

**Asia-Pacific Educational Research Association (APERA) and  
Educational Research Association of Singapore (ERAS)  
Conference 2008**

**Speech by Ms Grace Fu**

**Senior Minister of State**

**Ministry of National Development and Ministry of Education  
Singapore**

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Asia-Pacific Educational Research Association Conference

Distinguished guests

Delegates

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Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning.

**Introduction**

- 1 It gives me great pleasure to join you at the Opening Ceremony of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Asia-Pacific Educational Research Association Conference.

- 2 First of all, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the delegates from more than 35 countries from Asia-Pacific and rest of the world. I hope beyond this conference, you can spend some time to discover Singapore , our food and our people.

### **The Need for Constant Change and Development**

- 3 The conference theme is *Education Research for Innovation and Quality in Education*. The conference is a timely one. Today, we are trying out new approaches in pedagogy, curriculum design, assessment, as well as new technologies in our classrooms. We hope to find new methods and approaches that can make teaching and learning more effective for students with different needs. Innovation is critical to enable growth in educational achievements and to nurture the best in every of our children.

- 4 Since 2006, many of our schools have embarked on their journey to bring about engaged learning for our children. We have termed this movement the “Teach Less, Learn More” movement. In the primary school for example, many are strengthening their focus on holistic development. Some schools have creatively re-arranged the school timetable to include more time for co-curricular activities or deliberately blurred the lines between formal and informal curriculum such as by using drama as a pedagogy to allow students to learn through acting .

## Emphasis of Reflective Practice in Singapore

- 5 For teachers to develop and implement classroom innovations, we need them to be *reflective practitioners*. This is to ensure that school-based innovations are educationally sound. Since 2006, the Ministry has been developing a group of teachers as Research Activists (RA). The RAs undergo an intensive year-long attachment with the Ministry to learn about research methodology. The training equips them with research literacy to evaluate the curriculum innovations in their own schools. This is so that we can be assured that innovations are sound, and that we have greater reassurance in carrying out school-based innovations.
- 6 Singapore places great emphasis on educational research. In 2002, the National Institute of Education (NIE) established the Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice (CRPP) with an initial grant of \$48 million from MOE . This year, the Ministry has allocated another \$100 million to NIE for the purpose of educational research over a five-year period.
- 7 The NIE is also seeking innovative ways to enhance the pre-service preparation programmes for teachers. School teachers and educational leaders participating in in-service and enrichment programmes can also gain a deeper understanding of the importance of innovation in their schools.

8 This concerted effort among practitioners, researchers and the teachers' training institution is laudable. This will help to create a culture of evidence-based practice which will be critical to sustain and help scale up important education reforms.

### **Formation of World Educational Research Association**

9 I understand that the Presidents, of over 30 educational research associations from around the world, are here for their fourth meeting to set up a global body of research associations, tentatively called the World Educational Research Association (WERA). This is indeed a progressive step forward. With a global organisation of educational research associations, research work and findings can be quickly disseminated so that the best practices of an education system can be shared globally. This will also give rise to greater ease of collaboration among the various associations to strengthen the capacity in the area of educational research. I sincerely hope that the WERA can be made a reality quickly.

### **Concluding Remarks**

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10 In conclusion, I am confident that this coming together of minds and experience will engender a useful conversation among all delegates. I am sure the delegates are eager to learn from the presentations on innovative ways to improve learning and teaching in schools. I hope too that your passion for research work will lead to findings that can be applied, and will benefit educational practice. .

11 It now gives me great pleasure to declare the 2<sup>nd</sup> Asia-Pacific Educational Research Association Conference officially open. Thank you.

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