

COVID-19 and Educational Change: what has Singapore learned for future education?

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Brief Timeline (Singapore) ...

Late Jan 2020: imported cases

Feb 2020: local transmissions reported.

April 7th to June 1st : “Circuit Breaker” – only essential services continued to operate; all others closed or worked from home.

June 2nd onwards: the country ‘reopened’ in phases.

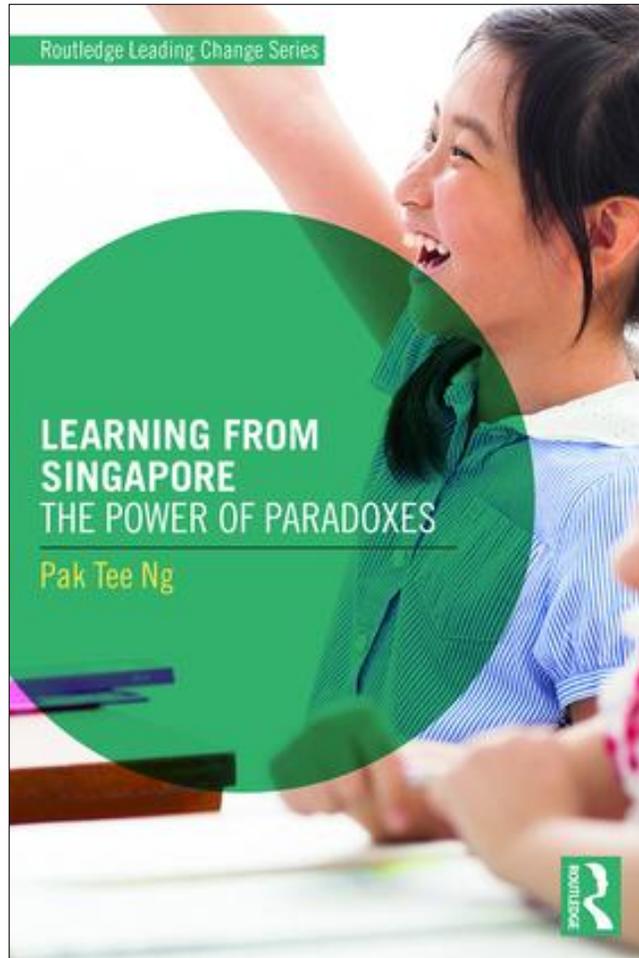
Brief Timeline (schools)

April: “Circuit Breaker” – schools shifted fully to Home-Based Learning (HBL) using online learning tools.

May: School holidays. The one-month June holidays, was brought forward.

June 2nd onwards: schools ‘reopened’ on the same day as the rest of Singapore, with strict safety measures, including physical distancing and wearing of masks.

The Singapore Story



*Learning from Singapore:
The Power of Paradoxes
Pak Tee Ng (2017)*

**Timely Change,
Timeless Constants**

Timely change is about keeping up with the times and staying ahead of the curve.

Timeless constants are our beacons as we navigate the turbulent waters of change.

Timely Change

Online Learning at home...

- Schooling did not stop. Schools went into full home-based learning using online technologies.
- Schools and teachers rose to the occasion admirably.

Moving forward...

- Capitalize on familiarity with online tools - > blended learning
- Some (regular) home-based learning (HBL) done online would complement classroom lessons.
- During such HBL periods, students will take charge of their own learning and engage in some topics outside the curriculum.

Blended learning...

- Blending learning ≠ students learn the same thing in the same way, except they learn online at home.
- So, teachers require higher levels of lesson design and facilitative skills.
- Otherwise, it will be free time or confused time at home for some students!

Bridging the Digital Divide...

- The pandemic has brought into stark relief the digital divide.
- All secondary school students will receive a laptop or tablet for learning by 2021.
- The plan was made before the pandemic, but the target date was brought forward by 7 years.

Expanding our learning...

- Learn for life, rather than for exams
(be very adaptable)
- Sustainability and climate change
issues
- Character and Citizenship Education
and Student Well-being

Timeless Constants

Our unchanging mission...

The pandemic has changed a lot of things. But the mission of education in Singapore has not changed.

It is always to mould the future of the nation. Teachers continue to lead, care and inspire their students.

Change in a steady manner...

Avoid knee jerk reactions. Today, we are hit by the coronavirus. If we react by shifting all education online, tomorrow, we could be hit by a computer virus!

There is a time to adapt quickly. There is also a time to change in a steady manner.

Continue in the spirit of timely change...

It is better to change from a position of strength... than from a position of desperation.

Student Learning Space (SLS) (implemented in 2018) is a national online learning portal that allows teachers to curate and share lesson resources, and students to access these resources in a self-directed manner.

The SLS also provides a common platform for teachers to collaborate across schools and for students to collaborate in their projects.

Teachers, school leaders and schools matter ...

We must continue to affirm that teachers, school leaders and schools matter to the nation.

When schools reopened, there was no violent public objection.

The society trusted in the professionalism of school leaders and teachers.

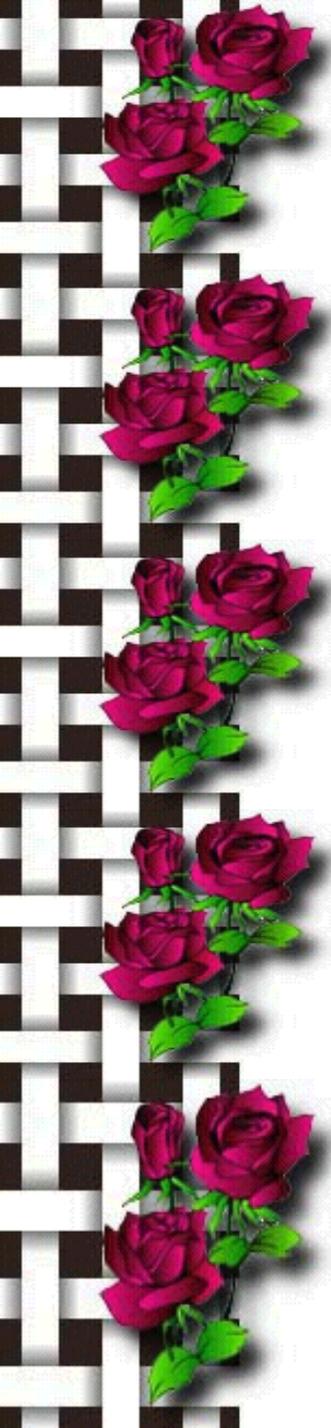
Invest in our teachers...

We should continue to invest in the development of professional capital in our education system.

Teachers will receive more PD support, under a new SkillsFuture for Educators road map so they can meet the evolving needs of students.

Timeless constants...

**In Singapore, education
is investment, not
expenditure.**

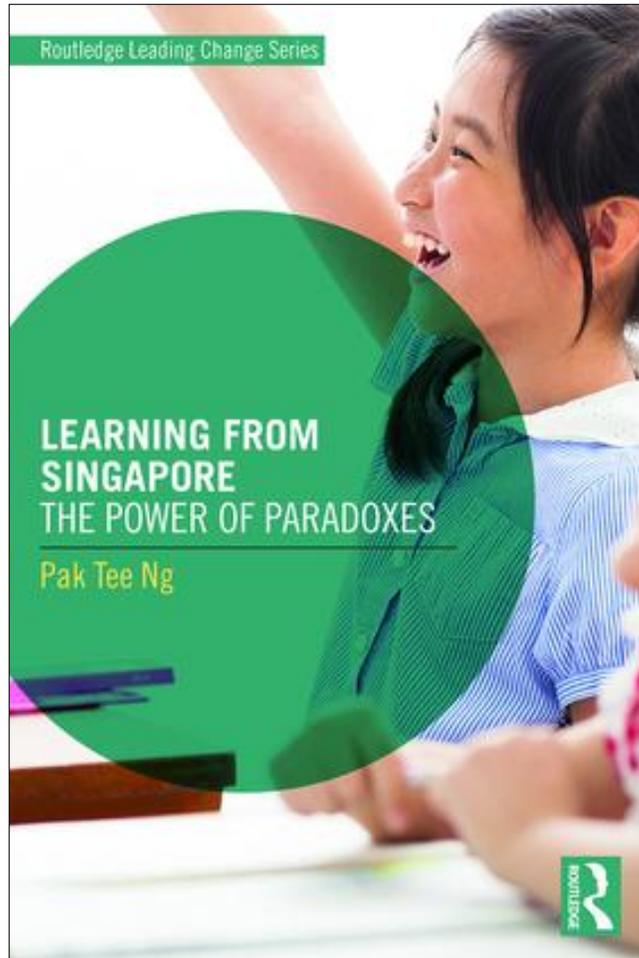


Educators...

People who plant trees, so that
others may sit under the trees ...
and no one knows who planted those
trees in the first place.

(Pak Tee Ng)

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**Education is the
human enterprise of
paying it forward.**