

Expression-Based Learning as a Starting Point to Promote Students' Creativity in K-12 Schools in China

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Abstract : In this paper, the author shares the findings of a pilot study that examines students' creative expressions and their perceptions of creativity when engaged in project-based learning. The study is based on an elective course that the author co-designed and co-taught with a colleague to sixteen grade six and seven students over the spring semester in 2019. Using the Little Prince story as the main prompt, they facilitated students' original creation of a storytelling concert that integrated script writing, music production, lyrics, songs, and visual design as a result of both individual and collaborative work. The author will share the specific challenges we met during the project, including learning cultures of the school, class management, teachers' and parents' attitude, process-oriented versus product-oriented mindset, and facilities and logistical resources. The findings of this pilot study will inform the ongoing research initiative of exploring how we can foster creative learning in public schools in the Chinese context. While K-12 schools of China's public education system are still dominated by exam-oriented and teacher-centered approaches, the author proposes that expression-based learning can be a starting point for promoting students' creativity and can serve as experimental efforts to initiate incremental changes within the current education framework. The paper will also touch upon insights gained from collaborations between university and K-12 schools.

Keywords : creativity, expression-based learning, K-12, incremental changes

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