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Author(s)	Fei Victor Lim, Csilla Weninger, Alexius Chia, Thi Thu Ha Nguyen, Jia Min Tan, Jonathan Adams, Lydia Tan-Chia, Charles Matthew Peters, Philip Alexander Towndrow and Len Unsworth
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Multiliteracies in the Singapore English Language Classroom: Perceptions and Practices



An Institute of



National Institute of Education
Nanyang Technological University
Singapore

DEV 01/18 VL Integrating Multiliteracies into the
English Language Classroom: Developing an
Instructional Approach to Teach Multimodal Literacy
(Critical Viewing and Effective Representing of
Multimodal Texts)

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RESEARCH TEAM

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Dr. Fei Victor Lim
Assistant Professor
English Language and Literature
National Institute of Education
Nanyang Technological University

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

Dr. Csilla Weninger
Associate Professor
English Language and Literature
National Institute of Education
Nanyang Technological University

Dr. Alexius Chia
Senior Lecturer & Assistant Dean
English Language and Literature
National Institute of Education
Nanyang Technological University

RESEARCH FELLOW

Dr. Thi Thu Ha Nguyen
National Institute of Education
Nanyang Technological University

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Ms. Jia Min Tan
National Institute of Education
Nanyang Technological University

COLLABORATORS

Dr. Jonathon Adams
Senior Specialist
English Language Institute of Singapore
Academy of Singapore Teachers
Ministry of Education

Dr. Lydia Tan-Chia
Lead Curriculum Specialist
Curriculum Planning and Development Division
Ministry of Education

Mr. Charles Matthew Peters
Lead Specialist & Assistant Director
Curriculum Planning and Development Division
Ministry of Education

Dr. Phillip Alexander Towndrow
Senior Research Scientist
Office of Education Research
National Institute of Education
Nanyang Technological University

PROJECT CONSULTANT

Dr. Len Unsworth
Professor in Education
Australian Catholic University

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DESIGN & LAYOUT

Tan Jia Min

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Introduction

Literary practices today have shifted beyond the reading of linguistic texts to include the viewing and creation of multimodal texts that make meanings across semiotic modes such as language, images and gestures (Jewitt & Kress, 2003; van Leeuwen, 2017). While the learning of the English language remains foundational, the sole focus of literacy as language learning is no longer sufficient for students to navigate the complex multimodal communication landscape in this digital age (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Mills & Unsworth, 2016; New London Group, 1996; Weninger, 2019). Singapore has progressively incorporated aspects of multimodality into the English Language Syllabus, where viewing and representing were added as areas of language learning alongside the more familiar speaking, listening, reading and writing in 2010. In the English Language Syllabus 2020 (MOE 2020a, 2020b), multiliteracies is explicated as one of the three pedagogical emphases, along with metacognition and inquiry through dialogue.

This report draws on the Phase 1 findings of the NIE/OER Educational Research Funding Programme and MOE CORE 3 project titled 'Integrating Multiliteracies into the English Language Classroom'. It explicates how teachers have been using multimodal texts to develop multiliteracies, specifically multimodal literacy, in the primary and secondary school contexts in Singapore. Multimodal literacy refers to developing critical viewing and effective representing skills to support students' engagement with multimodal texts.

Phase 1 of the project involved working with nine teachers and their classes of a total of 248 students from three secondary and two primary schools across Singapore. For anonymity purposes, the teachers are referred to in this report as Aspen Primary T1 and T2, Basil Primary T1 and T2, Clove Secondary T1 and T2, Dahlia Secondary T1 and T2, and Eurya Secondary T1. The nine classes of students belonged to Primary 3, 4, 5 levels and Secondary 1 Express and Normal (Academic) streams.

Over a period of two terms, from April to September 2019, the research team observed and video recorded 28 multiliteracies lessons taught by the teacher participants. Fieldnotes were also taken throughout all lessons. Before the first lesson observations, and after every observation, a short interview with each teacher was conducted and audio-recorded. A focus group discussion with four to eight students from each class and a 5-point Likert-scale survey with all the student participants were conducted to get the students' feedback on the multiliteracies lessons.

The findings presented in this report will cover the teachers' perceptions and interpretations of multiliteracies, their classroom practices when teaching viewing and representing, as well as the students' perspectives and expectations regarding multiliteracies lessons.

Executive Summary of Findings

1. The multiliteracies lessons observed across primary and secondary levels showed evidence of teachers planning and applying the skills, strategies, attitudes and behaviour (SSABs) of their students for viewing and representing, within the context of areas of language learning, as stipulated within the English Language Syllabus (ELS) 2010. Examples of the SSABs in the Learning Outcomes (LOs) in ELS 2010 as demonstrated in the lessons observed are:

Area of Language Learning	LO	SSAB
Listening and Viewing	L02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret the auditory and visual cues that enhance the comprehension of texts (e.g., actions, gestures, shapes, sizes) (MOE, 2008, p. 24, 26)
Reading and Viewing	L04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify typographical and visual features (e.g. headings, illustrations, use of logo) Identify text features (e.g., titles/headlines, main and sub-headings, captions/labels for visuals) (MOE, 2008, p. 40, 45)
Speaking and Representing	L03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support ideas and points of view by integrating selected visual and/or audio resources, verbal and/or non-verbal cues...to convey meaning appropriate to purpose and context (MOE, 2008, p. 53, 56)
Writing and Representing	L04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select and use language for effect...through appropriate and varied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> typographical and visual features (e.g. arrangement of text in a particular shape in poetry, letter/word position, line length and font type, colour and size) (MOE, 2008, p. 71, 77)

2. Multiliteracies was recognised by both the teachers and students as important for today's world. Teachers offered a range of perspectives on what the teaching of multiliteracies could look like and demonstrated different ways of teaching multiliteracies in their lessons. Multiliteracies was introduced in ELS 2020 to reflect the expanded notion of literacy. Skills of viewing and representing have been integrated with listening, reading, speaking and writing to include meaning-making across different semiotic modes in multimodal texts. Multiliteracies, together with metacognitive skills and inquiry through dialogue, supports students' development of 21st century competencies.

Executive Summary of Findings

3. Authentic multimodal texts were commonly used in the EL classroom. The introduction of such authentic multimodal texts in EL lessons was considered useful in bridging classroom teaching and learning to the real-world context. Teachers used multimodal texts more often as stimulus for reading and writing, and less often for the teaching of critical viewing and effective representing skills.

4. The explicit teaching of viewing skills was observed in some lessons. Teachers guided students to explore and reflect on how different semiotic modes were used to create multimodal meaning in the text in these lessons. Less attention was given to the explicit teaching of representing skills. Few lessons involved students' creation of multimodal artefacts. This was attributed to the fact that representing skills were not assessed in the EL national examinations.

5. Students across primary and secondary levels expressed positive attitudes towards multiliteracies being addressed in their current lessons. In response to what can be improved, students wanted to have more relatable materials, increased collaborative learning, and greater use of educational technology in their learning experiences when multiliteracies is being addressed in their lessons.

Phase 1 Objective

To understand how teachers are using multimodal texts to develop multiliteracies, specifically viewing and representing skills, in the primary and secondary school contexts in Singapore

Phase 1 Research Question

How are teachers using multimodal texts to develop viewing and representing skills in the English Language classroom in primary and secondary schools in Singapore?

Phase 1 Participants

5 SCHOOLS

Aspen Primary School
Basil Primary School
Clove Secondary School
Dahlia Secondary School
Eurya Secondary School

9 TEACHERS

4 primary + 5 secondary
(with teaching experience ranging from 6 to 25 years)

9 CLASSES

1 P3 class
1 P4 class
2 P5 classes
3 Sec 1 Express classes
2 Sec 1 N(A) classes

Data Collection & Analysis


	LESSON OBSERVATIONS	INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS	STUDENT SURVEYS	STUDENT FGDS
Aim	To explore how teachers are teaching viewing and representing skills	To find out teachers' interpretations of multiliteracies, challenges faced in teaching viewing and representing, and the support they need	To explore students' perceptions about lessons with multimodal texts To find out students' expectations of lessons with multimodal texts	
Data Collected	Observed and video recorded 28 lessons, with fieldnotes made for each lesson	Conducted nine pre-lesson interviews (10 mins each) and 28 post-lesson interviews (20 to 30 mins each)	Collected 243 survey responses	Conducted nine Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with nine groups of four to eight students from each of the classes observed
Method of Data Analysis	Video recordings were transcribed verbatim. Classroom discourse and activities were categorised into Lesson Microgenres (LMGs)* (Lim, 2020), based on verbal and non-verbal discourses. Each LMG was calculated as a proportion of the entire lesson duration and represented on bar charts.	Interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded based on thematic analysis: (1) Deductive coding [^] (2) Inductive, emergent coding ^{^^}	Students' responses on Likert scale questions were analysed numerically and represented on bar charts for each school. Survey results from primary and secondary respondents were compared.	FGDs were transcribed verbatim and coded based on thematic analysis: (1) Deductive coding [^] (2) Inductive, emergent coding ^{^^}

*Lesson Microgenres: segments of a lesson categorised based on the nature of the verbal and non-verbal discourse, e.g. Discourse on Instructions, Discourse on Content.

[^]Deductive coding: pre-defined themes and categories of interest to the current study, that are assigned to the data

^{^^}Inductive coding: common/similar themes and categories that emerge from multiple readings of the data

Overview of Findings from Phase 1



Teachers'
Perceptions of
Teaching
Multiliteracies

(1A) Beliefs
(1B) Interpretations
(1C) Challenges
(1D) Support
(1E) Importance

(2A) Resources
(2B) Teaching Viewing
(2C) Teaching Representing
(2D) Collaborative Learning
(2E) Educational Technology



Classroom
Practices



Students'
Perspectives on
Learning
Multiliteracies

(3A) Responses
(3B) Perceptions
(3C) Expectations



(1A) Consensus on the importance of multiliteracies among teachers

All the teachers participating in the project agreed that it was important to teach multiliteracies to meet (i) today's communicative needs, (ii) future job demands and (iii) syllabus requirements.

(i) Most teachers observed that students were now exposed to various types of texts in which different modes of communication were used in combination to convey meaning.

"[Students] go onto videos and...there's the sound, the music, and animation, and [other elements]."

–Aspen Pri T1

"[In] our world nowadays, it's not just about written words all the time. We also have signboards and advertisements...[students] are also more exposed to videos...it's important to get them to notice...the music used and the sounds in the videos, the colours, and so on. So, I think it's really important to expose them to [multiliteracies]."

–Aspen Pri T2

"[There] is a need for...the exposure...because it's not just text-based now...there are many other [types of] media that we can [make use of]."

–Basil Pri T1

"I think multiliteracies is really important in the current times, because students are already exploring videos, podcasts, and [different multimodal texts], so I think [it is important] to teach them how to critically use and access these sources."

–Clove Sec T2

"Definitely important to teach multiliteracies in class because...students are exposed to a lot of information on the social media and even in their day-to-day lives."

–Dahlia Sec T1



(1A) Consensus on the importance of multiliteracies among teachers

(ii) One teacher perceived the teaching of multiliteracies as a way to prepare students for the future workplace.

"[Given] the demands of the 21st century workplace, it's important not just to consume it [multimodal texts] correctly, but also to produce it effectively."

–Clove Sec T1

(iii) Teachers also cited the need to meet syllabus requirements as a practical reason for teaching multiliteracies.

"Since 2010, there have been shifts in the exam questions...exam questions do have an impact on how we teach. So, because of the introduction of the visual text in [the national examinations], I have been teaching students how to, for example, look at a multimodal text [by analysing the] visual and linguistic [modes]."

–Clove Sec T1



(1B) Interpretations of multiliteracies

Teachers expressed a range of understandings of multiliteracies and placed emphasis on different aspects of it.

(i) Multiliteracies involves teaching students critical viewing skills.

"[Students] are not just watching the video blindly...it's almost like practical criticism."

–Aspen Pri T1

"[We] need to teach them how to be discerning students, to know what are the different messages that are being conveyed...when they see certain visuals or...different types of texts, whether it's in word form, or if it's an image, or a poster, or an advertisement."

–Dahlia Sec T1

"I was thinking more of the teaching of connections – like how they view different things – [this] is more important, because...students will need to view these [things] critically."

–Dahlia Sec T2



(1B) Interpretations of multiliteracies

(ii) Multiliteracies involves teaching students to recognise perspectives.

"[We] want to expose them to...different texts, different authors' purpose [and] different perspectives."

-Basil Pri T1

"[Multiliteracies is] about teaching students to recognise different perspectives [so that] they don't just consume a text superficially. There are many, many points of view that they can take; there are many perspectives."

-Basil Pri T2

"Multiliteracies pushes us to consider why the text was produced, in what kind of contexts, so we're back to purpose, audience and context...On top of that, we're looking at how persuasive texts work."

-Clove Sec T1



(1C) Challenges in teaching viewing and representing skills

(i) Some teachers highlighted that viewing and representing were relatively new areas of language learning.

"[Multiliteracies] is also something new to all of us."

–Aspen Pri T2

"It's something new, it's something fresh [and] because of the impromptu-ness of multiliteracies in this age, you kind of just figure your way out in the dark and...trial and test a few things."

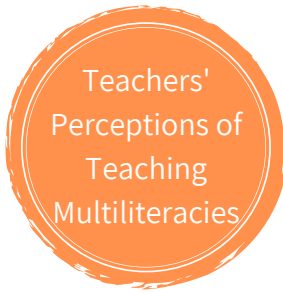
–Basil Pri T2

"Multiliteracies has been around since 2010, but because it [has] become...a new emphasis in 2020...I think it's important that we sharpen how we understand [a given] multimodal text and how we teach it."

–Clove Sec T1

"We are trying out new things for teaching different components of the English paper...So visual texts, we are trying to see what else we can develop."

–Dahlia Sec T1



(1C) Challenges in teaching viewing and representing skills

(ii) Some teachers expressed tentativeness in teaching viewing and representing skills.

"I find it difficult because it's like, where do I start? What am I looking at? So, when you're telling me [about] semiotic modes—it's very new to me."

–Aspen Pri T1

"[You] don't have a reference...to base your lessons on."

–Basil Pri T2

"I think it was a stretch for teachers to just understand multimodal texts for ourselves."

–Clove Sec T1

"[How] do we weave the metalanguage and all the different foci [together]? [We] are very new to this whole idea of the three foci [i.e. the three pedagogical emphases in ELS 2020]."

–Dahlia Sec T1



(1C) Challenges in teaching viewing and representing skills

(iii) Some teachers expressed concern on how best to help their students learn multiliteracies.

"I find [teaching multiliteracies] very difficult because sometimes, I get it in my head, but how do I articulate it to the children?"

–Aspen Pri T1

"[Students] are not able to express themselves from different points of view as well... because after all, they are only eight, nine, ten. [So], it's very difficult...to get them to see different people's points of view, get them to express themselves, get them to articulate."

–Basil Pri T1

"You really have to consider [the students'] points of view...where their level of maturity [is, and] what's the best method to deliver this kind of lesson?"

- Basil Pri T2

"[For] multiliteracies, the meanings that are produced are more complex, so, it's just more difficult for the students to grasp the meanings. A lot of students, especially my [weaker] students, they actually find it very difficult to even comprehend what the text is [about]."

–Dahlia Sec T2

"I'm just more concerned about the ideas that I'm [teaching], because some concepts can be quite abstract. And for them...they may not be able to see a lot of inferences and the deeper meaning of what the visual text is...trying to express."

–Eurya Sec T1



(1C) Challenges in teaching viewing and representing skills

(iv) Some teachers had difficulties in finding suitable resources.

"I would do this [teaching the viewing skill] with the [curricular] texts, but the [curricular] texts have more text than pictures."

–Aspen Pri
T1

"[It] is not easy to find authentic texts, and we have to go through the process of editing it, because some of the language is not suitable."

–Clove Sec
T2

(v) Some teachers admitted that they do not spend as much time on viewing and representing compared to other areas of language learning.

"I'm accountable for [helping students develop and] beef up their writing...so [multiliteracies] is just part of a little lesson...we learnt this from reading this picture book. This is how we're going to...enrich your language learning...I think it should also be about [improving students' writing and language skills]."

–Aspen Pri T1

"[The visual text component in the EL paper has low overall weighting], so, we don't spend too much time on it."

–Dahlia Sec T2



(1D) Support required to teach viewing and representing skills

(i) Teachers requested that more guidance be provided on how to teach viewing and representing effectively.

"I've been groping around in the dark for a year, [wondering] whether we are on the right track...[It] would be very good if there's support and resources."

–Basil Pri T2

"I think...professional development [is] very important."

–Clove Sec T1

"[There] are so many things we want to explore and we don't know where to start... [we are hoping to know] what else we can do to teach multiliteracies in our class."

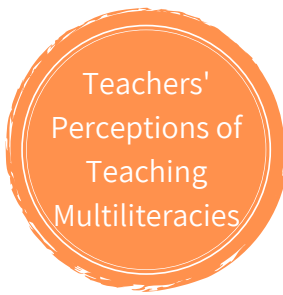
–Dahlia Sec T1

"[It] will be useful if there [was] more guidance...At least we know...what is being expected [in the new syllabus]."

–Dahlia Sec T2

"[Educational researchers] can come to help us to [develop]...a more appropriate way [to teach multiliteracies]...I think that will really help."

–Eurya Sec T1



(1D) Support required to teach viewing and representing skills

(ii) Teachers requested for more resources to teach viewing and representing.

"I would also like...teaching ideas to go with this book...[What] am I looking at when I'm teaching this book? [For example, having a] list of [guiding] questions [would help]."

–Aspen Pri T1

"We would love to have resources."

–Dahlia Sec T1

"Perhaps it's...the selection of resources [that we need help with], because there's such a wide range of resources...[We] also need a little bit of support...to get relevant [resources]...that will boost up [what] we have currently."

–Eurya Sec T1



(1E) Importance of multiliteracies signalled in the exams

Teachers accorded importance to viewing and representing skills by their assigned weighting in the national examinations.

"[But] I also need to take note...you do have a syllabus to finish...the exams are based on [language]."

–Aspen Pri T1

"Because of the introduction of the visual text in [the national examinations], I have been teaching students how to, for example, look at a multimodal text...how to make sense of that, how to see if the meanings cohere, whether they multiply, and to answer some simple questions."

–Clove Sec T1

"[If students] can analyse the images and the visual texts more effectively, it will definitely help them in answering the [exam] questions more accurately as well."

–Dahlia Sec T1

"[With] the current syllabus as well...when you have too much focus on visual texts, we have to realise that [it has low weighting], so, we don't spend too much time on it."

–Dahlia Sec T2



Teachers' interpretations of multiliteracies: Overview of all 28 lessons observed in Phase 1

When the teachers were asked to demonstrate a multiliteracies lesson, the following were observed:

CLASSROOM PRACTICES	NO. OF LESSONS	PROPORTION
With authentic multimodal texts	25	89%
With viewing activities in class	25	89%
With teaching viewing of multimodal texts	14	50%
With representing activities in class	5	18%
With representing activities as homework	5	18%
With teaching representing with multimodal texts	2	7%
With slides and visualisers	28	100%
With digital resources/online platforms**	11	39%
With students' group work (>15% of lesson time)	12	43%

**incl. the Student Learning Space (SLS), Kahoot!, Google Earth, Padlet



(2A) Authentic multimodal texts were used in most lessons.

Among the 28 lessons observed, 25 lessons (89%) made use of authentic multimodal texts as teaching-learning resources. These included picture books, news articles, YouTube videos, posters, print advertisements and commercials. The students were thus exposed to a variety of multimodal communication in the classroom.

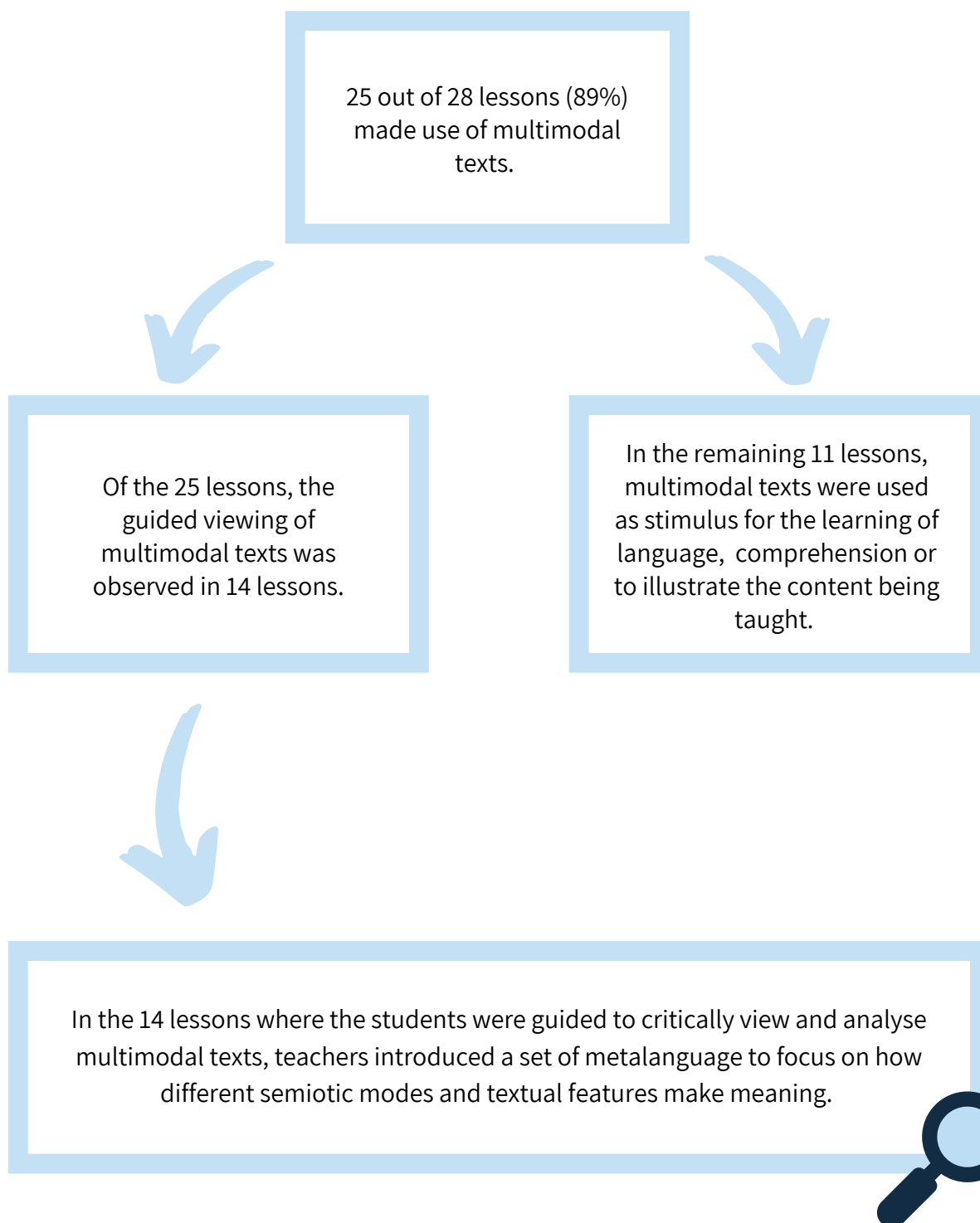
From the student survey results, more than 80% of both primary and secondary students corroborated that multimodal texts were used in their EL lessons.

SURVEY QUESTION	% OF STUDENTS WHO AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED
We use multimodal texts in our English lessons.	84% (Pri) 82% (Sec)



Classroom
Practices

(2B) Viewing skills were explicitly taught in some lessons.





(2C) Representing skills received less attention compared to viewing skills.

More emphasis was placed on viewing skills than representing skills. While guided viewing was taught in 14 observed lessons, five lessons included representing tasks in the form of in-class artefact-creation activities, where the students created posters, drew pictures and performed short skits. Of these, two lessons contained the explicit teaching of representing skills by the teachers. Another five lessons assigned representing tasks as homework.

14 lessons with guided viewing

VS.

5 lessons with representing task as classwork
5 lessons with representing task as homework

Greater emphasis on viewing than representing was also reflected in the students' survey responses.

SURVEY QUESTION	% OF STUDENTS WHO AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED
I learnt how to analyse multimodal texts in my EL lessons.	80% (Pri) 90% (Sec)
I learnt how to create multimodal texts in my EL lessons.	72% (Pri) 54% (Sec)



(2C) Representing skills received less attention compared to viewing skills.

Some teachers shared that representing skills would be taught later, at a higher level.

"[We] ended off [the lesson] with the creation of a poster, [and the students had] to explain to me the visual part, the literal part, and how they [made] use of all that...But that's, I think, more suitable for a Sec 3 class."

–Dahlia Sec T2

Some teachers shared that the lesson package that their EL department was using did not include the teaching of representing skills. Some teachers decided to include the artefact-making activities in subsequent lesson observations.

"For Primary 5, we have not thought about [the representing task], but I can see if I can fit it into one of the extension activities."

–Aspen Pri
T2

"[Representing tasks are] not in the package, but I can come up with something."

–Eurya Sec
T1

Among the ten lessons that included some form of representing tasks, the research team observed that there was minimal explicit teaching of representing skills.

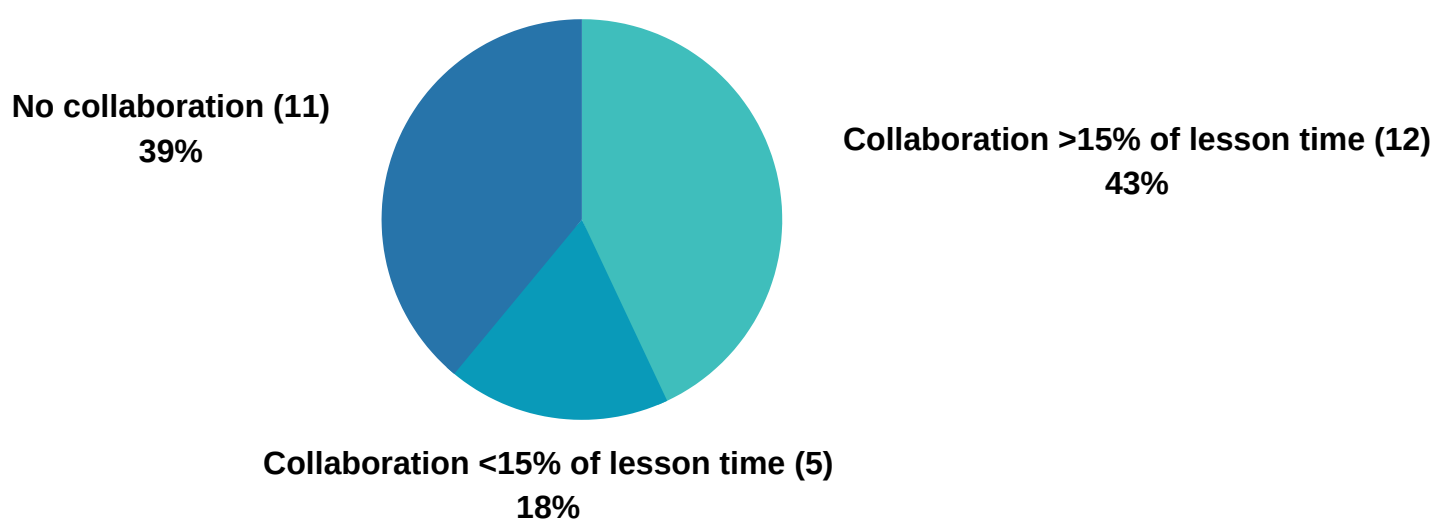
"[Some] of them may not...have that skill. They may be writing emails, but they may not have learnt [how] to insert pictures."

–Eurya Sec T1



(2D) Some lessons used collaborative learning.

12 out of 28 lessons (43%) made use of collaborative activities for more than 15% of lesson time. Five other lessons made use of collaboration but for less than 15% of lesson time.



From the interviews with the teachers and FGDs with the students, we received mixed opinions on collaborative learning.





(2D) Some lessons used collaborative learning.

Teachers' views on collaboration



Teacher's beliefs

"I am very into collaborative work...I like them to work in groups [because] they are sort of helping each other."

-Aspen Pri
T2

Peer support

"They are not very confident writers...when you ask them to [work] independently, they have that fear...letting them [work] in pairs, they will feel more secure. Then, they will be more willing to write."

-Basil Pri
T1

Efficiency

"[Many] hands make light work... [Once] they come together, perhaps more ideas will be generated. There will be greater synergy of ideas and perhaps new ideas even. So, it would be good if they can come together and really do more [as a group]."

-Eurya Sec
T1



Teacher's beliefs

"[The] teacher's task is to [facilitate] meaningful collaboration and choose the right platforms and affordances for that to happen...but collaboration, like differentiating instruction, doesn't need to happen all the time. It's...whether it's meaningful, whether it's going to be useful in helping students learn better."

-Clove Sec
T1

Student readiness

"[Sometimes with] group work...you will get people who don't really share, and then you miss out on those responses."

-Dahlia Sec
T1

Time constraint

"It does [take up] a lot of time. Because for group work, they tend to get super distracted...So, I realise that work doesn't really get done. So, with this class, I tend to do less group work."

-Dahlia Sec
T2



(2D) Some lessons used collaborative learning.

Students' views on collaboration



For the students who were in favour of collaboration, group work allowed them to "help each other learn", "share ideas", "spot each other's mistakes", "help each other out with the mistake", and "divide the work" to make the task more manageable. Group work also kept them more engaged in class.



On the flip side, a few students disliked group work because they found their group members to be at times disruptive, distracting and uncooperative.

Overall, the survey results showed that both primary and secondary students wanted to have more group work in their EL lessons with multimodal texts.

SURVEY QUESTION	% OF STUDENTS WHO AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED
I want to have more EL lessons that let me work in pairs or groups to discuss multimodal texts.	85% (Pri) 83% (Sec)



(2E) Educational technology was used to varying extents in all classes.



- All classrooms observed were well-equipped with reliable Internet connection, projectors, visualisers and laptops with which the teachers used PowerPoint slides to conduct their lessons.
- The students also made use of devices such as tablets, laptops and their own mobile phones in 11 of the lessons observed.
- Web-based educational platforms such as Kahoot!, Padlet and Google Earth were also used to facilitate four of the observed lessons.
- The Student Learning Space (SLS) was used in some classes. Of the 28 lessons observed, one primary and seven secondary level lessons made use of the SLS.
- Both teachers and students expressed positive comments on the use of educational technology and also noted the challenges.



Classroom
Practices

(2E) Educational technology was used to varying extents in all classes.

Appreciation of educational technology

Content illustration

"I prefer to have...more videos. I think the kids also, just to get them to really have a feel of the kind of devastation a tsunami can bring about"

-Basil Pri
T2

"I think the lesson is quite interesting, because the...use of computer [allows for] more explanation about the picture that is shown on the screen."

-Dahlia Sec
Student FGD
2

User-friendliness

"[The] SLS platform...was bug-free [and] many of [the students] could also do the highlighting, copy[ing] and pasting on their own without any instruction needed."

-Clove Sec
T1

Greater engagement

"[A] lot of things that technology can really help [with], to really enhance the entire lesson, to make it alive."

-Eurya Sec
T1

"I like IT lessons so that we take a break from the classroom, and then we use technology for once in a few weeks."

-Eurya Sec
Student FGD
1

Instant feedback

"I like the fact that [with the] SLS...we can have many responses onscreen at an instant."

-Clove Sec
T1



Classroom
Practices

(2E) Educational technology was used to varying extents in all classes.

Challenges of using educational technology

Time constraint

"[There] was a lot of wait time in between for [students] to get onto the websites or the reading, or to get into even the system itself. And, sometimes also, it's a bit difficult to get their attention because their attention is focused on the IT."

-Eurya Sec
T1

Unfamiliarity

"[Some] of the things I tried first time on [the] SLS, so it does need to take a bit of time to navigate the different functions."

-Eurya Sec
T1

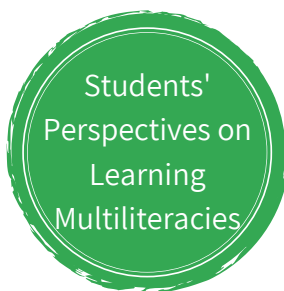
Teacher-student &
student-student
interaction

"I'm now trying different strategies as well...because there are some times [when] we need the students to be with us, to have [class] discussion[s], but they are very engrossed in trying to type in [their] responses."

-Clove Sec T1

"I'm still exploring what is a more effective way of doing [student collaborative learning with technology], because actually, I was toying with the idea of doing group work. But I tried in a lesson with them and it was a bit messy, that's why I changed it to pair work."

-Eurya Sec T1



(3A) Students enjoyed learning multiliteracies.

The survey results and FGD responses indicated that the students enjoyed learning multiliteracies in their English lessons.

From the survey, more than half of the students agreed that learning with multimodal texts is useful for face-to-face and online communication.

SURVEY QUESTION	% OF STUDENTS WHO AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED
What I learnt in my English lessons on multimodal texts is useful when I communicate face-to-face with friends outside the classroom.	70% (Pri) 54% (Sec)
What I learnt in my English lessons on multimodal texts is useful when I communicate online with friends outside the classroom.	56% (Pri) 62% (Sec)

The survey results also showed that the students wanted more learning on multiliteracies in their English lessons.

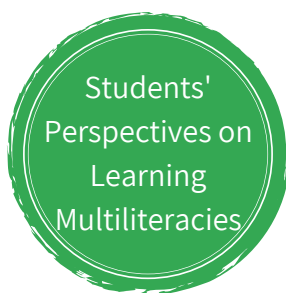
SURVEY QUESTION	% OF STUDENTS WHO AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED
I want to have more EL lessons that teach me how to analyse multimodal texts.	76% (Pri) 66% (Sec)
I want to have more EL lessons that teach me how to make multimodal texts.	84% (Pri) 63% (Sec)

Students'
Perspectives on
Learning
Multiliteracies

(3A) Students enjoyed learning multiliteracies.

Overall, the students found learning with multimodal texts to be "fun", "interesting", "enjoyable" and "exciting". In these lessons, they explored and reflected on how multimodal texts make meaning in different ways from linguistic texts through the use of various semiotic modes. The students found these lessons to be generally "productive" with increased teacher-student and peer interactions. More importantly, the students were able to connect what they had learnt in their multiliteracies lessons to their everyday multimodal communication beyond the classroom, and they looked forward to having more multiliteracies lessons in future.





(3B) Students rated viewing skills as more important than representing skills.

The survey results showed that the students perceived viewing skills to be more important than representing skills.

SURVEY QUESTION	% OF STUDENTS WHO AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED
It is important to learn how to analyse a multimodal text.	88% (Pri) 87% (Sec)
It is important to learn how to create a multimodal text.	71% (Pri) 64% (Sec)

The FGD responses affirmed that the students were uncertain of the value of representing skills.

"[Representing skills are] good skill[s] that we didn't think [we would] make use of, but...in future, maybe when we are working [and if] we are supposed to create a poster, then, at least we [have] some [prior] experience [doing so in school]."

–Clove Sec Student FGD 2

"I may not need [to use representing skills] in the future."

–Dahlia Sec Student FGD 1



(3B) Students rated viewing skills as more important than representing skills.

The students were able to apply the viewing skills that they had learnt in their daily lives.

"I can understand picture books [better]."

–Aspen Pri Student FGD 2

"Near the main gate, [there is a picture] about the [history of] the school. [The viewing skills learnt] helped me to understand the meaning of the picture."

–Aspen Pri Student FGD 2

"[Before] this lesson, whenever I saw a poster, it was...just another poster. But now...I know what the poster is trying to say exactly."

–Clove Sec Student FGD 1

"I...now better appreciate posters...[It's] not just a piece of paper which just says, "Save the Earth". They have details...which help us better understand [the message]."

–Clove Sec Student FGD 1

"[There is] real-life application [given that] we see advertisements all around us, and [learning how to] analyse [them helps us to] see the true meaning behind what the advertisers are trying to tell us [and to understand the text better]."

–Dahlia Sec Student FGD 1



(3C) Students indicated that they wanted more collaborative learning, use of educational technology and relatable learning resources in their multiliteracies lessons.

The survey results and FGD responses revealed that a large percentage of students preferred collaboration, use of technology and out-of-classroom connections in their multiliteracies lessons.

SURVEY QUESTION	% OF STUDENTS WHO AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED
(i) I want to have more EL lessons that let me work in pairs or groups to discuss multimodal texts. [Refer to theme 2D]	85% (Pri) 83% (Sec)
(ii) I want to have more EL lessons that use technology in learning about multiliteracies.	88% (Pri) 85% (Sec)

"More computer lessons, more activities, more fun and [learning]."

–Basil Pri Student FGD 1

"I would like to go to the computer lab more and do more quizzes."

–Basil Pri Student FGD 2

"I want...English lessons to be [conducted using] computers."

–Basil Pri Student FGD 2

"I think more quizzes [conducted] on the computer[s] [are useful] so that we can be more engaged."

–Dahlia Sec Student FGD 2



(3C) Students indicated that they wanted more collaborative learning, use of educational technology and relatable learning resources in their multiliteracies lessons.

SURVEY QUESTION	% OF STUDENTS WHO AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED
(iii) I want to have more EL lessons that connect what I learn in class with what I do out of class.	70% (Pri) 62% (Sec)

Many students expressed during the FGDs that they would like to have more relatable learning resources in their lessons on viewing and representing. They preferred a wider variety of topics, resources and activities that directly appealed to their interests and concerns.

"Because when I watch educational videos, I get bored."

–Basil Pri Student FGD 1

"[If] you [include] something very common that most of us know, like...games, it will make [the lesson] fun...[Previously,] we talked about brands...[It] was fun and everybody was participating."

–Clove Sec Student FGD 2

"[It] would be more fun if [they bring in students'] favourite game or...advertisement."

–Clove Sec Student FGD 2

"I want [more] appealing texts, something that concerns us."

–Dahlia Sec Student FGD 1

"[When] we use Kahoot!... [more students are] engaged."

–Dahlia Sec Student FGD 2

"I would actually quite like different types of texts because after a few of the same texts, [the lesson] gets a bit mundane and dry."

–Dahlia Sec Student FGD 1

"Talking about the latest trend[s]...like Avengers Endgame [and] K-Pop."

–Eurya Sec Student FGD 1

Recommendations

1. **Multiliteracies as expressed in ELS 2020:** Given the more ambitious goals and outcomes in ELS 2020 for multiliteracies, teachers will need further support in designing meaningful learning for their students. Examples of the SSABs in the Learning Outcomes (LOs) in ELS 2020 are:

Area of Language Learning	LO	SSAB
Listening and Viewing	L03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and analyse how semiotic modes work together to achieve a variety of purposes (e.g., a speaker's choice of words and gestures to convince and inspire, choice of music and sound effects to create humour, suspense or fear) (MOE 2020a, p. 36; MOE, 2020b, p. 36)
Reading and Viewing	L03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast meaning conveyed by the interplay between semiotic modes (e.g. linguistic, visual, gestural, audio and spatial) (MOE, 2020a, p. 48; MOE, 2020b, p. 44)
Speaking and Representing	L04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak and represent with cohesion and coherence by combining different semiotic modes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> linguistic, visual, gestural, audio, spatial (MOE, 2020a, p. 61; MOE, 2020b, p. 60)
Writing and Representing	L04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure coherence and cohesion in a text by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> selecting and using a combination of semiotic features such that they contribute to the overall meaning of the text (MOE, 2020a, p. 72; MOE, 2020b, p. 71)

2. **Teaching Viewing and Representing:** Literacy is more than just language learning. Literacy in today's digital age also involves viewing and representing with multimodal texts (MOE, 2020a, 2020b; NCTE Standing Committee on Global Citizenship, 2020; Weninger, 2019). Specific knowledge and skills of viewing and representing should be expressed in the learning outcomes of lessons. Understanding how choices in semiotic modes make meaning in multimodal texts can guide students in critical viewing as well as effective and creative representing (Anstey & Bull, 2018; Chia & Chan, 2017; Macken-Horarik, Love, Sandiford & Unsworth, 2017; O'Halloran, Tan & Marissa, 2017). The learning of viewing and representing, while integrated with the other areas of language learning (reading, writing, speaking and listening), should not be neglected.

Recommendations

3. **Multiliteracies Pedagogy:** Learning activities should be designed around the principles of multiliteracies pedagogy which emphasise authenticity, students' agency, collaboration and use of educational technology (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, 2015; Lim, 2018; Towndrow & Pereira, 2018). Students should be given opportunities to co-construct knowledge through participating in collaborative and inductive learning activities, using relatable learning materials, drawing on their prior knowledge and experience, and connecting what they learn in school with what they experience out of school (Kress, 2003).

4. **Assessment of Multiliteracies:** Formative assessment, such as students' creation of multimodal artefacts, could be designed and used to reinforce students' viewing and representing skills in relation to other areas of language learning (Chan, Chia & Choo, 2017; Weninger, 2017; Towndrow, Nelson & Yusuf, 2013). Alignment between the EL national examination and the EL syllabus could be strengthened to address concerns that viewing skills are hardly assessed and representing skills are not assessed (Unsworth, 2017; Unsworth, Cope & Nicholls, 2019).

5. **Teachers' Professional Learning:** Teachers could be encouraged to develop communities of practice as they innovate and experiment with a repertoire of multiliteracies pedagogies as well as share lesson ideas and resources as a fraternity (Pang, Lim, Choe, Peters & Chua, 2015; Sharari, Lim, Hung & Kwan, 2018). Educational researchers could also work with teachers to develop theoretically-grounded and evidence-based instructional strategies for multiliteracies teaching (Lim & Tan, 2017, 2018).

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Fei Victor Lim
Csilla Weninger
Alexius Chia
Thi Thu Ha Nguyen
Jia Min Tan
Jonathon Adams
Lydia Tan-Chia
Charles Matthew Peters
Phillip Alexander Towndrow
Len Unsworth

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National Institute of Education
Nanyang Technological University
1 Nanyang Walk, Singapore 637616