



creative schools

**BOYARE
PRIMARY**

CASE STUDY – TERM 2

creative schools

Visual Artist
Jodie Davidson

Teacher
Alison McEvoy

School
Boyare Primary School

Year group
Year 5/6

CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING

How can a garden space be used to explore migration and the beginnings of the Swan River Colony?

In 2019, with support from the Department of Education and DLGSC, FORM partnered with 16 metropolitan and regional schools to deliver its Creative Schools program. FORM developed Creative Schools in partnership with *Creativity, Culture & Education (CCE)*, an international foundation dedicated to unlocking the creativity of children and young people in and out of formal education, and *Hidden Giants*, an education consultancy agency supports schools to re-imagine their curriculum by placing 'disruptive', creative, and critical thinking at its heart.

Creative Schools Program aims to improve the learning outcomes of young Western Australians. It does so by activating creative learning strategies through the establishment of meaningful partnerships between teachers, creative (arts) practitioners and young people. The program is a valuable and imaginative addition to class and school strategies for raising attainment, improving well-being and supporting inclusion

Creative Schools engages with the participating school over a full academic year. In Term 1, the creative and teacher participate in an intensive Professional Development on Creative Learning. The program then partners each teacher with a creative practitioner to co-design and co-deliver these learning activities, which focus on a priority area of the curriculum as identified by the school and teacher (e.g. mathematics, HASS or science).

Teachers and Creatives co-facilitate a 90-minutes sessions for students on a weekly basis in Terms 2 and 3. Each class has access to 16 weeks (24 hours) of direct engagement of the creatives with the students. Two classes from each school were selected to participate, a total of 32 classes in 2019. Term 4 is an opportunity to reflect on the program and FORM's independent researcher, evaluates outcomes.

This document describes the activities and outcomes of the first term of delivery: Term 2 (over 8 weeks). It also includes reflections from school leaders, teachers and students.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2019



TERM 1

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ARTISTS AND TEACHERS

Observation and diagnosis of student engagement in the classroom.
Planning time for teachers and artists



TERM 2

PROGRAM DELIVERY IN THE CLASSROOM

Creative Learning workshops per week for eight consecutive weeks



TERM 3

PROGRAM DELIVERY

Learning workshops per week for 8 consecutive weeks



TERM 4

REFLECTION AND EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

CURRICULUM FOCUS

History - The Australian Colonies

- The contribution or significance of one individual or group in shaping the Swan River Colony, including their motivations and actions (e.g. groups such as explorers, farmers, pastoralists, convicts or individuals such as James Stirling, John Septimus Roe, Thomas Peel) ACHASSK110
- Students identify the cause and effect of change on Australia's colonies, and describe aspects of the past that have remained the same. They describe the different experiences of people in the past. Students recognise the significance of a group, individual, event or development in bringing about change in the Swan River Colony.
- Students are given the opportunity to develop their historical understanding through the key concepts of sources, continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy and significance. These concepts are investigated within the historical context of the development of Australia as a nation, particularly after 1900; the factors that led to Federation; and how Australian society changed throughout the 20th century.

CROSS-CURRICULUM LINKS

Geography - A diverse and connected world

- The location of the major countries of the Asia region in relation to Australia and the geographical diversity within the region ACHASSK138.

Questioning and researching

- They locate and collect relevant information and/or data from primary and/or secondary sources, using appropriate methods to organise and record information
- Identify current understandings, consider possible misconceptions and identify personal views on a topic WAHASS50
- Record selected information and/or data using a variety of methods (e.g. use graphic organisers, paraphrase, summarise) WAHASS53

Analysing

- Translate collected information and/or data to a variety of different formats (e.g. create a timeline, draw maps, convert a table of statistics into a graph) WAHASS58

Communicating and Reflecting

- Present findings, conclusions and/or arguments, appropriate to audience and purpose, in a range of communication forms (e.g. written, oral, visual, digital, tabular, graphic, maps) and using subject-specific terminology and concepts WAHASS61
- Develop a variety of texts, including narratives, descriptions, biographies and persuasive texts, based on information collected from source materials WAHASS62
- Reflect on learning, identify new understandings and act on findings in different ways (e.g. suggest additional questions to be investigated, propose a course of action on an issue that is significant to them) WAHASS63

Biological sciences

- The growth and survival of living things are affected by physical conditions of their environment ACSSU094

Evaluating

- Reflect on and suggest improvements to scientific investigations ACSIS108

Use and Influence of Science

- Scientific knowledge is used to solve problems and inform personal and community decisions ACSHE100

General Capabilities

- intercultural understanding
- interacting and empathising with others
- recognising culture and developing respect, ethical understanding



THE LEARNING PROCESS

The underlying aim was to develop resilience amongst quite a diverse group of students with a variety of cultural backgrounds and beliefs. The teacher wanted to utilise the methods of creative thinking to explore possibilities for problem solving to enable students to work through what might upset them, changes in class structures and challenges when work is too hard. In the first few minutes of day one, Alfred, a recent Afghan arrival complete with tears in response to a comment from another student, demonstrated why developing resilience was a priority for this group.

Warm ups provided a physical beginning to each session that incorporated collaboration and persistence from the creative habits of mind. A human knot activity posed a problem with all participants facing the centre, crossing arms and joining hands to create a circle. Their challenge was to unravel the knot and finish with everyone facing the inside with arms uncrossed. There were a lot of sceptics commenting that it was a trick however by the second session, one of the four groups demonstrated imaginative habits by playing with possibilities and using intuition and triumphed while the other three continued by only working with the two steps of the task that was familiar to them. This proved to be an apt example of the need for developing their habits of persistence and discipline.

A smaller class group made up of only year 6 students in session three attempted to collaborate untangling their knot however without the year 5's, each group struggled. Yelling over the top of each other and little listening invited a change of tack and the opportunity to connect with the curriculum links (WAHASS50) by adding a further challenge. Each participant had to pretend that they were from a different country without a common language. With no method of verbal communication, they had to devise other ways of making each other understand. Incorporating imagination into their warm appeared to remove the intent focus on discipline and persistence resulting in a more successful outcome and a level of intercultural understanding.

They untangled their human knot in 45 seconds.

During reflection each week, we were able to see what areas could be a point of focus for the following session. By mixing the groups up and putting students who may not normally work together in partners, they began to learn about each other (interacting and empathising with others). With that learning and sharing of results, they challenged some of the initial assumptions that were had about classmates.



Blind contour drawing and interviewing our partners gave both students and myself an insight into each other, where they have come from and an opportunity to explain a little bit about themselves (recognising culture and developing respect, ethical understanding). As a group we discussed the topics they were doing in their core subjects this term along with what they would like to do as a project. The underused school garden space was one of their top priorities and although currently neglected, it had the potential to provide a wonderful setting to explore HASS - Migration (year 6 Geography) and Swan River Colony (Year 5 History) and to be of use to other classes within the school. Our resilience focus could also be related to plant science.

The first experiment of planting vegetable and herb seedlings in eggshells provided the forum for inquisitive conversation about types of seeds brought by both the early settlers and migrants (ACHASSK138), where they may have originated from and their capacity for survival. This also enabled cross curriculum links (ACSSU094) with Biological Sciences. Unfortunately, it also resulted in a complete failure of plants to grow. It did enable critical reflection as to why; not enough water, not enough light, incorrect soil and not enough soil (ACSIS108) and suggest improvements to the science of growing plants. It also became clear that maintaining plants whether indoors or outdoors was not the best choice of projects for this particular class or its teacher. We moved to option 3 of our intended outputs; artwork to be used within the community garden space.

Venturing into the Community Garden and separating into groups, students made maps of the space (WAHASS58) maintaining an imposed absence of verbal language for the session. One dominant voice in the class meant that others often relied on him to provide answers. Their ability to cooperate appropriately in the silence encouraged them to take notice of each other using their other senses and also allowed them the opportunity to stick with difficulty. It provided students with the space to gain an insight into what communication may have been like between the early settlers, Aboriginal people and allowed for connections with Captain Stirling



when he first came to the Swan River to determine its suitability for settlement (ACHASSK110). Similar to the first settlers, they searched for materials and together we created a timeline (WAHASS58). Teacher Alison, when looking at the space, was overwhelmed with the thought of what needed to be achieved however by really looking beyond what was immediately visible, the most exciting thing discovered was that most of it was already there.

By session 4, the gardener had been and cut the grass. This small task, became the beginning of visible engagement from outside of Room 11. The class had formed into four groups and each were given a plot of land (garden beds) to clear ready for planting. Their discoveries of toadstools, insects and existing plants provided a hive of activity and the opportunity to share their findings (ACSSU094). With minimal tools they were forced to engage imagination and played with the possibility of loosening the soil using branches, making signposts from sticks, and reflecting on the success of other groups. They were also confronted with 'trespassers' which provided additional potential for exploring resilience. They were beginning to show evidence of utilising more of the creative habits of learning with the exception of one student:



Session 5's warm up used round rubber mats for teams to cross between the north and south side of the river as quickly as possible. Team skills would be needed to achieve the task of clearing the land, just as the first settlers did (ACHASSK110). They were so good at the new warm up that they wanted to do it twice and redo the human knot! The initial difficulty that they had stuck with had shown that using discipline in developing techniques benefitted their ability to work as a team. We talked about what they thought made one group more successful than the other. Asking students who are less likely to volunteer answers has had a positive impact upon their engagement. Evidence of this was Alfred (the upset child from session 1) who suggested communicating and Yasir's response of negotiating, both large words that Alison commented were unusual for these students.

Reflection proved both useful in planning but also problem solving (WAHASS63). We reflected on the idea of trespassers, considering how it may feel to be in an unfamiliar place and ways in which we can communicate when language might be difficult. These discussions resulted in a large component of the students beginning to work towards developing resilience and increase their ability and confidence in implementing methods of problem solving (WAHASS61). This was evident as they began to work together in groups more amicably. Continuing activities from previous sessions allowed for flexible

organisation of time such as clearing the allocated 'land'. With a number of groups finishing their plot, they then offering to help other groups. They were proud of their efforts and surprised at how much they had achieved. Even teacher Alison, had a renewed sense of enthusiasm. For the last five minutes they decided to all work together in the recently discovered bush tucker garden to remove ground weeds and identifying the assortment of plants. Their curiosity and inquisitiveness in the various bugs found in the dirt, a papery type fungus in the soil and deciding what were weeds and what were plants meant that they were disappointed when we needed to head back. The fungus generated discussion on its growth and survival due to the physical conditions of its environment (ACSSU094). Using the scientific knowledge they had gathered during their land clearing, they used this to understand that the fungus was able to grow due to lack of light and moisture and as a group decided that it needed to be identified and possible removed before growing food (ACSHE100).

With the beds weeded, the bones were all there. There was a native bush tucker garden, fruit trees and raised vegetable planters. The space had all the components for visually signposting both introduced and native foods and with the initial idea of using sticks to make signposts, we were ready to begin designing.

Not every session is a success. I found that inside warm ups aren't as beneficial as outside. There were weeks when someone would adamantly refuse to partner with someone else. Often, they would prefer to be partnered with friends. For cultural reasons a few of the girls are not allowed to be in physical contact with the boys. Although the feelings were acknowledged, and accommodated, there were occasions when rather than change partners, they were reminded to reflect on what we might get to know about a person as we had in one of the earlier activities of interviewing each other (ethical understanding, personal and social capability). They discovered that a conversation can sometimes result in changing an opinion. This mirrored the importance of communication as discussed in relation to Migrants and the Swan River Colony. For some students, this process isn't easy and the connections are a work in progress.

IMPACT OF LEARNING

Session 7 and 8's main activity was spread between the classroom and the wet area and allowed students to choose the space in which they preferred to work. Groups proceeded to discuss their design ideas. With a sample of the pallet board that we would be painting onto, paper, carbon paper, pens, lettering and what they had learned and researched in their lessons with their teacher, each group began designing signs for the garden areas. The purpose was to include information that would help others within the school to understand more about various migrant groups, why they left their homelands, when they arrived and what they brought with them. In their groups during session 7 they had to recall what they knew about the group they had been assigned - Chinese Migrants pre and post 1900, First Settlers, Indigenous inhabitants, European Migrants, Middle East and Asian Migrants.

It was clear we needed to clarify some of the misinformation that they had included from their online research (WAHASS61) (WAHASS62) (WAHASS50).

Students had little through to absolutely no knowledge of how to design a planting layout, a sign or develop group artwork. This new experience required putting themselves in the shoes of someone else, in some cases, almost 200 years ago, and imagining what life may have been like. In clearing the land, we would stop and listen, considering what may have been heard or seen two centuries before. During the final session of the term, talk of time machines, how they would work and where they could go created a diverse conversation as students pored over old photos and also demonstrated the development of their inquisitive thinking and increased curiosity.

“Their ability to work with each other improved over the term. They are more likely to work with classmates who previously they wouldn't have, showing that slowly they are beginning to develop some resilience and a sense of class community”

- Alison McEvoy, Year 5/6 Teacher

Incorporating creative habits consciously and being able to isolate and recognise them were as big a learning curve to me as the students. Often it isn't as simple as explaining and giving examples.

Failure sometimes has a larger impact than success and has reinforced the need for resilience and perseverance. I intuitively knew when a planned activity wasn't having the expected or desired outcome and as the creative practitioner, I too found myself having to explore and question reasons for the lack of success, implement imaginative possibilities and often, quite quickly reflect critically to change the direction for the activity based on student feedback.

Working alongside teachers in this program has improved my planning and confidence but more so, I am discovering new ways of exploring how individual students learn and build their curiosity to a high enough point that they begin to demonstrate wanting to discover more.

**BOYARE, YEAR 5/6
JODIE & ALISON,
1 JULY 2019**

“They are working on their designs for the community garden linked to the Swan River Colony.” (Jodie)

“We had a flat session a few weeks ago because we didn’t come outside. The warm-ups outside engages them.” (Alison, Teacher)

“When we say we are doing ‘gardening’, they don’t like it, but say ‘we are clearing our settlement’ they are fully engaged.” (Alison, Teacher)

“The sense of achievement when they cleared their settlements was great. Before they knew it, they had done it. They were so proud.” (Alison, Teacher)

“I have struggled letting go of control, letting the kids and Jodie take the lead, but she sends me all the plans so I always know what is happening. Jodie is amazing. She puts in a lot of work.” (Alison, Teacher)

“I’m noticing some of the students are a lot more cooperative, more comfortable working with others. The kids are also starting to speak up more when one person is bossy.”

“The warm-up activities definitely takes them out of their comfort zone, which is exactly what we need for the Year 6s” (Alison, Teacher)

“We were being imaginative because we were using our ideas.”

“We are thinking of different ways to do things.”

“We are collaborative because we were cooperating.”

“We were sharing our ideas.”

“We were sticking with difficulty and exploring and investigating different ways to solve problems.”

“We were determined to beat the challenge and developing techniques.”

“They take things very literally, but lack the deep understanding. It’s like they are given the cake but don’t understand the basic ingredients.” (Jodie)

“It’s fun, creative, awesome. It gets our brain juices flowing.”

“It makes us have so much energy. It makes us excited. Amazing.”

“Creative Schools includes everyone.”

“It is different to other classes because you go outside. It feels like you haven’t gone outside for five years.”

“You get to do different activities.”

“We have developed collaboration skills, because we don’t argue that much anymore.”

“It’s a good program because people will become more creative.”

“I feel like we are really good and scientific and learning lots when Jodie comes.”

“It’s a bit hard because she asks lots of questions I don’t know.”

“It’s like learning something really new.”

“It’s fun; you’re exploring new things.”

“The activities are making us use our brains more and making us think more creatively.”

“I never used to know what foods Italians brought to Australia and now I do.”

“You don’t just do one thing in creative lessons – you do different activities.”

“The warm-ups warm up our brains so we can think.”

“We are learning to think more outside the box. We are learning problem solving skills.”

“We are learning more about different countries and where other people are coming from.”

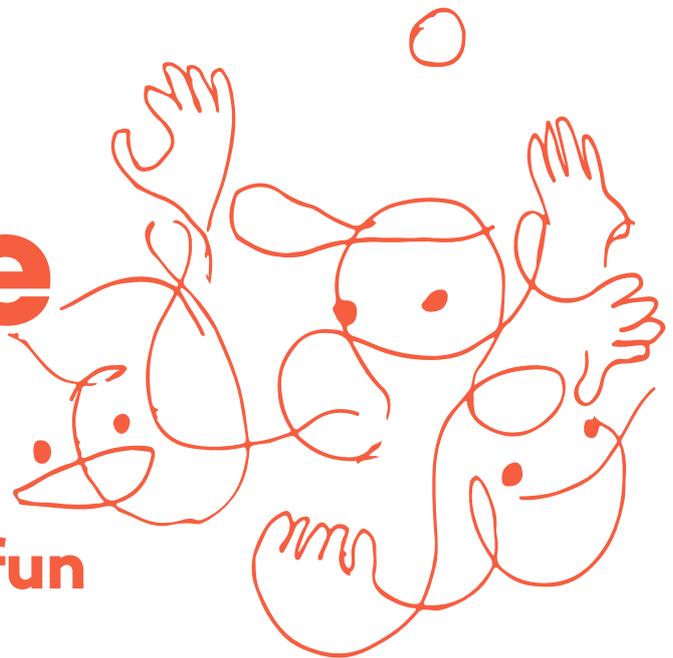
“Jodie is thinking of ways to make us think better.”

“It is better when learning is fun. You are learning more and better when you are having fun.”

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deep learning, hard fun



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