



EDUTECH ASIA CONFERENCE 2018



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We attended the EduTech Asia Conference, which was held at Suntec City during the 9th to 11th September 2018. The conference was largely attended by educators, both local and foreigners, as well as educational technologists. The conference saw over 3000 attendees and was bustling with promoters at the various booths in the expo section, speakers at on-going sessions and networking opportunities all around.

Spanning across 3 exciting days, the conference featured 8 theatres of content, covering topics in K-12 Education, Tertiary Education, IT Transformation, Vocational Training (VET), Early Childhood Education, Special Educational Needs (SEN), Education Business Leaders as well as the new EduBUILD Asia on building 21st century learning spaces.

Plus, there were lots of EduSLAM Sessions, Practical Workshops, EduSHARE Roundtables and more. With the support of IMDA, the conference also featured an exhibition showcasing the latest edtech innovations and technologies in Singapore schools.

From the DAS Main Literacy Programme (MLP) EduTech Team, Soofrina participated in three forms, oral presentation, panel session and Roundtable discussion. For the oral presentation, the title was Technology Integration Models; the panel session was on EdTech Integration and Professional Development; and Roundtable discussion was on Effective Technology Integration. The oral presentation was on MLP EdTech's current initiatives - Appy Hour and M-Learning Week, and how these were part of MLP EdTech's professional development initiatives.

For the roundtable discussion on Effective Technology Integration facilitated by Soofrina, educators from around the world discussed how to go beyond instructional methods for SEN students. Some of the examples shared in the roundtable were (i) the creation of new meaning using the iPad via augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) - students are able to experience new environments or feelings through VR and express their emotions and thoughts better, and (ii) the use of QR codes for 2D and 3D imaging and exploration of new places; for example, instead of having the original item on the table for the students to feel or touch it, students are able to scan the QR code and the item will appear in a 3D model via the screen. These examples shared during the panel discussion seems to fit in the level of "Redefinition" in Bloom's SAMR model.

The roundtable discussion on personalised learning was facilitated by an educator from Singapore American School and also consisted of educators from around the world. We first got to know how each school uses technology to teach and we learnt from the educators in Vietnam how they manage with very minimal educational technologies and also deal with the physical constraints, such as connectivity issues. The facilitator shared with us the different types of personalised learning such as competency-based progression, customised pathways and flexible environments and how it is being used in their school. For competency based progression, it links to four executive functioning progressions and students have a chart to highlight what they are able to do; reflections are done every lesson to see what they can progress on in the upcoming lessons. For customised pathways, they follow a program called 'Quest' which helps students to track their learning. The facilitator greatly believes in a flexible environment where classes



are in a hub and the special needs educator is able to intervene whenever she sees a student in distress and the problem is addressed on the spot. My take away from the session was that reflections from students helped a great deal in designing a lesson that caters to the students' needs and therefore, that leads to student progression.

Utilisation of EdTech for more meaningful experiences - This was our biggest takeaway at the EduTech Asia Conference 2018. There are now so many educational technologies available to us, and the companies that are leading the way, whether a small start-up or huge corporate are building technical ecosystems that enable our dyslexic learners and educational therapists (EdTs) to learn and develop, and have more meaningful digital strategies, that truly engage and help them. Thus, everything that EdTech does should still be focused on the students' learning needs and making the EdTs' tasks simpler yet enhancing their teaching strategies. Therefore, we, the EdTech Team will keep this as our goal, and will further research and utilise educational technologies to deepen and enhance the meaningful experiences of EdTs and dyslexic students of the MLP Programme.

