



**creative  
schools**

**NORTH FREMANTLE  
PRIMARY**

CASE STUDY – TERM 2

# creative schools

Nature pedagogy specialist

**Daniel Burton**

Teacher

**Elizabeth Smith**

School

**North Fremantle  
Primary School**

Year group

**Year 1**

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

### General Capabilities

- Creative and Critical thinking
- ICT Capability
- Personal and Social Capability

### Sustainability

#### English: Language: Language variation and change

- Understand that people use different systems of communication to cater to different needs and purposes and that many people may use sign systems to communicate with others

#### English: Language: Language for interaction

- Understand that there are different ways of asking for information, making offers and giving commands

#### English: Language: Language for interaction

- Understand that language is used in combination with other means of communication, for example facial expressions and gestures to interact with others

#### English: Literacy: Listening & speaking

- Engage in conversations and discussions, using active listening behaviours, showing interest, and contributing ideas, information and questions

#### English: Literacy: Listening & speaking

- Use interaction skills including turn-taking, recognising the contribution of others, speaking clearly and using appropriate volume and pace
- Use of software
- Construct texts that incorporate supporting images using software including word processing programs

## CROSS-CURRICULUM LINKS

### Mathematics: Measurement and Geometry

#### Mathematics: Number and Algebra: Patterns and Algebra,

- Investigate and describe number patterns formed by skip counting and patterns with objects

#### Mathematics: Measurement and Geometry: Location and Transformation

Give and follow directions to familiar locations

#### Mathematics: Measurement and Geometry: Using units of Measurement

- Measure and compare the lengths and capacities of pairs of objects using uniform informal units
- Describe duration using months, weeks, days and hours

### HASS Geography: Places have distinctive features

#### Science: Science Understanding: Biological Sciences

- Living things have a variety of external features

#### Science: Science as a Human Endeavour: Nature and Development of Science

- Science involves observing, asking questions about, and describing changes in, objects and events
- Use and Influences of Science
- People use science in their daily lives, including when caring for their environment and living things

### **Music: Audience behaviour (being quiet during a performance; clapping after a performance)**

- Places and occasions where different types of music are experienced and performed
- Personal responses expressing ideas and feelings about the music they listen to and make

### **Visual Arts**

#### **Media Arts**

### **Health and Physical Education: Personal, social and community health**

- Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing
- Appreciation and encouragement of the behaviour of others through the use of:
  - manners
  - positive language
  - praise

- Positive ways to react to their own emotions in different situations, such as:
  - walking away
  - seeking help
  - remaining calm
- Contributing to healthy and active communities
- Actions that support a safe classroom, such as:
  - moving around safely
  - sharing appropriately
  - following class rules
- Physical activities that can take place in natural and built settings in the local community

### **Health and Physical Education: Learning through movement**

- Strategies that will assist with involving everyone in games
- Cooperation skills in partner and group work during physical activity practices
- Simple rules and fair play in partner, group activities and minor games



## CREATIVE HABITS OF MIND

**Collaborative** – exploring the space as a group, developing new ideas, giving feedback, communicating

**Disciplined** – Reflecting critically and being focussed in an outdoor space - doing some pre-emptive work on being present, being still, looking to recycle own energy rather than pulling at leaves/grass/stones

**Persistent** – the outdoor classroom may present challenges to some children, it will require persistence if it rains – sticking with difficulty, tolerating uncertainty

**Imaginative** – finding stories and narrative in the outdoors, ‘reimagining’ the idea of a classroom. (This will be a focus for the parents, administration and colleagues also.)

**Inquisitive** – Challenging assumptions about where learning happens and exploring science outdoors

## THE LEARNING PROCESS

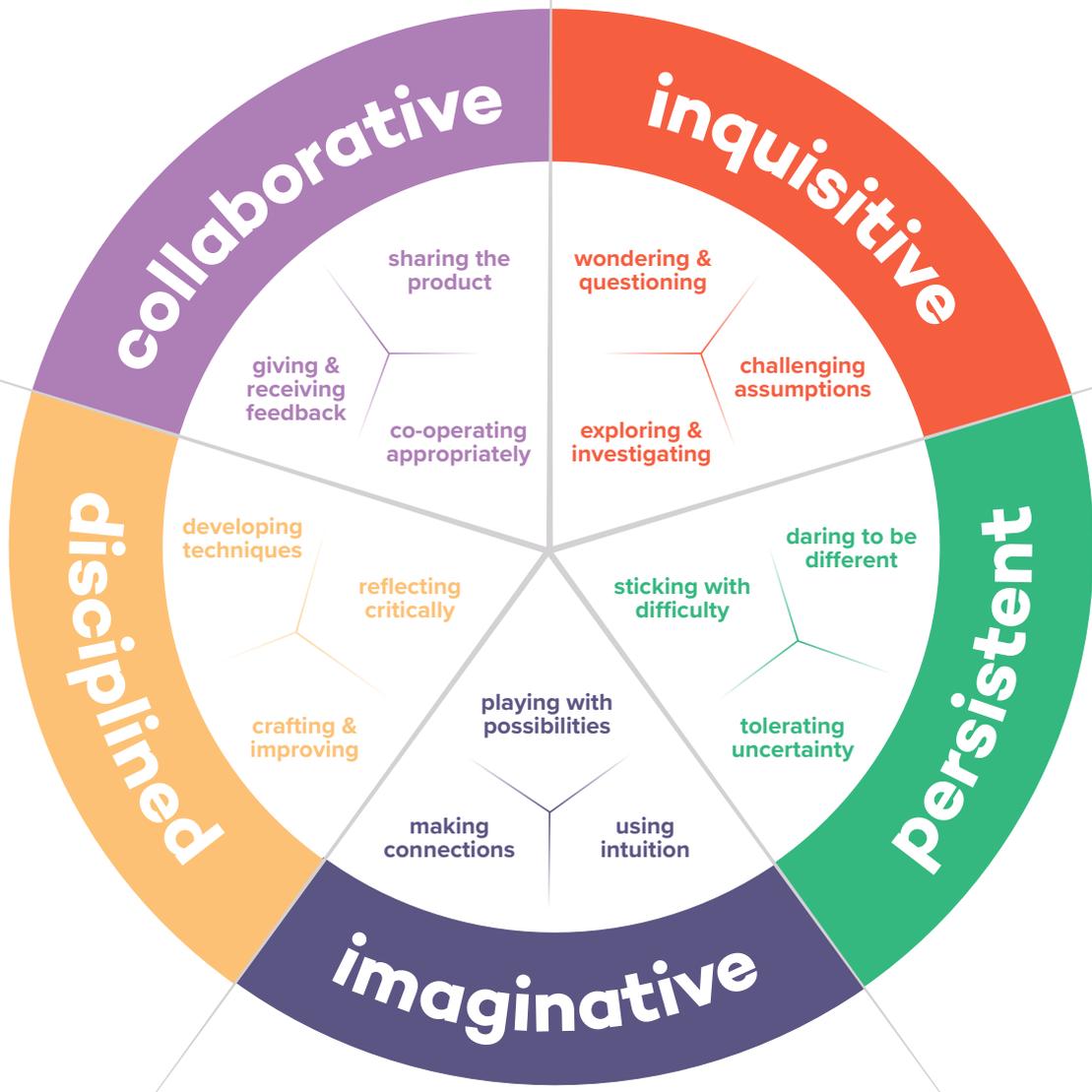
On walking into the Year 1 classroom at North Fremantle Primary school and seeing the tight knit, connected and family-like community that was Lizzie’s class I was intrigued as to what role I would play as the creative practitioner in this particular setting. In my other classes, at other schools in this project, I had a clear understanding from the onset about what part I was to play in supporting these classes of children and their teacher to grow in new directions. With Lizzie, it was different and in fact I almost felt that my role was going to be a little redundant. She was already an incredibly creative educator and taught in a way that was very similar to the way I did when I was in a classroom. This provided me with a challenge, a chance to grow my skills as the creative practitioner and really explore the potential of my role in this environment. What ensued was a term of sessions where together, as a team, Lizzie and I worked to enhance the use of student-centred pedagogy, listening to the children’s needs, to provide them with learning opportunities that were fun and creative but most importantly focussed on JOY.

In our initial planning for the term, after a discussion about Lizzie’s curriculum goals and thematic focus on fairy tales and character development. We devised a series of sessions that focused on exploring the outdoor space through the use of our senses. The school is fortunate to have an incredible outdoor learning space, a heavily tree covered, diverse natural space that is engaging and incredibly inviting. However, this space was somewhat underused in regard to learning opportunities. Like many schools, it is a place where children play during break times but apart from the kitchen garden and chicken coop, it remains fairly vacant during ‘class time’. Our aim was to change this culture and to be an example to the rest of the school by using it as an outdoor classroom.

So with this intention in mind, we started our first session in the space, with a warm up game to connect with the space, open up our senses and develop an awareness of our surroundings. What was planned as a 15 minute introductory ‘warm up’ game turned into the focus for the entire session. The children loved this altered game of hide and seek, with nature connection elements built in. We listened to their needs and played the game for the remaining hour, finishing with a meditation, reflection and song.

The children’s reflections in the following week, before the second session, highlighted for Lizzie and I just how connected they were to the space already. They really connected with the game and we noticed how their experience in the space made them light up. There was pure engagement. My reflections from the second session were “The student’s passion for the space and for exploring is so evident and sometimes it interferes with the plans - but this is good modelling for the teacher and the students to go with the flow.”

As the weeks continued, our use of the space continued, with a regular return to the game, listening to the student’s passion while also guiding them through some pre planned experiences that used the different senses. We explored texture, colour, size and shape through a treasure hunt focussed activity and asked them to classify the objects they found. We used found objects to make patterns and explored descriptive language; we made music with our bodies and natural materials to replicate a rainstorm in a body percussion orchestration. We even engaged digital literacy and recorded sounds in the environment to make our own ‘sound books’ using iPads. Throughout each session we followed the passion of the children as well as our overarching goal to connect with the space and explore the possibilities of nature connected pedagogy.



## IMPACT OF LEARNING

Each session in the outdoor spaces provided links to what the class had been covering in doors or provided inspiration for upcoming content areas.

As the term was progressed Lizzie reflected that our sessions seem to be providing a sense of 'structured joy' and I further reflected that we seem to be 'carving out space in a crammed, busy schedule to make time for simple joy'. We were pleased with our new outcome and agreed that the social and emotional impact of this outcome for the students was incredibly important.

It was also helpful to return to our original term overview plan and see that we are in fact covering our initial objectives as well as the school wide vision statement.

- How can we engage in outdoor learning and nature pedagogy through the reactivation of the 'Top Area'?
- Term 2 providing opportunity for individual lessons in the outdoor space using existing spaces as learning areas.

We wondered together if we could re-focus on one of our other original goals 'Communication to wider school community, parents, colleagues and administration' and continue to advocate for and communicate about the benefits of taking learning

outside and the importance of ownership of space. Highlighting the 'depth and complexity of authentic, child centred, play based learning' more of an intention with the use of documentation over the final 3 session of this term leading into our more project-oriented focus for next term.

It has been an incredibly enjoyable journey so far, one built around relationship building, experimentation and collaboration. When we end each session and reflect together Lizzie regularly speaks of the 'joy' that the sessions bring her and the children. I'm continuing to wonder if part of my role is to be a creative board to bounce ideas off and share joy. Lizzie often reflects that her perception of what she has to do within her classroom is text book based, test related and output-driven. She speaks about the fact that resources and programs increasingly purchased and used in schools, mandated as a whole-school approach, are rolled out across multiple classes/age groups in so many different settings are worksheet reliant. They dictate a direction for content and teaching style and make a teacher's creative role redundant, as ideas and direction don't comply with the 'lesson sequence'. This creative schools program seems to have been a ray of hope for an incredibly creative teacher like Lizzie. It supports her to still break out of the mould and reignite her passion and energy for creative ways of facilitating learning, to share a love of learning in a more holistic, natural way; responding to stimuli and enabling the students to have some ownership over their education process.





"Lizzie and I work really well together and it's going to be such a hoot working as a team. I feel our energy, focus, styles and aim for this project are so much on the same wavelength." Daniel Burton – Creative Practitioner

"We were picking things off the ground, being persistent and we were being collaborative when we were singing songs with Daniel." Student

"I was being imaginative because I was closing my eyes and opening my ears (to hear the sounds)." Student

"I liked the time I was having a laugh and being imaginative. We were collaborative playing the game Eagle Eye and working in a team." Student

"Albert was tapping sticks on the chicken house and I was taking pictures, so we were being collaborative." Student

"We were learning about nature with Daniel, we were sorted in groups and we made books." Student

**"I was being disciplined when we were listening to Daniel talk about the five habits board. We also closed our eyes so we could listen to the sound better."** Student

"I was making a puzzle that my friends made, and the puzzle was made of the nature." Student

"On Friday, Daniel came. We went to the 'no go zone' up the back of the school and Daniel taught us a game called Eagle Eye. It was fun. Then Daniel played us a song on his ukulele. It was really really fun. Then we played eagle eye again. My best hiding spot was behind an enormous tree." Student

"I was being inquisitive because I wanted to find out what type of bird this was." Student

**"The best thing that we did with Daniel was the stuff in nature, it was so fun! I loved it with Daniel, and I will miss Daniel so much!"** Student

I'd like to thank whoever teamed me up with Daniel Burton of Educated by Nature as this has been a dream partnership. We became fast friends and collaborators, we are both creative spirits and have been open to the flow and natural direction our journey has taken on, learning, adjusting and adapting as we go. We are very much, 'same same but different'.

**Focusing on the five habits of learning with the students has helped to shape, strengthen and develop their skills as life long learners. I have heard the children reflecting in both work and play and using the vocabulary of being 'collaborative, inquisitive, persistent, imaginative' - to be honest, 'disciplined' has been a term less used by the children but they are a disciplined and diligent bunch anyway!**

Working with Daniel during this process has reignited my passion for teaching. I've always been a creative, hands on teacher and it is in igniting the spark of knowledge and understanding that has always brought me the greatest joy, utilising both indoor and outdoor spaces balancing play-based activities with explicit teaching and assessing and monitoring process. However, I have been criticized for my creativity in the recent past and felt encouraged to engage in more 'sit and do' worksheet-type activities; which I struggle with as I find them predominantly close-ended and of limited use. This has lead to me feeling devalued as a professional, I have questioned my teaching style and pedagogy. When Daniel and I began the journey I was feeling apprehensive and uncertain about my own skills. My engagement in the Creative Schools Program has in many ways given me 'permission' to once again teach the way I want to; to engage, inspire and seize meaningful learning opportunities rather than racing on to 'get through' the curriculum. Unlike many teachers I don't find the curriculum too crowded, it just becomes so when everything is taught in isolation and teachers are required to deliver it using uninspiring programs. Of course, there are specific skills which children need to learn, develop, practice and master and explicit teaching is essential, but this journey can be one of joy.

Joy has become the key word for our group. Daniel and I reflect on our joy at the end of each session, my joy in the process, my joy in the time we have together and the joy sparked in the children. I now call my class the 'joy givers', and this collective moniker has spread and their parents use it too. This morning, the as the children were coming in to the classroom they chose to get their drawing books, one student was writing strings of numbers using skip-counting rhythms he's learnt; he then illustrated it with a picture of the tee-pee and snails we explored. On reflection, I now remember we were singing number songs and this has created a meaningful memory for him. Another child's mother turned and said 'oh, they really are the joy-givers, and it's thanks to you can you please please be their teacher again next year?'

The class really are joy givers. They are one of those rare cohorts of children, interested and motivated to learn always. The Creative Partnerships Program has nurtured us all and I have loved it. I am considering doing a research-based MEd centered on play-based learning and creativity as a result.

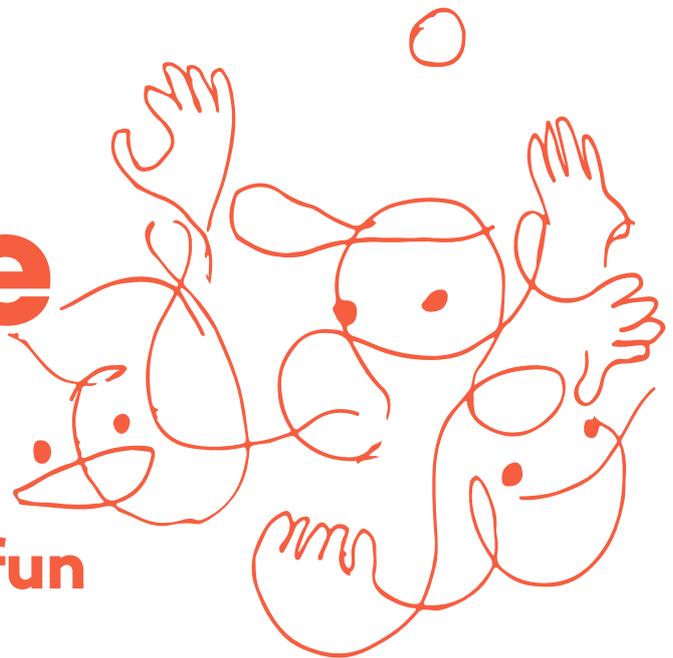
On a personal level, I have felt 'fixed' when I wasn't aware I had become so broken. I find a lot of people talk the talk of creativity but are reluctant to walk the walk, especially when there isn't always a tangible end product. I now have the confidence to once again teach the way I can be the most effective and inspire the children in my care. I believe in it - and it really, really works.

Thank you to my school, FORM, Lamis, Vanessa and most of all to Daniel and the children in my class.

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learning

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deep learning, hard fun



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