

Making Australian Studies Relevant for Japan and the Japanese: The Australian Education System as an Example of How Japan can Learn from Australia

Chris Burgess

[Tsuda College, Department of International and Cultural Studies]

In Japan, Australia is not as widely studied as other regions such as America, Britain, China, and Korea. For those involved in teaching about Australia in Japan, a pressing question is how to develop the area studies ‘baby’ that is Australian studies. Fortunately, Japanese students tend to be quite interested in Australia. In order to consolidate this interest, it would seem important to teach things related to the students’ own situation rather than abstract, unrelated topics. For example, if one was to teach about the Australian education system and associated reforms, it would seem more useful to draw parallels between Australian and Japanese society and consider how the Australian situation could apply to Japan, rather than to teach about the subject in isolation. The result might be a new kind of Australian studies which has relevance to Japanese students. Using tertiary educational reform in Australia as an example, this paper examines the kinds of concrete ways Japan might be able to learn from Australia. In sum, the paper simultaneously considers the ‘survival’ of Australian and Japanese universities in an increasingly competitive global market and the ‘survival’ of Australian studies in Japan.