

# NTU launching \$30m centre to study tertiary education here

FOR years, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) has carried out studies on learning in primary and secondary schools. Now it wants to go a step further – by launching a new \$30 million centre to conduct research on Singapore's tertiary education.

Called "Cradle" – short for the Centre for Research and Development in Learning – it will develop new ways of learning and assessing students, especially in an increasingly "technologically rich environment", as NTU put it.

In a statement released yesterday, NTU provost Freddy Boey said: "For the last two decades, the National Institute of Education (NIE) at NTU has been leading Singapore's research in learning at the primary and secondary school levels. Through Cradle, NTU will move into research on higher education learning."

The centre, which will be launched in the second half of the year, will work with NIE and top institutions like Stanford University in the United States. It will start with about 10 projects, including research on e-learning in universities.

Of the overall \$30 million sum, NTU has already pumped \$20 million into using innovative learning tools at its new

medical school with Imperial College London. Students there have technology-driven lessons, online modules, iPad-supported learning and virtual dissection. "We intend to expand these innovations to other NTU schools," said Professor Boey.

"Students today are more digitally savvy and when they enter the university, they have come to expect a technologically mediated environment that seamlessly blends face-to-face and online learning," he said.

"By evaluating students' learning experience through its research projects, Cradle will raise our understanding of such learning pedagogies and how the university's curriculum can be better delivered, so that they remain fresh and up to date."

Professor Lee Sing Kong, who is stepping down as NIE director next month after more than seven years at the helm, has also been appointed as NTU's vice-president for education strategies.

In the new position, he will lead the development of the institution's curricula, teaching and assessment methods.

Prof Lee, who will also be involved in Cradle's initiatives, said in the statement that the centre will complement NIE's work and expand on research at the primary and secondary school levels.

"We also want to build a strong pool of local experts who can contribute to the development of Singapore's tertiary sector."

AMELIA TENG

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## KEEPING THINGS FRESH

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– NTU provost Freddy Boey

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