

## **SYMPOSIUM PROPOSAL**

### **Teacher Education in Transition: Local Reform, Intercultural Competence, and the Challenge of Artificial Intelligence in Asia-Pacific Contexts**

*Convened by the Asia-Pacific Association for Teacher Education (APATE)*

*Submitted to the World Education Research Association (WERA)*

*Focal Meeting 2026 | For Senior Internal Review*

#### **I. Symposium General Rationale**

This symposium is convened by the Asia-Pacific Association for Teacher Education (APATE), a WERA-affiliated regional network that brings together researchers to advance scholarship on teacher preparation and connect Asia-Pacific perspectives with global debates. This curated panel addresses a critical question: How can teacher education systems respond to changing societal and technological demands?

Four studies will be presented in this symposium to address the question. In the first study, Dr. Jiraporn Chano proposed a framework, the school as a learning community (SLC), to address the demand of reforming the instructional paradigm. In Thailand, 21st-century educational reform has created a societal demand to move beyond centralized, rote-learning models toward more collaborative, democratic, and locally responsive school cultures. In response to this demand, Dr. Chano's study focuses on teacher professional development and examines how the SLC model could transform curriculum and instruction through open classrooms and sustained lesson study. The results indicate that the SLC practices help foster sustainable learning cultures in Thai schools by enhancing teacher collaboration, student engagement, and peer interdependence.

In the second study, Keith M. Graham responded to the policy demands of Taiwan's Bilingual 2030 policy by using the initiative as an opportunity to promote plurilingual intercultural competence. Dr. Graham argued that bilingual teacher education programs could serve as a platform for transforming the top-down bilingual policy into a more bottom-up plurilingual education. He adopted Dearforff's (2006) Process Model of Intercultural Competence as a theoretical framework for designing and evaluating a bilingual teacher education program. Through detailed analyses of curriculum materials and student artifacts, Dr. Graham found that the program successfully enhanced preservice teachers' plurilingual attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Dr. Graham further argued that Dearforff's model could be applied more broadly to the design of teacher education curricula to promote plurilingual intercultural competence in diverse international contexts.

In the third study, Dr. Chen-Wei Chang and Dr. Yann-Ru Ho drew on critical pedagogy to address the limitations of global citizenship education. They argued that current global citizenship education often emphasizes neoliberal and skills-based approaches, which may lead to only surface-level cultural exchange among students from different countries. Adopting a Freirean lens, Dr. Chang and Dr. Ho designed a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) course to promote structured cross-border dialogue aimed at developing critical consciousness and youth solidarity. Through this course, the researchers found that participants began to reframe intercultural competence not merely as a set of communicative skills, but as a process of deep critical reflection on power, inequality, and positionality. Participants also learned to translate reflection into praxis grounded in shared responsibility and transnational solidarity.

In the fourth study, Dr. Cheng-His Chien called for reform in teacher education in response to the rapid development of generative AI. Dr. Chien conducted philosophical thought experiments to illustrate three possible consequences of AI development. First, humans take full advantage of AI breakthroughs, which could either enhance their competitiveness or weaken their capacity for independent and subjective thinking. Second, humans fully utilize the development of AI to solve most problems related to survival and everyday life. This may lead to two further possibilities: (1) humans are controlled by a small group of top computer programmers or (2) human values need to be redefined because of declining human ownership and wealth accumulation. Third, AI achieves self-awareness and becomes a super-intelligent being. As a result, AI may either terminate humanity or integrate with humans to establish a new material-spiritual order. Dr. Chien argued that teacher education should respond to these potential AI-driven transformations as quickly as possible.

This symposium makes two important contributions to the WERA community. First, it identifies and examines the current challenges of teacher education in the Asia-Pacific region, many of which may resonate with those in other parts of the world. Second, it offers diverse theoretical frameworks and practice-oriented strategies for addressing these challenges. Together, these contributions not only deepen scholarly understanding of teacher education in the Asia-Pacific context but also suggest promising directions for future studies on teacher education.

## **II. Discussant's Role and International Lens**

This symposium is structured as a deliberately curated invited forum. The discussant, Dr. Greg William Misiaszek will synthesize the four contributions into a coherent cross-contextual dialogue, identifying structural connections across the panel's four studies: curriculum reform, national policy, global citizen education, and AI. Crucially, the discussant will situate the Asia-Pacific findings within international educational debates, enabling audiences from diverse contexts to engage with these cases as contributions to shared scholarly challenges.

---

— End of Symposium Proposal —

*Submitted for Senior Internal Review | WERA Focal Meeting 2026*

*Convened by the Asia-Pacific Association for Teacher Education (APATE)*