

Title: “Creativity is an expression of the self” – An Exploration of Creativity, Teacher Agency and Wellbeing in Education through the Froebelian Philosophy.

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Abstract

Froebel’s philosophical approach to education espouses the importance of creativity as fundamental to learning, enshrining it within his key principles. Play and playfulness are at the heart of Froebel’s philosophy, placing the learner at the centre of classroom pedagogy recognizing and validating their autonomy in and through the learning process. Creativity is defined as the ability to produce new ideas, thoughts and actions. Sir Ken Robinson defined creativity as “the process of having original ideas that have value” arguing that while imagination is the root of creativity, creativity is the putting to work of imagination. This presentation draws on findings from the CreatEd study to explore the role of creativity in the Irish education system, with particular focus on the possibilities for nurturing teacher and pupil/student wellbeing. The discussion will interrogate the importance of teacher agency to meaningfully realise creativity in school, while also considering the critical role of school leadership in creating optimal conditions to support creativity in classrooms and beyond. Finally, this presentation will consider the transformative possibilities proffered by creativity for shaping how pupils and students experience both their educational and life journeys, through, what Froebel describes as, “the free expression of what is in a child’s soul”.

Keywords: Froebel, Creativity, Education, Wellbeing, Teacher Agency