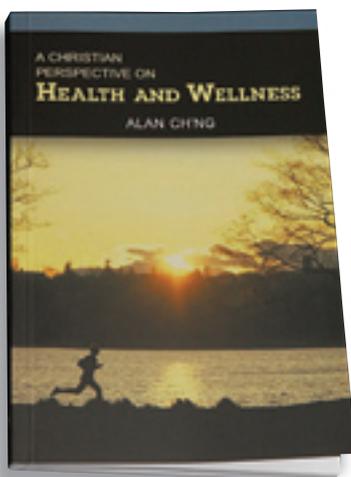
The present publication will be of immense use for students, researchers and those interested and involved in the socio-linguistic study of language, variation in language use, language planning and development, lexicographical work and



comparative linguistic analysis. The 255 page book, available from the author and selected bookstores, is priced at S\$15.00 or US\$10.00, excluding postage.

By Asst Prof Alan Ch'ng,
*Associate Dean, Physical Education
& Foundation Programmes Special
Programmes*

The Book *A Christian Perspective on Health & Wellness*



Asst Prof Alan Ch'ng has recently published a book integrating essential knowledge of health with religious beliefs entitled *A Christian Perspective on Health and Wellness*.

While there are many titles on health and wellness for interested readers and academics, there are few which integrate what is usually seen as a secular concern with religious practices and beliefs. The book provides this information on the concepts

of health, wellness and a discussion on each of the different dimensions of health. Useful practical strategies are suggested to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Each chapter ends with useful reminders on how to develop the right attitude, knowledge and skills to realise the goals of health and wellness.

Dr Robert Solomon, Bishop of the Methodist Church in Singapore, praised the book when he said, "A bonus is in his discussion

on health in other key areas of our lives, such as spiritual, which make physical health meaningful and fulfilling, and sustain us when physical health fails. His Christian faith and experience help to provide a holistic view of health and point to the most important things in our lives."

The book is published by Genesis Books, an imprint of Armour Publishing and is available from selected bookstores or from the author.

Launch of National Education Educators



Dr Balakrishnan addressing the audience at the launch

NIE, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MOE) and schools, has produced two National Education (NE) sourcebooks *Securing Our Future* to provide trainee teachers with readings related to NE and exemplar lessons to highlight how NE messages and ideas can be infused into school subjects. The sourcebooks are available in versions for primary schools and secondary schools/junior colleges.

Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister of State for National Development, launched the NE sourcebooks at a ceremony on 16 May 2003 at the Main Lecture Theatre, Nanyang Technological University.

Edited by NIE academics, Asst Prof Steven Tan (Associate Dean, Professional Development) and Assoc Prof Goh Chor Boon (Associate Dean, Academic Research & Consultancy Services), the contents in Parts I and II for both sourcebooks incorporate the

necessary background and issues for better understanding and application of NE in schools. Parts III and IV are directed specifically at the school levels ie primary and secondary/junior college. It is encouraging to note that a wide spectrum of subjects across the school curriculum is covered with contributions from NIE faculty and schools.

The sourcebooks complement the ideas, strategies and approaches that teachers had received in their teacher education programmes and NIE-wide NE activities which can be used in discussions and teaching of NE across different subjects. Teachers may be able to use and adapt these ideas in order to customise lessons and activities to fulfil the needs of different pupils and schools. These books will be useful additions to the currently available teaching resources published by NE Branch and Curriculum Planning & Development Division, MOE and Teachers' Network.



(From left) Prof Leo Tan, Prof S Gopinathan, Dr Balakrishnan & Assoc Prof Goh Chor Boon

Sourcebooks for

Let's Hear from our Writers

NIE News: What are the highlights of your article?

Asst Prof Yeap: Assoc Prof Tan Wee Kiat (Psychological Studies) and I used stamps as a platform for the activities that we designed for the NE-infused Mathematics lessons. Stamps are the natural choice because you can find both Mathematics eg shape, money and NE eg history, racial harmony in them.

Mr Ho: Our chapter is titled *Nurturing Educators in National Education: Ideas and Strategies for Physics Classes*. Besides offering some suggestions on how NE can be infused in regular Physics lessons, the other interesting aspect is that there are various options for lesson planning, ranging from a 10-minute NE activity as an appendix to a double period NE infused Physics lesson. Worksheets are also provided to facilitate in-depth discussion of NE issues.

Mrs Koh: The article provides an opportunity to share some of the practices, activities and approaches used to promote NE in Evergreen Secondary School. Through this article, it is hoped that schools and other NE practitioners would

be aware of the facilities available at the N5 Cluster NE Centre in Evergreen such as the Singapore Story, Chinese Tea Chapter, Spice Garden, Heritage Wing, Defence Wing, Challenges and Constraints Wing. We look forward to more visitors to our NE Centre.

NIE News: In your views, what can schools do to make the teaching of NE more meaningful and interesting to students?

Asst Prof Yeap: We had proposed that the infused lessons would be meaningful when the Mathematics brought in the NE messages and the NE context provided for significant mathematic learning. We are suggesting that teachers should not try to force NE into Mathematics just for the sake of it. Each subject should provide a means to learn the other. We have some examples in our chapter.

Mr Ho: To make teaching of NE meaningful and interesting for students, I believe it must be done through Experiential Learning (Kolb, 1984). However, the old adage "experience is the best teacher" needs to be refined. It is evaluated experience that makes the difference.

Mrs Koh: All schools are already carrying out activities to promote NE. These include celebrations of the four core events (Total Defence Day, International Friendship Day, Racial Harmony Day and National Day), visits to Learning Journey sites and Civics and Moral Education lessons. In promoting NE to students, the challenge is how to engage their hearts not just their minds. I feel that involvement is important. Engaging students in discussions and activities provides learning opportunities. Participating and organising NE activities would inevitably require them to be engaged. Getting students involved in fun activities such as camps and games help to stimulate interest in NE. Students can design NE games eg board games, software games that promote racial integration and the various NE messages. Other platforms that can be used to engage students in NE are the creative arts such as creative writing, story telling, art designs, music and drama.



*Mrs Mary Koh, Principal,
Evergreen Secondary School*



(From left) Mr Ho Boon Tiong, Science & Technology Education, NIE & Asst Prof Yeap Ban Har, Mathematics & Mathematics Education, NIE

Launch of National Education Sourcebooks for Educators

Continued from page 13

NIE News: Any recommendations for future NE programmes in schools?

Asst Prof Yeap: This book project is a good one. I also know of colleagues who do school-based workshops on this topic. Assoc Prof Wong Khoon Yoong (Mathematics & Mathematics Education) recently conducted a workshop for the Association of Mathematics Educators on 5 May 2003 on infusing NE into Mathematics classes.

Mr Ho: Schools are already doing a lot for NE. The important thing to bear in mind is that whatever we do, let us do it passionately to let the NE messages come alive!

Mrs Koh: Schools could share NE resources as well as their good NE practices. This could be within the cluster or across clusters. Schools may wish to involve students in designing and setting up NE corners to stimulate their interest. It would also be nice to involve the teaching and non-teaching staff in providing ideas and inputs for these activities. This would certainly engage the hearts and minds of the NE school community.

NIE News: How can NIE help to further promote NE?

Mrs Koh: NIE could consider working more closely with schools and clusters, particularly the Cluster NE Centres, to develop NE partnerships.

- Developing a close partnership with schools
NIE could collaborate closely with schools to develop suitable NE materials for teaching such as lesson plans and worksheets. These would serve as resource materials for beginning and serving teachers. The NE Book *Securing Our Future* is a good example of the collaboration that can be carried out with schools. It is a useful platform for NE practitioners to share ideas and practices on the teaching of NE in schools.
- Developing a partnership with Cluster NE Centres
As teacher trainers, it would be useful for NIE to include visits to Cluster NE Centres as part of course requirements for Postgraduate Diploma in Education, Diploma in Departmental Management and Leaders in Education Programme. This would provide an NE learning opportunity and create greater awareness of the NE programmes carried out at the cluster level.
- Include an NE component in lesson plans
During school attachments, trainee teachers could be encouraged to work with their mentors to develop at least one NE-infused lesson. This not only provides trainee teachers with the learning experience but also helps schools to build their NE teaching resources.

*By Assoc Prof Lee Peng Yee,
Assoc Prof Wong Khoon Yoong,
Ms Wu Yingkang, Ms Chua
Kwee Gek & Ms Dawn Ng,
Mathematics & Mathematics
Education*

14-15 April 2003

I **Conferences, Seminars & Workshops** | NIEnews

Penang Conference on Integrating Technology in the Mathematical Sciences

14 During the recent conference on *Integrating Technology in the Mathematical Sciences 2003* at Penang's Universiti Sains Malaysia, keynote speaker Assoc Prof Lee Peng Yee (Mathematics & Mathematics Education) spoke on *The Impact of Technology on the Teaching of Mathematics*. His talk focused on the soft skills of using ICT in Mathematics

lessons rather than the often hardware-driven issues. The other keynote speaker was Dr Kaye Stacey from Australia's University of Melbourne.

Assoc Prof Wong Khoon Yoong (Mathematics & Mathematics Education) also presented a paper entitled *Reviving the Roles of Logo in Teaching of Mathematics*. According to Assoc Prof

Wong, several presentations centred on the tutorial mode of ICT use in Mathematics lessons. Ms Wu Yingkang, a doctoral candidate with the Academic Group, presented a paper on *Using Excel to Assess and Promote Secondary School Students' Understanding of Statistical Graphs*.

With the availability of numerous ICT open tools,

Assoc Prof Lee summed up his view aptly with this statement on the need of "simple tools that can do many things and not powerful tools that can do only one job."

The biannual conference attracted both local and international participants, with about 100 of them from various Malaysian universities.

NIE Trainee Teachers Donate Their Gown Deposits

Forty six recently qualified teachers donated \$1,330 to the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Nanyang Alumni Fund. These big hearted graduands had donated a portion or full amount of their \$150 gown deposits to their alma mater. The Nanyang Alumni Fund, as part of the NTU 21st Century Fund (refer to inset), provides the Alumni Scholarship to alumni and their undergraduate children or siblings. The scholarship, valued at \$3,000 per annum, is presented to Singaporean or Permanent Resident students based on academic merit and financial needs.

One of these generous donors was Mr Ong Han Guan, a Postgraduate Diploma in Education graduand. He is currently teaching Chinese Language at Commonwealth Secondary School.

What motivated you to donate to the NTU Endowment Fund?

There is a Chinese idiom, 'Yin Shui Si Yuan' which means "When you drink water, think of its source - never forget where one's happiness comes from". This has been foremost in my mind and has always motivated my appreciation

of what I have or had been given. Therefore, I did not hesitate to donate part of my gown deposit as a token of appreciation and gratitude for all that I have been blessed with.

Relate an incident that made you proud to be an NIE alumnus.

As a mid career change student at NIE, I was very

impressed by the integration of the students across age groups. When I graduated, what made me most proud to be an NIE alumnus was the fact that I was equally welcomed into the teaching fraternity despite my being significantly older than most other graduates. This sense of welcome and belonging really touched my heart and made me proud.



Mr Ong Han Guan

NTU 21ST Century Fund

Fund raising activities for the NTU 21st Century Fund were officially launched by Mr S R Nathan, President of Singapore on 19 June 2001. Its target of \$100 million will be raised over a decade from 2001 onwards.

The NTU 21st Century Fund comprises the Endowment and Programme Funds.

Donations and matching grant received for the NTU Endowment Fund are kept intact such that a constant stream of income is always generated and available for use. With a steady revenue source, the University can enjoy the flexibility of introducing innovative projects and programmes over a long time frame.

The NTU Programme Fund allows donations to be put to immediate use. Donors can contribute to a variety of programmes in the likes of scholarships, bursaries, prizes, fellowships, facility development and research. All donations are tax deductible and the Government will match dollar for dollar up to \$100 million.

If you wish to make a donation, please send a cheque made payable to 'NTU' to:

Alumni & Endowment Office, NTU

Level 5, Administration Annexe
42 Nanyang Avenue
Singapore 639815

Please indicate your full name, identity card number and address on the back of the cheque.

Professor John Hedberg, Centre for Research in Pedagogy & Practice



Dr John Hedberg is Professor of Instructional Science in NIE's Centre for Research in Pedagogy & Practice, which he joined on 3 March 2003.

Prof Hedberg pursued his undergraduate studies in Mathematics and Master's degree in Education at the University of

Sydney. Later he obtained his doctorate in Educational Technology at Syracuse University in New York.

He was formerly Professor of Education at the University of Wollongong and Director of its Educational Media Laboratory. His teaching and research interests include cognitive strategies, interface design for learning with information and communications technologies, and implementation and evaluation of technology-based learning. Previously, while at the University of Wollongong, he led the production team that won a British Academy Award (BAFTA) for the CD-ROM *StageStruck*. He is editor-in-chief of the journal *Educational Media International*, and in 2002, was honoured as a pioneer in educational technology by *Educational Technology Yearbook*. His most recent book, co-authored with Thomas Reeves, is *Evaluating Interactive Learning Systems*.

In addition to his academic pursuits, Prof Hedberg has wide experience as a professional video producer. He has initiated and managed two educational radio stations, and has qualified as a professional librarian.

NIE News is published quarterly by the Public & International Relations Department (PIR), National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute.

Contributions from readers are welcome. You may wish to provide articles relating to NIE developments, initiatives, collaborations, events as well as staff research and accomplishments.

PIR reserves the right to accept, reject or amend any manuscript, photograph and other written material offered for its print.

The next issue of NIE News will be published in October 2003. Submissions should reach PIR by **15 August 2003**.

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