

## **Educational Reforms in Singapore**

**Associate Professor Christine Kim-Eng Lee**  
**Head, Curriculum, Teaching & Learning Academic Group**  
**National Institute of Education/Nanyang Technological University**

A presentation to Lausanne Board of Higher Education, Switzerland, June 2012

### **Abstract**

Educational policy imperatives of Thinking Schools, Learning Nation (TSLN) in 1997 and Teach Less, Learn More (TLLM) in 2004 and more recently Curriculum 2015 (C2015), Primary Education Review (PERI) and IT Masterplan 3 (MP3) have set in motion a wave of curriculum and school reforms and a hive of activities in the schools and among teachers in Singapore. Singapore's educational system is internationally recognized as being highly successful as evidenced by our strong performance in TIMMS, PISA and PIRLS. But the concern remains whether our current educational system would continue to serve us well into the future and the 21<sup>st</sup> century with its new "eduscapes" (Luke, 2004) as we respond to forces of globalization, international competition, technological demands and changing population demographics. This presentation will discuss why the need for educational reforms even in a highly successful educational system like Singapore (MOE, 2008; 2009) and what it would take in our cultural context to bring about deep and sustained changes in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in classrooms embedded in the realities of schools (Fullan, 2004 & 2000, Hargreaves, 2007; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009) when we move from a more centralized educational system to a less centralized educational system as a system in transition. References will also be made to a national study on classroom practices, teachers and students by the Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice (CRPP) as a way of identifying "the practices that appear to constrain the ability of the system to move forward" and "new emergent instructional and organizational practices to support the achievement of desired policy outcomes" (Hogan, 2009).

### **About the speaker**

Associate Professor Christine Kim-Eng Lee is currently the Head of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Academic Group in the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University. Prior to her current appointment, she was the first Head of Humanities and Social Studies Education Academic Group (2000 – 2006) and the first Vice-Dean of the School of Arts (1997 – 2000) in the National Institute of Education. Christine works closely with the Ministry of Education, Singapore in supporting the Research Activists Scheme as well in the provision of professional development workshops for school leaders and teachers in TLLM schools. She pioneered Lesson Study for Singapore schools through two research and development programmes, Communities of Practice in Cooperative Learning (2005) and Lesson Study as a Teacher –Directed Form of Professional Development (2006) and has been instrumental in working with school and teacher leaders in supporting the spread of Lesson Study to more schools in Singapore. Christine is currently the President of the World Association of Lesson Studies. She is a recipient of several awards notably, Long Service Medal (2011) and the Public Administration Medal (2005) which are National Day Awards, Fulbright Award (1981), the Milestone Award from Teachers' College, Columbia University (1992) and University of Singapore Gold Medal (1975).