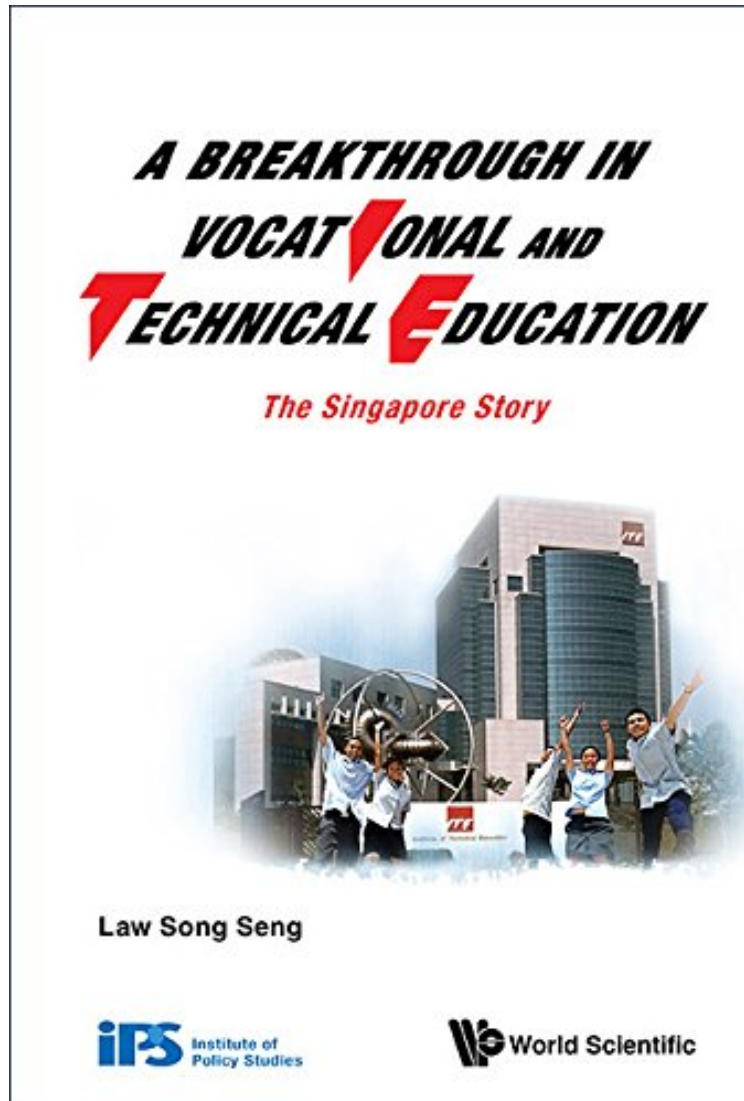


A Breakthrough in Vocational and Technical Education: The Singapore Story

Song Seng Law

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Song Seng Law : A Breakthrough in Vocational and Technical Education: The Singapore Story before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Breakthrough in Vocational and Technical Education: The Singapore Story:

There has been much international effort to improve or transform Vocational and Technical Education (VTE).

However, the outcomes often remain elusive. VTE continues to be largely shunned by society as a sector of education for low-achievers and academic failures. *A Breakthrough in VTE: The Singapore Story* explores the Singapore experience that was made possible through strategic planning, organisational excellence, innovation and ingenuity. It is a compelling story of how the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) began to transform lives and change its image over a period of fifteen years (1992–2007). This book, based on a first-hand CEO account, vividly captures the sort of leadership, policy choices, fundamental principles and capabilities in the journey of transformation. The details of the "what, when, how and why" are a valuable guide for leaders and practitioners in building quality and sustainable VTE systems which are responsive to social and economic needs.

Contents: The Early Beginnings: Historical Perspectives Dynamics and Challenges Aligning Education with Economic Development Vocational Training under the former VITB Journey of Transformation: Move Towards Organisational Excellence The Three Waves of Transformation Strategic Planning Makes a Difference Changing the Image ITE: A World-Class Educational Institution Implications for Developing Countries: Some Lessons on Building Quality and Sustainability Concluding Reflections

Readership: Leaders in governments, Ministries and related agencies overseeing vocational and technical education and training, skills development and manpower training; Professors, teaching staff and students in teacher education and training universities and colleges; Principals, heads of departments and senior staff in Vocational and Technical Education institutions and schools; General readers who have an interest in the transformation of organisations, including leadership, strategic planning, and organisational excellence.

Key Features: A compelling story based on a first-hand CEO account on how an educational institution was transformed into a global leader in vocational and technical education An acute analysis with an international perspective in understanding the dynamics and challenges in vocational and technical education A valuable source of fundamental principles, lessons and success factors underlying the "what, when, how and why?" of transformation A useful guide towards building quality and sustainable vocational and technical education systems with implications for developing countries

"Recognising that no one vocational training model can be transported wholesale from one country to another, this book provides a great service by highlighting the important issues that any successful system has to address. With this insightful book, Dr Law has now made it much easier for other countries to learn from and adapt Singapore's experience. This is invaluable to everyone keen on promoting economic transformation, particularly in Africa." -- Dr Yaw Ansu, Chief Economist, African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET) and Former Director for Human Development, the Africa Region, the World Bank

"Dr Law's acute analysis of the Singapore long-term education policy towards technical education goes far beyond theoretical considerations. It opens credible and practical ways all policy-makers in charge of education and of economic affairs would be well inspired to reflect upon if not to adopt. A great achievement indeed!" -- Dr Jean-Etienne Berset, Director General, University of Applied Sciences, Western Switzerland

"This book is indeed a 'must' for all policy-makers and experts who wish to develop their country into a modern, competitive nation. Many countries are inspired by the German model of 'dual training' in apprenticeship. The Singapore story shows that an individually adapted institution-based training model can be just as successful. It is an alternative pathway to success -- not only for a nation but also for the individual." Hartmut Mattes, Minister Advisor, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Baden-Wuerttemberg, Germany

"A remarkable story of how Singapore's technical and vocational institutes once shunned by school leavers became an international award-winning system offering a pathway to skilled jobs for nearly a quarter of the country's school cohort. The 'what, when, how and why' account of what was done to achieve this result during Dr Law's tenure as the Chief Executive Officer of the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) is both exhilarating and encouraging. I highly recommend the book to all who wish to distil lessons from Singapore's experience in technical and vocational education and training." -- Tan Jee Peng, Former Advisor, Education Department, Human Development Network, World Bank

From the Inside Flap There has been much international effort to improve or transform Vocational and Technical Education (VTE). However, the outcomes often remain elusive. VTE continues to be largely shunned by society as a sector of education for low achievers and academic failures. A breakthrough in VTE is a Singapore story made possible through strategic planning, organisational excellence, innovation and ingenuity. It is a compelling story of how the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) began to transform lives and change its image over a period of fifteen years (1992–2007). This book, based on a first-hand CEO account, vividly captures the sort of leadership, policy choices, fundamental principles and capabilities in the journey of transformation. The details of the "what, when, how and why" are a valuable guide for leaders and practitioners in building quality and sustainable VTE systems which are responsive to social and economic needs. This book is written in three parts. Part I provides the historical background to the VTE sector in Singapore, a systems view of the dynamics and challenges faced by the VTE system and propounds the fundamental importance of aligning education with economic development goals. The key focus in Part II is the three waves of transformation from the former Vocational and Industrial Training Board (VITB) to ITE in Singapore that was motivated by an early interest in moving towards organisational excellence and supported by a consistent use of strategic planning. In the process, the image of vocational training was changed and resulted in a unique brand of a world-class ITE education and training model that ITE is today. In Part III is a reflection on what it takes to build a

sustainable high-quality VTE system in light of Singapore's experience, an international context and a changing policy environment. Also included are thoughts on how the Singapore ITE story may be an inspiration to others facing similar challenges in VTE.

About the Author Dr Law Song Seng was the founding Director and Chief Executive Officer (1992ndash;2007) of the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) in Singapore. Dubbed as "Mr ITE", his visionary leadership and team have been instrumental in the transformation of ITE. Dr Law continues to share this remarkable Singapore story in vocational and technical education with the international community. Dr Law previously served as Senior Advisor and Chairman CEO of ITE Education Services Pte Ltd (2007ndash;2012); Director CEO of Vocational Industrial Training Board (1981ndash;1992); Lecturer, Associate Professor and Head of Industrial Systems Engineering at the National University of Singapore (1973ndash;1983); Visiting Lecturer at the University of Auckland, New Zealand (1980); Manufacturing Development Engineer with the Ford Motor Company in the United States (1972ndash;1973); and Assistant Lecturer in the Singapore Polytechnic (1968ndash;1973). Currently, Dr Law is Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam, Advisor to Temasek Foundation and Member of the Education Sub-Commission in the Singapore National Commission for UNESCO. Dr Law was educated at Bukit Panjang Government High School and Victoria School in Singapore. A Colombo Plan Scholar, he graduated with a First Class Honours in Mechanical Engineering from University of Auckland, New Zealand in 1968, and MSc (1971) and PhD (1972) from University of Wisconsin, USA, under a Ford Foundation Scholarship. He is the recipient of several awards: The National Day Public Administration Medal (Gold)(1984), Education Award (1994) by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce Industry Singapore Foundation, Center on Education and Training (1997) Distinguished Service Award, Ohio State University, USA, Medal of Commendation (2001) by National Trades Union Congress and Public Administration Medal (Gold)(Bar)(2006) in recognition of his national and international contributions in vocational and technical education.