



COUNTRY PRESENTATION – SINGAPORE

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SINGAPORE'S EDUCATION SYSTEM PROGRESS AND PRIORITIES

Introduction

To help Singapore develop into a knowledge-based economy, the Singapore Ministry of Education (MOE) has redirected the Singapore education system to one that is "ability-based, aspirations driven" in 1997. The education system is driven by each student's abilities and aspirations as we believe that everyone has different talents and abilities at different levels and that the education system should seek to harness these abilities to their fullest.

Recent developments in the Singapore education landscape are in line with the focus of COL's 2006-2009 plan, *Learning for Development*, which advocates learning as the key to achieving progress and development. Singapore seeks to enhance the learning of our students by opening up new pathways and different approaches to learning, so as to cater to the different needs, abilities and talents of students. In recent years, new educational programmes and types of schools have been added to the Singapore education landscape. Students are also given greater choices in curriculum offerings.

Progress

The following are some areas where progress has been made in terms of supporting '*Learning for Development*' :

More Pathways and Choices

Integrated Programme: Provides a seamless upper secondary and JC education for university-bound students.

Specialised Independent Schools: Cater to exceptional talents in sports (Singapore Sports School), arts (School Of The Arts), technology (School of Science and Technology) and maths and science (NUS High School).

Greater Flexibility and Choice in the Curriculum: Subject-based banding, more resources for schools with niche programmes (for Primary Schools); Introduction of new 'O' level subjects and electives for students (for Secondary Schools).

Holistic Learning Experiences

Focus on Values: Greater emphasis is placed on inculcating values and developing character.

Social and Emotional Learning Framework: Provides the conceptual framework for schools to integrate their guidance and developmental support efforts. It sets out the social and emotional competencies that pupils need to learn. These skills include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management and responsible decision-making.

Inculcate a Global Outlook

Learning of foreign languages: Enhances students' competency in a diverse range of languages

More overseas exposure: Allows students to get a sense of the complexities and opportunities in the world they live in.

ICT in Education

ICT Masterplan: The master planning for ICT in education provides a blueprint for the use of ICT in schools and access to an ICT-enriched school environment for teaching and learning for every student. ICT is harnessed to enhance the learning experiences of our students and to equip them with essential learning skills, creative thinking skills and communication skills. These skills will help prepare them for the workplace of the future.

The first Masterplan (1997-2002) laid the foundation for integrating ICT into education. Achievements in this phase include teachers acquiring basic competencies in using ICT in teaching and learning, equipping schools with the necessary basic ICT infrastructure.

Masterplan II (phase 2) sought to enable schools to pervasively and effectively integrate ICT into the curriculum so as to bring about engaged learning. A systemic and holistic approach was adopted in which all the key pieces – curriculum, instruction and assessment, professional development, pupil learning and school culture, were integrated and addressed. The focus was on the interactions among the components and how ICT could be leveraged to enhance these relations to bring about engaged learning.

The vision for the 3rd Masterplan (MP3) is to harness ICT effectively for finer customisation in learning and strengthen students' competencies for the 21st century.

Priorities

The following are the priorities for the next few years:

1. Setting up of the new publicly-funded university: To increase the capacity of the higher education sector, to better provide for Singapore's economic needs while expanding and diversifying the education opportunities available;
2. Enhancing primary education: A review of primary education to explore how schools can enhance holistic learning to better prepare pupils for the future. In particular, we seek to strike a better balance between equipping our pupils with foundational knowledge and developing in them the skills and values that will prepare them for life; and
3. Developing a new generation school team: Building a strong school team is critical to delivering quality education to every child. The Ministry of Education will consider recruiting only graduates as new teachers by 2015 and introduce programmes to enhance the professional development of the existing teaching force. MOE will also grow the pool of allied educators in schools to provide teachers with greater support in enhancing holistic learning.

The Ministry of Education, Singapore

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