bett asia

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO
INTEGRATING
EDTECH
INTO CPD

EDUCATION IN ASIA: AN INTRO

ASIA-PACIFIC IS THE LARGEST EDUCATION SECTOR IN THE WORLD.

With over 600m children in primary and secondary education alone, Asia is a major education hotspot, and one which is seeing significant interest from Education Technology (EdTech) suppliers.

East Asia in particular is noted as a high-performing area for school-age learners. In fact, a quarter of all school-age children worldwide can be found there. Seven of the World Bank's top performing school systems, in terms of spending to GDP and student outcomes, are located in East Asia.

Asia-Pacific is quickly establishing itself as a major centre of higher education too. As of March 2019, 32% more regional universities, including institutions in China, Vietnam, South Korean, and Malaysia, have made it onto the Times Higher Education University Rankings 2020.

Access to quality education is improving every year in this important region of the world. EdTech is playing a key role in bridging equality gaps, ensuring pupils and students across all levels make the most of their learning opportunities.

With this in mind, it's important for teachers, lecturers, and other Asian education leaders to turn more attention towards EdTech and work it into their Continuous Personal Development (CPD).

HOW EDTECH IS CHANGING LEARNING & TEACHING THROUGHOUT ASIA

TO UNDERSTAND HOW EDTECH IS EFFECTING BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE IN BOTH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS ALIKE, YOU MUST LOOK AT ASIAN EDUCATION IN GENERAL.

It holds many characteristics that separate it from Western learning systems.

Of course, this is a massive and most populated content in the world, with an enormous range

of cultures. This feeds into a multitude of education systems, shifting from country to country, province to province, city to city.

However, there are some unifying themes that bring together educational practice throughout Asia. What follows are the top trends in Asian education and regional EdTech development.

MOBILE LEARNING

High smartphone penetration helps draw together learners in less-developed areas of Asia. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) and virtual-learning environments are key to connecting these pupils and students with education leaders, particularly in Asia's more remote regions.

Indonesia, China and India are amongst the top purchasers of mobile learning tech anywhere in the world and are certainly market leaders in Asia.

Remote learning is critical to supplying a solid, balanced education throughout Asia, which mobile apps are helping to achieve.

21ST CENTURY SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Up to 77% of jobs in the coming decades will require technology skills. Driving 21st century readiness into learners across every education level is of great importance globally, and certainly in Asia.

Educators are doing their best to equip their pupils with both digital hard and cognitive soft skills to get them digitally literate. Online learning is proving a useful tool by providing practical platforms to learn a variety of skills necessary for the coming tech-led world.

EdTech helps familiarise Asian students with various different systems, applications, and software they may be using later in life.

Indeed, many Asian curriculums are shifting towards digital readiness. The Philippines' K-12 education system incorporates "Media and Information Literacy" as a core subject, for example.

PERSONALISED LEARNING

The needs of each individual learner. Pupils' varying educational abilities means a one-size-fits-all method often doesn't achieve satisfactory learning outcomes. A more personal approach is sometimes required.

This can all be achieved by personalised learning. This is not a new concept, but one that has been imbedded into curricula and education systems throughout Asia.

Personalised learning can better address the distinct learning needs of individual students. With the rise of data and analytics, tailored strategies can be formulated for each student, and implemented via digital education solutions without having to hire additional teachers—a limited resource in many Asian countries.

THE IMPORTANCE OF UPSKILLING & CPD

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) IS ESSENTIAL IN ALL CAREER PATHS. EDUCATION IS NO EXCEPTION.

Faculties and teaching staff owe it to themselves, their institutions, and their pupils/students to keep their knowledge of best practice, new teaching and learning trends, and education technology up-to-date.

Technology changes all the time. Its pace is relentless. Teachers, tutors, and administrators therefore often called upon to learn the intricacies of new technological teaching tools.

And, as we touched on earlier, getting used to a digitally-focussed era is a key concern across Asia. Teachers should be integrating new tech into their career development programmes to be able to lead the next generation into the future. This is true at primary and secondary level, as well as for higher and further education.

Upskilling allows educators to improve their career longevity too, instead of remaining reliant on outmoded teaching practices.

Because this is a critical part of all educators' working life, CPD cannot be taken lightly. It does require careful planning, especially in a time when teacher workloads are increasing. Finding time to properly set out and incorporate and theoretical approaches to integrating EdTech into teaching will pay dividends in the long run.

HOW TO INCORPORATE EDTECH INTO YOUR CPD

PLANNING & EXECUTION

FIRST AND FOREMOST, CAREFULLY CONSIDER WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE IN YOUR CPD SESSIONS.

Ultimately, they have to relate back to improving your teaching or lecturing methods, and how this will lead to positive outcomes for your pupils and yourself.

POINTS TO CONSIDER BEFORE SETTING A TECHNOLOGY DRIVEN CPD TRAINING SESSION ARE:

- What piece of EdTech do you want to improve your proficiency with?

- What is the key learning you hope to achieve in this session?

- How do you think you could implement this technology?

- How will this relate to students' needs?

You will also need to think about timing. Teacher workloads are increasing, so it can be difficult to find the time to work on CPD, especially tech-related development.

You don't necessarily have to get hands on for a lengthy period of time. You may consider spending 15-30 minutes a day testing and using the piece of technology, app, or digital platform you want to learn if possible.

Alternatively, work EdTech into your regular CPD schedules by assigning a similar level of time to it.

If the school or organisation you are at holds regular staff training days, you may suggest to training leaders to integrate EdTech into these sessions.

CPD PLANNING STEPS

SPLITTING CPD INTO KEY STEPS IS A GREAT WAY TO PLAN AND THINK ABOUT YOUR TRAINING OBJECTIVES

SOME KEY CONSIDERATIONS ARE:

1

BIG PICTURE

An overview of what you want the CPD sessions to achieve. It helps to lay out three or four objectives, and your hopeful outcomes, i.e. proficiency in VR or virtual classrooms.

2

RELEVANCE

How will this help you improve your teaching methods? How relevant is it to your current teaching objectives?

3

STRUCTURE

Break down your session into an easily applicable structure. So, you may want to only spend a quick 15 minutes on EdTech before assigning more time to other development areas. Blocking out your personal learning time into manageable chunks is a good idea.

4

OUTCOMES

These come from the big picture, but they'll be your key CPD objectives.
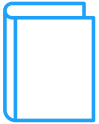
5

REVIEW & EVALUATE

Was it a success? Do you feel you achieved your development goals? What are the key takeaways? Have other areas of development emerged?

TOOLS & RESOURCES

EDTECH MANUFACTURER/ SUPPLIERS' GUIDES

One of the best resources will be the EdTech suppliers' own websites and materials. They are full of user guides, how-tos, videos, manuals, and more pieces of information designed to make learning how to use the app, device, or platform in question easier.

Many also run academies to improve your digital skills in a wider context. Take Microsoft for example. The IT giant runs Training Academies designed so educators can get to grip with Microsoft and its partners' solutions and offer advice on how these can be deployed practically in classrooms, lecture halls or seminar rooms.

SOCIAL MEDIA & ONLINE RESOURCES

Don't forget YouTube! Manufacturers will likely have their own channels, but you're sure to find tech demos in abundance on the world's largest video sharing platform.

Twitter and LinkedIn can also be a gold mine for EdTech education. Twitter is especially useful as you can connect with educators around the world instantly and learn from their experiences by talking to them directly.

LinkedIn can also provide many case studies of EdTech integration, as well as practical advice on how to use in and out of the classroom.

THE HUMAN ELEMENT

Then there are your peers. Other education professionals are a great resource to draw from, particularly if any are innovators in their field. Reach out via social media to engage with the wider community to get techniques and tips on adding digital elements to lessons, seminars or lectures.

But what about students and pupils? Learners are getting hands-on with technology from increasingly earlier ages. Ask them which websites, apps, games or devices they use, and take the time to look them up. This may help you plan engaging lessons by getting to the quick.

TIPS FROM EDUCATION LEADERS

WE SPOKE TO THREE EDUCATION FIGURES TO SEE WHAT ADVICE THEY GIVE ON EDTECH TRAINING FROM AN INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONAL LEVEL.

CRAIG KEMP
GLOBAL EDUCATION CONSULTANT, SINGAPORE

Craig is a New Zealand born educator with over 15 years' experience both in the classroom, in leadership and in consulting. He is an enthusiastic change agent that is passionate about every aspect of education and making a difference. Craig is currently based in Singapore and as a digital learning consultant he supports schools in their digital learning transformation journey.

"Tech is the easy part. Implementation, planning, strategy and investing in time is the hard party. Not enough time is dedicated to training and limited to commitment to wanting to change and grow as an educator are some of the toughest challenges I face when attempting to upskill faculty around the world.

"One top tip is don't do it all yourself. There are people out there to help. I wish I had someone external to support me at many times in my career. Support is critical, so I like to use human support as a critical element when choosing and learning about EdTech.

"I stay connected on Twitter and learn so much from those around me in my personal learning network (PLN)."

JOSS GAMBLE
DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL LEARNING, SRI KDU INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

Joss Gamble is Director of Digital Learning at SRI KDU International School, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The role has a number of elements to it including strategic leadership and planning of whole school/ campus projects, purchasing and policies relating to EdTech and Digital Learning, parental and student engagement and workshops to staff professional development and training. There are other aspects that are not related to Digital Learning as well and include communication and SIMS, etc.

This is a big deal and we put a lot of time, effort and money into CPD for the technology we use. Our current focus is making sure all staff have a minimum of Apple Teacher and Google Level 1 Educator.

Above this, we send staff on specific CPD session around Asia that link directly to our SIP and strategic goals. We have Twilight every half term and part of that time is always set aside for Digital Learning, we also deliver a snapshot every other week in our staff briefings.

Time would be the biggest, a lot of different areas and focuses always via for time in a CPD calendar and making the call to either keep or cut a specific focus can be difficult. Buy-in is also another key aspect.

The staff have to believe that they are investing in something that will have a positive impact on their lessons, workload and student outcomes. Without their buy-in you will spend most of your time trying to get them to do the training and you probably won't succeed.

Why should they invest their time in something they don't see as having a positive or worthwhile impact on their own practice?

You also have to really justify why you are asking them to commit more of their time to something new, a teacher's workload is always high without any additional training, so you have to have a water-tight case. "

THANBEER KAUR
TEACHER TRAINER & ENGLISH TEACHER, KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

Thanbeer Kaur trains teachers on Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in Malaysia, as well as teaching English in schools to students of various age groups using Google Classroom.

> I think for many teachers, it's a psychological resistance. They feel that preparing lessons using technology can be very time consuming and lack exposure, experience, and guidance in using it.

> These pitfalls can be avoided with simple training by teacher trainers, and teachers can also take these tips away for their CPD.

> I suggest:
> - Provide or look at ample and relevant examples of how EdTech can be used
> - Share ideas and knowledge of how to use the technology in question or previous teachers' experiences
> - Provide uneasy teachers with guidance on how they can use EdTech by either drawing on your own experience or use manufacturer-supplied instructions and guidelines

KEY TAKEAWAYS

EdTech training and upskilling is growing ever more important in CPD

Making time for EdTech training is critical in a world geared more towards digital skills than ever before

It must be worked into CPD training sessions

Careful CPD training planning will lead to better training sessions outcomes and higher skilled teachers overall

Use a variety of tools including online resources, manufacturer guides, social media, peers, and students to improve your EdTech knowledge

BETT ASIA: HELPING CHANGE THE WORLD'S LARGEST EDUCATION SYSTEM

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