

**ADDRESS BY MR NG CHER PONG,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE SINGAPORE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
AT IAL GRADUATION CEREMONY 2014, LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE,  
12 DECEMBER 2014, 7.10PM**

Graduands, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Evening to all of you.

1. I am delighted to join you here at the Institute for Adult Learning or IAL, Graduation Ceremony 2014. This is a significant milestone for the graduands and let me offer my heartiest congratulations to each and every one of you. Tonight marks the start of a new phase in your career, and a significant milestone in your continual professional development.

**Professionalising Adult Educators**

2. Collectively, your achievements also strengthen the foundation of our Continuing Education and Training, or CET system. This is because adult educators have a pivotal role in shaping the quality of skills acquired by the workforce. This in turn impacts business outcomes and productivity at the national level, and affects how individuals progress in their careers. Adult educators are therefore at the heart of the CET system, and support the work of newly-formed SkillsFuture Council.

3. Currently, we have a thriving community of adult educators with different domain expertise, and they specialise in different industries. Some are full-time adult educators, but many do so part-time, on a free-lance basis. Some operate primarily in training institutions, whereas others are embedded in companies. The community is therefore a highly heterogeneous one. This is why IAL conducted a sectoral survey on Training & Adult Education or TAE in short, earlier this year to map out the community so as to better support the continual professionalism of adult educators.

4. This is important because teaching is a craft that is honed through a combination of experience, self-reflection and research. Skills mastery cannot be achieved over-night, and requires strong commitment and dedication by the adult educators. For the next phase of our CET developments, it is imperative to build up a core group of highly-skilled and competent adult educators, and to enable them to be recognised and valued by the industry.

5. That is why IAL will launch an Adult Educators Professionalisation scheme in the second quarter next year. Positioned as a voluntary scheme, adult educators who participate in it can be recognised as Associate Adult Educators, Specialist Adult Educators or Adult Educator Fellows, depending on their level of proficiency and track record. The scheme will provide due recognition to individuals who have built up their expertise as adult educators over the years, and outline how others can similarly achieve skills mastery. With a structured pathway for career progression, individuals who are keen to develop their careers in training and adult education may also find it more attractive to do so. For a start, we will implement the scheme in the TAE sector itself and it will be expanded to benefit adult educators in other sectors in the near future.

6. I encourage Adult Educators to take this opportunity to be recognised and to advance in their careers, based on skills. Under the scheme, we will also be increasing the collaboration and networking opportunities, as well as the Continuing Professional Development programmes to support their professional development needs.

7. Specifically, IAL will roll out three new programmes next year. First, we will launch a new Master of Science in Skills and Workforce Development programme in collaboration with Cardiff University in the United Kingdom. This programme aims to deepen the specialist skills of the Human Resource and Workforce Development professionals by equipping them with the latest tools for analysis of skills and performance in employment. The programme will commence in the first quarter. Second, the National Institute of Education has launched the new Master of Arts in Professional Education programme, or MAPE, which was developed in consultation with the IAL. MAPE will provide CET professionals with a rigorous understanding of educational practices and systems from social, philosophical, psychological and cross-national perspectives. The programme will begin in August 2015 with applications currently ongoing. Third, IAL will launch a new Specialist Diploma in Advanced Facilitation around March. This is in response to the feedback from many adult educators, who wish to continuously improve their facilitation techniques, to inject innovation into their training delivery and develop a personal branding for an enhanced professional image.

8. More information about the Adult Educators Professionalisation scheme and these new professional development opportunities will be disseminated to the adult educators community. In particular, the Adult Education Network, which is spearheaded by the IAL, will be organising a communication session on this scheme next month. I encourage our adult educators to register your interest with IAL. Currently, the adult educators community is about 5,500 strong in members and with this scheme, we expect to benefit 3,000 adult educators by 2020.

### **Building Capabilities to Harness Technology for Learning**

9. Looking ahead, one of the key areas in which adult educators need to build professional capabilities is how they can make purpose use of technology to enhance learning. In the latest versions of the Advance Certificate in Training & Assessment and Diploma in Adult Continuing Education programmes IAL has already built these into the curriculum. A mobile app has also been developed for two short courses offered by IAL namely, Strategic Business Planning for Training Organisations and Managing Operations in Training Organisations. The 12 short videos embedded in the app allow learners easy access to the key concepts in the courses. Those who have used the app have found it a refreshing approach to have learning on the go.

10. IAL has also developed an online tool known as the Adult Educator Reflective Tool, to help adult educators review their current practices and pedagogical beliefs through an online questionnaire. A self-report will be generated, indicating the key areas for improvement. This tool is now available on the IAL website.

11. In addition, IAL is running an 8-session pilot training clinic over three months, to take adult educators through a series of storyboarding, e-development workshops and coaching sessions. At the end of the session, they will be able to develop an e-learning course that they can incorporate into their own programmes. Going forward, IAL will continue to support AEs in more technology-related capability building workshops, particularly with the impending launch of iN.LAB at the Lifelong Learning Institute in the second half of 2015. IAL will also invite learners to participate in their online courses and blended programmes.

## Conclusion

12. In conclusion, we recognise the important role played by adult educators and will continue to deepen our engagement with all of you through an increasing number of platforms. Today, for example, IAL launched a new e-magazine, known as IALeads (*pronounce as "I- A-L - Leads"*), which caters specially to the CET community. We urge all our Adult Educators to continue to stay current and relevant, and to let us know how we can better support them in their work. I will leave you with a quote from Brian Tracy, author of "Success Mastery Academy". He said: "Commit yourself to lifelong learning. The most valuable asset you'll ever have is your mind and what you put into it."

13. We will look forward to your invaluable contributions to CET and wish you all the best in your endeavour for lifelong learning!

Thank you.