

International Seminar on East Asian Education

Why High-performing Schools Need to Invest in Finding Purpose

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Room 1415, 14F, Building 2, Sophia University



The predominant focus on education worldwide has been on academic excellence, with international education indicators driving the search for best practices among schools. Education in Singapore and Japan are highly regarded and students are known as top-achievers in international benchmark tests. For students to engage intelligently and meaningfully with a rapidly changing world, however, education scholars argue that we need a new imperative in educational change --from a primary focus on academic excellence based on grades, to one that emphasises both the *academic and the human purposes of education*. In preparing students for complex and uncertain global societies, we should be asking bigger and more fundamental questions. What is learned in schools? What are schools doing to engage students in deeper questions concerning relevance and purpose of school and learning in their lives?

Drawing on my work as a teacher educator at the National Institute of Education in Singapore and my more recent work on youth purpose research, I highlight what it means to work with teachers and their students to confront urgent educational questions and assumptions that are important for sustainable and innovative educational change. I invite educators and

researchers to think about how programmes in university education schools in Japan might most effectively and meaningfully be developed to reconnect with the fundamental questions of significance and purpose in schooling.

Mary Anne Heng is Associate Dean, Higher Degrees and Strategic Partnerships and Associate Professor, Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the National Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore. At the NIE, she oversees the Doctor in Education programme and graduate programmes that are offered in partnership with top institutions such as the Master of Arts in Leadership and Educational Change joint programme by Teachers College, Columbia University, U.S.A and NIE, NTU, Singapore. She is an alumna of Teachers College, Columbia University where she obtained her doctorate in curriculum and teaching on the Nanyang Technological University Overseas Graduate Scholarship.

This seminar is organized by Masamichi Ueno (Professor, Sophia University, President, Institute of East Asian Education)

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Lecture in English / No RSVP required