

Classroom
Transformer
2.0

The Green Issue



Pirates of the
MapleSEA

Ironman
in Making
Triathlon

New Look, New Content, New Ideas **INSIDE!**

Editor's Note

It's heartening to receive positive feedback from our valuable readers. The new team will continue to strive to further enhance the magazine for all of you.

Also, @iKnow is honoured to invite Dr. Ashley Tan from the National Institute of Education, Singapore to be

the special guest writer of this issue. Dipping into an admirable wealth of experience, Dr. Ashley will write about the latest trends in learning, teaching and other guidelines for educators. As usual, there are many other exciting components awaiting you inside. We interviewed the "God-like" Pirates of Maplestory, we add a

new section — "Parenting Tips", plus another must-read Educators' Tips for teachers!

We aim to surprise you with every issue — comics and free vouchers. So stay tuned and continue to catch up with us in the next issue!

Christine Yee
Editor



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Letter from Reader :

Dear iKnow Magazine,

I have been wanting to write to the team but haven't got around to doing it until today. Well, you know teachers are really busy people. As much as I love reading, I could not find the time to read other than the daily papers. So I would usually get loads of reading done during the school holidays.

I read your iKnow Jan/Feb issue and I must say that I really like the things featured in this issue especially the Useful Websites and Tips to fully utilize

technology (No surprise there... as I am the HOD ICT). I felt that your researches have done a wonderful job to surface these Web 2.0 applications for busy educators like us. Really appreciate the effort! Rest assured that there's one educator in the east that is actually promoting these websites to all the entire staff. I am an active user of Animoto, Wikis and Audacity.

Another segment I love is the Gadgets Galore. They are really unique and being

a techie gal I would love to buy them. Do let me know how I could get hold of HOMADE Brick Flash Drive, Pop'n Pop and Headphonies. They make perfect gifts.

Thanks and keep up the good work. I would be anxiously waiting for the next issue.

Mdm Aini Hussien
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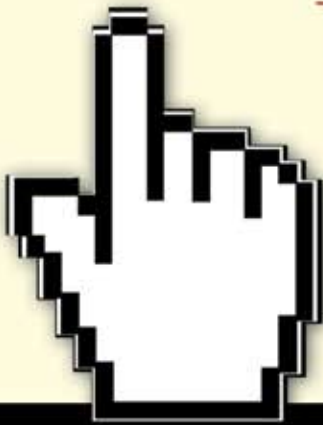
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Distributed by iKnow Pte Ltd.

Printed by Winland Printing Pte Ltd.

CLASSROOM VERSION 2.0

By Dr. Ashley Tan



Last year, Mike Quissaunee, an Associate Professor of Engineering and Technology at Brookdale Community College in Lincroft, New Jersey, gave a presentation on digital media (<http://q-ontech.blogspot.com/2008/05/thoughts-on-digital-media.html>). He told the story of a mother and daughter who visited a tourist attraction in order to make a point. Here's his story – with some modifications.

A mother and her daughter toured a historical site.

They walked into a room where a large loom was set up and an 18th century craftsman was dyeing textiles and weaving fabric. The girl turned to her mother and asked, "What is this place and what is that man doing?" The mother carefully explained to her daughter the weaving process and how clothes were made in the 18th century and how modern factories now made clothes that she and her daughter could pick up at the local store.

They moved on to the next building and discovered a foundry. Again the daughter asked, "What is this place and what are they doing?" The mother explained that this was a foundry and in it the men melted metals such as bronze and poured it into moulds to form bells, coach and harness fittings, shoe buckles, sword hilts, furniture hardware, and many other things. She explained that in



1908

the late 1700s and early 1800s this hot, dangerous process, known as smelting, was how metal objects were made.

1958

The mother and daughter walked into the next building. The daughter got very excited and said, "Mommy, mommy, I know what this is! It's a classroom!"

2008

What was the point of the story? The world has changed much, but our classrooms have changed very little, so little that the girl in the story could still identify the 18th Century classroom despite being a participant of one in the 21st Century.

In all likelihood, the girl saw similarities in both classroom layouts: The teacher, the teacher's desk, a writing board at the front, and the students and their furniture arranged rank and file. In the delivery mode of teaching, the teacher lectures students, hoping that information gets digested and absorbed by the students. The students then give back that information in the form of written

assignments or tests. The picture above depicts a typical classroom many of us have experienced before.

On the surface, this model of teaching seems efficient, but in reality, it is ineffective. This outdated mode of teaching assumes that learners are passive recipients who learn largely by reading, listening, and practicing. This form of teaching while still common today was more appropriate in the Industrial Age. Back then the information that students needed was more limited and compartmentalised. A person could go through the schooling system and be prepared for a job that they could hold for the rest of their lives.

Image by Inx





However, such teaching is woefully inadequate now in the Information Age. For example, it has been estimated that a week's worth of information in the New York Times newspaper contains more information than a person was likely to come across in a lifetime in the 18th Century (Wurman, 2000). There is just too much information now for us to process and not all of it is personally relevant. Educators cannot pretend to be primary sources of information and they cannot attempt to transmit what they know to their charges.

If we think that the educational challenges facing students, teachers, and parents in Singapore is daunting now, what does the future hold? As an industrialized country, we might look to other modern nations to see what lies ahead. The U.S. Department of Labour estimates that today's learners will have had been through 10 to 14 jobs by the time they are 38 years old (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/nlsoy.pdf>). This means that they will need to have broad skill-sets instead of narrow ones, and that they will need to learn between jobs or on-the-job. So how do we prepare our children for the future workplace?

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Do away with exams

An approach with greater emphasis on holistic development is more ideal

Letter from Leslie Ho Kin Hung

stand where their talents lie, and be able to pursue their interests from an early age.

The shift from an examination-orientated approach is similar to that of the IP implemented a few years back. Controversial steps, such as the scrapping of the O Levels at certain schools, raised similar concerns

Let Secondary kids study what they like

Letter from Denis Edward

DURING his visit to Nanyang Polytechnic, Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew said "we have to provide students with more different outlets that fit their particular strengths and profile". His call for the need to personalise education is worryingly undetected at the Secondary School level.

In January 2009, the Ministry of Education informed the public of its proposed changes to our Primary schooling system (<http://www.moe.gov.sg/media/press/2009/01/strong-fundamentals-for-future.php>). Some departures from the established way of doing things include not having end-of-year examinations for those in Primary 1 and 2, alternative assessments, which include character development, and a more holistic education with an emphasis on sports and the arts. Such a move will invariably worry students, parents and teachers who are used to the established form of schooling. But if letters to forums in the popular press are any indication, it will draw support as well.

A departure from the established form of schooling is to be expected if we are to prepare our children for the present and for the future. So what might Classroom 2.0 look like? How might educators teach and students learn tomorrow?

The classroom of the future will probably include the traditional classroom, but



learning will not be limited to the four walls. For example, some Singapore schools are already experimenting with e-learning; for days and weeks, students do not come to school for lessons. Learning environments will increasingly include the home, cafés, community centres, places of worship, and even public transport. In other words, any place where an Internet connection is available for students to Google, watch online videos, listen to podcasts, write blogs, or collaborate with wikis. Classroom 2.0 can be any place where learners can interact with their community, peers or experts. Ultramobile personal computers (UMPCs), mobile phones, handheld gaming consoles, and media players will be their tools of communication and learning.

About eight years ago, I worked with a school in Tempe, Arizona, that provided personal notebook computers for every student. Universities in the USA have taken the lead in doing similar things. In 2004, Duke University gave iPods to freshmen (<http://www.wired.com/entertainment/music/news/2004/07/64282>) and Abilene Christian University welcomed new students with iPhones (http://chronicle.com/wiredcampus/index.php?id=3518&utm_source=wc&utm_medium=en). Such technologies become more affordable all the time and parents can invest in them even if schools do not take the lead.

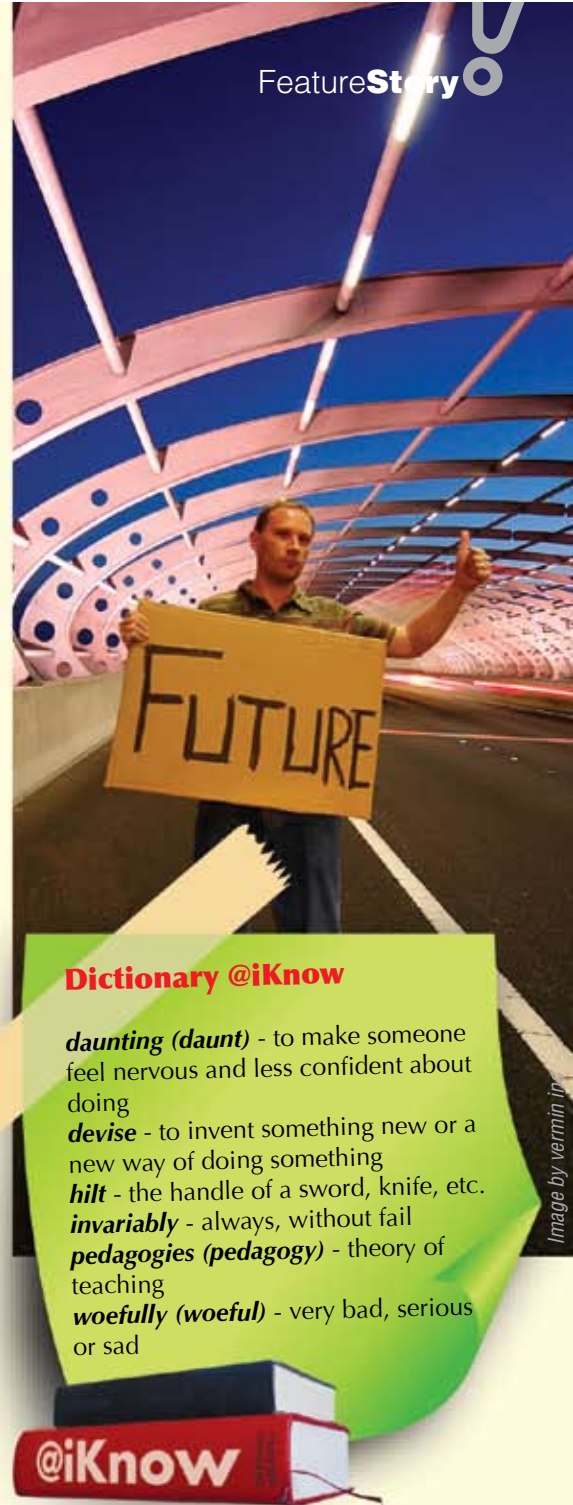
However, technology alone will not ensure that our children learn meaningfully. Teachers must devise ways to integrate technologies that enable self-directed, meaningful and independent learning. A teacher must be more of a “guide on the side” than a “sage on the

stage” (King, 1993). Teachers must function as facilitators by providing authentic experiences, scaffolding tasks, pointing learners to relevant resources, modelling higher order thinking, and encouraging reflection. Students must not expect to be spoon-fed and parents must take even more active roles so that their children are critical and creative thinkers. In the new classroom, students define their own goals, research independently, collaborate with others around them, and self-evaluate. By combining relevant pedagogies with appropriate technologies, learning can be personalized, self-directed, and thus more meaningful to each learner.

We have a long-term investment in our children’s education. But it is difficult to see what the future holds. A child born today will enter the workforce around 2030. Can we be sure what jobs will exist then and what knowledge, skills, and attitudes that person must have? Karl Fisch, who created a presentation called Did You Know (there are variants of this on YouTube), put it best when he said:

*We are currently preparing students for jobs that don’t yet exist
Using technologies that haven’t been invented
In order to solve problems we don’t even know are problems yet.*

We cannot persist with our current one-size-fits-all approach to schooling because living in the Information and Interaction Age is less predictable than it was before. Curricular, pedagogical and technological changes in our educational system have already begun, but these are pointless if mindsets and expectations from stakeholders to not change. Are you ready for Classroom 2.0?



Dictionary @iKnow

- daunting (daunt)** - to make someone feel nervous and less confident about doing
- devise** - to invent something new or a new way of doing something
- hilt** - the handle of a sword, knife, etc.
- invariably** - always, without fail
- pedagogies (pedagogy)** - theory of teaching
- woefully (woeful)** - very bad, serious or sad



Profile:

Dr Ashley Tan is an Assistant Professor in the Learning Sciences and Technologies Academic Group. He is currently in charge of the Media eXperiential (MxL) Studio in the National Institute of Education. In the MxL, he coordinates the curricular and research efforts on Web 2.0, Second Life, and educational gaming. As a teacher educator, he facilitates a core

course, ICT for Engaged Learning, for teacher trainees. He also conducts workshops and offers consultancy on mobile learning and educational Web 2.0. Prior to being a teacher educator, Dr Tan was an instructional designer and distance educator in the USA, and a project manager and school teacher in Singapore.

