

MASTER'S THESIS

The effectiveness of idea generating to improve students' writing at junior secondary level

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**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF IDEA GENERATING TO
IMPROVE STUDENTS' WRITING AT JUNIOR SECONDARY
LEVEL**

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ABSTRACT

The application of Process Writing has been very influential in the field of teaching writing. However, few studies have attempted to explore in-depth information of the first stage of Process Writing: Idea generating. The aim of this study is to examine the effectiveness of idea-generating activities in helping Hong Kong junior secondary students generate and develop ideas in the pre-writing stage. The focus here is put on three idea-generating activities namely, *Brainstorming*, *Mind Mapping* and *Using Questions*.

The study was conducted in a band one secondary school and involved sixty-two students at junior level. Students were asked to generate ideas for three writing topics (story genre) with the use of three idea-generating activities first in individual work and later in groups. Afterwards, students were asked to fill in a questionnaire evaluating the effectiveness of the activities.

The qualitative and quantitative results of this study indicate that while *Brainstorming* activities generate the greatest quantity of ideas, *Mind Mapping* generates the most organized and detailed ideas with more complex sentence structures. Besides, *Using Questions* also helps students generate ideas in a more organized and comprehensible way. It gives support and guidelines to those who are less proficient in English and those who lack confidence in writing. Most importantly, students indicated that the activities were useful to raise their interest and confidence in writing.

To sum up, idea-generating activities help to enrich the writing content by generating more organized and detailed ideas and hence, the activities are worth to be implemented in the writing lessons.

撮要

「分階段寫作」(Process Writing) 在教授寫作方法的範疇中可算是非常有影響力,然而,很少學者集中及深入研究第一個階段,即「意念創作」(Idea generating). 此項研究的目的是探討意念創作活動如何能有效地協助初中生在寫作初段創作及發展寫作意念. 而研究會集中在三個意念創作活動上,它們分別是腦力激盪(Brainstorming), 腦圖(Mind Mapping)及提問法(Using Questions).

是項研究在一所屬於甲組組別的中學進行,研究對象是一群為數六十二人的初中生;他們先以個人及後小組形式,用以上三個幫助產生意念的方法,創作三個故事. 最後回答一份問卷,用以評估不同活動的效能.

從研究的質性及量性結果顯示,腦力激盪(Brainstorming)在三者中能幫助學生創作最多的寫作意念;而腦圖(Mind Mapping)能產生最有系統及較仔細的意念,句式也較豐富及多元化;提問法(Using Questions)也能協助學生發展有系統及較全面的寫作意念,它能給予英文程度較弱及對寫作欠缺信心的學生,在「意念創作」時得到較多的支援及提示. 最後,大部份學生認為這些意念創作活動確能提高他們對寫作之興趣及信心.

總括而言,意念創作活動能豐富寫作內容,協助學生創作及產生較有系統及仔細的寫作意念. 因此,這些活動確實值得在寫作課堂上推行.

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