Is there a ‘Bob the Builder’ approach to health in Northern Territory Government Schools?

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in Northern Territory Government Schools?

International literature on the purpose of education identifies that there are two conflicting paradigms. The first is oriented to an economic purpose and the second on development of the whole student and belief in them becoming disciplined and self-motivated (Popkewitz, 2001). In 2008, the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians was released outlining the purpose of education in Australia. This document is an example of these conflicting paradigms, stating that “schools play a vital role in promoting the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and wellbeing of young Australians, and in ensuring the nation’s ongoing economic prosperity and social cohesion” (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008).

Understanding the field of education is complex and in NT government schools the interface between policy, procedures and personnel is based on the strong relationship between the NT government and its Department of Education. The 2013 - 2015 Strategic Plan of the Department of Education NT, focuses on both educational outcomes and safety and wellbeing in education, which may be due to the unique context of government schools in the NT. Increasing demands are placed upon schools to address social problems, fix national economic issues and move beyond the formal academic curriculum to meet the social and psychological needs of students (Degenhardt & Duignan, 2010).

The proliferation of potentially competing purposes and responsibilities for schooling, in part, sat behind a successful Australian Research Council Grant (Macdonald, Rossi, Mangan & McCuaig, 2013-2015) to analyse the nature of “health work” being undertaken by teachers in Australian schools and address expectations and capacity of schools contribution to these competing agendas. Research has been conducted on the role of teachers, however far too little attention has been paid to exploration of what constitutes, facilitates and constrains teachers’ “health work” in NTG schools.

References

