

Academy Matters

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Actively engaging every section of the NUS community
in transforming the educational landscape of the university

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Meet the Chair of the NUS Teaching Academy



Kumar Amirthalingam
Faculty of Law
Chair, NUS Teaching Academy

I have been given the honour of leading the NUS Teaching Academy as its sixth Chair, following in the illustrious footsteps of Bernard Tan, Lakshminarayanan Samavedham, Erle Lim, Kenneth Tan and Johan Geertsema. I am, in some ways, an accidental Chair, as Johan, the immediate past-Chair, had only assumed office for a few months before being called to duty as Director of the Centre for Development of Teaching and Learning (CDTL). Alice Christudason, our Vice-Chair, was the natural successor, but for personal reasons, Alice declined the honour, although she continues to be a bedrock of the Executive Council. Hence, it came to me. I would like to take this opportunity to record my gratitude to the Executive Council members for their confidence and support. We have plenty of new ideas from the Academy Retreat of 2014 as well as the Executive Council Retreat of 2015, which we will share with you as we draw on your talents and expertise to bring these ideas to fruition. I look forward to working closely with all my colleagues in the Academy, as well as with CDTL and the Provost's Office in taking the Academy forward.

Meeting with CMU Delegates

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Building upon NUS's multi-faceted partnership with Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), delegates from the NUS Centre of Development for Teaching and Learning (CDTL) and the Teaching Academy held an exploratory meeting on the 16th of September 2014, with Justine Cassell, Professor in the Human-Computer Interaction Institute, Associate Vice-Provost for Technology Strategy and Impact, and Co-Director of the Simon Initiative, as well as Marsha Lovett, Teaching Professor in Psychology, Director of the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation and Co-Director of the Simon Initiative. As with CDTL, the Eberly Centre primarily supports CMU's teaching faculty with programmes, with focus on new pedagogies and new technologies. In addition, they also believe in teaching faculty how to do research to improve teaching and learning (T&L), and collaborate with them to design and implement meaningful educational experiences. They do so with programmes



(from left): Lakshminarayanan Samavedham (Master, RC4), Chng Huang Hoon (Associate Provost, Undergraduate Education), Marsha Lovett (Teaching Professor in Psychology, Director of the Eberly Center and Co-Director of the Simon Initiative), Justine Cassell (Professor in the Human-Computer Interaction Institute, Associate Vice-Provost for Technology Strategy and Impact at Carnegie Mellon University and Co-Director of the Simon Initiative), Bernard Tan Cheng Yian (Vice Provost, Undergraduate Education) and Johan Geertsema (Director, CDTL)

like special interest groups that draw together diverse faculty to discuss and work on very specific T&L interest areas, as well as the ProSEED grants and the Simon Initiative which enable faculty to “pursue ideas related to learning science and technology-enhanced learning at CMU”, sharing some similarities with CDTL's Teaching Enhancement Grant (TEG).

Of special interest was the in-depth sharing on CMU's innovative Open Learning Initiative (OLI), which provides online learners with more immediate interactive (technology-assisted) feedback and yields course analytics to enable lecturers to better tailor classroom engagement time. These blended courses combining online-interactive learning with classroom engagement engendered much keen discussion of the translation of these methods and results to broader contexts and different disciplines. There was also exposition of how CMU is currently leveraging on the successes of this instructional design to reach out



Marsha Lovett and Justine Cassell

beyond its immediate scope to all faculty. The meeting ended with the promise to further explore collaboration possibilities in the future.



The Teaching Academy Fellows engaging in a discussion with Marsha Lovett and Justine Cassell

Teaching and Learning Club (TLC) Workshop on Constructive Alignment

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On the 22nd of September 2014, more than 50 members of the NUS teaching community gathered to explore an outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning using Constructive Alignment. In the workshop led by John Biggs, who developed the SOLO Taxonomy and Constructive Alignment, participants grouped into related disciplines examined how these concepts could be applied to their own course design. In particular, the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) of teaching endeavours were examined from broad perspectives (University Level Ideal Graduate Attributes and Programme Level ILOs) as well as particular modular expectations. Participants had the opportunity to reflect on the precise crafting of these ILOs to include not only the content to be covered, but also the particular expectations of how students apply what they have learnt. They then moved on to examine the alignment of these ILOs with their projected learning environments and assessment tasks. Biggs and Catherine Tang facilitated group deliberations, leading to several intense but highly productive discussions.



John Biggs
Former Professor of Education
University of Hong Kong



Catherine Tang

Workshop discussions



Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

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In January 2014, three Academy Fellows, Kenneth Paul Tan, Erle Lim and Johan Geertsema were part of a group from NUS that completed the 4-month-long blended International Faculty SoTL Leadership Programme: UBC Certificate on Curriculum and Pedagogy in Higher Education. They undertook the course in order to help build Teaching Academy capacity, specifically with regard to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), which is rapidly gaining in importance globally and at NUS. The key objective of SoTL is to enhance university teaching and learning in an evidence-based way by encouraging professors to:



Harry Hubball in Singapore
January 2014

- reflect upon their teaching and students' learning with reference to the literature (scholarly teaching);
- engage in studies that relate to their teaching, e.g. to investigate their use of technology or curriculum reform (among many other possibilities), as well as to assess its impact (SoTL); and
- take the lead in encouraging both scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL leadership).

This programme was led by Harry Hubball, Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of British Columbia, who has received Canada's most prestigious university teaching award – the 3M National Teaching Fellowship.

The programme had 4 themes:

- Research Design, Evidence-based Practice & Dissemination
- Pedagogical Leadership in Diverse Disciplinary Settings (Adult Learning and Teaching Perspectives: Authentic Assessment & Evaluation)
- Curriculum Leadership in Diverse Disciplinary Settings (Learning-centred Approaches to Undergraduate/Graduate Degree Programme Reform)
- Educational Technologies in Diverse Disciplinary Settings

And the E-Portfolio assessment components included:

- Scholarly Educational (Teaching/Curriculum) Leadership Dossier
- Educational Practice/Scholarship Journal
- Formative Peer Review of Teaching/Curriculum Reports
- Capstone Project
- Presentation

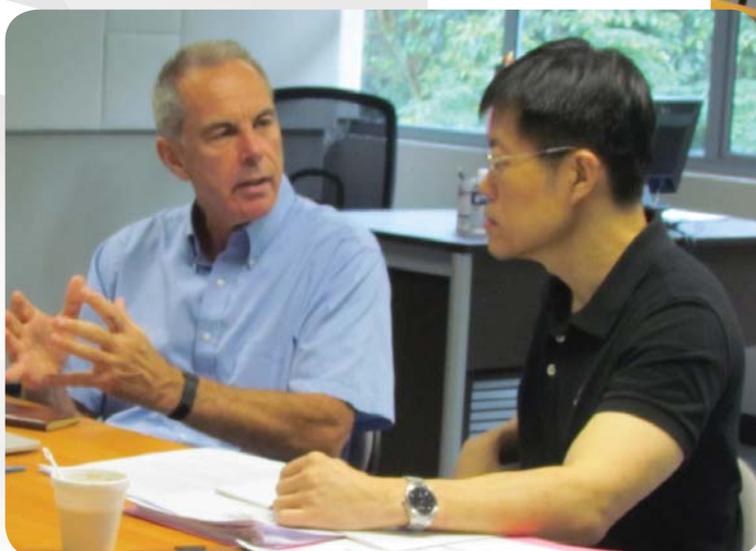
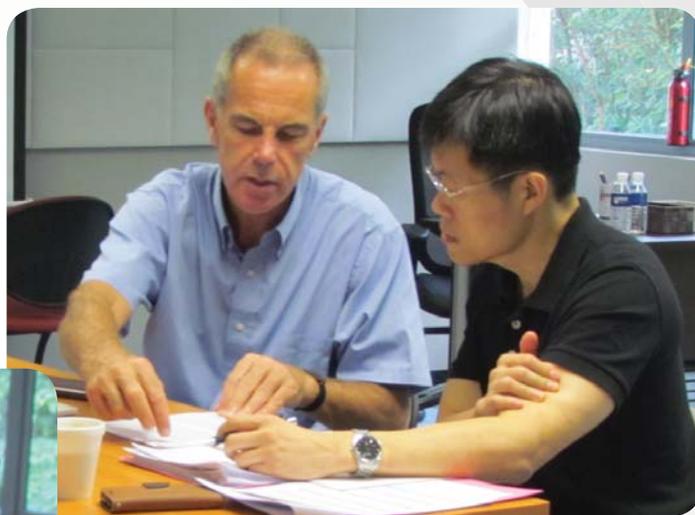


Harry Hubball presents the example of how one might approach the Peer Review of Teaching in scholarly fashion

Although the course was intensive and of short duration, the overall programme was beneficial in helping participants frame their own teaching practice, as well as their educational leadership, in a larger scholarly conversation informed by the literature. The fact that the programme could be tailored to meet the strategic needs of Fellows and the institutions involved was another aspect of the programme that was particularly invaluable.

After review of participant feedback, the Office of the Provost decided to put up a second cohort for the programme. The programme was improved to include more face-to-face consultation sessions with Hubball, as well as easier access to course materials from the University of British Columbia. Academy Fellows who are currently completing this programme are Victor Tan, Adrian Lee and Lee Kooi Cheng.

The Teaching Academy is now planning to advance the scholarship of teaching and learning throughout NUS via outreach sessions such as the Teaching and Learning Club (TLC) sharing session on SoTL leadership. Interested faculty can look forward to forthcoming announcements on such sessions.



Individual Consultation
Hubball with TA Fellow, Victor Tan
second cohort (September 2014)

Contributions of Academy Fellows to wider NUS Teaching Community

The following pages celebrate how, in addition to Teaching Academy projects and events, Academy Fellows continue to actively engage with the wider NUS teaching community to enrich the NUS educational landscape. Many Fellows have contributed time and expertise to teaching enhancement programmes, talks and workshops on progressive practices that enable the NUS teaching community to provide transformative education to our students. Some of these outreach efforts include:

Farooq Shamsuzzaman & Teofilo C Daquila
Chat with the Academy Fellows on 27 January 2014

The Academic Life @ NUS

Adrian Lee

Technology in Pedagogy Series talk on April 2014

Virtually Vygotsky

An article itemising the contents of this talk has been published by CDTL

[Click here to read article](#)

Damith C Rajapakse

Technology in Pedagogy Series talk on 12 February 2014

Leveraging Peer Feedback

Adrian Lee

*Faculty of Engineering Inaugural TEL workshop
6 August 2013*

Technology enabled active learning

Heng Cheng Suang's collaboration with the Department of Building and the Department of Real Estate Teaching Development Committees' Teaching Seminar, on 3 October 2013



What's Your Story

Spearheading Educational Initiatives

At the same time, Academy Fellows have continued to spearhead efforts in promoting excellence in teaching and learning within their own faculties and departments.

Aaron Danner's

Brown Bag Lunch Presentation for the
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
7 March 2014

How I Mesmerise Students and make them pay attention

Stephen Lim

chaired the inaugural

NUS Psychology Teaching Assistant Symposium

25 February 2014

Stephen Lim

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences'
Teaching Seminar

22 April 2014

Enthusing Students in Small Group Teaching

Soo Yuen Jien

School of Computing

Teaching Luncheon

A regular departmental lunchtime exploration of new technology enhanced teaching as well as how the school can leverage on its expertise to benefit the wider NUS Community

Teofilo C. Daquila co-organised the
Department of Southeast Asian Studies

Workshop for Graduate Tutors

20 August 2014

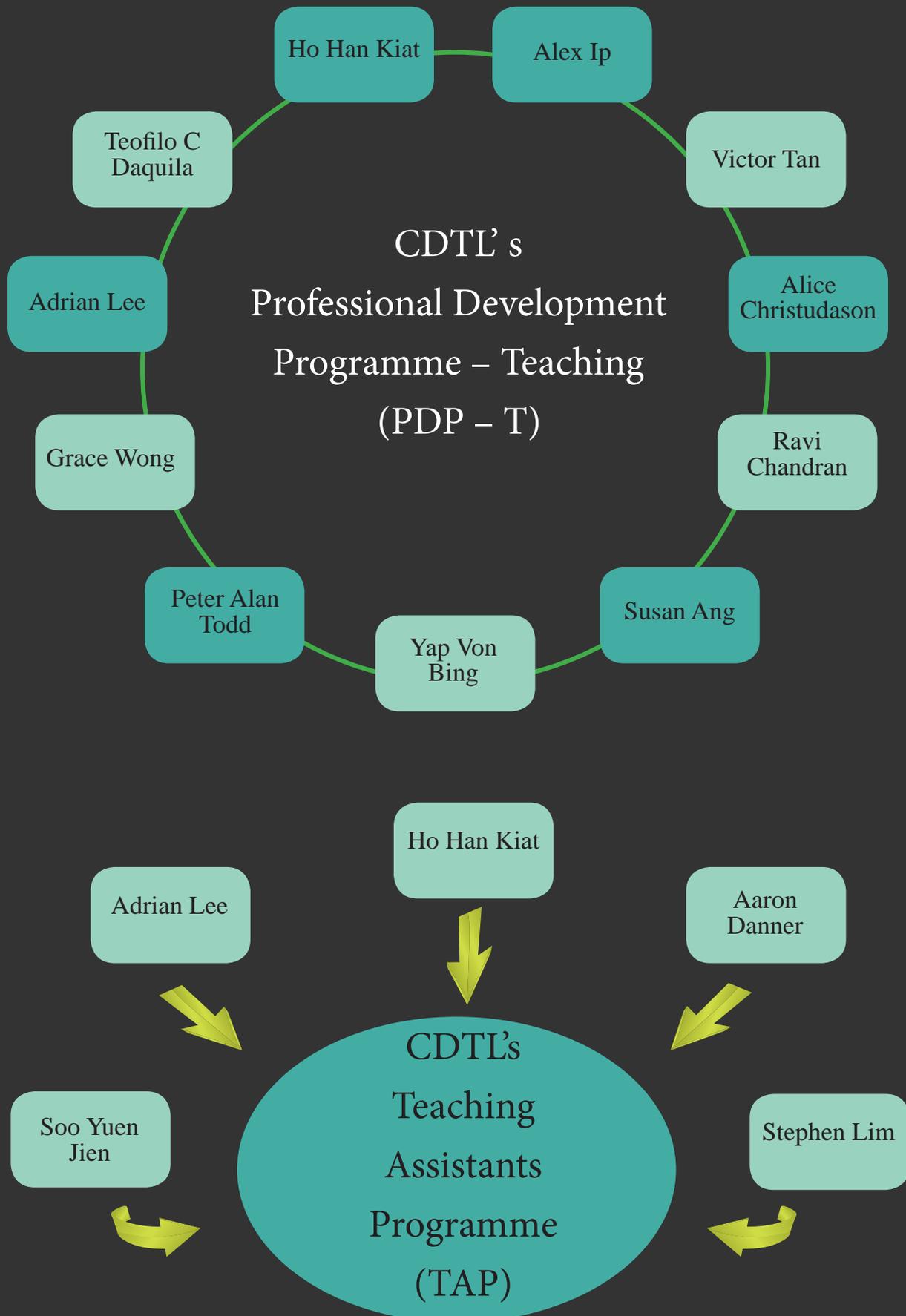
This programme introduced graduate tutors to teaching & learning strategies and approaches to address diversity in the classroom.

Jochen Wirtz's founding of the
NUS Business School

Teaching Excellence Council (TEC)

which has significantly enhanced the teaching culture at NUS Business School through the sharing of best practices and ideas related to teaching via a Faculty Mentoring Programme, Class visits and Teaching Workshops.

Outreach Efforts of NUS Teaching Academy Fellows (CDTL Programmes)



editorial information

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