Education IT

UNESCO: IT can transform education

By Xinghui Guo | 22 March 2011

According to Kim Gwang-Jo, Director, UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, the world has seen three revolutions in the dissemination of knowledge. The first came with the invention of the written language; the second through the development of moveable type and books; and the third with the advent of ICT.

“I believe we are at the threshold of the 4th revolution where learning will move beyond the walls of the classrooms to e-learning, to mobile learning and to ubiquitous learning,” said Kim to FutureGov Asia Pacific.

Kim was previously the Deputy Education Minister of South Korea, and had before headed a taskforce on ICT in education that was responsible for formulating ICT in education policies, developing teacher training programmes, and integrating ICT into the curriculum.

Based on his extensive experience, he has identified certain trends in the education technology industry.

Kim told FutureGov Asia Pacific:”Some of the trends include the use of ICT in delivery mode to increase access, e.g. distance education; teaching, learning and assessment in schools; management and administration; increase use of ICT in teacher training; ministries of education (MOE) developing and implementing ICT in Education master plan; and relationships between students’ achievement and access to computer at home.”

In the current 4th revolution in the dissemination of knowledge, Kim believes that the education ministries should “focus on creating an enabling environment for educational institutions,
teachers and students to optimise the use of ICT, particularly in the formulation of policies, enacting legislations and increasing resources”.

Yet, teachers of the traditional school of thought might not be convinced of the good of education technology. Kim said that in cases like these, it may also be necessary to “provide incentive schemes to encourage teachers to learn the use of ICT in their teaching practices”.

To help education ministries, Kim said that UNESCO is working closely with MOEs to develop systematic and comprehensive approaches in the following areas: education policy, teacher education, teaching and learning practices, non-formal education, monitoring and measuring change, research and knowledge sharing.

The non-profit organisation is working at the ministerial and policy-making levels, as well as at the institutional and personal levels.

“Many of our activities focus on enhancing the capacities of policy makers, teacher educators and teachers, in partnerships with private sector companies such as Microsoft and Intel,” said Kim.

With these efforts and ICT incorporated into education, Kim expects that teachers will eventually be replaced by increasing numbers of young ICT natives in the future.

“I expect the teacher of the future to be a technological savvy, confident, dedicated, caring, inclusive, moral, and globally aware educator who has moved from being a distant sage-on-the-stage to a caring guide-on-the-side,” Kim said.

Source: Asia Pacific FutureGov