

Teacher Education for the 21st Century: Developing teachers who are thoughtful, reflecting and inquiring

The IRN was established from 1st December 2012. Prof Oon Seng Tan from *National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore* and Professor Jane Conoley from *California State University, Long Beach, United States* are the conveners of the International Research Network (IRN) with Associate Professor Woon-Chia from *National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore* as the co-convenor of the IRN. The aim of the International Research Network is to create an international platform for teacher educators to share and learn about research and practices of teacher education programs with strong inquiry components.

The fourth IRN meeting was hosted in New Zealand by the Department of Education, University of Waikato from 16th to 19th November 2017. The meeting was represented by members from Switzerland, New Zealand and Singapore. Each member from the representing country shared their thoughts, perspectives and ideas on teacher education policies and innovative teacher education curriculum and research to develop future-ready teachers and learners. At the end of the meeting, members identified the key theme of "*International Practicum in Teacher Education: Crossing Boundaries*". Participating members agree to explore and research into the state of the art of practice of incorporating international field experience across different countries and continents to widen teachers' exposure and international experiences and develop their ability to take multiple perspectives on different educational system around the world.

During the meeting, WERA-IRN members had the opportunity to visit Endeavour School in Hamilton, New Zealand which has an innovative model of curriculum delivery supported by modern physical flexible learning environment to promote innovative teaching and learning. Endeavour School uses an integrated curriculum based on an inquiry approach to design collaborative and self-directed authentic learning experience for students to actively seek and create knowledge. In addition, Ms Beverley Cooper from University of Waikato, New Zealand and Dr Bee Leng Chua from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore participated in the New Zealand Association for Research in Education (NZARE) Conference held at the University of Waikato from the 20th to the 22nd of November 2017. Ms Beverley Cooper presented a paper on Collaborative University School Partnership (CUSP) programme which described the experiences of a university and seven schools as they collaborated on the development and introduction of a reframed practicum programme for student teachers in the first year of a three-year undergraduate primary initial teacher education (ITE) programme. Dr Bee Leng Chua in her paper presentation examined the role of e-Portfolio in the development of teacher identity and reflective practice among student teachers in initial teacher preparation programme at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

These meetings initiated by the IRN since its conception were instrumental in facilitating conversations amongst teacher educators and researchers from different cultures and continents on what it means to be a thoughtful, reflective, and inquiring teacher. The

opportunities afforded by the IRN facilitated collaborations among researchers and practitioners internationally to examine key components of teacher education programs that develop adaptive teachers who are able to design and deliver curriculum to meet the learning needs of their students in this increasing diverse and complex world.

Moving ahead, WERA IRN for Teacher Education will continue its activities to facilitate the teacher education network and interests. WERA IRN activities for 2018 include (i) conduct WERA IRN meeting on the 30th and 31st August 2018 in Zurich, Switzerland, jointly hosted by Zug University of Teacher Training and Zurich University of Teacher Training, (ii) prepare a special issue for a journal with the theme “*International Practicum in Teacher Education: Crossing Boundaries*” and (iii) organise a symposium on “*Teacher Education: Innovation in Policies and Practices*” to be held at the joint Asia-Pacific Educational Research (APERA) and Educational Research Association of Singapore (ERAS) Conference in Singapore from the 12th to the 14th November 2018.



From left to right: Prof Oon Seng Tan, *National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore*, Dr Bee Leng Chua, *National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore*, Ms Beverley Cooper, *University of Waikato, New Zealand*, Prof Esther Kam, *Zug University of Teacher Training, Switzerland*, Prof Christine Bieri Buschor, *Zurich University of Teacher Training, Switzerland* and Mr Russell Yates, *University of Waikato, New Zealand* at the WERA-IRN meeting held at Hamilton, New Zealand from 16th to 19th November 2018.