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ENGAGING LEARNERS

ENHANCING EDUCATION

Moving Forward Together: Sustaining Pathways in Teaching and Learning

Dear colleagues,

Happy New Year!

2011 was an extremely busy year at CDTL and we wrapped up the year on a high note, hosting over 200 participants at the **Sixth International Conference on Teaching and Learning**, or TLHE 2011, on the theme, *Sustaining student-centric higher education: Embracing diversity and empowering Gen Y learners*. We are very grateful for the enthusiastic support we received not just from foreign delegates from across 15 countries but also from NUS colleagues and students. In particular, several fellows of the NUS Teaching Academy helped to organise and host the conference (in terms of abstracts review, programme work and chairing sessions); and about 110 NUS colleagues and students participated in the workshops, student panels, and paper/poster presentations. In addition, our Provost, Vice Provosts and Associate Provosts supported us with their presence at the conference. We truly could not have so successfully mounted this conference without all of you.

The same strong collegial support shown to us for TLHE 2011 was also critical in enabling CDTL to achieve various milestones within the past year. Over and above our regular staff and student programmes, activities and work on various university initiatives, CDTL also hosted or played a part in the following major initiatives:

- From January 2011, we launched the first year of our 3-year **Able Communicator** initiative, which comprised a dedicated series of Communication Skills Workshops for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. In total, almost 60 workshops on the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing were conducted, reaching out to about 1,500 students.
- From August 2011, with the warm support of our Associate Provost (Graduate Education), Prof Mohan Kankanhalli, Vice Provost (Student Life), Prof Tan Tai Yong, the NUS Graduate Student Society (GSS), and the students and colleagues from our University Town's Graduate Residence, we piloted a new postgraduate students series, simply named "**PGS**" (for Postgraduate Students Series), with 6

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informal workshops and dialogues designed for NUS graduate students, on selected social and academic aspects that define the postgraduate journey in NUS. Close to 1,000 PG students participated in the 6 pilot sessions.

- In September 2011, CDTL assisted in hosting the NUS Teaching Academy's Inaugural **Masterclass Speaker Series**, helping to coordinate the week's visit made by Prof Lee Shulman.

What will 2012 bring? Among the major activities expected for 2012 are the following:

- The **Able Communicator** initiative is expected to expand its reach as we plan to offer about 75 workshops to between 2,000 and 3,000 students.
- Similarly, the high participation we have obtained from the NUS postgraduate student population has encouraged us to maintain the **PGS series in 2012**, with about a dozen activities expected to be organised from January to December.
- **Educator-in-Residence Programme (EiRP) 2012**: we expect to bring in an expert in education to be our

2nd EiRP visitor – when plans are finalised, we will inform all colleagues about the activities associated with this programme.

- CDTL and the NUS Teaching Academy will assist the Provost's Office in organising and hosting the 2012 **Universitas 21** meeting in November 2012 on the broad theme of "Transformative Education".

CDTL will continue with all established programmes and activities but with these additional major programmes in the works, 2012 promises to be another very exciting year. We look forward to getting to know even more colleagues and students through these and the various regular CDTL platforms, and will strive to be the Centre where we can all share and contribute to excellence in teaching and learning in NUS.

On behalf of all CDTL staff, THANK YOU for the wonderful year we have just said farewell to, and we look forward to engaging you in the coming year. Take care.

Huang Hoon & the CDTL Team



Welcome

CDTL would like to welcome:

- Ms Thayalini Selvaraj, who joined our team in December 2011 as an Executive. Lini will be assisting with the Communication Skills workshops.



6th International Conference on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

6 TO 9 DECEMBER 2011

THLHE 2011 was held from 6 to 9 December 2011. With the theme *Sustaining Student-Centric Higher Education: Embracing Diversity and Empowering Gen Y Learners*, the conference was dedicated to discussing issues relating to Gen Y learners, student-centricity and the opportunities and challenges of the global campus. As in previous years, the conference was used as a forum for an exchange of knowledge and experiences amongst colleagues.

Workshops (6 to 7 December 2011)

From 6 to 7 December 2011, 8 workshops were conducted. About 150 delegates attended the workshops. The following facilitators conducted two workshops each – Prof Daniel Bernstein, Prof Charles Graham, Prof Carmel McNaught and A/P Victor Tan.



Prof Daniel Bernstein, Director, Centre for Teaching Excellence and Professor of Psychology, University of Kansas, USA – *Constructing understanding from the inside out.*



Prof Charles Graham, McKay School of Education, Brigham Young University, Utah, USA – *Blended learning ecosystems: Engaging 21st century learners with information and communication technologies.*



A/Prof Victor Tan, Department of Mathematics, National University of Singapore – *Managing large classes.*



Prof Carmel McNaught, Director and Professor of Learning Enhancement, Centre for Learning Enhancement and Research (CLEAR), Chinese University of Hong Kong – *Using technology actively to effectively enhance learning in the classroom.*

Paper Sessions (8-9 December 2011)

8 December 2011

The conference began with some opening remarks from Prof Tan Tai Yong, Vice Provost (Student Life), followed by a student diversity panel session *Diversity on a global campus – Opportunities for teaching and learning*. The speakers were Avinash Govind Bahirvani, Peter Bartels, Chen Ya and Fung Tze Kwan. The session was facilitated by A/Prof Chang Tou Chuang.

After the coffee break, the participants broke into three parallel sessions that covered the following topics:

- Diversity and multiculturalism on campus – opportunities and challenges for teaching and learning
- Gen Y learners or ‘digital natives’: What to teach; how to teach; what to learn; how to learn
- Innovative student engagement methods
- Literacies for the new world economy
- Student-centric teaching and learning strategies and approaches
- Sustainability and quality assurance issues in tertiary education
- Technology-assisted education for Gen Y learners and the 21st Century classroom
- Towards advanced personalised learning: A grand challenge for 21st Century education
- Undergraduate and postgraduate student experience in the university



Opening Remarks by **Prof Tan Tai Yong**, Vice Provost (Student Life)



Student Diversity Panel Session: *Diversity on a global campus – Opportunities for teaching and learning* facilitated by A/Prof Chang Tou Chuang. L-R: Peter Bartels, Chen Ya, A/Prof Chang Tou Chuang, Fung Tze Kwan, Avinash Govind Bahirvani



The first invited lecture was delivered by **Prof Carmel McNaught**, Director and Professor of Learning Enhancement, Centre for Learning Enhancement and Research (CLEAR), Chinese University of Hong Kong, *Unpacking the Terms ‘Digital Natives’ and Digital Learners’ in the Context of Higher Education in Hong Kong*.



Our overseas invited speakers interacting at the conference. L-R: Prof Carmel McNaught, Prof Daniel Bernstein and Prof Charles Graham.

9 December 2011

On the second day, Prof Tan Thiam Soon, Vice Provost (Education), gave the opening address.

The second invited lecture was delivered by Prof Daphne Pan, Department of English Language and Literature, NUS, *Teaching and Learning in the Age of 'Gen Y' Students*.

Apart from the parallel sessions, two other student panel sessions were also conducted – Student Panel Sessions I and II.

The day concluded with a stimulating lecture by Prof Daniel Bernstein, Director, Centre for Teaching Excellence and Professor of Psychology, University of Kansas, USA, *Constructing Understanding from the Inside Out*.



Opening Address by **Prof Tan Thiam Soon**, Vice Provost (Education)



Student Panel Session I: *Fostering and facilitating structured learning clusters* facilitated by A/Prof Laksh Samavedham.
L-R: Audrey Chan, Liu Shuli & Jim Gan



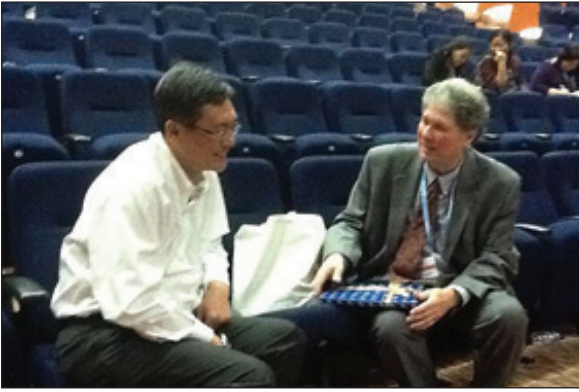
Invited Speaker: **A/Prof Daphne Pan**.



Student Panel Session II: *Contemporary graduate education: Where is it and where could it be?* facilitated by Prof Bernard Tan.
L-R: Kanchi Lakshmi Kiran, Loganathan Ponnambalam, Prof Bernard Tan, Bori Ige, Chakravathy Mynampati Kalyan



Invited Speaker: **Prof Daniel Bernstein**.



Prof Tan Eng Chye, Provost and Prof Daniel Bernstein.



A/Prof Chng Huang Hoon, Director, CDTL and Co-Chair for TLHE 2011 presenting a token of appreciation to Prof Daniel Bernstein.



A/Prof Yap Von Bing chairing a session.



Dr Edward Errington.



L-R: Dr Reesa Sorin, Mrs Amanda Nickson and Ms Lynette Ireland.



Dr Esther Goh.



Dr Nachamma Sockalingam.



Participants in the auditorium.

In total, 3 invited lectures, 12 paper presentation sessions on various topics, 3 student panel discussions and poster sessions were conducted at the Shaw Foundation Alumni House. Two campus tours and an informal dinner outing was also organised for the delegates. A total of about 200 delegates from 15 countries attended both the workshops and the paper sessions.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all speakers, reviewers, committee members and participants. Your contributions and support were instrumental to the success of TLHE 2011.



Participants in one of the breakout rooms.

Student Panel Session II: Contemporary graduate education: Where is it and where could it be?

Panelists: Loganathan Ponnambalam, Chakravathy Mynampati Kalyan, Kanchi Lakshmi Kiran, Bori Ige, with special thanks to Naviyn

Facilitator: Prof Bernard Tan

Graduate schools provide a curriculum of core and elective courses for students to specialise in their area of interest. For research-oriented programmes, students are mentored by their respective faculty to guide them in their projects of choice. One might infer that graduate education is essentially student-centric. However, recent literature and surveys conducted among graduate students suggest that they have become less pleased with their experience as they progress in their studies, with the biggest drop in satisfaction level occurring after the first year. The widespread stress, anxiety and pressure among graduate students indicate structural challenges in the contemporary model of graduate education, thereby surfacing the need to understand how the current system functions, its pros and cons, and explore possibilities of revising the structure. To this end, this student panel addressed the following aspects:

1. Limitations in the current model for graduate education and their effect on student development;
2. Solutions to overcome these challenges; and
3. A possible alternative model of graduate education.

The session comprised a 30-minute presentation by the panel followed by another 30 minutes of Q&A.

Presentation: The members of this panel conducted an e-survey that drew 530 respondents from across 35 countries and 20 disciplines. The survey helped to gather information on the limitations of the current model, list solutions to address the major limitations and suggest a feasible alternative model. The following are some results from the survey:

Challenges in Mentorship

- **Selection of research topic**
 - 90% want *a priori* information of the project before enrollment
- **Choice of supervisor**
 - 90% want to know their supervisor before enrollment
- **Approach of supervision during the research period**
 - 48% expect guidance, decreasing over time
- **Quantity and Quality of interactions with your supervisor**
 - 56% are satisfied
- **Differences in approach to research with supervisor**
 - 73% are able to sort out differences without major problems
- **Contribution of supervisor towards research**
 - 56% response for 0-20% contribution

Challenges in Learning Environment

- **Courses during PhD and their relevance to research**
 - 38% admitted relevance
- **Nature of qualifying exams to assess student's research potential**
 - 16% prefer the current approach, while 52% want project review meeting with a panel of examiners every year
- **Source(s) for research ideas – self study or workshops**
 - 92% self-initiative
- **Team-bonding events (e.g. recreational activities, movies, sports) to improve the research performance**
 - 48% agree to their significance
- **Lab environment**
 - 51% experienced difficult relationship with supervisor

Challenges in Career Development

- **Motivation for PhD study**
 - >80% for interest in research
- **Career expected after PhD**
 - 39% for faculty career
- **PhD study experience to develop intellectually**
 - 57% agree
- **PhD study experience to work independently**
 - 44% agree
- **PhD study experience to improve communication skills**
 - 52% agree
- **PhD study experience to gain ability to make decisions**
 - 53% agree
- **PhD study experience to handle setbacks, stress**
 - 61% agree

Q & A: The following are some feedback during the questions and answers session:

Name	Suggestions
Charles A Gullo Assistant Professor, Duke NUS Graduate Medical School, Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for assessment of mentors/supervisors • Highlighted the absence of such assessment schemes in universities around the world • Mentorship should be a key component for annual appraisal of the faculty • Supervisor should set aside time for his/her student regularly
Laura R Winer Associate Director, Teaching and Learning Services, McGill University, Montreal, Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She emphasised the importance of supervisor-supervisee relationship in PhD studies • Most of the supervisors supervise the way they have been supervised or opposite to that. This needs to change. So, PhD supervisors need to be trained on proper supervision • She mentioned that it is difficult to get assessment of supervisors from their graduating or graduated PhD students, if such a task is being undertaken in any university • In her university, supervisors are recommended to discuss with students on a checklist of student-supervisor responsibilities during PhD. This checklist is generally discussed during the 1st year of PhD study • Regarding the student's feedback on PhD studies providing minimal support to develop interpersonal, communication, and decision making skills, she suggested that institutional support is essential to improve the student's capabilities in the aforementioned areas. This is also suggested in the report commissioned by Canadian association of graduate studies.
Charles Graham Associate Dean, McKay School of Education, Brigham Young University, USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the format of qualifying exams, he suggested the following alternatives to the contemporary format – developing a teaching syllabus on a given topic, a conference style oral presentation on a given topic, or a journal review in the given discipline. • On the format of final dissertation, he suggested that a collection of journal articles should be considered as an alternative to the traditional thesis.

Carmel McNaught Director and Professor of Learning Enhancement, Centre for Learning Enhancements and Research (CLEAR), Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In her university, training is provided to Supervisors on mentorship and student-supervisor relationships She is willing to help NUS develop such training workshops and share the material developed in her university 	Barry White Research Development (Masters and Doctoral), The Centre for Academic Development, The University of Auckland, New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Council for Educational Research published his 360 page monograph on "Mapping Your Thesis: The Comprehensive Manual of Theory and Techniques for Masters' and Doctoral Research" – He recommended this book to the audience as this book covers the issues raised in the panel discussion. This book provides for candidates and supervisors comprehensive and dispassionate arguments as to what must be fulfilled for a successful outcome
Edward P Errington Academic Development Adviser, James Cook University, Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He emphasised on the importance of combined workshop for supervisor and supervisee to learn from each other He suggested the need for formal/informal contract/checklist between supervisor and supervisee on their duties and responsibilities. Workshop for supervisors to share their issues concerning mentoring students 		

LEARNING ISSUES

Making History More Than Strange Names and Places

Mr Benjamin Nathaniel Freud, Department of History

A winner of the inaugural FASS Graduate Students' Teaching Award

The emergence of modernity in Europe is more than a progression of events along a well-delineated timeline, it is the story of drastic changes in mentalities. For many students from non-European traditions it can be difficult enough to master the avalanche of dates, names, and happenings that occurred in Europe since the end of the *ancien régime*, particularly if the course is one of their first real exposures to the region. Most had never delved much into European history prior to university or travelled through the continent enough to experience how radically different cultures can be from one side of a river or a mountain range to another. The most difficult aspect of teaching the history of Europe's modernity to Singaporean students is the need to juxtapose the subjective with the objective, more specifically explaining the role of mentalities in the unfolding of events.

I remember having to explain why it is that French people are always so eager and keen to take to the streets, sometimes for a harmless afternoon, sometimes for a drawn out revolution. I tried to impart that demonstrations are part of normal – sometimes quotidian – life and that in France it is a viable part of the political system. At first what many students couldn't understand was what point there could be in demonstrating if things seldom changed as a result anyway. They were confounded by the pride French

people took in striking and perturbing daily life for very few gains and even more confused when I told them that this wasn't the case throughout Europe: in the United Kingdom, for instance, the situation had to be extreme for people to use the streets as means to voice their opinions. At the time I wasn't sure I succeeded entirely, but I wanted them to feel those intangible forces behind the events we discussed and understand their essentiality in the European mentalities and value. What happened in Europe was more than a chronology. For instance when we treated the assassination of Marat by the royalist Charlotte Corday in 1793, I wanted my students to go beyond the act as a coupling of names and dates and look at how the Revolution transformed mentalities, albeit temporarily. Marat was killed in his bath because he agreed to let in his house a stranger who said she had something to tell him. I asked them if this was something fathomable in our day, in any country. Would Nicolas Sarkozy allow them in his bathroom if they showed up at his door? I think that illustration hit home.

The group exercises that we ran involving the simulation of the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference showed me how challenging it can be for students to see things from irrational perspectives, specifically through mentalities. Some – not all – couldn't understand why some countries wouldn't act according to what was

legitimately believed to be their best interest simply because...well...they just wouldn't, that's who they are! For instance, to a few students' amazement, the French would never have agreed to move the Peace Conference to Geneva in exchange for certain favourable settlement terms they otherwise wouldn't have received. The reasons go beyond revenge for 1870, they're entrenched in the symbol of Versailles, which for some students is just a set of beautiful buildings and gardens. It's part of the French psyche. But then what happens when you try to tell them that actually there is no such thing as a national culture and we should always avoid generalisations?

The reality is that the students do get it. They may not necessarily grasp every intricacy, but they are very aware that different cultures approach the situations they face differently and the decisions they take subsequently are in perhaps large part influenced by national values and cultures, if we can even talk of such things. During the simulations I evoked, barring a few hiccups, I could tell that the actors saw the history of Europe as more than

just myriad dates and names to remember; the students who had the most fun pretending to be Roosevelt, Orlando, or Clemenceau were those who role played the attitudes and drivers perfectly. More to the point, the particular satisfaction I received after the semester was over came from talking to two of my students about their trips across Europe. They told me that they had initially been motivated by typical sightseeing but now they were more interested in learning about and experiencing the flow of life itself. It seems that all the frustrations that I had felt shouldn't have been frustrations at all. For many it was just part of a process and the results would probably come out later, maybe much later. This final anecdote shows that I achieved what I set out to accomplish, for these two students and hopefully others: I wanted them to learn more than just the material and shape the way they approached new situations through a more well-rounded understanding of that with which they are confronted. I too learned that there is more often than not something hiding behind the curtain, beyond what is visible. A very satisfying semester indeed.

Teaching Principles of Economics (EC 1301) to Science and Engineering Students

Ms Mun Lai Yoke, Department of Economics

I read with amusement a posting by a student on the IVLE forum. This student was lamenting about a tutorial solution that he did not understand, and he concluded that economics has a different system of reasoning, which he termed, "Economics logic". Having been a student of science myself, I chuckled, as I could understand his angst.

EC 1301 is designed for undergraduates from non-economic major, with the objective of providing students with "an economic framework to understand the workings of individual markets, the aggregate economy, as well as international trade and finance"¹. Mapped that to everyday life, the module should help

these students perceive and evaluate newspaper articles and parliamentary debates for themselves.

Like the sciences, current economics research is driven by positivists, where theoretical developments and empirical observations are intertwined. However, unlike mathematics and the sciences, where the testable logical structures and reasoning of competing models are built on axioms that are universally accepted, there is much more diversity in the basic assumptions made in competing economic models, upon which the logical structures are built. For example, in many introductory texts, the definitions of the constructs "short-run" and "long-run" stated in the microeconomic section would differ from the definitions of "short-run" and

¹ Source: https://aces01.nus.edu.sg/cors/jsp/report/ModuleDetailedInfo.jsp?acad_y=2011/2012&sem_c=2&mod_c=EC1301

“long-run” stated in the macroeconomic section of the same text. Another example of such diversity is evident from the list of renowned economists. Keynes and Hayek exemplify the different ends of the spectrum, representing different schools of thought on the business cycle, in particular, about the right size and actions of the government in an economy. Can both of them be right, or is the jury still out? I found myself giving both sides of the business cycle story when I was explaining how equilibrium arises from interaction of the aggregate demand and aggregate supply curves, and how full employment may be attained.

In my opinion, the thinking process and the logical structures in economics are no different from the sciences. For example, the experience of all molecules inside a reaction vessel may not be exactly the same and therefore the predictions based on the individual micro-level behaviour may not hold true at the macro level. Similarly for economics, when making inference, what is observed at the micro level may not be consistent or observable at the macro level through the interaction dynamics.

But, one has to be wary when using models to represent or reduce human preferences and relationships. Many of the economic concepts which we infer from the choices or actions of individuals, such as preferences, are latent. The role of the observer cannot be ignored, so too the role of learning. Furthermore, we have to consider the historical or social context that may affect the representation of social idea or relationship. Thus, we have to be wary of treating an abstraction as if it were the real thing. Hence, **when presenting an economic model to the students, we should always discuss the assumptions, both implicit and explicit, behind the model**, so that the logical structures and reasoning that are built on these assumptions would not be lost or termed as “economic logic”. This is particularly true for students who are new to modeling.

In addition, from pedagogical considerations, I find it helpful to share with the students how to evaluate different economic models for themselves. A good analogy which I adapted from Friedman² is to liken an economic model to a fruit tree. One can always pluck and taste the fruits for the sweetness. If they are sour (that is, the results do not match reality), the tree is not desirable. One can also scrutinise if the roots are holding the ground well (that is, examine if the assumptions of the model are realistic).

It is a delight to teach the science and engineering students as they possess the mathematics and scientific rigour required to build the toolbox for analysis. With the right toolbox, we can heighten the students’ perception, and encourage them to ask deep questions.

Finally, I share with them the roles and limitations of economics and economists. Unlike engineers, economists cannot dream of controlling the economy with precision due to the intricacy of human behaviour (well, at least for now). Presently, economists are more like climatologists seeking to understand, and to make preparations ahead of bad weather in order to survive a storm with the least damage. Unfortunately, few people truly appreciate the complexity of social sciences. Consequently, everyone thinks he is qualified to be an armchair economist.

I am reminded of a story, available on many internet sites, whose original source I am unable to ascertain³. In essence, Einstein died and he was asked to share a room with several people in heaven. With the roommates whose IQ scores are 180, 150 and 100, he discussed mathematics, physics, and the arts respectively. To the roommate with an IQ of 80, he asked, “So where do you think interest rates are headed?”

2 However, for model selection, Friedman emphasised the importance of “simplicity” and “fruitfulness”. See also Friedman, M., *The methodology of positive economics*. The Philosophy of economics: an anthology, 1953.

3 The following list is by no means exhaustive. These sites include (29 Dec 2010): http://thegatheringplacehome.myfastforum.org/archive/einstein-jokes__o_t_t_907.html, <http://officediversions.com/discover/modules/wfsection/article.php?articleid=18&joke=Einstein%20in%20Heaven>, and <http://www.abconinvesting.com/>.

PDP-T: Professional Development Programme-Teaching

3-5 August 2011

This programme is offered to faculty members with less than 3 years of full-time teaching experience in tertiary education. The programme aims to enhance the performance in teaching and thus further enrich the quality of student learning at NUS. It also serves to assist faculty members in their endeavour to meet the requirements laid out in the new guidelines for Promotion and Tenure.



Fifty-four new NUS colleagues attended the Orientation and PDP-T held from 3-5 August 2011.



Facilitator: Prof Alex Ip Yuen Kwong



Facilitator: Dr Johan Geertsema



Facilitator: A/Prof Joel Lee Tye Beng



Facilitator: A/Prof Eric Chan



PDP-T elective workshop:
Case methods in education facilitated by Ms Judy Shulman on 14 September 2011.



TAP: Teaching Assistants Training Programme

21-22 September 2011



Fifty-seven TAs attended the Teaching Assistants Training Programme on 21 September 2011. Fifty-nine TAs attended the programme on 22 September 2011.

As part of the University's commitment to excellence in teaching, CDTL conducts a formal training programme for teaching assistants (TAs).

This training programme has been specially designed to help graduate students perform more effectively in their role as teaching assistants. The programme aims to review sound educational principles and practices and their application to teaching. More specifically, it focuses on those activities that TAs are most likely to be involved in, such as taking tutorials and labs, assessing and giving feedback on student performance, leveraging on IT as a teaching/learning tool.

The training package is conducted over 2 days and comprises various plenaries and complementary workshops where the TAs are divided into smaller groups to facilitate learning via interactive discussions.



What's New

- An online version of the Teaching Assistant Handbook titled "*Achieving Excellence as a Teaching Assistant: A Handbook for NUS Graduate Students*" has been launched in June 2011 to provide support for the teaching assistants at NUS to help them achieve the capability and skill needed to impart high quality teaching to NUS students. The handbook is available at: <http://www.cdtl.nus.edu.sg/ta-handbook/>
- A blog has also been started to discuss realistic case scenarios allowing teaching assistants to comment and analyse each of the crisis situations provided. Website: <http://blog.nus.edu.sg/tahandbook/>

PGS: Postgraduate Students Series

2011

The Postgraduate Students Series is a new initiative planned especially for postgraduate students in NUS. PGS aims to be a platform for discussion and building awareness/expertise on generic issues that students are likely to face during their postgraduate studies at NUS. CDTL conducted 6 sessions between August to December 2011. For more information, visit <http://www.cdtl.nus.edu.sg/pgs/>

No.	Title/Date/Facilitator(s)
1	PGS Welcome Tea (17 Aug 2011) [A/P Chng Huang Hoon (CHH), A/P Laksh Samavedham (LS)]
2	Planning & Managing Your Postgraduate Journey (9 Sept 2011) [Prof Lim Chwee Teck, A/P Yap Von Bing, CHH, LS]
3	Identifying a Research Topic & Managing the Supervisor-Supervisee Relationship (19 Sept 2011) [A/P Sow Chong Haur, Dr Esther CL Goh, CHH, LS]
4	Effective Oral Communication (14 Oct 2011) [Ms Chitra Sabapathy, Ms Wong Soon Fen]
5	Taking an Analytical Approach to Thesis Writing (2 Nov 2011) [Dr Chitra Varaprasad]
6	Components of a Research Paper (13 Dec 2011) [Mr Jeffrey Mok]



A/Prof Chng Huang Hoon giving her welcome address at the PGS Welcome Tea on 17 August 2011.



Front row (L-R): Dr Chitra Varaprasad (facilitator on 2 November 2011), Dr Patrick Gallo and Dr Deng Xudong.



Participants at one of the sessions.



Ms Chitra Sabapathy and Ms Wong Soon Fen giving their presentation at the PGS Effective Oral Communication session on 14 October 2011.

Communication Skills Series

CDTL's Communication Skills Series aims to enhance students' communication skills for academic purposes. The series consists of two teaching platforms: **workshops** and **consultation clinics** that cover a range of topics in writing, reading, speaking and listening.

The workshops provide, generally in small group settings, an active-learning environment to engage students in hands-on practice and opportunities to interact with one another. These activities and episodes of interaction are intended to deepen students' mastering of the relevant skills and to enhance students' critical and creative thinking, which are the essential attributes of able communicators.

Consultation clinics engage students in more detailed discussions and feedback. They help students identify specific problems in communication and to improve their capacity to organise, write, deliver, and revise their work.

For more information, visit <http://www.cdtl.nus.edu.sg/student/comm-skills.htm> or <http://blog.nus.edu.sg/commskills/>



Technology in Pedagogy Series

As campus-wide experience with the use of technology continues to grow, conclusions on how best to use and not to use technology to optimise student learning are emerging. Through a lunch-hour workshop series, CDTL explores, coordinates and encourages the sharing of some of these practices. Launched in April 2011, this new initiative titled "Technology in Pedagogy" highlights the effective use of technology for teaching and learning and brings NUS academics together for informal chats about innovative teaching methods to improve student learning.

Each session features a speaker who shares a technology that he/she has successfully used in their teaching. An active Q&A session and discussion follows. Sessions are normally held from 12:30 pm – 1:30pm with the first half-hour for presentation and the next half hour for Q&A and discussion.

Recent topics include:

- Enhancing Your Academic Reputation with Social Media
- Wikis for Participatory Learning
- Using PLEs to Encourage Peer Learning and Learner Autonomy

Forthcoming topic:

- If you can't Say it, Voice it: Using Text-to-speech in Presentations by A/Prof Stephane Bressan, School of Computing

More information on the series can be found at:

- <http://www.cdtl.nus.edu.sg/technology-in-pedagogy/>
- <http://blog.nus.edu.sg/cdtkdr/technology-in-pedagogy/>
- <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Technology-in-Pedagogy/124434804300499>

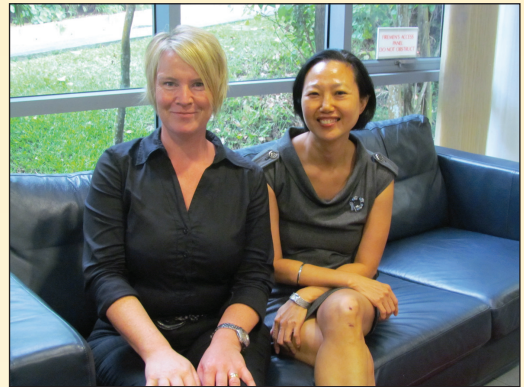


Using PLEs to encourage peer learning and learner autonomy by Mr Chris Harwood, Centre for English Language Communication.

VISITORS TO CDTL



14 July 2011:
Ms Kiruthika Ragupathi; Dr Abdullah Al-Mubarak, Dean of Development of University Education, Imam Mohammad Bin Saud Islamic University, Saudi Arabia; and A/Prof Laksh Samavedham.



25 October 2011:
Dr Gayle Morris, Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong; and A/Prof Chng Huang Hoon.



10 August 2011:
A/Prof Laksh Samavedham; Mr Alan Soong; Ms Kiruthika Ragupathi; A/Prof Chng Huang Hoon; and Ms Ashlinn Quinn, Global Learning Senior Program Specialist, Center for New Media Teaching and Learning, Columbia University.



18 November 2011:
A/Prof Laksh Samavedham; Prof David Coates, University of Dundee; and A/Prof Chng Huang Hoon.



1 November 2011:
Thirty delegates from the Digital Campus Consortium of Waseda University, Japan led by Prof Yoshiaki Fukazawa and Dr Kunio Taniguchi visited CDTL.

Thank you

Our sincere thanks to the following colleagues for facilitating workshops for CDTL from July to December 2011.

Name	Department	Faculty/University
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Photography CDTL (unless provided by authors)

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