

creative schools

deep learning, hard fun



NEWSLETTER ISSUE ONE

FORM. creative learning

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Placing Creative Learning at the heart of the curriculum

Welcome to the first of three newsletters, through which we'll keep schools, parents, teachers, creatives and supporters of the Creative Schools Program up to date with what's happening in the 16 schools currently participating in the program.

“We believe that creativity is the key to unlocking the potential of learners from any background and through and across all areas of the curriculum.”

PAUL COLLARD, CCE

Our 2019 program, co-funded by the Department of Education for Western Australia, started at the beginning of Term 2. We'll share highlights from all the schools and give the inside track on what is happening in Creative Schools sessions around Western Australia.

In Term 1 creative practitioners and teachers involved in the program underwent intensive training with our international partners – Paul Collard (Chief Executive, Creativity, Culture & Education, UK), Paul Gorman (Director, Hidden Giants, Scotland) and Bill Lucas (Director, Centre for Real-World Learning).

Research tells us that teaching children about creativity doesn't work; but using creativity to improve the way they—and we—all learn, irrespective of the subject, really does work. With Creative Schools, which FORM developed in partnership with Paul Collard, Culture & Creativity in Education (CCE) a global organisation dedicated to preparing children for the opportunities and careers of the twenty-first century, we train creatives to partner with teachers and collaborate with students on creative learning in the classroom.

Celebration of Learning:

Teachers and Creative Practitioners will be presenting the learning outcomes of their 16-week collaboration across Term 2 and 3. They will share stories, challenges and discuss strategies to sustain and deepen creative learning approaches within the program schools

“Is thinking like football, does it take practice to get good at it?”

**STUDENT AT MERRIWA
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

With warmest best wishes,

Lamis Sabra and Vanessa Bradley
Manager and Co-ordinator of
Creative Learning at FORM



Creative Schools:

- Trains and partners teachers with creative practitioners from different disciplines (who could be dancers, painters, musicians or writers) to devise and deliver creativity-based learning activities in the classroom.
- Uses creativity to help children to engage with learning; to collaborate and listen, to challenge and discover, to fail and grow, to think and reflect, to solve problems by combining imagination and materials with things like technology, performance, executive function, motor skills and play.
- Addresses a priority learning area (e.g. mathematics, HASS or science) and employs creative ways of teaching the curriculum: the three R's are still important, it's just that there is more than one way of helping students achieve them.
- Recognises that if some students have difficulty learning or even just being in class, Creative Learning can help ease or eliminate that difficulty, and increase achievement for those students who can already cope well.
- Engages the whole of the school community (including principals and parents) in the support, delivery and outcomes of the program.
- Is an important component of FORM's Creative Learning strategy, which includes the annual Scribblers Festival of literature and art for young people.
- Has engaged independent academic and educator Mathilda Joubert from Sheridan College to carry out research, observation and evaluation.

FORM is an independent, non-profit organisation based in Perth. Through our work we've seen how people and places can flourish, children's confidence can grow, and how governments and businesses can be influenced by what creativity can achieve.

- We explore how creativity sparks art and culture, and inspires learning, conversation and social connection.
- We build creative capacity through projects, programs and people, and through culture, visual arts, learning and community engagement in Western Australia.
- We believe creativity drives positive change and helps us achieve more fulfilling relationships with our environments, each other and the rest of the world.

How the Creative Habits of Mind shape the Creative Schools sessions:

The Creative Schools sessions not only concentrate on curriculum subjects but also encourage students to develop and strengthen the 'Creative Habits of Mind' as identified by Professor Bill Lucas, Ellen Spencer and Guy Claxton (Winchester University). These habits are the keys to life-long learning, co-operation and creativity. They are as follows:

- Collaborative: connecting with people, helping each other to problem-solve and achieve success (empathy).
- Imaginative: original thinking, interesting ideas, leaps into the unknown (entrepreneurship).
- Disciplined: paying attention, staying focused and reflecting on learning (ethics).
- Persistent: determination, not giving up (endurance).
- Inquisitive: wanting to know more, how, why, why not, who, what, where and when (engagement).

Four Creative Schools session snapshots:

North Fremantle Primary School - Pre-Primary class

Teacher: Roberta Slattery | Creative: Charissa Delima

Learning focus: Children are confident and involved learners

Creative Habits: **Imaginative** **Collaborative**



Charissa says: “taking inspiration from *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires we decided to look for materials on a mini nature walk. Using their senses, the children had to choose two natural objects, then collaboratively create something and describe it to the class. Some children admitted that working collaboratively was hard, some enjoyed sharing and some eventually took the materials and worked individually, just immersing themselves in the experience. When I asked them to revisit the creative habit poster and if they had a change of mind regarding their habits, three children who initially said they were great at working together admitted they didn’t fit in the group, they were more thinkers. Two children swapped between ‘doers’ and ‘following rules’. It was lovely to watch these pre-primary students discover their strengths and weaknesses.”

Big words and small people don’t necessarily mix. So in this session, the six-year-olds at North Fremantle Primary School came up with their own versions of the Creative Habits of Mind with multidisciplinary educator Charissa and teacher Roberta Slattery. For Inquisitive, the children chose ‘thinker’, for Persistent, ‘doer’, while being Imaginative meant being ‘creative’. Being Disciplined translated as ‘follow the rules’ and the children decided that Collaborative could be called ‘work together’. The children were asked to choose which habit best described them. Most chose ‘working together’.

Glencoe Primary School | Year 2

Teacher: Benita Swart | Creative: Daniel Burton

Learning focus: English skills, numeracy, HASS

Creative Habits: **Collaborative** **Imaginative**

Persistent **Disciplined** **Inquisitive**

Nature pedagogy specialist Daniel says: “In this outdoor classroom session we read the story *The Echidna and The Shade Tree: An Aboriginal Story* by Mona Green and Pamela Lofts. The students then explored making echidnas with clay and sticks. The children were challenged to collect 25 sticks, to count and estimate, share sticks and sort them from shortest to longest. There was some great problem-solving, persistence, and collaboration when the children started sharing. It is very clear that these children thrive when given the opportunity to explore the space outside their classroom. They communicate and interact with their peers in more authentic ways which help them to build connection to space and each other.

It was so lovely to see spontaneous maths skills coming into play in this lesson. The children worked so well with



the clay and enjoyed manipulating it. They were super creative and enjoyed making the echidnas. It was great to see the diversity and the creativity of each individual. We reflected at the end of the session that they needed so much more time to play with the medium and explore the texture, as a way to build understanding and connection with the clay.

Governor Stirling Senior High School | Year 7
Teacher: Sophie Bradley | Creative: Jodie Davidson
Learning focus: HASS
Creative Habits: **Collaborative** **Imaginative**
Persistent **Disciplined** **Inquisitive**



Creative practitioner and creativity consultant Jodie Davidson says: "Last week these guys were so quick at unravelling their human knot that I thought I'd try the counting warm up in pairs, or as we discovered worked better, in groups of three. It's unusual for them to go into a class only to walk out again so I asked if they wanted

to do the warm up inside or out. It was a unanimous OUTSIDE! I have one boy who grumbles and doesn't like to participate, however as soon as we start building [components] he is fully engaged, to the point of having a teacher come in today to take him out for reading extension and then deciding not to because she said there's no way he'll want to leave. That is a good feeling.

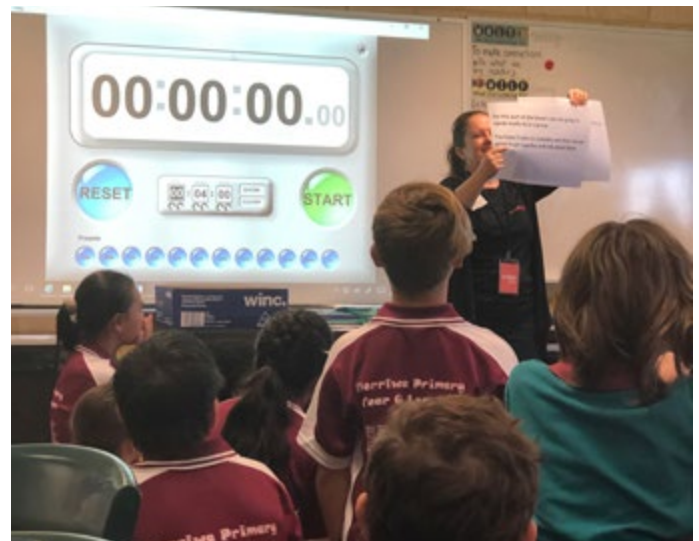
This was our second week working on gravity although most of the groups are pushing ahead onto developing levers. Both Sophie and I are constantly surprised by the different ways that each group decide to create their parts. One group have made a catapult device and another had the idea to create a lever that could divert the run creating two different courses. Initially I had said to avoid using tape but of course tape has very much made its way in. Pick your battles. They are beginning to work out that tape isn't always the most suitable option in keeping objects stable. We have also found that taking slow motion footage is helping them determine why the balls are falling off or travelling a certain way and then making changes to their course to counteract that."

Creative Schools co-ordinator at Governor Stirling, Elizabeth Phillips says: "The Creative Schools program is offering our school an opportunity to effect change in a meaningful, real and actionable way ... [it] is a fundamental shift ... we have committed as a whole school to the program, ensuring it is shared by creating a Professional Learning Community to share and workshop activities and practices from the teachers and artists involved in Creative Schools."

Merriwa Primary School | Year 6
Teacher: Sophie Perkins | Creative: Andrea Tenger
Learning focus: Imaginative (making connections)
Creative Habits: **Imaginative** **Persistent** **Disciplined**

Visual artist Andrea says: "Traditionally classroom learning is often dominated by the teacher. The teacher plans the lessons and then delivers them. There are instructions to be issued, tasks to be completed, outcomes to be met and timetables to be kept. It is often the teacher and their voice 'driving' the lesson. In the first few workshops I tried to be the driver and found it to be exhausting and time consuming; the transition times especially, moving from warm up to workshop and trying to get into groups was chaotic and uncertain. I didn't like how it felt and I don't think the students did either.

So, trusting my intuition and with the support of the classroom teacher Sophie, I dared to be different and tried silent teaching. A warm-up game of *Up, Down, Stop & Around* where I would normally call out 'Up' and everyone gets up, then 'Down' (get down) and so on, then 'Opposites Land' (everyone has to do the opposite of what I say) was done in silence. I did not say a word. It was difficult to sign language the 'Opposites Land' bit so I



whispered to just one student. Enough of the others saw this and knew something was happening and so looked to both of us to work it out. They worked out what they needed to do and how to do it themselves, they didn't need my voice telling them. It was fun and we were all learning."

We are looking for case studies for the next newsletter.
If you have any learning stories please share them with us by emailing: learning@form.net.au

Meet the team: Introducing Lamis Sabra and Vanessa Bradley



Before joining FORM in 2015, Lamis focused on designing and managing innovative educational programs especially for children and youth in disadvantaged, displaced and migrant communities across Asia. Lamis has worked collaboratively with schools and government, and at UNICEF, UNESCO, CARE, Save The Children, corporations and international institutions. She has field experience in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan and Yemen. Her qualifications include an MA in Social Entrepreneurship from Goldsmiths, University of London and Diplomas in Art Therapy (Universitat Pompeu Fabra – Barcelona); Non-profit Leadership and Management from Georgetown University (Washington); Social Impact from INSEAD (Fontainebleau); and an executive education certificate in International Development from McGill University (Montreal).

Vanessa holds a Master's Degree in Fine Art from the University of Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Her paintings depict the experiences of women and develop imagery and storylines taken from history, literature and her own personal heritage. Vanessa has had an extensive career in book publishing, working at Penguin Books (London), Raincoast Books (Canada) and Fremantle Press (Perth). In 2018 Vanessa was a creative practitioner on the Creative Schools pilot program. In 2019, Vanessa became part of the FORM Creative Learning team.

Next time:
introducing our Creative Schools
evaluator Mathilda Joubert



News round-up:

In May, FORM's international project advisor for Creative Schools, Paul Collard from CCE joined the FORM team for a week in Perth, running professional learning sessions for staff at Governor Stirling SHS and observing classes at Merriwa PS and Churchlands PS. Paul also facilitated a networking meeting with Principals and Creative Schools program coordinators. Paul also appeared as keynote speaker at the Transformance - Transforming the Learning Landscape conference (May 28-31) talking about learning environments that foster creativity, using the Bentley Primary School Creative Schools (2018) case study. FORM's Lamis Sabra presented on the Creative Schools Program, while Vanessa Bradley presented the Kinross Primary School (2018) case study.

In June, Creative Schools evaluator Mathilda Joubert spoke about the future of educational assessment, including the assessment of creative thinking skills at the EduTECH Conference in Sydney, attended by over 10,000 educators from across Australia. We'll tell you more about Mathilda's appearance, and catch-up with former colleague, Sir Ken Robinson, in the next newsletter.