"Conversation with Assoc Prof Tjin Swee Chuan"

**Which award did you win?**
I won the College of Engineering Teaching Excellence Award 2005 for 1st year students.

**How many students did you teach? Was it a difficult or easy subject? How did you conduct your teaching?**
I teach about 1000 students FE1002 Physics II each time in a huge lecture group. The subject that I am teaching is difficult so I try to simplify the topics. It is important to link the topics to something that the students can relate to either in their daily experiences or a technology trend with which the students are familiar.

**What motivated you to go into teaching as an academic?**
I have always enjoyed being able to communicate effectively to a group. Therefore, teaching is probably a natural career choice. As a lecturer, I put in effort to teach well and it paid off by benefiting the students.

**What are the qualities of a good teacher?**
The most important characteristic of a good teacher is to have a good command of the language. Secondly, it is the ability to crystallize the concept into a diagram, whenever possible. Thirdly, a good teacher should have the ability to be able to present concepts in interesting ways using demos, technologies (power points, applets, and internet) and also our intonation and body language.

**What advice do you have for fellow academics on teaching?**
- Know your subject well.
- Put yourself in the shoes of the students and try to visualize how you would feel when the lectures are being presented.
- Get feedback from the students to get a feel of how well they have understood the subject. It may not be very accurate but will at least give you a feel of the pace and the delivery methods.

**Good research can benefit industry. How can good teaching benefit industry?**
Good teaching helps stirs the students' interest in the subject. Over the years, I have students who told me that they want to learn more on their own. This is an important habit to cultivate when they get into the industry. Overall, the company that they work for will benefit from their quest for learning which will translate into higher productivity.