

Getting To Know Our Students

Dr Cao Feng, PhD graduate



Dr Cao Feng
is currently working as
a lecturer and is a PhD
graduate of English
Language and Literature
(ELL) Academic
Group.

What are you currently working as?

Currently I'm working as a lecturer at the Centre for English Language Communication in National University of Singapore. I teach a module called Graduate English to postgraduate students from various disciplines. I had long considered doing a higher degree when I was teaching English in a Chinese university, almost a decade ago. Getting an advanced degree does not simply add to my credentials; more importantly, it empowers me to become a teacher scholar. I believe teaching cannot be separated from research. A good teacher should be able to do pedagogic research and use the best evidence available to inform his or her teaching practice.

What attracted you to a higher degree programme at NIE?

NIE is well-known for her educational scholarship and attainment in the region. I completed my Postgraduate Diploma in English Language Teaching and Master of Arts degree in NIE. My first-hand learning experience in these programmes convinced me that NIE was a good choice to pursue a doctoral degree in my research area.

How would you describe your interactions with NIE faculty members?

In general, I think NIE faculty members are knowledgeable and respectable. I'm also very lucky to know a few professors who are very generous and friendly. They care about students and provide great advice. I have received considerable assistance from them in my academic study and career advancement.

Could you share with us more on the research that you did? Did the research yield the desired outcome that you hoped for?

My PhD study investigated academic discourse from a discourse analytic perspective. Specifically, I looked at how writers from different disciplinary fields and research traditions represent their materials and interact with readers in written research reports. I would say that the research findings largely confirmed my hypotheses, but there were also unexpected findings. I became interested in the unexpected findings and felt prodded to explore possible explanations.

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

For me the best part of being a research student at NIE was the environment. For instance, on campus there were many interesting seminars, lectures, and workshops that we could attend. I also enjoyed the opportunity of interacting with academic staff and my peers in postgraduate conferences. The NIE Library also offered excellent resources for doing research. Such kind of academic support was essential to my academic study.

Has the programme been beneficial to you in bringing forth changes in your organisation?

I think I have applied what I learnt in NIE in my current teaching. For example, by wearing my applied linguistics hat, I can better help those postgraduate students who are learning English as an additional language for academic and research purposes.