Applying Cognitive Psychology to Education

Assoc. Prof. Stephen Wee Hun LIM, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
National University of Singapore

Abstract

Today, there is an ever rising need to improve education. Expensive technological applications have been recommended for improving education notwithstanding the lack of empirical support for their effectiveness, whereas the potential of one inexpensive avenue has, unfortunately, been undermined. Cognitive educational psychologists have discovered strategies that significantly boost teaching and learning, and yet these approaches are not usually announced in education nor implemented in schools. In fact, teachers often subscribe to educational practices which psychologists have established to be wrong (e.g., massing rather than interleaving examples in explaining a concept). In this talk, I will illuminate, based on recent data arising from my lab, how applying such cognitive psychological principles as interleaving (Wong, Low, Kang, & Lim, *Music Percept.*, to appear), global-local processing (Tan, Lim, & Manalo, *QJEP*, 2016), and retrieval practice (Wong, Ng, Tempel, & Lim, *J. Exp. Edu.*, available online; Koh, Lee, & Lim, *Applied Cog. Psych.*, available online) to classroom instruction is a helpful and inexpensive strategy in achieving a variety of educational goals. Implications for the real world will, in particular, be highlighted.