

A Study on Extra Curricular Activities in Torres Strait, Queensland, Australia

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Abstract

This paper aims to clarify the role and the meaning of extra curricular activities in Torres Strait, Queensland, Australia. Extra curricular activities in Australia do not have any framework. So, each school might be able to plan/ do their own activities which give a consideration of their students' backgrounds and community demands. This character of the extra curricular activities is so different from the Japanese ones which are within the curriculum. Extra curricular activities in Japan is one of the learning areas which every student should study, so it has a Course of Study and a certain amount of time for learning are already decided and allocated.

Although the extra curricular activities in Australia have much enough flexibility at least on paper, there are not so many activities which contribute to maintain and cultivate Indigenous 'traditional' cultures in Torres Strait. Many campuses of Tagai College, the united school system in Torres Strait established in 2007, hold sports activities, and attend the Croc Festival whose main aim is to encourage the 'reconciliation' between 'White' and Indigenous people. Besides some of the campuses have already started to have activities which improve students access to ICT and VET (Vocational Education and Training). This trend indicates that the extra curricular activities in Australia receives much influence from federal/ state educational policies, and sometimes it might be difficult to have activities which reflect individual school's conditions or demands.

However, when we think that Torres Strait Islanders have had a special request, schools should respect their languages and cultures as well as English and the 'western' system of education, the importance of extra curricular activities which deal with their 'traditional' cultures should be reconsidered and recognized. The Cultural Festival held in the Thursday Island Secondary Campus every year actually shows that the presentations of 'traditional' dances are good opportunities for both students and teachers. For students, these bring chances to realize the importance of their cultures, and for teachers, these become a kind of teacher in-service training in order to know the local cultures. Moreover, because the community supports the cultural festival such as preparation for the feasting, the school would be able to strengthen their cooperation with the community.

So, in conclusion, extra curricular activities in Australia should include the activities which reflect students' and community's voices for education, and the balance between the curriculum

and the extra curriculum in schools are so important. 'Extra' curricular activities of course are the activities outside of the curriculum, so that is why these are 'extra'. However, there might be a possibility for extra curricular activities in Australia to be involved within the curriculum in order to secure the time for teaching/ learning of their 'traditional' cultures which Japanese employed.