

Lifelong Learner Story Series ▶▶



Matilda Huang, Alumni of NIE/2007

- ▶ Pursuing Master of Education (Early Childhood) with NIE NTU
- ▶ Completed FlexiMasters in Early Childhood Education

Which aspect of this FlexiMasters do you like the most?

Pursuing a Master's degree has always been something I wanted to do. However, I hesitated for years because I wasn't certain if I could deal with the workload. The course nature of the FlexiMasters in Early Childhood Education appealed strongly because it allowed me to pursue my studies one course at a time on a schedule that I can commit to. In addition, I was able to have a feel of the postgraduate programme and decide if I

really wanted to pursue a Master of Education (Early Childhood). Being able to do so confirmed my decision to pursue a Master's degree in this field.

Could you share with us some interesting facets of the FlexiMasters you enrolled?

When I took my first course, I was surprised that the lecturers were so friendly and opened to sharing their work and life experiences with us. It really felt like we were colleagues in the same field, sharing and learning together. Each course took on a character on its own, largely determined by the lecturers' teaching styles and my coursemates. It was enriching to meet different personalities and benefit from what they brought to the classroom through the weekly sharing in class. One of my favourite learning moments was the stories from the Early Childhood arena, and how the lecturers drew relevance to the concepts and theories taught in class. I felt that everything we learnt was very real and applicable directly to the Early Childhood arena.

Share with us a memorable experience you had during your time at NTU.

I remember stepping into the tutorial room for the very first time for my first FlexiMasters course. There was a sense of fear and trepidation as everything felt so familiar and yet so foreign at the same time. I was worried about not being able to fully digest academic journals and if my contributions in class were not good enough. However, I soon realised that I had nothing to fear because my coursemates were all very welcoming and generous in sharing what they already known. Most of them were much more experienced than me and were very happy to share their knowledge and experience. To date, this has been my biggest takeaway - learning from the experiences of my lecturers and fellow coursemates.

What were the challenges you faced when trying to complete this FlexiMasters?

The biggest challenge I faced would be juggling family life and my studies. Thankfully my husband and parents were very supportive. It was only because of them that I was able to make it for class weekly! Aside from that, completing the readings and assignments required me to be creative in finding pockets of time. Most of the time, I studied alongside with my children or camped at eateries while waiting for them to finish their lessons. They were often curious about what I was reading or writing and I found those moments excellent opportunities to expose them to tertiary education and issues or concepts that may be relevant to them in time to come.

Has this FlexiMasters benefitted you in your career development?

Before I ran a business developing educational materials for preschool children, I was a teacher for a number of years. Pursuing a Master's degree in this field seemed like a natural progression towards my interest and profession. After obtaining my FlexiMasters, I'm hoping that I can take on a professional role with greater responsibility and influence in the industry. The early childhood industry has been gaining traction and coupled with increased focus from the government on the importance of childhood and early education - it is indeed exciting times for those in the industry.

Will you recommend PaCE@NTU's programmes to your friends and family?

Definitely! I would recommend PaCE@NTU's programmes especially to those who have been thinking of pursuing continuing education but afraid to do so due to their commitments. The courses and programmes offered by PaCE@NTU can be completed based on individual's level of commitment. The first step forward is usually the most daunting, but thankfully PaCE@NTU's programmes make this step now less daunting and definitely do-able for us.