

IRENE TAN KHENG LIANG CONFERENCE GRANT



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MR MICHAEL CHEN ZHENGAN

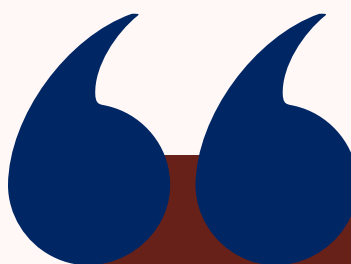
Master of Education
(Developmental Psychology)

With the support from the Irene Tan Kheng Liang Conference Grant, Mr Michael Chen Zhengan (Master of Education (Developmental Psychology) from the Psychology & Human and Child Development Department, participated in the APERA-TERA 2025 International Conference, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, from 28 October to 2 November 2025.

Hi Michael, can you share with us more about your learning experience?



I attended the conference where I presented my paper titled “Teacher Gestures as a Classroom Management Strategy in Singapore Primary Schools: Insights from a Qualitative Study” under the Leadership Administration, and Teacher Development category. This conference marked my first international oral presentation, an important milestone in my academic journey as a master’s student at NIE, NTU Singapore.



The experience allowed me to engage deeply with an international community of researchers, practitioners, and educators who share a passion for advancing educational practice and research across diverse contexts.

What were some of your key takeaways from this experience?

The conference offered a wide range of learning experiences that enriched both my research perspective and professional growth.

The school tour to Tainan Municipal Experimental Elementary School was particularly meaningful. Observing a teacher’s use of gestures in classroom management confirmed several hypotheses from my current findings and readings. I was especially impressed by the immediacy gestures used to manage classroom transitions, which reflected the central ideas in my study on multimodal communication and teacher-student relationships.

During the workshops, I learned practical strategies for enhancing collaboration and conducting meta-analyses. Using the effect-size calculator and Comprehensive Meta-analysis (CMA) software, I gained a clearer understanding of how to integrate findings across studies to generate stronger evidence.

Delivering my own presentation helped me refine my ability to communicate research effectively to a diverse audience. I learned how to highlight my study's relevance to teacher training and educational practice. Listening to other presentations broadened my methodological repertoire, particularly in systematic reviews and mixed-methods research.

The networking sessions provided opportunities to exchange ideas with researchers in educational technology and social-emotional learning, two areas that are rapidly shaping education in Taiwan and beyond.

Finally, the keynote addresses resonated deeply with my beliefs in education, especially the emphasis on flow, relationship, and relevance as key ingredients of joyful learning. It was equally valuable to hear a professor share candidly about her academic struggles and to suggest a possible framework that might help address them.

How has this experience impacted you as an aspiring researcher?

The conference experience has inspired new directions for my ongoing and future research. It opened doors for potential cross-country collaborations, such as co-developing gesture-based teacher training programmes and exploring multimodal communication in classroom management with international partners. These insights will inform the continued development of the SILR-T (Satir Iceberg-Limited Reparenting for Teachers) programme that I am designing for my doctoral research.

Another area of inspiration was the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in digital game-based learning. This has motivated me to explore how AI-assisted games can be used in teacher training, particularly to simulate classroom interactions and strengthen teachers' intrapersonal and interpersonal competence.



For more information on the Master of Education (Developmental Psychology) programme, please visit <https://ntu.sg/nie-med-dp>.