

SUNWAY
UNIVERSITY



School of
EDUCATION

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Newsletter Issue #6: May - August

The May–August period brought together academic milestones, research development and engagement with the wider education community. From postgraduate research development to international academic exchange and industry engagement, these efforts strengthened connections between education and practice.

This edition of Beyond the Classroom brings together key developments from across the School, highlighting the people, initiatives and collaborations shaping our academic community. It also reflects the School's engagement with the wider education sector, including its work on the Children's Experience Economy (CEE), which explores how experiences beyond the classroom shape children's learning and development.

What's Buzzin'?



Academic Milestones

Programme accreditation and new academic appointments.



Research & Postgraduate Development

Postgraduate intakes, research workshops and alumni experiences.



Partnerships & Industry Engagement

New connections across education, industry and international institutions.



Global Perspectives

Academic exchange and conversations on the future of higher education.



Learning Beyond the Classroom

Community engagement, educational innovation and Next Big Quest 2026.



Professor Malissa Maria Mahmud
Dean, School of Education
Sunway University

Message From The Dean

This period has been one of continued development for the School of Education at Sunway University. Across teaching, research and external engagement, we have worked to strengthen our academic community, deepen connections with the education sector and explore new ways to contribute to educational practice.

A key area of focus has been our work in Early Childhood Education. As we developed our new academic pathways, the Children's Experience Economy (CEE) concept continued to inform our thinking about how children learn and grow beyond the classroom. Through engagements with organisations across different sectors, we explored how products, services, spaces and digital experiences can shape childhood, and how these insights can contribute to more meaningful and inclusive learning experiences.

We have also continued to invest in postgraduate research and academic development. Research workshops, peer-learning opportunities and academic exchanges provided space for our students and colleagues to strengthen their research capabilities, share perspectives and engage with emerging ideas. These activities reflect our commitment to cultivating a research community where learning is collaborative and inquiry is encouraged.

Our engagement with local and international institutions has further broadened opportunities for knowledge exchange. From conversations with industry and education partners to academic dialogue involving Malaysia and Japan, these connections have allowed us to consider educational challenges from different perspectives and explore opportunities for future collaboration.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to developing relevant academic pathways, supporting meaningful research and building stronger connections between education and practice. I would like to thank our colleagues, students, alumni and partners for their continued contributions. Their ideas, expertise and collaboration remain central to the School's ongoing development and our shared aspiration for a more inclusive, responsive and future-focused education landscape.

Malissa Maria Mahmud

Children Experience Economy: Centering Education in Child Experiences

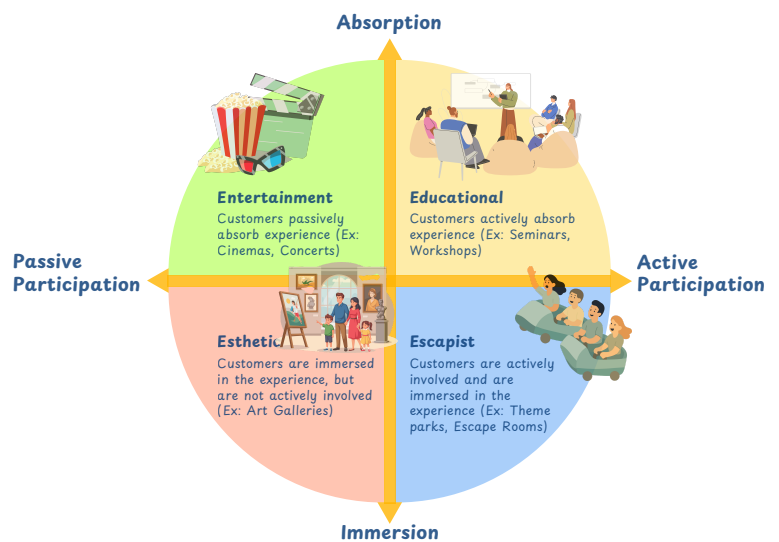
Think about it: Early childhood experiences are shaped beyond what goes on in the classroom. These experiences are also influenced by the spaces, services and products families introduce to children. What prescribes value to these child-targeting experiences?

From April 2026 to August 2026, the School of Education Sunway University engaged with several industry participants to discuss the Children Experience Economy. The Children Experience Economy is an expansion of the Experience Economy theory, posed by Pine and Gilmore (1998), in which value in consumer goods and services is derived from the experience it offers. To build on that, the Children Experience Economy proposes that the value from child-facing services, spaces and products is derived from education, reinforced by input from education professionals.

This prescription of value centred around education was asked to companies and organisational participants through a series of engagement sessions with 10 industry participants ranging from playground developers, game developers and even parenting news companies – and they agreed! Throughout our engagement, some of these companies agreed that the integration of education into child-facing products typically enhanced the desirability and suitability of the products and YES, these products are typically made in consultation with education experts (At least some of them).

At the current stage, the School of Education had sought to complete the Children Experience Economy Industry Survey towards the publication of the Children Experience Economy White Paper. Watch this space to learn more about the upcoming publication – coming soon!

The term children's experience economy is derived from the broader **experience economy** notion introduced in the Harvard Business Review article, "**Welcome to the Experience Economy**" by Pine and Gilmore (1998).



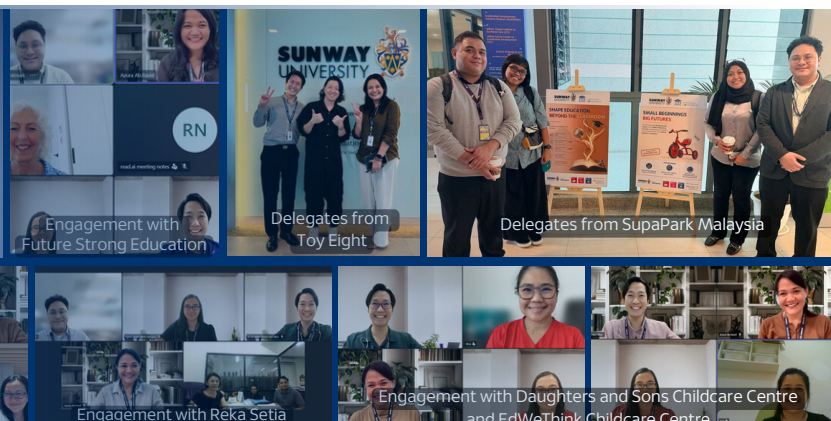
The Four Realms of an Experience by Pine and Gilmore (1998)

For further reading, explore these two articles by Prof. Malissa Maria Mahmud on the Children Experience Economy (CEE) and how the concept is taking shape:

- [A New Lens: The Children Experience Economy \(CEE\)](#)
- [Naming a Phenomenon to Shaping It \(CEE\)](#)
- [Children Experience Economy \(CEE\): When "child-friendly" still fails the child](#)

Key Engagements

- Toy Eight
- Future Strong Education
- SuperPark Malaysia
- Daughters and Sons Childcare Centre
- EdWeThink Childcare Centre
- Reka Setia
- Mak Chic
- Gameka
- SPM Games



Exploring New Ideas, Rethinking Educational Practice

Education continues to evolve beyond the classroom, shaped by new technologies, changing learning needs and opportunities for collaboration. The School of Education, Sunway University, engages with academic institutions, industry and community organisations to explore how these developments can contribute to better learning experiences.

An exchange with Universiti Brunei Darussalam's Centre for Lifelong Learning (C3L), led by the Dean, Assoc. Prof. Dr Nik Ani Afiah, explored lifelong learning, flexible pathways, microcredentials and opportunities for regional collaboration. Meanwhile, discussions with Noodle Factory's founders Yvonne Soh and Dr Jim Wagstaff considered how artificial intelligence can make learning more personalised and responsive, while keeping pedagogy and student outcomes at the centre.

The School also explored the potential for a Multi-Sensory Smart Room with Ronald McDonald House Charities Malaysia, considering how sensory environments could support learners with special educational needs.

Through these conversations, the School continues to explore approaches that make education more inclusive, accessible and responsive to diverse learners.



Delegates from Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) Centre for Lifelong Learning C3L



Delegates from Noodle Factory



Delegates from Ronald McDonald House Charities Malaysia

Building New Possibilities Through Education Partnerships with Eduwis and Kamakura Women's University

Education grows when different perspectives come together. Through MoUs with Eduwis Sdn Bhd and Kamakura Women's University in Japan, Sunway University and the School of Education are opening up opportunities to exchange ideas and explore new approaches to education.

The collaboration with Eduwis - spurred through its Founder, Amanda Tan, focuses on early childhood education, research and professional development. Meanwhile, the partnership with Kamakura Women's University, led by Prof. Aya Fujisawa creates opportunities to explore deeper academic exchanges and collaborations, joint researches and educational innovation.

When industry experience meets international academic perspectives, new conversations emerge about how education can evolve at the university level.



MoU Signing for Kamakura Women's University



MoU Signing with Eduwis Sdn Bhd

Master of Education (Conventional) Fully Accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)

Since its establishment in September 2023, the School of Education at Sunway University has steadily built its academic portfolio, welcoming students into new programmes and expanding its presence in the education landscape.

In July 2026, the Master of Education (Conventional), led by Dr Conie Toh, achieved full accreditation from the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), marking an important milestone for the School's growth!

Accreditation represents more than just a programme status as it reflects the academic standards and ongoing work behind programme delivery, supported by the contributions of our colleagues across academic and administrative teams. For a young School such as us, continuing to develop its programmes and academic community, this achievement marks meaningful progress in establishing its foundations.

As the School continues to grow, the accreditation stands as an important part of its journey so far – recognising progress made while supporting the work that lies ahead in teaching, research and postgraduate education.



Celebrating Teachers' Day Across Sunway Campus

Teachers' Day is an opportunity to recognise the educators who leave a lasting mark on our lives, often in ways we only come to appreciate over time. In the lead-up to the occasion, the School of Education invited the Sunway Campus community to reflect on the teachers who have inspired, guided and supported them.

Through a week-long series of six video compilations, students and staff shared messages of gratitude and personal reflections on the educators who made a difference in their lives. This kind of initiative served as a reminder that teaching extends beyond delivering lessons to build confidence and shape the people we become.



Welcoming SOE's New Academics

The School of Education at Sunway University is delighted to welcome three academics to our growing community of educators and researchers!



Dr Zahra Naimie brings her expertise and experience to the School's academic community. Through her work in education, she contributes to the School's commitment to academic development, research and meaningful educational practice.



Assoc. Prof. Dr Amanallah Soltani brings extensive experience in special education and educational psychology, contributing to the School's commitment to inclusive education, research and meaningful educational practice.

Next Big Quest 2026: Making Education Visible and Interactive

The School of Education brought storytelling and hands-on learning to Next Big Quest 2026 through an interactive, two-day puppet theatre experience.

With puppets in hand and imaginations at work, young learners explored storytelling, creative problem-solving and the joy of learning through play. The experience brought together the academic team, SOECOMM and the wider Sunway Education Group Marketing team to create a space for curiosity, creativity and discovery.

From the first day's performances to the return of the puppet theatre on Day 2, the experience offered a glimpse of how learning can extend beyond conventional classroom settings, inviting children to participate, experiment and discover through play.

A big thank you to everyone involved in bringing this experience to life and making learning an adventure for our young learners.



Exploring Malaysian Education with Students from Ho Chi Minh City

On 15 July 2026, the School of Education at Sunway University welcomed visiting students from the University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City for a conversation about Malaysian education, unity and cultural diversity. Through the session, "Malaysian Education: Fostering Unity and Intercultural Understanding within Malaysia's Diverse Society," students explored how education can bring people together across cultural differences, opening up conversations about the many perspectives that shape Malaysia's diverse society.



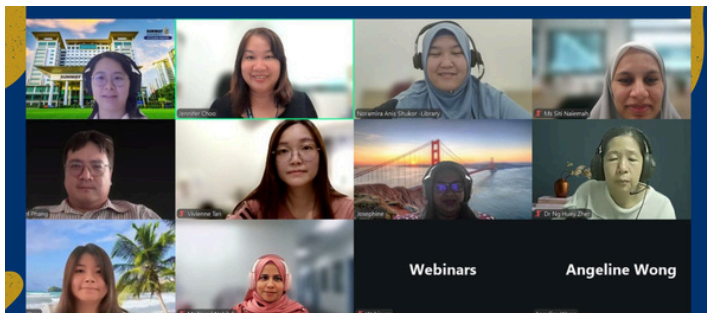
Welcoming Our Postgraduate Students: May and July 2026



The School of Education (SOE), Sunway University, warmly welcomes our Master of Education and Doctor of Education postgraduate students across two intakes!

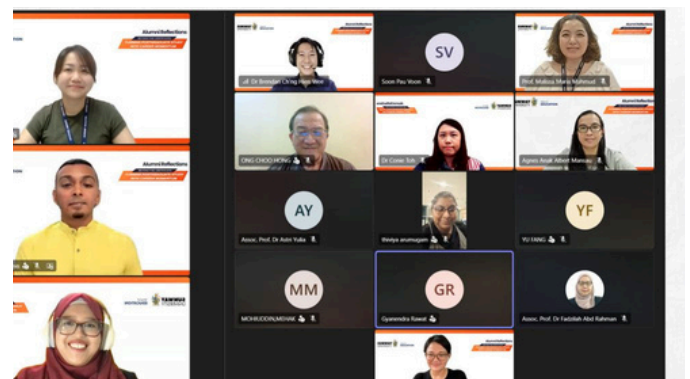
Comprising mostly working professionals, the students bring valuable academic and professional perspectives to the School of Education's postgraduate community. Their enrolment in flexible postgraduate programmes reflects a commitment to academic and personal growth alongside busy work schedules.

We look forward to supporting their academic growth and the development of their educational practice throughout their postgraduate studies.



Beyond the Certificate: Learning Beyond the Classroom

Postgraduate study offers opportunities to reflect on professional practice and explore new approaches to teaching and learning. In the Beyond the Certificate series, PCHEP alumni Dr TamilSelvan Ramis and Ms Lai Sok Yee share how further study has shaped their professional journeys. Their stories highlight the value of pedagogical knowledge and how continued learning can influence educators' approach to their work.



Research in the Round: Ideas, Insights and Exchange



Organised by the School of Education Student Committee (SOECOMM), the Postgraduate Roundtable brought students and academics together for research sharing and reflection.

Led by Dida Khairullah, Betari Aisah and Thiviya Arumugam, the session featured three activities: Research Show & Tell, for sharing research journeys and feedback; Troubleshooting Hangout, for discussing challenges and solutions; and Reflect & Realign, for reviewing progress and refocusing goals. The roundtable encouraged peer learning, problem-solving and connections across the School's research community.



Postgraduate Research Workshop Series: Building Stronger Research Foundations

This August's Postgraduate Research (PGR) Workshop Series, hosted by the School of Education's Dr Brendan Ch'ng, discusses formulating research questions, artificial intelligence in research, reviewing literature systematically, developing research proposals, and selecting the right research method to address research questions. Led by the School of Education, the series aims to help postgraduate students refine their research direction, strengthen their academic writing and make informed methodological decisions throughout their research journey.



Stronger Titles, Clearer Abstracts: A Guide to Academic Publishing

On August 26, 2026, the School of Education hosted Dr. Erkin Sadikov from Bukhara State University for a workshop on crafting effective titles and abstracts for international journal publications. The session focused on clear communication of research, effective abstract structuring, and insights into the scholarly publishing process from an editor's viewpoint. Participants received practical advice on presenting research to enhance reader understanding of its focus and contributions.



Learning Beyond Borders: Lee Li Chin's Academic Exchange at Kamakura Women's University

From 25 to 29 May 2026, Lee Li Chin, a PhD student at the School of Education, Sunway University, visited Kamakura Women's University in Japan for a week of academic and cultural exchange.

Through campus exploration, digital learning and moral education sessions, an international academic workshop, and virtual reality applications in education, the experience exposed Lee to different learning environments and teaching approaches. It also offered her an opportunity to consider how technology can support student engagement and enrich learning experiences.

Beyond the academic sessions, the visit broadened Lee's exposure to international educational practices and perspectives, adding another dimension to her journey as a postgraduate researcher. For the School of Education, engagements like this also open doors to knowledge exchange and help lay the groundwork for future international connections.



Masterclass by Prof. Fernando Reimers (From Policy to Practice: Rethinking Education Reform)

The School of Education, Sunway University welcomes Prof. Fernando Reimers, a Ford Foundation Professor of the Practice in International Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

The insightful session addresses the gap between education policy and classroom practice, stressing the imperative role of district leaders and academic institutions in emphasising educational reforms. The session also considered how artificial intelligence can inform decision-making, strengthen leadership capacity and support ethical governance.

The masterclass offered an opportunity to reflect on how leadership, institutional capacity, and sustained collaborations are crucial to translate education policy into meaningful practice. The masterclass was organised in collaboration with the Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (ASLI), MACEE and the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation.



Japan × Malaysia: Exploring International Student Mobility and Higher Education



The Japan × Malaysia Higher Education Dialogue, held on 24 July 2026, welcomed Emeritus Prof. Dato' Dr Morshidi Sirat, former Director General of Higher Education, Malaysia, and Prof. Futao Huang of Hiroshima University, Japan, for a hybrid session titled "International Student Mobility and Higher Education Development in Japan and Malaysia: A Comparative Perspective."

The dialogue brought Malaysian and Japanese perspectives together, exploring how international student mobility and cross-border collaboration can shape higher education policy and its future direction.

Looking Ahead

As we close this edition of Beyond the Classroom, we reflect on a period shaped by academic development, research initiatives and engagement with the wider education community.

School of Education continued to create opportunities for learning and knowledge exchange through postgraduate research activities, conversations with industry partners and engagement with international academic communities. These experiences reflect the different ways education connects with research, professional practice and the wider environments in which learning takes place.

The stories in this edition offer a glimpse into the people, ideas and collaborations that contribute to the School's work. From strengthening research capabilities to exploring how industry and international perspectives can inform educational practice, each reflects an ongoing interest in how knowledge can be shared, developed and applied.

As the School moves into the next chapter, these connections provide a foundation for further conversations, collaboration and academic growth. We look forward to sharing more of these developments in the next edition.

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