Teaching Heritage through Primary Social Studies

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The Primary Social Studies Curriculum

- New syllabus launched in 2012
- Thematic approach
- Explicit infusion of heritage into the various themes
  - Contributions of pioneers reflected in places today (Primary 4)
  - UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Southeast Asia (Primary 6)
The Primary Social Studies Curriculum

- Especially noteworthy are suggested activities within the syllabus
- Field-based learning Experiences
  - in Singapore: museum visits; heritage site visits;
  - overseas immersion programs; study trips
- Performance Tasks
  - Toponymy project (Primary 4)
  - Cultural Preservation Advocacy(Primary 6)
Implication

Teachers will need to be prepared to teach beyond the textbooks and be familiar with heritage issues...

They needed to be equipped!
Teacher Education

Primary Social Studies

Subject Knowledge Courses

Curriculum Studies Courses
## The SK Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity and Community</th>
<th>Singapore: Challenges and Responses</th>
<th>Ancient Civilizations: Origins and Legacies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General overview of Singapore History</td>
<td>Geographical approach to Singapore</td>
<td>Ancient civilizations of China and India and Southeast Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migration, identity (self, community and national), and heritage</td>
<td>Urban planning and renewal; urban change and responses to change</td>
<td>Civilization, Legacies (innovations), geography, cultures and traditions and economies of Southeast Asia</td>
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Explorations of Heritage

- Heritage as conceptual understanding
  - Readings and in-class group discussions
  - Aim: enable student teachers to come to a conceptual understanding of what heritage is
- Making the connection between Heritage and Self
  - Idea of identity: as student / future teachers; as members of specific communities; and as Singaporeans
Making the Connection

- Research Projects using Oral History
- Idea of oral history as memory and heritage
- Field investigations to further explore and unpack concept of heritage
Identity and Heritage

- Idea of Heritage as identity formation
- Main concern of Primary SS curriculum
  - Contribute to nation-building through development of identity as individuals, Singaporeans and as global citizens
- Heritage becomes a resource for nation-building
Place and Heritage

- Idea of Heritage as presented through places and spaces

“Buildings are the chief catalyst of collective historical identity because they seem intrinsic to their surroundings and outlast most other relics.”

Family History

- Students investigated their personal family histories through interviews and research
- Present their family histories juxtaposed against Singapore history
- Evidenced by family tree, interview notes, documents, artifacts etc
- Impact on students
Migration History

- Students were tasked with comparing case studies of pre-1965 and post-1990 migration to Singapore
  - National Archives
  - Own interview
- Findings presented in a research paper discussing the concept of migration and reflection on migration as part of the Singaporean heritage
- Impact on students
Field Investigations

- Heritage Trails
  - Based on the trails curated by National Heritage Board
  - Group-based experiential learning
  - Presented in a blog where students reflected individually on heritage and conservation in Singapore
Field Investigations

- Scenario-based Project
  - Developmental needs required the maintenance of only ONE heritage area
  - Group needs to present a proposal for the ONE heritage area they felt was worth keeping
  - Intention: to help student teachers unpack for themselves the meanings, criteria and value of heritage
  - How will they make the decision and on what grounds?
Our Reflections

- Our role as teacher educators
- Emergence of heritage as a theme
- Conflation (?) of the past with heritage