

*Blended
learning*

*Learning in
the new normal*



**LEARNING
DIFFERENTLY,
LEADING
CHANGE**

CONTENT

02 FEATURE STORY

02 *The Rise of Blended Learning in the New Normal*

04 PEOPLE

- 04 *Teaching and Learning Mother Tongue Languages*
- 10 *When Your Passion Is Your Profession: Working with Language for a Living*
- 14 *Studying through Crisis*
- 17 *Home Away From Home (Covid-19 Edition)*
- 18 *Where Do We Go From Here?*



LEARNING DIFFERENTLY, LEADING CHANGE is a half-yearly publication, published by GPL. All rights reserved.

No part of this newsletter may be reproduced in any form or by any means without written permission from the publisher.

Disclaimer: All information is correct as at time of print and is subject to change without prior notice.



20 NIE GSC HAPPENINGS

20 *Towards a Cohesive Graduate Student Community*

22 REFLECTIONS LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMES

22 *Management and Leadership in Schools (MLS) Programme*

26 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

26 *List of Professional Development courses in January to June 2021*

29 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

29 *Application Period for Higher Degree Programmes*



A Message From The Editor

Welcome to the 12th issue of our GPL Newsletter.

2020 has been a challenging year as the COVID-19 pandemic caught the world off-guard, leaving behind a trail of socioeconomic destruction in its wake. As mitigation measures to prevent the spread of the virus, travels and social activities were restricted, while commercial and industrial activities were diminished.

With the implementation of social distancing and restrictive measures around the world, including Singapore, many industries were adversely affected, including the education sector. The sudden closure of educational institutes has also drawn special attention to the resilience of educational systems and institutions, as educators began to see the critical need to delve into the unfamiliar territory of online teaching.

Not all is doom and gloom, however. Our institution is not new to incorporating blended learning into our pedagogical approach, as our faculty members from the Learning Sciences and Assessment Academic Group (LSA AG) have highlighted in our feature story (page 2). Digital transformation and solutions remain vital to bridge the gap between space and time to allow real-time interaction between offsite and onsite learners and educators.

Although it is unlikely for us to return to pre-COVID days anytime soon, we may learn a thing or two from the resilience and adaptability shown by the Higher Degree students in our articles “Studying through Crisis” (page 14) and “Home Away From Home” (page 17). In face of evolving times like these, reskilling and upskilling for working professionals is no longer optional, but essential to maintain competitiveness and relevancy in all industries amid job changes.

So hesitate no more and start your learning journey with us now.



CHIEF EDITOR

Assoc Prof Cheung Yin Ling

Associate Dean

Outreach and Engagement

Office of Graduate Studies and Professional Learning (GPL)

READER'S CONTRIBUTION

If you know of anyone who has displayed attributes of “Learning Differently, Leading Change”, do send us their story to niegpl@nie.edu.sg. We will be in touch with you very soon! However, the editorial team reserves the right to edit and publish the article.

EDITORIAL TEAM

Assoc Prof Cheung Yin Ling
Renee Ng
David Kwek
Janice Cheng
Cheng Zhao Xuan

EMAIL

niegpl@nie.edu.sg

WEBSITE

www.nie.edu.sg/gpl

FOLLOW NIEGPL



The Rise of Blended Learning in the New Normal

By Learning Sciences & Assessment Academic Group (LSA AG)



- The COVID-19 pandemic has caught the world off-guard, resulting in the need to quickly adapt to the new normal. With lockdowns and social distancing measures in place, it has inevitably disrupted travel plans and restricted movement of people both within cities and across borders. This has led to the hastening of digital transformation and the urgent need to come up with technological solutions for real-time interaction, in order to bridge the distance of space and time caused by these physical restrictions. This is evident in the realm of education, where we see an accelerated use of blended learning, in order to optimise students' learning experience under such limitations.

With the gradual evolution of our educational landscape, blended learning, while not new to us, has become an important feature for teaching and learning in higher education. It is an effective combination of both the elements of online and Face-to-Face (F2F) learning, which is able to enhance the learning experiences of our students. With their expertise in educational technology and learning sciences, the faculty in Learning Sciences and Assessment Academic Group (LSA AG) has designed and implemented different types of blended learning activities in their higher degree programmes. These well-designed blended learning activities have also allowed students to engage in self-directed and collaborative online learning, which assumes a significant role in their own active learning, both onsite and offsite, during the pandemic.

There are four types of blended learning, which are synchronous and asynchronous modes, either in student-directed flexible learning environment or teacher-directed fixed learning environment. Through these arrangements, instructors would be able to facilitate the collaborative learning and knowledge in students, and also conduct a real-time formative assessment of their learning.

A student-directed synchronous online learning environment allows students to attend their classes, whether F2F or online, simultaneously, which creates a real-time classroom where students can participate actively regardless of where they are. This is useful in addressing the challenges, such as class capacity constraints and travel restrictions, caused by the pandemic. In a teacher-directed learning environment, however, synchronous online learning takes place in a F2F classroom, where online activities are implemented to enhance the learning experience.

On the other hand, asynchronous online learning, where it is student-directed, provides a flexible learning environment for students to go through a self-directed learning process by completing online modules at their own pace, and would only consult the instructors when required. Whereas a teacher-directed





Assoc Prof Chen Wenli used Padlet for collaborative learning in SE812 and NEDD902 at i-Space

asynchronous online learning consists of both F2F and online sessions, usually in a flipped classroom format, so students will engage with online learning at their own time, and come to a F2F classroom for higher order thinking activities.

However, designing and implementing meaningful blended learning experiences and environments are easier said than done, as successful blended learning goes beyond the mere use of technology, and is done with careful considerations of pedagogy and instructional design to facilitate student interaction and participation in discussions, albeit virtually.

As we adapt to the new normal amidst the pandemic, the utilisation of blended learning would increase for the foreseeable future. While it can never substitute good teaching, our faculty from the LSA AG will continue to explore more innovative and meaningful blended learning designs, in order to create a meaningful learning environment and experience for students.



Asst Prof Azilawati Jamaludin teaching MLT915 at NGLT



Interested to find out more on
LSA AG's postgraduate programmes?
You can visit www.nie.edu.sg/lisa
for more information.



Teaching and Learning Mother Tongue Languages

By Asian Languages and Cultures Academic Group (ALC AG)

Dedicating themselves to the research, teaching and learning of Mother Tongue languages in Tamil, Malay and Chinese, let our postgraduate students from the Asian Languages and Cultures Academic Group (ALC AG) share about their invigorating learning journey and how their respective programmes have helped to advance their career aspirations.

Thamizhodu Valarvom!

Aspiring to Make Tamil a Living Language in Singapore



with **Kalarani**, who is a second-year student of the Master of Education (Tamil Language) programme. Having been a Tamil teacher for 23 years, she is currently working at the School of the Arts (SOTA) on secondment.

► Can you share with us what inspired you to pursue the Master of Education (Tamil Language) programme?

Initially, I was skeptical about pursuing the Master of Education (Tamil Language) programme on a part-time basis, as I was unsure if I would be able to cope with the pressures of juggling between work and studies. Over the years, I drew inspiration from other Tamil teachers, who had pursued their postgraduate degrees. With the emphasis on continuing education and life-long learning, I realised that it is important for me to constantly upgrade my knowledge and skills. After much deliberation, I decided to pursue the Master's programme with the support of my school management under the Ministry of Education (MOE) Professional Development Continuum Model (PDCM) cycle.

► How do you apply what you have learnt from the course to enrich your students' learning?

In order to continue being an effective classroom teacher, it is essential for me to build on my knowledge and capacity in the Tamil Language. Right from the start of the course, my

lecturers, Assoc Prof Seetha Lakshmi and former Assoc Prof A Ra Sivakumaran, have not only nurtured and guided me in my pursuit for knowledge, they have also instilled in me the responsibility to extend the passion for learning the Tamil Language to the next generation. Hence, I make it a point to share small anecdotes of what I have learnt with my students.

I firmly believe that the knowledge and skills gained from the programme will certainly help to instill the passion for learning the Tamil language in them. For instance, the sociolinguistics course has provided me with a better understanding of how society impacts the use of Tamil language. This will enable me to enhance my students' spoken Tamil. The literary knowledge gained during the course of studies will also help to make my Tamil lessons livelier and more interesting for the International Baccalaureate (IB) students whom I am currently teaching.

► **On a personal level, how do you think you have benefitted from this course?**

Other than reading up for my assignments, I am motivated to seek knowledge in the Tamil language actively. I have also learnt to be more selective of the materials I choose for my lessons. The past courses have been very enriching and have inspired me to widen my perspectives and look at issues critically. I have also come to learn about the hard work of our pioneers in the Tamil community in Singapore, and I would always make it a point to emphasise to my students not to take the current status of Tamil language in Singapore for granted. I believe that taking up the MEd (Tamil Language) programme has enabled me to see myself grow not just in terms of knowledge, but also as a patriot of Tamil language.

► **What are your hopes for young Tamil Teachers in Singapore and how do you think you can contribute back to the Tamil Society in Singapore after taking this Master's programme?**

I hope that young and aspiring Tamil teachers will continue to upskill themselves in this subject area by enrolling in programmes such as the MEd (Tamil Language). Age is not a barrier to learning. With the right attitude towards learning and time management skills, anyone would be able to juggle between work and studies at NIE. The future of Tamil education in Singapore is in the hands of our Tamil language teachers. I believe that I can contribute in a small way to make Tamil a living language in Singapore, and nurture students to become active learners and proficient users of the Tamil language. I hope to inspire some of my students to become the faces of the Tamil community in Singapore in the future. *Thamizhodu Valarvom! Thamizhaal Inaivom!* (Let us grow with Tamil! Let us connect with Tamil!).

Deepening Knowledge and Broadening Perspectives through the Multifaceted Study of the Malay Language



with **Asnida Bte Daud**, who is currently a Senior Curriculum Specialist at the Educational Technology Division (ETD) of the Ministry of Education (MOE). She has recently completed her Master of Education (Malay Language) programme.

► What was your motivation for taking up a Master's programme at NIE?

After more than 20 years of active and enriching service in the Ministry and at school level, and upon my move to become a curriculum specialist at the Educational Technology Division (ETD), I felt the need to upgrade my knowledge in order to serve the Ministry of Education (MOE) better. Although ETD provides in-house training and sponsors its staff for courses, I felt the need to undergo a structured and rigorous course that will help me not only in my work, but also to refresh and reinvigorate me for the challenges ahead. Thus, I chose to take my Master's degree at NIE, which is also my alma mater in teacher training. I did my Bachelor's degree at the University of Malaya, and subsequently went on to apply for a scholarship at NIE for my Master's degree. I wanted an academic grounding in Malay language and literacy issues, including critical and creative thinking, as well as curriculum planning. Where else can I get this if not at NIE?

► What was your coping mechanism in completing your Master's programme within two years?

I had the three Fs. Firstly, FRIENDS. The scholarship I have received from MOE only allowed me to take two years of paid leave. Therefore, I must finish my studies in four semesters, which is the minimum period required to complete the programme. I was very lucky to find four like-minded classmates who were also planning to finish the programme in four semesters, and were equally steadfast and competitive. The fact that we came from different backgrounds helped to enhance our bonding.

Secondly, FAMILY. My family played a very important part in the coping process. From my husband to my mother and children, all of my family members helped to make the journey bearable for me—especially when assignment submissions beckoned!



Thirdly, FRATERNITY. This includes all the people I have come across in the teaching service, especially my lecturers, who were very understanding and always found the time to ensure that we understood the concepts taught.

They would always go out of the way to make the materials meaningful for us and ensure that the learning experience was authentic.

► How do you think you have benefitted from the programme, both personally as well as professionally?

As a Senior Curriculum Specialist at ETD, I apply the curriculum planning knowledge I had learnt into my work. This happens during our own curriculum review sessions, as well as during its implementation—we are then able to look at the bigger picture and thus, focus on important matters.

What is also important is that the programme has made me look at things from different perspectives:

- i. Think before I speak. When I speak, I will make sure that it is based on frameworks.
- ii. Think before posing an argument. I will think it through and make sure that it is evidence-based.
- iii. Think and listen. Knowledge is not just about knowing, but also about having the humility to listen to others and admit it when you are wrong.

Therefore, this programme has definitely made me a more knowledgeable officer, and most importantly, I have become a better colleague and person because of it.

Reimagining Chinese Language Education



with **Sin Sit Boon**, who is currently a Chinese teacher at Horizon Primary School, after his stint as a Curriculum Planning and Development Division (CPDD) officer in MOE. He is also a graduate from the Master of Education (Chinese Language) programme.

► How do you think you have benefitted from the Master of Education (Chinese Language) programme?

Before coming to NIE, I was working as a Chinese language teacher and curriculum developer. Working among different educational units has allowed me to develop an informed and critical perspective on how the interplay of numerous factors, both inside and outside the classroom, can strongly influence students' academic opportunities and achievement.

My desire to augment my perspective on the education of Chinese Language in Singapore, particularly with a set of strong analytical research skills, in-depth content knowledge of the language and literacy within developing contexts, led me to pursue the Master of Education (Chinese Language) programme. Through interaction with the faculty whose research focused on language and literacy, I was able to develop a much deeper understanding of literacy development and international literacy programmes, thereby improving my ability to read and critique current research within the field.

I am grateful for the experience gained during the course of the programme, as it exposed me to various philosophies of education that have helped to better define my own. I look forward to remaining as an active and engaged member of the NIE alumni network, and I am incredibly thankful for the relationships I have forged with the professors, lecturers and my peers at NIE.



► Can you share with us your career plans after graduation?

My time at NIE was truly life-changing, and I feel so fortunate to have been a part of such a renowned and rigorous Master's programme. Although my time at NIE has come to an end, I know that my educational journey has not. I have decided to pursue doctoral studies in my quest to reimagine and recreate an educational system that allows for every student to reach their fullest and highest potential.

► How would you describe your experience in pursuing a Master's degree in NIE, and would you recommend the programme to your colleagues?

The past year at NIE has not been easy, but never in my life have I been so supported and challenged by my professors, lecturers, advisors and peers. I did not imagine that my interest in Chinese education would lead me to research on Chinese teaching materials; a job and passion that I would not have discovered or have the practical skills for, had it not been for my stint here at NIE.

I would strongly recommend my colleagues to consider joining this incredible community in the Master of Education (Chinese Language) programme. I promise that they will learn and experience more than they would have ever expected.



Interested to find out more on ALC AG's postgraduate programmes? You can visit www.nie.edu.sg/alc for more information.

When Your Passion Is Your Profession: Working with Language for a Living

By English Language and Literature (ELL) Academic Group

In this feature we get to know two language professionals, united by their long-standing fascination with language and by the fact that they are both postgraduate alumni of NIE. We interviewed them to find out how their postgraduate studies have facilitated their personal and professional growth and broadened their skill sets.



with **Edmen Leong**, who is currently working as a Director of Specialised Educational Services at Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS). A graduate of Master of Arts (Applied Linguistics) programme, he is also currently studying for his Ph.D. in ELL AG at NIE.

► Tell us a little bit about yourself as a professional. What do you do?

I have been working with the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) since 2010. I started off as a young and enthusiastic educator with a passion for language who wanted to serve a specific group of dyslexic individuals. I served as an educational therapist in the first few years of my career at the DAS, after which I served as a programme manager as well as an assistant director before assuming my current post as Director of Specialised Educational Services. In this role, I oversee the curriculum development, evaluation, training and needs of a range of programmes including the Preschool, Speech and Language Therapy, Math, Chinese, Prep 2 PSLE and Speech and Drama Arts programmes.

► What role does language play in your job at the DAS?

Language is one of the most important aspects of my role at the DAS since we work with learners who struggle with language. Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that affects skills involved in word reading and spelling, which impacts skills relating to comprehension and writing. Understanding the building blocks of a language, the process of language acquisition, and a range of language teaching methodologies is therefore very important for my professional role at the DAS.

“I feel it is important how the master’s programme helped me serve a greater pool of students in my organisation. The MA (Applied Linguistics) provided me with a very structured framework for building up a language educational programme.”

► **How has the Master of Arts (Applied Linguistics) programme helped to hone your skills, knowledge and understanding of language?**

I started the master’s programme during the time I assumed the role of programme manager of the Prep 2 PSLE programme at the DAS. This is a programme that helps children with dyslexia learn the necessary language skills tested in their PSLE exams and equip them with these skills for language learning beyond the PSLE. Several of the master’s modules I took provided me with valuable skills to develop and take the programme I was managing to the next level. The curriculum development

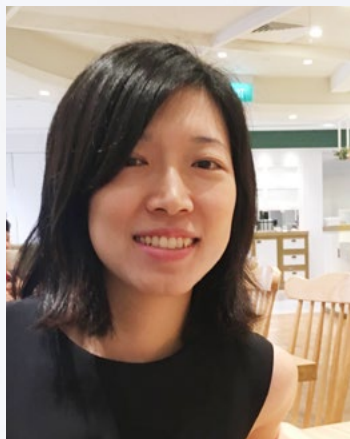
and materials design modules for example provided me with the knowledge and thought processes I would need to think through in developing the Prep 2 PSLE programme. The research methods module provided me with the appropriate skills to evaluate the developed Prep 2 PSLE programme and improve on its design over the years. The language testing module supported me with the knowledge in developing a test for my students in the programme. I feel one of the biggest skills I have acquired from completing the Master of Arts (Applied Linguistics) at ELL while working at the DAS was the opportunity to put theory to practice.

► **Would you say that the knowledge and skills you have gained enabled you professionally?**

I feel it is important how the master’s programme helped me serve a greater pool of students in my organisation. The MA (Applied Linguistics) provided me with a very structured framework for building up a language educational programme. With advice from my various professors, and the knowledge from the experience I had over the years of teaching learners with dyslexia, I was able to apply what I have learned into the context of my organisation. The success of the programme led to the progress in structuring a range of other programmes I am now overseeing and therefore serving a greater reach of students.

In fact, you came back for more....as you are now a PhD student in ELL!

Yes! What I found most valuable during my time at NIE is the relationships I have built with my professors. One of the reasons why I gained so much from the modules I took was because of the passion each of these professors had in their subject matter. Several of them supported me in the questions I had beyond the module’s requirements that helped in the work that I do at the DAS. This has spurred me on to continue my education at NIE as a part-time doctoral student with a research focus on motivation among dyslexic readers.



with **Evangeline Lin**, who is currently working as a part-time lecturer in communication at NTU and graduated from NIE with a MA (Applied Linguistics) degree.

► What is your professional background?

I've always been interested in language and have worked, for the past number of years, as a language professional in different contexts. Before I decided to embark on postgraduate studies, I worked for five years in Cambodia. For about two of those years I was teaching English in a vocational school run by a non-governmental organisation and then subsequently became involved in community development work, which I found very meaningful. After graduating from NIE, I worked as a research assistant at NTU, doing linguistics research in the area of World Englishes, before switching to my current position as part-time lecturer at the Language and Communication Centre (LCC) at NTU. In this job, I teach English modules such as Academic English and Communication & Literature for pre-matriculated students from overseas. But continuing with my interest in intercultural aspects of language, I also do part-time communications work for an international non-profit organisation (NPO), which is involved in language and translation projects around the world.

► How is language and communication part of your professional job?

Language, literature, and communication are literally what I teach at the LCC now. All of these subjects include elements of linguistics, which was my course of study at NIE. Hence, a deep understanding of these subjects is important for me to adequately impart knowledge and skills to my students in these areas. In addition, since my students are all international students, there is also a practical cross-cultural dimension not just when interacting with them, but also in the way I have to adjust how and what I teach. At the NPO I work for, these are also very important, as my role in communications entails writing news updates and reports, managing the website and social media platforms, and more, and all of these are targeted at different audiences for varying purposes.



“ Actually, there was at least one rather concrete benefit: having the MA degree qualified me to teach at the tertiary level and thus has allowed me to become a lecturer at LCC. But through completing a dissertation, it has also given me valuable research experience. ”

► How has the programme in NIE enabled you to grow as a language professional?

Aside from delving deeper into linguistics at a higher level, the fact that completion of the programme required a minimum number of modules in a variety of areas helped to force me out of my comfort zone. Not only did this help to broaden my perspectives, it also helped me to see how different concepts were inevitably interconnected/interdependent in some way. This understanding definitely helped when developing my own research study for the master’s dissertation at the end of the programme.

► Were there any tangible career benefits to having obtained the master’s degree?

Actually, there was at least one rather concrete benefit: having the MA degree qualified me to teach at the tertiary level and thus has allowed me to become a lecturer at LCC. But through completing a dissertation, it has also given me valuable research experience. After spending almost five years working in Cambodia, I knew I wanted to embark on some sort of linguistics research on English in Cambodia. I just didn’t know what and how exactly I would do it. The dissertation was an important stepping stone for further, future research in this area of interest. I am now planning/hoping to continue my studies and conduct research in this area.

► What is the most memorable experience you have from your postgraduate studies?

Probably my professors! All of the professors who taught the modules I took were great – the atmosphere in classes was friendly and conducive to learning. I really enjoyed every module in a different way. My dissertation supervisor, Dr Rita Silver, was wonderful. She gave me very useful advice, afforded me plenty of autonomy over my research and ideas but at the same time pushed me beyond my comfort zone at times. For instance, she encouraged me to present a paper at the NIE student conference, which in turn helped to prepare me for presenting at international conferences. These relationships really made the academic experience much more enriching both professionally and at a personal level as well.



Interested to find out more on ELL AG’s postgraduate programmes? You can visit www.nie.edu.sg/ell for more information.

Studying through Crisis

By Humanities and
Social Studies Education
Academic Group (HSSE AG)

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused upheaval in all of our lives—but how has it affected our postgraduate students? Let four of our students from the Humanities and Social Studies Education Academic Group (HSSE AG) share how the pandemic has changed their lives and studies. They had to make significant changes to navigate the challenges of the pandemic—in their work and family lives, as well as in their research. Each in their own way, their determination and resilience provide inspiration to us all.



Interested to find out more on HSSE AG's postgraduate programmes? You can visit www.nie.edu.sg/hsse for more information.


By Cheak Su Peng

I am a part-time student in the Master of Arts in Humanities Education (MAHE) programme, and I have been enrolled in this programme since 2018. After my pre-service training at NIE from 2011-15, I taught geography at Chua Chu Kang Secondary School (CCKSS) between 2015 and 2018, and am now a Character and Citizenship Education Officer in the Student Development Curriculum Division, Ministry of Education (MOE).

I am currently working on my dissertation, which focuses on geography education in Singapore. My research examines the correlation between school geography in Singapore and the development of students' geographical imaginations, which hypothesises the significant role of school geography in shaping our students' geographical imaginations about the world. By capturing students' voices, the study will include them for syllabus reviews and curriculum design, which can benefit the teachers who are reviewing their own delivery of the geography curriculum.

The pandemic has certainly impeded the progress of my dissertation, as I had to juggle between work and studies. I was involved in inter-ministry work as part of the national response to COVID-19. As a result, I had less time to work on my dissertation, and inevitably, I lost some of my momentum in writing. At the same time, I developed screen fatigue from the working-from-home arrangements and had to take more regular breaks after office hours, which further hindered the progress of my writing.

My supervisor, Dr Tricia Seow, was unfailingly kind and patient with me, as she understood the stress I was getting from the difficulties I faced, as a result of the pandemic. She actively reached out to me to schedule online meetings and constantly affirmed my efforts in the composition of my drafts. Her reassurance was pivotal in helping me to regain my momentum in writing and her provision of timely feedback was crucial in helping me to alleviate and overcome occasional bouts of writer's block. We worked together to revise my timeline for the dissertation and, under her mentorship, I am confident that I will be able to complete it by the submission deadline.



“ I was involved in inter-ministry work as part of the national response to COVID-19, which resulted in less time to work on my dissertation, and inevitably, I lost some of my momentum in writing. ”

Cheak Su Peng, third-year MAHE student from Singapore

By Daniel Lee

I am pursuing my Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) with HSSE AG, while concurrently working as a Geography teacher at a local secondary school. NIE is a place close to my heart, given its role as the national teacher education institute for all teachers in Singapore.

My PhD research focuses on Singapore's Smart Nation initiative. Specifically, I am interested in promoting greater citizen engagement and participation in SG-QR, an e-payment platform that has much potential—in my opinion—to revolutionise the way Singaporeans transact goods and services nationwide.

The COVID-19 pandemic, though unfortunate, has sped up the transition to cashless modes of payment, and I hope to see all segments of society are given the same access and opportunities in this digital revolution.

The evolving situation with the pandemic and corresponding measures have significantly reduced the chances for face-to-face interactions with my supervisor and peers in research. This limited my ability to conduct field research and interviews.

“ The COVID-19 pandemic, though unfortunate, has sped up the transition to cashless modes of payment, and I hope to see all segments of society are given the same access and opportunities in this digital revolution. ”

Daniel Lee, first-year PhD student from Singapore

On the other hand, digital affordances, such as Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and web meeting platforms, have enabled me to continue my research and overcome a majority of the challenges I was facing. The institute and my supervisor have also been very understanding and flexible in terms of scheduling for lectures and discussions, particularly by offering blended lesson modes, comprising both online and on-campus interactions, depending on requirements. From my perspective as a postgraduate student, NIE has also been very receptive to feedback. Together, I am confident that we can and will ride out the crisis as a nation.



Home Away From Home

**COVID-19
EDITION**



“The pandemic has created a lot of uncertainty with regards to timelines, especially with the restrictions on international travel affecting my planned fieldwork in India. In addition, the school closures in India meant that I have had to think about alternative possibilities for access to research sites and recruitment of participants. I had also learnt to explore all possible scenarios in every decision related to my research, as I cannot rely on things going back to the pre-COVID situation anytime soon.

My supervisors, Dr Chee Min Fui and Dr Kho Ee Moi, have been patient listeners, as they made every effort to understand the context of the situation in India, and helped me to think through all my options. Their timely responses over email and detailed feedback to my work made all the difference, especially during the lockdown. I was able to do a small pilot study, which was conducted using online tools, and I could not have done it without their help!”

~ **Indira Subramanian, second-year Doctor in Education (EdD) student from India**

“The pandemic has affected my study and research badly. The Circuit Breaker (CB) started towards the end of my second semester had left me feeling alone and very anxious.

Since then, I have had to adapt and change many things for my study as well. Fortunately, all the lecturers of the courses I was taking extended the deadline of the final assignments. With the end of CB and resumption of activities in the “new normal”, I can now go to the library and work on my research. I am also working on a book project with other Indonesian mothers, who are taking graduate studies in Singapore, on how we have navigated this challenging situation as students and mothers.”

~ **Indah Wahyu Puji Utami, second-year PhD student from Indonesia, Publicity director of the NIE Graduate Student Club (NIE GSC), Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) scholarship awardee**



Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Ranking for Education



For more information, please refer to
www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings.



Where Do We Go From Here?

By Mathematics and Mathematics Education Academic Group (MME AG)

Having undergone years of rigorous and stimulating advanced study in the area of mathematics or mathematics education, four of our PhD graduates from the Mathematics and Mathematics Education Academic Group (MME AG) shared with us how the programme has helped to advance their career after graduation.



Dr Muanfun Yaowiwat is currently a senior academic staff at the Institute for the Promotion of Teaching Science and Technology (IPST) in Thailand. She obtained a PhD in Education—Mathematics Education.

My team and I are responsible for developing the national curriculum for Primary Mathematics, as well as the supporting teaching and learning supplements, such as textbooks, workbooks, teacher guides, learning applications, and online learning materials. Because IPST is also responsible for the professional development programmes for teachers, I am also tasked to develop and conduct courses, adopting both online and face-to-face modes of teaching.

The PhD programme in NIE has prepared me to conduct my work with confidence. Besides deepening my knowledge in mathematics education and research methodologies, there

were also various opportunities for sharing and presenting my work to scholarly and academic communities. Such opportunities have helped to prepare me to be a better professional developer. At NIE, I have learnt to enquire more and grew to be more eager in acquiring new knowledge. Now that I am back in Thailand, I would like to share what I have learnt from this PhD programme with my colleagues and the teachers, so that we can better support our students' learning effectively.



Dr Chang Suo Hui is a Lead Teacher under MOE. She graduated with a PhD in Education—Mathematics Education.

Upon graduation, I have continued to serve in my capacity as a classroom teacher with a renewed and deeper understanding of the reciprocal nature between teaching and learning. As a Lead Teacher, I actively contribute to discussions on the impartation of pedagogical content knowledge, as well as teaching and

learning matters with not just the Math teachers in my school, but also the fraternity, through school-based professional development (PD) and teacher-led workshops.

The knowledge acquired from my in-depth PhD study on the teaching and learning of Primary Math, particularly the use of multiple representations to develop students' conceptual understanding, has a direct impact on my pedagogical knowledge. I am now better equipped with varying perspectives to analyse issues concerning both teaching and learning. Apart from knowledge acquisition, the inquiry process that I had undertaken during the PhD programme has also sharpened my thinking. My perspectives have broadened and become more diverse than before. I also find myself asking deeper questions when presented with situations, data and reports.



Dr Zhang Ruixue graduated with a PhD in Mathematics and is currently an Assistant Professor in Qingdao University. She was awarded the Singapore Mathematical Society Medal by NTU for the best PhD thesis in Mathematical Sciences.

The PhD programme in NIE has reshaped my way of thinking with regards to mathematics and problem-solving, which adequately prepared me for my current position as an academic

staff in Qingdao University. The MME AG also regularly organises colloquiums and seminars to facilitate academic communication by inviting research students and scholars to share their research. Besides that, the academic staff in MME are inspiring role models, not just in terms of their academic research, but also as people of kindness and passion.



Dr Uha Isnaini is a lecturer at the Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia. He graduated with a PhD in Mathematics.

After graduating from the PhD programme in NIE, I have continued my role as a lecturer at the Universitas Gadjah Mada in Indonesia. The programme has helped to foster my intellectual, creative, scholarly and professional growth. In particular, the programme has improved my ability to understand and solve problems, which boosted my confidence, and enabled me to become a better communicator. There were also many opportunities for me to learn to better equip myself to be a good teacher in guiding students. These skills are important for me to fulfill my role as a lecturer.



Interested to find out more on MME AG's postgraduate programmes? You can visit www.nie.edu.sg/mme for more information.

Towards a Cohesive Graduate Student Community

By NIE Graduate Student Club

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the way events and activities are being delivered, it has also opened up the opportunity for digital transformation of events through technology – just ask our NIE Graduate Student Club (GSC). Not one to let their enthusiasm be diminished by the evolving situation of the pandemic, GSC has brought both welfare and academic activities to our students, right from the comfort of their own homes.



The first welfare activity was a wellness talk presented by Mr Bernard Mackenzie (pictured left), Clinic Manager of NIE Wellness Centre (NWC) in May 2020, during the Circuit Breaker period. The session aims to raise awareness among postgraduate students on the importance of maintaining psychological well-being, as well as to encourage them to share their issues freely without being judged, and seek professional help in times of need.

The second activity was a video blog (vlog) contest with the theme, “Graduate Life at Home”, which took place in July 2020. The contest offered a platform for postgraduate students to share their experiences, feelings, and tips to staying healthy and strong during the pandemic. A total of 13 submissions were received, which included interesting and healthy activities, such as cooking, workouts, art performances, etc. Three winners were eventually selected and awarded with winner certificates, based on audience votes, while the rest received certificates of participation as a token of appreciation.



Library Talk with Mr James Wong from NIE Library

In early August, NIE GSC organised two academic talks, one of which was presented by Mr James Wong, Assistant Librarian of NIE Library, who provided tips on how to make the best use of NIE Library. The talk introduced and familiarised postgraduate students with the library resources and services available to them, and how it can be used to facilitate their studies and researches. Mr Wong also conducted a hands-on demonstration of the tools and resources that are easily accessible on the library website. The

talk was very well received by the participants and the recording of the event has also been posted on the NIE GSC YouTube channel for future references.

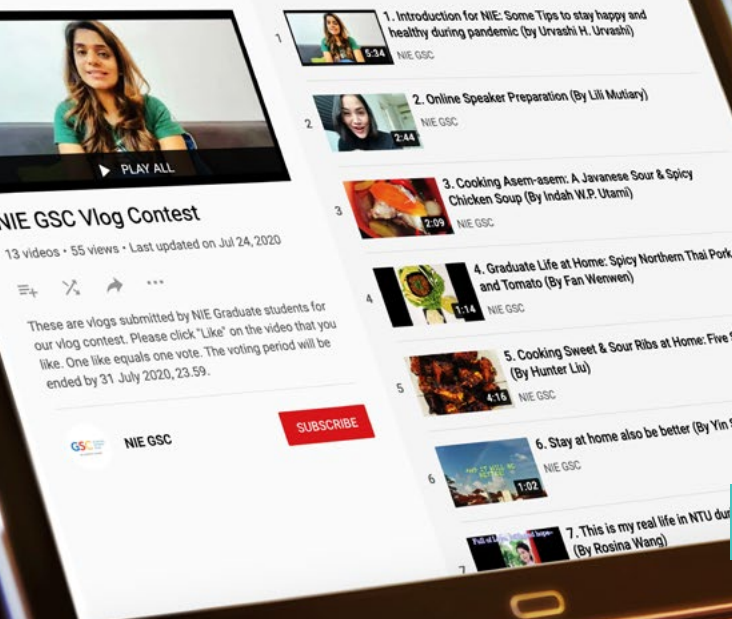
The next academic activity was a talk by NIE PhD alumnus, Dr Yong Yik Ling (pictured left), who had recently received the inaugural NTU Graduate College Interdisciplinary Research Award. He shared insights gained from his doctoral journey, particularly on how he managed to overcome various obstacles to conduct an interdisciplinary study on Shakespeare's writings, in relation to his field of practice: architecture.



All higher degree students are welcomed and encouraged to join the events organised by NIE GSC, as they continue to organise more meaningful activities for the NIE graduate student community.

You can now view the videos of the NIE GSC vlog contest on their YouTube channel!

Simply scan the QR code below:



For updates on upcoming NIE GSC events, please visit www.facebook.com/NIEGSC.

REFLECTIONS

LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMES



Management and Leadership in Schools (MLS) Programme

“ As Year Heads, the areas of student well-being, student development and student management are close to our hearts. However, there is one group of students that we are particularly concerned with—the pupils who are often labelled as recalcitrants. The team saw the curriculum project as an opportunity to develop an affective curriculum for this group of students, instead of responding to them in a reactive manner whenever they run into problems.

We are thankful to the host school, which not only accepted our proposal, but also challenged us to think out of the box. During the process, we began to see how meaningful this curriculum project was and the positive impact it would have for this group of students. With the support of our dedicated mentor, Assoc Prof Christine Lee, we translated our understandings from literature reviews, as well as the deliberations with the host school and within the team, to practical lesson plans.

This project has certainly provided us with a rich experience to develop as curriculum leaders. Learning and sharing do not cease at the end of MLS, and the network and friendships forged will continue to be our pillars of support as we return to serve in our respective schools. ”

Reflection by: Francisca Chua, Georgina Michelle George, Josephine Yeo



Reflections on the Learning Experiences Beyond Campus (LEBC)

“ When we first heard that we were unable to visit Taiwan for our Regional Visit, there was a palpable sense of disappointment. Despite this, we came together as a cohort, recognised the valuable opportunity at hand, and focused on our common purpose: to have a meaningful and fruitful learning experience.

We appreciated the autonomy given to us and the organic nature of the Learning Experience Beyond Campus (LEBC), which enabled us to design our unique learning experiences. We were able to pursue our areas of interests, collaborate with our cohort mates and participate in activities or programmes that we, otherwise, would not have done. These included experiences at the Coast-to-Coast (C2C) Challenge, and tours to the Reactor School, a culinary school, Singapore University of Technology (SUTD), Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre (SCCC) and at MOE HQ (CPDD - Humanities).

One particular experience that stood out for us was the Coast-to-Coast (C2C) Challenge, which spanned a total trekking distance of 36 km across Singapore. We basked in the sun and enjoyed the vibrant flora and fauna of Singapore’s nature parks, while learning and using the C2C Augmented Reality (AR) application. It was truly a great learning experience for educators who wish to incorporate blended learning within and outside their classrooms.

Another priceless experience was the Reactor School tour. It is an educational company that prides itself in entrepreneurial training. Situated in the Pollinate office at JTC Launchpad in Ayer Rajah, the whole area serves as an incubation centre for aspiring businesses or enterprises to network, gather resources and spearhead initiatives. The cross-pollination and inter-mingling of key ideas between the companies served to remind us, as educators, of the importance of creating opportunities for interdisciplinary work for our students.



In summary, LEBC was certainly memorable, as it afforded us valuable time to explore, pursue and deepen our learning. ”

Reflection by: Tan Boon Leng, Muhammad Shahrom Bin Asmani, Chan Taiping Joseph, Ng Bee Lian, Hanna Maryam Bte Samri, Corinne Yu Huiyi



REACTOR SCHOOL TOUR—an entrepreneurial educational company, which gave a comprehensive, alternative look at how learning can be fun, interactive, collaborative and meaningful.

Reflections of the Impact of Covid-19 on Learning @ MLS

by Mr Chan Taiping, Joseph, currently the Head of Department, Integrated Programme at CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School.



The January 2020 Management and Leadership in Schools (MLS) programme was a unique learning experience for me. It enabled me to view the impact of Covid-19 on teaching and learning from the perspectives of both educator and student. Initially, it was disappointing for me as we progressively moved from face-to-face lessons to home-based learning. Having to adjust to new learning modalities and norms was uncomfortable, even challenging. Indeed, even the challenge of finding a conducive learning environment with reliable connectivity and an accessible power point became very real.

Yet, we established new ways to connect, collaborate and learn with each other. I liked how we were better able to pace our own learning, as we watched pre-recorded videos and used the resources on Blackboard. It was helpful as I could revisit concepts that I did not adequately understand, and had to take time to ponder and reflect on the lesson before moving on. Home-based learning has enabled me to learn better, as compared to a live lecture or lesson, because I could pause to think and make sense of the content before continuing.

Most importantly, it broadened our perspectives to new possibilities of what teaching and learning 'could be' instead of what it 'should be'. My experience as a student with home-based learning enabled me to better understand and anticipate possible challenges my students may face when they are doing home-based learning. Hence, I was better able to apply my experience when designing lessons. In one instance, I opted to use Google document to enable greater student collaboration, instead of having them complete an online worksheet.

Overall, while Covid-19 had affected my MLS experience, it did not diminish it. I believe that the experience has enabled us to become better individuals and educators, particularly as we continue to see and adjust to shifts in the educational landscape and society at large.



Interested to find out more on Management and Leadership in Schools (MLS) programme at NIE? You can visit www.nie.edu.sg/gpl/mls for more information.



An Institute of



Professional Learning & Continuing Education



Follow niegpl on



Professional Learning and Continuing Education at NIE (PLaCE@NIE) provides a suite of programmes and courses to support the continual development of educators and working professionals. Professional development is a lifelong journey, we aim to help each individual reach their aspiration for professional growth through multiple pathways.

Visit PLaCE@NIE at <https://place.nie.edu.sg> today!

List of Professional Development courses in January to June 2021

Course Code	Course Title	Course Start Date	Course End Date
Assessment			
ILA0013	Designing Quality Feedback in support of AfL (2 runs)	01 Feb 21	31 May 21
ILA0011	Designing Quality Assessment in support of AfL (2 runs)	01 Mar 21	30 Jun 21
Curriculum, Teaching & Learning			
ICT0509	Data-Driven Conversations in Professional Learning Teams (5 runs)	20 Jan 21	29 Apr 21
ICT0202	Differentiated Instructions for Diverse Learners (2 runs)	22 Feb 21	01 Apr 21
ICT0513	Introduction to Qualitative Research (2 runs)	02 Mar 21	09 Mar 21
ICT0514	Qualitative Data Collection & Analyses (2 runs)	06 Apr 21	13 Apr 21
ICT0221	Accommodating diverse learners	14 Apr 21	15 Apr 21
Design & Technology			
INS2141	Design-and-Make III (Scamper!) (6 runs)	17 Feb 21	31 Mar 21
INS2176	Electronics – Designing and Making Fun Projects	25 Feb 21	08 Apr 21
INS2142	Refresher on Machining Skills I (Meranti – Mild Steel) (3 runs)	05 Apr 21	06 May 21
INS2162	Facilitating Pupils in Designing in the 2019 D&T US T&L Syllabus	12 Apr 21	23 Apr 21
INS2143	Refresher on Machining Skills II (Pine/Ash – Aluminium) (3 runs)	10 May 21	30 Jun 21
Humanities			
IHS1043	Culture and Identity (2 runs)	19 Jan 21	27 Apr 21
IHS1044	People and Environment (2 runs)	20 Jan 21	28 Apr 21
IHS1042	Time, Change and Continuity (2 runs)	21 Jan 21	29 Apr 21
Mathematics			
IME1071	Constructivist Approach to Promote IBL in Primary Math	12 Jan 21	26 Jan 21
IME2110	Constructivist Approach to Promote IBL in Secondary Math	14 Jan 21	28 Jan 21
IME2114	Effective Peer and Self-Assessment in Secondary Mathematics	18 Jan 21	08 Feb 21
IME2113	Developing Computational Thinking in Secondary Mathematics	19 Jan 21	09 Feb 21
IME1068	What's the Fuss about Big Ideas in Mathematics? (2 runs)	23 Feb 21	13 Apr 21
IME2099	Teaching Towards Big Ideas for Secondary Mathematics Teachers (2 runs)	15 Mar 21	31 May 21
IME1063	Big Ideas: What is Equivalence? (Primary Mathematics)	18 Mar 21	18 Mar 21
IME1067	Big Ideas: The Mathematics Behind Proportionality (2 runs)	06 Apr 21	01 Jun 21
IME1070	Use of Formative Assessment to Support Differentiated Instruction in Primary Math	06 Apr 21	27 Apr 21
IME2038	Geometry in Secondary Elementary Math	08 Apr 21	29 Apr 21
IME2095	Teaching A Level Math using Real-world Contexts	09 Apr 21	30 Apr 21
IME2109	Use of Formative Assessment to Support Differentiated Instruction in Secondary Math	13 Apr 21	04 May 21
IME1050	Holistic Assessment Performance Tasks: For Pri 1 & 2 Teachers (Mathematics)	27 May 21	27 May 21
IME2097	Engaging N(T) students in Mathematics	01 Jun 21	01 Jun 21
IME2055	Metacognition in the Mathematics Classroom	22 Jun 21	23 Jun 21
IME2089	Math Problems in Real-world Contexts: Design & Implementation	22 Jun 21	23 Jun 21
IME2111	Constructivist Approach to Promote IBL in A-Level Math	24 Jun 21	25 Jun 21

Course Code	Course Title	Course Start Date	Course End Date
Science			
INS1029	Engaging Students' Natural Curiosity to deepen Understanding of Electrical System (Part 1)	22 Jan 21	22 Jan 21
INS2171	Designing STEM Tasks for Biology Instruction	26 Jan 21	26 Jan 21
INS2203	Tackling Food & Nutrition Essay Questions (4 runs)	25 Feb 21	22 Apr 21
INS1030	Engaging Students' Natural Curiosity to deepen Understanding of Electrical System (Part 2)	19 Feb 21	19 Feb 21
INS2172	Science as Practice - Scientific knowledge: Truth and Myths	24 Mar 21	24 Mar 21
INS1031	Engaging Students' Natural Curiosity to deepen Understanding of Electrical System (Part 3)	26 Mar 21	26 Mar 21
INS2173	Science as Practice - Negotiating Scientific Practices: What and How?	01 Apr 21	01 Apr 21
INS2185	Exploring Models through Emerging Technology	01 Apr 21	01 Apr 21
INS2201	STEM Tasks with Chemistry Applications 1	05 Apr 21	05 Apr 21
INS2178	Teaching Science as a Human Endeavour: Why, What, How?	07 Apr 21	08 Apr 21
INS2174	Science as Practice - Putting Science as Practice into practice	09 Apr 21	09 Apr 21
INS1028	STEM Applications in Teaching Primary Science 1	12 Apr 21	12 Apr 21
INS2204	Introduction to Medicinal Food	12 Apr 21	12 Apr 21
INS1048	Primary Science Content Updating: Diversity of Living Things	19 Apr 21	19 Apr 21
INS1032	Science Inquiry Projects (Primary): From Development to Analysis	21 Apr 21	23 Apr 21
INS1022	Science Inquiry Projects (Secondary): From Development to Analysis	28 Apr 21	30 Apr 21
INS1033	Teaching Primary Science in Inclusive Classrooms	3 May 21	3 May 21
INS2202	Teaching Disciplinary Ideas in Physics at 'O' level	20 May 21	21 May 21
INS2190	Integrating STEM into Lower Secondary Science (Part 1)	20 May 21	28 May 21
INS2193	Differentiated Assessment Practices for Secondary Science	25 May 21	01 Jun 21
INS2187	Inquiry and Design of Experimental Set-Ups in School Chemistry	27 May 21	28 May 21
INS2182	Assessing Practices of Science in Lower Secondary N(A) and N(T)	31 May 21	31 May 21
INS1038	Primary Science Content Updating: Forces	31 May 21	07 Jun 21
INS1040	Primary Science Content Updating: Kinetic Energy and Potential Energy	31 May 21	07 Jun 21
INS2205	Augmented Reality (AR) Strategies to Engage Students in the Learning of H3 Molecular Stereochemistry	01 Jun 21	01 Jun 21
INS1027	Integrated STEM for Primary Level (Part 1)	01 Jun 21	03 Jun 21
INS1037	Primary Science Content Updating: Electrical System	01 Jun 21	08 Jun 21
INS1043	Primary Science Content Updating: Sound Energy and Electrical Energy	01 Jun 21	08 Jun 21
INS1036	Primary Science Content Updating: Frictional Force and Air Resistance	02 Jun 21	09 Jun 21
INS1042	Primary Science Content Updating: Magnet And Magnetism	02 Jun 21	09 Jun 21
INS1041	Primary Science Content Updating: Light Energy	03 Jun 21	10 Jun 21
INS1039	Primary Science Content Updating: Heat Energy	03 Jun 21	10 Jun 21



For more information on how to apply and to view other courses that are available, please visit <https://place.nie.edu.sg>.



MODULAR GRADUATE COURSES



Follow niegpl on



While formal recognition of postgraduate education in the form of a Master's or Doctoral degree may appeal to some, the majority of working adults may prefer learning through standalone courses. Modular Graduate Courses (MGCs) provide flexible opportunities for individuals to strive towards knowledge acquisition and skills mastery. In line with SkillsFuture Singapore's initiative, NIE has curated a variety of higher degree courses to provide opportunities to develop skills through lifelong learning for working professionals from the various industries and sectors.

Visit www.nie.edu.sg/mgc today for more information and a listing of SSG funded courses.



► **Application Period for
Higher Degree Programmes
August 2021 Intake**

1 Oct 2020 - 29 Jan 2021

PhD and Masters by Research

9 Nov 2020 - 8 Jan 2021

Masters by Coursework



Visit www.nie.edu.sg/aug2021 for the list of programmes offered.

► **Application Period for
Higher Degree Programmes
January 2022 Intake**

1 April - 15 June 2021

Doctor in Education

3 May - 30 July 2021

PhD and Masters by Research

10 May - 5 July 2021

Masters by Coursework



Stay tuned for the list of programmes to be offered.
For more information on the range of higher degree programmes that we offer, please visit www.nie.edu.sg/gpl/hd.



An Institute of



**NANYANG
TECHNOLOGICAL
UNIVERSITY**
SINGAPORE



NTU MINIMASTERS™

Constant shifts in economic focus and growing relevance of lifelong learning have encouraged working adults to acquire new knowledge or upgrading existing skill sets to ensure employability and remain competitive for the evolving market.

With the NTU's MiniMasters™, individuals are encouraged to build up their micro-credentials through Continuing Education and Training (CET) to embrace lifelong learning amid the transforming economy.

Visit www.nie.edu.sg/minimasters for more information.



Follow niegpl on

