

Engagement with Educator-in-Residence Scholar, Associate Professor TAI PESETA

Highlights and Insights

Over two enriching weeks in September 2025, CTLT hosted Associate Professor **Tai Peseta**, who joined us as the 2025 Educator-in-Residence Scholar from Western Sydney University, Australia.

Throughout her visit, Tai shared her deep expertise and perspectives with the NUS community across multiple settings. The programme featured a thought-provoking public lecture, an interactive faculty workshop, and a meaningful student dialogue, complemented by conversations with senior leadership and faculty/school teams. Together, these engagements inspired rich exchanges and sparked fresh ideas for advancing teaching and learning at NUS.

EiRP Public Lecture on Education: Co-creating University Curricula with Students in Partnership: Practices and Provocations

02 Sep 2025

EiRP Student Dialogue: Expanding Your Learning Horizon Through Co-inquiry

03 Sep 2025

EiRP Faculty Workshop: From Feedback to Consultation to Co-inquiry with Students

04 Sep 2025

EiRP Academic Developer's Round Table: What's Your Model of Change, Today? Academic Development as Critical Stewardship

09 Sep 2025

Learn more about Tai's work

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EiRP Public Lecture on Education

Co-creating University Curricula with Students in Partnership: Practices and Provocations

02 September 2025

Associate Professor Tai Peseta offered a refreshing and thought-provoking perspective on what student–staff partnership can look like when taken seriously. She described partnership as “me and my students looking at something together, and being curious about it”, a shared process where students and staff collaboratively address an educational problem or challenge. The job of improving student learning and teaching practice, she argued, requires the combined insights and experiences of both students and teachers. When teachers study student learning alongside students, she reasoned, they are more likely to become even better educators.

Her talk provided a compelling insight into how partnership operates at the macro level on a curriculum transformation project, the 21c project. The starting point, as Tai explained, was a fundamental question her university posed amidst ongoing disruption: “**Are our programs adequately preparing our graduates for that kind of future?**” From there, Tai reframed the discussion through the lens of the student experience, encouraging students to see the university itself as an object of inquiry.

Two deceptively simple but deeply generative questions from students’ perspective guided the project and its process:

◆ **How do I stand out?** ◆ **How can I tell my story?**

1 Partnership begins with seeing the university as a possibility space

if we don’t imagine the university as a place where partnership is possible, it simply won’t happen.

2 Partnership is a decision

teachers’ intentional, relational choice to work alongside students rather than for them.

3 Shift in boundaries and identities

teachers and students take on new roles as they co-create, co-lead, co-research, and co-design. These shifts can be powerful but also destabilising if not approached with care.

4 Partnership as co-inquiry

being beside each other, looking together at a shared problem.

5 Commitment to transformation matters

it can involve individual growth, changes to institutional practices, and high-quality outputs that reflect a genuine commitment to transformation for both students and teachers.

At its heart,
partnership embodies a simple but profound message of reciprocity:
you matter to me, and I matter to you.

She invited the community to reimagine what partnership could mean within our own NUS contexts. While there are many ways to work with students, she reiterated that not all forms of collaboration constitute partnership. Genuine partnership, she noted, is relational, intentional, and often labour-intensive that demands time, care, and mutual commitment. Being deliberate about where and why we engage in such partnerships is therefore crucial.

Tai closed with two reflective questions for educators to consider:

How might we move beyond transactional relationships with students toward genuine partnership?

What would it take to view and enact the university as a “possibility space”?

EiRP Student Dialogue

Expanding Your Learning Horizon Through Co-inquiry

03 Sep 2025

In this dialogue, Associate Professor Tai Peseta invited NUS students to reimagine student engagement through the lens of student–staff partnership: a radical shift from viewing engagement as an individual effort to seeing it as a shared process of co-inquiry. Drawing on her experiences at Western Sydney University, Tai shared compelling examples where students collaborated with staff, faculty, and industry partners to co-create curriculum, design resources for educators, and rethink engagement strategies.

A highlight of the session was her introduction of
“Five Moments that Matter,”
a resource co-designed by student partners as a
“love letter to teachers.”

These moments capture what helps students learn most effectively

1. **Start with inspiration**
2. **Support students own their learning**
3. **Bring learning to life**
4. **Demystify assessment**
5. **End with reflection**



Tai also invited our students to reflect on another moment that resonated with them and why it mattered. Through this thoughtful exchange and a collective reflection, a sixth moment took shape:

6. **Making Connections**

For each of these moments, Tai shared what it means, the rationale for why it is important from students’ perspectives, and examples of activities, tools, and resources that teachers can use to help students see, feel, and experience these forms of engagement.

The dialogue also surfaced insightful student perspectives on disengagement, which often stems not from apathy but from a lack of opportunities for meaningful connection in class. Tai underscored that authentic partnership rests on **mutual respect, curiosity, shared purpose, and reciprocal responsibility**. These are qualities that make it, in her words, **“a relationship that can be challenging but deeply rewarding.”**

Ultimately, the session encouraged our students to view partnership not only as a means to enhance their own learning, but also as a powerful way to shape the broader university experience for themselves and their peers.

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Key Takeaways from EiRP Faculty Workshop

From Feedback to Consultation to Co-inquiry with Students

04 September 2025

Tai's key message for faculty

**“Partnership isn't a recipe:
it's a matter of judgment, respect, and relationship building.”**

She began the workshop by drawing a distinction between student engagement and student-staff partnership and then inviting faculty to consider the threshold concepts that define what partnership is—and what it is not. Tai also addressed several key questions that surfaced during the session:

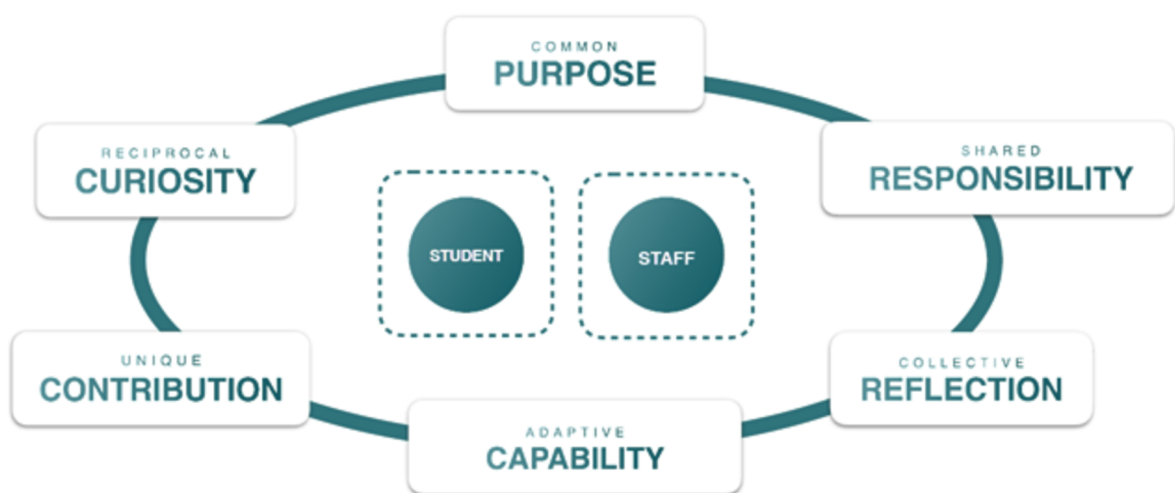
How do we motivate faculty to begin exploring student-staff partnerships?

What tools can help students engage in this work meaningfully and with confidence?

How might individual classroom practices grow into broader institutional change?

Drawing on experiences from Western Sydney University and other institutions, Tai shared that initiatives such as curriculum champions, transdisciplinary challenges, and student-faculty co-design projects not only prepare students for uncertain futures but also reinvigorate teaching practice. She noted that many educators she worked with, describe partnership work as “the most rewarding teaching they've done in years.”

Tai introduced the Co-Inquiry Framework, which shifts the focus from ‘extracting data or insights FROM students’ to ‘co-inquiring and co-creating WITH students.’ The framework is grounded in six guiding principles: reciprocal curiosity, common purpose, shared responsibility, collective reflection, adaptive capability, and unique contribution. Together, these principles offer a concrete way to plan for and sustain meaningful partnerships.



Students who feel supported and valued are more resilient and persistent, regardless of their background. Feeling a sense of belonging and mattering helps students thrive, even if they don't fully fit in.

Practical strategies for fostering connections

- ✓ Start small: experiment with a single partnership activity
- ✓ Communicate openly: set shared goals, discuss motivations, clarify expectations, support each other.
- ✓ Respect matters: students notice when we show up authentically and with care.
- ✓ Leverage strengths: students bring unique expertise that enriches learning.
- ✓ End with reflection: help students consolidate and connect learning.

The workshop served as a powerful reminder that fostering meaningful connections is vital for creating a supportive and thriving learning environment.

EiRP Academic Developer's Round Table

What's Your Model of Change, Today?

Academic Development as Critical Stewardship

09 September 2025

In this final roundtable of the EiRP series, academic developers from across Singapore gathered to reflect on their journeys into academic development exploring how, where, and from whom they had learned what the work entails and how to do it well.

Facilitating the conversation, Associate Professor Tai Peseta invited developers to articulate their own models of change, reconsider their professional identities, and discuss how newcomers might be inducted into the field.

Framed by Tai's notion of academic development as critical stewardship, the discussion positioned AD as a profession concerned not only with improving teaching and learning but also with sustaining the intellectual and ethical life of the university. Drawing from the scholarship on academic development by Felten, Gibbs, and Wilson & Popovic, Tai shared ten propositions that sparked debate around AD's purpose, evidence base, and the tensions inherent in balancing competing institutional demands and expectations.

As part of this reflection, developers were also invited to articulate two personal questions they hold about their own practice in academic development. The responses revealed the complexity and self-reflective nature of the field, raising questions such as:

- **What is the key purpose of academic development, and who is it ultimately for?**
- **How do we continue to develop our own expertise and improve how we do our work?**
- **How do we sustain and stabilise change, whether in curriculum reform or technological shifts?**
- **How can we form structures to support transitions, gain credibility and visibility, and discern what is essential versus what is “good to have”?**

Through this conversation, it was acknowledged that academic development is a profession of complexity and care, and one that requires balancing evidence and judgment, advocacy and diplomacy, and immediate institutional needs with long-term educational purpose. The session concluded with a collective recognition that sustaining this work depends on trust, reflective practice, and a shared commitment to shaping the future of teaching and learning at their campuses and beyond.

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