

Getting To Know Our Students

Tan Xian Jing, Master of Arts (Humanities Education) graduate



Tan Xian Jing
is currently a History/Social Studies teacher and is a Master of Arts (Humanities Education) graduate.

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

I considered pursuing a higher degree education in my fifth year of teaching service. I wanted to see if my experiences as a teacher would allow me to gain new perspectives on History as a discipline. I felt there was a need to gain new insights on issues and events that would allow me to take on greater responsibility as a history educator.

Describe the factors that led you to choose NIE.

I wanted to pursue my studies locally due to family commitments. I chose NIE as it was the place that would allow me to investigate the complexities behind integrating History, the discipline, into the subject History in school. My interest in the humanities and my love for my work as an educator led me to NIE.

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

I enjoyed the interdisciplinary exposure from the programme. As a History / Social Studies teacher, I am glad that I get to pursue courses related to both disciplines. In addition, I had the opportunity to pursue a Geography course that allowed me to gain new perspectives that are critical in understanding the needs and concerns of my Geography colleagues in the Humanities Department.

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

I had National Service commitments in my first semester and I was taking five courses as a full-time student. I was worried about how I could cope with the intensity of the programme, especially after six years being away from the rigours of academia. I approached my then programme leader, Dr Wu Bing Sheng and he was able to provide me with sound advice on the options available to me. Eventually, I was able to obtain a deferment from National Service thanks to the efforts of Dr Wu, who explained to my superiors on the demands of courses and the disruption of missing classes. That put my mind at ease and I was able to acclimatise to life as a post-graduate student.

Describe your relationship with the NIE faculty members.

The NIE faculty members were really encouraging and were always on hand to help if I had any trouble with the assignments. They were open to new ideas and always enjoyed a robust debate. In addition, many of the faculty members were genuinely concerned about us, as they would always consider the timetable in school when deciding the assignment submission deadlines, knowing that many of us were part-time students. I was fortunate enough to pursue my studies full-time but even so, they would ask if I am comfortable with taking on five courses in a semester and would always be most accommodating to the requests of students.

Will you recommend NIE's programmes to your friends?

Yes. I will recommend NIE's programmes to my friends. Besides the gain academically, the shared experiences of different educators make the programme come to life. I have enjoyed the late evening sessions where different educators from a multitude of backgrounds come together to debate how we can better understand and teach the Humanities.

An Institute of