

## Conference Keynotes

**DAVID WATKINS, UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG, CHINA**

**Day 1, 10.30am–11.15am, Nanyang Auditorium, Nanyang Technological University (NTU)**



*David Watkins is a professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Hong Kong. He has done extensive research about cross-cultural investigations of student learning, conceptions of teaching and student motivation. He has worked with other researchers to investigate the nature of motivation in Western and non-Western cultures as well as coordinated a team of researchers from over 20 countries for the first real test of the relationship between the nature of self-concept and cross-cultural dimensions.*

### ***What Works: Is Western Educational Research Relevant for Educational Reforms in Asia?***

Western research on factors related to educational achievement is massive and meta-analyses of this data have produced clear evidence of which innovations are most effective in Western educational settings in terms of improving student learning outcomes. Such evidence has (sometimes) been used to inform educational reforms in Western countries, but are these findings relevant for Singapore and elsewhere in Asia? In this keynote, I will try to answer this question by reviewing research mainly done by my colleagues and myself in Hong Kong and some other Asian countries to try to highlight some of the areas where it is relevant and where it is not. For instance, qualitative research has pointed to cross-cultural differences in basic educational concepts such as the nature of motivation, of understanding, and even of “what is teaching”. On the other hand, our research has also supported the generalisability of constructivist-based teaching innovations and of a number of personal and environmental factors related to deeper level learning processes. The relevance of these findings for current educational reforms in Hong Kong, which emphasise more student-centred teaching, lessening the emphasis on competition and external assessment, but not reducing class sizes, are discussed. I am certainly not arguing my findings will necessarily apply to the rest of Asia, but rather, that educational research needs to be done in context and take into consideration local cultural values and beliefs. Such an emic approach is needed before educational research can truly inform educational reform.

**DAVID HOGAN, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, SINGAPORE**  
**Day 2, 9.15am–10.00am, Nanyang Auditorium, NTU**



*David Hogan is professor and Dean of the Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice at the National Institute of Education, Singapore. Hogan has written extensively about the history of education in the USA and won a series of awards for his work, including the American Educational Research Association Outstanding Book Award (1986) and the Henry Barnard Prize.*

***What Happens? What Matters? What Works? Where to from Here? Reflections on the Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice's Research and Intervention Findings, 2003–2007***

In March 2003, the National Institute of Education established the Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice (CRPP) with a substantial grant from Singapore's Ministry of Education. The centre's objectives are to conduct baseline research and design evidence-based interventions, both with the intention of improving the quality of teaching and learning in Singapore. Four years down the track, what did CRPP researchers find out about what happens, what matters and what works in Singapore classrooms? Furthermore, we need to consider how consistent these findings are with parallel research findings internationally. Finally, we need to ask what these findings imply for the future of CRPP research and intervention work: what kind of research do we plan to do in the future, and what kind of interventions or "innovations" do we now think are indicated by our research findings here and internationally?

**SASHA BARAB, INDIANA UNIVERSITY, USA**  
**Day 2, 9.15am–10.00am, LT 1A, NTU**



*Sasha Barab is a professor in Learning Sciences and Cognitive Science at Indiana University, USA, and is the Barbara Jacobs Chair of Education and Technology. His research has focused on establishing rich learning environments, frequently with the aid of technology. Much of this work builds on current literature regarding situated cognition and focuses on the use of game methodologies and technologies to establish rich contexts for learning academic content.*

***Academic Play Spaces: A 21st Century Pedagogy***

Learning is one of the most natural acts in which a child can engage. Developmentally, young children are born with a propensity to decipher the world around them, make sense of sights and sounds, and learn complex language skills. As children progress to more formal skills, such as recognising letters and reading, they typically do not view learning these arbitrary symbols as work, but rather approach it as play. In elementary school, a different attitude towards learning regularly emerges; school-based learning is often something that must be done before a child is allowed to go out and play — an activity distinct from play and explicitly labelled “work” (schoolwork, homework). Much like eating one’s vegetables before getting dessert, schoolwork becomes a chore rather than reward.

In this keynote, I will describe academic play spaces: curricular contexts that leverage what is known about how people learn, the metaphorical power of narratives, and game design principles to establish an educational, entertaining and personally transformative context for learning. Instead of a lesson plan designed to impart some ready-made, expert description of a concept (a fact), I will argue that the curriculum itself should constitute an experience or world-to-be-lived (an activity). I will describe four experiential outcomes and the core design elements that proven to be necessary for establishing such outcomes. I will then show how these design elements have been integrated into the technology-rich Quest Atlantis project to further ground the argument. I will close with a theoretical discussion of the power of games as becoming 21st century curriculum.

**JUDITH WARREN LITTLE, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BERKELEY,  
USA  
Day 2, 10.30am–11.15am Nanyang Auditorium, NTU**



*Judith Warren Little is Carol Liu Professor of Education Policy at the Graduate School of Education, University of California Berkeley, where her research focuses on teachers' work and careers, the organisational and occupational contexts of teaching with special attention to teachers' collegial relationships, and policies and practices of professional development. In pursuing these interests, she attempts to balance micro-analytic attention to the daily life of schools with a macro-analytic view of the larger social, institutional, and policy environments in which the work of teaching resides.*

***Making the Most of Experience: Teachers' Representations of Practice as a Resource for Professional Learning and Instructional Decision Making***

Tales of classroom experience punctuate teachers' talk with one another in a range of workplace contexts — in staff rooms or hallways, meetings of one sort or another, professional development events, and increasingly, activities focused on reviews of school assessment data or samples of student work. Such accounts form a pervasive feature of professional interaction, but only recently have researchers begun to examine what and how teachers learn from such "representations of practice". There are good reasons to attend more closely to the accounts and artefacts by which teachers portray classroom experience, particularly from the perspective of their significance for professional learning and instructional decision making. Two developments of the last decade form the backdrop for this position: the growing enthusiasm for "evidence-based decision making" among policy makers and education leaders; and the growing conviction among teacher educators and scholars of teaching that professional development will more surely yield instructional improvement when it is anchored in the systematic investigation of practice. In this keynote, I characterise recent research on teachers' representations of practice and how they serve as resources for professional learning in the workplace and in professional development contexts. I also speak to the organisational conditions that foster or impede teachers in learning from and through experience. Finally, I raise the question of how research in a range of cultural and national contexts might better inform efforts to aid teachers in learning from experience in generative ways.

**ANDREAS SCHLEICHER, ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT, GERMANY**  
**Day 2, 10.30am–11.15am, LT 1A, NTU**



*Andreas Schleicher is Head of the Indicators and Analysis Division at the Directorate for Education in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The division seeks to measure the performance of education systems, including examining the quality of learning outcomes, policy levers and contextual factors that shape these outcomes. In 2003, he was awarded the Theodor Heuss prize for exemplary democratic engagement in association with the public debate on PISA 2000. Mr Schleicher has an honorary professorship at the University of Heidelberg, Germany.*

***Is the Sky the Limit to Educational Performance?***

How well do school systems perform in providing young people with a solid foundation of knowledge and skills, and in preparing them for life and learning beyond school? Since 1997, governments of the OECD have been working on establishing the PISA framework, the most comprehensive and rigorous international effort to date to assess learning outcomes and to identify the policy levers that may help improving the performance of education systems.

PISA has revealed wide differences in the extent to which countries succeed in fostering knowledge and skills in key subject areas as well as effective learning strategies. For some countries, the results were disappointing, showing that their 15-year-olds' performance lagged considerably behind that of other countries, sometimes by the equivalent of several years of schooling and sometimes despite high investments in education. PISA also highlighted significant variation in the performance of schools and raised strong concerns about equity in the distribution of learning opportunities. However, the performance of countries such as Canada, Finland, Japan or Korea in PISA also revealed that excellence in education is an attainable goal. It also showed that the challenge of achieving a high and socially equitable distribution of learning outcomes can be addressed.

As a cross-sectional survey, PISA cannot show which policies or practices cause success, but it does reveal some common characteristics of students, schools and education systems that do well, which the keynote will examine. These include the strive to individualise learning and to engage constructively with the diversity of student interests, capacities and socio-economic contexts; the shared commitment to professionalised teaching, in ways that imply that teachers are on a par with other professions in terms of diagnosis, the application of evidence-based practices and professional pride; as well as the move beyond systems of external accountability towards building capacity and confidence for professional accountability in ways that emphasise the importance of formative assessment and the pivotal role of school self-evaluation.

**ELENA L GRIGORENKO, YALE UNIVERSITY, USA**  
**EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE-Ruth Wong**  
**Memorial Lecture**  
**Day 2, 5.30pm–6.30pm, Nanyang Auditorium, NTU**



*Elena L Grigorenko received her PhD in general psychology from Moscow State University, Russia, in 1990, and her PhD in developmental psychology and genetics from Yale University, USA, in 1996. Currently, Dr Grigorenko is Associate Professor of Child Studies and Psychology at Yale and Associate Professor of Psychology at Moscow State University. Dr Grigorenko has published more than 200 peer-reviewed articles, book chapters and books. She has received awards for her work from five different divisions of the American Psychological Association (APA): the Gardner Lindzey Dissertation Award in General Psychology, Sigmund Koch Early Career Award in Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology, Berlyne Early Career Award for Creative Achievement in Psychology of the Arts, Boyd McCandless Early Career Award in Developmental Psychology, and Richard E Snow Early Career Award in Educational Psychology. In 2004, she won the APA Distinguished Award for an Early Career Contribution to Developmental Psychology. Dr Grigorenko's research has been funded by National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Department of Education, Cure Autism Now, the Foundation for Child Development, the American Psychological Foundation, and other federal and private sponsoring organisations.*

***Schooling Today: Teaching Competence, Creativity, and Compassion***

In this keynote, I will discuss the US school curriculum with regard to (1) how much attention is given to teaching academic competencies (2) the development of creative thinking and (3) the formation of emotional maturity. I will summarise my thoughts on the principal components of today's education, which should cover not only the 'three Rs' (Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic), but also skills of applying this content knowledge in novel situations in today's dynamic world, and being able to generate and impose ethical judgments on applications of knowledge. My discussion will include illustrations of recent empirical education studies carried out at Yale that illustrate the efficacy and importance of teaching creativity and compassion along with academic competencies. Specifically, I will discuss and evaluate the results of a large-scale elementary school intervention study in which academic competencies in mathematics, language arts and sciences were taught in the context of teaching for creativity, among other skills. I will also discuss a middle-school intervention study in which teaching for wisdom was embedded in a history curriculum. In addition, I will briefly include other illustrations from my empirical work.

**SURESH CANAGARAJAH, CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, USA**  
**Day 3, 9.15am–10.00am, Nanyang Auditorium, NTU**



*Suresh Canagarajah is a professor of English at the Baruch College, City University of New York. His research interests span bilingualism, discourse analysis, academic writing and critical pedagogy. Canagarajah's recent research work includes looking at sociolinguistic challenges for immigrant communities and ethnographic research on the classroom culture of minority students.*

### ***Globalisation and English: Redesigning Pedagogies in English Language Teaching***

In the context of Internet, globalisation, diaspora communities and multinational production networks, postmodern subjects are constantly required to shuttle between diverse communities and English varieties. As a result, the demography of English speakers is changing and English is used “mainly in multilingual contexts as a second language and for communication between non-native speakers” with the “decline of the native speaker” (Graddol, 1999, p. 57). Therefore, scholars in ELT are beginning to abandon the distinctions “native”/“nonnative” or “standard”/“non-standard” and treat everyone as speakers of Global English - a multinational language, featuring a plural grammatical system with diverse norms and conventions in different communities. We are beginning to realise that everyone needs a repertoire of English codes to negotiate postmodern communication.

In this context, debates such as the place of Singlish or British English for Singapore become irrelevant. Policies such as the Speak Good English Movement need to be questioned. Singaporeans need local codes for intra-community relations, dominant codes for interaction with the metropole and the evolving norms of lingua franca English for interaction with multilingual speakers from other non-English speaking countries. The fluid social and communicative environment has motivated some educators to speak of a basic need for multiliteracies to be functional in today's world (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Rather than simply joining a speech community, we should teach students to shuttle between communities.

But how can a classroom teach the multiple codes required for postmodern communication? We have to consider a paradigm shift in language teaching. These changing pedagogical priorities imply that we should begin to develop language awareness rather than grammatical correctness (in a single variety); strategies (of learning, social negotiation and discourse) rather than product-oriented rules; a sociolinguistic sensitivity to context and variability rather than the mastery of the abstract linguistic system. Rather than judging divergence as error, we should orientate to it as an exploration of choices and possibilities. Rather than teaching rules in a normative way, we should teach strategies - creative ways to negotiate the norms operating in diverse contexts.

**PHILIP BROWN, CARDIFF UNIVERSITY, UK**  
**Day 3, 9.15am–10.00am, LT 1A, NTU**



*Philip Brown is a research professor in the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University, UK. He is currently involved in a major seven-country study of the corporate strategies of multinational companies and the future of skills. His research interests include the future of capitalism; globalisation, education and social change; and self-identity and personal capital. Prof Brown serves as Advisor to governments on skill formation and international best practice for workforce development as well as to private and public sector organisations on the future of work, skills and the knowledge economy, the global labour market and employability.*

### ***Education, Globalisation and the Future of the Knowledge Economy***

The dominant view today is of a global knowledge economy, driven by the application of new technologies, accelerating the shift to high-skilled, high-waged Western economies. This view is reflected in the expansion of higher education and the key role of education in national economic policy. Not only is education believed to hold the key to an international competitive but to the foundations of social justice and social cohesion. This talk will challenge these assumptions, drawing on key findings from a major study of corporate strategies and the future of skills, involving leading transnational companies and policy-makers from seven countries - China, Germany, India, Korea, Singapore, United States and the United Kingdom. It will examine some of the latest trends that are shaping the global labour market and the demand for “knowledge” workers. It will examine why leading companies still see themselves in a “war for talent” at the same time that there is a global wealth of talent, and why we are witnessing the rise of high skilled, low waged economies in the United States and Britain. In conclusion, it will be argued that the human capital assumptions on which the current education consensus rests are historically contingent and increasingly redundant in the early decades of the 21st century.

**LESLIE LO NAI KWAI, CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG, CHINA**  
**Day 3, 10.30am–11.15am, LT 1A, NTU**



*Leslie Lo Nai Kwai is the Founding Dean of the Faculty of Education at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. His research interests are educational change in Chinese societies and school reform in the global context. Prof Lo currently serves as Advisory Editor of Comparative Education Review and is an editorial board member of Teachers College Record. He has held many leadership positions including Director of the Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research.*

***The Self-Efficacy Myth: Re-interpreting the Culture of Teaching in Chinese Societies***

Current educational reform endeavours in the Chinese Mainland and Hong Kong aim to change the ways that students learn and develop so that they can contribute to the development of a knowledge economy. Teachers are counted on to transform reform policies into practice through making necessary changes in their ways of educating. However, they have not supported reform efforts enthusiastically. The implementation of reform measures has in fact generated scepticism and dissent among teachers.

A survey conducted in 2005 and 2006 reveals that while secondary teachers in Beijing and Hong Kong are under pressure to change their approach to teaching, they generally feel efficacious about what they do. The teachers' sense of self-efficacy is sustained neither by a strong sense of job satisfaction nor a strong commitment to their schools.

Given the above findings, the purpose of the keynote is to illuminate critical issues of teacher self-efficacy in the contexts of reform in the Chinese Mainland and Hong Kong. It argues that, reform demands for change notwithstanding, teachers have not altered their beliefs and practices in teaching and learning in any substantive ways. Teachers feel efficacious about their work because they believe that they could help their students to learn to perform better academically, especially to pass examinations. Their views on student learning are geared primarily towards academic achievement. The keynote further argues that teacher participation in educational reform warrants a re-interpretation of a culture of teaching which has been preserved by a common belief in the core functions of teachers as preachers, enlighteners and counsellors.

**STUART MCNAUGHTON, UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND**  
**Day 3, 10.30am–11.15am, Nanyang Auditorium, NTU**



*Stuart McNaughton is Director of the Woolf Fisher Research Centre at the University of Auckland. His current research interests are literacy and language development and the design of effective instruction and educational programmes for culturally and linguistically diverse populations. His work has included research on family literacy practices and interventions in early childhood settings and schools, including research partnerships with school clusters across New Zealand.*

***Cultural Contexts for Schooling Improvement***

One response to the enduring challenge of gaps in literacy achievement between cultural groups in school systems has been programmes of schooling improvement and reform. There is evidence for varying degrees of effectiveness. Analyses of effectiveness have typically considered aspects of the processes and content of improvement such as school infrastructure, the specificity of programmes and classroom practices including the focus of instructional improvement. While generalisable principles of effectiveness can be derived, the keynote examines the proposal that different forms of school change may be required in different contexts. It considers the role of local histories of schooling and of the cultural frameworks for teaching and learning held by both teachers and learners in educationally significant improvements. Considering these relationships contributes to our understanding of the risks and balances needed in “redesigning pedagogy” as well as the promise.