



The Enhanced Partnership Model

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The Singapore brand of education is renowned globally, with many academics, policy-makers and government leaders seeking to emulate or adapt relevant features for their own countries. The success of the Singapore school system can be attributed to three main factors: sound educational policies; the quality of teachers in schools; and the efforts undertaken at the school level to improve student learning. One of the underlying drivers of this success is the vital and robust interface between MOE, NIE and schools. Each plays a distinct yet harmonising role in achieving the desired outcomes of education.

Like many of the world's high-performing teacher education providers, NIE currently adopts a university-based teacher education model characterised by classroom-based courses and a school based-practicum. The practicum, school attachments, in-service courses as well as various forms of collaborative activities offer a glimpse of the concordant partnership that NIE shares with MOE and schools, with both stakeholders working together to help student teachers make effective transitions from campus learning to classroom teaching.

Schools also serve as fertile grounds for cultivating educational research as they are the primary locus for gathering data and assessing the robustness of NIE's latest research findings. Schools benefit from educational research through the application of research findings in the areas of curriculum design, innovative pedagogies and learning environments.

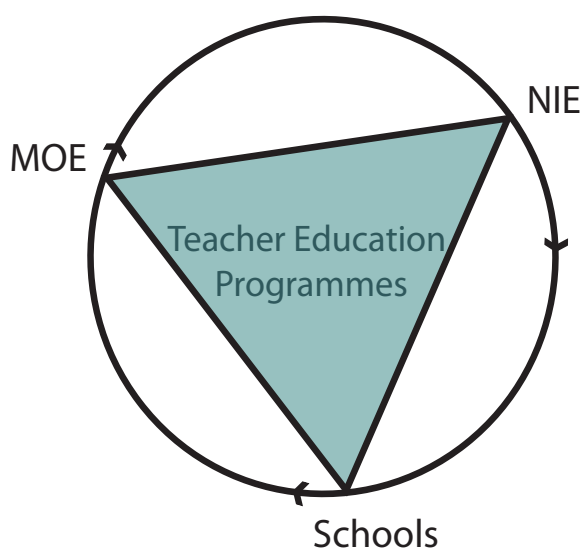
MOE's role within this education eco-system is essential, as the source of overarching policies that inform the direction of NIE's teacher education model, including the shaping of its programmes and research priorities.

Having recognised that the quality of teachers determines the quality of education, a strong strategic partnership is needed between the key stakeholders that determine the quality and excellence of teacher education - NIE, MOE and the schools. In a connected world where alliances bring to the fore combined strengths that individual players lack, it is in the collective advantage of NIE, MOE and the schools to establish a scaffold of formal or semi-formal structures to optimise long-term and sustained cooperation and collaboration.

NIE advocates an **“Enhanced Partnership Model”** (Figure 4) characterised by the tripartite relationship between NIE, MOE and schools along the whole continuum of teacher education. This model leverages on the proven strengths of NIE's university-based approach while emphasising much closer collaboration with MOE and schools than what currently exists, in order to

strengthen the theory-practice nexus. It also provides for clearly defined accountabilities for each partner, which may be more prominently weighted at different points in the teacher education continuum, starting from ITP to the early stages of a teacher's career and further in their professional development.

FIGURE 4 : ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP MODEL



The Enhanced Partnership Model is intended to provide the necessary collaborative framework of shared values and goals which are aligned towards a unified outcome. It offers a clear articulation of defined accountabilities for each stakeholder at relevant stages in the teacher education continuum, and provides an overarching framework for closer collaboration between NIE, MOE and schools in the interest of teacher learning, as well as education research. In particular, the enhanced partnership between NIE and the schools will further help to bridge the current gaps between theory and practice, and strengthen the theory-practice relationship. A stronger tripartite partnership will support beginning teachers in making more effective transitions from the campus to schools, while enhancing the continued learning and professional development pathways available to the teaching workforce.

The NIE – Schools partnership is particularly significant in underpinning the enhancements designed to strengthen the theory-practice nexus. The *theory-practice gap* has been acknowledged as the main shortcoming of teacher education the world over, whether institutions or national agencies subscribe to the university-based or school-based models. Under the Enhanced Partnership Model,

NIE will be at the helm of formal teacher education within an academic setting, equipping and reinforcing teachers with the values, knowledge and skills that will enable them to successfully navigate the challenges of the 21st century classroom. Schools will take on a bigger, more active role in practicum, school attachments and other in-situ collaborative platforms that facilitate professional development and bridge the gap between campus-based learning and 'real classroom settings'. As NIE becomes more research-intensive, schools will also be invited to collaborate by becoming test-sites. Such a model for working relationships will in turn lead to a higher level of responsiveness by NIE to school and practitioner needs.

Transforming teacher education and bringing it to the next level is a task that NIE cannot achieve in isolation. It is an endeavour that requires a single-minded commitment from all key stakeholders – NIE, MOE, and schools, while recognising that there should be mutual respect for the differing roles, beliefs, perspectives, experiences, expertise and knowledge of each. The Enhanced Partnership Model promotes solidarity of intentions and efforts from all stakeholders working in tandem to provide teachers with the best support in equipping them for their work in 21st century classrooms.

