

Getting To Know Our Students

Dr Mercy Karuniah Jesuvadian, PhD graduate



Dr Mercy

is currently a lecturer at NIE and is a PhD graduate of Early Childhood and Special Needs Education (ECSE) Academic Group.

What are you currently working as?

I am currently a lecturer with the Early Childhood and Special Needs (ECSE) Academic Group in NIE. I trained as a teacher and taught in both junior colleges and secondary schools before I decided to switch to the Early Childhood field. I took up a Master of Education (Early Childhood) with ECSE in 2005 and decided to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in 2008. I have a keen interest in understanding how children learn. My initial interest was in the socio-emotional realm of learning. Though this area continues to intrigue me, I have found an equally powerful curiosity towards investigating the individual in the context of his/her environment. In recent years, I have sought to deeply understand the role of parenting in child development. This area was also the focus of my PhD study.

What attracted you to a higher degree programme at NIE?

I was keen to take up the NIE Masters and PhD as the programmes offer both breadth and depth. Topics are designed to inform on the latest developments in the field. It was good for me because I came from a non-Early Childhood background and needed some form of grounding in this area. The rigor of the programmes also attracted me to take up the courses. As I progressed along, I was also privileged to work with exceptional faculty members who are experts in their fields.

What was your research on? Did the research yield the desired outcome that you hoped for?

My PhD research was on the parent-child relationship that was evolving in low income earning single mother families. I focused on the local Indian community as there was limited existing data on how the parent-children relationship was taking shape in this particular community. The research study was able to shed light on how parental perspective on sound parent-child relations may be very dissimilar to how young children between the ages of 8-10 expect the nature of the relationship to be. In the course of doing this research, I was able to foreground child voice and opinion on how they wished to be parented. It was very illuminating.

How would you describe your interactions with NIE faculty members?

I would describe the interactions with NIE faculty members as being warm and nurturing. As a beginning academic, I was especially supported by senior faculty members in the ECSE AG when it came to teaching and research. Much guidance was given to new academics as we went about developing courses and designing material to ensure that our learners, be it pre-service, in-service or higher degree students benefited from the time they spent in class.

What was the best part of being a student at NIE?

Higher degree students were given much scope to develop their ideas. Supervisors provided many opportunities for me to explore the topic, and streamline it to better fit the expectations of a PhD.

Has the programme helped you in your career progression?

It certainly prepared me for my role as an ECSE lecturer. I was given the grounding in content and the opportunities to take my learning out into the real world. It has served to let me see how relevant and competent I was in terms of content mastery and content delivery.