

## Is it Time for a New Approach to Education in Singapore?

Singapore's achievements in education are laudable, but raise some serious questions about their costs to students and parents, and about purpose of life and education, said IPS Senior Research Fellow Tan Tarn How in a recent paper.

Singapore coming top or near the top in international rankings such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) shows that Singapore does some things well, he said. But PISA – which has assumed a tyranny over education systems worldwide -- only measures educational achievement in reading, science, mathematics and creative problem-solving. While these are useful to measure, they do not take into account other equally important aspects of education such as the arts, culture, sports and values, Mr Tan said in a lecture titled “Is it Time for a New Approach to Education in Singapore?” at the private think tank [The Head Foundation](#).

Singapore's high ranking comes from an education system whose aims are largely economic and instrumental, and which has resulted in intense competition, he said. The result is high stress on parents and children, and an over emphasis on grades that leaves children with little time for and kills their interest in other pursuits that will equip them to leading flourishing lives.

He proposes a “flourishing education index” which is much wider in scope than the narrow focus of PISA and similar measures. His lecture has been published in a [paper](#).

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