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Learning to Serve Serving to Learn



Learning to Serve, Serving to Learn is the motto of Group Endeavours in Service Learning, a service-learning community outreach programme of NIE



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Serving & Learning Beyond the Classroom

By Mr Aaron Chong, Public, International & Alumni Relations

Service Learning Day at NIE on 22 February 2008 celebrated the humanitarian facet of a student teacher's profession. The day's highlight was a motley mix of service-learning projects, which took place between August and December 2007 by 80 groups of student teachers.

Service learning has been an integral part of NIE's initial teacher preparation programmes since 2005. All student teachers on the Diploma in Education, Bachelor's degrees and Postgraduate Diploma in Education are

required to complete a compulsory service-learning community outreach project entitled Group Endeavours in Service Learning (GESL) in their first year of study.

Facilitated by an academic staff and in groups of 20, student teachers embark on their projects from conceptualisation to implementation while bearing in mind their limited resources and objectives which they hope to achieve. Groups approach organisations or a community and in discussion with their representatives, ascertain their role and scope of the projects.

Through this experiential learning experience, student teachers acquire the knowhow in project management, self- and team-development, and community service. As newly-qualified teachers, these skills will equip them to assume leadership roles in their schools' Community Involvement Projects and other service-learning initiatives.

On the student teachers' behalf, NIE News showcases their oft-inspiring and heartwarming projects.

Service Learning, a Part of My Teacher Education

Ms Akhilandeswari d/o Rajasegaran (far right), a third-year Bachelor of Science (Education) student teacher, is Chairperson of NIE's Service Learning Club.

“Service learning is ideally suited to nurture the development of character. One of the most effective tools available to teachers, service learning acquaints children with a world that is larger than their own, enhances overall education and instils a strong sense of social and civic responsibility in our students.

Anyone can engage in service learning – teachers, parents or even children. As a future teacher, I look forward to giving my students a chance not only to learn by doing but also to learn by doing for others. Heading NIE's Service Learning Club (SLC) has provided me with ample avenues to work with both our local school children as well as to understand their less fortunate counterparts in overseas communities.

A recent service-learning project SLC was involved in was preparing 30 prefects from Tanjong Katong Primary School for their Community Involvement Project trip to Batam, Indonesia. The enthusiasm shown



by them in organising the various objectives such as teaching songs, dance and reading, was simply amazing! The prefects were challenged to listen, reflect and empathise with others as they prepared to come face-to-face with less fortunate children in Indonesia.

Engaging in service-learning projects helps socialise student teachers in the essential moral and civic obligations of teaching, which include teaching with care, fostering lifelong civic engagement, being able to adapt to the needs of learners with diverse and special needs, and being committed to advocacy for social justices, children and families.

What I will always try to remember and act on as a future teacher, is that service learning does not have to be complicated or intense to be meaningful. As teachers, our responsibility is in trying to organise unique service-learning opportunities for students to participate in and to work hard to look for the everyday experiences that can be highlighted and used for learning by both student and teacher. Indeed, these service experiences advance the civic responsibility by developing our students into caring and compassionate individuals.”

Saying NO to Illegal Wildlife Trade



Mr Muhammad Dzuhri Bin Juniwan (above, far left), a first-year Diploma in Education student teacher and Chairperson of Group Endeavours in Service Learning (GESL) Group 22 RadicalZ, relates his experience in doing his part for wildlife conservation from September to December 2007.

“As Group 22, we had several ideas on what to do for our GESL project. Everyone gave many exciting suggestions that were worth considering. When Assoc Prof Vilma D’Rozario (Sub Dean, Student Development and Liaison) proposed that we did a fund-raiser to help ACRES, honestly, most of us had no idea what ACRES stood for. I thought ACRES meant clearing acres of land to make way for a charity organisation!

But after she explained that ACRES stood for “Animal Concerns Research and Education Society”, there was a unison of “Ohs” in the classroom. Then the brainstorming began on what we could do for ACRES Wildlife Rescue Centre and saying “No” to illegal wildlife trade. Initially, we intended to stage a concert at the Singapore Botanic Gardens to raise funds for the centre. We toyed with the idea and after much discussion, we felt the project was too ambitious an attempt.

We went for the next best alternative: a documentary featuring ACRES. The aim was to raise awareness on the illegal trade of wildlife such as reptiles and endangered animals. As ACRES, which is located at Jalan Lekar, was not yet completed, we also decided to help them beautify its premises. We got the gardening job (above), albeit a less than glamorous one! We thought we could paint the enclosures but some schools had already done so! But in the name of charity, we literally rolled up our sleeves and got down and dirty.

The video documented a tour of the enclosures, an interview with ACRES Executive Director Mr Louis Ng as well as our horticultural skills. Apart from the video, we also helped sell their merchandises and donated 40 sleeping bags for its educational camps catering to schools. Assoc Prof D’Rozario was generous enough to help us with the initial funding.

We had a ball of a time undertaking this project. Hopefully, we could play a part in protecting our wildlife from mercenary and selfish individuals who are more interested in making a quick buck.”

Visit <http://www.acres.org.sg/> for more information on ACRES.



The Storytelling Way of the Guru

First-year Diploma in Education student teacher Ms Mahirah Mohd Thoimi had a foretaste of teaching in a less conventional 'classroom'. Her Group Endeavours in Service Learning (GESL) project centred on the timeless art of storytelling to her younger charges in a library setting.



“The Gurus had an awesome experience in their service learning. As our name suggests, we played the role as teachers for our service-learning project by collaborating with the National Library Board to conduct storytelling sessions. The exposure that we gained during our contract teaching came in handy for these sessions. In tandem with the Children Asian Festival, we organised several activities that focused on the Asian countries of Mongolia, Japan and the Philippines. “3...2...1...ASIA!” was the name given for this project; simple yet reflective of its content. The designated activities aimed to inculcate different cultural knowledge in children in an interesting and engaging way. These three countries were chosen due to unique aspects of their cultures. With the diverse forms of activities such as art and craft and informative sessions, we had fulfilled the goals of our project.

We divided ourselves into three sub-groups and conducted the storytelling sessions in Tampines, Toa Payoh and Central Library. As a team, we planned the activities and attended to the logistical requirements. We were encouraged by the good turnout and enthusiasm from our young audiences. One of the libraries even requested for an extra session.

GESL had given us an opportunity to make a tangible contribution to society. The project also allowed us as future teachers to realise a meaningful accomplishment which benefited ourselves and the wider community which we live in. We do hope that we will be able to continually commit to more exciting and innovative service-learning initiatives. Perhaps, a project involving the environment may be next on our agenda.”

Voices From Our Children

Mr July Lin chairs the NIE Green Club and is a third-year Bachelor of Arts (Education) student teacher. The club seeks to create awareness of nature's beauty.

“We know that Singapore offers us many natural wonders. But did you know we have people blogging about our natural wonders? One of these voices is a boy named Leshon who has been writing and sharing about nature with others on his blog, <http://leshonlovesnature.blogspot.com/>. Leshon is a voice from our young for our environment and he is not alone.

In January 2008, the NIE Green Club, together with volunteer guides from Naked Hermit Crabs and botanist Mr Joseph Lai, collaborated on a project to expose a group of about 20 home-schooled kids to our shores and introduce them to blogging. The aim of this project was to generate awareness and appreciation of nature in these children and encourage them to share their findings through writing on blogs.

For the exposure to our shores, the kids together with their parents were treated to a guided walk on Changi Beach.

The kids then attended a workshop at NIE where they were taught how to start a blog and were tasked to blog about their trip.



Besides learning a new technical skill, they were naturally excited with being filmed by a crew from Channel NewsAsia, who were producing a programme on personalities working for the environment. *The Little Red Dot*, a paper for primary schools, also published a story on the adventures of the kids at the shore.

On the whole, this project has motivated these kids to write and share their work and not forgetting that they now know our shores are in fact very 'alive'!”

Find the children's blogs at <http://iyor08singapore.blogspot.com/2008/01/seashore-blogging-workshop-for-young.html> and discover 15 fabulous facts about Singapore's shores at <http://wildfilms.blogspot.com/2007/10/15-fabulous-facts-about-singapore.html>.

Visiting Professor to University of Paris-Sorbonne

By Mr Aaron Chong, Public, International & Alumni Relations



Francophone Assoc Prof Wong Tai Chee (Humanities and Social Studies Education) spent a month in December 2007 as a Visiting Professor to the Institute of Geography, University of Paris IV-Sorbonne. After over 10 years of intellectual interactions with its geography professors and graduate students, Assoc Prof Wong was appointed in October 2007 as external adviser, stationed in Singapore, to co-supervise its master's and PhD students' research topics on Southeast Asia where his expertise and knowledge fit in. This appointment, which is not remunerated, is for three years.

During his visit, Assoc Prof Wong took part in the examination of a PhD thesis (far left) and as a member of the candidate's oral defence committee. He also gave two seminars to geography professors and graduate students on *Land Use Change and Urban Development in Singapore* and *The Transport Infrastructure of Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta: A Comparative Study*. As the Institute of Geography's new two-year master's programme requires their students to spend the final semester in a mandatory internship of two to four months, Assoc Prof Wong has been asked to provide assistance to students who opt for Singapore as their base of fieldwork or internship.

On his research agenda, Assoc Prof Wong made site visits with his research counterpart, Prof Olivier Sevin, to the outlying new towns and the Parisian suburban townships where ethnic minorities are highly concentrated. Their joint research topic is tentatively entitled *The Suburban Crisis in France and the Sustainable New Towns in Singapore: A Comparative Study*.

Visiting Research Scholar Appointment at Oxford's Blackfriars

By Mr Aaron Chong, Public, International & Alumni Relations

Asst Prof Jude Chua (Policy and Leadership Studies) was Visiting Research Scholar at Blackfriars Hall of the University of Oxford for the later Hilary Term (late February to March 2008). Blackfriars Hall is a permanent private hall of the university and a leading centre of learning for the thought of Thomas Aquinas. Asst Prof Chua researched and shared his take on Aquinas' account of practical reasons and its relevance for

Herbert A Simon's philosophy of professional education and design theory. He also visited the Centre for Philosophical Psychology at Blackfriars and was invited to attend the annual Aquinas Colloquium organised by the Aquinas Institute at Blackfriars. He joins four other Visiting Scholar appointees for 2007-2008, including the distinguished Thomist scholar Prof Ralph McInerny and Prof Roger Scruton.

Mathematician Invited to Isaac Newton Institute of Mathematical Sciences as Visiting Fellow

By Asst Prof Tay Eng Guan, Mathematics & Mathematics Education

Asst Prof Dong Fengming (Mathematics and Mathematics Education (MME)) has been offered a Visiting Fellowship to the Isaac Newton Institute of Mathematical Sciences of the University of Cambridge to participate in the Combinatorics and Statistical Mechanics programme from 14 January to 4 July 2008.

The programme is intended to build on the cross-fertilisation of combinatorialists, probabilists, computer scientists and theoretical physicists concerned broadly with the study of “probability theory on graphs” or “statistical mechanics on

graphs”. His appointment is considered timely because, among other reasons, methods from mathematical physics are beginning to make their mark on previously intractable combinatorial problems, increasing computer power has brought the possibility of exploration of non-trivial examples, and phase transitions are increasingly being investigated on a wide variety of combinatorial structures, including matroids, set partitions and constraint satisfaction problems, as well as graphs.

Among the 67 Visiting Fellows on this research programme, Asst Prof Dong is the

only one from an Asian university. He brings to the programme his expertise in graph theory, in particular his extensive knowledge and groundbreaking techniques in chromatic polynomials. He has worked in this area for more than a decade and published around 40 papers in international journals. The visit also complements the Academic Research Fund project on graph polynomials which Asst Prof Dong and his MME colleague Asst Prof Tay Eng Guan are working on.

Asst Prof Dong’s visit is divided into two parts: 14 to 25 January 2008, in which he gave an invited talk entitled *On Graphs Whose Chromatic Polynomials Have No Zeros in (1, 2)* and a longer period from 7 April to 26 June 2008, where he will concentrate on working with other top researchers to address some important problems in the field.

When asked about his impression of the Isaac Newton Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Asst Prof Dong remarked, “I found a big blackboard installed in the toilet there instead of a big mirror. They are still using chalk during the talks.” Apparently, substance matters more than appearances in Cambridge.

RESEARCH

Virtual Lab Promotes Safety in Science Experiments

By Mr Aaron Chong, Public, International & Alumni Relations

In collaboration with an NIE academic staff, a group of Raffles Institution students created a virtual laboratory as a tool to educate on lab safety. Teenagers Chan Wei Jian, Benjamin Lau, Joel Low and Wang Dawei partnered Asst Prof Marissa Wettasinghe (Head, Centre for IT in Education (CITE)) in her interest on the use of technology in education, together with Mr Apurva Lawale, a former CITE staff. Eight months of effort birthed *Labbench*, which won a prize in the Asia-Pacific Inforcomm Technology Alliance Awards 2007.

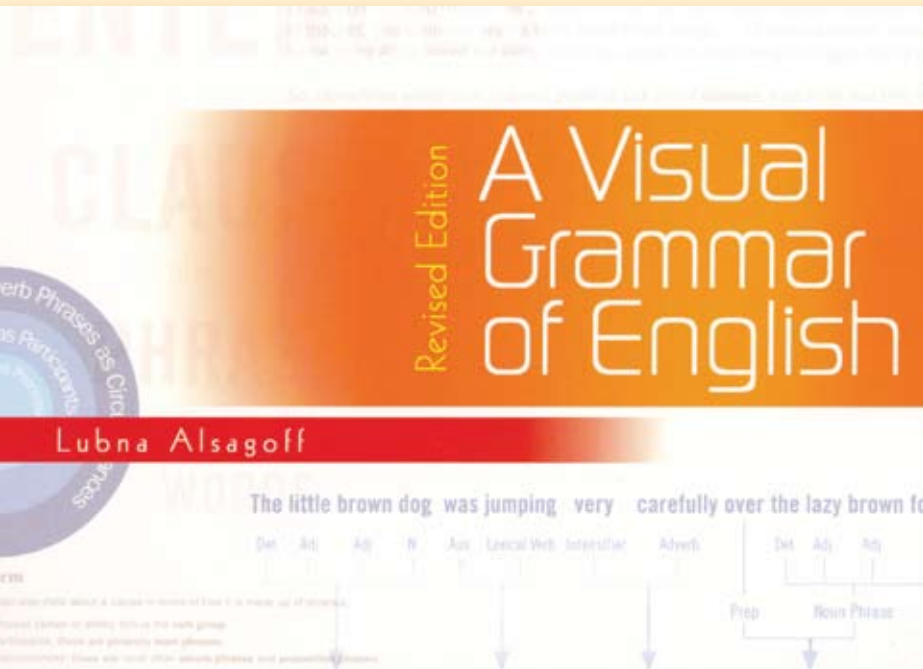
The prize-winning computer software aids in the discovery of scientific outcomes in science experiments without having to physically conduct them. Bearing in mind that this approach is not meant to replace real-life experiments in a lab, *Labbench* works by a quick drag-and-drop action in a virtual two-dimensional chemistry lab. The worst case scenario in this lab is an error message, in place of an explosion should an accidental mix of acid with metal occur. Asst Prof Wettasinghe worked with the students in the conception of the project by providing them guidance in understanding how their

project could value-add current Chemistry lessons. She helped them understand how their end-product could serve the pedagogical needs of the teachers better given the affordances of technology that they could tap on. Mr Lawale assisted the students with the programming components of the project.

Asst Prof Wettasinghe praises her charges on their achievement, “Our local students are clearly innovative. The creation of *Labbench* is but one example of their vast potential. Our expertise in education research can go a long way to facilitate more of such student-centric inventions. The outcomes of such creative projects can extend to very practical solutions for real-world challenges beyond the field of education.”

Notwithstanding *Labbench*’s ease of use and realistic graphics, improvements in the pipeline include a more user-friendly interface for teachers to create further scenarios in the virtual lab without prior computer programming knowledge.

Visual English



Grammar as a subject of study has a bad reputation – associated with an irresistible urge to doze off, with near rigor mortis, and many other kinds of dreadful psychosomatic conditions brought on by sheer boredom!

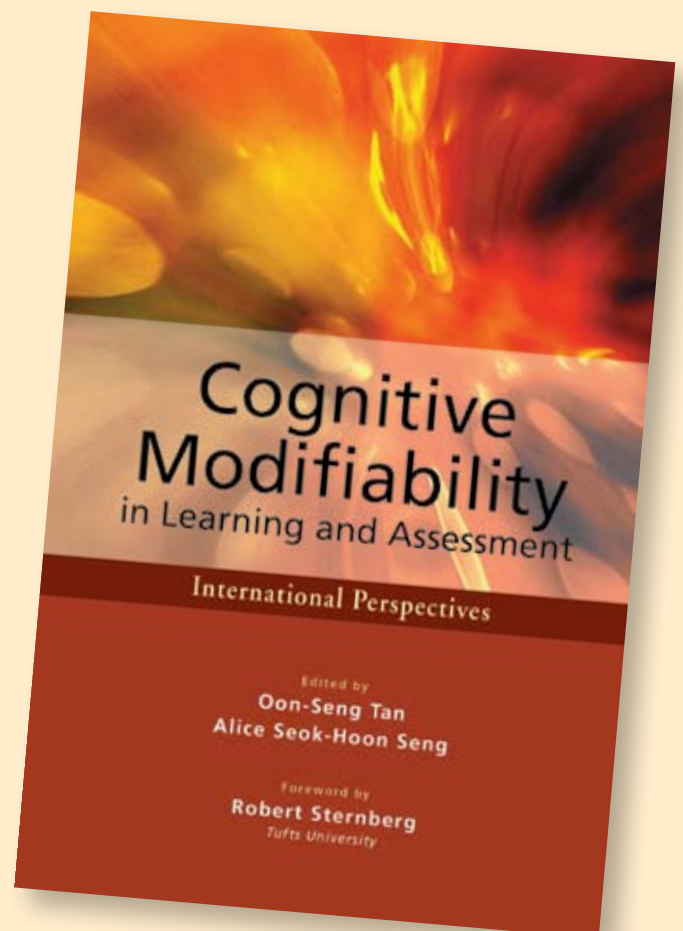
In this book, however, you will see grammar in a different light through the use of easy-to-read charts, diagrams and pictures. Tapping on varying visual thinking tools, the book explains how grammar works in a way that is less abstract and more interesting for parents, teachers and learners.

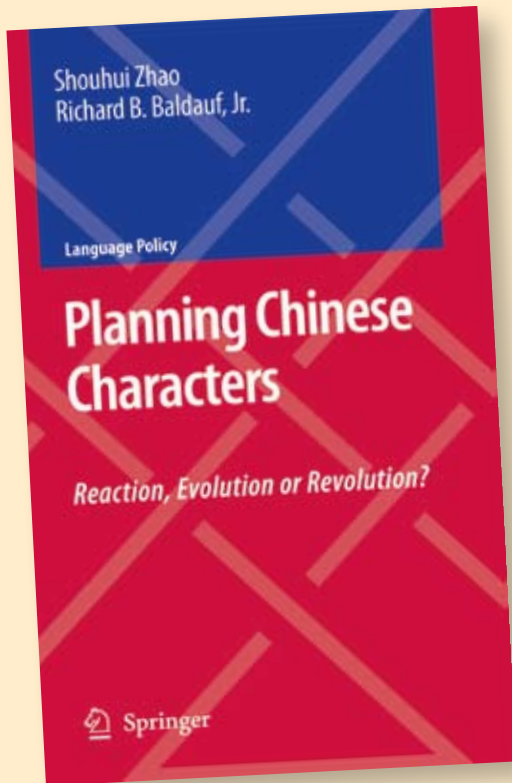
The author of *A Visual Grammar of English* is Assoc Prof Lubna Alsagoff, who heads NIE's English Language and Literature Academic Group.

Cognitive modifiability is a radical concept based on the belief that humans have the rare capacity of becoming modified in a variety of cognitive abilities. They become very adaptive to the changing demands in life situations. This book captures how such positive changes and development can come about in various cognitive modifiability research studies and programmes. It describes innovative and effective approaches grounded in cognitive theories and written to provide valuable information that discusses educational interventions and the dynamic learning process important for academic achievement.

The approach is multidisciplinary with contributions from several well-known research institutions. The discussions are structured under two parts – cognitive modifiability in learning and cognitive modifiability in assessment. Each part provides a set of studies with examples from the laboratory as well as from longitudinal studies. The contributors come from an international pool of highly experienced and qualified researchers and practitioners.

The editors, Assoc Prof Tan Oon Seng and Assoc Prof Alice Seng, are with NIE's Psychological Studies Academic Group. Assoc Prof Tan is head of the academic group.





The Chinese information technology (IT) industry being plagued by the complexities of dealing with the three-millennium-old Chinese orthographic system is well known. This 420-page strong volume provides a broad and in-depth analysis of that conflict. *Planning Chinese Characters: Reaction, Evolution or Revolution?* provides the up-to-date detailed sociolinguistic background needed for understanding changes that have occurred in Chinese characters leading to the current planning emphasis on computerisation and text processing.

The volume is unique in providing a stimulating and critical study of how technology has outstripped political decision-making about language in China. In the past, the focus on technology had been separated from general issues of character development. These two issues are now highly related in society, and this volume brings these research areas together, establishing the interdependent relationships between IT, language planning and the sociopolitical situation.

The book is enhanced by a large number of highly informative vignettes and exercises that are interspersed throughout the text. Furthermore, solutions are suggested to the dilemmas faced by character-based writing systems in their access to and use of modern computer-based systems. Although these may not be acceptable to some scholars, they offer an alternative vista for the struggle of a logographic writing system to survive a digital world, and may thus stimulate scholars to pursue further studies.

Dr Zhao Shouhui is a research associate with the Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice at NIE.

For orders, visit www.springer.com for more information.

World Bank Launches Two Books

In conjunction with the official opening of Leaders in Education and Training for Sustained Growth in Africa (see story on page 15) on 21 January 2008, the launch of two new books was witnessed by the then Education and Manpower Minister of State Gan Kim Yong and Vice President for the Africa Region of the World Bank Ms Obiageli Ezekwesili. Published by the World Bank and NIE, *Toward a Better Future: Education and Training for Economic Development in Singapore since 1965* was co-edited by NIE Director Prof Lee Sing Kong, historian Assoc Prof Goh Chor Boon (Associate Dean, External Programmes), Mr Birger Fredriksen and Ms Tan Jee Peng, Consultant and Education Advisor respectively to the Africa Region of the World Bank, with contributions from academics from the Ministry of Education, Institute of Technical Education, NIE and Nanyang Polytechnic.

Contributors associated with NIE are Dr Ang Wai Hoong, Assoc Prof Goh Chor Boon, Prof S Gopinathan (Associate Dean, Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice), Assoc Prof Koh Thiam Seng (Deputy Director, NIE), Asst Prof David Ng (Associate Dean, Leadership Programmes), Prof Lee Sing Kong and Prof Leo Tan (Natural Sciences and Science Education). The publication provides an analysis of Singapore's education development since independence, focusing on the type of strategic management that has led to its education and training system. Other topics cover the development of vocational technical, polytechnic and university education, teacher education, textbook experience between 1965 and 1997, and digital skills in terms of ICT master planning for the school sector.

The second book entitled *An African Exploration of the East Asian Experience* was edited by Mr Fredriksen and Ms Tan.



Graduating Student Teachers Encouraged to Engage in Lifelong Learning

By Ms Grace Tan, Public, International & Alumni Relations

A cohort of 336 newly-qualified teachers pledged to do their best for today's young minds during the Teachers' Investiture Ceremony held on 16 January 2008 in Nanyang Technological University's Nanyang Auditorium. Most were conferred the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), alongside recipients of diplomas and undergraduate degrees.

In his speech, guest of honour then Minister of State for Education Rear-Admiral (NS) Lui Tuck Yew said to the graduands, "Your graduation today is only the beginning of what I'm sure will be a lifelong adventure in learning and development. As you encourage your students to become lifelong learners and prepare for the changing circumstances and challenges of the future, you should yourselves be role models of continuing learning and growth, both professionally and personally."

Rear-Admiral Lui's encouragement for the graduands to engage in continuing education was echoed by NIE Director Prof Lee Sing Kong. In his speech, Prof Lee urged them to continually update and upgrade their knowledge. He said, "As you set sail in your journey as teachers, I hope that you will return to the harbour of your alma mater at appropriate intervals to re-fuel and replenish your ship. With our wide range of professional development courses, I am sure there will be no shortage of programmes that will meet your needs."

Prizes and awards were presented to outstanding graduands. The valedictorian Mr Teo Cheng Yap was awarded the Justice Choor Singh Gold Medal for best performance in the Education Studies component of the PGDE, including a distinction in practicum as well as the Association of Mathematics Educators Book Prize for best performance in the teaching of mathematics component. In his valedictory speech, Cheng Yap acknowledged that the Values, Skills and Knowledge framework offered by NIE to all student teachers had prepared them well for their role as teachers. In his concluding remarks, Cheng Yap said, "Let us not forget that on a daily basis, we, as teachers, strive to make a difference the lives of our students, instil hope for their dreams and support for their worthiness."



Then Education Minister of State Lui Tuck Yew (left) congratulates valedictorian Teo Cheng Yap



Besides these winners, two graduands deserve special mention. Ms Goh Poh Ling (far left) from the PGDE cohort overcame difficulties and graduated successfully despite having to miss most lessons due to a serious traffic accident that she was involved in. Poh Ling was bedridden and suffered from persistent headache for an extended period of time. Despite these challenges, Poh Ling was able to complete her assignments with good grades. Mdm Penny Chong Chew Luan (left), who also graduated with a PGDE, is visually-impaired but demonstrated that her physical impairment posed no difficulty in achieving her goal of becoming a teacher. She is a

stellar example for all student teachers and she looks forward to share her own experiences and encourage visually-impaired young people. Read more of her inspiring story in *Visually-Impaired Teacher Succeeds Against All Odds*.

Visually-Impaired Teacher Succeeds Against All Odds

By Ms Jolene Tan, Public, International & Alumni Relations

Visually-impaired since the age of nine has never wavered Mdm Penny Chong's determination in fulfilling her ambition of becoming a teacher. Penny recently graduated with a Postgraduate Diploma in Education in January 2008 and has since been serving at her alma mater, Ahmad Ibrahim Secondary School (AISS).

Penny is a resource teacher and together with two other colleagues, they oversee a group of 18 visually-impaired students at AISS. These students attend regular classroom lessons with the

Inaugural Cohort of Management & Leadership in Schools Graduates

By Ms Kamsina Alfia Bte Jumari, Public, International & Alumni Relations

On 24 January 2008, 160 teachers and educators received their Management and Leadership in Schools (MLS) certificates after successfully completing the four-month programme. The graduation ceremony was graced by Mr Winston James Hodge, Director of Training and Development Division, Ministry of Education.

The MLS programme, previously known as the Diploma in Departmental Management, places special emphasis on collaborative learning and aims to develop middle-level leaders to expand their roles beyond departments and assume direct leadership for teaching and learning.

There were two award recipients during the graduation ceremony. Ms Yeo Young Muay (above, left), Level Head of English at Kranji Primary School, was presented the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Book Prize, awarded to the



participant who exemplifies the highest level of learning across the MLS Programme.

Another award recipient, Ms Chan Wai Yee (above, right), Subject Head of Mathematics at St Andrew's Junior College, was presented the Dr Ruth Wong Medal for Best Overall Performance in the MLS programme. In her speech, Ms Chan said that through the MLS programme, she and her classmates had learnt invaluable lessons on leadership and management, curriculum design, marketing, alternative assessments, coaching, staff appraisal and many other topics. The programme provided an opportunity for her to venture beyond her comfort zone – she was enlightened by the wealth of experiences shared by her lecturers, tutors and course mates. They had also learnt the best practices of schools from a wide spectrum comprising mainstream schools, niche schools and specialised schools such as NUS High School of Mathematics and Science, NorthLight School, madrasahs, Singapore Sports School and the Prison School.

rest of their classmates but are exempted from subjects such as Physical Education and Home Economics. They visit the resource room, which is a specially designated facility for their use. Penny and her colleagues provide assistance to these students in their studies and at the same time, counsel those who require a listening ear. "Even though my majors in university were English and History, I have to help the students in most other subjects such as Mathematics, Science and Geography. I am constantly learning on the job to gain subject knowledge so that I can better assist my charges," said Penny.



A normal day in school for Penny will see her working either on the Braille or the laptop, helping subject teachers convert normal teaching materials into Braille for the visually-impaired students. When these students submit their assignments in Braille, she will convert them into text format for the subject teachers to mark. "Our greatest challenge

is when the teaching materials contain many diagrams and graphics as the Optical Character Recognition machine is unable to recognise them. We would therefore need to spend time explaining the diagrams to the students, which is not an easy task due to their inability to visualise. Learning how to do so is one of the many important skills that we hope to impart to these students," shares Penny.

NIE has left a deep impression on Penny during her year-long study stint. She said, "I was touched by the caring spirit displayed by my classmates and staff of NIE. One of my teachers, Mr Alexius Chia (English Language and Literature), made a special effort to read out every single word on his slides so that I could follow during lesson time. As I was still breastfeeding my daughter while studying at NIE, the administrative staff made special room arrangements for me to express my milk in-between lessons. I was indeed impressed and grateful for all these gracious efforts."

Building Educational Bridges of Innovation & Excellence

By Mr Aaron Chong, Public, International & Alumni Relations

Thirty principals from Singapore and Malaysia received their certificates after successfully completing the week-long Building Educational Bridges: Innovation for School Leadership Programme (BEB) on 20 March 2008. The closing ceremony at Nanyang Technological University's Nanyang Executive Centre was witnessed by Singapore's Director-General of Education, Ms Seah Jiak Choo.

Mr Mazlan Bin Samsudin, Head of Department for Research at the Institut Aminuddin Baki, presents a token-of-appreciation to Ms Seah Jiak Choo, Director-General of Education



The collaborative programme, co-funded by the education ministries of Singapore and Malaysia, focused on innovation and change, sustaining innovation and managing resources, aimed to improve understanding of both educational systems and the context for leadership and its challenges, generate ideas on innovation and change for school improvement, and define routes for sustaining school leadership and innovation. BEB was conducted at NIE and Institut Aminuddin Baki (also known as Educational Management and Leadership Institute, a division of Malaysia's Ministry of Education).

NIE Director Prof Lee Sing Kong touched on the significance of the principals' learning journey, "At a time when complex educational

problems require inter-agencies solutions, this programme is timely to link two countries together. We have brought together two institutions, involved two ministries, and travelled more than 400km." Prof Lee urged the participants to celebrate differences, "for in diversity there is abundance of views and perspectives that only can add richness to our knowledge and understanding."

Ms Seah added, "I am sure that you have found the exchanges and sharing useful in helping you construct new knowledge and examine new possibilities. Equally priceless would be the friendships formed and the deeper collaborations that would continue between schools long after the programme has ended."

CONFERENCES & SEMINARS

Home Economics Symposium

By Ms Jasmine Kaur, Bartley Secondary School, NIE Diploma in Home Economics Education, 2006

The Association of Home Economists Singapore and NIE held its second Home Economics Symposium on 7 March 2008 at NIE. The theme was *Home Economics as a Foundation for Human Capital Development*.

Guest of honour NIE Director Prof Lee Sing Kong made numerous observations on the powerful role of home economics education in providing a foundation for the young generation. Keynote speaker Dr Tahira Hira (Executive Secretary to the President of Iowa State University) spoke on the *Changing Agenda of Home Economics: Preparing Consumers for Globalisation and Consumer Education: Programmes by Extension and National Organisations*. Dr Hira was recently appointed by American President George W Bush as a member of the Advisory Council on Financial Literacy.

Participants were reminded of the mission and meaning of home economics, which stands for today's ideal home life, unhampered by traditions of the past; the utilisation of all resources of modern science to improve home life; the freedom of the home from the dominance of things and their due subordination to ideals; and the simplicity

in material surroundings which will most free the spirit for the more important and permanent interests of the home and of society (Richards, 1915). The important role of home economics in developing human capital was aptly highlighted by Dr Hira as "the only profession that focuses on the holistic development of the individual in a family and its near environment".

Prof Leo Tan (Natural Sciences and Science Education) provided his insights from his vast experience as an educator. The variety of topics – Dr Bervyn Lee (Director, Youth Sports Development, Singapore Sports Council) on the role of sports in developing human capital, Dr Wong Mun Loke (Deputy Director, Youth Health Division, Health Promotion Board) on health promotion programme evaluation and Asst Prof Vesa J Kangaslahti (Nanyang Technopreneurship Centre) on how marketing and entrepreneurial skills could be developed through this subject – provided a philosophical discussion and a repertoire of skills and strategies for practitioners on the role of home economics in human capital development. As a roundup, experts from the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Planning and Development Division introduced strategies for home economics educators.

International Conference on Teaching & Learning with Technology 2008

The Ministry of Education, Singapore and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) will jointly organise the International Conference on Teaching and Learning with Technology (iCTLT) biennially from 2008. ISTE is the organisation that hosts the premier National Educational Computing Conference annually in the USA.

The inaugural iCTLT 2008 will be held on 5 and 6 August 2008 at Suntec City and the theme is *Learning, Leading, Innovating*. iCTLT 2008 will focus on effective and innovative practices on the use of ICT for teaching and learning, issues and trends related to ICT in education as well as school and teacher leadership to drive ICT implementation in schools. It will provide opportunities for sharing and networking among local and overseas school leaders, education researchers, classroom practitioners and industry leaders across the Asia-Pacific region and around the world.

For more information, logon to www.ictlt.com or contact info@ictlt.com.



iCTLT International Conference on Teaching and Learning with Technology
Learning Leading Innovating
 5 - 6 August 2008, Suntec Singapore

Call for Proposals • Login here

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Welcome to iCTLT 2008!

This International Conference on Teaching and Learning with Technology (or iCTLT) is jointly organized by the Singapore's Ministry of Education (MOE) and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). ISTE is the organization that hosts the premier NECC (for National Educational Computing Conference) annually in the U.S.

The inaugural programme of iCTLT 2008 will focus on teaching and learning practices for engaging and effective digital-age education. It will feature education leaders, education researchers, classroom practitioners and industry leaders across the Asia-Pacific Region and around the world.

Don't miss out on this exciting event! You will have an enriching opportunity to learn, share and network with the 2000 participants at the conference.

We look forward to seeing you in Singapore in August 2008.

Co-chairs
Bai Choo Lee
 Assistant Director, MOE
Don Knezek
 Chief Executive Officer, ISTE

Updates: Online registration is now open.
 Call for Proposals • Submissions will be accepted online from February 2008 to 31 March 2008

Organised by: Ministry of Education (Singapore) | Supported by: ISTE International Society for Technology in Education | iDA | NIE | Held in: Singapore | UNIQUELY Singapore

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APERA CONFERENCE 2008

Educational Research for Innovation & Quality in Education

The Asia-Pacific Educational Research Association (APERA), NIE and Educational Research Association of Singapore (ERAS) will jointly host the APERA Conference 2008, to be held in NIE, Singapore from 26 to 28 November 2008. This conference will see the gathering of researchers from renowned educational research associations worldwide to discuss important issues of standards of education research, impact of educational research on policies and capacity building for educational research, particularly in developing nations. The event will provide an excellent platform for the meeting of peoples across continents as educators and researchers in the Asia and Pacific regions and internationally, congregate to learn, engage and develop new ideas to bring about quality in educational research, policy and practice.

Keynote speakers include Prof Julian Elliott, Durham University, UK, Prof Colin N Power, Chair of Commonwealth Consortium of Education and former Deputy-Director General of UNESCO, Prof Yin Cheong Cheng and Prof Magdalena Mo-Ching Mok, Hong Kong Institute of Education, Prof Eva L Baker, University of California Los Angeles Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, USA, Prof Bienvenido F Nebres, Ateneo de Manila University, the Philippines, Prof David Tzuriel, Bar Ilan University, Israel and Dr Felice J Levine, Executive Director of American Educational Research Association.

Conference strands, guidelines on the submission of proposals and abstracts, and other useful information are available at <http://www.apera08.org>. Submissions are expected by 31 May 2008.

Queensland University Academic Shares on Language Planning & Policy

By Dr Zhao Shouhui, Centre for Research in Pedagogy & Practice

Prof Richard B Baldauf Jr from The University of Queensland, Australia delivered two lectures at NIE on 25 January 2008. The event was organised by the Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice and Policy and Leadership Studies Academic Group. Prof Baldauf is renowned for his work in language planning and policy in numerous countries. He sits on many editorial boards and is actively involved as an external academic reviewer in several universities. He received the Excellence in Research Higher Degree Supervision Award from The University of Queensland in 2007.

The lectures focused on the theoretical and practical aspects of teacher-based curriculum as well as recent and future directions of language and policy development. More specifically, the former examined how teachers (teaching English as a foreign language) combined the theories of teaching with contextual limitations in developing teaching materials for their own schools. The latter looked at the historical, structure, frameworks, goals and issues in language planning and policy.

Science Education Symposium Honours C N Yang's 85th Birthday

By Prof Xu Shuyan, Natural Sciences & Science Education



Prof Michael Fisher



Prof Walter Kohn

In conjunction with a conference in honour of Physics Nobel Laureate C N Yang's 85th birthday, a Science Education Symposium was held in Hwa Chong Institution's auditorium on 2 November 2007. The event was jointly organised by NIE and Institute of Advanced Studies and sponsored by Singapore's Ministry of Education (MOE).

Attended by more than 200 participants, including science teachers and students from 14 junior colleges and secondary schools, NIE staff, MOE officials and overseas delegates, the occasion provided a rare opportunity for teachers and students to learn from some of the best known scientists' knowledge and experiences. On behalf of the ministry, Prof Leo Tan (Natural Sciences and Science Education) officiated the opening and chaired the first session of the symposium. NIE Director Prof Lee Sing Kong chaired a subsequent session.

The keynote speaker was Prof Walter Kohn, who won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1998. His talk featured excerpts from *Power of the Sun*, a new documentary on solar electricity, which he executive-produced. Prof Kohn and Prof Alan Heeger, who produced the film, use this

film as the heart of their outreach programme for students, teachers, policymakers and the public – a “morality tale” about solar electric power. Prof Kohn also hopes the programme will open more eyes to a career in science. “We want to motivate young people and show them what wonderful opportunities science can bring.”

This was followed by a presentation by Prof Michael Fisher, University of Maryland, USA on *Pictures, Models, Approximations and Reality: Phase Transitions and Our Understanding of the Physical World*.

After a short tea break, the symposium continued with Prof Kerson Huang of Massachusetts Institute of Technology who spoke on *Frontiers of Science in the 21st Century*. The final talk entitled *Matter-Antimatter Interactions and Their Applications* was delivered by Prof Igor Bray, Deputy Director of ARC Centre for Antimatter-Matter Studies, Curtin University of Technology, Australia.

The programme ended with a question-and-answer session and concluding remarks from Prof Lee.

African Nations Take a Leaf Out of Singapore's Book in Education

By Mr Aaron Chong, Public, International & Alumni Relations

About 75 delegates from the African nations of Ghana, Madagascar and Mozambique were on a study trip to Singapore – jointly organised by the World Bank, Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Enterprise, Singapore from 21 January to 1 February 2008 – to learn more about the Republic's 40-year experience in developing its educational system.

They participated in the Leaders in Education and Training for Sustained Growth in Africa (LETSGA) workshop, conducted by the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) and NIE. The programme also included site visits to ITE, NIE, Nanyang Polytechnic and schools. Discussions centred on strategic leadership, school management systems, curriculum development and delivery, resource management and development.

LETSGA presents an opportunity for delegates to understand the nature of visionary and strategic leadership in building skills for economic growth using Singapore's development experience, acquire practical skills and knowledge to improve education and training in their own countries, and establish contacts with counterpart institutions in Singapore for future collaboration in areas of mutual interest.

In conjunction with LETSGA's official opening, the World Bank launched two books (see page 9 for more details).

Reflections

Two participants share their insights on LETSGA after attending the leadership track of the programme.

Mr Andry Razafindrazaka is Advisor in the Office of the President of the Republic of Madagascar. He advises policy makers on strategic areas of development, specifically on infrastructure, education and economy.

Ms Antuía Soverano is Provincial Director of Education and Culture, Cabo Delgado in Mozambique. She worked as a Geography and History teacher and has been in the field of education since 1990. Her current duties include implementing strategic plans in education and culture, and ensuring the quality of education across all levels.

What were your impressions of Singapore and her teacher education system?

Mr Razafindrazaka: I was most impressed by the behaviour of Singaporeans. Everything seems to be in its right place and the people's mindset seems to be receptive to new ideas all the time.



The education system is very powerful and translates the political will to give priority to human resources. The teacher education system provides opportunities for personnel development and tools for education. NIE will play a critical role in transforming teachers into an expert of education and also an agent of change in the education system of the future.

Ms Soverano: I was so impressed with Singapore's education system and NIE. During our visits to the educational institutions, I observed that each school had its own pedagogical project, which guides the school in developing an action plan based on its mission, vision and values.

What might some highlights of LETSGA be?

Mr Razafindrazaka: I consider LETSGA as the beginning of an initiative to introduce the world in a new age of education evolution. The highlight is the integrated leadership tools which transit between a traditional way of acquiring knowledge and the future way of building a dynamic and universal education system. Leadership completes the adaptation of the teaching mechanism in all kinds of environment and at all levels.

Ms Soverano: Some years ago, I participated in a similar programme, organised by the World Bank in the USA. In comparison with that experience at Harvard University, LETSGA was more useful due largely to the school visits. These visits allowed us to meet school management and see how they conducted and promoted leadership. The pillar of success of any education system is combining theory with practice.

How did you benefit from LETSGA in relation to your own country's educational system?

Mr Razafindrazaka: The programme taught me how to introduce new concepts of education in a poor country. Besides material resources, community involvement is another important factor that could make a difference between schools.

Ms Soverano: Despite coming from different realities, I learnt that whatever responsibilities we undertake, we must do so with professionalism, discipline and efficiency. We are planning to introduce in some schools, albeit on a small scale, training for principals so that they can be adequately equipped to discuss with their stakeholders issues related to the future of their schools.

We cannot underscore enough the importance of a career path for a school principal and his deputy as they play such a critical role in school management and leadership. The synergy between the government and private sectors is also crucial in the robust development of education in Singapore.

Chief Executive of Britain's School Leadership College Visits NIE

By Asst Prof Ng Pak Tee, Policy & Leadership Studies



Mr Steve Munby (far left with NIE Director Prof Lee Sing Kong), Chief Executive of National College for School Leadership (NCSL), UK, visited NIE on 5 January 2008. He was accompanied by Ms Susan Douglas (Consultant to NCSL and British Council), Mrs Eunice Crook (Director, British Council) and Ms Sandra Bodestynne (Programme Manager, British Council). After a warm welcome by Prof Lee Sing Kong and Prof Paul Teng (Dean, Graduate Programmes and Research), the delegation was briefed on NIE's leadership programmes and given a tour of the Classroom of the Future. Prof Lee, Prof Teng and Mr Munby exchanged views on education leadership and the innovations in school leadership development programmes. They also discussed plans for collaboration in such leadership programmes that would involve participants from both Singapore and the UK, and explored the possibilities of joint research between the institute and NCSL.

HAPPENINGS

Teach Less, Learn More in Action

By Ms Jolene Tan, Public, International & Alumni Relations

Dendrobium Nanyang (above), the official flower of the Nanyang Technological University, was created by a team of students and teachers from Temasek Primary School as part of its Orchid Hybridisation Programme (OHP), developed by Assoc Prof Chia Tet Fatt (Natural Sciences and Science Education). Since then, the scope of OHP has broadened at the school. Assoc Prof Chia conducts periodic training for its teachers to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to guide their charges in orchid hybridisation, which is an integral component of the primary six life sciences curriculum.



The OHP has been such a success at Temasek Primary that the programme features as a staple

during school events such as *Temasek Magicland* – a day when the school is transformed into a huge learning centre. Assoc Prof Chia said, "Some school teachers are so smitten by the OHP that they have made it their interest and hobby and are even cultivating orchids at home." He added, "While working together with the teachers of Temasek Primary, I am also getting nuggets of new information and learning together with them, and I am glad to see how quickly the programme has grown, how much the students have learnt and enjoyed and bore so many new hybrids along the way. This is truly *Teach Less, Learn More* in action!"

Besides the OHP being a part of the school's life sciences curriculum, all primary five pupils are also required to undertake an aeroponics project, using the technology developed by NIE Director Prof Lee Sing Kong.

These collaborative efforts between NIE and schools illustrate that teacher education does not end when student teachers leave the doors of the institute.



PGDELT – a Cooperative Effort Between China & Singapore

By Asst Prof Ramona Tang, English Language & Literature

This year's selection test for the 2008 intake of Chinese scholars for NIE's Postgraduate Diploma in English Language Teaching (PGDELT) programme was successfully conducted in Xi'an, China, from 2 to 7 March 2008.

Aimed at providing college and university lecturers from China with opportunities for professional development in the area



(From left) Mr Pei Denghua (Project Officer in charge of the PGDELT programme, CSC), Assoc Prof Lubna Alsagoff, Ms Wei Li (Deputy Director, Division of Cooperation & Consultancy, CSC) & Asst Prof Ramona Tang

of English language teaching, the PGDELT programme is an inter-governmental cooperative effort between China and Singapore that has been running for 24 years. The feedback from the participants of this programme has been very positive over the years, with about 700 PGDELT graduates working in universities across China.

This year, Assoc Prof Lubna Alsagoff (Head, English Language and Literature) and Asst Prof Ramona Tang (Coordinator, PGDELT programme) were in Xi'an to conduct the selection test and, while there, were hosted most hospitably by the Xi'an International Studies University and the China Scholarship Council (CSC).

A total of 86 candidates, shortlisted by the CSC, travelled to Xi'an from provinces all round China to participate in the selection test, which consisted of a listening test, a written test and an interview.

The 35 Chinese scholars who are offered the Singapore Ministry of Education PGDELT scholarship this year are expected to arrive in NIE for the new semester in July 2008.

Small Beginnings

By the Centre for Research in Pedagogy & Practice

On 11 January 2008, a small mix of staff gathered at NIE's Lecture Theatre 6 for a simple lunch party. This small celebration marked the fifth anniversary of the Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice (CRPP).

For all present, the event brought new meaning to the saying, "Do not despise the day of small beginnings." It was, perhaps, not unlike a similar assorted party that had gathered nearby not so long ago, except that the numbers have swelled more than tenfold in that short span of five years.

There was a touch of nostalgia as Professors Lee Sing Kong, Leo Tan, David Hogan and S Gopinathan, all of whom had been involved with the centre from its earliest days, recounted CRPP's humble beginnings.

It is "no small feat", remarked Prof Gopinathan, that we have come this far. Citing achievements that have put CRPP in the "international firmament of research

institutions", he added: "In some sense, we have arrived ... we are a benchmark for other institutions and given our age, I think we can all be very proud of this achievement." It was also "no small sum" that the Ministry of Education had invested in this endeavour. As Prof Lee and Prof Tan reminisced about the 48-page document that helped begin to realise a lofty dream, the contributions of each staff member – from the administration to the leadership – were also acknowledged.

In particular, a special mention was made by Prof Tan and Prof Hogan of Mrs Belinda Teo's role in the centre's administration. Always preferring to remain in the background, she was applauded for playing a critical part in supporting and uniting CRPP's people and day-to-day operations.

A retelling of CRPP's history, however, would not be complete without honouring one man. "There is one other person, absent but not forgotten, and that's Prof Allan Luke," said Prof Gopinathan of the centre's



CRPP Turns Five (from left): Associate Dean of Centre for Research in Pedagogy & Practice Prof S Gopinathan, NIE Director Prof Lee Sing Kong, Dean of Office of Education Research Prof David Hogan & immediate past NIE Director Prof Leo Tan

founding dean, a sentiment echoed by the other three professors. "I think we need to credit Allan with enabling CRPP to transit from a document, a vision, into a reality."

But a busy research centre never has time to rest on its laurels. As Prof Lee aptly pronounces, "I hope that in the next five years, when we celebrate the 10th anniversary, we will have achievements that we can truly take greater pride in, and that would truly be a cause for celebration."

A Day at the Kranji Countryside

By Staff Welfare Committee, Mathematics & Mathematics Education

Networking is about communicating and bonding relationships. On 17 November 2007, the Mathematics and Mathematics Education (MME) Academic Group's Staff Welfare Committee organised a half-day tour to one of the nature outskirts of Singapore – the western region of Kranji countryside.

The intention was to build better relationships among staff and family members as well as to promote a healthier lifestyle.



Among the 32 participants who took part in this activity was invited guest Prof Shen Dandan, a visiting scholar from Ningbo University, Zhejiang, China.

The excursion included stopovers at the Haydairies Goat Farm, Hausmann Aquarium, the Jurong Frog Farm and the Fire Flies Health Farm (above).

The participants felt that the outing was a meaningful occasion to get to know each

other's family and for children of colleagues to interact among themselves.

One of the participants highlighted that the event enabled him to relax in a comfortable coach while having a great time with his family members.

Prof Shen highlighted that she enjoyed the warm hospitality and most importantly, she appreciated the family spirit and camaraderie very much.



All Hail the King of Fruits

By Asst Prof Shawn Lum, Natural Sciences & Science Education

In Singapore, they often go by various Chinese epithets – *mau shan wang* (mountain cat king), *qing zhu* (green bamboo), *hong xia* (red prawn), *hei zhen zhu* (black pearl), *jin feng* (golden Phoenix) – or by slightly less alluring alphanumeric designations such as XO, D2, D13 or D24. If you do not recognise these immediately, chances are you have only recently arrived in Singapore or are culturally oblivious, for these names represent different cultivated varieties of durians, the stuff of frugivorous dreams (or nightmares).

Whenever you see suddenly appearing from out of forest undergrowth along Nanyang Avenue, pushing bicycles with bulging plastic bags dangling from handlebars, tied to the back or stuffed into baskets up front, there can only be one implication – durian season has arrived. The season will have arrived at NIE, too, for the institute has its own patch of durians behind Science Block, the remnant of a former fruit orchard.

Prof Gan Yik Yuen (Natural Sciences and Science Education), who has studied the finer points of durian biology, is helping to uncover the genetic secrets of the King of Fruits.

NIE durians are not the fancy designer-brand kinds that sell for outrageous prices at Geylang. They are the salt of the earth, old fashioned, evocative type – *kampung* durians. The kind that the forefathers knew; not grafted, not cloned, but planted from seeds as Nature intended them to be. They may lack the nuanced aromas, flavours and textures of their upmarket Geylang cousins but the humble *kampung* durian has something much more precious, qualities that educators can relate to – diversity and the ability to surprise. They are not mass-customised products but the type where every tree produces a different flavoured fruit, each with its own character, idiosyncratic, occasionally disappointing but never boring.

Unveiling of Olympic Mural Ignites Olympic Spirit

By Assoc Prof Teo-Koh Sock Miang, Principal, Singapore Olympic Academy & Mr Aaron Chong, Public, International & Alumni Relations

A list of who's who from the local and international Olympic fraternity convened in NIE on 5 April 2008 to witness the unveiling of the Singapore Olympic Academy's (SOA) Olympic Mural by Dr Jacques Rogge, eighth President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Dr Rogge was accompanied by Mr Ng Ser Miang, Chairman of Singapore Youth Olympic Games (YOG) 2010 Organising Committee and the legendary Sergei Bubka, current Men's Pole Vault world record holder and gold medalist at the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games. Dr Rogge and his delegation were in Singapore to sign the inaugural YOG 2010 Host City contract between IOC and the Singapore Government.

Displayed at NIE's Physical Education Block, the SOA-commissioned mural is an art glass mural designed and created by Dr Elsie Yu. The mural is sponsored by Mr Zhong Sheng Jian, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Yanlord Land Group Limited. The Olympic Mural is a tribute to Singapore's sporting heroes for bringing glory to the nation in their quest for sporting excellence.

During his stopover at Nanyang Technological University, Dr Rogge's special touch left a deep impression on the many youth runners from Admiralty, Canberra and Woodgrove Secondary Schools, who participated in the ceremony. The runners were inspired by his personal call for them to be involved with the YOG. The IOC delegation also toured the university's hostels, which may be used if the planned Games Village at the National University of Singapore is not ready for the YOG 2010 Games. At the end of his official visit, Dr Rogge gave Singapore the thumbs up for the nation's enthusiasm and sporting facilities available for YOG 2010.



Hosts NIE Director Prof Lee Sing Kong (left) & NTU Provost Prof Bertil Andersson (second from right) present a token-of-appreciation to IOC President Dr Jacques Rogge (centre) after he unveils the Olympic Spirit, fashioned by Dr Elsie Yu (second from left) & watched on by Mr Ng Ser Miang (right), Chairman of Singapore Youth Olympic Games 2010 Organising Committee

The SOA, set up in 1994 as the educational arm of the Singapore National Olympic Council and incorporated in NIE's Physical Education and Sports Science Academic Group (PESS), aims to promote Olympic studies and education in Singapore schools and within the wider community through its International Annual Academic Sessions and school-based projects. The academy is run by an executive committee, headed by its Principal Assoc Prof Teo-Koh Sock Miang (PESS).

OLYMPIC SPIRIT

**CITIUS
SWIFTER**

**ALTIUS
HIGHER**

**FORTIUS
STRONGER**

This art glass mural depicts the noble Olympic Spirit. The 15 iconic images encapsulate Singaporeans' sporting aspirations. Their vision of striving towards excellence is symbolically represented by a glowing bronze flame. The energy generated is delicately illustrated with layers of shimmering glass against a backdrop of glittering mosaic components of exotic youthful colours. A sea of bright red and gold emerges as the unifying factor in the singular determination and mission, as well as the harmony generated from the diversity of continuous effort, in reaching towards higher ideals.

Caring Teacher Awards 2008

By Mr Aaron Chong, Public, International & Alumni Relations

The seventh Caring Teacher Awards will be jointly organised by NIE and ExxonMobil Asia Pacific Pte. Ltd., with support from the Ministry of Education.

The awards, inaugurated in 1996, are aimed at acknowledging and rewarding school teachers who exemplify the values of caring, sharing and concern for the academic, moral, social, emotional and mental welfare of their students.

The criteria for nominees are:

- Be full-time teachers in a primary school, secondary school or a junior college/centralised institute in Singapore;
- Have at least three years teaching experience in Singapore; and
- Demonstrate exemplary character, initiative, integrity, altruism and a proven record of service to their schools and students.

While effective teaching leading to excellent examination results will be considered, the emphasis of the awards is on the humanitarian qualities of the teaching profession.

An award ceremony will be held at year-end to recognise the caring attributes of one primary school, one secondary school and one junior college/centralised institute teacher. These awards will be used for the teachers' personal and professional development.



Significance of ASEAN in These Changing Times

By Ms Aisha Farhana, Chairperson, ASEAN Club, NIE

With support from Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA) co-organised a live radio show with Campus on 938LIVE to discuss "What Does ASEAN Mean to You?" on 25 January 2008 at 9.00am.

The show was held at NIE's Student Hub with 50 student teachers from the Bachelor of Arts Club, ASEAN Club and the United Nations Students' Association as the blithe

and engaging audience. The distinguished panelists were Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Manpower Mr Hawazi Daipi (seated, third from left), SIIA Council Member Mr Collin Tseng-Liu, Prof Goh Kim Chuan (Associate Dean, Student Development and Liaison, NIE) and Ms Aisha Farhana (Chairperson, ASEAN Club, NIE).

Facilitated by host Mr Daniel Martin, the panel commented on the meaning of ASEAN, its economic sphere and

political significance, and how to relate the regional organisation to the youth community. There were also comments and questions from the audience attributing economic disparities in ASEAN as a major factor impeding its integration and how education could serve as a platform in expediting this process. The need for creating a youth culture through common understanding fused with strong cultural roots was also amongst the other exigent discussions.

NIE Collaborates with National Library Board on Malay Studies

By Mdm Kartini Bte Anwar, Asian Languages & Cultures

In its constant search for ways to stimulate scholarship, research and teacher education in Malay Studies, the Malay Language and Culture Division (MLC) within the Asian Languages and Cultures Academic Group (ALC) recently established a collaborative relationship with the National Library Board (NLB) to organise a series of programmes for 2008. Two NIE-NLB collaborative projects and the inaugural edition of MLC's e-journal, *e-Utama*, were launched at NLB on 29 February 2008 in the presence of guests of honour Prof Paul Teng (Dean, Graduate Programmes and Research, NIE) and NLB Chief Executive Dr N Varaprasad.

In his speech, Prof Teng expressed his appreciation of the efforts made by MLC in its attempt to position NIE as a distinguished world class centre for the Malay language, literature and culture education. MLC has established new working strategies by initiating links with local and external institutions by fostering an academic and professional network to achieve this goal.

Renowned for its established knowledge infrastructure as an information hub, NLB will undertake these collaborative projects

as part of *Arena: Bahasa and Budaya*, a channel which promotes a diversity of Malay programmes in the library for the Malay community. The channel is expected to equip the Malay community with life skills and knowledge in adapting to global challenges while retaining its unique identity, language and culture.

The two joint programmes of NIE-NLB – *Jalanan Budi* Seminar Series and Book Discussion Series – aim to spotlight Malay topics and discourse in the region and internationally. The *Jalanan Budi* Seminar Series provides a platform to stimulate intellectual exchange among scholars and generate interest and inquiry in the Malay language, literature and culture. Topics cover education, teaching community, language, literature and social dynamics in the context of Singapore's Malay community. The Book Discussion Series serves as an arena for readers and writers to discuss recently-published works and reviews by experts in the relevant fields.

The biannual *e-Utama* is an internationally reviewed journal, which brings together practitioners and academics from all areas of Malay Studies. Visit <http://mlcd.myplace.nie.edu.sg/e-utama.html> for more information.