Living and Learning Together in Higher Education: How Co-Curricular Efforts Enhance Curricular Education and Foster Thriving Communities

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Outline

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Findings
- Pictures
- Discussion and Criteria for Effective Co-Curricula
- Criticisms / Constraints

Note: I can email you powerpoint / references / working paper
Think for a moment...
Introduction

 Authors - Oliver Crocco and Esther Wakeman

 Co-curricula = activities outside the university curriculum such as student activities, residential life, and student leadership programs, which includes service learning, mentoring opportunities, and student support services.

 Research Question: What are the identifiable effects - and potential effects - of co-curricula in higher education in Thailand (and beyond)?
Methodology

- Non-empirical exploratory
- Interdisciplinary (theory, policy, practice)
As Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan (2010) in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* have noted that often “broad claims about human psychology and behavior in the world’s top journals [are] based on samples drawn entirely from Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic (WEIRD) societies” (p. 2).

This, however, does not mean extreme cultural relativism must exclude “basic aspects of cognition, motivation, and behavior” (Henrich, et al., 2010, p. 5).
Findings

Primary Emergent Themes

1. Co-curricula promotes curricular education (learning)

- Academic support systems
- Mentoring Relationships
- Service Learning

- Make connections
- learning styles/multiple intelligences
- 2nd language acquisition
- motivation/purpose
2. Co-curricula fosters community (people relating in effective and cohesive ways.)

- Residence Life
- Dining Halls
- Student activities
- Global Community
- Build Relationships
- Play and Wellness
- Psychosocial Development
Findings

- Secondary Emergent Themes:
  - Co-curricula and holistic human development
  - Co-curricula and ethical maturity
  - Co-curricula and socio-cultural adaptation
  - Co-curricula and a readiness for leadership
Towards an Effective Theory of Change (Weiss, 1995)

Every educational institution is operating from a set of theories about reality/learning, etc. which include goals, strategies, and assumptions.

What is the theory of change of your institution/organization? Of Thailand’s institutions of higher education?

Is is based on research? Theory? What are the key assumptions?
Criteria for Effective CC

1. Student centered - Empowering
2. Developmentally sound
3. Contextually relevant
4. Relationship-oriented
5. Interesting and motivating
Criticisms

- Slim to no transferability of policy and practice across cultures.
- Perhaps a luxury of the wealthy
- It all depends on the quality of programming and implementation
- Involvement is often limited to people who need it the least.
Constraints

- Education reform in Thailand faces many challenges: underfunded, lack of good staff preparation, lack of systemic perspective.
Further Research

- A more comprehensive knowledge base is needed to fill in the assumptions of the theory of change.
- In depth and methodologically sound* mixed methods research on the effects of co-curricula in Thailand.
- Create an ongoing dialogue.
Thank you!

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