NIE RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Investigating School-based Co-curricular Activities
as Contexts for Expanding Learning Spaces

RESEARCH PROJECT INSIGHTS
- Beyond character development, CCA participation can also enhance development of academic learning and acquisition of literacies
- Greater connectedness between CCA and academic curricula is suggested

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RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The research project challenges the marginalised status of school-based co-curricular activities (CCAs) in Singapore. It is also motivated by the state's interest in CCAs as an integral agent for holistic education (MOE, 2010)[1]. While there have been studies on CCAs in Singapore, none has explored learning in CCAs and literacy education through the research lens of literacy as a social practice.

RESEARCH PURPOSE

To investigate how participation in and experiences of CCAs can contribute to the development of learning, including literacy learning.
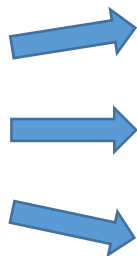
Research Questions

1. How do teachers engage pupils with learning in CCAs?

2. What literacies and/or learning acquired from CCA experiences are activated or reinforced in class?

3. How do CCAs allow pupils to develop particular kinds of persons aligned with their desires, responsibilities or obligations for classroom learning?

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[1] Ministry of Education. (2010). Nurturing our young for the future: Competencies for the 21st century. Retrieved from http://www.moe.gov.sg/committee-of-supply-debate/files/nurturing-our-young.pdf.

RESEARCH DESIGN

- New Literacy Studies and social learning as theoretical frameworks
- Ethnographic case studies
- Research tools
  - participant observations
  - interviews
  - field notes
  - pupils' artefacts
- Research participants
  - 2 mainstream secondary schools
  - 230 school participants
    - 27 teachers
    - 203 pupils
- Data analysis: grounded theory

KEY FINDINGS

1. A range of learning opportunities is afforded in CCAs under study. Learning opportunities can be broadly viewed as contexts for knowledge and skills acquisition, and of identity exploration.

2. Development of character and traits is constituted in the practice of accomplishing CCA tasks.

3. CCA participation implicitly prepares pupils for formal disciplinary academic learning that commonly occurs in classrooms.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

1. Explore greater connectedness between learning in academic and CCA curricula, including after-school or out-of-school organised activities as ways of widening pupils' contexts of learning and of acquiring literacies.

2. Envision CCAs as contexts of advanced, sophisticated and expanded learning spaces that enhance classroom academic learning.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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To visit the project page
Scan code or visit www.nie.edu.sg/project/oer-31-12-la.

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