



**creative
schools**

**CHURCHLANDS
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

CASE STUDY — TERM 2 & 3

TERM 2

creative schools

Creating the conditions for learning

Can practicing the five habits of mind help us to be investigators, questioners, explorers and reflectors?

Term focus:

Students were introduced to the Creative Habits of Mind model and taught how to use the Habits to direct their own learning. This was applied to studying the impact of bushfires or floods on environments and communities and how people can respond (ACHASSK114).

Visual Artist

Andrea Tenger

Teacher

Hannah Barnett

School

Churchlands Primary School

Year group

Year 4/5



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

HASS KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

GEOGRAPHY: The impact of bushfires or floods on environments and communities and how people can respond. (ACHASSK114)

Cross-curricular links

HASS SKILLS: Develop and refine a range of questions required to plan an inquiry.

SCIENCE UNDERSTANDING

Chemical Science: Natural and processed materials have a range of physical properties that can influence their use (ACSSU074)

SCIENCE INQUIRY

Questioning and Predicting: With guidance, identify questions in familiar contexts that can be investigated scientifically and make predictions based on prior knowledge.

GENERAL CAPABILITIES:

Critical and Creative Thinking: Students pose questions to clarify and interpret information and probe for causes and consequences; combine ideas in a variety of ways and from a range of sources to create new possibilities; reflect on assumptions made, consider reasonable criticism and adjust their thinking if necessary.

Personal and Social: analyses factors that influence ability to self-regulate; devise and apply strategies to monitor own behavior and set realistic learning goals.

Role of Creative Habits:

Inquisitive: wondering and questioning, exploring and investigating, challenging assumptions

Persistent: daring to be different and tolerating uncertainty

Imaginative: playing with possibilities

Disciplined: reflecting critically

Collaborative: cooperating appropriately

THE LEARNING PROCESS:

The class teacher Hannah Barnett wanted to see what would happen if she relinquished control of the learning process and made the students a central resource. She wanted her students to direct their own learning, instead of waiting for her to provide the information and then the directions as to what to do with that information.

Warm ups were an essential tool to break students out of the habit of waiting passively for the teacher to tell them what to do next. The short games encouraged students to practice the five creative habits of learning in a fun way. I noticed that when the warm up activity required students to be imaginative many of them did not trust their intuition and they worried that what they did would be wrong.

The learning sessions were designed to incrementally shift the control of the leaning from the teacher to the students. We anticipated that the students would find this different approach to learning challenging and that it might create feelings of uncertainty.

We began by writing Post-It-Note poems about what we thought 'being creative' meant and spent time establishing what the five creative habits of learning are. We created our own common language about the habits and called them The Five Creative Super Powers and made a super-hero shield to show how well we currently used them. The students didn't know it, but they were already starting to direct their own learning. Imagine thinking

*Imagine thinking
About new things that
Are unique.
Make ideas into inventions.
Creating magic!*

We then practiced being inquisitive; wondering and questioning. For example; students worked in groups and asked a photograph of a fire ten questions. They then sorted and grouped the questions on what I know, what I want to know, what I have learned and arranged them in a grid. These questions would form the basis for their learning about the effects of fire. They had created their own learning plan.

Changing from passive to active learners required persistence. The learning environment was different, and this approach challenged the students. During one session the students were simply asked to answer a question that had been written on the board; 'What was Black Saturday and how did it effect the environment?' No further instructions were issued. Initially there were many questions about what to do and how to do it. The only answer was "What do you think?" or "Will it help you answer the question?" I noticed a palpable fear from many of the students; a fear of doing the wrong thing and a fear of getting the wrong answer. But once they were convinced that they were allowed to do whatever they thought they needed to do to answer the question they got to work. Most formed groups and worked collaboratively to research the question and prepare a response.

Being self-managed learners allowed students to be imaginative and play with possibilities. One session asked the students to tell the story of the Black Saturday fire from the viewpoint of one of the characters. Each group was given a character. The only rule was that the story had to have a beginning, a middle and an end. A variety of approaches to the task were employed and so each story was created and shared differently. Some groups presented a short play, others read from iPads and some created illustrated texts on paper or whiteboards.

Reflection

There were opportunities to reflect critically on what was created during the sessions whether it was a story, poem, table or artwork. Groups were asked to give feedback by writing on post it notes indicating what they liked, what they didn't like and what they had noticed. There were group discussions about how the product was created and how it could be improved.

It was important to identify which of the 'Five Creative Superpowers' we had used during the session. We used the same language seen in the Creative Habits of Mind wheel poster for example:

"I cooperated with others in my group and wrote the notes."

"I wondered what it would be like to be a fire."

I noticed that the students found it easy to identify when they had practised being collaborative and inquisitive but needed help to identify and articulate times when they had been persistent, disciplined and imaginative.

Impact of Learning:

Encouraging and enabling the students to reflect on the learning environment itself gave students autonomy. It helped them direct future sessions. It also allowed Hannah and I to assess how the students were feeling about being self-managed learners and adjust the level of difficulty and uncertainty if required.

"I liked having more time to do the work, that there weren't a lot of rules. We could be creative and we could do anything instead of having to show our thinking all the time. The topic was broad so we could do anything and so everything was different. I liked that we could use any supplies we wanted." (Student)

"I didn't like that we didn't have enough time for all of our ideas. I couldn't see what everyone else did – everyone should have gone up the front. We needed more information at the start because we didn't know what we actually had to do. The question was so broad it was easy to go in lots of different ways and get lost. It was hard to work out what to do and how to do it." (Student)

"The students have seen the importance of the learning the creative 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." (Diane Idle)

TERM 3

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Visual Artist

Andrea Tenger

Teacher

Hannah Barnett

School

Churchlands Primary School

Year group

Year 5/6



CURRICULUM FOCUS

Humanities and Social Science - knowledge and understanding.

History - First Contacts.

The diversity and longevity of Australia's first people and the ways they are connected to Country/place (e.g. land, sea, waterways, skies) and their pre-contact ways of life (ACHASSK083)

The nature of contact between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples and others (e.g. the Macassans, Europeans) and the impact that these interactions and colonisation had on the environment and people's lives (e.g. dispossession, dislocation, the loss of lives through conflict, disease, loss of food sources and medicines) (ACHASSK086)

CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

HASS Skills

Questioning and research: Identify current understanding of a topic; develop a range of focus questions to investigate; locate and collect information from a variety of sources; record selected information and/or data.

Evaluating: Draw conclusions and give explanations, based on information and/or data displayed in texts, tables, graphs and maps; Use decision making processes.

Analysing: Interpret information and/or data collected; Identify different points of view/perspectives in information and/or data (e.g. analyse language, identify motives) (WAHASS57); Translate collected information and/or data into different formats.

Communicating and reflecting: Present findings in a range of communication forms; Develop texts, including narratives and biographies, that use researched facts, events and experiences, reflect on learning, identify new understanding and act on findings in different ways.

WHAT WE DID

ENGLISH

Literature

Literature and context: Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts (ACELT1608)

Features of literary texts: Recognise that ideas in literary texts can be conveyed from different viewpoints, which can lead to different kinds of interpretations and responses (ACELT1610)

GENERAL CAPABILITIES

Critical and Creative Thinking

- Pose questions to clarify and interpret information and probe for causes and consequences
- Analyse, condense and combine relevant information from multiple sources
- Combine ideas in a variety of ways and from a range of sources to create new possibilities
- Identify situations where current approaches do not work, challenge existing ideas and generate alternate solutions
- Reflect on assumptions made, consider reasonable criticism and adjust their thinking if necessary.
- Apply knowledge gained from one context to another unrelated context and identify new meaning.

Context

Churchlands Primary School is a celebrated Independent Public Primary School where committed stakeholders (parents, students and staff) work in partnership to support school direction that results in higher performance. The school rates above average in the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage with 73% of its students in the top quarter (the higher the ICSEA value, the higher the level of educational advantage of students who go to this school.) The school proudly embraces a unique cultural and linguistically diverse community; 53% have a language background other than English. There is one Indigenous student at the school.

About History

Learning about Aboriginal history and culture helps students to develop a respect for diversity and understanding of cultural differences. It provides all students with a rich and well-rounded knowledge of Australia's true history. But non-Indigenous educators worry about whether content is treated respectfully and that learning experiences are appropriate. While no amount of study can substitute for the lived experiences of Aboriginal community members, a creative learning approach can create meaningful learning opportunities by promoting the skill of empathy; an ability to understand and share the feelings of other people from different time periods and cultures which can help understand diversity.



What we did

We aimed to create a high functioning classroom with a focus on encouraging students to manage their own learning; to become self-learners. The role of the teachers was 'challenging'. We challenged the students to think differently and learn differently and there was very little formal instruction. The students were often given a task or asked a question and then allowed time to collect the information and work out how to share it with the class.

All of the activities involved collaboration and the learning was physical and highly visible. The activities were mobile and utilised the spaces inside and outside of the classroom in different ways.

We offered authentic activities that would excite and challenge the students, and promote the skill of empathy while learning about the impact that colonisation had on Aboriginal people's lives.

We wanted the students to develop a deeper understanding of what being connected to Country actually means and so designed a series of activities that would help the students create connections to their own special place in the world. For the first session of the term we lay face up on the grass outside and while paying attention to the sun, earth and air we thought and breathed deeply and identified five things that were essential to them staying alive and being happy. Then, using only lines, shapes, colours or symbols we made drawings of each of these 'things' on a large piece of

cardboard (old fridge box) on the grass outside. This 'community canvas' became a classroom resource that was used in future sessions.

Later in the term, during Science Week, when an alien spacecraft landed at the school, the artist dressed as an alien and invaded the classroom with the aim of setting up a colony. Through role play the students experienced dispossession, dislocation, the loss of lives through conflict, disease, loss of food sources, and medicines. They were asked to write about this experience and make links to the real events in Australia's history. These diary entries became a resource to be used in the future sessions.

There was continuous reflection throughout the sessions, formal and informal, group and individual. Time devoted to reflection at the end of each session allowed the learning to be made visible; students were asked to recap on what they did, how they did it (relating to the Creative Habits of Learning) and why they did it.

The students produced a range of creative works that demonstrated learning including a community canvas, bird's eye sand maps and a diary entry written in English and then in an invented secret code. Each student presented their work and described their learning at the annual Learning Journey evening at the school.



KEY CREATIVITY SKILLS/HABITS

Inquisitive: wondering and questioning, exploring and investigating, challenging assumptions

Persistent: daring to be different and tolerating uncertainty

Imaginative: playing with possibilities

Disciplined: reflecting critically

Collaborative: cooperating appropriately

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

Students were able to:

- Be more disciplined in their approach to learning.
- Reflect critically on their own work and make adjustments and improvements.
- Be persistent in tolerating uncertainty, having to make their own decisions and trust their intuition when directing their own learning instead of relying on their teacher.
- Demonstrate that there are important skills required for effective collaboration, simply being part of a group is not sufficient.
- Give and accept relevant and constructive feedback or criticism within a prescribed context.
- Meet the curriculum outcomes about the impacts of European settlement on Aboriginal people.

The teacher and creative practitioner found that:

Clear goal setting from the beginning helped keep the planning and delivery on track.

Creative learning can be messy and chaotic at times.

There is a lot of uncertainty in terms of the end product not being exactly what we imagined or hoped it would look like. Reminding ourselves to focus on supporting the process meant that

students had agency in the process.

QUOTES AND PHOTOS

“In Creative Schools there are no certain ways to do things; not many rules. We had to figure out our own ways of doing things within a time frame. Teachers for once stood aside and let the students do their own learning. Sometimes it was hard without a guide, but I learnt how to think of an idea and build on it, stick with it and do it all in a time frame.” (Student)

“When the UFO crashed, we put ourselves in the Aboriginal people's shoes...we pretended that the aliens had crash landed to take over our country and Miss T dressed up as an alien, so we were developing empathy with the Aboriginal people.” (Student)

“In many activities we had to be persistent and ‘stick with difficulty’ and ‘tolerate uncertainty’ because sometimes we didn’t get much instruction from Miss T, so we had to figure it out for ourselves.” (Student)

“I learnt to reflect critically. I have learnt this by putting a writing goal at the top of my English book. Now I am always looking back to my goal and re-reading my work so I can enable myself to achieve my goal within the writing time I have.” (Student)

“I never realised how many questions I answer in a day until I stopped answering. Allowing the students to take control of their learning gave me time to spend with students who needed more support.” (Teacher)

“Next time it would be good to see if we could apply this approach to the entire term's unit of work and formally plan how to embed the creative learning objectives across the whole scheme of work, instead of focusing on just one learning area.” (Teacher)

“The students and teachers have enjoyed and benefited from having the artists in the school. Our school values are all about providing opportunities for deep learning, for both students and teachers. We want our students to experience success and be critical and creative thinkers both now and in the future.” (Principal)

“At first the students found the idea of being in control of their own learning quite stressful but careful planning and a determination by both the teacher and the creative practitioner to step back, created a learning environment that was consistent and safe. This allowed the students to let go of their fear of getting things wrong and start to enjoy discovering and learning for themselves.” (Creative Practitioner)

“I think I will be forever known as the alien that invaded the classroom and took all of their special things away – their names, their pets, their Wifi, their lunch and the Eagles AFL grand final win – but I’m okay with that!” (Creative Practitioner)

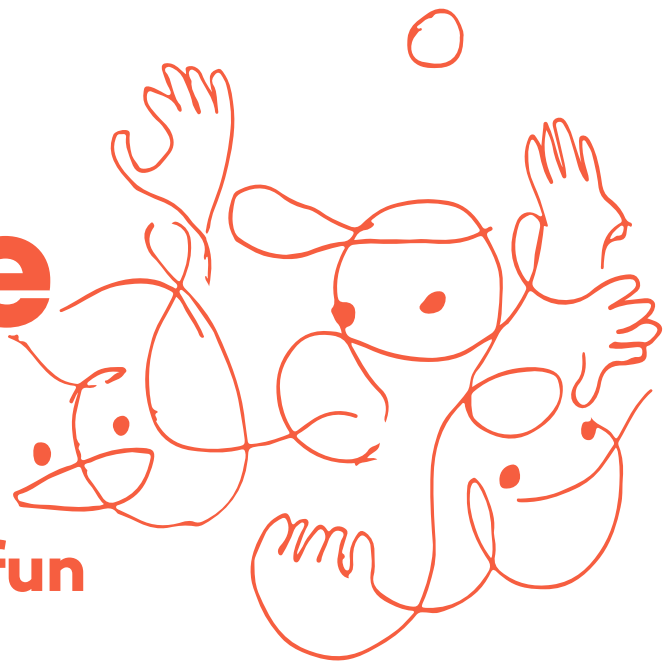
“The best thing that came out of the project was the development of students dialogue and language ability. The children became more articulate and more conscious of criteria. They really did get insight into understanding the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal people. Their decision making skills improved. They are usually just so focused on getting an A, but Creative Schools got them thinking for themselves.” (Teacher)



FORM. creative learning

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deep learning, hard fun



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FORM.
building a state of creativity



Department of
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