

Getting To Know Our Students

Lynn Koh, Master of Education (Early Childhood) graduate



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is currently working as a Centre Principal at Kiddy Ark Childcare and Development Centre and is a Master of Education (Early Childhood) graduate.

At what point in your career did you consider pursuing a higher degree education?

The idea of pursuing a master's degree programme was mooted five years ago. At that time, I was feeling rather stagnated in my work and wanted to seek out some professional development. With the government's push for lifelong learning, I decided to pursue a higher degree instead of modular courses or seminars. I desire to use my knowledge effectively to contribute more towards the early childhood industry, and a holistic programme such as a master's degree will certainly help me to achieve this.

Describe the factors that led you to choose NIE.

I was deciding between NIE and another institution initially. Both are equally reputable and known for offering quality programmes. Despite the distance from my home, I chose NIE due to its programme structure. I like how the learning is paced out through the year. After the first semester of intensive learning, there is a break of 3 months before a new semester of intensive learning begins. Though the learning is rigorous, it was comfortable since there is time to recharge mentally in between semesters. Such a structure is ideal for working adults like me who need to juggle studies with work and family commitments.

Which aspect of the programme and courses do you like the most?

I like all the courses in early childhood. Besides gaining knowledge, the learning enables me to keep up to date with current research and practices as well as trends and issues in the early childhood landscape. For instance, from the Assessment course, I learned that assessment is a mean to an end, rather than an end in itself. The process has to be purposeful and meaningful to better benefit children's learning and enhance teachers' pedagogical skills. Moreover, the current highly recommended type of assessment has a sociocultural approach that looks at a child's learning holistically within a community instead of solely from within the child.

Share with us a memorable experience you had during your time at NIE?

I especially enjoyed the learning journeys organised by the lecturers for us to better understand and appreciate what they have taught. For instance, I was able to visit a Montessori preschool and a Waldorf preschool to gain a better understanding of how both different teaching approaches are adopted in the local context. Many of our preschools' curriculums are thematic based and seeing how other educational approaches can benefit children's learning led me to rethink what else can be improved in my preschool. My conclusion is that an eclectic approach is probably the best since it enables me to tap into the strengths of different approaches.

Describe your relationship with the NIE faculty members.

The Early Childhood lecturers are highly qualified, experienced and knowledgeable in their own fields. They are approachable and very ready to render help to students when needed, sometimes even before we asked. Some went the extra mile to provide written feedback on our assignments. It was most helpful to know how and where to improve for subsequent assignments. Personally, I greatly appreciate all their assistance and input for my learning. It has helped to stretch me mentally, teach me to examine issues at work more deeply and reflect on my practices more regularly. I am definitely better equipped to be a more effective early childhood practitioner now.

Will you recommend NIE's programmes to your friends?

Yes, I would highly recommend NIE's quality programme. In fact, I have already spoken to some friends about it. Learning at NIE was an enriching experience. I also got to meet and network with other professionals and early childhood practitioners here. The mental sparring with them and practical knowledge shared among us during class is something that I will certainly miss upon graduation.