

Getting To Know Our Students

Koh Wei Xun, Master of Education (Developmental Psychology) graduate



Koh Wei Xun
is the ERAS Gold Medal
award winner for 2021.

Please share with us your professional life's journey thus far and at which point in your career did you aspire to do a graduate programme?

I initially graduated from SMU Business, specialising in Marketing and Operations. After graduation, I joined the private tuition industry as a primary school science teacher, and then as a mathematics and science tutor at an international preparation centre. It was during my time at the international preparation centre that I decided to enrol in NIE's graduate programme.

What attracted you to your chosen programme at NIE?

Although juggling school and work was stressful, having the option to do the programme part-time while working concurrently, without the need to sacrifice one or the other, was a major factor in my decision to study at NIE.

I chose to specialise in developmental psychology as I felt that psychology addresses many of the roots of learning issues, difficulties, and problems. It is a multi-disciplinary field that can generate beneficial impact across many disciplines, including curriculum and pedagogies, and even educational policies.

Could you share with us some interesting facets of your programme?

There was a lot of experiential learning involved and the lecturers made sure that information was suitably delivered. A lot of thought had been put into the course content and structure and it showed when you see how engaged the students were during class activities, even after a full day's work. For example, I remember the MDP903 Counselling Children and Adolescents course had multiple role-play components in it. Imagine that – adults role-playing a counselling session. It was definitely out of our comfort zone, but it was memorable as we had practical hands-on experience in enacting the basics of a counselling environment.

What was the best part of being a student at NIE?

The best part of being a student would be being able to make mistakes without being judged, and regardless of where we came from, everybody's opinion was treated with respect. It was amazing to see classmates from different working backgrounds coming together to accomplish something. It was truly refreshing to be able to work with different groups across the courses, and to experience this interplay of dynamics and to learn from everyone.

How would you describe the learning culture in NIE?

Can you share at least one specific learning experience that had left a deep impact on you?

The learning culture at NIE is one that is very open in nature, where students and teachers alike share their professional and life stories in abundance and there are many lessons to be learnt from every discussion that we partake in during class. I particularly enjoyed my MDP903 Counselling Children and Adolescents course as the lecturer frequently recounted past experiences and how these adolescents impacted her life. It was this creation of a safe learning environment that spurred deeper conversations and learning within our groups and within the class.

Has your experience in NIE been beneficial to you in your career?

Yes, my experience at NIE has definitely been beneficial to me.

After enrolling in the programme, I found research to be something that I loved doing and I made the switch to becoming a full-time Research Assistant at NIE instead. The programme also gave me the flexibility to take elective courses outside of my specialisation. For example, I could take MPM903 Measurement Theory to learn more about Rasch Measurement, which was a key concept used in my work at NIE during that time.

Would you recommend the programmes at NIE to someone else? What would you say about it?

Definitely! I would tell them that the programmes at NIE are taught by very experienced academics who are not only versed in the theoretical frameworks, but many of them were also former educators. Hence they understand the practical considerations that educators face as well. The programme stretches your thinking also as there are ample opportunities given to students to ideate during group projects and research proposals.