



creative schools

MELVILLE
PRIMARY

CASE STUDY – TERM 2

creative schools

Nature pedagogy specialist

Trudi Bennett

Teacher

Michelle Roberts

School

Melville Primary School

Year group

Year 3

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

English - Procedure writing - Literacy

(Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts demonstrating increasing control over text structures and language features and selecting print, and multimodal elements appropriate to the audience and purpose)

CROSS-CURRICULUM LINKS:

Technologies - Technologies Processes and Production Skills

Create a sequence of steps to solve a given task, Develop and communicate ideas

Health and Physical Education - Personal, Social and Community Health

Ways to be in natural environments

General Capabilities

Critical and Creative Thinking, Ethical Understanding, Personal and Social Capability, Sustainability

CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING

Next to Melville Primary School is a beautiful park called Kadijini (a Noongar word meaning Learning). The landscaped park has a winding dry river bed and various types of native vegetation. The park has undulating hills, shrubs with tunnels, interesting plants, shady trees and a ring of logs all set up for the ideal outdoor classroom. When this project started, the park was used by the teacher, Michelle Roberts, and most other classes for the occasional reward day (playing in the playground) or cross-country running. We decided to explore how many of the curriculum content areas could be taught outside in the outdoor classroom and if they could be integrated into one bigger learning area and project, developing stronger connections between the children and the park.

The aim of the project was to learn about writing procedures as part of the English through playing games in the park. We wanted the students to understand procedures by playing and examining different games, then breaking them into small steps. The students were then given the opportunity to develop their own game in a small group, trial the game, write the procedure and present the game to their older buddy class.

Teacher Michelle has an expectation in her class for students to work through tasks independently and one of the aims of exploring procedures was also to help students think through tasks and steps with minimal support from their teacher. This is also a great life skill of looking at a big task, which can sometimes be overwhelming and breaking it down into simple steps to assist in knowing where to start.





THE LEARNING PROCESS

The first session took the form of playing a predator/prey, biology version of hide-and-seek as a way to get to know the space. Students started to learn how to move through the uneven space, being mindful of small plants and pushing themselves to feel comfortable in the 'scratchiness' of the bushes. The students then replicated the game in four steps using natural materials to represent each stage.

For the second session, the class was split in half and was taught how to play a maths orientated game. They then had to discuss the procedure and write one step each. These steps were compiled and given to the other group to read, interpret and try to play. This highlighted to the students how instructions need to be very specific in order to be followed correctly.

In the third session, we introduced fear and uncertainty as a motivator for giving specific instructions. Michelle wanted to integrate trust games and mindfulness into the outdoor classroom space. We decided to take the risk and remove most of the children's sight through blindfolds in order for them to use their other senses and rely on each other. We started with a meditation, listening for quiet sounds, then in partners lead a blindfolded student to 'meet a tree', explore it with other senses and then re-find it with sight. Lastly, we played a game where children needed to walk in small, connected groups, blindfolded with one sighted leader. The leaders in these games needed to be precise with their directions, instructions and messages to keep the group safe. The removal of sight and adrenaline that was involved made the need for precise communication more urgent and motivated.

On the fourth session, we introduced the idea of creating their own game and writing it for the buddy class to play. It had been two weeks since the class visited the park and we sent them out with the simple challenge to, "Explore in your new groups and report back what you see that has changed and anything fascinating you discover." The students were thrilled by the sense of freedom in being allowed to explore and being invited to construct their own game. They discovered many transformations in the landscape which they happily shared, especially of a tree shedding of some large pods with shiny seeds inside. These pods became a source of inspiration for each groups' imaginative game

design and were a feature of each one in some way. Children explored the possibilities of using the pods and made connections between game ideas and this new material.

Over the next two sessions, the students discussed, refined and tested their games collaborating in their small groups. The teacher and creative role was to assist with this collaboration to ensure that everyone was clear on the game rules and that ideas were heard and appropriate feedback was given. The students were then asked in their groups to write up the procedure for their game. At the end of the session a few students asked if they would get the chance to play each other's games.

We decided to allow space for this and take the writing activities out of the outdoor classroom to allow space for more hands-on, nature connected learning that the students were craving. Michelle suggested the class surprise Trudi by writing and finishing the game procedures before she returned next week. The students were thrilled with this idea and worked hard during the week to discuss the game improvements, individually write a procedure, combine each other's ideas and take turns to type the instructions and draw diagrams.

In session 8 the buddy class of year 5s came to play the year 3s game in Kadijini. The project was explained by members of the class including introducing the Creative Habits of Learning they were using to reflect and make connections to their growth in the sessions. The year 5s were broken into groups and started rotating through the games, reading the instructions and being guided by the year 3s. In one game an altercation between a couple of year 5s occurred. One year 3 student went to comfort the upset year 5, while the rest of the group problem solved the situation and decided to reset the game.

IMPACT OF LEARNING

“WHAT WE SAW IN THE KADIJINI HEADQUARTERS WAS THE STUDENTS EXPRESSING A NEW WAY THAT THEY WANTED TO LEARN AND THEIR TEACHER LISTENING.”

- Trudi Bennett

We just did an hour’s reflection on the Creative Habits and how they have improved. There were so many ideas coming from the students. It was phenomenal. They worked at stations and all worked together.” (Trudi, creative practitioner)

“At the start Michelle wasn’t believing in herself, but hearing her feedback is amazing. We are bouncing ideas of each other. To see the impact on the children’s indoor work because of the outdoor time is great.” (Trudi)

The sessions outdoors pushed the children out of their comfort zone and into a creative zone encouraging their persistence and sticking with the difficulty of learning in a new place and in a new way. When they came together, they discovered what they were missing through collaboration.

The students were thrilled by the sense of freedom in being allowed to explore and being invited to construct their own game. Michelle discovered the engagement and energy of her class when given control over their own learning in the outdoor classroom: “The less involvement we have out there, the more the children get out of it.”

Children had been going home and sharing their excitement for the project with their parents. Some families who hadn’t visited the park together for years, started to visit the park again. One of the parents shared how impressed they were with the program to Michelle, “Do you share this as it is phenomenal? Please share it with the other teachers.”



“When I’m in class I’m stressed, but when I’m out there I can think.” (Student)

“The Creative Schools program is amazing because we get to go to the park and get our hands stuck into nature and get to collaborate with other people, work on games and learn about the Creative Habits.” (Student)

“I think it’s one of the best things that could happen in a school. I just wish it could happen twice a week.” (Student)

“You can learn out here. You can learn how delicate nature is” (Student)

“I love it. It is like you have to use nature and you get to be outside. It’s good for your learning because you are using your imagination more.” (Student)

“My teacher, Mrs Roberts, talks a lot about creativity now. At the start of the year I think she was really strict and now she seems much happier.” (Student)

“We had to use persistence to design our games because we had to stick at it ... and may be imagination and discipline.” (Student)

“I enjoy Creative Schools because it exposes you out of your comfort zone and it makes you more tough and able to do things. You have to be persistent.” (Student)

“I was initially like a deer in the headlights when asked by the Principal to participate in the Creative Schools program. Now I am so stoked to have been given this opportunity. I use the Creative Habits all the time in my teaching.” (Michelle, Teacher)

“I was so out of my comfort zone with the two days of training, but when seeing the energy of the people who did the program last year, it excited me.” (Michelle, Teacher)

“I’m really struggling with not having four walls. I have to push beyond my comfort zone. I have control in a class, not out here, but I feel we have it good here now. I love it.” (Michelle, Teacher)

“I have stopped giving them the answer, to make them think and work for it. It was a big shift for me.” (Michelle, Teacher)

“I’m telling all the other teachers to take photos of the Creative Habits poster and use it in their classes.” (Michelle, Teacher)

“They taught another class the game ‘Eagle Eye’. It was brilliant. They have played different games each week and now they are designing their own games. They have loved it.” (Michelle, Teacher)

“One day the weather was bad and I didn’t want to go outside, but we went in any case and it was the best day ever.” (Michelle, Teacher)

“They have worked so hard to write their procedures before today. They sat and wrote for 40 minutes, then got feedback, went back to do the improving and crafting. Their discipline, from the Creative Habits, really improved.” (Michelle, Teacher)

“They have become more collaborative, learning to give and receive feedback.” (Michelle, Teacher)

“The biggest thing I have noticed is the little quieter kids light up out here. The difference in some of the kids is just phenomenal ... just taking on leadership roles being outside.”

“The children love it, the parents say they love Fridays. We have noticed less absence on Fridays. The parents hear about it at home.” (Michelle, Teacher)

“Their conscious streaming journals is amazing. They have to sit 5 metres apart from one another and write down their reflections. Even the most reluctant writers is writing out here. They are just sitting everywhere and writing. It really warms my heart.” (Michelle, Teacher)

“I feel blessed that I’ve had Trudi with her background. It’s been awesome because we’ve been flexible and bouncing ideas off each other. She’s brought so much to it.” (Michelle, Teacher)

“The three hours whole school PD on creativity was brilliant, but how do you get other t

“It is the highlight of their week.” (Principal)

“The children are bringing their parents to the park now on weekends. The parents feel so lucky that their children are in the program.” (Michelle, Teacher)

“Children need all these creative skills, but they are usually not taught.” (Michelle, Teacher)

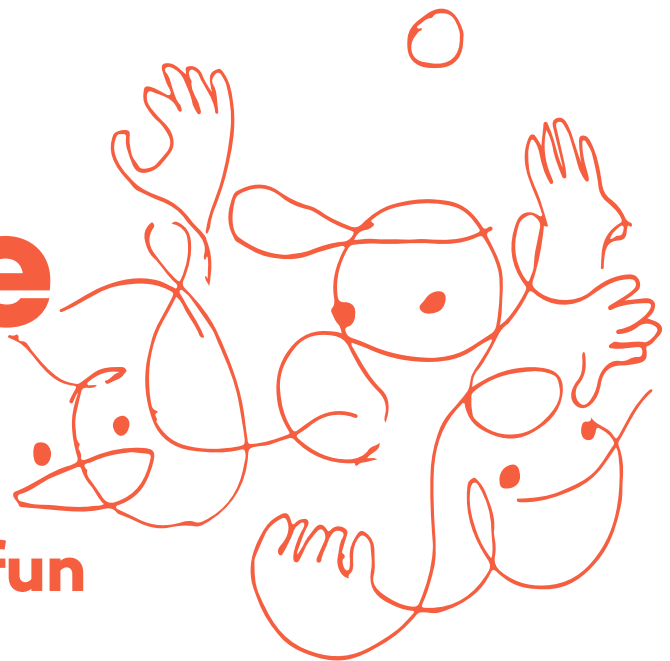
“They (and I) go home exhausted, but beaming.” (Michelle, Teacher)



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