

**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT OF MUIS
HJ MOHD ALAMI MUSA
AT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY
NIE SPECIALIST DIPLOMA IN TEACHING & LEARNING
ON THURS, 21 APR 2011
AT MUIS AUDITORIUM, SIH**

Honourable Minister for the Environment & Water Resources and
Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs, Dr Yaacob Ibrahim

Director, National Institute of Education (NIE)
Professor Lee Sing Kong

Associate Dean, NIE International
A/P Goh Chor Boon

Mufti of Singapore
Sahibus Samahah, Dr Md Fatris Bakaram

Muis Council Members

Members of Madrasah Board of Governors and
Chairmen of Madrasah Management Committees

Madrasah Principals and Teachers

Colleagues from the NIE,

Graduands,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by congratulating all the 50 madrasah teachers who have successfully graduated from the NIE Specialist Diploma program in Teaching and Learning. They will receive their diploma today from Honourable Minister, Dr Yaacob Ibrahim. These teachers will be joining our enlarging pool of madrasah teachers who have successfully

obtained professional teacher qualifications with the full sponsorship of Muis and made possible by the collaboration that Muis has forged with our world renowned teacher training institution, the NIE.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

2 Our Madrasah are an important institution of the Singapore Muslim community. They educate and nurture our young who aspire to be the future religious leaders and intelligentsia. The community's support for the madrasah is important because we need to ensure that there is an adequate pool of "home-grown" religious teachers, teachers, imams and religious officials who can deal with socio-religious issues and challenges, within the context of Singapore.

Investment in Teacher Training

3 On its part, Muis will continue to support all madrasah in Singapore. Besides providing administrative and funding support, as well as support for curriculum development and infra-structural upgrading, Muis invests heavily in teacher training.

4 In 2003, only 16% of our madrasah teachers were professionally trained as teachers. With the graduation of our 50 madrasah teachers today, I am happy to report that 85% of our teachers are now professionally trained. The remaining teachers who are yet to be trained

will commence their diploma program run by NIE, in June and November this year.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

5 Professional development of madrasah teachers requires a huge budget. Since 2003 till today, we have spent some \$2.7 million on teacher training. This is no small sum but a worthwhile investment. Education is a field which is ever changing, with no finality. It is constantly developing and changing. As such, we need to continuously train our madrasah teachers to be equipped with the latest knowledge and pedagogical skills required of teachers today.

6 I am happy to say that we are already seeing the fruits of our investments. Our madrasah benefit from having quality teachers, who are well equipped with the latest theories and practices in pedagogy and are more effective in applying assessment techniques, new pedagogies, and technology.

Effectiveness in Assessment methodologies

7 One such example is **Cikgu Kamalina Sahril from Madrasah Al-Arabiah**. Being a very experienced teacher prior to attending the course, she is now more confident in applying assessment methodologies. Having gone through Bloom's Taxonomy in the program, Mdm

Kamalina's comprehension of Bloom's Taxonomy allows her to set varying degree of questions that can help her students to achieve a level of creativity and excellence. In setting her exam papers, she applied what she learnt to ensure that the questions do not stray away from the Table of Specifications and the Marking Scheme. With Bloom's Taxonomy being factored into her exam papers, she is now able to provide an even fairer assessment of her students' understanding of the subject that she teaches.

Effectiveness in applying new padagogies

8 Another encouraging example is **Ustazah Zalifah Abdul Rahman from Madrasah Al-Maarif**. She feels more empowered after attending this program, she feels more empowered in applying the theories taught by the NIE lecturers in her classroom. Her students felt that her lessons are more fun and interactive as she incorporated new methods of teaching such as Cooperative Learning. When discussing the topic "Different Religions in Singapore" in her *Aqidah* lesson using the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning method, she discovered that her students exude hidden talents and skills. They develop their oratory skills and become more outspoken. Ustazah Zalifah is able to witness that her students were more responsive in learning and they naturally felt more confident in expressing themselves in public.

Effectiveness in applying new Technology in Learning

9 A third example is **Cikgu Suhana Dupree from Madrasah Alsagoff**. She has over 20 years of experience, and even before she completed the program, she has applied whatever that she had learnt from it. Her enthusiasm allows her to apply various pedagogies in her Higher Malay and Malay Literature classes with the help of technology. In addition to her students submitting their assignments via email, she is also comfortable in communicating with her students through 'fb' (Facebook) and 'tweets' (Twitter). Teaching using Powerpoint slides and Youtube videos, this is customary for her. She is currently looking for suitable Apps for the iPad to be used in her lessons.

10 These are just a few examples of how madrasah teachers have benefited from the NIE training program. I am sure all our madrasah have inspiring stories to share how their teachers have put to good use in classrooms their professional training. Our madrasah teachers are steadily striving to empower themselves and are now more confident in trying out new pedagogies while ensuring that the students remain effectively engaged and learning more.

Teachers on "Leadership Track"

11 I have mentioned earlier that the last two batches of teachers will start their professional teacher training through the NIE Specialist

Diploma program later this year. With these last two batches, we will be completing the professional training of all our teachers. Given this positive development, Muis has also started to focus its attention on the training of madrasah teachers who are on the 'leadership track'. These teachers are the Heads of Departments, Vice-Principals and Principals.

12 We are taking advantage of educational management and leadership programs run by the NIE to train our madrasah teachers who are on the "leadership track". I am happy to report that 21 of them have successfully completed the NIE's 'Management and Leadership in Schools' (MLS) program as well as 'Leadership in Education – International' (LEP-I) program. We intend to eventually send all our HODs, VPs and Principals to NIE for training through these programs.

13 Besides the full-time NIE programs that I have mentioned, madrasah teachers on leadership track will also have an opportunity to participate in a new enrichment program called the 'Customised Leadership in Madrasah Education' program which will be introduced by Muis Academy late this year. This enrichment program will guide these teachers to apply educational leadership and management skills within the context of our madrasah.

Conclusion

14 On that note, let me conclude by expressing our appreciation to our partner, the National Institute of Education. We look forward to further collaborations and other joint efforts in organizing professional development programs for our madrasah teachers.

15 I like to also thank Honourable Minister Dr Yaacob Ibrahim for officiating at this Graduation Ceremony. And again, to all graduates and their families - our most heartfelt congratulations. May you continue to give your level best to our students in the madrasah.

Thank You.