



48th SEAMEO Council Conference

Information for Press

POLICY FORUM

“Digital Learning for Creating Future Global Citizens”

7 May 2015

The Policy Forum was led by **H E Dr Teerakiat Jareonsettasin, Vice Minister of Education Thailand** and moderated by Miss Porntip Kanjananiyot, Former Executive Director of Thailand-US Education Foundation. The theme for the policy forum was “Digital Learning for Creating Future Global Citizens”.

H E Dr Teerakiat Jareonsettasin presented on digital learning and how it is different, and emphasized on the differences between the learning from textbooks and the learning from devices. Indeed, electronic devices represent efficient tools for learning and support textbooks but it cannot replace learning from the teachers. Firstly, he emphasized the nature of the engagement with digital devices compared with textbooks, such as the three dimensions relationship, level of comprehension and understanding of the content, engagement of senses, and distraction. On digital devices, he mentioned that the students’ perception of the digital device as being a storage tool, not as a learning tool. Secondly, he pointed out the important investments of the Thai government in digital learning and invited the audience to always consider the limitations related to these devices and encouraged all policy-makers to formulate policies that are evidence-driven.

Dr Gatot Hari Priowirjanto, Director of SEAMEO Secretariat addressed the comment from H E Dr Teerakiat Jareonsettasin by presenting examples from SEAMOLEC in Indonesia where many digital learning initiatives are currently conducted. These initiatives also utilize digital media for examination purposes. It has shown very successful results. However, he pointed out the role of teachers in guiding and giving direct feedback to students. Moreover, digital learning enables inter-countries collaboration as teachers from different countries have the opportunity to exchange their experiences and teaching strategies.

H E Mr Pehin Abu Bakar Apong, Minister of Education Brunei Darussalam then shared Brunei Darussalam’s initiative focusing on the use of digital learning and Global Citizenship. He emphasized the inclusion of new technologies into learning as an integral part of the 21st Century skills. In addition, technologies will support teachers in achieving better learning results but it needs to be fully designed by the teachers. He presented the 3S. More information can be accessed on www.wsid.info.

In response to this last comment, H E Dr Teerakiat Jareonsettasin mentioned about a distance learning project through satellites which was initiated by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. The distance learning project called “Klai Kangwon” enables children and teachers in remote areas to have access to collective teaching in subjects that are not available.

H E Dr Anies Rasyid Baswedan, Minister of Education and Culture Indonesia asserted on the big challenge in Indonesia, which is the access to education in remote areas, given the geographical constraints (islands). He considered digital learning as a real necessity in those areas. He presented the new initiative that is currently being undertaken in Indonesia. He pointed out that new digital examinations are taking place, which leads to more creative and innovative ways of testing students. He also reiterated on the importance of using digital techniques that have proven its efficiency. Therefore, he suggested SEAMEO and stakeholders to produce a document summarizing the lessons learned and challenges, as well as the good practices in the region and beyond that can serve as a reference for all SEAMEO Member Countries. Reference was made on the role of teachers in educating children with new technologies. Indeed, teachers need to be familiar and educated first with these new approaches, standards and instruments with digital learning before teaching their students.

H E Dr Teerakiat Jareonsettasin supported the points raised by Indonesia, emphasizing the relevance of looking at digital learning through the lens of equity. He mentioned accessibility to knowledge and education is central to any education reforms.

H E Dato' Seri Idris Jusoh, Minister of Education II Malaysia shared his view that digital learning as being an opportunity for learning for all. It also allows self-paced learning. However, he also pointed out that digital learning cannot replace some important elements of classroom learning such as peer interaction. Therefore, he describes learning in Malaysia as blended learning. He then reminded that the limitations of digital learning could not be ignored. He specifically referred to the lack of proper infrastructures, which would not allow the proper use of technologies. In that sense, the use of digital learning can also trigger inequality and therefore needs to be carefully assessed.

H E Atty Alberto Jesus Tiongson Muyot, Undersecretary (Deputy Minister) of Department of Education Philippines emphasized the role of teachers in digital learning. Indeed, they need to access materials easily and be properly trained. Capacity of the teachers is central and needs to be further strengthened. He referred to a programme in the Philippines that supports teachers such as the "Learning Resources and Management Development System" (LRMDS) which is an online portal for teaching and learning materials. However, this programme has a limitation related to intellectual property. He pointed out a concern related to the faster access of students to information and knowledge compared to their teachers that might lead to misinformation. He emphasized how technologies have been used negatively in terms of child protection, e.g. cyber bullying. Therefore, this aspect needs to be taken into consideration when developing and promoting technologies.

In conclusion, H E Dr Teerakiat Jareonsettasin stated that all the audience agreed on the benefits of digital learning and that it is important to lay down the infrastructures and foundations for digital learning. However, several issues and limitations arise and those need to be further investigated, such as motivation to learn and the assessment of learning through online courses.

Miss Pornnip Kanjananiyot, the moderator ended the policy forum by thanking the members of the meeting for their active participation and valuable contributions.