

The Singapore education system was established under the aegis of the founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, who acknowledged that the educational investment was the primary source of wealth and prosperity. The first independent government of that country island was centralized, standardized and prioritized. He focused on education directed towards survival. In 1979 began a major restructuring of the Singapore education system into a system giving priority to efficiency, the increasing challenges of emerging economies with low production costs in Asia Southeast. This educational system "effective" has encouraged the development of a knowledge-based (Mukhopadhaya 2003) economy and focused on learning by heart, on monitoring and guiding students and their ability to obey and comply (Boshier, 1994).

2 More recently, former Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong (1997) provided the framework for many of the educational reforms that have been implemented over the past decade, following the so-called "Schools vision who think, a nation that learns ". These reforms have set the goal of establishing an education system based on capacity. They were supported and improved later by the next prime minister, Lee Hsien Loong, since 2004 (Ho, 2006). It was at this time that the Ministry of Education of Singapore broadly defined "expected educational purposes", specifying the primary goals of all education: promoting social cohesion and socio-cultural backgrounds of individuals different and encourage a common national identity in preparation for their role as adult citizens.

3 The description by Tyler (1949) the approach to the curriculum indicates that it decides foremost educational objectives and creates learning activities and assessment to achieve these goals. This description reflects the educational landscape in Singapore. The national program could be described as normative as it indicates what should be taught and assessed, but also what we value. The education system promotes the selection and distribution of individuals in the occupational structure of Singapore and serves to differentiate individuals and play a function of Cerberus society.

The national program

The educational objectives

4 In most countries, the goals of education can generally be illustrated by "good citizen" (Klein, 1996). Share many cultural values with other Asian countries like China, Japan and South Korea, Singapore combines the notion of "good citizen" individuals fully accountable for their duties in the context of a collective society and give value to the collective life by their individual Cooperation (Ministry of Education, 2006). Considering that education reflects the objectives of the company, the department indicated that not content to encourage each student to learn and grow to achieve a high level of academic achievement, emphasis is also placed on the ability to each to match the family, community and country. In return, Singapore schools must design a program that addresses the needs and interests of each individual, taking into account the fundamental values of society as a coherent entity, while respecting the education policy and cultural norms education (such as the value placed on academic achievement).

- 1 NdT: Game of untranslatable words: the word "seed" means "seed, seed."

5 The main educational objectives of Singapore were defined around the maintenance of social order, meeting the core values of accountability, cooperation and social cohesion. More recently, they also emphasize on promoting the interests, abilities, diverse talents of students, as well as their creativity. During the past decade, no longer focus exclusively on learning the basic subjects, educational reforms have sought to promote various capacities and promote students' creativity. This effort was encouraged by a growing realization that the traditional way of teaching (that is to say, by direct instruction) stifled the creativity of students and excluded a variety of ways to learn and know. These new efforts can be seen in the recent reforms, such as the slogan "teach less, learn more" and the initiative SEED [1](#) (*Students' Engagement for Effective Development* - Student Engagement for Effective Development). However, educators are facing difficulties when it comes to change their approach to teaching and learning, and to move from the traditional passive learning based on repetitive exercises by heart and a pedagogy different that meets the requirements of the new program.

The encouragement of innovative practices

6 The wide range of learning activities in schools can be divided into two broad guidelines related to child development, the "academic tasks" (such as knowledge associated with the content of a material) and "goals intellectual" (such as mental dispositions used to interpret experiments and solve problems) (Helm & Katz, 2000). According to the program design in Singapore, the promotion of school students' abilities overrides optimizing their mental dispositions. The standard curriculum, textbooks and common tests are used to plan instruction and student learning and focus on certain specific and fundamental knowledge at the expense of other knowledge. While promoting intellectual referred students is also taken into account in Singapore, curriculum designers tend to associate these mental dispositions to learning materials, especially in academics subject to review as mathematics, science and languages - such as English and "mother tongue" of the student. Program activities are designed to ensure the success of the school student learning while including them in a kind of surplus value, optimizing their mental dispositions. If you believe the use of a school day time general primary and secondary schools, learning materials governs how the time and activities are organized in schools. Outcomes associated with student learning (which will be explained in more detail below) are primarily assessed through examinations sheet on the knowledge related to the material in question.

7 New educational policies have encouraged the development of new teaching and learning initiatives to support the academic achievement of all students, using a wide range of learning activities. For example, government encouragement to teachers to promote student mental dispositions (that is to say "teach less, learn more") entails a review of the program including the teaching of critical thinking skills information technology, and civic education (Koh, 2004). This initiative is the importance underlined by Helm and Katz (2000) to develop intellectual goals of students rather than focusing exclusively on academic tasks. Thereby, the challenge to the educational community in Singapore is to teach academic content in order to prepare students for exams that emphasize specific knowledge while promoting the diverse talents and diverse student abilities. Accordingly, this awareness increased and encouragement to implement innovative practices in teaching and learning have taken all their importance in Singapore schools, while teachers struggle to combine academic and intellectual tasks referred to open wider avenues leading to student success (Tan and Ng, 2005).

Transmission to learning "transactional"

8 Currently, Singapore refines and redefines the very meaning of the concepts of knowledge and learning. Thus, the model of Miller (1996) is useful to make clear what really matters in terms of knowledge and how this knowledge is enhanced by the synergy of contributions from students, teachers and policy makers in Singapore. Miller said that there are three types of programs to give shape and structure to knowledge and learning. He said the programs "transformative" encourage and guide the integrated learning and include a wide range of relationships between thinking and learning - between the self and the universe, between fields of knowledge. Programs "transmissive" on the other hand, focus on the accuracy and validity of knowledge, while "transactional" programs focus on learning procedures.

- 2 Review of primary school leaving.

9 In the past, knowledge that students were supposed to have were acquired primarily through a transmissive approach, fragments of different materials, under the guidance of specialist teachers of these subjects, fragments derived primarily from textbooks. As logic with this form of assessment, it is expected that students provide evidence of their ability to accurately understand the knowledge associated with these isolated materials. As we discuss below, the emphasis on critical examinations of courses in the fourth grade of primary and the *Primary School Leaving Examination* (PSLE) school [2](#) push students and their families to think they must have the better to prevent school failure.

10 The ministry of education and training programs for teachers now encourage teachers to enhance the learning procedures and meet the diverse needs of students so as to center the classroom on the child. This argument is fueled by the importance of the learning process, which corresponds to a transactional approach to programs. It recognizes the need to redefine the teaching profession, to overcome the culture of results to achieve an educational system oriented process. The concept, which continues to evolve, what teachers mean by learning shifted to the core values of a transactional program design, leading teachers to join liberalist values and put into practice the theories of development of the child. Thus, what is meant by knowledge is hardly consistent with the fact that students are assessed and sanctioned for their learning (what the standardized tests) and that teachers are accountable for their teaching practice (that is student-centered and still involves the need to help him pass his exams). This gap requires teachers to do the splits in their teaching practice.

The "transformative" learning

11 According to Miller (1996), a holistic program should involve the areas of knowledge and the relationships between individuals and the world in which they live, in order to transform this knowledge and apply it to different contexts where they are relevant. What Miller is in this statement applies to recent government efforts to make the country a global city. The government to ensure that Singapore is regarded internationally as an economic and scientific center of the foreground. He fully realizes that it is necessary that people find their place in the turmoil caused by the global context in which mutations affecting beliefs and cultures, if Singapore wants to play an important role on the world stage (Koh, 2004, Sharpe and Gopinathan, 2002). Local policymakers have also adapted many Western ideas to the educational context of Singapore. These efforts tend to broaden the perspectives of people in order to connect to the world, as proclaimed the slogan of the celebrations of the *National*

Day in 2006, "Connecting our homes, connecting global. "" Connect our homes to connect to the world. " However, this vision of the fundamental to learning has some open bites regarding the roles of students, teachers and policy makers.

The assessment in Singapore

Current practices

12 In Singapore, students sit national examinations at the end of sixth grade, fourth and fifth years of high school and the second year of pre-university cycle. The examination at the end of primary school (*Primary School Leaving Examination or PSLE*) assesses the academic skills of students to make them follow a secondary curriculum that matches their knowledge and academic skills. In the secondary, the following curricula "Special" and "Express" students pass the *General Certificate of Education 'Normal' Level* or *GCE N-Level* at the end of the fourth year. Those who do well can then continue in the fifth year and present the *O-Level* (Ordinary Level) of the *General Certificate of Education (GCE O-Level)* students at the end of high school who intend to university may choose the one of two solutions: to follow a pre-university course of two years in a preparatory institution, or a course in three years in a centralized pre-university institute. Those two tracks leading to the *Advanced Level* (Advanced Level) of the *General Certificate of Education, GCE A-Level*. Students who are particularly interested in the technical or commercial studies may join the polytechnics to pursue a degree qualifying, or the Institute of Technical Education (*Institute of Technical Studies, or ITE*) to attend technical training courses. Finally, those who do well in the polytechnics and ITE can also follow to choose a university course or qualifying.

13 Structures current assessment require Singaporean students to study in preparation for regular reviews, particularly in traditional written tests, focusing on knowledge and core capabilities and standardized math, English, Science and the "mother tongue" of the student. All these exams are timed, are conducted under standardized conditions and are almost all of the type "Take a sheet. "

14 As can be seen in the field, the assessment is used by the government as a tool to select the elite, and many students take exams. Teachers and students have a clear and precise definition of the standard of performance for each level of education in the national program. The government decided that primary education was used to prepare Singaporeans to knowledge and basic skills needed for good citizenship. Secondary and tertiary education is based on the expected economic growth and the need for labor (Gregory and Clarke, 2003). However, it is important to note that "while the Singapore education system already meets international standards in mathematics, computer science and other sciences, experts noted the relatively poor performances in terms of development skills in business management and human resources, and in terms of ability to foster the emergence of talented creative and dynamic leadership (Johnson, 2003, cited in Tan, 2005, p. 12). "

The need to change modes of assessment

15 To some extent, this new education policy has sought to move beyond the focus on exams, to gain flexibility and diversity in Singapore's education landscape.

16 Former Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong (1997) noted that the old recipes based learning by heart were unlikely to help young Singaporeans to face new situations and new problems. In addition, the report of the influential Economic Committee of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (1986) showed that Singapore needs to review and adapt the teaching to its workforce and produce more students and autonomous students, creative and adaptable. While the heart and by the hierarchy present in Confucianism and traditional Asian societies have contributed to the stability of Singapore (Low, 2002), this approach now seems inadequate. Creativity and innovation are valued because they produce knowledge that is less "uncertain" and less difficult to organize, conceptualize and measure. Their acquisition is usually associated with risk-taking, a process which is not encouraged by traditional educational approaches.

17 Koh (2004) argued that educational change in Singapore in the last decade have originated planetary imperatives. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong (2004) has actually admitted this when he proclaimed that Singapore must continue to restructure and modernize its education system to reflect the fierce competition caused by this general trend towards globalization. Hence, Singapore schools are repositioning to meet the requirements to new and different times. The Government agrees with this interconnection between economic and educational policies. The pillars of learning and knowledge of the students do not continue to be built in a linear fashion from the interpretation by the government of the success factors of the students and their contribution to economic growth.

18 Singapore needs citizens capable of more creative and independent thinking to respond to global economic change. However, Sharpe and Gopinathan (2002) have questioned whether the education system could be restructured to produce such students while maintaining high academic standards required by the government. To the extent that the Singapore education system is highly structured and depends on a culture of exams and results, it is difficult to teach and to learn to think in such a discursive environment. Koh (2004) explained that critical thinking has its limitations and teaching can not totally flourish under a normalizing governmental pressure. Because a minimum economic growth and wealth are imperative because of the small size of the country and its optimal limit population of 5.5 million, the Singapore government seeks to strike a balance between the imperatives of essential globalization and its own social, political and cultural identity (Chun, 1996 Low, 2002). He needs time to get into high gear, leaving an old world, spawning generations of followers to a new world, capable of producing innovators who are not afraid to take risks and even fail. The following discussion draws the reader's attention to a selection of examples of educational developments in Singapore.

The change in valuation methods

19 The restructuring of the Singapore education system has been underway since the mid-eighties. It is accelerating, thanks to the emergence of globalization in recent years. Previously, the government focused more on student achievement exams in order to select them. Today, test scores are gradually replaced by term objectives and intervention. The Singapore education system softens gradually become more receptive to change through diverse modes of assessment.

20 Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process at school. However, the launch of the so-called vision "of schools that think, a nation that learns" has contributed greatly to promote revisions and changes in pedagogy. Alternative assessment procedures

have been added to existing procedures, completing them. Multiple assessments are gradually changing.

21 The program of some subjects was reduced to 20% for making time to develop interdisciplinary projects and extracurricular activities. Institutions have also been equipped with computers and educational software; they have technical assistance. Students spend up to 30% of their school time using computers (Sharpe and Gopinathan, 2002). Moreover, changing the content of education, and reduction programs have reached more space and time to develop creative activities.

22 However, to the extent that schools tend to teach based on assessments, traditional programs continue to govern how students learn. Because of unexpected results, dissemination of best teaching practices by the "*School Excellence Model*" (model of academic excellence) is also questioned. Institutions tend to reproduce programs "that work", with little regard to the specificity of their own students, often different in many respects. In addition, mutual and beneficial cooperation between institutions is hampered by the pernicious competition they practice to attract the best teachers and the best students. Moreover, parents are not always free of their choice in what they enact and what they spend their time and energy, because of their own experience, lived in an education system that ensures competitiveness in a global economy.

Beyond the boundaries of the school

23 Villaverde (1999, p. 131) embraces many definitions when it defines a program as "everything that happens and is learned in school, the classroom, at home or in the street, so individual or collective, as well as in society in general. " However, the notion of program, Singapore, seems to refer to textbooks on unique materials and worksheets from the teacher, to formal educational experiences in the classroom and in extracurricular activities conducted by school managers. Specifically, Zongyi and Gopinathan (2005, p. 32) argue that "in Singapore, teachers tend conventionally to consider knowledge as a body of facts proved or as factual information in textbooks approved by the government, against which students are tested during the examination. "

- 3 The best possible rating, on a scale of A (excellent) to F ("*fail*", fail). The medium lift (...)

24 In the past, parents were asked to encourage the development of their academic success (s) child (ren) in unique disciplines. New educational reforms presuppose that parents encourage future development of a variety of talents, interests and abilities. However, the problem in Singapore is that the majority of parents is so far from day to have abandoned the rule of preparing their children for exams. As highlighted Tan (2005, p. 7) "mindset prevails that academic achievement remains paramount." In fact, Tan demonstrates that the number of institutions reported tutoring increased 86% over the past five years. It does not fail to raise questions, at a time when the Ministry of Education has been a lawyer for more innovative and creative initiatives in the areas of teaching and learning and encouraged implementation. Khong (2004, p. 7) examined the role of parents, and especially mothers, in Singapore's primary education system, and how they manage their children's schooling. He offers the following thoughts: "because in Singapore education is something that the stakes are high, academic achievement remains the most effective way to promote socially and

economically, parents often take the initiative to push their children to fight for this unbroken chain of A 3 , especially during critical reviews as the *Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE)* or type examinations *GCE A-Level* and *O-Level*. "

25 Khong evokes the high sums Spent On private tutoring in Singapore, Because Many homes dual income and no time-have the skills nor Neither the energy to help Their Children In Their schooling.-have Tan (2005, p. 8) supports the idea aussi That a significant number of the parents of school-age children Recognize the importance of academic achievement to success in Singapore society. "It is not unusual for ordinary elementary school student year take courses and teaching hours at school and reinforced Spends three hours a day to full assessment workbooks, plus two more hours of tutoring ... The state of mind Prevailing Among Parents Is That Their Children must first of All Be Successful in the field of education, not in extracurricular Areas Such As the arts. "

26 Parents are Informed of the results and Their behavior (s) child (ren) to school and are Encouraged to work in concert with teachers to prepare Their (s) Child (s) at the end of sixth grade PSLE of elementary school, to Ensure em a spot in a "good" school "side". Such systems based on meritocracy Helped foster a highly selective education system, forcing the parents to worry incessantly about Their Children's academic success (Sharpe, 2000).

27 The knowledge, skills, attitudes and skills Learned in School are Closely linked to the learning outside the classroom Acquired. Curriculum as defined influences learning Many Students and Singaporean Students out of school. interactions and conversations, events and experiences as well as learning and knowledge of students Single Pendant Their school life are a much smaller Given, much less recognition and are a far less rich soil, ounce Transposed Into the space of primary and secondary schools.

The questionnaire of current practices

28 As expats coaching and supervising student teachers and in service and research and consulting specialists teaching and learning practices, we grant the education system all the respect due to _him_ and will miss No. appreciate the true value of ict historical role and present the exchange Implemented . As Foreigners, we are aware and Concerned That aussi our deferral May OPTIONALLY include Generalizations and Be distorted by a North American and Australian Taiwanese vision - our respective Countries of origin or training. Nevertheless, "any program always Involves definition, redefinition and negotiation" (Teitelbaum, 2004, p. 127) and have investigators working on programs and educational updates on the dot everyone in our role, we feel the need to Log SUGGEST The Following comments and issues to generate permanent one adversarial knowledge, teaching and learning in Singapore.

Reflections on curriculum and assessment

29 While the education system HAS EXPERIENCED changes - The Most recent being white to the architecture and structure of groups of institutions, improvement of educational spaces, Reducing class size, and teacher training (Ho, 2006) - Introducing Flexibility initiatives in the management and media for All Students are frustrated by the review and Maintenance of networks.

30 The Ministry of Education emphasizes the importance of Respecting all forms of talent (Tharman, 2004 and 2006) and to meet all students' Abilities (Teo, 2001). In Fact, Prime Minister Lee (Department of Education, 2006) reported about at the *Teachers Day Rally* (meeting at the Teachers' Day) the importance of Achieving Constitute "many centers of excellence for children with Abilities, Skills and Interests." However, scholars AGREE That program was based on the capabilities Hardly light reflection the reality and the mindset That Prevails Among Many teachers and parents, Many Unchanged REMAIN - that academic achievement, Especially in mathematics and science Remains Paramount (Tan, 2005). How to make --other forms of knowledge and learning, SUCH AS the humanities (literature, history and art, for example) are regarded and Treated in the Same Way as science, mathematics and technology in Singapore schools? Do we want our children to Be part of a society based on Economic theories, or the well-being of man? As Apple (2006, p. 23) shows, "to Promote a market economy, we need to Log encourages everyone to think as year Individual Who acts to maximize icts own Interests." Apple pushes us to ask if we want a system That Works Considering That It is perfectly normal to-have winners and losers. shoulds The chair cultivation to education, and education to culture? As a share of along-term vision of the country and Its Inhabitants, Economic Policy Should Be Before setting defined educational policy, or vice versa? What role can education play in the development of the identity of the student through cultural and traditional norms, while Facilitating creative thinking - All which May well conflict with traditional values thesis?

31 Finally, a recent postponement by the *World Bank Institute* (Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi 2006) Showed That Singapore Should Be Accountable and more transparent policy choices. Any policy Involves translating requests and Proposals on educational initiative in tangible exchange in teaching practices in the field (in the relationship between Students and teachers and in terms of knowledge and learning). However, as in the old portion of the traditions of review, the majorité of schools in Singapore continued to focus on what is quantifiable. In order to change teaching practices and learning the foundations of These practices Must Be altered as well, both, for Students and for schools (Teo, 1999). How do I use multiple assessments to paint a more full picture, a more detailed description of the capabilities and skills of a student? How to make the learning and achievement of a student form a coherent and continuous across the different levels of the education system Singapore? The traditional tests Such As "Take a Sheet" are Becoming less suitable to evaluate-Reviews some of the skills and knowledge needed in a global economy. Moreover, how can schools Singaporean Recognize, appreciate, and to integrate knowledge and student learning in a school environment, Before we build these? redraw the boundaries Can we between school from home? How can we help teachers Implement the new guidelines of the program, in order to Improve teaching and learning and to make work more productive Students?

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Notes

[1](#) NdT Game of untranslatable words: the word "seed" means "seed, seed."

[2](#) Review of primary school leaving.

[3](#) The best feasible rating was scale of A (excellent) to F ("fail", fail). The average is C and E ratings do not exist.

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