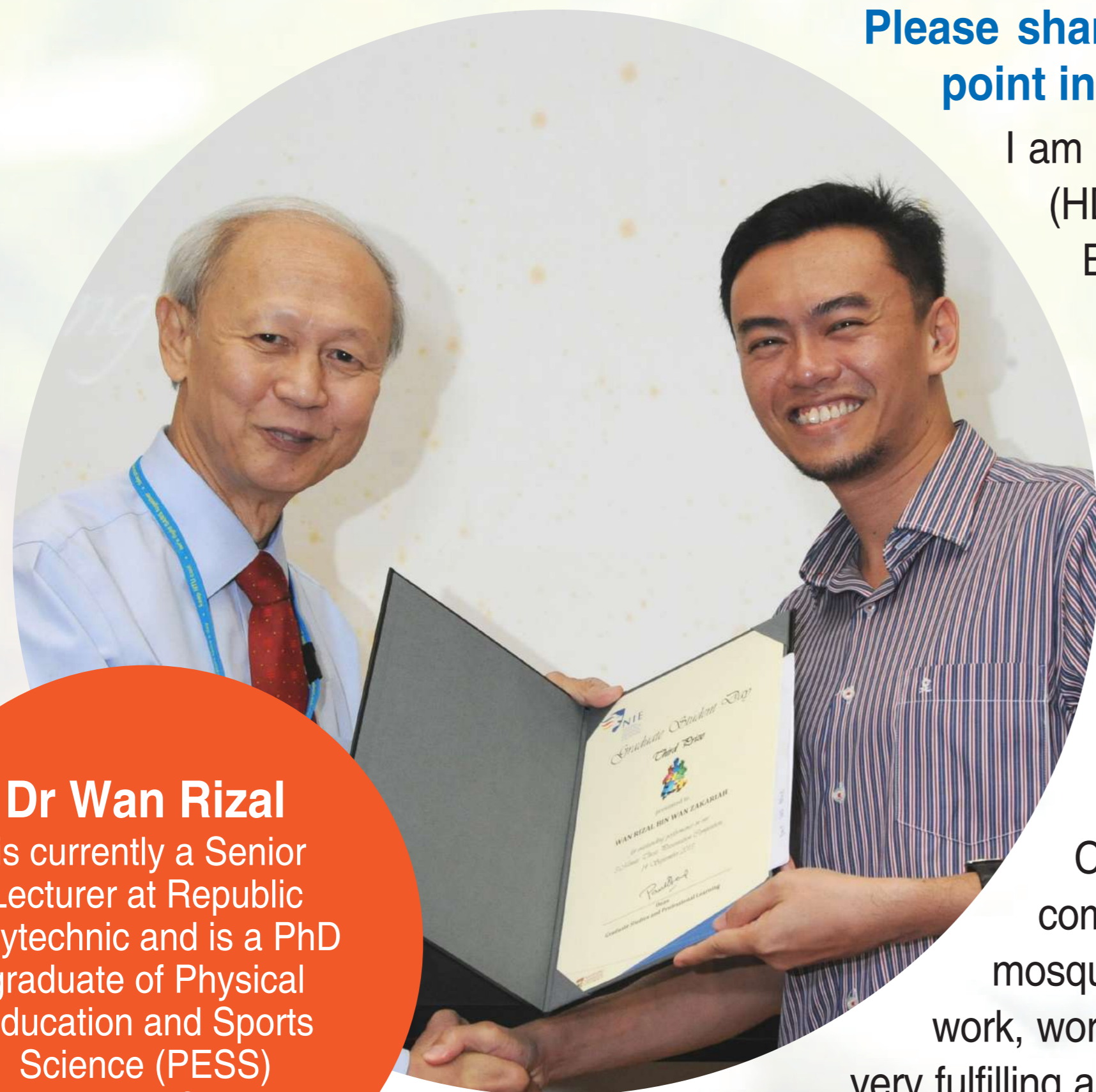


Getting To Know Our Students

Dr Wan Rizal, PhD graduate



Dr Wan Rizal

is currently a Senior Lecturer at Republic Polytechnic and is a PhD graduate of Physical Education and Sports Science (PESS) Academic Group.

Please share with us your professional life's journey thus far and at which point in your career did you aspire to do a higher degree programme?

I am currently a Senior Lecturer at Republic Polytechnic. Prior to the higher degree (HD) programme, I was a Physical Education teacher at Hougang Primary School. Being passionate in my subject area, I wanted to further explore the Dynamical Systems Theory which relates closely to the key concepts of skill acquisition.

We understand that you are heavily involved in community work. Could you share with us the roles that you currently hold and how did such involvement come about?

I am currently involved as a board member at my neighbourhood mosque, I am also a member of the Board of Governors for Home Team NS and I sit in a special committee at Mendaki that looks into tertiary students' education and funding.

Collectively, all the roles I currently hold reflect my belief in giving back to the community. My involvement began in 2010 when I was appointed as Chairman of a mosque building committee. Through that role, I became immersed in community work, working not only with the Muslim community but the community at large. I found it very fulfilling and it certainly gave me a balance when I pursued the HD programme full-time.

The experience gained since then has certainly given me a myriad of perspectives that has enriched the way I approach things in life.

What attracted you to your chosen programme at NIE?

Being trained at NIE for both my diploma and degree, I was certain that the education and experience I would receive at NIE would be both relevant and current especially in the context of the Singapore curriculum. Additionally, I was drawn to the prospect of working with my PhD supervisor, A/P Chow Jia Yi. I felt that the subject area that he was researching on was meaningful and relevant to my interest in PE and Sports. Critically, I also felt that he was the best person to get the best out of me and he understood my commitments as a father – I was right!

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

Briefly, my research focused on understanding how a learner achieves mastery in a certain skill. Unfortunately, many of the theories that underpin Skill Acquisition are not applicable to practical settings. Additionally, many of the assessments currently available are focused on performance. My work looks into the inherent nature and behaviour that reflects a person's decision-making skills and ability to recover from perturbations. I find these attributes more meaningful and describe a learner beyond performance scores.

How would you describe your interactions with NIE's faculty members?

I had an excellent relationship with the faculty members and my supervisor. They were always open to me sharing ideas and thoughts with them and sometimes our discussions went beyond the topic of work. We talked about family and the trials faced by a PhD student amongst other things and this reflected the warmth, strong morale as well as professional support that they provided.

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

Certainly, through this programme, I have enhanced my approach to problem solving and dealing with issues. I am more sensitive, analytical and critical to the information I receive and more thoughtful and measured in my responses. Collectively, I believe these are inherent traits that one could possibly acquire as a result of doing a PhD and balancing other commitments.

Would you recommend the programme at NIE to someone else? What would you say about it?

Yes, I would definitely recommend it. At NIE, I was empowered to research deeply within my subject area and had strong support from my supervisor, faculty and fellow PhD students. Additionally, the opportunity to do it locally means that my family is close to me too.

An Institute of