



...Continued from page 1

If the fundamental purpose of an educational system is to serve the future social, economic, political and cultural needs of the society in which it exists, then Singapore's educational system can be seen to have been very effective. Not only has it helped to create a first class lifestyle for its citizens but also it has achieved this in a very short period of time. All in all, it can be seen as an educational system of distinction. In fact, one of the most distinctive educational systems in the world. The NIE has been an integral part of this development since the 1950s (although under different names and at different locations) and in that sense, one could say that the professional fundamentals (to use a loosely applied economic analogy) are in place for us to maintain our position as a vocational training institute of distinction.

Secondly is our position within the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), which has itself a rapidly developing international reputation for research excellence, innovation and entrepreneurship.



NIE

We have been in this new academic context for only 10 years now and we are gradually developing our international academic presence in the region and the world. In this way, we will ultimately achieve our vision as being a world-class educational institute of distinction in the eyes of our colleagues across the world.

history, the NIE has never been more productive in research and development than it has been over the last decade. This is largely because we have not been a part of a world-class university. We have never had more postgraduate programmes on offer than we have today. We now have a strong cohort of PhD trained faculty. We have access to research funding both in-house and university wide and we have a new organisational structure, which gives greater flexibility to Heads of Academic Groups to allocate resources according to a Group's research strategy. Once again, it is fair to say that the 'fundamentals' are in place for us to be seen internationally as an institute of distinction.



NTU

In sum, it is up to us to make the best of the fundamentals surrounding our existence and to leverage and nurture our relationships with NTU (a university of distinction) and the MOE (an educational system of distinction).

In this way, we will ultimately achieve our vision as being a world-class educational institute of distinction in the eyes of our colleagues across the world.

In the final analysis, I guess it is up to us!

National Day Awards 2001

(Contributed by Public & International Relations)

National Day Awards are presented yearly to people who have served the nation and the community. This year, more than 700 grassroots leaders, civil servants and community leaders who made outstanding contributions to the society, and 400 who have given long service to their respective organisations, are honoured.

NIE is certainly proud that the following staff have been conferred with these distinguished honours:

The Public Service Star

Prof Leo Tan (Director, NIE)

The Public Administration Medal (Silver)

Prof S Gopinathan (Dean, Foundation Programmes)



Prof Leo Tan



Prof S Gopinathan



Ms Siti Alimah



Mr Abdullah Basil



Mr Kabirdas Perumal



Mrs Pauline Lim

The Long Service Medal

Ms Siti Alimah Aliyas (Operations Support Officer Grade IV, Natural Sciences)

Mr Abdullah Basil Bin Ramli (Operations Support Officer Grade IV, Science & Technology Education)

Mr Kabirdas Perumal (Corporate Support Officer Grade III, Strategic Planning & Corporate Services)

Mrs Lim-Tang Poh Lin, Pauline (Corporate Support Officer Grade I, Finance)

Corporate Affairs



News

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NIE: An Institute of Distinction?

(Contributed by Assoc Prof Ian Haslam, Head, Public & International Relations)

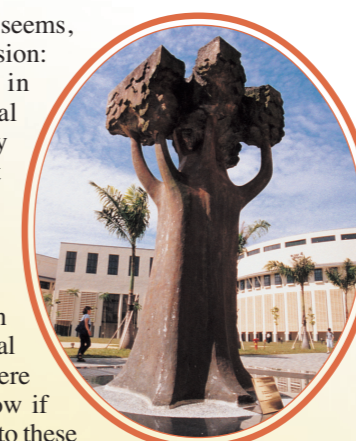
There has been much discussion, it seems, over the past few weeks on NIE's vision: to be an institute of distinction in teacher education and educational research. The International Advisory Panel had the opportunity to reflect on our quest, as did colleagues from the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the NIE.

The discourse naturally centred on the qualities that make an educational institute of distinction as well as where we are now and when we will know if we have arrived. The simple answer to these problems could reside in perhaps overseas organisations that appear to have achieved the level of recognition that we seek.

After a review of a selection of organisations in the likes of the University of London Institute of Education (UK), Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (Canada) and Columbia Teachers College (USA), it has given us some insights as to why they are held in such high esteem but no solutions to understanding our own situation. In the end, it was possible for us to glean certain attributes from these organisations that we could use in the local context.

1. On the one hand, these organisations had very close relationships with their respective Ministries and/or Boards of Education.
2. Secondly, they were positioned within an academic environment that itself was renowned as a high quality university.
3. It was evident that much of the work these institutions undertook was school and community based research work.
4. That their research did much to inform educational policy and practice.
5. They were involved in a variety of vocational education ranging from leadership training to preservice preparation.
6. That they were able to attract the best teacher education faculty in the country and the region had to offer and in some cases that the world had to offer.
7. That they subject themselves to rigorous quality assurance exercises.
8. That they always seemed to be evolving.

These are just a selection of insights that can be determined by reviewing institutes of distinction across the world. Certainly, the list is by no means inclusive and there are other organisations that would help us in our quest for greater insights. One thing that comes to mind though is how similar we are to other world class institutes of education especially in regard to the first two items on the list. That is our relationship to the educational system that we serve and our position as a 'University' institute of education.



Tree of Education

Director's MESSAGE

Everyday, since the new organisational structure has been in place, I learn something new. Sometimes I find it surprising, sometimes I find it a little shocking; but on the whole, I am encouraged and positive about our future. In the past few months, I have had the opportunity to peruse and probe a whole host of issues that cover everything from who we are to what we want to be. It has caused me to think about how the new matrix structure is literally making us work. Sounds a little sinister, I know, to suggest that a structure that we constructed could take on a life of its own but in fact that is what appears to be happening. Work processes in almost all areas and at all levels have different information flows than they had in the past. As each of us sifts through that information, which we deem relevant to the jobs we have been assigned, we find ourselves both empowered by what we come across and sometimes flustered.



It is through this information flow, which is the lifeblood of the NIE and the manner, the speed and the various directions in which it flows, that gives the NIE an organisational life of its own. Then I ponder about the best way for the management team to lead the development of the NIE with its new structure and I realise that it cannot be business as usual. But if we cannot use the old tools, then what might be the best management model we can use to enable the NIE to steer itself successfully? In other words, what might the best way to manage the ecology of the NIE be? A daunting question and one that neither my management team nor myself have yet found the answer. Only some interesting observations can be made at this time. The most interesting to me is the notion that, almost like changes in modern day teaching, management practice should move more towards facilitating rather than directing work processes. The extent to which my office, the Programme Offices and the office of the Academic Group heads can create a climate for high quality teaching and high quality research is the measure of our success. In like manner, the extent to which our management decisions inhibit outstanding work and outstanding achievement should probably be the focus of our attention. Within this context however, I know as many of my colleagues realise there are constraints and limitations having to do with available resources and the needs of our stakeholders. This is why we must establish benchmarks and formalise criteria against which our ability to cope with the ever changing demands on the NIE will be measured. We will need to be cognisant of the quality of our teaching, our research output, our consultancies, our relationships with colleagues, trainees and graduates as well as our relationships with our other stakeholders.

I think I would like to move to a greater understanding of the ecology of NIE. I am hopeful that our on-going efforts to improve communication flow and team building through information and communication technology (ICT), operational process reviews, for example, will help us understand what we do better and help us to grow as an organisation of scholars and teachers.

Continued on page 12...



Prof Margot Cameron-Jones

(Contributed by Assoc Prof Vilma D'Rozario & Assoc Prof Angela Wong, Foundation Programmes Office)

Visits NIE

Prof Cameron-Jones, Professor of Teacher Education at the University of Edinburgh, Practicum consultant and external examiner for the diploma programmes visited NIE in April this year.

During her visit with Assoc Prof Goh Kim Chuan (Associate Dean, Degree & Diploma Programmes) and Assoc Prof Vilma D'Rozario (Sub Dean, Diploma Programmes) and representatives from the Diploma Programmes Committee, she discussed the current status of the new diploma programmes. She also interacted with trainee teachers, primary school principals, and visited two primary schools to learn more about the needs of our schools with respect to the training of beginning teachers. She also reviewed trainees' assignments and examination scripts.

Prof Margot Cameron-Jones

As Prof Cameron-Jones had helped NIE develop the Practicum Partnership Model, she also met up with the Practicum Working Committee to discuss how the model could be further improved and also conducted a workshop on supervision skills for newer academic staff at NIE.

Her talk, *Rising Standards of Teacher Professionalism?*, described current global efforts to ensure rising standards of professionalism in teaching. It explored the factor which seems most likely to contribute to rising standards: that of the interaction between the personnel at the training site (cooperating teachers in the school) and the university staff (supervisor). She pointed out that quality interaction has been found to be vital in securing and maintaining the link between different partners in training. Although illustrated with examples from the United Kingdom, the talk had international applications and raised issues for NIE.

Using Cases to Enliven Teaching

(Contributed by Assoc Prof Vilma D'Rozario, Foundation Programmes Office, Asst Prof Mary Anne Heng, Specialised Education & Assoc Prof Anthony Seow, English Language & Literature)

A total of 40 NIE colleagues attended two workshops led by Rita Silverman, Professor of Education at Pace University and co-director of the Centre for Case Studies in Education at Pace University, New York in March 2001. The workshops were on writing and using cases in higher education.

Why the Case Workshops?

Case teaching is an active learning pedagogy, used for many years in the business and law schools in the United States, and elsewhere. The case teaching approach, where a relevant case is presented, analysed and discussed, encourages face-to-face interaction, thinking, active problem-solving and thus deeper learning. If we are to be successful in encouraging our trainees to stimulate thinking and interaction in their school classrooms, it follows that we should also use similar pedagogy.

Colleagues' Response to the Workshops

Our colleagues found the workshops relevant and expressed the intention of using cases in their future teaching. Learning how to analyse cases from different points of view, how to handle discussion on a case, and how to encourage student participation were some of the gems picked up. As a follow-up activity, colleagues stated that they would try using cases in their teaching, and that a Special Interest Group be formed so that they could get together to share their experiences in using cases, to identify materials on cases and future training, and to write cases together. Efforts are also underway to develop a directory of cases on education.



Prof Rita Silverman

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

Contributions from members of the Institute and all recipients of NIE News are most welcome. PIR reserves the right to accept, reject or amend any manuscripts, photographs and all other written material offered for its print.

The next issue of the NIE News will be published in January 2002. Submissions should reach PIR by **20 November 2001**.

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Assoc Prof Lee Sing Kong, Winner of the Excellence for Singapore Award 2001

(Contributed by Public & International Relations)

Our heartiest congratulations to Assoc Prof Lee Sing Kong (Dean, Graduate Programmes & Research) on being conferred the *Excellence for Singapore Award* for his aeroponic technology and research that has earned international recognition.

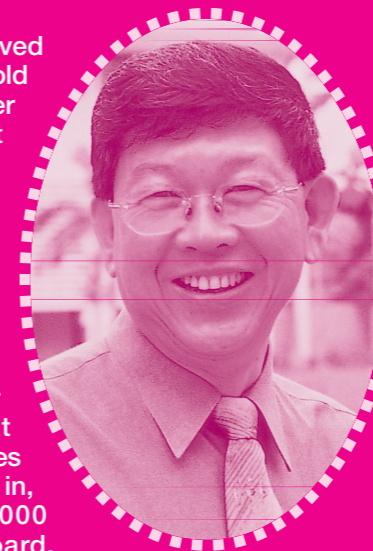
This award is presented annually by the Singapore Totalisator Board to recognise and honour individuals, groups of individuals or organisations that bring credit to Singapore by being among the best in their areas of activity in Asia or in the world.

"The honour of the award goes more to NIE and NTU as it is a recognition of their vision and concerted support for the aeroponic project. I hope that the recognition, which the project receives through this award, will also inspire our trainee teachers to dare to be innovative and creative when encountered with challenges in their careers as teachers. I am also grateful to all my colleagues who have given me their unstinting support throughout the many years of hard work," said Assoc Prof Lee.

The aeroponic technology developed by Assoc Prof Lee has since been licensed for commercial applications. This has led to the development of the world's largest aeroponic farm in Singapore and a second commercial aeroponic farm in Malaysia.

Assoc Prof Lee's aeroponic technology has been featured in prime news internationally and published in many national and international newspapers and magazines. The international hydroponics magazine *Practical Hydroponics and Greenhouses* even regarded Singapore as the pioneer in commercial aeroponics and Assoc Prof Lee as a world authority in tropical aeroponics.

Award winners received a specially-minted gold medallion from former Singapore President Dr Wee Kim Wee at the ceremony on 1 August 2001 at the Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel. Winners were also given the privilege of choosing a non-profit organisation or organisations that promoted the activities which they excelled in, to receive \$10,000 donated by the Board. Assoc Prof Lee has donated the sum to the NTU Endowment Fund.



Assoc Prof Lee Sing Kong, the man behind aeroponics

WELCOME

Human Resource & Finance Mr Kwang Sing Hock, Peter	- Deputy Divisional Director (Human Resource & Finance)
Finance Mdm Tan Lee Noy	- Corporate Support Officer (Grade IV)
Development & Estates Mr Zaw Min	- Estate Officer
Centre for IT in Education Miss Tan Ei Hui	- Technical Officer (Grade B)
Computer Services Centre Miss Neo Lay Kiok Mr Chandra Sekaran Rajavel Mr Lim Kuan Heong	- Systems Analyst - Analyst Programmer - Laboratory Technician (Grade D)
Mr Tan Boon Leong, William	- Laboratory Technician (Grade D)
Library and Information Services Centre Mdm Ng Lee Peo	- Corporate Support officer (Grade V)
Practicum Miss Tan Yen Sen	- Management Support Officer (Grade VI)
Special Programmes Office Mdm Choo En Loo Mrs Chan-Chew Lay Pin	- Administrative Officer - Management Support Officer (Grade VI)
Graduate Programmes & Research Office Ms Yuen Wai Yin, Serena Miss Lim Sing Fung	- Administrative Officer - Administrative Officer
Policy & Management Studies Asst Prof Ng Foo Seong, David Asst Prof Lana Khong Yiu Lan Dr David Howard Tripp Asst Prof Kang Lu-Ming, Trivina	- Assistant Professor - Assistant Professor - Senior Fellow - Assistant Professor
Specialised Education Prof David Ross Mitchell	- Visiting Professor
Psychological Studies Asst Prof Liu Woon Chia Assoc Prof (Adj) Chee Wei Liang, Michael	- Assistant Professor - Adjunct Associate Professor
Instructional Science Mr Chong Whye Seng	- Laboratory Technician (Grade D)
Mr Chai Ching Sing	- Lecturer
English Language & Literature Asst Prof Leong Ping, Alvin	- Assistant Professor
Asian Languages & Cultures Mdm Sa'eda Bte Buang	- Teaching Fellow (on secondment from MOE)
Visual & Performing Arts Asst Prof Colin George Reaney Mr Eric Peter Stead Miss Suharti Bte Mohamed Samuni	- Assistant Professor - Lecturer - Corporate Support Officer (Grade V)
Physical Education & Sports Science Dr Peggy Ann Hunt Asst Prof Wang Chee Keng, John	- Senior Fellow - Assistant Professor
Mathematics & Mathematics Education Mr Leong Yew Hoong Mr Toh Tin Lam	- Lecturer - Lecturer
Natural Sciences Miss Teo Lai Lai Miss Chew Yiwen Miss Ng Irene	- Project Officer - Research Assistant - Project Officer

The NIE Teachers' Investiture Ceremony July 2001

(Contributed by Public & International Relations)

About the Ceremony

A total of 1774 newly qualified teachers received their NIE diplomas at the Teachers' Investiture Ceremony held at the Singapore Indoor Stadium on 4 July 2001. It was also an occasion to welcome them into the teaching profession.

The ceremony was presided over by Mr Chiang Chie Foo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education (MOE), who is also the Chairman of the NIE Council. Rear-Admiral (NS) Teo Chee Hean, Minister for Education, graced the occasion as Guest-of-Honour.

The first session saw 754 teachers receiving their Diploma in Education, Diploma in Art Education and Diploma in Home Economics Education certificates from the NIE Council

Chairman. Rear-Admiral (NS) Teo presented the National Youth Council's Outstanding Youth in Education Award (OYEA) 2001.

In the second session, 1020 teachers received their Postgraduate Diploma in Education, Diploma in Physical Education and other diplomas from the Chairman, NIE Council.

On behalf of the graduands, a valedictorian spoke and expressed their thoughts, aspirations and hopes in undergoing their training at NIE at each ceremony.

The graduands present at the ceremony also recited the Teachers' Pledge, just before the close of the ceremony.

Let's Hear from the Award Winners

Mr Marvin Chan Weng Yew, Bachelor of Science (Honours) with Diploma in Education, received the following awards:

- * **Lee Kuan Yew Gold Medal**
- Awarded for best performance in general proficiency throughout the course of study and for attaining First Class Honours;
- * **National Science and Technology Board Gold Medal**
- Awarded for best performance in research and academic work; and
- * **Genetron Engineering Corporation Book Prize**
- Awarded for Best Performance in Physics.

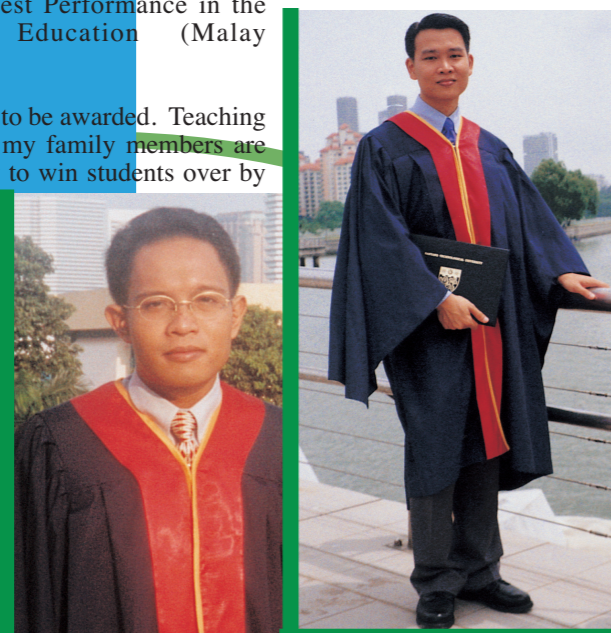
"It is a pleasant surprise winning these prizes. This will certainly spur me on in teaching. Joining the teacher profession is very heartening as it allows me to nurture the young and go home each evening with the thought that someone has learnt something from me," expressed Mr Chan. Well said!

Mr Muhammad Zulkifli Bin Rahmat, Diploma in Education, attained the following prizes:

- * **Rotary International 75th Anniversary Gold Medal**
- Awarded for excellence in the NIE examinations as well as for outstanding leadership and dedication to student activities in the institute; and
- * **Singapore Malay Teachers' Union Book Prize**
- Awarded for Best Performance in the Diploma in Education (Malay Specialisation).

"I am extremely glad to be awarded. Teaching is not new to me as my family members are teachers. The ability to win students over by adapting oneself to the mindset and needs of the students is an important attribute of a good teacher. Treat teaching as a passion," said Mr Zulkifli. Keep it up!

Mr Muhammad
Zulkifli Bin
Rahmat



Mr Marvin Chan

About the Outstanding Youth in Education Award (OYEA) 2001

Introduced in 1999, the Outstanding Youth in Education Award (OYEA) is administrated by the National Youth Council (NYC) with support from the Teachers' Network of the MOE. Besides honouring the achievements of deserving young educators, the OYEA serves to inspire youths to take up a teaching career and be an excellent role model for the younger generation.

The objectives of the Award are as follows:

- * to give national recognition to the role young teachers play in moulding the future of our nation; and
- * to recognise outstanding young teachers for their youthful idealism, enthusiasm, energy and active involvement in the development of youth beyond the formal education curriculum.

This year, the OYEA winners are:

- * Mrs Aw Ai Ling, Head of the Humanities Department at Crescent Girls' School;
- * Mr Subash Anthony Lazar, Assistant Head of Co-Curricular Activities at Mayflower Secondary School; and
- * Mdm Diane Goh Ling Ling, Disciplinary Head and English Language Level Head at Radin Mas Primary School.



Guest-of-Honour: Rear-Admiral (NS) Teo Chee Hean, Minister for Education addressing the graduands and guests



Graduands reciting the Teachers' Pledge



Rear-Admiral (NS) Teo Chee Hean in conversation with the graduands



Newly qualified teachers at the Teachers' Investiture Ceremony



Presenting the OYEA Winners (from left) Mrs Aw Ai Ling, Mr Subash Anthony Lazar and Mdm Diane Goh

The Diploma in Departmental Management Graduation Ceremony July 2001

(Contributed by Public & International Relations)

About the Diploma in Departmental Management

A total of 131 newly appointed Heads of Department received their Diploma in Departmental Management (DDM) certificates at a graduation ceremony held on 11 July 2001 at the Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM) Auditorium. Mrs Lim Soon Tze, Director of Schools, Ministry of Education (MOE), was the Guest-of-Honour for the ceremony.

The DDM is a training programme for heads of department and other school leaders in Singapore schools. It is managed by the Graduate Programmes and Research Office, NIE. In consultation with the MOE, the programme is designed by NIE's team of experts and professionals who have had considerable experience of working with school leaders.

This year, the award and book prize winners are as follows:

Dr Ruth Wong Medal

The best performance in the DDM for Primary and Secondary were awarded to Mdm Luwena Goh Hui May, Raffles Girls' Primary School and Mr Ivan Lee Thiam Hin, Tanglin Secondary School respectively.

When asked about the challenges facing Heads of Department, they replied:

Mdm Luwena Goh : "These include building a cohesive team of teachers, being an effective leader and a role model in all areas as well as devising innovative programmes for students and teachers."

Mr Ivan Lee : "The Head of Department not only has to be a 'pathfinder', ie a coach and people developer, he should also be a lifelong learner and a change agent; who can shape the culture and transform the department into a learning organisation."

That's the way to go!

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Book Prize

The best performance in the Departmental Management component of the DDM Primary and Secondary were given to Mrs Renata Tay Ren Jee, St Margaret's Primary School and Mr Toh Ang Poh, East View Secondary School respectively.

So, what are their words of advice for aspiring teachers?

Mrs Renata Tay : "Networking with a group of teachers to share ideas, teaching method and strategies. Be focused and guided by your mission in teaching. When faced with setbacks, this will keep you in perspective and see the obstacles as temporary."

Mr Toh Ang Poh : "Teaching is challenging. You always have to do your best and never lose faith in your love and belief for teaching. In this way, you will find teaching rewarding."

To put it simply - passion is the key to teaching!



Mrs Lim Soon Tze delivering her address



The award winners are (clockwise) Mr Toh Ang Poh, Mr Ivan Lee, Mdm Luwena Goh and Mrs Renata Tay

Singapore

H.E.A.L.T.H. Award 2001

(Contributed by Public & International Relations)

An effective and sustained workplace health promotion programme produces benefits, such as increased productivity, reduced sickness-absenteeism, fewer work-related injuries, controlled health care costs, increased employee morale and lower staff turnover.

This year, NTU is a *Silver Award* recipient for the *Singapore H.E.A.L.T.H. (Helping Employees Achieve Life-Time Health) Award 2001*. Presented by the Ministry of Health, it is in recognition of NTU's commitment and effort to promote workplace and life-time health.

In conjunction with this award, Assoc Prof Quek Jin Jong (Principal Officer, Director's Office, NIE and Chairman, NTU Healthy Lifestyle Committee) received the *H.E.A.L.T.H. Promoter Award 2001*.

"While the *Singapore H.E.A.L.T.H. Silver Award* for NTU recognises the university's enlightened philosophy and support in promoting health and wellness programmes within the university, the *H.E.A.L.T.H. Promoter Award* recognises the excellent and dedicated team I have in executing the planned programmes.

My team and I are delighted with the recognition. However, our foremost aim is to follow up with the data gathered from our recent survey and tailor a programme to meet the needs of our colleagues," said Assoc Prof Quek.

Congratulations, Assoc Prof Quek!



Assoc Prof Quek Jin Jong (left) receiving the H.E.A.L.T.H. Promoter Award from Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong

Sports Scene:

NIE finding Success in NTU Inter-School Arena

(Contributed by Asst Prof David J Waters, Physical Education & Sports Science)

Each year, the sportsmen and women of NIE take to campus arena, courts, fields, athletic tracks and gymnasiums in search of camaraderie, competition and sport competency. Throughout the school year, the Inter-School Staff Games pit staff and faculty from NTU and NIE against each other in events ranging from bowling and darts to soccer and softball.

Thus far in 2001, NIE teams have fared very well.

Captained by Assoc Prof Daniel Smith (Physical Education & Sports Science), NIE fielded a strong volleyball team and rolled through the assembled bumpers-and-spikers with ease. Losing just one game in the entire six-a-side tourney, NIE beat GINTIC to gain its first shield in February. Each match, great setting performances were turned in by Mr Tan Hoon Chiang (Head, Computer Services Centre).

In March, a determined handful of hard court hoopsters defended their Inter-School Basketball title by stringing together three straight victories with impressive margins of 15, 40 and 19 points. Leading the charge were Assoc Prof Steven Wright and Mr Koh Suan Lam (Physical Education & Sports Science).

In April, NIE's softball squad batted, ran and scored aplenty while deftly defending their infield and outfield territories. They

put together an impressive string of wins, claiming the Inter-School Championship Crown. Assoc Prof Daniel Crosswell (Humanities & Social Studies Education) displayed superb pitching and base running prowess, while fielding kudos went to Visiting Professor Paul Schempp.

Shield events are on-going and participants are most welcome. Interested? Contact Asst Prof G Balasekaran (Physical Education & Sports Science) for more information.



Basketball Champions: (from left) Assoc Prof Steven Wright, Asst Prof David Waters, Assoc Prof Daniel Smith, Mr Koh Suan Lam, Mr Jason Liu, Mr Mark Reimer and Dr Thomas Patterson

Singapore

Sports

Ace 2001

(Contributed by Public & International Relations)

NTU has been given yet another award, the Singapore Sports Council's *Singapore Sports ACE Certificate of Commendation* for promoting sports and fitness actively to its staff.

Let's have a glimpse at the health promotion plans:

"NTU is one of the few organisations which launched its own Fitness Award. But what we are targeting at is getting more of our colleagues to exercise on a regular basis.

To encourage greater participation in physical activities, the NTU Healthy Lifestyle Committee is paying for all facility charges levied for staff. So all of us should capitalise on this move," commented Assoc Prof Quek.

National Day Observance Ceremony

(Contributed by Public & International Relations)

More than 800 trainee teachers and staff gathered at the Triangle near the Administration Block for the National Day Observance Ceremony on 8 August 2001.

Attired in specially-designed polo-shirts, the ceremony began with the march-in trainee teachers contingent. This was followed by the flag raising, pledge taking and reading of the Minister for Education's speech by Prof Leo Tan (Director, NIE).

NIE plays a very important role in preparing our young for the future:

"The future we will face is a challenging and exciting one. All of us at NIE have the responsibility to prepare our young for that future. What exactly that future holds we do not know. Some of the jobs in the future have not even been invented yet. But we do know the qualities that we will need to do well in the future.

Our young need a solid foundation in literacy and numeracy. They have to be able to communicate and present themselves well, to be IT-savvy, to be able to work with different people and most importantly, to be able to think on their feet, create and take opportunities, and manage uncertainty and stress. It is in school that our young can first develop many of these qualities. Indeed these are qualities that all of us need to have.

We also have to make sure that our young learn about our country. When they know the facts and understand the context which Singapore is in, they will have a more complete picture of the issues and be more confident of the choices that they make and can contribute more meaningfully towards ensuring Singapore's future.

At NIE, we all play a role, either directly or indirectly, in equipping our young with the right values and skills so as to translate these goals into reality in the exciting future ahead. Therefore, we ourselves must be anchored to a core set of fundamental values; and we have to continuously improve and innovate to stay relevant," said Rear-Admiral (NS) Teo Chee Hean, Minister for Education.

Organised by the NIE National Education Committee, the ceremony was followed by a concert, with performances by our very own talent. National Day souvenirs were also distributed to staff, trainee teachers and students from the Townsville Campus.



In unison, everyone sang 'Mari Kita, Rakyat Singapura'



Trainee teacher Miss Karen Low and Asst Prof Harry Tan with their 'Speedy Gonzales' song

Pinholes & Paintings: Imaging Art Exhibition

(Contributed by Asst Prof Jane Leong, Visual & Performing Arts)

Imaging Art Exhibition was a collaborative effort by second year art students of Visual & Performing Arts. Held at the Art Gallery from 9 to 28 July 2001, it consisted of experimental pinhole camera works, featuring photographs taken with students' makeshift pinhole cameras produced during a pinhole photography workshop conducted by renowned local artist Tang Dawu. Pinhole cameras and paintings, related to the photographic experiments, were also on display.



Photograph taken with pinhole camera (on left)

Teachers' Challenge: A Touch of Rugby?

(Contributed by Ms Rita Zamzamah, President of Trainee Teachers' Club – Academic Year 2000/2001)

The continual challenges faced by teachers today can be overwhelming, yet undeniably exciting. As in playing a team sport such as rugby, the passion within ourselves motivates us teachers to strive towards a common goal. With the racing pace of this profession, it can only be our passion for our profession that will pulsate through our students and enthuse them about life and learning. Not easy a challenge, yet all of us must have experienced having that admirable, unforgettable star who has shaped our lives. Deep within us, we too hope to one day be that admirable, unforgettable star to someone.

Touched Rugby indeed! This year, NIE celebrated Teachers' Day with a fine mark, as organised by the Trainee Teachers' Club (and its sub-clubs). For the second year running, Teachers' Challenge took field. A friendly tournament of Captain's Ball team, playing and traineer teachers, the challenge saw through exposés of cooperation, friendship and interdependence among its players. Four teams of staff and trainee teachers took on the challenge. The academic and non-academic staff made up the Grey team, playing with the Red, Turquoise and Blue teams, all of whom comprised trainee teachers. Although physically challenging, the games were filled with laughter as players and spectators were entertained by the antics of our fellow colleagues. Hierarchies and ranks stripped, equality on court left each player with a fair share of bruises and scratches, as players themselves, self-evolved the rules of Captain's Ball to liken that of Rugby! In his second year being part of Teachers'

Challenge, Edmund Heng (Bachelor of Arts, Year 3) disclosed that, "there are innumerable ways to celebrate the occasion but I am glad that the core meaning of this day remains true to the spirit of forging relationships between teachers and learners." Teachers' Challenge 2001 ended with the Red Team having an 11-9 win over the Grey team. Noor Hasnizan (Bachelor of Arts, Year 3) of the Champion team shared, "the scratches and bruises were worth it as I really felt united with friends from different courses." Asst Prof G Balasekaran (Advisor, Physical Education & Sports Science Club) who won the title last year, thought well of the spirit of the teams and look forward to another exciting round next year.

The touchdown of the Teachers' Day Celebrations 2001 was the Lunchtime Concert and Dedications where trainee teachers joined hands to collaboratively put up a showcase of talents. With the lush greenery of the rainforest background, fellow colleagues enjoyed lunch while being entertained. Prof Leo Tan (Director, NIE and Chief Advisor to the Trainee Teachers' Club) and Assoc Prof Vilma D'Rozario (Sub Dean, Diploma Programmes and Second Advisor to the Trainee Teachers' Club) commended the efforts of the trainee teachers for having worked very hard to put up the show. "It has been fun being part of the staff team. I too enjoyed the concert very much and appreciate the efforts of the students. With the success of having a stage in the canteen, we could have more of that in the future," shared Assoc Prof D'Rozario.

Nandakumar (Bachelor of Arts, Year 3) saw the concert as a 'greater opportunity (for him) to work with fellow trainees'. The audience walked away dazzled by the voices of Rai, Samuel, Natalie and Hairul, as well as the moves of Kiran, Shahirah, Kumar and dancers from the Tamil Language Club. On top of all that, the bond and spirit of NIE was strongly felt. A heartwarming celebration, the unspoken affiliation became self-evident towards the end of the day. What could have been a nicer end to a special day of tribute being paid to us, teachers.



Games and performances

Research

NIE TEAM TACKLES MYSTERIES OF SINGAPORE'S MONSTER GUNS

(Contributed by Asst Prof Karl Hack, Humanities & Social Studies Education)

Every 15 February is Total Defence Day, marking the day Singapore fell in 1942. But, did you know that there are bunkers and concrete emplacements, left over from that defeat all around Singapore? Not just on Sentosa and at Labrador, but on Pulau Tekong Besar, and near Changi Airport too.

A team comprising Asst Prof Kevin Blackburn (coordinator), Asst Prof Karl Hack, Asst Prof Rahil Ismail, Ms Doreen Tan and Ms Sim Hwee Hwang from the Humanities & Social Studies Education Academic Group will be unravelling the riddle of one of the most important of these sites: the Johore Battery, near Changi Prison.

This site contains abandoned tunnels and magazines related to three of Singapore's biggest guns. Referred to at the time as *Singapore's Monster Guns*, these 200-ton giants could lob 15-inch shells over 20 miles to sea to smash into battleships.



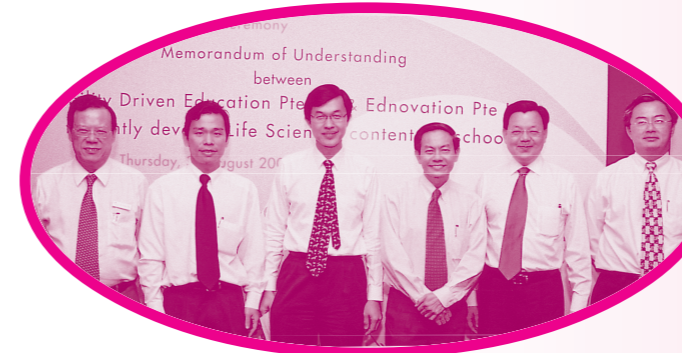
Singapore's Monster Guns

They have also been the object of heated argument: were many of them only able to point seawards? Were they useless against the Japanese attack that came from the north, and so symbols of Britain's lack of preparations to defend Singapore?

The NIE team will discover more about these guns, such as their place in the Singapore story, and present them to visitors, teachers and students in a compelling way. This is part of the consultancy services for the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), which is preparing the Johore Battery site for opening on the 60th anniversary of Singapore's fall: 15 February 2002. The partnership should fuse NIE's expertise in research and teaching, with STB's record in developing heritage sites for the public. Hopefully, this will not only contribute to our heritage, but also provide an impetus for further public service projects.

Memorandum of Understanding between Ability Driven Education Pte Ltd and Ednovation Pte Ltd

(Contributed by Public & International Relations)



(From left) Mr Sim Cheng Tee, Divisional Director, Corporate Planning & Development, NIE; Mr Charles Chua, Chief Operating Officer, ADE; Assoc Prof Chia Tet Fatt; Prof Leo Tan, Director, NIE; Dr Richard Yen, Managing Director, Ednovation and Mr Hee Joh Liang, Senior Vice President, Ednovation

Ability Driven Education Pte Ltd (ADE), a spin-off from NIE, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Ednovation Pte Ltd, a leading educational technology company in Singapore on 30 August 2001.

The MOU will allow both parties to drive ability-driven education via project work in Singapore schools using Internet technologies.

Background

In line with the Ministry of Education's (MOE) vision of *Thinking Schools, Learning Nation*, Assoc Prof Chia Tet Fatt (Natural Sciences) operationalised and exposed the concept of ability-driven education vis-à-vis novel programmes to schools. Ability-driven education is a process-driven approach to learning which centres on project work. The approach encourages students to use their collaborative work and creative problem solving skills for the creation of end products. Where feasible, these products could be marketed commercially, thereby cultivating a spirit for entrepreneurship.

Besides his role as an educator with NIE's Natural Sciences Academic Group, Assoc Prof Chia has been actively involved in molecular biology research and development. To preserve Singapore's heritage in orchids and leading position in orchid hybridisation industry, as well as to pioneer the ability-driven approach to learning in schools, he introduced the Orchid Hybridisation Programme.

The Orchid Hybridisation Programme (OHP)

The OHP brings the spirit of research into the schools. As part of the OHP, Assoc Prof Chia trains teachers through seminars

and field trips, on the process of orchid hybridisation. Upon completion of the training, teachers establish an Orchid Corner in their schools and in turn, pass on their knowledge of orchid hybridisation to their students.

Students are taught how to take care of orchids, participate in the hybridisation of new orchids, observe simple genetic traits and undergo research. It is anticipated that through the OHP, students will generate commercialised products, including new orchid hybrids, discoveries and inventions. To date, about 100 hybrids, which are still in the infancy stage, have been created.

The OHP has been introduced in schools across Singapore since early this year. It is anticipated that 40 schools will embark on the OHP yearly, creating an estimated 1000 new hybrids a year. Students can choose to name the hybrids after themselves, or auction the naming of their unique hybrids through an Internet auction site. Revenue generated will flow back to the teachers and students in the form of vouchers, bursaries, scholarships and study trips. The whole programme is designed to develop creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial abilities amongst the students.

The SchoolDNA-OHP Learning Portal

To propagate the OHP in schools, Ednovation Pte Ltd has developed the SchoolDNA, a content-rich, web-based e-learning solution for students and teachers.

The OHP is the first of an on-going series of collaborative projects in life sciences between ADE and Ednovation Pte Ltd. Through this collaboration, ADE and Ednovation Pte Ltd hope to share a variety of unique and purposeful ability-driven, project-based learning programmes with schools in Singapore.

Seminar on Enhancing Meaningful Learning Among Primary Science Students

(Contributed by Assoc Prof Boo Hong Kwen, Science & Technology Education)

On 10 July 2001, Assoc Prof Boo Hong Kwen (Science & Technology Education), at the invitation of the Makassar State University, presented a paper entitled *Enhancing Meaningful Learning Among Primary Science Students* to over 200 participants. This international seminar was organised in celebration of the 40th anniversary of Makassar State University, Sulawesi, Indonesia. The presentation ended with a Question and Answer session in which meaningful and valuable ideas were exchanged between the presenter and participants.



Assoc Prof Boo Hong Kwen presenting at the seminar