

Getting To Know Our Students

Mary Foo, Master of Arts in Professional Education
(Training and Development) (MAPE) student



Mary Foo

is currently working as a Training Manager in the financial industry and is a Master of Arts in Professional Education (Training and Development) (MAPE) student.

Why did you enrol in the Master of Arts in Professional Education (Training and Development) (MAPE)?

My interest was kindled by my company's revised Human Resource policy to sponsor staff who are interested in pursuing a master's programme and this was made more attractive by the availability of grant from SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG). In addition, I believe in lifelong learning, having had many opportunities to pursue various professional certification programmes and courses in the financial services industry. I have been in the industry for 18 years; 5 years as a sales agent and 13 years in training and development. Pursuing a master's degree was a natural progression for me towards my professional development as a trainer/facilitator.

How has this programme helped you in your career thus far?

The programme has given me a deeper understanding of the various learning theories and how these impact the choice of various instructional strategies. It has thus helped me in conducting training needs analysis, where I have to identify what the training and non-training needs are. I am also now able to reflect and review more critically the effectiveness of current training programmes in terms of methodologies, assessment and design practices.

How has this helped your colleagues?

I have shared with my colleagues on the use of Training Needs Assessment (TNA) to identify training and non-training issues which affect agents' sales performance and recommend appropriate solutions to address performance issues.

What features of the programme appealed to you?

The ability to apply what I have learnt to training / workplace issues; whether in performance analysis, or understanding workplace learning issues and providing solutions to meet the needs identified. I also enjoyed the Workplace Coaching and Mentoring module as I find the skill sets learnt very practical and useful.

Did you face any difficulties in combining work and study?

I had to apply for leave to complete assignments which were intensive in readings and higher in demands. I am fortunate to have a very good company which gives me the flexibility to work around my working hours; for example, to report to work earlier on days that I have to go for classes. I work and stay in the East and the distance to NTU is considerable. I also have very good family support from my husband and children. I am "excused" from household chores and duties - like cooking, walking the dog, etc. when I have to work intensely on my assignments during weekday nights and on weekends. The NIE tutors and professors are understanding; they start class a bit later and allow us to eat our dinners in the classrooms.

Describe your interaction with your fellow course mates.

My course mates are very resourceful and many freely share any useful links or materials they have found which are pertinent to our programme. We have fun learning together and doing group projects and assignments together. There is a lot of camaraderie, a sense of "bonding" as we "moan and groan" over assignments and deadlines!