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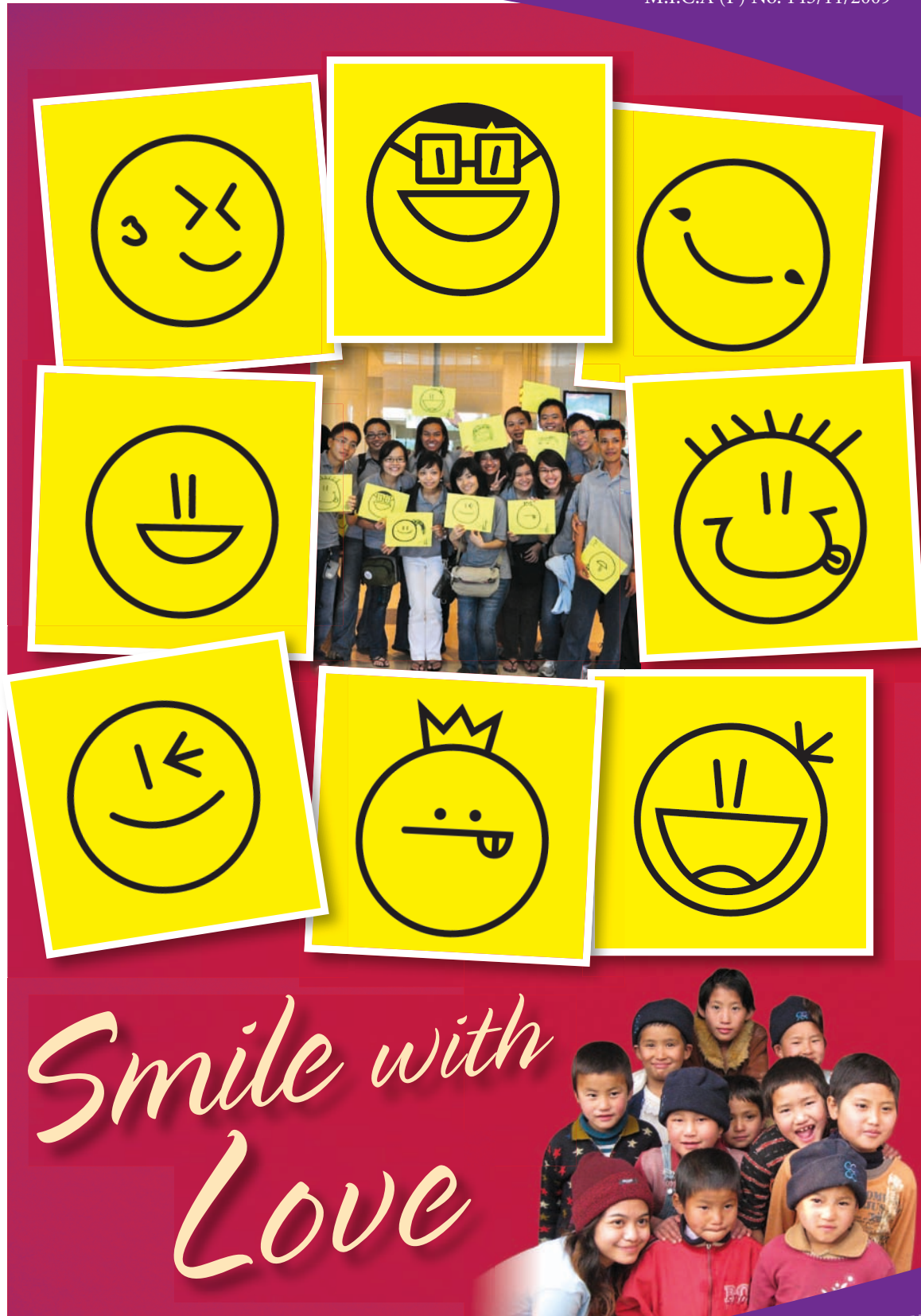
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Director's Message



Dear Student Teachers,

Welcome to the National Institute of Education for new students and to returning student teachers, welcome back to a new semester of exciting and fulfilling challenges ahead!

While you pursue a rigorous academic programme which will give you the skills and knowledge for teaching, take time out to enjoy our lovely campus, make friends and serve the community. It is through the connection with your peers and the community that you will build up values and create for yourselves a more holistic experience and hence nurture yourselves as effective teachers. With the Ministry's unequivocal focus on soft skills and holistic education, actively engaging in student development activities is certainly a step in the right direction! Moreover, the focus in the 21st Century as outlined in the Curriculum 2015 (C2015) document is to be an active contributor and a concerned citizen and these outcomes can be achieved

through your loyal and firm support of student-led activities. We have 15 active student-led clubs catering to different interest groups and programmes, from a hip-hop dance club to a Food and Consumer Sciences Club, to a club which promotes board games for learning. Clubs aim to connect student teachers and to make life on our campus a truly vibrant one! Join club activities – they will broaden your worldview and nurture your talents. Participate fully in our student development programmes too – such as GESL, The Meranti Project, the NIE Resiliency Challenge, Explorations in Ethnicity, study trips to overseas educational institutions, education and youth conferences and upcoming international service-learning projects. All these activities will help you grow personally and enable you to build up your professional identity as a teacher.

I wish you a truly blessed new year 2010 and fulfilling semester ahead!

Warmest regards,
Professor Lee Sing Kong
Director, NIE

Editor's Commentary



Time flies and here we are, already in the new decade that is 2010!

I trust everyone had a very fun-filled and hopefully meaningful December break. Some of you may have gone overseas for leisure, and there are also some who have gone away on youth expedition projects organized by the clubs at NIE, of which you can read about here. They just might inspire you to join them the next time round in helping and learning from other communities.

You can also find here, the story of how one student teacher discovers the true essence of writing a proper essay, how smart sexy was brought back at the Global Social Innovators' Forum 2009, and if you are interested to know how it is like living and studying overseas, student teacher Hui Shan shares her experiences here on how it was like studying at Boston College.

Check out the write up on TIC (Teachers' Investiture Ceremony) too, to know what being a 21st century teacher entails.

Also, do not miss out on our humor page. Hopefully you will have a few laughs, it keeps the blues away!

Play and Study hard!

And Welcome to Semester 2! (=

*Yours Truly,
Melissa Ng
TTC Publications Officer
Editor in Chief of NIE Voices 2010*

Trio-power Investiture



Professor Tan Oon Seng,
Guest-of-Honour



Melvyn, our
outgoing BA chair



30th November 2009 was an important day for BA and BSc Clubs as both clubs came together to officiate the handing-over ceremony for their committees. This year, ASEAN Club joined in the fun as well. The investiture was a successful closed-door event and many distinguished guests came to grace the ceremony.

The Guest-of-Honour, Professor Tan Oon Seng (Dean of Foundation Programmes) initiated the event with interesting values out of "CPF" for the student leaders. He also encouraged student leaders to expand their frontiers and think out of the box.

A video of remembrance, prepared by the three clubs, was presented to showcase the different successful events. They included ASEAN Educational Forum, TICE-ECO Camp 2009, and Learning Festival 2009.

Through speeches, the outgoing chairs demonstrated their gratitude towards the individuals they had worked with. As a symbol of club spirit, the outgoing chairs passed their flame of passion inside a lamp to the incoming chairs. In addition, the outgoing chairs were presented with roses and gifts of love from their respective clubs. The outgoing committees

also received certificates of appreciation for the hard work and effort they had contributed.

The highlight of this investiture was the majestic red carpet, which certainly captured the attention of the audience. Gold-coated icons were hung to create a vibrant ambience.

Towards the end, the incoming committees felt energized and motivated to take on a challenging role to make a difference in NIE. The guests were then treated to a sumptuous lunch reception. It also provided opportunities for other clubs of NIE to interact.

"I had mixed feelings about this day," said Yushiella Ahmad, incoming chairperson for BSc Club, "It's sad to see the people I'd worked with, leaving the committee. But I definitely look forward to working with new faces."

People say three's a crowd. However, this collaboration definitely proved otherwise. The success of this event is just a beginning for more upcoming collaboration between the three clubs.

Sam Yew
Chairman,
Investiture 2009 for ASEAN, BA and BSc Clubs

Sowing the Meranti Seed



Certificate Presentation

My experience at The Meranti Project

To have to head back to school during my week break for The Meranti Project meant sacrificing two days of my break. My immediate thought was "This course had better be good."

Yet, it could hardly be called a sacrifice as I truly enjoyed myself during the course. I learnt a lot from my friends' experiences, talked about various issues honestly and for the first time, I was not afraid to let others know how I really felt about certain things. There were no

boundaries and we did not have to give politically correct answers.

I also understood my friends better, and found out interesting things about them, like the origin of their names. Some of their stories of why they became teachers were really inspiring too and it was heartening to know that these were the people who are going to be my colleagues in the future. We also explored areas of the current education system and it was enlightening to know

what my friends and I thought and felt about it. There were unexpected responses, but those were the ones that we really learnt from.

More importantly, I learnt much about myself, especially with regards to the way I think, and The Meranti Project reminded and assured me of why I became a teacher. There was a segment where we had to give each other feedback and that was amazing because it allowed me to see myself from other people's point of view and some feedback were things of which I never realized I was. It showed me my blind spots and hence provided me with an opportunity to change some of my ways.

It would be difficult for me to pass on The Meranti Project experience to others merely with words because there is much more to it than what I have mentioned. I took away a lot from it and my friends and I became much closer than we were before. It was a course that was based mainly on what we wanted and made it to be, and it was truly one of a kind. The only way for you to find out what I am talking about is for you to experience the course yourself!



Guest Speaker sharing

Life Journey sharing

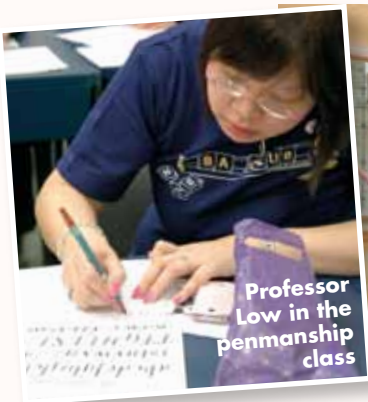
Personal commitment and Group affirmation

Jeanette Ngoh
19th TTC Committee

"Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere."



Director Lee and students in the cup cake making class



Professor Low in the penmanship class



Students trying a hand at belly dancing

With this Chinese proverb in mind, the BA Club conducted Learning Festival 2009. Learning Festival 2009 was a half-day event held on the 28th of August, giving staff and students alike the opportunity to equip themselves with new skills.

Currently in its fourth year, we brought back favourites from previous Learning Festivals, such as Western Calligraphy and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. We also introduced new and interesting classes such as Belly Dancing (for females only, though we had plenty of enquiries from guys if they could join the class just to observe), Debating and a Beginner's Guide to Hungarian (the language) and Hungarians (the people), which were all well-received by the participants.

Our Guest-of-Honour, Professor Lee Sing Kong, Director of NIE, also joined in the fun, trying his hand at making cupcakes, practising his penmanship skills, and even learning some Hungarian.

Everyone enjoyed themselves learning a new skill at their respective workshops, so here's a very big THANK YOU to everyone involved for making Learning Festival 2009 happen: the BA Club Executive Committee and members, staff from the Foundation Programmes Office, all facilitators, and last but certainly not least, all staff and students for your active participation!

Melvyn Chung
Chairman, BA Club

Happy Hour '09

When Rudyard Kipling lamented on the incongruity between the East and the West, he probably did not do so with leopard prints and teachers in mind. The man dubbed the "prophet of British imperialism" was left floundering in the wake of all things foretold as the Trainee Teachers' Club (TTC) rode on the crest of the Ris Low's encyclopaedic faux pas to distribute to the student population of NIE its very own "Boomz Bag" of delectable goodies.

Held on the 28th of October 2009, TTC's signature Happy Hour event came as a welcome respite as the deluge of assignments, datelines and looming examinations threatened to cast a sombre note on campus. With over 400 "Boomz Bags" in their sights, student teachers flocked to the Hub only to be greeted by more than what they had initially bargained for. As the TTC committee braced themselves for the first wave of handouts, students were treated to a medley of entertaining acts fronted by Anugerah 2004 national singing champion, Aqmal and the effervescent Dance Fuzion crew, a double jointed buffer act which proved effective in stemming the ravishing appetites of the masses.

Meanwhile, in the background, TTC members were steadily augmenting the fort, setting up distribution points and relaying the stylish bags which were eyed surreptitiously by those awaiting. To top it off, cartons of crisp apples were being



buffet food and fruits courtsey of FCS

prepared to be meted out by the chairperson of the Family and Consumer Science (FSC) club herself. Little wonder then, the exponentially escalating sense of anticipation.

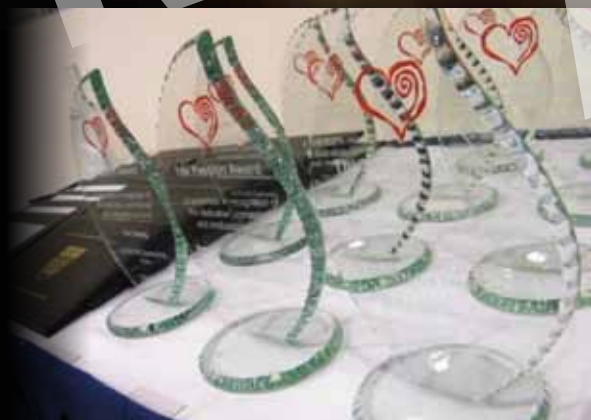
The array of talent only served as a precursor to the main event, the distribution of the "Boomz Bags" and the buffet spread just outside the student hub. Within minutes, the goodie bags were snapped up and students were making their respective ways back to class, this time their spirits fortified by a wash of good cheer and their bodies nourished by free cans of Nescafe and green tea nestled within their bags, amongst various other items. The spring in their steps were not for naught as yet another savoury delight was to come their way come lunch time, this time in the form of free Cornetto ice cream!

Exams and excitement. Never the twain shall meet? Boomz.

Muhammad Herwanto
President of the 18th TTC Committee

Celebrating the Achievements

NIE CLUB AWARDS



Passion and Club awards



Professor Lee presenting the Gold Award to Aisha Farhana of ASEAN Club



Club award winners with Professor Lee

On 28th August 2009, just when some of you were rushing home from school, a very important ceremony was taking place at the Amphitheatre in the Student Hub. That's right! It was the annual NIE Club Awards!

The official ceremony kicked off with a superb performance by WAN (We Are Noobs), a 3-man team under DanceFuzion. Following that, the Guest-of-Honour, our Director Professor Lee Sing Kong gave us an inspiring speech. Quoting from Professor Lee's speech, commitment and passion are two extremely important aspects that mark a student leader. Without commitment, work would not get done and ideas would not become actions. Without passion, interest would die down quickly and everything becomes more of a chore. Thus, the "ingredients" commitment and passion both have to be present in our DNA! Professor Lee ended off with words that should become the motto of

every student leader here at NIE – to LEAD every student or member of the NIE population, to CARE for every individual's needs and wants, and to INSPIRE others with their passion.

A short video "CLUBBING @ NIE" was then shown to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of all the clubs in NIE for the past academic year. This year, there were two bronze award winners – namely Club Jeux and Service Learning Club – because the panel of judges decided they had both performed well in bringing NIE to the community level. The Silver Award holder was DanceFuzion for their endless dedication to put NIE's name everywhere and for being extremely supportive of other clubs' events. When the emcee announced that ASEAN Club was the Gold Award winner, there were lots of cheers and tears of joy all round. Being a relatively young club in NIE, ASEAN Club has indeed

come a long way and they have made so many milestones in NIE with their various achievements and contributions. Congratulations ASEAN Club! Last but not least, Family & Consumer Sciences Club (FCS Club) and Malay Language and Cultural Society (MLCS) also received special commendation for their perseverance and hard work during the past academic year. Apart from the NIE Club Awards, 12 graduand teachers also received the Passion Award from Professor Lee himself for their perseverance, dedication and invaluable service to NIE.

To end the ceremony on a good note, everyone had fun mingling with one another over a yummy tea spread! So if you missed all this, don't forget to join us again next Teachers' Day then!

Toh Hui Fang Hazel
Diploma in Education

The Amazing Games



“London! Spain! Brazil!” One would think you’re caught in a fantasy of being able to choose any destination you would want to go to, but that’s not the case here. Instead, a group of year one GESL (Group Endeavours in Service Learning) teams were racing against time to complete the station games for the first ever NIE Travel Games, organized by the NIE Travel Club. They all came from different backgrounds, but had the ultimate dream of winning seed money to carry out their group projects.

There were 5 stations, which required groups to answer various travel-related questions like naming world cities, arranging the numbers one to ten in various languages, identifying flags to their respective homelands and a game of Pictionary to identify five different countries. At the same time, they had the challenging task of overcoming the different obstacles that came their way as they moved from one station to another. And to top that, the challenge had to be completed with all six team members’ hands held together!

Seems tough? Apparently not for these teams! They fought through each station with a positive attitude and a can-do spirit,

and it was actually very heartwarming seeing teams running with hands held tight, determined to win the prize money for their projects. It was definitely a sight not commonly seen along the halls of the campus. As a result, PGDE GESL Group 19 emerged champions with an excellent recorded timing, that would definitely be a tough record to break in the future travel games to come.

Indeed the execution of the games was flawless; and such would not be possible without the efforts of the planning committee. They certainly did a fantastic job of coming up with interesting games that were challenging as well as educational. I’m sure there are participants who will not easily forget the names of those cities because it meant a difference between first and second place for them. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and sincerest thanks to all those who helped make the event, a first of its kind, a success.

Sharina Majid
BA(Education), Year 2

Global Social Innovators Forum 2009



With **Suhas Gopinath (right)**, the world's youngest CEO



All smiles now with 77th Street President, **Elim Chew (left)**



John Hope Bryant (left) and **Mostapha**

I met hope at a sidewalk and it came via a limocab. Stifle your sniggers, o ye of the unbelievers. This hope materialised in the form of a man who put the White House on hold to chat with me. Now how many of you can lay claim to that? ;)

My meeting with John Hope Bryant, the founder of Operation Hope and Vice Chair of the U.S. President's Advisory Council came about at the Global Social Innovators Forum 2009, (helmed by Member of Parliament, Penny Low) a three day event which brought together a plethora of distinguished global talents and thought leaders; all of whom came together with one underlying and unifying mission: to shape the world. As my fellow delegates, Mostapha, chairperson of the NIE Travel Club and Zuraidah, chairperson of the NIE Green Club, would attest, the forum more than verifiably succeeded in continuing the crusade of the Social Innovation Park (SIP) in providing a platform for influential minds to shape a more inclusive and sustainable world.

So there we were, rubbing shoulders and commingling with billionaires such as Rob Walton (Chairman of Wal-Mart), luminaries in the kind of Forbes editor, Tim Ferguson, the world's youngest CEO, Suhas Gopinath, BBC World producer, Sharanjit Leyl and 77th Street founder,



The NIE delegates with our event host, **Augustine Anthuvan**, editor at **Mediacorp**

Elim Chew. Before you could even breathe 'once-in-a-lifetime', I was accosted by none other than Nadya Hutagalung, who was there to promote greenkampong.com, her latest effort at raising environmental awareness (my recollection remains hazy as to who was doing the initial accosting). After exchanging contacts and posing for a few soon-to-be treasured photographs, we rushed headlong into a series of plenaries and workshops which gave us the opportunity to share, deliberate and develop ideas towards embracing social innovation as a concrete foundation to serve, lead and inspire.

It would be greatly misleading to believe that the thrust of leadership in forging new grounds and rehabilitating primordial ones lies solely in the hands of

the privileged, for the principal tenet of leadership as espoused by the forum, was one that is championed by collaborations of like minded individuals who lead through love. The conference spearheaded by futurist Alvin Toffler and his wife on the dangers of an obsolete educational system molded to serve the needs of a bygone industrial era perked our collective attention as did the recounting of the Harvard professor who broke down upon seeing his former charges on television shepherded by authorities out on Wall Street, a vividly damning indictment of social accountability amongst the formerly heralded.

It would be a grave injustice to attempt a fair portrayal of the myriad issues of gravitas and ostensibly substantiating them in a singular article, after coming away from the forum enlivened with the snapshots of the global imagery, with a spark so infinitesimally small, yet inspiring in its brilliance. In celebrating the amalgamation of imagination so resplendent, one would do well to put forth one's lessons into practice. As John Hope Bryant opined, "It's time to make smart sexy again."

So watch out world, we're bringing smart sexy back.

Muhammad Herwanto
President, Trainee Teachers' Club

Teachers' Investiture Ceremony



Mr Harman Johll, our valedictorian receiving awards from Ms Grace Fu, our Guest-of-Honour

On the 20th January 2010, the Nanyang Auditorium was host to the Teachers' Investiture Ceremony, that saw 357 newly qualified teachers graduating officially from the National Institute of Education.

The ceremony saw the graduands receive their Post Graduate Diploma in Education, Bachelor of Arts (Education), Bachelor of Science (Education) and Diploma in Education respectively. The Guest of Honor for this event was Ms Grace Fu, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of National Development and Ministry of Education. The valedictorian for the ceremony was Mr Harman Johll.

In Ms Grace Fu's speech, she commended the graduands on their decision to become teachers. She remarked that while the responsibility of a teacher is tremendous, it offers rewarding experiences. She shared with the graduands good role models like Lim Pia Leong and Derek Lin, who went beyond their call of duty to organize a two day-one night camp to help integrate special needs students into St Gabriel's Secondary School. They not only went beyond the stipulated hours for their service learning course but took the time to share their experiences and reflections with their fellow student teachers.

Ms Grace Fu spoke about the NIE review that resulted in the "Teacher Education for the 21st Century Model (TE 21)." The TE 21 model focuses on imparting values to student teachers and there are three aspects to it. Firstly, it is learner centered. Secondly, it aims to build a strong identity as a professional. Thirdly, it emphasizes service to the profession and the community.



Ms Grace Fu explained that for beginning teachers, being equipped with good class management skills or content knowledge is not enough. What is needed is also "a strong sense of inner purpose and drive for the long haul." She also stressed the importance of teachers being in a strong fraternity, to "collaborate and deepen their expertise",

so as to make an even better difference in their students' lives.

What the 21st Century Teacher Education Model should be about was also touched upon by Professor Lee Sing Kong, Director of NIE. He stressed that NIE is firmly committed to developing quality teachers and educators who are "relevant with the times", a key factor in making a positive difference in the lives of their students.

With all this in mind, the graduands were left pondering on essentially, what teaching means to them. As valedictorian Mr Harman Johll points out in his speech, "are our diplomas simply licenses to teach?" This is something that each teacher needs to think about and come to a conclusion about. One thing for sure, teaching is more than just a career. As quoted from Ms Grace Fu's speech, Professor Linda Darling-Hammond, a member of the NIE International Advisory Panel and the first recipient of the Honorary Doctor of Education awarded by Nanyang Technological University had this to say: "Teaching is the profession on which all other professions depend. Indeed, everybody who is somebody was enabled to become somebody by a teacher."

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT



Watching the NBA Celtics game, live!



Our Montreal trip

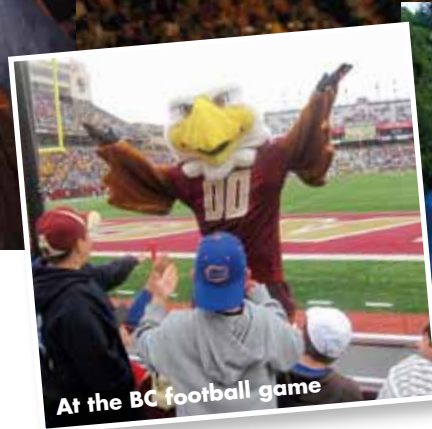


Celebrating Halloween at Salem

"Study Hard, Play Hard"



My room



At the BC football game



The New York trip

It is truly an honor to be a pioneer student representing NIE in an exchange to Boston College (BC). BC is one of the oldest Jesuit, Catholic universities in the United States. It has three campuses, all within a 30 minute train ride from downtown Boston; and boasts of buildings with impressive architecture.

The International Student and Assistant Association (IS&IA) helps ease international students into life in BC through international orientation week, and events that run throughout the school year to give international students a taste of American culture. The International Assistants (IA) whom I have met have been exceedingly

hospitable and helpful. In fact my own IA, Ashley, was kind enough to open her room to me when I first arrived in Boston without any fixed accommodation.

The college sports teams are quite well supported; a typical American Football match in BC sees a packed and boisterous stadium of supporters dressed in the BC Eagles "Super Fan" tee-shirt. BC students are politically and socially acute, making their views well heard through flyers and talks while offering themselves up as volunteers in service to the community.

The hackneyed expression "study hard, play hard" applies appropriately to life for the typical BC student. The typical BC student finesses her mountain of projects, assignment and in term assessments (most of which count towards their final grade) while finding the time to turn up, unflustered and glamorous for the endless number of parties. Classes tend to be dynamic as BC students seldom shy away from speaking their mind. I felt quite uncomfortable with this, and tried to participate more actively in class.

I lived with three other international students in a two bedroom apartment within walking distance of school. We enjoyed each other's company and went travelling together often with other international students of a myriad of nationalities (Korea, Japan, Australia, Morocco and France). One of my initial aims was to experience independent living. This has been satisfactorily accomplished as I have had to manage daily meals, laundry, house chores, banking, and grocery shopping, all within a tight budget. I have grown to appreciate more of what my mother does for me back home.

I am well pleased with this opportunity to be immersed in a US college, to experience the classroom culture and sightsee as well. I would strongly encourage other students, if given the opportunity, to experience BC and the American college culture for themselves. I believe it would be a once in a lifetime experience.



Making my own meals

Wang Hui Shan
BSc (Math) Year 2

The Great Expedition

From the 7th to 12th December 2009, 11 members from the NIE Chinese Language Education And Research (CLEAR) Club embarked on an educational exchange trip to the Centre for Advancement of Chinese Language Education and Research (CACLER) at the University of Hong Kong. The trip included pedagogical exchange workshops with the professors and researchers from CACLER as well as school visits to Ying Wa Primary School and The Hong Kong Chinese Christian Churches Union Logos Academy.

Through these, club members had the opportunity to be exposed to new and innovative instructional materials and pedagogical methods such as efficient mental lexicon recognition and reading & writing techniques. In addition, we gained an invaluable insight into the Hong Kong educational system, where Mandarin is also taught as a 2nd language, through the two school visits where we witnessed first-hand how Chinese lessons in Hong Kong were conducted in a live classroom setting. As an added bonus to our school observation, the principals of each school also gave an enthusiastic sharing of their teaching experiences.



Group shot with the Principal of HKCCCU Logos Academy, the second school we observed

We were also privileged to be instructed by Mdm. Cheong Choo Mui, Head 2 of the Chinese Language Unit at the MOE Curriculum Planning & Development Division and whose team was responsible behind the recently newly revamped primary school Chinese curriculum. Currently at HKU for her P.H.D, Mdm. Cheong was on hand to clear any doubts we had regarding the new curriculum as well as constantly drawing relevance to the new pedagogical methods we have just learnt. We all benefited from her vast experience which, coupled with what we have learnt from other enthusiastic and welcoming professors and researchers in CACLER, dovetailed into a comprehensive and fruitful learning journey throughout our short stay there.

It was not all work and no play too, as we took full advantage of whatever free time we had to enjoy ourselves in the food and shopping haven that is Hong Kong. Every meal was sumptuous and every shopping foray resulted in loot as we took in sights like Disneyland, The Peak, the Avenue of Stars and the Tian Tan Buddha on Lantau Island while gorging ourselves silly on seafood, dim sum, egg tarts, milk tea, and other local delights along the way. In all, it was a memorable trip that CLEAR Club will be looking forward to continuing next year and sharing our learning experience with our fellow trainee teachers.

Loh Wei Qi
BA(Chinese), Year 2



Our first meal upon arrival: Sumptuous authentic Hong Kong Dim Sum!



At the gates of the Hong Kong University

Small group presentation during one of the pedagogy workshops



The University of Hong Kong, where we had our numerous workshops and discussions



First hand pedagogical observation at Ying Wa Primary School



The lively kids during class. Naturally we garnered a lot of attention



A shot with the Ying Wa students



Workshop with Professor Chong, Head 2 of the Chinese Language Division from MOE's Curriculum Planning Division

SKITTLES!



GESL TG09 with the children



Mention 'GESL' to an NIE trainee, and one would get a myriad responses, ranging from "It's only a module," to "No need to be so serious!"

That was not what GESL TG09, or 'SKITTLES!' experienced on the 30th November, 2009 during the Heritage Race planned in support of Club Rainbow, a non-profit organization caring for children with chronic illnesses.

When we reminisce the genuine, unsullied joy of the children as they embarked on a learning journey through Singapore's historical milestones and diverse heritage, the effort we ploughed through, was all more than worth it.

Our journey was especially demanding, as we sought to approach our event with a twist – to engineer a trail of Singapore's heritage landmarks using an Amazing Race template. All this was meticulously planned to cater to children with special needs.

After we secured the aid and organization of Club Rainbow, it was off to the drawing board as draft after draft of proposals was fine-tuned. Sponsorship acquired from Talent Plus Playschool, as well as from achieving Second Runner-up in the Inter-GESL Games, bolstered our finances to fund our rather ambitious event.

As for our program itself, numerous days under the scorching Singapore sun were dedicated to gather reconnaissance and dry runs for the areas we would be planning our activities at, namely Chinatown, Little India, Singapore Museum, Kampong Glam and Raffles' Landing Site. There were almost endless

meetings to formulate games and routes, as well as addressing the paramount concern of safety.

Finally, the day of the event arrived!

Groups passionately led by SKITTLES! members headed out into the streets and to places where the Club Rainbow children would never have had the chance to visit otherwise, given their health and medical conditions.

To them, it was a welcome breath of fresh air, a deviance from their routine of treatments and therapies. The children enjoyed themselves, and this was evident in the vivid sparkle in their eyes, as they presented their experience during the Picture Sharing Session after the Race.

A Scottish writer once said,

"Happiness... consists in giving, and in serving others." For Skittles! (GESL TG09), this has never rung more true.



Walking through Chinatown



Andy Ng
SKITTLES! (GESL TG 09)



On a Saturday morning 26th September, the bright sun and clear skies greeted the participants of the 2nd Inter-GESL Mini Olympics. A total of 18 groups amounting to over a hundred participants were eager and raring to compete in the 6 Sports on offer that was Basketball, Captain's Ball, Floorball, Frisbee, Soccer and Tchoukball.

The Inter-GESL Mini Olympics was co-organized by the Physical Education and Sport Sciences faculty together with Foundation Programmes Office to foster camaraderie and friendship through sports amongst the student teachers and staff of NIE. In addition, with the Youth

Olympic Games coming soon, this was a great opportunity for student teachers and staff at NIE to feel the Olympic Spirit.

Basketball was played 4 on 4, on half the court that called for fancy dribbling, dazzling footwork and sharp shooting from the eventual winners from PGDE group 17. Captain's Ball sure brought back fond memories, as it surely was a favourite amongst everyone who played it during their school going days. The eventual winner was Degree group 9, who certainly relived their childhood days.

The participants were clashing sticks in the fast paced game of Floorball. Excellent stick control and accurate shots proved to be the deciding factor that gave

the title to the group from Degree 4. A familiar implement was used to play a relatively unfamiliar game of Ultimate Frisbee as the participants were chasing the flying disc and soaking up the sun, quite literally on the NIE hockey pitch. The ability to tame the unpredictable flying disc brought glory to the Degree group 16.

The boys and girls certainly lapped up our nation's favourite game Soccer that was played 5 a side. Putting the round ball into the goal more than any other team was Degree group 16. Tchoukball was definitely a game that most if not all the participants were unfamiliar with. Thanks to the President of the PESS Committee, Ben Ang, who took the time to teach the teams, eventually the participants got into the swing of this unusual game and emerging winners were Diploma group 21.

The Olympic values of Friendship, Respect and Excellence were clearly demonstrated by all the participants as they played hard but played fair and made new friends throughout the day. The event ended with the participants being sweaty and sunburned but leaving with huge grins on their faces.

Many thanks to all the participants and the members of the 8th PESS committee for making this event a successful one!



Gideon Loh
Sports Manager, 8th PESS Committee

Project Phone Ngam



Phone Ngam Village where the team stayed for 11 nights



Initial state of the classroom to be rebuilt

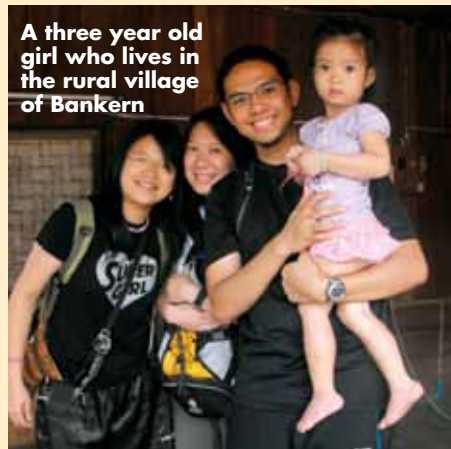


Nestled in the heart of Vang Vieng Province, Phone Ngam Village sits quietly below the magnificent and majestic mountains that rise above it. This simple, idyllic and small village is home to just over 800 villagers, mostly made up of middle aged farmers and fishermen and an average of four to five children per household, where mothers still play a conservative role by managing the house and taking care of the needs of the family. Conservatism plays a very big part in this culture rich province. Respecting others in the community by wearing proper attire, no touching of the heads of children and covering the feet when interacting with the elderly were manners we followed very closely. The team went into this project facing many challenges and one was the fast changing temperature. It was the cold and dry season in Phone Ngam where temperatures in the morning and evening dropped below 10 degrees Celsius and the midday temperature hovered just above 25 degrees Celsius.

Team Dao Kham was formed in August 2009 and was made up of 16 enthusiastic and capable members with the goal of nurturing human welfare

and self-identity. For that next four months, the team met at least once a week to prepare ourselves by having team bonding and facilitation sessions as we believed that having strong team camaraderie was important.

We went to this beautiful uncharted territory with a few objectives in mind.



A three year old girl who lives in the rural village of Bankern

Rebuilding and refurbishing a classroom that was so long needed in the village's primary school was one of it. Having just 11 days to complete this mammoth task was not easy and was very daunting, knowing the limited experience we had

with construction. With determination and sheer will, we managed to construct the classroom by collaborating with some men in the village. The size of the building is similar to the size of an average classroom in Singapore. By the eleventh day of the project, we had completed building a classroom and refurbished it with shelves of books, painted tables and benches, a decorative mat, and beautifully drawn and painted murals. We got to know the students and teachers where we had English and Mathematics workshops for four hours daily. To top it off, we planned and executed a Sports Carnival and Cultural Day for the village. It was just amazing! We surprised ourselves by managing to pull off all the activities given the short time we had.

Surely, this expedition trip to Laos had been a fulfilling and memorable one for us. The journey of hearts, minds and hands will be treasured by us.

Mohammad Firuz Bin Mustapha
Expedition Leader,
Project Phone Ngam 2009, Laos
Asia Ambassador,
NIE TRAVEL CLUB



thinker and essayist, Drs. Agus R. Sarjono (Indonesia) and MASTERA alumni, Arif Bagus Prasetyo. With such great names in the fray, I was beginning to kick myself for having second thoughts about joining the programme. Thankfully, the skeptic was laying low this time as I relished the opportunity to learn from these icons of the essay writing fraternity. From day 1 till day 3, we rotated between the 4 mentors who had actually taken the time to read our submitted 'essays', deconstructed and 'essayized' them in the truest sense.

Professor Ampuan was insightful with his advice that an essayist must be an avid reader as well as a writer who has an eye for detail. Pak Sobary humoured us with his energy and antics as he let fly anecdote after anecdote that could and would probably make an essay more memorable and less 'dry.' Arif Bagus Prasetyo was the epitome of seriousness and commitment in his delivery as he professed his inclination to view essays as products of struggle against a backdrop of 'similar thinking masses.' Finally, Agus R. Sarjono was the mentor that left the greatest impact on many of the participants as he charmed us with his wit, intelligence but most of all, his humility. I was particularly intrigued by the statement he made where he regarded the prophet Muhammad as being the greatest essayist of all time. Though the messenger did not write them down, his essays are manifested through his acts of kindness, care and love for mankind.

On day five, it was time for us to edit, check and finalise our essays. Messages needed to be filtered and focused. Sentences needed to be sharp and succinct. Tones needed to be reflective rather than regurgitative. Finally, ideas needed to be bold but not boring, subversive yet not sermonic, and unique yet universal. With a literal and literary mountain to climb, it seemed like our essays will never see the light of day. Though I did manage to scale the original 3000 worder to a mere 750 words, I still left Arga Mulya feeling that something was missing in my essay. Then it struck me. In the words of Agus R. Sarjono, "an essay can never be perfect for it is always in the state of becoming." I lifted my head up and thought, "Bogor, you blew my mind!"

It was not that long ago that I remembered receiving an email from the Singapore Malay Language Council (MBMS). It was an invitation to attend an essay writing programme organized by the South East Asian Literary Council also known as MASTERA, a regional literary organization based primarily in Indonesia. The thought of spending an entire week in Western Java with a book hunting spree at Gramedia in sight, intrigued me. So I signed up. Then I found out that my senior from NIE, now Malay Language teacher at Bukit Timah Primary School, Nur Namira Mazlan, was also offered a place in the programme. In addition, Juffri Supa'at, a senior research and resource librarian from the National Library Board was also on board as our mentor throughout the programme.

With the lineup complete and the Garuda tickets in hand, the three of us set off on a journey into the not-so unknown. Matter of fact is, we do know that Jakarta is the capital city of Indonesia and that essays are written with an immense seriousness, objectivity and accuracy of the issues put forth. Well, we got Jakarta right but our perceptions of what make an essay tick was somewhat off the mark. This, we found out as our SUV moved on into an area where the temperatures dip as the climb increased. The place was Wisma Arga Mulya in Bogor, Western Java.

Glancing through the manuscript of 'essays' compiled for the programme, I was pretty convinced that I had churned out a solid essay. The sneer on my face was completely wiped off when Pak Sobary, a renowned essayist in Indonesia, spoke. He was utterly disgusted at the sight of the manuscript as he chucked it aside and told the participants in the briefing room that our works were no essays. They were mere assignments. Many heads sunk and mine was one of them. According to Pak Sobary, essays are not inklings of gargantuan and jargonistic words. He was also quick to point out the tendency of many young writers to name-drop great thinkers such as Edward Said, Paulo Freire and Mikhail Bakhtin, in order to legitimize their 'essays.' Then Pak Sobary asked, "So where is your voice in all these inklings?" That got me thinking. Have I been guilty of the same? Did I actually have a voice in all my writings? With that, my un-learning and re-learning of the essay writing process in Bogor has begun.

20 participants made up the MASTERA Essay Writing Programme 2009 cohort. 2 from Singapore, 3 Bruneians and 15 from Indonesia. We were split into 3 groups and given a chance to be tutored under the mentors who consisted of the experienced academic, Associate Professor Ampuan Dr. Haji Brahim (Brunei), essayist Drs. Muhamad Sobary (Indonesia),

Muhammad Irwan Jamal
Bachelor of Arts in Education
Malay Language & Literature

Project Smile

Feedback with
the Principal at
Thegone School



Warm welcome at Thegone



Mingalabar! It has been an exciting and fulfilling 17 days with Project SMILE 2009 – Singapore Myanmar Igniting Love for Education, as we served the Myanmar community and learnt much from the experience. Our team of 18 youths from NIE, NTU and Yangon were in Yangon, Taungyi and Twantay in Myanmar from 7 – 23 December 2009. As a Youth Expedition Project (YEP) focused on youth and community development, the objectives of the project were to serve as a youth service learning platform, arouse greater interest in learning and teaching of English as foreign language through workshops, sharing of pedagogies and teaching resources through sharing and feedback sessions as well as refurbishing the school library in Kayin Chaung village which was destroyed by Cyclone Nargis in 2008. The team achieved all the above objectives and so much more.

It is a challenge to run projects in Myanmar, as permits are required for staying at the locals' homes and for entering government schools. The

team learnt much about international relations, political diplomacy and operating procedures in Myanmar and came back with a greater understanding of the land and her people. We also built new relationships and strengthened old ties with partners such as Myanmar Airways International, the Myanmar embassy in Singapore, our Singapore embassy in Yangon and various local youths and people interested to serve their community.

The first part of our project was conducted in Taungyi, a highland plateau in Shan state of central eastern Myanmar. We had to take a 20-hour bus ride to Taungyi and travel for 1.5 hours each day by car to get to the village.

There are 135 ethnic groups in Myanmar, and Shan state alone has about



The school uniforms of the KC students

35 different ethnic groups. Majority of the people in the village are from the Danu tribe and they have their own language and writing. Thus the students speak their own language at home, they learn their subjects in Myanmar, the national language and English is a foreign language that they have not seen the practical application of. Thus the principal wanted us to arouse the interest of parents, teachers and students through English enrichment programmes. We had great feedback and dialogue session after each day of programme with the teachers and principal. These dialogues prompted us to reflect on teaching and the impact we make as teachers.

The second part of our project was in Kayin Chaung village in Twantay, near the delta region. To get there from Yangon we had to take a 2-hour bumpy car ride and a 1-hour boat ride. Kayin Chaung village was where the medical team from Singapore was stationed during Cyclone Nargis in 2008. We were also fortunate to be there for the Kayin tribe's New Year's eve and participated in their festive





celebrations like VIPs. We were all very touched by the sincerity, warmth and generosity of the people we met. Our hosts in both Taungyi and Kayin Chaung and even the educational officers and local youth team mates went out of their way to make us feel welcome and ensure that we were comfortable and had a good time.

Kayin Chaung village is situated along the river and the sub-high school has about 900 students from the village. We conducted sports activities, English enrichment workshops and Science experiments with the students and teachers. We had a postcard project with the Grade 10 and 11 students where they wrote replies to their Singaporean friends who had written to them during our local project in Singapore. This helped to develop their interest in English as they could apply what they learnt. On the last day we had a Learning Festival with booths for Science experiments, Global Warming, Singapore, carnival games and library book care and reading corner. Students took home Singapore postcards sponsored by our Singapore Tourism Board as souvenirs.

We also had an opening ceremony for their refurbished library. We used the funds raised in NIE and donated by Lee Foundation to buy materials and hire local workers to put in a new roof, ceiling, lights, paint the walls of the library, make new tables and chairs, bookshelves, water purification filter, Myanmar language books and stationery for the library. The funds were also used to repair the roof and ceiling in other parts of the school, repair the doors and windows damaged by Cyclone Nargis, as well as repair and buy new furniture for the students. We sincerely thank all our sponsors, donors and ardent supporters for helping us to make this project possible! SMILE! :)

Teo Siew Kuang
Project Smile 2009 Team

Project HUH - Help Us Hear 2009



Project Help Us Hear 2009 is in its third year running. In December last year, our team of 16 student teachers visited our host school, Anusarnsunthorn School for the Deaf, in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Like in previous projects, we focused on the sharing of pedagogies in Physical Education and Mathematics. And with the generous support from our student population and staff in NIE during our car-wash event in August last year, we raised enough funds to purchase Mathematics Manipulatives and Handball equipments. These items were used to share with the teachers at Anusarnsunthorn School new Mathematics pedagogies as well as to teach them the game of Handball.

In addition, when the representatives from Anusarnsunthorn School visited Singapore, the director, Dr Pikul, saw the beautifully painted walls in our local schools and was impressed by it. She requested us to help recreate a similar vibrant learning environment for her students. As it was in last year's project, we created a vibrant reading corner for the students.

However, aside from the work we did, the most important thing is that through such service learning trips, we learnt to work as a team and experienced a whole new culture. We certainly hope to sustain our project with Anusarnsunthorn School and look forward to future collaborations with them in 2010.



Jaron Yap
Project HUH Team

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Uttam Mei Pyaar (Love In The North)

The Kanchengjunga mountain range



Trekking



Picking litter



UMP, Project Sikkim, North India,
8th - 23rd December 2009

the Sikkimese lead simple but joyful lives. They are contented and appreciative of what they have in life which made us more grateful for what we had back home in Singapore.

In Yuksam, we consolidated projects done by previous NIE teams. We went trekking for six days to reach Gochela Viewpoint of Mount Kanchengjunga with the altitude of 4480m above sea level. It was indeed an achievement for most of our team members who had little or no trekking experience before. Enduring the extreme cold weather and harsh terrain, we motivated and supported each other



The Lepcha children

of the trail. We were well taken care of by our guides and were touched by their warmth and hospitality.

In addition, our other objective for the expedition was to do a video documentary which will serve as a service learning tool and also help KCC in promoting their eco-tourism/conservation programmes. We hope to instill the interest of service learning in trainee teachers and continue the sustainable NIE-YEP project with Sikkim in years to come. We believe that for those who watch it, the video will be rewarding and unforgettable.

Youth Expedition Project Team Uttam Mei Pyaar is a collaboration between 15 NIE trainee teachers and 8 graduated alumnus and teachers. NIE YEPs in Sikkim have been sustainable at NIE since 2003 and last year, we were fortunate to have Siva Gopal Thaiyalan, the founder of NIE Service Learning Club, to lead the team. With the objective of charting a 3-year plan for sustained partnership, we collaborated with Lepcha Cottage, an orphanage in Gangtok and Kanchengjunga Conservation Committee (KCC) in Yuksam.

While in Lepcha Cottage, we conducted Art & Craft activities for the children such as colouring, making face masks as well as sing-along sessions. Interacting and bonding with the children through the activities conducted and the singing lessons were truly heartening and seeing their smiles were priceless. At the same time, we got to understand the culture, history, religion and the beautiful people of Sikkim. It made us realize that



Me with Zulaisha

all the way to the final viewpoint. We realized that showing care and concern for one another throughout our trekking journey is a simple but yet, a powerful strength indeed. Flora and fauna along the way were simply gorgeous. We picked up litter along the trail on our way down to help promote eco-tourism and cleanliness



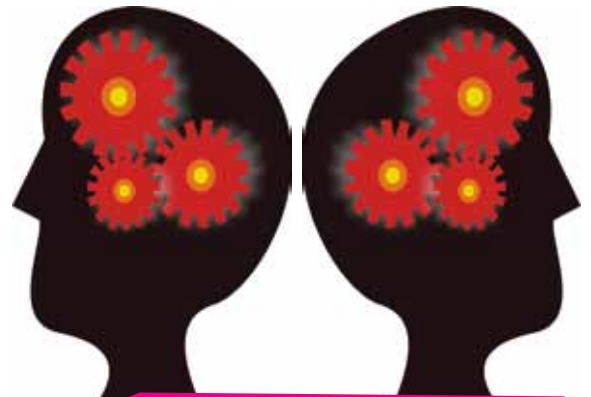
Balloon sculpting and face mask making

Sharifah Marziana
Diploma In Education (General)
Co-leader of Team Uttam Mei Pyaar
Honorary General Secretary of SLC

GESL

What does it mean to you really?

It is one thing that we as students of NIE share in common; we all have to go through GESL, otherwise known as Group Endeavours Service Learning, a yearlong project in our first year of study. Yet what really happens in the process of GESL and what can be learnt from this project? We take a look at the reflections of some of the group members of GESL Group 18, who carried out the Carpe Diem Leadership Camp 2009 for children with special needs. Indeed through these reflections, one can see that many lessons can be learnt: humility, a sense of purpose, compassion.



“Personally, learning points for me are attitude and a sense of purpose. It’s important to have a clear sense of purpose and to embark on a task wholeheartedly with the intention to serve, to participate and to learn. These, plus the necessary groundwork will result in things falling into place. However, according to Murphy’s Law, not ‘everything’ will go according to plan. Thus one needs level-headedness, tenacity and humility to take on these situations.”

– Melinda Foo

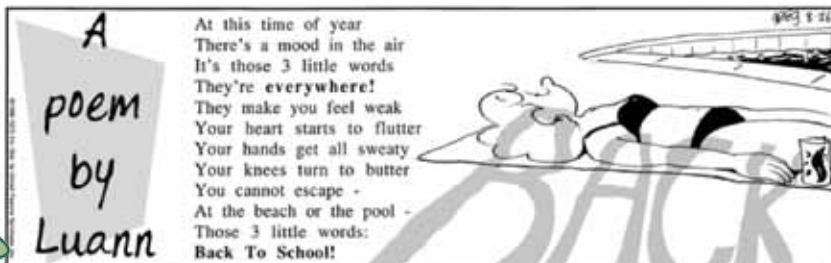
“This project has exposed me to various aspects of planning and execution of a camp. It has also made me appreciate students with special needs (SN) more deeply and to view them with greater respect. Many of the SN students I encountered in the camp were very mature and from the conversations we exchanged, I not only learnt more about their conditions, but also their perceptions of various attributes of a teacher which they look up to. Having received appreciative comments from the students with regard to the camp, this project was truly a rewarding and fulfilling experience.”

– Huang Shu Fen

“I believe that this camp was an eye-opener to the students who attended as well. They would realize that they are not the only ones who suffer from disabilities and would become aware of other students and the various other disabilities as well. In one activity, namely the “Treasure Hunt” one student from each group was supposed to wear a “blind-fold” and search for the next clue. These students would hence learn and realize what a visually impaired student experiences in his daily life. When one has difficulty seeing things and gauging for themselves, they have to depend on their peers to guide them and assist them in getting from one place to another. I hence believe that this camp was a really good learning experience for the students who attended as well.”

– Mathini Segar

LAUGHTER PAGE



10 Ways to Grade the Final Exams:

- 1 **Dept. of Statistics:** All grades are plotted along the normal bell curve.
- 2 **Dept. of Psychology:** Students are asked to blot ink in their exam books, close them and turn them in. The professor opens the books and assigns the first grade that comes to mind.
- 3 **Dept. of History:** All students get the same grade they got last year.
- 4 **Dept. of Religion:** Grade is determined by God.
- 5 **Dept. of Philosophy:** What is a grade?
- 6 **Law School:** Students are asked to defend their position of why they should receive an A.
- 7 **Dept. of Logic:** If and only if the student is present for the final and the student has accumulated a passing grade then the student will receive an A else the student will not receive an A.
- 8 **Dept. of Computer Science:** Random number generator determines grade.
- 9 **Music Department:** Each student must figure out his grade by listening to the instructor play the corresponding note (+ and - would be sharp and flat respectively).
- 10 **Dept. of Physical Education:** Everybody gets an A!



Melissa Ng
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