



**creative  
schools**

**MELVILLE PRIMARY**  
CASE STUDY — TERM 2 & 3

## TERM 2

# creative schools

Creative Practitioner  
Trudi Bennett  
(Outdoor Classrooms,  
Nature Connection and  
Project Oriented Learning)

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 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









## CREATIVE HABITS

Collaborative, Disciplined, Persistent, Imaginative, Inquisitive

## CURRICULUM LINKS:

**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)

**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

## THE BIG QUESTION

**How can the park next to the school be used as an outdoor classroom and develop stronger connections between the children and the park?**

Next to Melville Primary School is a beautiful park, landscaped with 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 wondered 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.

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.

The creative, Trudi Bennett's, assumption was that year 3's may not yet be the best at breaking a task down into small steps and retaining explained steps in order to follow instructions. 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 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. One child came up to the Trudi at the end of the session, "Trudi I like you and I like Friday afternoons going to Kadjini Headquarters, it is really fun, but today was hard." 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.

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. "Oh, the freedom!" they cried as they ran out to the park. 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. The session ended with a rain shower, a bright double rainbow and children running and dancing in the rain and rolling down a grassy hill with joy. The children went home saying it was the best day of the year and the teacher, Michelle, discovered the engagement and energy of her class when given control over their own learning in the outdoor classroom.





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. Michelle, reflected that at this stage she felt like she was back in her role as a teacher in the indoor classroom, pushing students, particularly the reluctant writers through a writing task. 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 writing out of the outdoor classroom to allow space for more hands-on, nature connected learning that the students were craving. Michelle invited her class to into this plan by suggesting that the class surprise Trudi by writing and finishing the game procedures before she returned next week. This way rather than writing in Kadjini Headquarters, they could play each other's games instead. 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.

"It was so brilliant! The students were so excited about writing and bursting to get started. There was energy in the class, yet they were writing quietly. Even the reluctant writers were engaged. When they came together, they discovered what they were missing through collaboration." Michelle Roberts



When Trudi arrived for session 7, there was a very excited energy with the anticipation of the surprise reveal. Trudi made sure to feign being too busy or distracted to listen when any of the students tried to tell her the secret ahead of time while they were quietened by the rest of the class. The session started, with Trudi introducing the need to write the procedures and vote on whether than was to be done outside or inside. Much joy was shared when the surprise work was finally revealed.

During that session, Michelle and Trudi were able to join in the games as one of the players, confident that the students knew what they were doing, how to collaborate appropriately with each other and respect the place. At the end of the session Michelle reflected that, "The less involvement we have out there, the more the children get out of it."

The project was celebrated in session 8 by the buddy class of year 5s coming to play the year 3s game in Kadijini. The year 3 students (and their teacher and creative) were all feeling excited and a little nervous. This time the cockatoos had chewed off bright pink banksia flowers and these were added to the games as decorations, obstacles or prizes.

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.

Feedback from the year 3's ranged from, "The buddies are good at our game," to, "The year 5s don't understand the game as well as we do." The year 5 students commented that some of the games were hard or needed a bit more logic. However, they were all sad that they didn't get time to try all the games and wanted to come back and play the rest at another time.

The year 5 teacher on entering the space commented, "Has this [outdoor classroom space] always been here? I never knew it was here." Towards the end of the session she reflected, "This is good for my class. I have lots of energetic children. They are intelligent but by the end of the day they need something else."

Michelle was worried that the year 5s might find the games too easy or young and that their teacher would not view it as a worthwhile use of their school day. However, the feedback was great with all the children engaged and working together to get the most out of the session. "They loved it and no one was doing the wrong thing!" year 5 teacher.

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."

**"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**

## TERM 3

# creative schools

Creative Practitioner  
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Teacher  
**Michelle Roberts**

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## CURRICULUM FOCUS

**Health and Physical Education – Movement and Physical Activity;**

**English – Literacy – Listening and Speaking Interactions;**

**General Capabilities – Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability and Sustainability.**

## CURRICULUM LINKS:

**Mathematics - Measurement and Geometry, Location and Transformation;**

**Science – Biological Science Understanding, Nature and Development of Science, Science Enquiry Skills;**

**HASS – HASS Skills, Civics and Citizenship;**

**Technologies – Technologies Processes and Production Skills.**



## CONTEXT

Next to Melville Primary School is a beautiful park with a ring of logs set up as an Outdoor Classroom. The teacher Michelle Roberts only used the park occasionally for reward days and is now developing an outdoor classroom pedagogy for her class.



## WHAT WE DID

### Project overview

We noticed that the students enjoyed their sessions in the park, Katijini Headquarters, seeing their time as play and exploration but not necessary learning or at least not relating learning outdoors with the learning they were doing indoors. We wanted to help the students identify and share what they were learning in the outdoor classroom by making their learning visible.

The teacher was also questioning whether she was meeting the parent expectations of school in the outdoor classroom and the expectations of her as a teacher. Through this project we also wanted to highlight learning for the parents.

#### This project contained three parts:

- reconnecting with the space and the creatures.
- developing mathematical questions and seeking answers.
- and students developing 15 minute collaborative lessons to deliver to the other students, their teacher and the creative practitioner.

#### Reconnecting with the space

Nature connection and exploration through play was an important part of the Creative Schools Program for the students as well as being with their friends. The students had been away from the space for at least three weeks and the sessions in this term provided more space for students to engage in the space in the way of their choosing. Sometimes this was playing their favourite games as a class, other times it was exploring the bush for spiders, caterpillars and other creatures, and at other times it involved rolling down the hill in various ways.

The warm up of the session followed a thread of curiosity regarding the visiting ravens. Each week we explored a different level of their language and used our imagination and inquiry skills to figure out what they were saying to us and to each other.

#### Mathematical Questions

Part of the curriculum that Michelle was focussing on in the indoor classroom was data collection and analysis. We used this as a scaffold to design a line of enquiry from a question, to the process of finding out, equipment needed and the working out of a problem or question. This really challenged collaboration, being flexible with ideas and making sure that all team members were included. Students investigated how many trees would fit in the park if they were just 1cm tall, how much moss grew around the drains, what proportion of the park were grass trees and how many birds could perch on the park bench at one time.

#### Student Lessons

The project culminated in spending almost a whole day out at the park. A day where the students became the teachers and the teachers became the students. The students worked in small groups of three to invent a lesson, organise equipment needed, and plan the timing of activities within a 15 minute time slot. Students had two weeks to prepare their lessons before the main day of delivery. Lessons ranged from floating and sinking seeds, treasure hunts, tree climbing, hide and seek with camouflage, stick fighting and moving and rolling down hills.



## HOW DID WE MAKE THE CURRICULUM COME ALIVE?

When we proposed to the class that we would spend almost the whole day outside, that they would become the teachers and we would become the students, there was a roar of excitement. The students loved the idea of having the opportunity to learn in the ways that they wanted to learn, to have control over what happened in a day and to include their adult teacher and creative practitioner in their playful style of learning. The role of the adults then became one of mentors and advisors. The students would bring us their proposals and we would ask them questions to pull out learning, safety and efficiency. The curriculum areas tackled were the ones involved in the design process and idea sharing.

The students made the Health and Physical Education curriculum come alive for themselves by involving play and movement of various types in all their lessons.

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

The Creative Habits of Mind were used in sharing advice on becoming a good teacher. We discussed ideas and tips about facilitation through using the Creative Habits of Mind and the students were able to apply these to their final project day. One of the biggest life-skills was around discipline and persistence, of being flexible and letting go of ideas when things do not work. The biggest challenge was in collaboration as the groups needed to be organised and communicate effectively under huge time pressures with an audience of students they needed to engage with limited adult support.

## HOW DID WE ACTIVATE STUDENT VOICE AND LEARNER AGENCY?

The students had total control over their choice of lesson and the adults supported them to bring out areas of curriculum learning, ensure the safety of their groups and to keep their lessons simple in order to experience success.

Strong relationships were built with their teacher through her engagement in all the lessons, including rolling down hills. Michelle also surprised students with a sausage sizzle lunch which was appreciated by the class during the half-way picnic.





## WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

### Students

The students learned how to work efficiently in small groups, through leadership, turn-taking, letting go of ideas, working quickly, delivering clear instructions and knowing when to stop and round up their lesson. The children acting as students learned how important it was to move and get settled quickly, listen carefully in order to support their friends and allow lessons to proceed so everyone was able to participate. We saw this learning develop over the day as the students learned through observation and quick reflections at the end of each lesson. The first few lessons were chaotic and ran out of time quickly, whereas the lessons at the end of the day started off smoothly and respectfully with clear directions and ample time for participation.

### Teacher

To give the students the most autonomy we did not program the curriculum area at the start but rather reflected as teachers at the end of each session. We used colour coding and dates to mark on the curriculum chart the areas which naturally arose in the learning. Michelle's concern on meeting the curriculum needs changed during the term and shifted from fear to surprise and comfort at the amount of learning covered.

### Creative Practitioner

To support Michelle in being strong with giving students this level of autonomy over their learning, Trudi needed to be strong in her conviction of the natural learning that would unfold. Use of reflection was important as was asking students questions at the right level so they could answer in enough depth. At first Trudi's questions were too abstract and learning was difficult to highlight, this progressed to more natural conversations which linked the Creative Habits of Mind to other learning areas.



## School Community

During the term we witnessed more and more classes coming to use the space. This helped Michelle open her idea of the park as a resource for the school and between sessions Michelle started inviting other classes to join them in the space to play a favourite game or shared lesson ideas with other teachers. One class was inspired by Michelle's initial 'Three Little Pigs' stick house lesson and they went on to replicate the activity for their class. Another teacher that rarely takes their students to the park, agreed to join Michelle's class to learn their favourite hide-and-seek game with biological science links.

## Parents

We placed a whiteboard outside for parents to give feedback, communicate learning at the park and to communicate future plans. This board became a hub of excitement for many students at the end of the day. They would drag their parents there to share the story of their day at the park, using the board as a conversation starter. It also opened up a communication channel between the parents and Trudi and was a safe space to invite feedback. Parents in a survey, communicated that they wanted their children to learn at the park by investigating and exploring what interested them or working on projects with small groups. This information helped Michelle feel comfortable with her new role on a Friday afternoon as she knew the parent expectations. Parents offered positive feedback regarding the energy and stories that children came home with after a Friday at the park.

## QUOTES

"You look at it and think that they aren't doing much but now that we've put it down [marked the curriculum] we have covered heaps." (Teacher)

**"The students are very kinaesthetic learners as most learning done is in PE."  
(Teacher)**

"It is OK for groups to fail as they will learn through that experience too." (Teacher)

"I'm a mini you today [teacher] because I get to lead Eagle Eye." (Student)

"If something didn't work they [students acting as teachers] still tried." (Student)

"We were sticking with difficulty with a time limit." (Student)

**"We were being inquisitive because we are wondering and questioning what to do."  
(Student)**

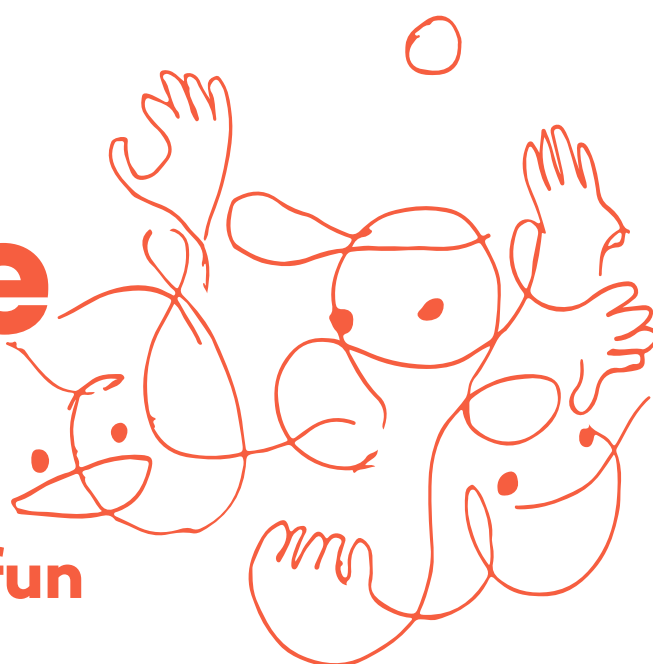
"What if we brought out all our chairs and desks and blackboards and bring it outside and have our classroom outside?" (Student)

**"Our challenge now is to find a way to move the Creative Schools Program into the rest of the school and how to support Michelle to communicate the program to other teachers."  
(Deputy Principal)**

**FORM.** creative  
learning

# creative schools

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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Education