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News Release

Mixing Virtual and Augmented Reality into the SPED Experience



Singapore, 21 September 2018 – Association for Persons with Special Needs Chaoyang School (APSN CYS), will be launching the first Mixed Reality (MR) room during its New Campus Official Opening to give students with special needs a multi-sensory, interactive learning experience. The school will be graced by President Halimah Yacob, in support of the Special Education (SPED) sector.

The MR room consists of virtual software that blends tactile contact with digital interaction. While virtual reality is not entirely new to schools, APSN is the first SPED School to mix virtual learning within the physical learning state. Typically, schools either simulate a virtual or real life environment to facilitate learning.

With this installation, practitioners can customise the system to suit the curriculum – without the need for assistance from a third party. Highly-modifiable templates allow teachers to change background, insert text, videos and more to customise activities according to different class requirements and situational needs.

With this system developed by Digital Dream, scenarios that occur on a day-to-day basis in a HDB flat or even outdoors can be simulated which make teaching much more convenient. For example, one activity of daily living taught in SPED schools is crossing the street, but taking the class on a trip to a busy road junction is not feasible.



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This is where such applications enter, which help pupils to navigate virtual scenarios and practice their skills, before transiting seamlessly into the actual one. All classes would be given opportunity to visit the MR room once a week.

The MR room which was partially-funded by SG Enable, has received a warm reception from the primary school students. Nine-year-old Fathur Matin Bin Farhad said, "The MR Room is very fun because there are many activities for us to try out. We can also pretend to be in many different places!"

Such technological initiatives not only expose students to an array of situations, but they also serve to improve their cognitive and life skills. APSN Chief Executive Officer, Dr Christopher Tay said, "Smart options have been integrated across our schools, such as by including iPads and interactive whiteboards within day-to-day lessons. With virtual technology added into the curriculum, we hope to bridge learning gaps and foster a culture of inclusiveness."

Apart from the MR room, new spaces such as a 'Living Room' and 'Integrated Allied Professionals' room' have been created to give students and staff an enhanced experience, in a setting where safety and learning is a priority.

Principal of APSN CY S, Mrs Angela Lee said, "Together as a team, we create a vibrant home for all in the new campus in which our students will have delightful and authentic experience and achieve better positive outcomes."

President Halimah Yacob visited APSN Centre for Adults immediately after her inauguration as Head of State. With this second visit to a Primary level school under the organisation, it further reinforces the messaging that education starts from young.



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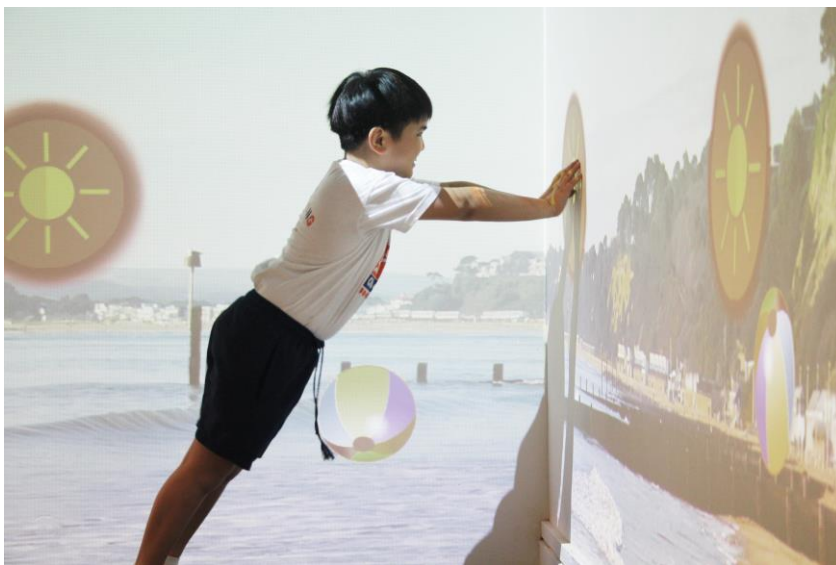
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An APSN CYS teacher shows her students how to locate animals hidden beneath the foliage. Upon contact, a picture of the creature and its name will appear.



A student experiments with Mixed Reality technology.

Enclosed:

Annex A: New Facilities within APSN Chaoyang School's new campus

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About Association for Persons with Special Needs (APSN)

Established in 1976, Association for Persons with Special Needs (APSN) is a social service organisation providing special education for persons with mild intellectual disability (IQ 50-70). Today, APSN operates four Special Education (SPED) Schools (APSN Chaoyang School, APSN Katong School, APSN Tanglin School and APSN Delta Senior School) for students aged 7 to 21, an APSN Student Care Centre for students aged 7 to 18 and an APSN Centre for Adults for persons aged 17 and older, benefiting over 1,200 beneficiaries each year.

The APSN Schools and Centre adopt a holistic approach in its curriculum, comprising academic, vocational and social skills which are important for open employment and lifelong learning. APSN seeks to enable persons with special needs to be active contributors of the society and is committed to inspire and build capabilities of its partners and community to lead and advocate an inclusive society.

To date, APSN's growing database has more than 5,000 alumni members. The Association is constantly expanding its network to reach out to and understand the needs of its members to better support them.

For more information on APSN, please visit www.apsn.org.sg.

About APSN Chaoyang School

APSN Chaoyang School caters to children with mild intellectual disability and mild autism, between ages 7 and 12. Upon graduation from APSN Chaoyang School, the students will proceed to APSN Katong School or APSN Tanglin School for secondary education.

APSN Chaoyang School offers two key programmes – MID General Programme and/or ASD Structured Programme for children within the IQ range of 50 to 70.

The curriculum domains include functional academics such as Literacy, Numeracy and Science; Personal-Social Skills (e.g. Life Skills – Independent & Community Living Skills, Fitness and Health Education, Visual and Performing Arts, Social and Emotional Learning); Co-Curricular Activities, Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) and ICT.

At APSN Chaoyang School, before-and-after school care programmes are also offered at the APSN Special Student Care Centre (SCC) for special needs students, aged 7 to 12, within the school premise. The conducive and supportive environment facilitates growth, development and learning, giving working parents a piece of mind.

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Annex A: New Facilities at APSN Chaoyang School's new campus

When school reopened in January, APSN CYS students were unusually excited to return onto campus and attend lessons. In this new school year, APSN CYS has relocated to a brand new campus, with several new features in store for staff and students.

Here are a few examples of the new facilities below:

Living Room Corner

Co-located with the MR room, this is a place for students to learn independent living skills in an authentic environment. Set up like a living room, pupils can apply and generalise the skills learnt. Here, students practise their self-help skills such as personal grooming, dressing, personal hygiene, simple household chores (e.g. folding and hanging of clothes) and dining etiquette. Apart from these key skills, pupils are engaged in leisure activities and learn how to occupy their free time at home meaningfully.

Integrated Allied Professionals' room

A newly-launched Integrated Allied Professionals' (AP) room was created for the team of psychologists, occupational therapists, speech-language therapists, and social workers to call their own. Now seated together, they can optimise communication with other team members and discuss cases more easily.

Art Studio

The Art Studio is a conducive space for students to enjoy Art lessons. A distraction-free, air-conditioned room, equipped with basic art materials and tools, this area encourages students and teachers to let their creative juices flow. Outstanding artwork produced by students will be exhibited within the studio, to showcase young and budding talents.

Safe Rooms

Located on the ground floor and the third floor, are two safe rooms that are padded from floor to ceiling. They serve students undergoing a meltdown, a distressing situation in which they could potentially hurt themselves or others. These rooms serves as a safe and secure location for the student to calm down, under the supervision of an adult.