

Getting To Know Our Students

Alwyn Lee, PhD Student



Alwyn Lee

is a currently a PhD student at the Learning Sciences and Technologies (LST) Academic Group.

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

I am an electrical engineer by training and previously worked with A*STAR for 5 years and was doing a lot of Research and Development with industries in the field of information and communications, healthcare, smart devices and intelligent networks. At that time, I had already made up my mind to pursue a PhD, but I had doubts on whether I should pursue a PhD in engineering. Throughout my learning journey in schools, junior college and university, my family and friends around me are involved in the education sector, either as teachers, university lecturers or tutors. I was very curious to know why there was a draw towards the field of education, and more importantly, I began to question how students learn, and whether the students are learning and accomplishing what they strived to achieve. It was then that I made a choice to begin deeper research to answer this question, and I realised I can conduct research in an organised manner in the form of a PhD, with expert guidance in an established educational institute in Singapore.

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

In my learning journey thus far, I realised the coursework at the beginning of my programme was tremendously helpful in providing a basic understanding of learning sciences and methodologies that are important for research students. I have received guidance and instruction on the foundations of learning sciences (MLT801), allowing me to understand the field and specificities of the learning sciences. Further, I began to appreciate how computer-supported collaborative learning platforms with knowledge building (MLT802) methodologies can be applied to classrooms, and this knowledge has helped me further develop analytics for obtaining insights on learning behaviours. This focus on learning sciences and analytics has led me to conduct deeper research and development on learning analytics in knowledge building classrooms.

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

As I am an electrical and computer engineer by training, I remembered coming into NIE not knowing much about educational research and having to make new friends in a foreign environment. The experience in my first course with a group of course-mates (who happened to all be teachers) was eye-opening and very insightful. My course-mates were all very helpful in guiding one another to learn more about the learning sciences, and were especially invaluable to me, since I seemed to need the most help in understanding elementary information, such as the numerous acronyms that are commonly used in the educational field. My perspective of education and educational technologies was also slightly different and thus, I am thankful to this group of friends who helped me integrate into the NIE community, and most of us still stay in contact even after four years.

Describe your relationship with the NIE faculty members.

Apart from my supervisor and co-supervisor, I have also met other faculty members in the LST academic group, through discussions, projects that I am involved in, and chit-chat sessions along the corridors of NIE. Through my colleagues in Nanyang Technological University and friends in NIE, I was fortunate to be acquainted with staff and faculty from other academic groups such as Natural Sciences and Science Education and Psychological Studies. I am also glad that my participation in events such as the Graduate Student Conference in NIE has connected me with GPL staff who are able to provide me with valuable advice on my PhD progress and future career options. Overall, NIE has a very warm and helpful community, and I hope to be able to meet more people during my time at NIE.

Describe the factors that led you to choose NIE.

Prior to my search for institutes and schools that provide opportunities of educational research in Singapore, NIE struck me as the place that I will need to be, as the amount of institutional knowledge, resources and quality of educational researchers at NIE seemed to eclipse that of other institutes. Furthermore, the people around me definitely influenced my thinking about how NIE was beneficial to them over the years as an educator, and finally, the types of courses available at LST were able to pique my interests and seemed to be able to help me answer my burning questions.

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