

Budding physicists from 86 countries gather in Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore to compete in the 37th International Physics Olympiad, with its theory & experimental papers being held at NTU's National Institute of Education

2 CONTENTS



HAPPENINGS

- 3 Director's Message
- 4 Physics Cognoscenti Compete
- 9 First Kikkoman-NIE Cooking Competition
- 13 Calendar of Events

CONFERENCES & SEMINARS

- 10 Educational Research Association of Singapore Conference 2006
- 11 An English LangScape
- 16 A Lecture in Memory of IE's Founding Director

PROGRAMMES

- 12 Change Agents of Assessment



BOOK LAUNCHES

- 8 Challenging Sustainability: Urban Development & Change in Southeast Asia
- Teaching Primary School Mathematics: A Resource Book
- 9 Managing Sport: Concepts & Issues of Non-Profit Organisations

VISITORS

- 14 Dignitaries Learn of NIE's Initiatives
Indonesian & Thai Educators Visit NIE & Singapore Schools
- 15 Overseas Visitors Express Interests in English Language Programmes at NIE
English Language Academics Share Insights



AWARDS & HONOURS

- 3 NIE Director is Distinguished Friend of Ngee Ann
- 11 A Royal Historical Moment

RESEARCH

- 16 Lessons Learned at a Salmon Hatchery



Editorial

Ivy Goh
Aaron Chong
Lynn Chew
Irene Teo

Photographer

William Oh

Contributors

Alexius Chia
Alan Ch'ng
Jude Chua
Jessie Ee
Ho Siew Yin
Kim H Koh
Lee Ai Noi
Lee Yew Jin
Lin Junliang
Joyce Mok
Ng Luan Eng
Saeda Buang
Anthony Seow
Leo Tan
Wong Tai Chee
Xu Junwei
Lawrence Zhang

NIE News is published quarterly by the Public & International Relations Department, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University.

The next issue will be published in October 2006.

Please address your comments to:
The Editorial Team, NIE News
Fax: (65) 6896 8874
Email: nienews@nie.edu.sg

National Institute of Education
1 Nanyang Walk, Singapore 637616
Tel: (65) 6790 3888
www.nie.edu.sg

NTU Reg No: 200604393R

NIE News is also available at
www.nie.edu.sg/nienews.

Designed & Printed by KHL Printing Co Pte Ltd

An exciting academic year has just flown by. I need not reiterate what has been achieved but I am more than sure NIE is instilling the right values, skills and knowledge not only in our student teachers but among staff as well. The most recent episode of spontaneous and generous outpouring to one of our student teacher's call for immediate assistance when hospitalised with a major ailment, was exemplary and symptomatic of the care and concern among the community of NIE ie all staff and students. Many of you did not even know the student teacher. Yes, you do walk the talk. Teachers do not just teach and do research. They reach out to the lives of all they meet and endeavour to make each one a better person in every conceivable way. That is just one of many reasons why I believe NIE, Nanyang Technological University is an Institute of Distinction and that all who serve her do so with a passion and commitment to bring out the best in each and every student and serving teacher.



The completion of the Trainee Teachers Development and Activity Centre (TTDAC) is a significant milestone of NIE. Now student teachers have a purpose-built focal point to direct their energies to create a real campus environment of learning, living and leisure and a place to call their own. They can plan and organise activities that will enhance their own development and interests and more importantly, bond with each other and reach out to the community through various projects, especially the Group Endeavours in Service Learning projects. The holistic development of an individual goes beyond the lecture/tutorial rooms and laboratories. My earnest hope is that all NIE staff recognise the value of the TTDAC in the total education of our student teachers and will play active roles to nurture our student teachers beyond the formal timetable and curriculum.

A new academic year begins and we have a new cohort entering our membership. How they fare and how they develop in the time they spend here with us, will determine our worth. If they leave us, ready to face the uncertainties and ambiguities of a changing universe with confidence, fortitude and integrity, we have served them well. The real learning does not lie in our teaching but in our facilitation of our students' learning to enable them to learn how to learn, be self reliant and care for each other – continuously!

I thank all our colleagues, student teachers and alumni who have contributed great effort and time to guide our architect and contractor in delivering a facility that is both aesthetic and functional and something the student teachers will, I believe, be eager to use for furthering leadership skills, creativity, community bonding, learning objectives and campus vibrancy. Our alumni will help us enrich the student teachers' experiences.

Welcome home as we embark on another exciting journey together.

AWARDS & HONOURS

NIE Director is Distinguished Friend of Ngee Ann

By Public & International Relations

Ngee Ann Polytechnic honoured NIE Director Prof Leo Tan with a Distinguished Friend of Ngee Ann award on 4 July 2006. Prof Tan's multi-faceted contributions to the polytechnic ranged from the life sciences to youth development. In a tribute, Ngee Ann principal Mr Chia Mia Chiang credited Prof Tan for his wisdom and how the polytechnic had learnt from his vast experience in the life sciences, environmental protection, nature conservation and student leadership development.

In 1998, Prof Tan was instrumental in setting up the polytechnic's Diploma in Horticulture and Landscape Management programme through his networking with the National Parks Board. Described as a "very personable man with a

fantastic sense of humour", Dr Sushila Chang, Senior Director and Director of Ngee Ann's School of Life Sciences and Chemical Technology, appreciates his efforts in assisting the school in competitions and school outreach programmes. Mrs Choo-Yeo Cheh Hoon, Director of the polytechnic's School of Humanities, is particularly thankful to Prof Tan for the successful collaboration between Ngee Ann and NIE in launching a brand new model of training Chinese language teachers for primary schools. The polytechnic's Chinese study curriculum was conceived with the help of NIE.

Prof Tan shares, "I accept this award on behalf of my many NIE colleagues, who have put forth their expertise towards the development of Ngee Ann's numerous academic initiatives.



Ngee Ann Polytechnic Council Chairman Mr Tan Hup Foi (left) congratulates NIE Director Prof Leo Tan on his award

We are proud of our association with the polytechnic and are privileged in being able to work alongside Ngee Ann in its journey of realising its vision of *Connecting Minds, Unlocking Talents and Creating Value.*"

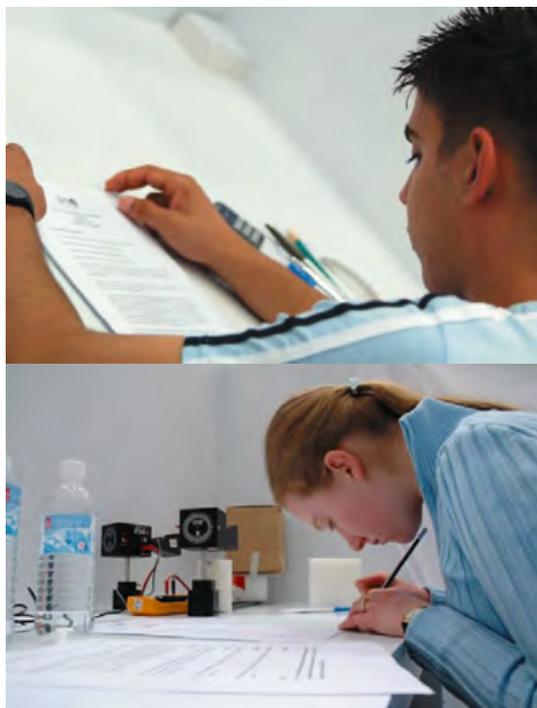


Physics Cognoscenti Compete Meeting of Minds at 37th International Physics Olympiad

By Public & International Relations

The 37th International Physics Olympiad (IPhO) was held in Singapore from 8 to 17 July 2006, where a record 400 prodigies – accompanied by an equal number of leaders, observers and visitors – gathered at “games village” Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore to challenge improbable solutions to seemingly unsolvable puzzles in physics. This prestigious competition was organised by NTU, NTU’s National Institute of Education (NIE), National University of Singapore and Singapore Institute of Physics, with support from the Ministry of Education.

IPhO is an international physics competition for secondary school students, with the objectives of encouraging excellence in science and physics and promoting friendship among the global youth. The first competition took place in Warsaw, Poland in 1967. Since then, each IPhO has been organised in a different country annually. The Olympiad’s humble



beginnings saw three-member teams from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Poland solve four theoretical problems and one experimental problem. The 37th IPhO witnessed five-student teams from 86 countries, many of whom had to undergo rigorous tests at school, national and regional levels before being selected to represent their nations. The competition lasted two days; one day was devoted to theoretical problems (left, top) and the second was for experimental problems (left, bottom). Participants had five hours to complete each test.

Prof Xu Shuyan, Chairman of the 37th IPhO Organising Committee and a faculty member of NIE’s Natural Sciences & Science Education Academic Group, shares, “The 37th IPhO provided a platform for a fruitful interaction and exchange of ideas for some of the most talented, young and bright minds from

all over the world. The event offered an unprecedented opportunity for all of us to come together, to make new friends and to blend in



8 July 2006: NIE Director Prof Leo Tan (left) warmly welcomes Nobel laureate Aaron Ciechanover to the Welcome Party, the inaugural event of the 37th IPhO



8 July 2006: Anglo-Chinese Junior College students perform the Bhangra dance to the delight of an appreciative audience at the Welcome Party



9 July 2006: Global citizens and participants go on parade during the Opening Ceremony – held at NTU's Nanyang Auditorium – in the presence of guest of honour, Education Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam

6 HAPPENINGS



9 July 2006: Singapore's representatives (in red blazers) flanked by (from left) NTU President Dr Su Guanng, Education Permanent Secretary Lieutenant-General (NS) Lim Chuan Poh, Education Minister and guest of honour Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Secretary to NTU Anthony Teo & NTU Acting Provost Prof Er Meng Hwa after the Opening Ceremony. Low Guang How (third from right), 18, won the Best Singaporean Performance award



11 July 2006: Singapore's city skyline forms an impressive start for participants on their heritage trail of Civic District, Kampong Glam, Little India & Chinatown



With both theory and experimental examinations behind them, participants build a sense of camaraderie through a variety of team-building games at Sentosa's Siloso Beach



15 July 2006: Participants experience the Mass Rapid Transit, one of Singapore's most efficient modes of transport



12 July 2006: Prof Douglas Osheroff greets his fans at “An Evening with Laureates” at Orchid Country Club. He is accompanied by Prof Paul Davis and Prof Masatoshi Koshiba (seated)



16 July 2006: Prof Xu Shuyan (left) hands the IPHO flag to Prof Mohammad Sepehry Rad – who will spearhead efforts for the next Olympiad in Iran – during the Closing Ceremony at NTU’s Nanyang Auditorium



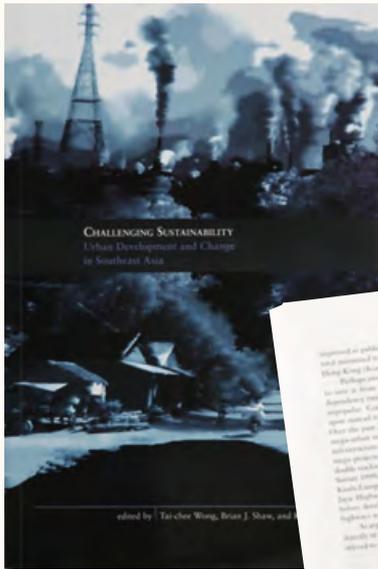
16 July 2006: (from left) Halasz Gabor, Zhang Hong Kai & Mailoa Jonathan Pradana emerge with top honours after being presented their medals at the Closing Ceremony

with the beauty of this tropical paradise.” The young talents did soak in the sights and sounds of Singapore, savour varsity life by staying at NTU’s halls of residence 3 and 16 and appreciate the warm hospitality offered by their hosts and more than 300 liaison officers, who graciously attended to their every need. There were also ample opportunities for participants to be engaged in a whole host of activities throughout their 10-day hectic itinerary.

Aside from visiting local tourist attractions, participants were treated to the presence of four Nobel laureates and a Templeton laureate, namely Prof Yang Chen Ning (Nobel Prize in Physics 1957), Prof Douglas Osheroff (Nobel Prize in Physics 1996), Prof Masatoshi Koshiba (Nobel Prize in Physics 2002), Prof Aaron Ciechanover (Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2004) and Prof Paul Davies (Templeton Prize 1995). The laureates delivered lectures and were able to interact with participants on numerous occasions.

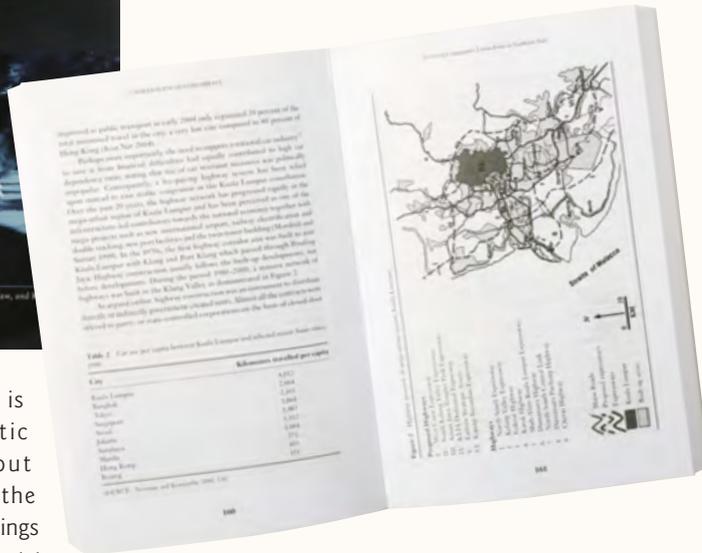
A total of 250 awards comprising gold, silver and bronze medals, honourable mentions and other special prizes were conferred on participants at the closing ceremony on 16 July 2006. The Overall Absolute Winner was 17-year-old Mailoa Jonathan Pradana from Indonesia, who also achieved Best Performance in Experimental Paper and Best ASEAN Performance. To aspiring champions, he cited “hard work” and an element of luck as the most important ingredients for success. The two winners of Best Performance in Theory Paper were Hungary’s Halasz Gabor and Zhang Hong Kai from China. Low Guang How won the award for Best Singaporean Performance.

The 38th IPHO will be organised by Iran in 2007.



Challenging Sustainability: Urban Development & Change in Southeast Asia

Edited by Assoc Prof Wong Tai Chee & Prof Goh Kim Chuan, Humanities & Social Sciences Education
416 pages, ISBN 981-210-307-4
S\$49.00, available at Marshall Cavendish International (Asia) Pte Ltd



overwhelmingly rural to being dominantly urban. While this rapid urban development has been documented in a number of publications over four decades, there is an urgent need for comparative reassessment in the context of sustainability. This fact makes the present volume, with its focus on the challenges facing urban sustainability, development and change in Southeast Asia, particularly apt.

Presented in three parts – the first deals with physical environments including infrastructure issues, the second with broadly economic and cultural concerns, and the last with social and political perspectives – *Challenging Sustainability* features contributions made by a distinguished group of expert academic geographers, each documenting recent research findings that identify the complexity of problems facing the region's largest cities and highlight the various ways in which the challenges of sustainability are being met.

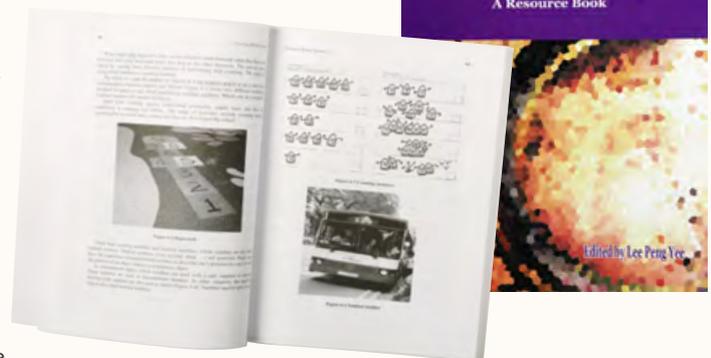
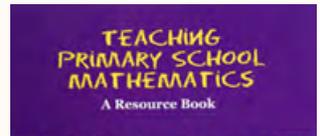
Sustainability is not a static paradise but represents the capacity of human beings to continuously adapt to their nonhuman environments by means of social organisation, in a bid to effect permanent reform. While opinions may vary on the course and pace of such modification, few authorities or organisations today would

dismiss the fundamental importance of urban sustainability.

Over the next decade, Southeast Asia will complete its transition from being

Teaching Primary School Mathematics: A Resource Book

Edited by Assoc Prof Lee Peng Yee
Mathematics & Mathematics Education
259 pages, ISBN 007-125517-6
S\$18.00, available at McGraw-Hill Education (Asia)



Learning to teach mathematics to primary school pupils is a challenging, yet inspiring journey. This learning experience takes on a new significance when they learn how to teach mathematics through preservice training, which requires them to reflect critically on past school learning experience, acquire new pedagogical knowledge and develop strategies to plan and teach mathematics lessons to achieve various learning objectives. This resource book has been specially prepared by mathematics educators at the Mathematics & Mathematics Education Academic Group at NIE to facilitate this journey for mathematics student teachers who take the primary mathematics Curriculum Studies modules.

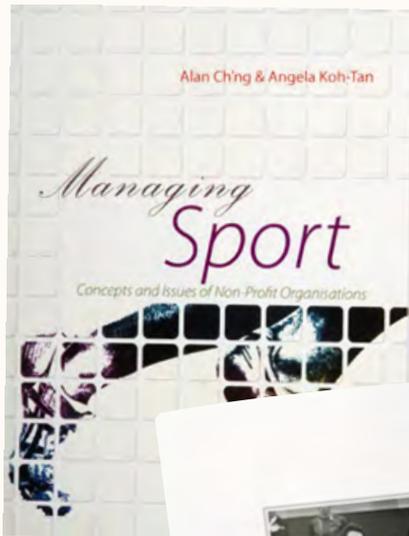
This resource book has two main sections. The first consists of four chapters of the Singapore

mathematics curriculum, learning and pedagogy theories, assessment, and problem solving, with special reference to primary mathematics teaching in Singapore. The second section deals with the teaching of specific topics, ranging from Whole Numbers to Statistical Graphs. Each teaching chapter explains the coverage required by the Singapore syllabus, the key mathematical concepts, specific teaching techniques and assessment tasks.

Two types of activities may be included: *tutorial* activities and *pupil* activities. The *tutorial* activities engage student teachers to understand and reflect on various education issues and practical situations. The *pupil* activities, on the other hand, are sample classroom tasks that student teachers may use, perhaps with some modifications,

in their actual teaching. They typically consist of worksheets and problem sets.

Some common themes and strategies, such as problem-solving heuristics and information and communications technology, will cut across these teaching chapters and are a worthwhile exercise to explicate for oneself how different authors have applied these strategies to different topics. Although the authors have written their chapter with student teachers in mind, most ideas and strategies are also relevant for practising teachers, in particular those in the early years of their teaching career.



Sport Management Textbook for the Local Sport Industry

Authored by Asst Prof Alan Ch'ng & Mrs Angela Koh-Tan
154 Pages, ISBN 981-06-7647-6
S\$21.00, available at Pearson Education & Kinokuniya bookstores



Sport management is both a study of an academic discipline as well as a professional practice in sport. The book *Managing Sport: Concepts and Issues of Non-Profit Organisations*, authored by Asst Prof Alan Ch'ng (Physical Education & Sports Science) and Mrs Angela Koh-Tan, serves to meet both these needs. The chapters cover essential areas of sport management and include relevant case studies and review questions. Practitioners of sport management will appreciate the key issues raised in the book while students can learn the important concepts in the field.

Mr Eric Song, Director-General of Singapore Athletic Association, welcomed the book as “a long awaited book; the first reference book or textbook of its kind for students reading sport management in Singapore”. Dr Janice Khoo, a member of Republic Polytechnic’s Board of Governors and Vice-President of Singapore Ladies Golf Association, feels that the book is a great contribution to a new generation of accomplished sports managers, as well as towards achieving Singapore’s goal of developing a “Sporting Singapore”.

The sports industry in Singapore is set to grow with the Singapore Sports Council’s strategic thrust of achieving sports excellence, cultivating a sporting culture and creating a vibrant sports industry. There are already plans to turn Singapore’s Kallang vicinity into a sports hub that will eventually attract and host quality international sport events.

Increasingly too, more Singaporeans are taking up sports as a recreational activity or to pursue personal excellence.

Growth in the sports industry will also witness a rise in demand for suitably qualified professionals who can manage various aspects of the industry. This includes coaches, sports scientists and sports managers.

HAPPENINGS

First Kikkoman-NIE Cooking Competition

By Asst Prof Joyce Mok, Natural Sciences & Science Education



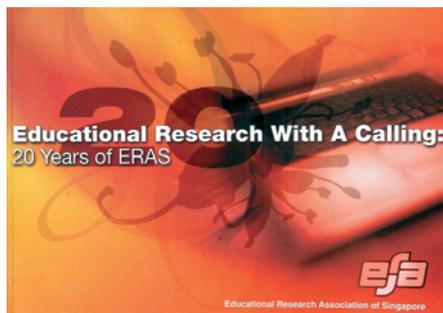
On Valentine’s Day 2006, the Natural Sciences & Science Education Academic Group’s Family and Consumer Science Unit co-hosted its very first cooking competition with Kikkoman Trading Asia Pte Ltd. Participants, who included Diploma in Home Economics Education and Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) student teachers, prepared and served original recipes using Kikkoman sauces at the event. Prof Paul Teng (Head, Natural Sciences & Science Education) presented the winner Ms Ruth Tang (left) with her prize, which included a trip to Japan. Culinary delights by Ms Tang and other finalists were assessed by a judging panel comprising Home Economics specialists Mrs Ethel Chong, Miss Soo Soon Imm and famous chef, Ms Devagi. The competition showcased the originality of student teachers in creating more than 40 ethnic-infused dishes.

Educational Research Association of Singapore Conference 2006

By Asst Prof Jessie Ee, Conference Convenor & Honorary Secretary, ERAS & Psychological Studies



Assoc Prof Tan Oon Seng (left) presents a token of appreciation to Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister of State for Education & Manpower



Launching of the ERAS Commemorative Book entitled *Educational Research with a Calling: 20 Years of ERAS*

The Educational Research Association of Singapore (ERAS) Conference 2006 was held at the Orchard Hotel from 29 to 31 May 2006. There were over 10 workshops, 16 symposiums, 130 paper presentations, 10 poster presentations and more than 350 participants.

ERAS guest of honour, Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister of State for Education and Manpower, officiated at the conference. He felt that the theme *Diversity for Excellence: Engaged Pedagogies*, chosen by ERAS, was most timely and relevant. He believed teachers must accept each student's abilities and talents so that all students' potential could be tapped. He challenged teachers to identify the various learning needs of the diverse group of students in their care and keep all their students' minds engaged. Teachers need to be effective facilitators to help students become independent and critical thinkers in acquiring knowledge themselves. He expressed confidence that the ERAS conference is a good platform to engage in an insightful exchange of ideas and professional know-how so that everyone's options could be critically examined for engaged pedagogies that would deepen learning experiences for all students.

Assoc Prof Tan Oon Seng (Head, Psychological Studies), in his ERAS presidential address, indicated that the number of educational research papers presented by school teachers in this ERAS 2006 conference was testimony to the legacy of educational research in Singapore. This legacy began three decades ago

under the educational pioneering spirit of Dr Ruth Wong, then Director of the Institute of Education, who had a vision to groom a critical mass of people well versed in educational research. Dr Wong also realised the need for two types of change agents: the 'front-rankers' in the limelight who possessed the energy to get things done as well as the 'backroom boys' or 'kakitangan' who tidied up in the wake of the drama. "The latter tend to be forgotten..." (Wong, 1974, p.78).

For this year's 20th ERAS anniversary, Assoc Prof Tan acknowledged the humble contributions of all ERAS executive committee and active participants who played a part in progressive momentum of educational research and educational development in Singapore. He also acknowledged Dr Sim Wong Kooi, the first President of Educational Research Association (ERA), who saw to the inauguration of ERA with the primary objective of promoting educational research and the quality of education in Singapore some 20 years ago and brought forth the vision of the legacy.

Assoc Prof Tan was pleased to note that "we now have a rather large representation of papers from school teachers although we still have a long way to go according to the vision of Dr Ruth Wong". Thus, on this special occasion, he wished to salute the past presidents and committee members of ERAS and the many friends and people who have contributed their ideas, time and energies to the education research



Past ERAS Presidents (from left) Dr Sim Wong Kooi, Prof S Gopinathan, Assoc Prof Toh Kok Aun & Assoc Prof Agnes Chang with current ERAS President, Assoc Prof Tan Oon Seng

movement through the launching of an ERAS commemorative book.

Mr Gan launched the ERAS commemorative book – *Educational Research with a Calling: 20 Years of ERAS* by Assoc Prof Lee Ong Kim (Head, Policy & Leadership Studies), Asst Prof Jessie Ee and Assoc Prof Tan. In celebration of ERAS's 20th anniversary, the ERAS Executive Committee also took the opportunity to present ERAS Recognition Awards to Prof Leo Tan (Director, NIE) and Dr Ho Wah Kam, as well as ERAS Appreciation Awards to all ERAS past presidents namely, Dr Sim Wong Kooi, Prof S Gopinathan, Assoc Prof Toh Kok Aun and Assoc Prof Agnes Chang. In encouraging more quality research and school-based research, Dr Kong Siew Lang received the ERAS Travel Award while the ERAS School-Based Research Award was bestowed upon Ms Dianaros Ab Majid from Haig Girls' School.

The conference keynote speakers included Prof Cheng Yin Cheong, Head of Asia-Pacific Centre for Education Leadership & School Quality, Hong Kong Institute of Education, who addressed the issue on *Multiple Thinking and Creativity in Multi-level Learning for Sustainable Development*. Prof David Hogan (Dean, Centre for Research in Pedagogy & Practice, NIE) discussed the issue on *Education and the Pursuit of Happiness in Singapore*. Prof Susan Adler, Professor of Education and Director of Teacher Education, University of Missouri-Kansas City, USA, challenged the teachers on the issue of *Teach Less, Learn More: Teaching for Meaningful Learning*. The Ruth Wong Memorial Lecture was given by Prof Julian Elliott, Professor of Education, University of Durham, UK, who spoke on *Motivation, Engagement and Educational Performance: International Perspectives* (read more on page 16).

An English LangScape

By Mr Alexius Chia, English Language & Literature



Assoc Prof Jim Albright delivering his paper to a packed audience

The English Language & Literature Academic Group, in collaboration with the Singapore Teachers' Union, organised a conference from 27 to 28 April 2006 at the SEAMEO Regional Language Centre. Entitled *LangScape: Exploring Ways of Teaching Language and Literature*, the event brought together more than 250 established scholars, teacher educators and practitioners in the field of language, literacy and literature education. Guest of honour Mrs Tan Ching Ye, Second Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, opened the conference with a thought-provoking address challenging participants to reexamine and reconceptualise pedagogy in

view of new research developments and technology.

Keynote speakers were:

Emeritus Prof Frances Christie
Language, Literacy and Art Education
University of Melbourne, Australia

Prof Tara Goldstein
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto, Canada

Prof Graeme Turner
Centre for Critical and Cultural Studies
University of Queensland, Australia

The conference featured over 40 paper presentations by teacher practitioners and academic researchers on the current state and future of curriculum and pedagogy in English language and literature. It also offered an array of workshops which showcased, and invited conference participants to explore, innovative and more empowering ways of teaching and learning in English language and literature classrooms. The participants spent two enriching days sharing ideas and exchanging experiences with fellow teachers and researchers.

AWARDS & HONOURS

A Royal Historical Moment

By Asst Prof Jude Chua
Policy & Leadership Studies



Asst Prof Jude Chua (Policy & Leadership Studies) was elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society (RHS) of Great Britain and Ireland early this year. Based in University College London in the UK, the RHS was founded in 1868. Its current membership comprises 2,386 Fellows, 12 Honorary Vice-Presidents, 91 Corresponding Fellows and 216 Associates and Members. Fellows are those who have made "an original contribution to historical scholarship in the form of significant published work", normally a book or several substantial scholarly articles. Their post-nominal status title is "FRHistS".

Change Agents of Assessment: A Professional Development Workshop on Alternative Assessments

By Ms Lee Ai Noi, Asst Prof Kim H Koh (Centre for Research in Pedagogy & Practice) & Mdm Saeda Buang (Asian Languages & Cultures)



Asst Prof Kim H Koh (front row, fifth from left), Ms Lee Ai Noi (first row, fifth from right) & Mdm Saeda Buang (first row, eighth from right) with workshop participants

Forty officers from the Malay Language and Tamil Language units of the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Planning and Development Division (CPDD) came together for a three-day professional development workshop on alternative assessments. Held from 17 to 19 May 2006 at NIE, this workshop was a sequel to the Professional Development Workshop conducted previously in January 2006 for 50 new officers from CPDD core units.

The workshop was organised by Asst Prof Kim H Koh and Ms Lee Ai Noi from the Centre for Research in Pedagogy & Practice (CRPP), as well as Ms Norainee Mohd Salleh from CPDD. The success of the workshop could be attributed to a resilient research team from CRPP, together with Mdm Saeda Buang from Asian Languages & Cultures and Mdm Perema Ramasamy from Changkat Changi Secondary School. The CRPP research team included Asst Prof Kim H Koh, Ms Lee Ai Noi, Asst Prof Karen Harris, Mr Gong Wengao, Mr Snow Tan and Mdm Susan Gwee. This group of researchers is currently working on improving Singaporean teachers' assessment literacy in 16 primary schools.



CPDD officers share their perspectives on implementing alternative assessments

The theme of the workshop was *Alternative Assessment and Authentic Intellectual Task Design*. In the workshop, the CPDD officers were introduced to the various modes of alternative assessments, task design of high authentic intellectual assessment, rationale for assessment for learning and the importance of building professional learning communities both within and between schools. An integral part of the workshop was the officers' reflections on their critical role to effectively assist schools in implementing assessment reforms.

The sharing of the CRPP findings on the quality of teachers' assessment tasks and student work in Malay and Tamil languages had given insights into the current development of language assessment in the Singapore classroom.

During the workshop, the CPDD officers participated actively in the hands-on sessions on how to design authentic and cognitively-rich tasks for day-to-day classroom teaching and assessment. Group discussions and sharing sessions were also created to allow participants and the CRPP research team to interact and to discuss with each other their perspectives on:

- (1) Empowering teachers in assessment reforms;
- (2) The importance of aligning curriculum, pedagogy and assessment; and
- (3) The incorporation of alternative assessments into the school curricula of the Malay and Tamil languages, respectively.

At the end of the three-day workshop, many officers expressed that they found the session very fruitful and informative. They felt the workshop had not only provided them with a good opportunity to interact with experts and researchers in assessment and mother tongue languages, but also encouraged them to reflect more deeply on how they could better support and collaborate with teachers and schools by incorporating alternative assessments into their day-to-day curriculum. Most importantly, the workshop provided a platform for the officers to rethink and redesign the curriculum in 2007.

Calendar of Events

Event	Date	Venue	Contact Person
12th International Seminar on Community Music	11 - 14 Jul 06	Performance Room (3-02-07), NIE	Mr Peter Stead Email: epstead@nie.edu.sg
3rd International Seminar on Malay Language, Literature & Culture 2006	14 - 16 Jul 06	Meritus Mandarin Hotel	Assoc Prof Paitoon M Chaiyanara Email: pmchai@nie.edu.sg
3rd Congress of the World Federation of Physics Competitions	17 - 21 Jul 06	NTU / NIE Campus	Prof Xu Shuyan Email: syxu@nie.edu.sg
Registration for New Student Teachers of Initial Teacher Preparation Programmes	20 - 21 Jul 06	NIE Campus	Mrs Tok-Tan Kok Mui Email: kmtan@nie.edu.sg
Commerce Seminar 2006	22 Jul 06	NIE Campus	Ms Koh Noi Keng Email: nkkoh@nie.edu.sg
Orientation Programme for All New Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Primary & Secondary) Student Teachers	24 Jul - 1 Aug 06	NIE Campus	Mrs Jessica Tan Email: lfjwong@nie.edu.sg
Orientation Programme for All New Bachelor of Arts/Science (Education) Year One Student Teachers	24 Jul - 4 Aug 06	NIE Campus	Mrs Jessica Tan Email: lfjwong@nie.edu.sg
Orientation Programme for All New Diploma Programmes Year One Student Teachers	26 Jul - 4 Aug 06	NIE Campus	Mrs Jessica Tan Email: lfjwong@nie.edu.sg
National Day Observance Ceremony	8 Aug 06	NIE	Assoc Prof Goh Chor Boon Email: cbgoh@nie.edu.sg
Racial Harmony Day Celebration	16 Aug 06	Lecture Theatre 10, NIE	Mr Mohd Aidil Subhan Email: masubhan@nie.edu.sg
International Conference on Educational Technology	7 - 8 Sep 06	Singapore Expo	Ms Nenny Noorman Email: nnoorman@nie.edu.sg
Tamil Research Seminar & NAA Govindasamy Tamil IT Award Prize-Giving Ceremony	8 Sep 06	Lecture Theatre 2, NIE	Asst Prof Seetha Lakshmi Email: slakshmi@nie.edu.sg
Mid-Autumn Festival Celebration	22 Sep 06	Lecture Theatre 1, NIE	Asst Prof Aw Guat Poh Email: gpaw@nie.edu.sg
Caring Teacher Awards 2006	3 Oct 06	Orchard Hotel	Assoc Prof Nick Aplin Email: ngaplin@nie.edu.sg
Deepavali Celebration	11 Oct 06	Lecture Theatre 8, NIE	Asst Prof Seetha Lakshmi Email: slakshmi@nie.edu.sg
Leaders in Education Graduation Dinner 2006	17 Oct 06	Meritus Mandarin Hotel	Ms Mae Chan Email: mpchan@nie.edu.sg
Enrichment Programme for Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) January 2006 Intake	Nov 06	NIE Campus	Mrs Jessica Tan Email: lfjwong@nie.edu.sg
School Coordinating Mentor Briefing	Nov 06	NIE Campus	Ms Abby Lim Email: pylim@nie.edu.sg
7th Singapore Biology Olympiad - Theory Tests	Nov 06	Gymnasium, NIE	Assoc Prof Shirley Lim Email: slim@nie.edu.sg
7th Singapore Biology Olympiad - Practical Tests	Nov 06	Natural Sciences & Science Education Biology Laboratories, NIE	Assoc Prof Shirley Lim Email: slim@nie.edu.sg
Advanced Diploma/Advanced Postgraduate Diploma Graduation Ceremony	Nov 06	NIE Campus	Ms Serena Yuen Email: wysyuen@nie.edu.sg
Nanyang Research Programme Symposium	18 Nov 06	NIE Campus	Assoc Prof Paul Lee Email: ckplee@nie.edu.sg
MOE-NIE-STAS International Science Education Conference 2006	22 - 24 Nov 06	NIE Campus	Asst Profs Ho Boon Tiong & Lee Yew Jin Email: btho@nie.edu.sg & yjlee@nie.edu.sg
8th Southeast Asian Geographers' Association Conference	28 - 30 Nov 06	Nanyang Girls' High School	Assoc Prof Ooi Giok Ling Email: glooi@nie.edu.sg
Drama Education for Secondary School Teachers	28 - 30 Nov 06	Nanyang Playhouse, NIE	Ms Madonna Stinson Email: mstinson@nie.edu.sg
13th Annual Academic Session for Young Participants, Singapore Olympic Academy	4 - 6 Dec 06	Sentosa	Assoc Prof Nick Aplin Email: ngaplin@nie.edu.sg
11th English in South-east Asia Conference (ESEA) – English in Asia: Asia in English	12 - 14 Dec 06	Perth, Australia	Katie Dunworth Curtin University of Technology Deputy Convenor 11th ESEA Conference

Dignitaries Learn of NIE's Initiatives

By Public & International Relations



Sciences Laboratory, Classroom of the Future and Library & Information Services Centre.

NIE Director Prof Leo Tan also welcomed Dr Nguyen Thien Nhan (left, in red tie), Permanent Vice-Chairman of the People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and his delegation to NIE on 23 June 2006. Dr Nguyen's visit was part of his study tour of Singapore's education system. Asst Prof Alan Ch'ng (Associate Dean, Physical Education & Foundation Programmes Planning) and Assoc Prof Goh Chor Boon (Associate Dean, External Programmes) were also in attendance to present the institute's initial teacher training and professional development programmes to the guests.



During Colonel William See's (right) visit to NIE on 10 May 2006, the Air Force School Commander and his instructors were briefed on research related to ICT-supported learning as well as e-learning initiatives by Assoc Prof Michael Jacobson (Learning Sciences & Technologies) and Asst Prof Marissa Wettasinghe (Head, Centre for IT in Education). The delegation toured the Learning

Indonesian & Thai Educators Visit NIE & Singapore Schools

By Ms Ho Siew Yin, Mathematics & Mathematics Education

Asst Prof Yeap Ban Har (Mathematics & Mathematics Education) played host to eight visitors from Kairos Gracia Christian School, Jakarta, Indonesia and four visitors from Lamplimat Pattana School, Buriram, Thailand, during their visit to NIE on 13 April 2006. The Indonesian educators comprised the school's chairperson, executive principal and teachers while the Thai delegation consisted of the principal, vice principals and a teacher trainer.

Both Indonesian and Thai educators were interested in learning about the programmes and facilities at NIE and to observe

mathematics classes in Singapore schools. After touring the Library & Information Services Centre, the visitors were shown and briefed on the various mathematics classroom manipulatives used for training NIE student teachers by Asst Prof Yeap.

The Thai educators and three of the Indonesian educators proceeded to Kuo Chuan Presbyterian Primary School where they were invited to attend two interesting lower primary mathematics lessons. The Primary Two mathematics teacher introduced the lesson on 'Money' by getting the students to sing along to the tune of *How Much Is the Doggy*

in The Window. The Primary One lesson focused on problem solving through class participation.

The visitors also called on the International Community School, Keming Primary School, Seng Kang Primary School and White Sands Primary School during their stay in Singapore.

Both Indonesian and Thai visitors had a good, productive time in Singapore. Just as they had learnt a lot from their visits to the institute and the schools, the NIE hosts were also enlightened by the visitors' enthusiasm, dedication and commitment towards education.

Overseas Visitors Express Interests in English Language Programmes at NIE

By Assoc Prof Anthony Seow, English Language & Literature

The past several months saw a steady stream of overseas visitors, comprising university professors, Ministry of Education (MOE) officials, educators and school teachers visiting the English Language & Literature Academic Group (ELL) to find out more about its English language teaching programmes in NIE. The visitation schedule was as follows:

- 13 February 2006: A group of school teachers and educators from Triam-Udom-Suksa School, Thailand;
- 8 March 2006: Two professors from Ehime University, Matsuyama, Japan;
- 24 April 2006: Three professors from Beijing Foreign Studies University, China; and
- 5 May 2006: Five English language educators and their MOE English supervisor from Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

In addition, a group of some 25 school principals and education officers from Vietnam paid a visit to ELL on 30 June 2006.



Visitors from Dubai (from left): Ms Mary Ellis (ELL), Assoc Prof Anthony Seow (ELL), the Dubai delegation (with Ms Shahla Mattar, their English supervisor, wearing the red scarf), Asst Prof Lawrence Zhang (ELL) & Mr Mark Wilkinson (ELL)

The objectives of their visits were to make comparative studies between the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in their respective native countries and the teaching of English as a Second Language in Singapore, as well as to find out how they or their teachers could come to NIE for some form of teacher training or professional development. The visitors were briefed on the teaching of English in NIE in addition to the various language and professional development courses available. They were also given demonstrations of classroom lessons and computer-lab resources used in language teaching. They all came with specific expectations and went away visibly impressed with, and much more learned about, NIE's comprehensive and integrated teacher training courses, continuing teacher education and professional development programmes.

The Asia-Pacific region and Middle East are apparently fast emerging as potential sources of educational co-operation and service provision for NIE within the framework of its newly corporatised entity.

English Language Academics Share Insights

By Asst Prof Lawrence Zhang, English Language & Literature

A delegation of three professors of English, Prof Wen Quifang, Director, Prof Wu Yi'an and Prof Zhou Yan, research professors, of the National Foreign Language Education Research Centre of China, attached to the Beijing Foreign Studies University, visited the English Language & Literature Academic Group (ELL) on 24 April 2006. Assoc Prof Lubna Alsagoff (Head, ELL) extended her warm welcome and shared with them the academic group's mission and vision. The three professors were then briefed on ELL's various teacher education programmes, professional development programmes as well as Master's and PhD degree programmes. The visitors were extremely impressed with the systematic organisation of the various



Visitors from Beijing Foreign Studies University, China (from left): Asst Prof Benny Lee (ELL), Prof Wu Yi'an, Prof Wen Quifang, Assoc Prof Phyllis Chew (ELL), Assoc Prof Lubna Alsagoff (Head, ELL), Dr Ho Wah Kam (Singapore Teachers' Union), Prof Zhou Yan & Asst Prof Lawrence Zhang (ELL)

programmes, especially the Postgraduate Diploma in English Language Teaching that caters to English as a Foreign Language teachers. They were pleased to interact with ELL so that they could learn to effectively conduct teacher training programmes for this relatively weaker area in foreign language teacher education in China. Also present at the reception were Assoc Prof Anneliese Kramer-Dahl (Deputy Head, ELL) Assoc Prof Phyllis Chew, Dr Ho Wah Kam from the Singapore Teachers' Union and Asst Profs Benny Lee and Lawrence

Zhang. After their visit, they were ushered to the Centre for Research in Pedagogy & Practice (CRPP), where Prof S Gopinthan briefed the visitors on CRPP's core research projects.

A Lecture in Memory of IE's Founding Director

By Public & International Relations



Family of the late Dr Ruth Wong with NIE Director Prof Leo Tan (sixth from right), guest speaker Prof Julian Elliott (back row) & former IE Director Dr Sim Wong Kooi (extreme right)

The 22nd Ruth Wong Memorial Lecture entitled *Motivation, Engagement and Educational Performance: International Perspectives*, was organised in memory of Dr Ruth Wong, first Director of the former Institute of Education (IE) on 30 May 2006 by NIE and the National University of Singapore.

Held in conjunction with the Educational Research Association of Singapore Conference 2006 (full story on page 10) at the Orchard Hotel, the lecture was attended by over 300 educators, with Prof Julian Elliott,



Vice Dean of Centre for Research in Pedagogy & Practice Prof S Gopinathan (right) chairs the session with guest speaker Prof Julian Elliott

Professor of Education at University of Durham, UK as guest speaker.

His presentation first examined a five-year cross-cultural study of achievement motivation in England, USA and Russia, with more than 6,000 students and 3,000 parents being surveyed. He then discussed the impact of recent socio-economic and socio-political upheaval upon achievement motivation in Russian schools. Questions were raised about the ability of current achievement motivation theory and methodology, to provide rich and meaningful understandings about those factors that led individuals, communities, cultures and nations to commit to academic study.

Such memorial lectures seek to bring to the consciousness of a younger generation of teachers, teacher educators and administrators, Dr Wong's seminal ideas and her reminder and challenge to examine and re-examine the ends and means of education. She is a role model for the teaching profession and her quest for excellence in education continues today in many of those who knew her.

RESEARCH



Canadian salmon hatchery showing the fish ponds where Asst Prof Lee Yew Jin did his fieldwork for three years

Lessons Learned at a Salmon Hatchery

By Asst Prof Lee Yew Jin, Natural Sciences & Science Education

A co-authored paper with Asst Prof Lee Yew Jin's former doctoral supervisor, Prof Wolff-Michael Roth from the University of Victoria, British Columbia, entitled *The (Unlikely) Trajectory of Learning in a Salmon Hatchery* was recently awarded the Outstanding Paper at the Emerald Literati Network Awards for Excellence 2006. The article was recognised as the best 2005 paper published in the *Journal of Workplace Learning*.

The gist of this project is that people always learn even though they may be well entrenched in routine and mundane work environments. To show this, the researchers used the activity of feeding fish in a

salmon hatchery that superficially seemed to require very little training and intelligence to perform. Two assertions concerning learning were proposed: the dialectic of doing (actions may seem repetitive but are in fact always different and productive in nature) and dialectic of understanding and explaining (practical understanding develops dialectically with conceptual understanding when the latter is subjected to scrutiny). These seem to account for learning in places that at first sight are not conducive to change and transformation. The study suggests a need to rethink the nature and possibilities of learning in humdrum work environments that are believed to be widespread.