

Editorial (ERPP Issue 10.1)

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Received: 5 January 2011 / Accepted: 5 January 2011 / Published online: 29 January 2011
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Welcome to the first issue of ERPP for the year 2011. An exciting event at the end of 2010 was the successful organisation of the third Asia-Pacific Educational Research Association (APERA) conference from 23rd to 26th November, at Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The theme of the conference, “The Ecology of Human Growth and Sustainable Societal Development: Contributions from Educational Research and Innovations”, reflects APERA’s commitment to facilitate research that can bring sustainable quality and innovation into educational policies and practices to help societies develop. The APERA 2010 conference brought together some 300 participants from many different countries across the globe to discuss innovative ways of facilitating teaching and learning that would benefit the society in the long run. A conference report by Ng is found in this issue. The ERPP welcomes the submission of high quality papers from the conference.

During the conference, I officially handed over the APERA Presidency to Professor Dato Dr Ibrahim Bajunid of INTI-UC Laureate International Universities, USM & Universiti Utara Malaysia. I have enjoyed working with committed stakeholders in the APERA network and would like to thank them for their invaluable support. I would also like to thank Dr Ee Ling Low for her support as the APERA Executive Director (now handed over to Professor Rajendran Nagappan, Sultan Idris Education University of Malaysia); and Dr Pak Tee Ng for his support as the Executive Editor of the *Educational Research for Policy and Practice* (ERPP) and APERA publications. I look forward to see APERA achieve greater heights and contributing more to educational research and development of societies.

Issue 10.1 of the ERPP presents several pieces of research from the perspectives of policy and practice from New Zealand, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines. In the article by Jones and Cowie, the authors highlight the successful evaluation approaches deployed for long-term exploration of the impact of a national policy initiative as well as some of the results and outcomes. Using the provision of laptops to teachers in New Zealand as an example, the authors examine the evaluation approaches for this compulsory school sector ICT strategy. Based on the findings of their examination, Jones and Cowie argue that in long-term studies,

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it is important to establish effective relationships with the schools and the policymakers and to deploy robust evaluation methodologies. This is essential for both validity and reliability of the findings and the usability and utilisation of the findings.

In the next article, taking advantage of newly available data on a standardized national examination for secondary school students in Thailand, Winai Wongsurawat attempts to explain the variation in the average performance of students using school and local characteristics. Special emphasis was placed on trying to understand the asymmetric success factors of public and private secondary schools, and the possible effects of their coexistence. Results from a propensity score matching model suggested that private schools might create positive spill-over effects on the academic performance of students attending public schools located in the same district. The author argues that a more careful discussion about the impact of the ongoing education reforms in private schools is needed.

Khiat, Chia, Tan-Yeoh, and Kok-Mak present a research to understand the various aspects of the Action Research initiative in the Department of Mathematics and Science, Singapore Polytechnic. A total of 55 lecturers took part in the study and the data was collected through semi-structured questionnaires, informal conversations with the lecturers, observations of their behaviors in action research processes, and evaluation of their action research reports. Statistical methods and grounded theory were used in the analysis. Generally, the lecturers generally felt that action research was useful in teaching and learning, and that taking personal and professional ownership in action research was a very important success factor. A number of recommendations to improve action research implementation in the department were also proposed.

The study by Bringula and Basa examines the student profile and enrolment of the three Universities in the University Belt in Metro Manila. It also examines the students' level of consideration concerning the institutional image indicators that served as basis for attracting prospective entrants. Interestingly, the hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the level of consideration of the respondents from the three Universities regarding institutional-image indicators is partially upheld.

We hope that the articles will generate further discussions and collaborations among educators and researchers so that good educational philosophies and practices may be shared globally. We look forward to your valuable contributions to the ERPP.