



**creative  
schools**

**CHURCHLANDS  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

CASE STUDY — TERM 2 & 3

## TERM 2

# creative schools

Visual Artist  
Sheryl Chant

Teacher  
**Lucy McNamara**

School  
**Churchlands Primary School**

Year group  
**Year 2/3**



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 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-minute 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 across two terms of delivery: Term 2 and 3 (over 16 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

Looking back at our term plan, we hoped to achieve many things in our 8 week creative adventure into the History stream of HASS, specifically looking at the year 3 topic Communities and Remembrance: The historical origins and significance of celebrations and commemorations in other places around the world.

### **The Creative Habits of Mind that the teacher wanted to focus on were:**

- **Persistent** - sticking with difficulty.
- **Collaborative** - giving and receiving feedback and co-operating appropriately.
- **Inquisitive** - wondering and questioning.

### **The elements of the High Functioning Classroom model the teacher wanted to target were:**

- **Role of the teacher** – from guided to challenging
- **Role of learner** – from directed to self-managing
- **Reflection** – from limited to continuous

The Teacher developed a very thorough term plan, which detailed sections within the suggested categories.

By the last session, the students were confidently identifying the ChoM elements and how they applied to the activities and to themselves.

Assessment for and of learning - as a result of the creative lessons the Teacher devised a different type of test for the end of term formal HASS lessons which she took each week after our Creative schools class. This class had Year 3 students from the Creative Schools program and those from another class – the test was open ended, where the students had to select their own country/celebration/commemoration and fill in a who, what, when, where, why and how chart.

The biggest challenge was keeping to the time limit so that there was enough time for adequate reflection. Reflection time was adapted to include a gallery walks and discussions about what ChoM were being used. This was a successful use of the classroom environment making the reflection more continuous and relevant to the work in progress. They used the ChoM chart – at first with the students just placing post-it-notes on the areas they thought they had used and the adults tallying the results. As everyone grew more confident with the Chart, the students wrote their names onto the post-it-notes and attached to the chart – this gave more ownership.

Intended outcomes and The Big Question – did they achieve a greater persistence shown by students, a willingness to give everything a go, especially open ended tasks? Yes, the students became braver as the sessions evolved. It was also noticeable that they helped each other.

The Creative felt that the students benefited from being allowed to do things which they would normally not be allowed to do – like popping balloons or spending a morning in bare feet, making footprints in clay, and, most importantly, making their own decisions. Both the Teacher and Creative adapted their approach from always answering questions to asking students “What do you think?”

The initial plan was for the students to visit a different country each week to research a particular celebration or commemoration and record their results in their passports as well as making a memento or souvenir. It soon became obvious that this was too prescriptive and teacher directed. To give the students more agency they were encouraged to work in groups of 3 on a celebration/commemoration of their choosing. The first week they had to research their country, the second week they had to research the celebration or commemoration and share their results without using words, the third week they had to find a way to present their information without using technology (specifically Ipads). The fourth week they created their own celebration and had to

use balloons to present their choices.

The final 2 sessions were a combined session based on NAIDOC - to celebrate National Aboriginal and Islander Day - an adaptation of tracking through creating clay footprints (gifts for the garden and a reflection on the earth water holding properties of clay). We also represented Dreamtime stories using rice on black paper (ephemeral art).

Has deep learning occurred? Combing the Curriculum Area of HASS, ChoM, Creative Learning Spaces, and Creative Practice.

The students used the classroom space in a less formal way – some worked on the floor – they took their ideas and ran with them. Some worked at desks, others standing. The teacher did configure the class to give more space for whole class mat sessions. With the NAIDOC activity, it proved more suitable to conduct the entire clay session outside rather than move desks. It was a 16 degree day with wind and wild weather. The students were so engrossed in their learning activity that the weather and space became immaterial.

Week 3 saw the Teacher and Creative Practitioner presenting themselves and the students with a challenge – adults were not allowed to speak and students had to present their findings without speaking. The teacher found it difficult at first, as many students asked her questions. Afterwards she said that she had found it liberating to just walk away. From this small change in behaviour the biggest growth occurred – the students enjoyed owning their responsibility for discovering things for themselves, they appeared to be more independent, more engaged, more collaborative, more persistent, more willing to have a go. Two words which the students have used to describe our sessions: interesting and exciting. This is certainly how the Creative Practitioner feels about the program.

“The students have seen the importance of the learning habits of mind. That’s just been a real delight to see. They reflect on their learning against the habits of mind framework , not only in the creative schools sessions but other learning times. They are talking at home about their learning habits of mind as well.” (Drama Teacher)

**“Lucy really enjoyed and engaged with the programme and the kids engaged. It was hilarious to see and hear them making noise. I’m really happy. It is great to see innovation and innovative thinking in our school and to have someone other than the teacher come and do it.” (Principal)**

“At week 3 I have already noticed a change in the students, they are better able to get into groups and the edges appear to be rounding off.” (Drama Teacher)



## TERM 3

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## CURRICULUM FOCUS

### Science - Biological Sciences

Living things grow, change and have offspring similar to themselves (ACSSU030) and can be grouped on the basis of observable features and can be distinguished from non-living things. (ACSSU044)

### Science inquiry skills

#### Questioning and predicting

- Year 2 pose and respond to questions, and make predictions about familiar objects and events.
- With guidance, Year 3 identify questions in familiar contexts that can be investigated scientifically, and make predictions based on prior knowledge.

#### Communicating

- Year 2 represent and communicate observations and ideas in a variety of ways.
- Year 3 represent and communicate observations, ideas and findings using formal and informal representations.

### Cross-curricular Links

In the split Year 2/3 class many of the cross curricular links crossed year levels, reinforcing concepts for the Year 3 students and providing scaffolding for the Year 2 students.

We did not focus on teaching these elements of the curriculum; however, in our eclectic approach to teaching this Science unit, we touched on many of the curriculum - Literacy, Literature, Language, Mathematics, Digital Technology, Health and Physical Education, and Visual Art.

### Context

Churchlands Primary School is located in one of Perth's more affluent neighbourhoods. It is an Independent Public School catering for over 550 students from Kindergarten to Year 6. Many families have both parents employed in professional fields. The school is a culturally diverse community with a significant number of students who speak English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D). Community support of the school and its educational programs is excellent.

## WHAT WE DID

The teacher had noticed an increase in students displaying a fear of making mistakes, often accompanied by high levels of anxiety. This was also tied to an increased use of screen time by students in their leisure hours. To this end, the main goal of our Creative Schools Program was to build persistence, collaboration and imagination.

We began by allowing the students choice and agency in what and how they uncovered the Science curriculum link to - living things grow, change and have offspring similar to themselves (ACSSU030); and can be grouped on the basis of observable features and can be distinguished from non-living things. (ACSSU044)

### OUR OVERARCHING QUESTION WAS:

How do we make learning visible?

How does persistence look?

**“We were trying to build self-belief, greater persistence, willingness to give everything a go and open ended tasks.”**

(Teacher)

These distilled into specific Creative Habits of Mind (CHoM):

**PERSISTENT** - sticking with difficulty.

**COLLABORATIVE** - giving and receiving feedback and co-operating appropriately.

**INQUISITIVE** - wondering and questioning.

There was a strong reliance on the teacher to reinforce the CHoM and continue the learning after our weekly session had finished – be it in finishing off and editing a comic strip or capturing examples of the Creative Habits in action.

### HOW DID WE MAKE THE CURRICULUM COME ALIVE?

The various modes of learning/multiple intelligences. Bodily-kinaesthetic, Visual-Spatial, Verbal-linguistic, Logical – mathematical, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal and Naturalistic - were taken into account in our various presentations during each lesson. Through activities, engaging the senses, engaging multiple intelligences, through movement, meditation, outside and inside, group and individual work, warm up and pre-warm-up activities, making and doing, speaking and listening and time for reflection; the students, teacher and creative practitioner were able to make the curriculum content come alive.

### HOW DID WE MAKE CREATIVE HABITS OF MIND COME ALIVE?

By using the Creative Habits of Mind, educating the students about them, both during the sessions and reinforcing them throughout the week. Other key components of this strategy were: using the CHoM chart; and using reflection time during and after an activity.

We targeted areas of the High Functioning classroom such as: the teachers moved from direct instruction to being a guide, individual tasks were moved towards more group work, the role of the learner changed from directed to self-managed, and reflection time from limited to continuous.

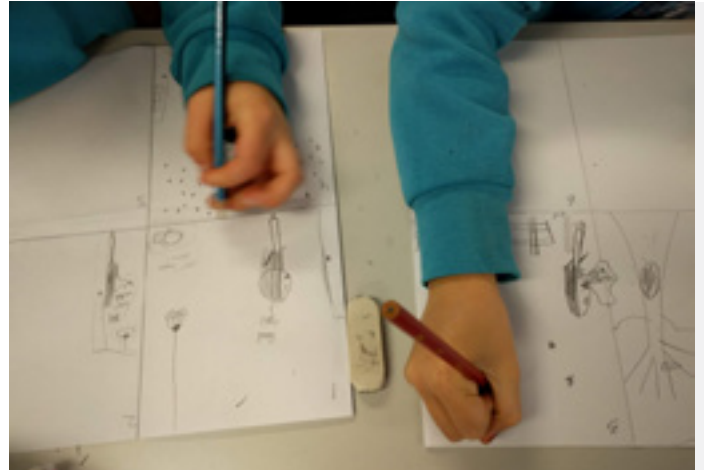
By allowing students to speak of what and how they were learning – with a slight adaptation of the Visual Thinking Strategies of Abigail Housen and Philip Yenawine we tried to:



“Encourage all students to speak and allow them to finish their thoughts completely. ... to encourage the quieter students. Much of the learning at this stage comes through the process of verbal expression. Speaking enables growth.”

(Excerpt from [ww.carearts.org/lessons/rdfs/Visual\\_Thinking\\_Strategies.rtf](http://ww.carearts.org/lessons/rdfs/Visual_Thinking_Strategies.rtf))

To embed the ChoM in their hearts and minds we gave the students opportunities to discover the ChoM in action. By allowing “No mistakes” to pervade and create opportunities to use mistakes as learning tools.



## HOW DID WE ACTIVATE STUDENT VOICE AND LEARNER AGENCY

We designed the program to let the students determine the focus of their learning through connecting learning to their interests. The outcome was to create a more meaningful learning experience. We were giving the students a voice: By asking, What do you think? By stepping back, by talking less, listening more, providing thinking time, being clear, waiting, by allowing the students to do things not normally allowed, like popping balloons, like asking teabag questions, like making ephemeral art, like drawing with their eyes closed, by sculpting in sand, by going outside, by group work, by encouraging collaboration, inquiry, imagination and independence and fun.



## WHAT WAS THE IMPACT

### SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The principal was very positive and accommodating, supporting the concepts of embedding creativity and critical thinking skills with the staff and the whole school community. She had noticed that the collaboration with the teacher and staff members has led to an increased interest in applying creative skills in the school and from the parents.

The office/administration staff were always ready with a question of what we were doing that day. The Creative was often early to the school so spent time in the staff room chatting with teachers, visitors, the school psychologist, and the school librarian, explaining the Creative Schools Program and learning about the school environment. Building interest in the Creative Schools Program and in the school community was one of the self-appointed roles the Creative Practitioner enjoyed.

### STUDENTS

The students really connected with the CHoM of Persistence and Collaboration – sticking with difficulty and tolerating uncertainty. The students certainly matured over the term, in their ability to “have a go” and tolerate the uncertainty of the challenging activities asked of them – such as asking a teabag question or drawing with their eyes closed. The results of this growth could be seen in the maturity and imagination of the story telling and visualisation in their cartoons. When the buddy class came to share in their success, the students were very proud to share their learning. In the culmination activity of creating sand sculptures of their animals, their collaboration was evident as students shared sand patches and ideas of best practice. The students encouraged and assisted each other. It was a really enjoyable session. They consolidated their animal research and knowledge by transferring into the animals into 3D form. They demonstrated equanimity and persistence in the face of sculptures collapsing and being trodden on. The care, attention to detail and imagination was evident, even with the knowledge that the work was ephemeral and would be gone by lunchtime.

### TEACHER

“Taking a step back and letting the students lead really let me see learning come alive for the students.”

“I found it hard at first to let go, I would want to answer every question, now my go to is, “What do you think?”

These two quotes give the best evidence of the impact the program had on the teacher. She said that she found it liberating to walk away, to not have to answer the same question multiple times.

The biggest impact of this small change in Teacher behaviour was in the students – they blossomed in confidence as they realised that they could answer questions themselves and think for themselves. Their independence grew, and as this grew, so did their ability and confidence to “have a go” and to try new things. They appeared happier and made comments such as, “Before we would have said No, this is mine, but now we are sharing and showing each other”.

### CREATIVE PRACTITIONER

I want to know more, ask more questions, listen more, have more time...

I guess that is the nature of the Creative Schools Program – to engage our sense of wonder. I will certainly miss this lovely class of eager and enthusiastic students.

The biggest learning curve for me was to allow time – time for students to think of answers to questions. The teacher demonstrated a process of explaining what was expected – 40 second thinking time, then pair-share, then group responding time. The responses from everyone were thoughtful and insightful and the normally quiet girls were amazing in the quality and depth of their observations. After my quick fire, high energy, fast pace, get everything done style of teaching, this was my moment of insight.

I feel privileged to have been a Creative Practitioner for the program this year. The opportunity to be involved in this groundbreaking research and training has been invaluable, both personally and professionally. I have grown in my ability to apply the creative and critical thinking capabilities to my own practice. To engage the students in a delight for learning by activating the curriculum in a creative way; and by using the creative habits of mind to help children reflect on their learning. These achievements have been one of the highlights of my career.

## QUOTES

“I thought maybe I can do this, so I tried and I saw I was improving.” (Student)

“I made a sand sculpture of a snake and I think I used sticking with difficulty because it was hard to make it and it kept falling apart.” (Student)

“Today I made a kookaburra sand sculpture at school and I used my imagination to see how a kookaburra looked. I sculpted the kookaburra at first but it didn’t work, so I tried again and added detail.”

“There’s lots of questions to think about and answer. I like how it gets you to create in your imagination and let it out to the world.” (Student)

“Basically you are daring to be different the whole time. You get to answer your questions by actually doing it.” (Student)

“Mrs Chant teaches us creative things we can work on in activities. It’s enjoyable and you can learn lots of stuff from the teacher. I can then be a person that teaches other people how to be creative.” (Student)

“In other lessons you stay in the classroom. You get to do lots of different things in Creative Schools. In art you have to trace nicely but in Creative Schools you don’t have to be neat.” (Student)

“I’m learning the five habits and I never knew that before. It doesn’t matter if you make mistakes. You can turn mistakes into something good.” (Student)

“In Creative Schools we are learning new skills and learning about the world. It doesn’t matter if your spelling is not perfect. It’s more important to concentrate and be creative.” (Student)

“Mrs Chant lets our mind go free.” (Student)

“I’m getting better at drawing and writing skills. I’m getting better at collaboration, and giving and receiving feedback.” (Student)

“You do learning in a fun way. We do experiments, like with clay when we had to throw it in the floor and see if it keeps its shape.” (Student)

“In normal lessons we sit at our desks. In Creative Schools we move around. We do lots of talking and group work.” (Student)

“We are learning partner work. To be more confident and to talk in front of the class.” (Student)

“Firstly I would like to say a big thank you for being part of this program and part of the team. Your positive energy was definitely felt in Room 4 with the active engagement of the students.” (Principal)

“My child finds the project fun, challenging and enjoys being creative.” (Parent)

“Learning and having fun at the same time; what is not to love!” (Parent)

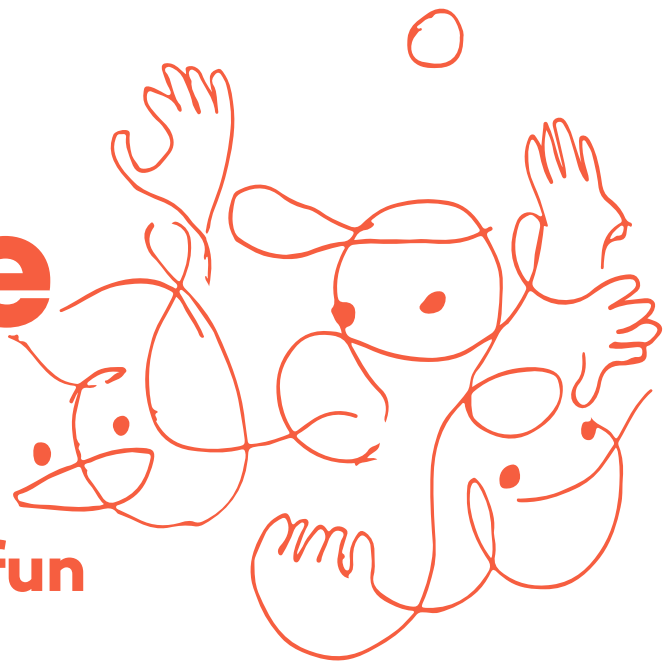
“My child came home from school feeling happy and excited talking about the creative schools project.” (Parent)

“I’m seeing big improvements in collaboration. Other people are noticing it too. Mrs Idle our Drama teacher has commented on the children’s improved collaboration skills. Even the person from the SciTech incursion mentioned how well the children work together. Creative Schools has made me think about questions and answers. It’s made me realise that I tend to want to help by giving the answer to questions. I try not to answer so many questions now. I’m asking more questions of the students. Even the children have changed their wording. Instead of saying they have a question they now say “I have a comment”. The children are really enjoying the program. I’ve been thinking about how I can talk to other staff about this program and how to give examples of what we are doing.” (Teacher)

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deep learning, hard fun



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The Creative Schools Program was initiated and is managed by FORM, provided by the Department of Education and is financially supported by the Western Australian Government.

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