
Title	Pulling together amid globalization: National education in Singapore schools
Author(s)	Jason Tan
Series	CERC Studies in Comparative Education; 20
Source	P. D. Hershock, M. Mason & J. H. Hawkins (Eds.), <i>Changing education: Leadership, innovation and development in a globalizing Asia Pacific</i> (pp. 183-198)
Published by	Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC), The University of Hong Kong, and Springer

This document may be used for private study or research purpose only. This document or any part of it may not be duplicated and/or distributed without permission of the copyright owner.

The Singapore Copyright Act applies to the use of this document.

Original source of publication at <http://www.fe.hku.hk/cerc/Publications/CERC-20.htm>

Pulling Together amid Globalization National Education in Singapore Schools

Jason TAN

Forging a sense of national identity has been a preoccupation of the People's Action Party (PAP) government in Singapore for over four decades. This preoccupation is linked to the top political leadership's "garrison mentality" (Tan, K.P. 2001, p.97), which manifests itself in a perennial concern with issues such as the country's limited territorial and natural resources, the maintenance of the country's economic and social achievements, and the country's vulnerability as the only majority-Chinese state in the midst of a majority Malay/Muslim region (Hussin 2002). The government has consistently adopted a substantially top-down approach towards education policymaking, and has assigned the national education system, in which over 90% of primary and secondary school-age children are enrolled, a central role in socialising students into their roles as future citizens. Since the attainment of self-government from the United Kingdom in 1959 and subsequent political independence in 1965, the Education Ministry has instituted various civic and citizenship programs, only to dismantle them later and replace them with yet other programs.

In the early 1980s, two locally designed programs were developed and implemented: "Good Citizen" for primary schools, and "Being and Becoming" for secondary schools. Between 1984 and 1989, Religious Knowledge was made a compulsory subject for all upper secondary students amid fears of a moral crisis among young people. Six options were offered: Bible Knowledge, Buddhist Studies, Confucian Ethics, Hindu Studies, Islamic Religious Knowledge and Sikh Studies. Students were segregated on the basis of their choices. The government had originally

intended to offer a World Religions option but abandoned its plans, claiming that it was too difficult to formulate such a syllabus (Tan, J. 2000).

One of the main reasons why Religious Knowledge was made an optional subject in 1990, after having been compulsory for the previous six years, lay in its role in contributing to religious revivalism and evangelistic activities among Buddhists and Christians. In place of Religious Knowledge, a new compulsory civic and moral education program was designed for all secondary school students. Its main objectives were to foster cultural and religious appreciation; to promote community spirit; to affirm family life; to nurture interpersonal relationships; and to develop a commitment to nation building (Ministry of Education 1991). Meanwhile, the Good Citizen program remained compulsory for all primary school students.

This chapter focuses on the National Education policy initiative that was introduced into all Singapore schools by the Ministry of Education in 1997. The initiative aims at developing in students a sense of national identity, an awareness of Singapore's recent history and of the country's developmental challenges and constraints, and a confidence in the country's future (Ministry of Education 1997a). The chapter describes the origins of the initiative and discusses some challenges and contradictions that policymakers need to grapple with as they attempt to ensure the success of this initiative. It argues that the National Education initiative was drawn up in direct response to the growing pressures of globalization, as Singapore attempts to situate itself firmly within the global economy. Even as Singaporeans are being encouraged to foster greater regional and international economic and cultural links, they are, somewhat paradoxically, being urged to root themselves firmly within the local context. The chapter also demonstrates the limits to a top-down approach to fostering social cohesion and national identity in a national education system.

The Call for National Education

At a Teachers' Day rally in September 1996, the then Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, lamented the lack of knowledge of Singapore's recent history among younger Singaporeans, as reflected in the results of a street poll conducted by a local newspaper. The Ministry of Education had also conducted a surprise quiz on Singapore's history among 2,500 students in schools, polytechnics and universities. The results proved equally disap-

pointing. For instance, only a quarter or fewer of these students could explain why Singapore had separated from Malaysia in 1965 (Goh 1997a).

Goh claimed that the gap in knowledge was the direct result of a deliberate official policy not to teach school students about the recent political past and the events leading up to political independence. This was an attempt to downplay what were officially perceived to be sensitive issues related to the brief period between 1963 and 1965 when Singapore was part of Malaysia, and to the subsequent expulsion of Singapore from Malaysia. However, he felt that this ignorance was undesirable among younger people who had not personally lived through these events. He claimed too that these events, constituting "our shared past," ought to "bind all our communities together, not divide us We should understand why they took place so that we will never let them happen again" (Goh 1997a, p.425). Goh highlighted the possibility that young people might not appreciate how potentially fragile inter-ethnic relations could prove to be, especially in times of economic recession. Not having lived through poverty and deprivation meant that young people might take peace and prosperity for granted.

Calling on all school principals to throw their support behind this urgent initiative, which he termed National Education (NE), Goh pointed out that NE needed to become a crucial part of the curriculum in all schools. Emphasizing the importance of nation building in existing subjects such as social studies, civic and moral education, and history would be insufficient. More important was the fact that NE was meant to develop "instincts" in every child, such as a "shared sense of nationhood [and an] understanding of how our past is relevant to our present and future" (Goh 1997a). NE was to make students appreciative of how Singapore's peace and stability existed amid numerous conflicts elsewhere around the world. This meant that what took place outside the classroom, such as school rituals and examples set by teachers, would prove vital in the success of NE. Goh announced the establishment of an NE Committee that would involve various ministries, including the Education Ministry, in this effort.

Goh's remarks came on the heels of increasing concern on the part of senior government officials over how to satisfy the consumerist demands and material aspirations of the growing middle class. Since the mid-1980s, access to higher education in Singapore has widened tremendously. By the year 2000, more than 60% of each age cohort was enrolled in local universities and polytechnics. This massive expansion of a better educated citi-

zenry was also a cause for official concern. For instance, in 1996 former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew (Lee, K.Y. 1996, p.30) commented that

thirty years of continuous growth and increasing stability and prosperity have produced a different generation in an English-educated middle class. They are very different from their parents. The present generation below 35 has grown up used to high economic growth year after year, and take their security and success for granted. And because they believe all is well, they are less willing to make sacrifices for the benefit of the others in society. They are more concerned about their individual and family's welfare and success, not their community or society's well being.

Likewise, Goh had in 1995 claimed that

[g]iving them (students) academic knowledge alone is not enough to make them understand what makes or breaks Singapore Japanese children are taught to cope with earthquakes, while Dutch youngsters learn about the vulnerability of their polders, or low-lying areas. In the same way, Singapore children must be taught to live with a small land area, limited territorial, sea and air space, the high cost of owning a car and dependence on imported water and oil. Otherwise, years of continuous growth may lull them into believing that the good life is their divine right [Students] must be taught survival skills and be imbued with the confidence that however formidable the challenges and competition, we have the will, skill and solutions to vanquish them. ("Teach students," 1995)

The Launch of National Education

The NE initiative was officially launched in May 1997 by the then Deputy Prime Minister, Lee Hsien Loong. Lee claimed that countries such as the United States and Japan, with longer national histories, still found it necessary to have schools transmit 'key national instincts' to students. Singapore, being barely one generation old, therefore needed a similar undertaking in the form of NE. NE aimed at developing national cohesion in students through:

- Fostering Singaporean identity, pride and self-respect;
- Teaching about Singapore's nation-building successes against the odds;

- Understanding Singapore's unique developmental challenges, constraints and vulnerabilities; and
- Instilling core values, such as meritocracy and multiracialism, as well as the will to prevail, in order to ensure Singapore's continued success (Lee, H.L. 1997).

Lee called on every teacher and principal to pass on six key NE messages:

- Singapore is our homeland; this is where we belong;
- We must preserve racial and religious harmony;
- We must uphold meritocracy and incorruptibility;
- No one owes Singapore a living;
- We must ourselves defend Singapore; and
- We have confidence in our future (Ministry of Education 1997a).

Several major means were suggested for incorporating NE in all schools. First, every subject in the formal curriculum would be used. Certain subjects, such as social studies, civic and moral education, history and geography were mentioned as being particularly useful in this regard. Social studies at the primary level would be started earlier, at Primary One instead of at Primary Four. It would also be introduced as a new mandatory subject for all upper secondary students in order to cover issues regarding Singapore's success and future developmental challenges. The upper secondary history syllabus would be extended from 1963, where its coverage had hitherto ended, to include the immediate post-independence years up until 1971.

Second, various elements of the informal curriculum were recommended. All schools were called upon to remember a few major events each year:

- Total Defence Day, to commemorate Singapore's surrender under British colonial rule to the Japanese in 1942;
- Racial Harmony Day, to remember the outbreak of inter-ethnic riots in 1964;
- International Friendship Day, to bring across the importance of maintaining cordial relations with neighboring countries; and
- National Day, to commemorate political independence in 1965.

In addition, students would visit key national institutions and public facilities in order to develop feelings of pride and confidence about how Singapore had overcome its developmental constraints. A further means of promoting social cohesion and civic responsibility would involve a

mandatory six hours of community service each year. An NE branch was established in the Ministry of Education headquarters to spearhead this initiative. Furthermore, to provide extrinsic motivation for school heads to take NE seriously, the degree of students' sense of national identity and of their social and moral development were included as assessment criteria in the School Excellence Model (under which each school undertakes self-appraisal with regard to a number of key processes and outcomes, and undergoes external validation once every five years).

Challenges

One can read in the importance accorded to NE a pressing concern among the political leadership about how, on the one hand, to satisfy the growing desires among an increasingly affluent and materialistic population for car ownership and bigger housing, amid rising costs of both commodities, and on the other, to maintain civic awareness and responsibility. A related concern is that the population might translate their dissatisfaction with unfulfilled material aspirations into dissatisfaction with the ruling party, which has based much of the legitimacy for its uninterrupted reign over the past four-and-a-half decades on the promise of delivering ever-expanding material affluence.

There is also concern that social cohesion might suffer, should the economy falter and fail to sustain the high growth rates of the past few decades. Social stratification has assumed a growing prominence on the government's policy agenda, especially in the wake of the 1991 general elections, when the PAP was returned to power with a reduced parliamentary majority (Rodan 1996). Whereas the issue of income stratification was largely taboo in public discussions before 1991, there has since then been growing acknowledgement on the part of the PAP government of the potential impact of income disparities on social cohesion. For instance, Goh Chok Tong has acknowledged on several occasions that not all Singaporeans stand to benefit equally from the global economy. He has also pointed out that highly educated Singaporeans are in a more advantageous position compared to unskilled workers, and that there is a great likelihood of widening income inequalities and class stratification (Goh 1996, 1997b).

Goh has drawn an explicit link between income inequalities and the need to maintain social cohesion. However, he thinks that "we cannot narrow the [income] gap by preventing those who can fly from flying

Nor can we teach everyone to fly, because most simply do not have the aptitude or ability" (Goh 1996, p.3). In the late 1990s, Goh introduced the terms "cosmopolitans" and "heartlanders" to illustrate the class divide between the well-educated, privileged, globally-mobile elite, on the one hand, and the working class majority, on the other (*Parliamentary Debates* 70(20), 1999, Col.2284). A PAP Member of Parliament expressed his fervent hope that Singaporeans would not "allow our system of education [to] create a bipolar society of cosmopolitans and heartlanders that will be destructive for nation-building" (*Parliamentary Debates* 71(2), 1999, Col.87). Such divisions have intensified in the wake of an economic recession in 1997/98 and worries about Singapore's continued economic viability amid growing economic competition from China and India. The ruling elite has also begun to realize that calls for Singaporeans to establish firm economic and cultural links at both the regional and international levels, in the name of economic survival, do not come without risk of calling into question national loyalties and citizenship obligations.

This tension between social inequalities and social cohesion permeates the underlying framework of NE. Different emphases are planned for students in various levels of schooling. For instance, students in technical institutes are to

understand that they would be helping themselves, their families and Singapore by working hard, continually upgrading themselves and helping to ensure a stable social order. They must feel that every citizen has a valued place in Singapore. (Ministry of Education 1997b, p.3)

Polytechnic students, who are higher up the social prestige ladder, are to be convinced that "the country's continued survival and prosperity will depend on the quality of their efforts and that there is opportunity for all based on ability and effort" (Ministry of Education 1997b, p.3). Junior college students, about four-fifths of whom are bound for local universities, should have the sense that "they can shape their own future" and should, as future national leaders, appreciate "the demands and complexities of leadership" (Ministry of Education 1997b, p.3).

One sees in these differing messages clear and unmistakable vestiges of the stratified view of society espoused by Lee Kuan Yew more than thirty years earlier. Speaking to school principals in 1966, Lee stressed that the education system ought to produce a "pyramidal structure" consisting of three strata: "top leaders," "good executives," and a

“well-disciplined and highly civic-conscious broad mass.” The “top leaders” are the “elite” who are needed to “lead and give the people the inspiration and the drive to make [society] succeed.” The “middle strata” of “good executives” are to “help the elite carry out [their] ideas, thinking and planning,” while the “broad mass” are to be “imbued not only with self- but also social discipline, so that they can respect their community and do no spit all over the place” (Lee, K.Y. 1966, pp.10, 12, 13). Lee also lamented the tendency among many Singaporeans to be more concerned with individual survival, rather than national survival, a theme that both he and Goh later repeated, within the setting of a much more materially prosperous society.

This task of holding on to citizens’ sense of loyalty and commitment will come under increasingly severe strain as globalization and its impact mean that Singaporeans are exposed via overseas travel, the internet, news and print media to social and political alternatives outside of Singapore. Increasing wealth also means that individuals are able to send their children to be educated outside of Singapore, after which work opportunities beckon. Furthermore, the government itself has been calling upon citizens to work outside of the country in order to broaden Singapore’s external competitive economic advantage. It has also been government practice for four decades now to sponsor top-performing students in the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level examinations for undergraduate studies in prestigious universities such as Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard and Stanford. It is perhaps ironic, if somewhat unsurprising, that the well-educated elite, in other words, the very individuals who have been accorded generous support and funding in their schooling in the hope that they will take on the mantle of national leadership, are the most globally-mobile, and who are best placed to take advantage of economic opportunities around the world, to the point of contemplating emigration. This policy dilemma was exemplified in the late 1990s when parliamentarians debated the merits of publicly naming and shaming individuals who had been sponsored for their undergraduate and/or postgraduate studies in elite foreign universities, only to repay the government the cost of their studies upon graduation instead of returning to Singapore to work for the government (*Parliamentary Debates* 68(7), 1998, Cols. 855-996). A few years later there were echoes of the “cosmopolitans-heartlanders” issue in the wake of Goh Chok Tong’s National Day rally speech about two categories of individuals, the “stayers” (Singaporeans who were “rooted to Singapore”) and the “quitters” (“fair

weather Singaporeans who would run away whenever the country runs into stormy weather") (*Parliamentary Debates* 75(8), 2002, Cols.1110-1201).

Entangled with the question of class-based disparities is that of ethnic inequalities. Data from the population census in the year 2000 indicated that the ethnic Malay and Indian minorities, constituting 13.9% and 7.9% of the total population respectively, formed a disproportionately large percentage of the lower income strata and a correspondingly small percentage of the higher income strata vis-à-vis the majority ethnic Chinese. There is sufficient cause for concern that these disparities will not narrow as the effects of economic globalization make further inroads into Singapore society.

These ethnic disparities play out in the area of educational attainment as well. Ethnic Chinese are heavily over-represented in local universities and polytechnics, forming 92.4% and 84.0% of the respective total enrolments in 2000, as compared with their 76.8% representation in the overall population. Ethnic Malays (2.7% and 10.0%, respectively), and Indians (4.3% and 5.2%, respectively) are correspondingly under-represented (Leow 2001, pp.34-36). Despite ethnic Malay and ethnic Indian students having made tremendous quantitative improvements in educational attainment over the past four decades, their public examination results continue to lag behind those of their Chinese counterparts (see, for example, Ministry of Education 2004). A disproportionately large percentage of Malay and Indian students are streamed on the basis of national examinations into the slower-paced streams at both primary and secondary levels. In other words, the educational gap is already present at the lower levels of schooling (Ministry of Education programs, such as the Learning Support Program, notwithstanding) and perpetuates itself at the higher levels. This gap also translates into ethnic minority under-representation (and working class under-representation) in some of the most prestigious schools and a corresponding over-representation in some of the least prestigious schools. All these gaps may raise doubts about how meritocratic and fair Singapore is, as well as whether there is indeed an equal place at the table for all Singaporeans.

There is evidence that four decades of common socialisation in a national school system have still not managed to eradicate racial prejudice among school students (see, for instance, Lee et al. 2004). The existence of Special Assistance Plan primary and secondary schools, which are almost entirely ethnically Chinese in enrolment, has been the subject of periodic discussion because of their perceived ethnic exclusivity (see, for example,

Parliamentary Debates 55(4), 1990, Col.371; 64(5), 1995, Col.486; 70(9), 1999, Col.1027; 76(10), 2003, Col.1635). Moreover, the practice of streaming students into various tracks at the primary and secondary levels within the context of a highly competitive, high-stakes education system has, since its inception in 1979, contributed to prejudice on the part of students in faster-paced streams, and teachers as well, towards students in slower-paced streams (see, for instance, Kang 2004; Tan & Ho 2001). These sorts of stratification sit somewhat at odds with the government's claim that

Everyone has a contribution to make to Singapore. It is not only those who score a dozen 'A's, or those who make a lot of money who are important and an asset to the country Each one of us has a place in society, a contribution to make and a useful role to play As a society, we must widen our definition of success to go beyond the academic and the economic. (Government of Singapore 1999, p.11)

The various tensions and dilemmas that have been discussed in this section have serious implications for efforts to impart the key messages of NE to all students. Further compounding the situation in recent years has been a renewed heightening of awareness of religious differences, especially between Muslims and non-Muslims. In 1999 there was a public controversy over the future of privately-run Islamic religious schools following the publication of a Ministry of Education report recommending six years of compulsory education for all children in state-run schools (Ministry of Education 2000). This was followed by events in the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York in September 2001, when, at the end of that year, Singapore authorities arrested several Muslim Singaporeans on suspicion of involvement in terrorist activities. In early 2002, another domestic controversy broke out over the Education Ministry's insistence that female Muslim students not be allowed to don Islamic veils in state-run schools (despite female Muslim teachers' being allowed to do so). In the midst of these potential flashpoints, government leaders have renewed calls for all Singaporeans to remain united, and for schools to play their role in fostering social cohesion.

In a sense, the Singapore government has never pretended that ethno-religious tensions have been swept away as a result of various educational policy initiatives (including civic and moral education) and other economic and social policies. In fact, certain government pronouncements may have served (unintentionally) to make the task of

forging social cohesion more problematic. For example, the question of ethnic Malay representation in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) has remained controversial ever since the establishment of the SAF in 1967. Government leaders have openly stated that Malays are not recruited into certain military units in case their religious affinities come into conflict with their duty to defend Singapore (Hussin 2002). In addition, Lee Kuan Yew has stated publicly that Singapore needs to maintain current ethnic ratios in its population in order to ensure continued economic success. These ethnic-based controversies have been complicated in recent years by the influx of new immigrants, many of whom are highly skilled, from countries such as China and India. The ruling elite have justified this importation of "foreign talent" on the grounds that Singapore lacks sufficient domestic talent for the needs of the global knowledge economy. These new immigrants have had at times to cope with resentment among some Singaporeans over perceived competition for jobs. NE will have to grapple with the task of socialising the children of these immigrants. There is also resentment that highly skilled male adult immigrants need not serve national service alongside Singapore citizens, but are nevertheless eligible to apply for permanent residence in Singapore. Even in the schools arena, there is worry among some parents, teachers and local students about the added competitive element that talented foreign students are perceived to represent (see, for instance, Quek 2005; Singh 2005).

At the same time, the question of national vulnerability in terms of resource constraints has leapt to the forefront of public consciousness in recent years, adding further urgency to the task of NE. In particular, the governments of Malaysia and Singapore have been unable to agree on the terms under which Malaysia will continue to supply the bulk of Singapore's water needs. The two governments have also traded words over a disputed island lying between the two countries. One may raise the question about whether the perennial siege mentality perpetuated by the ruling elite, far from arousing Singaporeans' patriotic sentiments, may instead have served in part to heighten their insecurities about Singapore's continued viability. Appealing to Singaporeans to be proud of the country's rapid economic growth under the People's Action Party's rule does not appear sufficient to engender emotional attachments and to bind Singaporeans, especially the well-educated elite, to their country (Kluver & Weber 2003).

On a more practical note, it is not always easy to get teachers and students to accord sufficient importance to NE, amid the general scramble

to prepare students for examinations within a highly competitive education system. As Chew (1997, pp.90-91) has pointed out,

there is a conflicting moral orientation in parts of the written curriculum that socialises Singaporean pupils to behave in a very individualistic and self-serving way in their relationships with other people. The message is clear: if an individual and a small nation-state are to survive in a highly competitive world, then they must work smartly and try to 'keep ahead of the pack.' Herein lies the strongest driving force in Singapore society, a force that encourages unbridled competition and selfish individualism, and one that is reflected in the education system. The school program poses some dilemmas to its pupils. Given the reward structure of the wider society, pupils are responding in an expected way. In this sense, the whole educational system is geared towards sustaining a competitive ethos rather than an ethos of cooperation and caring for others. An important consequence is that much of the effort put in by the school to give pupils a balanced education is in danger of being nullified by the entrenched value system.

This individualistic and competitive spirit has been exacerbated by the marketization of education over the past 15 years (Mok & Tan 2004). Among the manifestations of this marketization has been the annual publication of league tables based on secondary schools' academic performance and the borrowing of business-world quality assurance models in the form of the School Excellence Model. Attempting to quantify the success of NE (which essentially involves intangible emotional attitudes and beliefs), through the collection of hard data for the annual School Excellence Model reports, leads more often than not to students' chalking up the necessary hours of community service for the sake of complying with school requirements, rather than undertaking these activities in a genuine spirit of helping one's fellow citizens (see, for instance, Tan, S.H. 2005). The Singapore government has over the years instituted a system of incentives and disincentives to encourage citizens to comply with official policies (Lee, K.Y. 1966). There is, therefore, a possibility that schools might treat community service as yet another means to compete for national trophies and awards for schools that have chalked up demonstrably outstanding achievements in terms of community service or for NE, and might not manage to evoke genuine, intrinsic passion for the objectives of NE on the part of students.

Another concern with regard to NE is exactly how comfortably it sits within the *Thinking Schools, Learning Nation* (TSLN) initiative. This initiative was launched simultaneously with NE in 1997, with the major aim of promoting creative and critical thinking skills in all students in order that they might better meet the needs of the global knowledge economy. One might argue that the patriotic nature of NE requires a certain degree of convergence among teachers and students in terms of the emotions and passions that are officially deemed desirable. In other words, a common set of responses is deemed more worthy than others. However, it might be said that this sort of convergence of thought is somewhat incompatible with the sort of critical thinking skills that TSLN would appear to encourage.

Conclusion

The NE initiative is by no means new in its desire to impart a sense of 'Singaporean National Identity.' It has been part of a long-standing concern over the past four-and-a-half decades of PAP rule to foster social cohesion through schools through a top-down approach to education policymaking. What is new is the changed social context, that is, the greater income disparities in a materially wealthier society, amid the economic vagaries of globalization, as well as a more fragile socio-political world-wide environment, characterized by heightened fear and tension following the events of 11th September 2001. After a decade of NE, the Ministry of Education implicitly acknowledged in 2006 that NE has been less than wholly successful in fostering cross-racial cohesion and in promoting students' intrinsic commitment to "shaping Singapore's future" (Tharman 2006, p.6). A Ministry-led committee was established the same year to review the implementation of NE. School-based programs such as NE, located within a relatively centralized school system, will likely have to fight an increasingly uphill struggle as they attempt to foster social cohesion and a sense of rootedness to Singapore.

References

- Chew, J.O.A. (1997): 'Schooling for Singaporeans: The interaction of Singapore culture and values in the school', in Tan, J., Gopinathan, S. & Ho, W.K. (eds.), *Education in Singapore: A book of readings*. Singapore: Prentice Hall, pp.75-91.
- Goh, C.T. (1996): 'Narrowing the income gap.' *Speeches*, Vol.20, No.3, pp.1-4.

- Goh, C.T. (1997a): 'Prepare our children for the new century: Teach them well', in Tan, J., Gopinathan, S. & Ho, W.K. (eds.), *Education in Singapore: A book of readings*. Singapore: Prentice Hall, pp.423-491.
- Goh, C.T. (1997b): 'Singapore and the East Asian "miracle."' *Speeches*, Vol.21, No. 1, pp.13-19.
- Government of Singapore. (1999): *Singapore 21: Together, we make the difference*. Singapore: Singapore 21 Committee.
- Hussin, M. (2002): 'The socio-economic dilemma in Singapore's quest for security and stability.' *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.75, pp.39-56.
- Kang, T. (2004): 'Schools and post-secondary aspirations among female Chinese, Malay and Indian Normal Stream students', in Lai, A.E. (ed.), *Beyond rituals and riots: Ethnic pluralism and social cohesion in Singapore*. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, pp.146-171.
- Kluver, R., & Weber, I. (2003): 'Patriotism and the limits of globalization: Renegotiating citizenship in Singapore.' *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, Vol.27, pp.371-388.
- Lee, C., Cherian, M., Rahil, I., Ng, M., Sim, J., & Chee, M.F. (2004): 'Children's experiences of multiracial relationships in informal primary school settings', in Lai, A.E. (ed.), *Beyond rituals and riots: Ethnic pluralism and social cohesion in Singapore*. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, pp.114-145.
- Lee, H.L. (1997): *The launch of National Education*. Retrieved February 8, 2005, from <http://www1.moe.edu.sg/ne/KeySpeeches/MAY17-97.html>.
- Lee, K.Y. (1966): *New bearings in our education system*. Singapore: Ministry of Culture.
- Lee, K.Y. (1996): 'Picking up the gauntlet: Will Singapore survive Lee Kuan Yew?' *Speeches*, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp.23-33.
- Leow, B.G. (2001): *Census of population 2000 statistical release 2: Education, language and religion*. Singapore: Department of Statistics.
- Ministry of Education. (1991): *Civics and moral education syllabus: Secondary 1-5*. Singapore: Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education. (1997a): *About NE*. Retrieved February 8, 2005, from <http://www1.moe.edu.sg/ne/AboutNE/SixMSGs.html>.
- Ministry of Education. (1997b): *Launch of National Education*. Ministry of Education press release no. 017/97.
- Ministry of Education. (2000): *Report of the committee on compulsory education in Singapore*. Singapore: Author.
- Ministry of Education. (2004): *Performance by ethnic group 1994-2003*. Retrieved February 8, 2005, from <http://www.moe.gov.sg/press/2004/pr20041122a.htm>.
- Mok, K.H., & Tan, J. (2004): *Globalization and marketization of education: A comparative analysis of Hong Kong and Singapore*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Quek, T. (2005, February 13): 'China whiz kids: S'pore feels the heat.' *The Straits Times*, pp.3-4.
- Rodan, G. (1996): 'State-society relations and political opposition in Singapore', in

- Rodan, G. (ed.), *Political oppositions in industrialising Asia*. London: Routledge, pp.95-127.
- Singh, S. (2005, February 15): 'But Montfort principal says: We are improving local standards.' *The New Paper*, pp.2-3.
- Tan, J. (2000): 'The politics of religious knowledge in Singapore secondary schools', in Cornbleth, C. (ed.), *Curriculum politics, policy, practice: Cases in comparative context*. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp.77-102.
- Tan, J., & Ho, B.T. (2001): 'A' Levels or a polytechnic diploma? Malay students' choices of post-secondary options', in Tan, J., Gopinathan, S. & Ho, W.K. (eds.), *Challenges facing the Singapore education system today*. Singapore: Prentice Hall, pp.207-223.
- Tan, K.P. (2001): "'Civic society" and the "new economy" in patriarchal Singapore: Emasculating the political, feminizing the public.' *Crossroads: An interdisciplinary journal of Southeast Asian studies*, Vol.15, pp.95-124.
- Tan, S.H. (2005, February 13): 'No vision? Youths need role models.' *The Sunday Times*, p.26.
- Tharman, S. (2006): *Address by Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Minister for Education and Second Minister for Finance, at the Ministry of Education National Education forum for principals 2006, on Thursday 24 August 2006 at 8.30am at the Ministry of Education auditorium*. Retrieved August 28, 2006 from http://www.moe.gov.sg/speeches/2006/sp20060824_print.htm.
- 'Teach students to live with S'pore's constraints: PM.' (1995, March 5). *The Straits Times*, p.1.