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TITLE: Bridge students' digital interests to school learning: Heng Swee Keat

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POSTED: 09 Apr 2014 20:30

URL: <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/bridge-students-digital/1064636.html>

Minister for Education Heng Swee Keat made this point on Wednesday as he spoke on his ministry's plans for its next instalment of the Info-Communication Technology Masterplan.

SINGAPORE: The way students learn in school must match their digital interests.

And this is the message from educators, students and parents.

Minister for Education Heng Swee Keat made this point on Wednesday as he spoke on his ministry's plans for its next instalment of the Info-Communication Technology Masterplan.

Mr Heng was speaking at the International Conference of Teaching and Learning with Technology, organised by the Ministry of Education and **Academy of Principals, Singapore.**

Info-comm technology in schools is more than using a computer in a classroom.

PE lessons at North Vista Primary involve motion-tracking games and simulations.

And once a week, students put on devices that can measure their heart rates and activity levels.

During PE lessons, the teacher will be monitoring the students' heart rate and activity through an iPad.

The intensity of the activities is colour-coded, so the teacher knows immediately whether his students are working too hard or not enough.

The individual data is also sent to the students' individual accounts.

Alvin Lee, HOD of Physical Education at North Vista Primary School, said: "We wanted a platform where the pupils are able to monitor their own health. At the same time, this is also a very good platform for the teachers themselves to also monitor the pupils, especially so if we do have pupils who might have some special or medical health reasons. This information will be very useful for us so that we can manage their safety, especially during physical activity."

For the students, this has helped motivate them to do better.

Sharlene Tan, Primary 6 student of North Vista Primary School, said: "I think I've improved a lot, as when I first started it, I was at "very light", which means the lowest rank. But now I have exceeded the "moderate", which means I have reached the target heart rate zone. So I think this helped me improve in my PE lessons."

Mr Heng said good technological tools, placed in the hands of a skilful teacher, can make lessons come alive.

And as the ministry works on its fourth ICT Masterplan, Mr Heng said both educators and students have raised the need to bridge students' digital interests to the way they learn in school.

The next masterplan, which is expected to be unveiled next year, will also need to meet the challenges of a changing world.

Mr Heng said: "We cannot assume that just because our children can handle technology, they know how to use technology responsibly. There is no roadmap for the digital world, and we need to give every student a compass and help them develop navigation skills."

He said the ministry will continue to ensure that all students will have an equal opportunity to learn with info-comm technology.

- CNA/de