



Reframing Literacy in an Elementary Future School in Singapore

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Abstract

A collaborative effort of the Ministry of Education and the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore, the FutureSchools@Singapore initiative is in line with Singapore's 10-year masterplan, Intelligent Nation 2015 (iN2015), to realize the potential of Information and Communication Technologies. Beacon Primary School, the first elementary school selected for this programme, was commissioned to explore how technology can be harnessed to engage and stimulate the learning capacity of its students. Presently in its fourth year of operation, the school is an experiment that will rethink organizational structure, reinvent curriculum and innovate pedagogy while still being constrained by national policy and standardized assessment. The lessons learnt will inform and shape the practices of other schools of the future.

This paper traces the evolution of the school's approach to language teaching and outlines how it intends to move forward in 2011 by building media and visual literacy skills using a Directed Viewing-Thinking Activity with short films as a form of cinematic analysis and narrative interpretation. Doing away with the traditional demarcations of subject specialisation, the school integrates Languages, Social Studies, Art and Music into a multi-disciplinary Media and Arts Channel which aims to nurture creativity, develop language abilities, aesthetic appreciation, imagination and a global and cultural awareness. Using Interactive Digital Media, the students are encouraged to express their creative vision in multimedia productions. In the first three years of school, they have engaged in dramatization using a Green Screen and collaborative digital storytelling with PowerPoint and Photo Story 3. With an eye on 21st Century competencies, multi-modalities and multi-literacies, the school now intends to introduce viewing and representing as outlined in the new English Language 2010 syllabus by incorporating Literature and film into language teaching.