

**“MOE-certified’. What does it really mean? (John Tan Liang-Joo, ST Forum, 1/3)**

ABOUT a year ago, I complained to the Ministry of Education (MOE) about a MOE-certified teacher who, without credential, was teaching psychology in a MOE-registered private school.

The ministry said its prerequisites for registering a private school are limited to ensuring its adequacy in providing physical facilities such as classroom furniture and rest rooms, and that its certification of a private school teacher is based solely on the school's recommendation. One problem with this method is that some private schools are more concerned with profits than the quality of education. They engage teachers who may be ill-qualified. I urge students to check their credentials while embarking on a programme with a private school. Don't be impressed by titles such as 'neuropsychologist' or 'neuro-cognitive pedagogist'. Unscrupulous teachers use them freely. The MOE does not regulate the use of such titles and there is no law in Singapore that guides their usage. Don't rely on the fact that they are 'MOE-certified' or that they are members of certain academic associations. Qualified teachers can demonstrate their credentials without having to hide behind pseudo-qualifications.

Many students assumed vaguely and wrongly that the MOE would ensure the propriety of everything about a private school before registering it. Perhaps the MOE can educate the public as to what it precisely means to be a 'MOE-registered' private school and 'MOE-certified' private teacher.