The first-ever Neuroeducation Symposium of Asia has been successfully inaugurated and the Neuro-revolution is finally set in motion

Written by: Amutha Saravanan

31/10/2019, Singapore

Leading Neuroeducational Institute Da Vinci Group sent ripples through the Singaporean educational landscape with the unveiling of the Symposium.

The overwhelmingly positive response and the noteworthy turnout that the event generated, was emblematic of the public's interests in neuroeducation and the desire for advancements in the existing educational model. It is also indicative of the immense scope for development in this burgeoning field of neuroeducation.
The central themes of neuroeducation were meticulously brought to light by the speakers, with the neuro experts imparting their astute insights to the eager and excited audience.

Dr. Susan Pinker succinctly emphasised the importance of face-to-face interaction in education and aptly demonstrated the role of interpersonal relationship skills in education. Empirical evidence shows an increase in release of neurotransmitters such as dopamine during optimal face-to-face interactions, resulting in potentially greater consolidation and retaining of educational material. Mr. Rethinavel Shanmugam's novel and thought-provoking talk on drama as a medium for better educational engagement and deepening interests, kept the audience completely engrossed. His evaluation of medium-based education in relation to purely textbook based learning, gave the engaged audience considerable food for thought. Dr. Mari Tervaniemi added a new dimension to the discussions with her intriguing and informative presentation, on the impact of music on the plasticity of the brain and its cognitive functioning and development. She mentioned that musical training has been associated with phonemic awareness and better foreign language pronunciation as well as higher cognitive functions (executive functions, working memory, and attention). She also emphasized that research still needs to be carried out to assess if learning music can better mathematical skills and spatial reasoning.
Dr. Adam Claridge-Chang delivered a fantastic talk on one of the highly debated topics in the scientific community - how does one delineate the evidence on different types of research and how do we accurately assess the validity and reliability of a study's research findings. He highlighted the complex nature of research in education and how to improve the applicability of research studies. Dr. Adam actively emphasised the need to find means and avenues to duplicate studies in order to improve applicability and replicability of research studies. It was of particular interest to the audience, especially in light of the prevalence of the experimental methodology in the educational sector.

The Finnish ambassador, HE Antti Vänskä's speech proved to be an enlightening one, as he went into depth about the principles at the heart of the successful Finnish education system. The audience were particularly fascinated by the Finnish approach of emphasizing 'how to learn instead of what to learn'. The hotly debated theme of the relative lack of testing and monitoring in the Finnish system and the
pertinence of a similar approach in our system, sparked productive and varied discussions amongst experts and the present audience throughout the Q&A sessions.

The absorbing panel discussion spearheaded by CEO of Da Vinci Group, Saravanan Manorkorum proved to be an eye opening experience for the audience. The diverse discussions ranged from the importance of evidence in learning methods, to the fundamental characteristics of a future-ready education in our hectic globalised world. The discussion also highlighted relevant issues such as stimulating interest levels of students in a grades-centred system, the future of the educational landscape in Singapore and Asia and educational trends worldwide.
The audience were also fascinated and captivated by the interactive booths set up by Artistic Strategies Academy, EdgeX/KeepCats, Neeuro, together with Da Vinci Group's KlayKit® giving a taste of neuroeducation to the inquisitive audience.

The Symposium made the audience question their existing views on this critical topic. It also emphasized on the compelling need for a re-evaluation of the Singaporean education with academic excellence not just being the sole overriding criterion but other critical parameters such as the holistic growth and self development of students, utilisation of stimulating and conducive learning methodologies, psychological health of students and individualisation of education amongst others paving the way for a consummate educational model.