



Whole School Projects: Engaging Imaginations Through Interdisciplinary Inquiry

By Kieran Egan

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In this new and practical contribution to the importance of imagination in learning, Kieran Egan and his colleagues demonstrate how individual contributions to a coherent large-scale project can produce enormous results of great educational value. Helping all participants to feel pride for more than just their own individual work, such Whole School Projects (WSPs) encourage appreciation for the abilities of others and enable everyone involved to recognize that all kinds of learning styles, intelligences, and ability levels play an important part in constructing the whole. Most important, WSPs invigorate student engagement and build community within a school. The authors describes a program for engaging a whole school in a particular project over a three-year period and outline the educational principles and benefits. Providing examples of schools successfully using WSPs, they examine the detailed practices needed to get such a project up and running in a typical school. While the Whole School Project is distinct from the regular curriculum, it can help achieve many of the year's curriculum objectives in mathematics, literacy, science and technology, social studies, art, and history. Finally, teachers can choose to incorporate their curriculum aims into the project study, even when those aims include meeting externally mandated achievement standards.

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Kieran Egan is a professor of education at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia. He is a recipient of the Grawemeyer Award in Education and an Upton Sinclair Award.

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