

Getting To Know Our Professors

A/P Mary Anne Heng

Why do you enjoy teaching and mentoring higher degree students?

"It always seems impossible until it is done," Nelson Mandela wisely said. I enjoy seeing students light up with the excitement that comes with discussing new ideas and considering the power of the possible. I believe that significant and purposeful educational change requires the courage to rethink the status quo and reimagine teaching and learning for tomorrow's schools.

What research area(s) are you working on now? How does it impact your work at NIE?

My work focuses on the intersections of curriculum leadership, teaching, learning and educational change, especially those that critique contemporary notions of curriculum, student learning and educational change. My current funded research study, "Finding meaning and purpose: What are our youth telling us?" is one of the first studies in Singapore to tackle the question of purpose and meaning head-on to find out from adolescents what matters in school. The study also aims to open up discussions about the fundamental questions of schooling in Singapore - what is meaningful and purposeful education, and what it should look like in Singapore schools. More recently, I have embarked on the first international comparative study between Singapore and Israel to find out from adolescents the purposes that underlie their learning, school and life experiences. The findings are both exciting and intriguing in terms of what the two countries can learn from each other!



A/P Mary Anne Heng is currently the Associate Dean for Higher Degrees and Strategic Partnerships at the Office of Graduate Studies & Professional Learning, and an Associate Professor with Curriculum, Teaching and Learning (CTL) Academic Group.

Why is NIE a good place for you to do your work?

Singapore is rather well-known for the quality of its education in schools. I believe NIE plays a critical role in seeding ideas and shaping the future of learning in Singapore and beyond.

What does NIE offer to higher degree students that is unique?

Innovative international programmes such as the Master of Arts in Leadership and Educational Change that NIE offers in partnership with Teachers College, Columbia University provides opportunities for higher degree students to build new learning communities steeped in both local and global perspectives. The programme also enables students to engage critically in thinking about existing practices, and to think big with regards to transformative and meaningful educational change.

What have you learned from your students?

The power of curiosity and richness of new learning when one speaks to students as human beings and takes the time to listen to their experiences, stories and questions.