

Our Students - Rayner Tan Xue Wen

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Rayner Tan Xue Wen

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"If you do something and it turns out pretty good, then you should go do something else wonderful, not dwell on it for too long. Just figure out what's next." So said Steve Jobs, and this is the mantra that Rayner Tan lives by. He knows what he wants, works to achieve it, then moves on to his next exploit.

When Rayner was 10 years old, his father bought him Super Mario Galaxy for the Nintendo Wii. Interestingly, it was the game guidebook and editor notes that intrigued the young man most. "I realised that there were people who actually earned money from creating and playing such games!" he said. That sparked his interest in game development.

The youngest child and only son of a senior managing director of a technology company and a homemaker, Rayner has two elder sisters. According to Rayner, his parents always let their children decide where and what they wanted to study. It is perhaps this ownership of his future at a young age that has resulted in Rayner being highly focused in his choices. Even before sitting for his PSLE, he had secured a place in the then newly established School of Science & Technology, Singapore (SST). Four years later, before he sat for his O-Level exams, he was accepted into TP's Game Design & Development course through the Direct Polytechnic Admissions scheme. Today, this amazing young man has been offered a place in the National University of Singapore (NUS) to pursue a Computer Science degree. He has also been offered the prestigious NUS Merit Scholarship.

Following a "life-changing" four years in SST which saw him get an O-Level aggregate score of 6 points, Rayner was set on pursuing his interest in game development. After comparing the curricula of the game-related courses in all the polytechnics, and visiting their Open Houses, Rayner decided on TP. From the get go, he distinguished himself. According to his lecturers, "Rayner possesses a level of technical brilliance that one rarely sees." His zest for learning and his teachable nature made him a joy to have in the classroom. Having programmed since the age of 13, he has created an impressive repertoire of games - some award-winning - ranging from PC games to games for iOS and Android.

At TP, Rayner also worked on a project using cutting edge Virtual Reality (VR) Technology, called Tower Power. This serious game was identified by Unity Technologies to be showcased at Singapore's inaugural Unite Southeast Asia Conference in 2016, which brought game industry experts together. Tower Power was presented alongside other professionally produced work at that conference. It also won the Best Project Prize at the recent TP InfoTech Day 2017.

Rayner secured internship with a company called LandShark Games in his final year. He was tasked with getting the iOS version of one of their projects up and running. He also programmed numerous automation tools to improve the workflow of the game building process, and developed a caching system that is reusable for future projects. A technical genius, he was involved in many other tasks such as fixing broken third-party plugins, writing new ones, debugging, building workflow tools, as well as QA testing.

Despite his many successes, Rayner is always humble, cheerful and ready to help his peers. He organised peer tutoring sessions through the Game Design & Development Student Interest Group. There, he was the go-to student for all members of staff to interface and rely on. He was also entrusted with being an organiser for Game Jam in 2014 and was the coordinator for the same event in 2015.

While he looks up to gurus like Steve Jobs, Shigeru Miyamoto and Satoru Iwata, Rayner's biggest hero remains his father who, no matter what, always puts family first, and is fair to everyone.

Rayner graduates with an astounding 27 distinctions and a perfect cumulative GPA of 4.0. After National Service and university, he plans to work in an AAA game and/or Indie company and eventually start his own games company.

As Super Mario would say it, "Way to go, Rayner!"