



# ICT and the Drive to Reform Japanese Education

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December 16, 2016 : 17:00-18:30

Room 301, 3F, Building 10, Sophia University

Over the decades, Japanese educational policy has moved from an “immobilist” period to one of intensely politicized educational reforms influenced by global policy dynamics. The development of disruptive information and communication technologies (ICT) has affected school systems around the world, and dramatically changed the working lives of teachers in most high-income countries. Under the proposed 2020 reforms, Japanese teachers face significant pressures to adopt technologies like tablets and interactive white boards as well as to initiate programming education in elementary school. Both MEXT and MIAC have invested considerable effort and money in promoting technology. I will also discuss how ICT functions as a convenient vehicle for promoting a range of educational reforms, and the various motives that may respondents have identified regarding the educational reform goals of the government. Finally, I give an overview of how Japanese teachers and various professional development providers are responding to proposed reforms.

**Dr. Gerald K. LeTendre** is the Harry L. Batschelet II Professor of Educational Administration at the Pennsylvania State University and editor of *The American Journal of Education*. He is currently a Fulbright research fellow conducting research on the role of information and communication technology in Japanese teacher professional development. His books include *Teaching and Learning in Japan* (co-edited with Tom Rohlen, Cambridge U. Press); *Challenges to Japanese Education* (co-edited with J. Gordon, H. Fujita and T. Kariya, TC Press); *Learning to be Adolescent: Growing Up in U.S. and Japanese Middle Schools* (Yale University Press); *Intense Years: How Japanese Adolescents Balance School, Work and Friends* (co-authored with R. Fukuzawa, Routledge/Farmer Press). He and Motoko Akiba are currently editing *The Routledge International Handbook of Teacher Quality*, which is due out in 2017. He first came to Japan in 1986 and taught English at the middle and high school in Fukui Prefecture. Dr. LeTendre is currently an ICC Visiting Fellow.