

EEF Small Projects Report 2013

Beginning in 2009, Evergreen Education Foundation partner school/public/community libraries started triage and developing services in form of small projects. These small projects were initiated and implemented by the locals, focusing on the transparency and accountability of the process, and "Project-based learning". In 2012, to support development of grassroots libraries to serve the local needs, Evergreen Education Foundation small projects application opened to Private Libraries Association and its affiliated libraries with limitations.

The new trend of this year is the promotion of Oral History and Local Culture Study among Evergreen schools, after the success of the pilot project implemented in TianZhu No.1 High School from 2009 to 2012. The courses of Evergreen Workshop in July 2013 has helped teachers and librarians to establish a systematic understanding of Oral History, and encouraged them to practice on it. From Nov. 2013 to Dec. 2014, twenty-two small projects were completed by 13 rural libraries (9 school libraries, 3 public/community libraries, and 1 organization - Private Libraries Association). The projects covered the following areas:

READING, WRITING, AND ARTS



Student reading a wall-poem at Wuguan Site, "Local Culture and Classical Poetry Reading",
DanFeng High School, Shaanxi

The Reading project of this year has evolved from "reading" to "walking". In the project of "Local Culture and Classical Poetry Reading", teachers of DanFeng High School guided students to research local poetry and relevant historical and cultural background, as well as historical sites or events recited by the poetry, such as local ancient gates. Field trips were also organized for on-site investigation. Students summarized collected information from reading and study, analyzed connotation of classical poetry, wrote review or evaluation thesis. Teachers and students teamed up to study and write on same topics, exchange ideas and grow together. From students' works, we can tell the enhancement of students' appreciation of classical poetry, the nourish they gain from local history and culture, and their tightened binding to hometown. During the project evaluation and retrospection, we also discussed with the project team of two possible directions to further improve the students' research ability and self-thinking. One direction is to improve non-fiction writing capability, since lacking of historical inquiry ability had been reflected in students'

writings; to be more advanced, the project can further evolve to become a historical research and writing. The other direction is to widen the study from local poetry to all other aspects of local culture, such as dialect, local diet culture, etc. which are closer to the students' daily life, easy for them to investigate, and cultivate their ability to study beyond classroom and desktop.



Student writing lyrics, "Campus Lyrics Creation Room", TongWei No.1 High School, GanSu

This reading and writing projects of this year tried to combine with art education. There are two example projects. Project "Campus Lyrics Creation Room" of Tongwei No.1 High School was jointly designed by Chinese, Computer Science, and Music teachers, cooperated with Music Club. The group, formed with 60 students, learnt writing lyrics through reading the relevant books, studying online examples, and practicing lyrics-written and solfeggio under the guidance of the teacher. They also organized a competition of "Original Campus Songs and Lyrics" and a singer contest to promote exchanges between students, and attract more students' attention and participation. Project "Reading to Appreciate Arts", implemented by TongweiNo.1 High School, combined reading and writing with music appreciation, encouraged students listening to their own interested music, reading its historical background and evaluation articles regarding its development and variations, and writing thesis on the experience and their own understanding of music.

INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

Within this small project year window, many teachers experimented inquiry-based learning in class via small projects. Thanks to the systematic Oral History Training in July, 2013, Oral history and Local Culture Study, as the core form to explore community, becomes even more active and goes even deeper.

Classroom Inquiry-based Learning



Students measuring the high angle noon sun, “Constructive Geography Learning”, Huaian No.1 High School, Jiangsu

There are 2 typical examples of Classroom Inquiry Attempt: Project “Inquiry-based Learning in High School Chemistry Compulsory Courses” from DanFeng High School, and project “Constructive Geography Learning” from Huaian No.1 Middle School. The learning process is to explore against specific problems (such as how to calculate the height of the sun at noon), and is a process combined with practical application (for example, the height of the sun at noon can be used to derive the space between residential buildings). But the problems were textbook knowledge, not open inquiries arising from daily life. Thus it lacked of open inquiring, not enough to stimulate creativity of students. A real problem inquiry may require teachers to guide students to mobilize all kinds of knowledge and skills for interdisciplinary research, and to combine with professional resources. Evergreen schools need to further explore how to implement it.



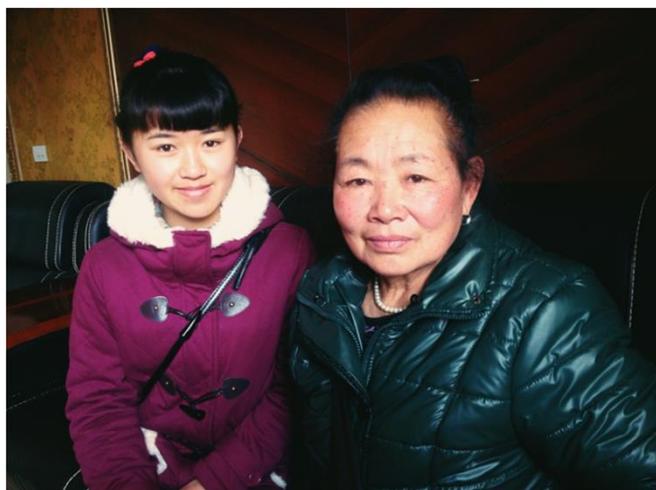
Students in the lecture contest, “Reading and Inquiry-Based Learning Pilot Project for A Class”, Kaili No.1 High School, Guizhou

Project “Reading and Inquiry-Based Learning Pilot Project for A Class” from Kaili No.1 High School is a case originated by school library, to promote reading and inquiry-based learning in classes. 1)

The reading promotion activities, “Finding a Book” contest attracted students, classroom book corner directly benefited students. Book-reading thesis and photos exchange of Reading Club demonstrated that it is necessary for kids to communicate in depth in small groups of class or interest, in addition to the superficial sharing among students at school level or grade level. In short, children should be able to not only find like-minded reader-friends, but also to broaden their reading category through a wide range of exchanges. 2) As a preliminary step of inquiry-based learning, teachers of Chinese, English, History, and Geography explored methodology of classroom teaching, introduced ways of autonomous learning, cooperative learning, learning-through-teaching, etc. For example, utilizing geography knowledge to display favorite tourism site to classmates, geographical knowledge lectures, etc. History course activity “Owner of my own class” performed teaching of evaluation of historical figures, Chinese or foreigners, in form of speech contest among groups of students. This way, students took the initiative to acquire knowledge, practiced information search and courseware making, improved their expression skills. In the future, middle school history teaching should break the established textbook appraisal for historical events and figures, encourage open and speculative discussion for students to truly enter the kingdom of inquiry and autonomous learning.

Extra Curricular Inquiry-based Learning --- Community Centered Learning

Oral History and Local Cultural Study, including folklore and folk literature and art study, and community oral history, is the core of extra curricular inquiry-based learning.



Student interviewing the Dong Story Master, “Collecting Southeast Guizhou Dong Minority Folk Stories”, Kaili No.1 High School, Guizhou

There are 3 folklore and folk literature and art study projects, each with a different emphasis. Project “Hua’er Life – Interview of Hua’er Folklorist in TianZhu” from Xinhua Middle School was based on the 2012 project “Hua’er in TianZhu” which explored Hua’er art itself. “Hua’er Life” tried to collect life history of Hua’erfolklorists/amateurs, so to understand the relationship between the local life of people and their folk art, excavate its cultural connotation. This kind of in-depth interview is more challenge compares to the interview of the art form Hur’er itself. The project team spent a lot of time and effort to establish a trust and harmonious relationship with Hua’er on Square Group (elder artists) and Hua’er QQ Group(middle-aged artists). Through them the team

was introduced to meet and interview couple of important Hua'erpeople, and set a good foundation for more students to participate in to interview more artists in the two groups in the future.

Project "Tu Folklore in TianZhu" from the same Xinhua Middle School focused on the study of local Tu Folklore in TianZhu. Through relationship network of students, the project team went into Tu village, recorded authentic folk wedding ceremony and grand birthday celebration for elder, and produced a documentary. Especially the overelaborated wedding ceremony, with special ethnicdresses, roles, procedure, songs and folk rap, is an important event for folk culture heritage for Tu, whose culture inheriting merely through word of mouth. Researching and reading relevant materials of Tu Folklores, participating in the recording and video producing, had given opportunity to Tu students to study the root of their ethnic, and gained knowledge to cherish their folk culture. At the same time, the project impressed other students with the beauty of diverse ethnical local folk cultures and planted culture heritage seeds into their heart.

A third project "Collecting Southeast GuiZhou Dong Folk Stories" from Kaili No.1 High School guided students collecting local folk stories, readingbooks regarding Dong culture and folk stories, and writing essay. Students were also encouraged to interview family/friends/neighbors in their hometown to tell Dong folk stories during holidays, and demonstrated their collections/works in Blogs for sharing.



Students interviewing retired teacher, "Oral History: DanFeng High School History", DanFeng High School, Shaanxi

Project "Oral History: DanFeng High School History" of DanFengHigh School and Project "School Oral History" of YaoShan High School were both attempting of school/community group oral history. Because of its promotional nature, interview for school oral history was easily mistaken as "news" interview by interviewers and narrators. In addition, both guidance teachers were IT background. Thus teachers and students had struggled, at the beginning, to achieve a natural talking status during communication with interviewee, and to obtain the event and emotional details. Gradually they got calmed down, started digging deeper, and grasped skills to guide the narrators into better accessing state. From the collected information, they summarized couple clues and set a good foundation for both schools to continue oral history projects among students.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The public/community library project of this year focuses on innovation of community education service for children.



**Family Reading Workshop, “Cultivating Reading Habit of Migrant Children”,
New Century Dream Library, Beijing**

Project “Cultivating Reading Habit of Migrant Children” implemented by Beijing New Century Dream Library is to promote family reading in the community of migrant workers. The project provided core readings, reading guide, and a 24-hour training workshop on both reading methods and early education theories. From the reading diary of 60 participated families, we found that most families got better understanding of early education and family reading, and over 2/3 of the families have formed family reading habit and mastered the basic reading method.

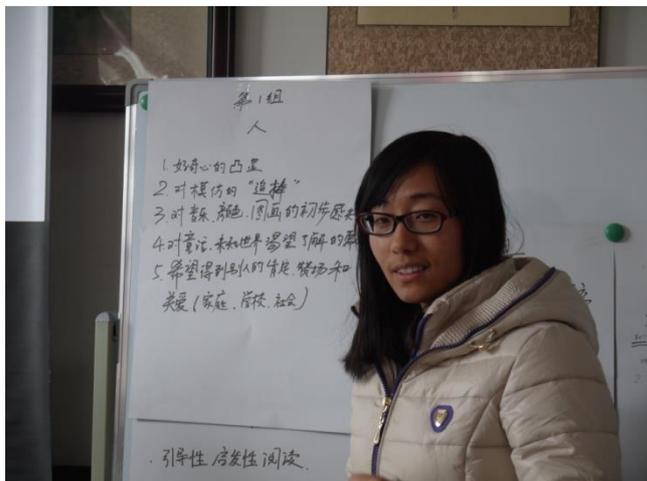


Primary school students in the poster-making class, “Children's Poster-making”, TongWei County Public Library

Project “Children's Poster-making” was run by TongWei County Public Library. In the summer, the project offered 8-hour poster-making class for 30 pupils. Taking environment protection as the theme, every student in the class designed and produced a poster, and exhibited their results. The evaluation result shows that 86% of the students mastered the basic MS word skills, and 63% of

the students mastered the basic poster design skills.

INFRASTRUCTURE, CAPACITY BUILDING, AND PARTNERS



Presenting group discussion results, “Stimulating Reading Interest”, Grass-root Library Association

This year, small projects program continues supporting projects from Grass-root Library Association, the agency supporting grass-root libraries. One project is “Upgrade of Culture Fire Searching Journey Website”. The other is “Stimulating Reading Interest” training organized by Grass-root Library Association, hosted in Beijing ShengXue Rural Library. It trained a total of 21 grass-root library directors/librarians and school principals/teachers. By lectures, discussion forums and case study, the training provided ideas and methods to participants.

SUMMARY

In the future, inquiry-based learning and community education service continue to be the core services provided by school and community libraries, and the two most important directions of Evergreen Small Projects.

On the inquiry-based learning on humanities front, classroom inquiry is relatively mature. For community centered extra-curricular inquiry, oral history and local culture study is relatively easy to start thus most active.

On science inquiry, courses just started connecting with daily life; while applied science inquiry for real community issues had a high barrier due to the gap between high school textbook and the needed professional knowledge and skills. Evergreen Education Foundation will continue unremitting search for effective direction for secondary school science inquiry.