



**creative
schools**

**HIGHGATE
PRIMARY**

CASE STUDY – TERM 2

creative schools

Visual Artist
Elaine Olsen

Teacher
Lauren Hay

School
Highgate Primary School

Year group
Year 6

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 and 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

Design and technology

Literacy

language, listening, communicating

Health

social and emotional in particular self-awareness, self-management and social awareness skills

CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING

DEVELOPING STUDENT INDEPENDENT THINKING SKILLS THROUGH GIVING STUDENTS AGENCY TO BECOME LEADERS OF THEIR OWN LEARNING.

The curricular aim of the term was to learn about the design and technology design thinking process through making board games with a focus on helping others.

In planning the sessions what was clear was the teacher's intention of allowing the students to lead the learning. The focus during the term was then about creating opportunities for the students to learn according to things that they liked doing.

I brought in my knowledge about systems thinking and applied this by helping students to see connections and to learn to understand problems first before working on solutions.

The students wrote down what excited them. They used their imagination when they were asked to self-organise into teams without speaking. This they did by employing body language and sign language. They were asked to write down some of the problems they encountered with the things they loved doing.

They demonstrated an excellent way of communicating without words by using sign language. Collaborating in teams they grouped their answers and came up with a number of categories that clustered their problems together. Butchers paper, post-it notes and textas were the main form of resources.





THE LEARNING PROCESS

A number of sessions were devoted to building team rapport and connection as a way of preparing students for better collaboration. This included fun activities like marshmallow challenges and empathy walks where students were paired up and asked to tell personal stories to one another. Building team cohesion involved writing down things about each other and what they thought was good about each other. The students were persistent in how they stayed with the uncertainty of learning new and different ways of doing and thinking.

The students learnt about how to define the problem. People usually jump straight away into finding solutions, rather than spend time understanding the problem. We helped the students to explore the problems they came up with in a number of ways.

Using a template they learnt to break the problem down further, and in so doing crafted their problem statements. They set about collecting data about their problem statements. This they did by interviewing each other as well as the teacher and myself. To help them understand how to do interviews, the teacher and I did a role play where we showed how to ask good questions and how to listen intently.

They learnt to dive even deeper into the problem when a team of coaches were brought into the classroom. Through targeted questioning and using post-it notes and butchers paper the students were able to see more clearly how their problem related to other seemingly unrelated issues. Their level of inquisitiveness heightened during this process.

Part of my creative practice involves holding the space for creativity to emerge. To do this each session began with a circle check in process and ended with a circle check out process. The circles were important in giving each child a voice. The questions asked during the check-ins and check-outs helped to centre the students and to give them focus. These questions provided rich fodder in terms of the reflections that the students were offering back.

Each session also included a short mindfulness session, another technique for bringing the students into the space and grounding them before opening them up to imaginative and creative ways.

IMPACT OF LEARNING

Principal, Stephen Ivey: 'The impact on the teacher has been huge. The teacher told me that it's not about the process it's about the journey. She feels like she has a mentor and a coach in her Creative Practitioner and that has had a big impact.'

Deputy Principal, Mr Smith: The session [I attended] promoted rich learning and collaborating with the student. I liked the topics. There is a sense of calm and a sense of reflection in the Creative Schools sessions. Students are given permission to stop and think. It gives the teacher permission to take on a different mindset.'

This detailed process of working to the pace and needs of students was important to both the teacher and creative practitioner. We decided to extend the project to allow children time to fully investigate the rules, work hard on developing their collaborative skills and to allow time to refine, improve and produce quality work. The students practised journaling and so they became disciplined in bringing out their creative journals to record their reflections for how they were learning.

For this to be able to happen in a school environment, many different curriculum areas need to be used to collate and share time. This meant that timetables needed to be more flexible so that we could look at English or Media in a HASS timetable slot. Difficulties are also presented when specialist teachers provide for certain parts of the curriculum, restricting the amount of integration that can be achieved.

The teacher observed: 'I have a deeper understanding of the children. I feel different. I feel a shift in my thinking. As teachers we are used to asking questions in a certain way so we get the answers we want i.e. focused on the outcome rather than the process. I am learning to ask better questions of the students.'

During the course of the term a couple of unexpected things happened. The teacher felt so inspired by what she was experiencing through the creativity we were introducing that she felt compelled to re-create the physical layout of the class. From rows of industrial style seating arrangement she brought in colourful, bright and easy furniture, introduced fit balls and cushioned milk crates. Bland, rectangular tables were replaced with bar high tables and blob-shaped tables.

The creative practitioner noted: 'The opening up of the classroom as a physical space was an unexpected outcome, and one which has deeply resonated with the children. I sense that that opening up of physical space will also open up their minds and thinking, which of course is the whole intent of the Creative Schools Program.'

'Most profoundly perhaps, the reflections from the students show that a deeper level of learning is happening. Not only are they learning about the 5 creative habits, they are also discovering the importance of relationships and connection.'

'It is fascinating to note their expressions of happiness and comfort, a most unexpected occurrence to have emerged from the Program, and one that is perhaps the most rewarding for me. It seems as if they are learning essential life skills and the core elements of wellbeing.'

"We got on really well during the training, so I was so excited when I heard Elaine would be my creative."
(Lauren Hay, Teacher)

"She's made me think really deeply."
(Lauren Hay, Teacher)

"She questions really well. I don't think I'm that good at it. I need to learn just to question, to let the students be inquisitive; not just to question to get the right answer."
(Lauren Hay, Teacher)

Student Quotes

"We are learning to ask questions, getting to know more people you don't normally talk to, working in teams, making new friends."

"We are learning to use the five habits. It will help us work better in a group."

"It is extremely fun."

"It is calming. It lets you calm down and monitor yourself."

"We are learning questioning and interviewing, telling each other about ourselves."

"We are learning about other people."

"It is different to other lessons because we are being more in groups. You work a lot more with your peers."

"You get to have fun for two lessons each week."

"I am learning to use other people's ideas more."

"I have become more disciplined/ I have behaved more."

"I have become a bit more selfless. Before I usually thought of what's the benefit for me, but now I think about others before myself more ... not necessarily all the time, but more."

"I have become more collaborative."

"I feel more collaborative and inquisitive. I have become more creative."

"It's really helpful. Everyone in the class have noticed people are behaving better, using their imagination more, being more creative and working in a team more since Creative Schools started."

"In the beginning we found it really hard to work in teams. Then we started learning about the Creative Habits and we became better at listening to each other and working together."

"I am much more creative and I go through problems step-by-step now."

"I now understand it's not all about me and my ideas ... I can use other people's ideas too."

"One word: collaborative."

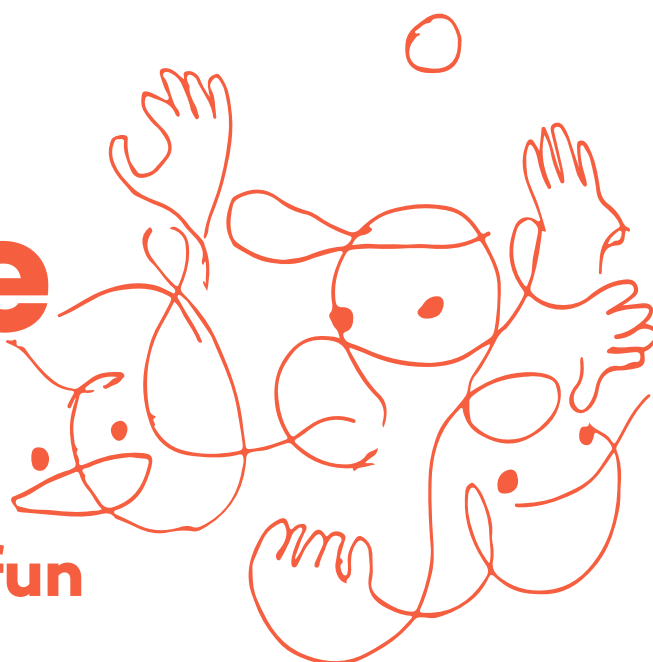
"We did lots of challenges."

"It is different to any other class."

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For further information please contact:

Lamis Sabra/ Vanessa Bradley

learning@form.net.au • (08) 9385 2200 • form.net.au/creative-learning