



**creative
schools**

MELVILLE PRIMARY
CASE STUDY — TERM 2 & 3

TERM 2

creative schools

Visual Artist
Stephanie Reisch

Teacher
Abigail Temby

School
Melville 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 & 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



CURRICULUM FOCUS

ENGLISH

Literature and context
Creating literary texts
Personal responses
Word level grammar
Vocabulary

CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

Health and physical education

THE LEARNING PROCESS

How can we get students to be more engaged, articulate, creative and confident in their use of descriptive language?

To develop engaging nature based activities that can assist students in building a rich, sensory word bank to help improve overall literacy and understanding of figurative language. This term we used Kadijiny Park as a site from which to launch numerous activities that fully immersed the kids in the natural surrounds as well as stimulated their curiosity and imagination.



CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING

Coming into the class for the first time I quickly came to realise that most of the Five Habits of Learning were already ingrained in the schools culture. This particular class has a great overall dynamic, with most of the students being very supportive of one another, as well as quick to follow instructions and work through difficulties without any fuss. In my initial meeting with their teacher, Abigail Temby, she suggested the habits we needed to focus on were Imaginative and Inquisitive. Even though the students were generally eager learners, the overall literacy in the class was quite low and Abi felt that most of them simply didn't have the confidence or creative independence to really excel in their language studies.

Armed with this knowledge, my challenge was to find ways to get these students thinking differently about creative writing and encourage them to take risks in how they express their thoughts and perceptions of the world around them.

For me, at the heart of this 8-week program, was one very important element, and that was the need for authenticity. I felt that if I could get the students to connect to the subject in a meaningful way then those experiences would organically feed into their writing. For this reason the term focus was on sensory learning by engaging all the five senses (sight, sound, touch, taste and smell) and fully immersing the kids in the beautiful surrounds of Kadijiny Park.

Each week Abi and I structured the learning activities around a particular sense. For example in the second week we blindfolded the students and asked them to interact with the park using only sound. In week 5 we focused on the need to make meaningful connections to the site by capturing a specific mood or feeling. This resulted in each student renaming the park to reflect his or her own experiences and personal connection to Kadijiny. In week 6 the students participated in a scented trail, which involved mapping the park using passive and active smelling techniques such as rubbing, crushing and digging. From these olfactory findings the kids were then asked to create a scent that could transport them back to Kadijiny Park using essential oils and raw plant materials. The aim was to highlight the importance of memory and meaning in cultivating potent use of language. Throughout the term students were also required to apply their weekly sensory findings to specific writing activities, which consolidated the creative learning with the curriculum.

IMPACT OF LEARNING

Reflection: Teaching the students how to separate the senses and building independent word banks for each one was an effective way of stimulating curiosity and imagination in a subject area that can often be tedious and desk bound. Although spelling and grammar levels remained relatively the same, Abi and I found that overall student engagement, vocabulary, confidence and understanding of figurative writing had significantly increased. The most important outcome for this term was to have each student find their own voice in their writing. Furthermore, feedback from the students shows that sensory learning has made them more observant and mindful of their environment.





I'm learning to think in a different way. I recognise things around me in a new way. To interact with nature. To pick ordinary things up and notice special things about it. I'm learning in a whole new way. (student)

Reflecting on how you are learning is... looking back on what you've done. Giving yourself personal feedback on what you've just done. Being inquisitive and asking other people questions, getting them to say what they think about your work. (student)

We all have different ideas and different ways to express ideas and our own imagination and we get to explore new things with our own thoughts. (student)

In normal lessons we learn about the old ways. We do the same things together but in Creative Schools we get to explore our own ideas and explore mysterious discoveries. (student)

I think we are learning to step outside of our own shadows and stop trying to be like others. I like how we are learning the five senses and we have to say if the lesson was imaginative collaborative and that's a part of our own thoughts and not just following what everyone else thinks. (student)

Creativity is....when you dive into your thoughts and set them out loud and think about them. I think that is a good goal to have in life. (student)

Collaborative is....it's different to working on your own. You have to combine our ideas together to make it work. (student)

Persistent is....where you may have an idea but it may not work the first time so you keep trying until it turns out good. (student)

Inquisitive is....when you are wondering and questioning about all the things around you and thinking about the things you are doing. Asking why is this like this? More ideas like that. (student)

Imaginative is....where you use your creativity and thinking skills to come up with something new and original. (student)

Disciplined/Reflective is....discipline is having to take on constructive criticism. Some times it might be a bad comment but it's about not getting upset and learning something for next time. (student)

We normally do writing and thinking in other lessons. In Creative Schools there is more making and imagining. We have to use our minds more. (student)

In school you focus on academic stuff but with this way of learning we get to broaden out and use our imagination. There is not just basic art involved it's using your imagination to form new things. (student)

To use my imagination more when I am needing to problem solve something. It teachers me to learn using all my senses. (student)

Creativity is....being able to use your imagination and to be open to new ideas. (student)

Collaborative is....working together as a group and getting along. If you don't get along you could try seperate ideas and then join them at the end. (student)

Persistent is....if something doesn't go your way keep trying. It's kinda like resilience. If something brings you down keep trying don't give up. (student)

Inquisitive is....means asking lots of questions and learning new things from those answers. (student)

Imaginative is....having a broad imagination thinking of things on the spot and play along with ideas. (student)

Disciplined/Reflective is....paying respect, listening to who is talking to you, reflecting on what they say so that it doesn't go in one ear and out of the other. (student)



TERM 3

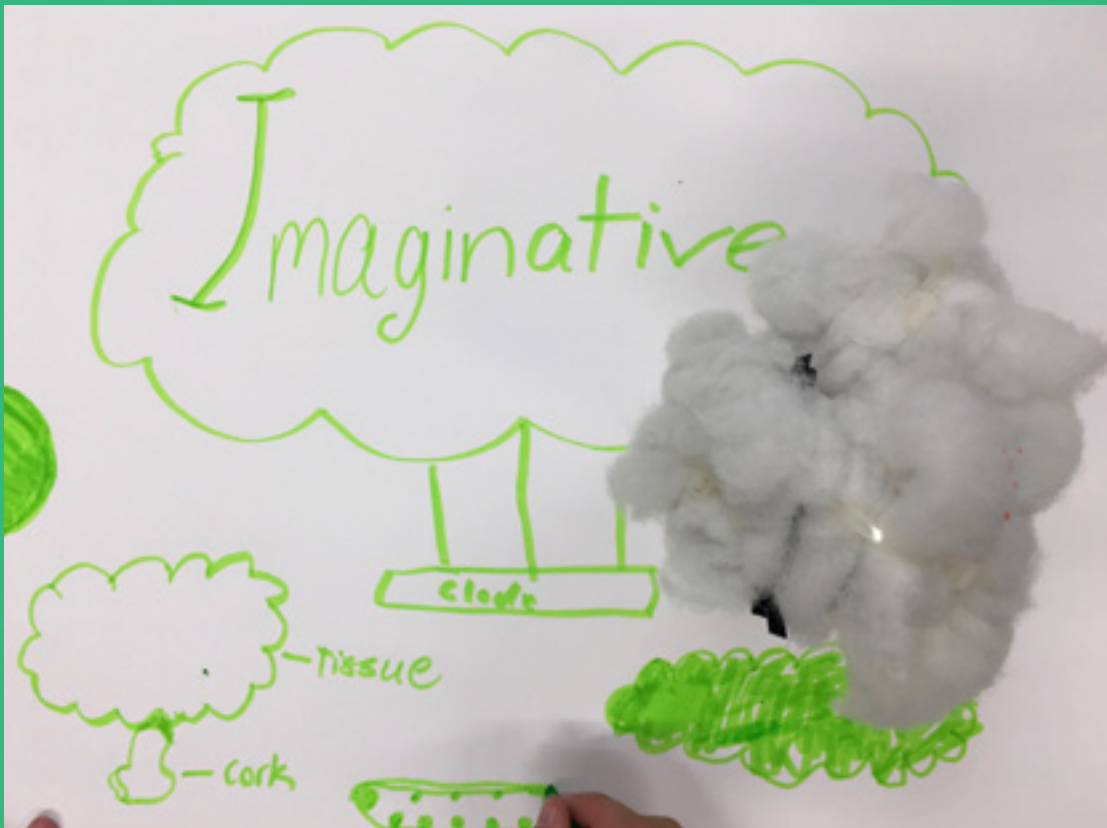
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CURRICULUM FOCUS

English (Poetry)



Curriculum Links:

- Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience (ACELY1714)
- Re-read and edit students' own and others' work using agreed criteria and explaining editing choices (ACELY1715)
- Understand how ideas can be expanded and sharpened through careful choice of verbs, elaborated tenses and a range of adverb groups/phrases (ACELA1523)
- Application of visual art elements and selection of materials, media and/or technologies, to communicate an idea, belief or viewpoint (ACAVAM115)
- Development and application of artistic techniques and processes with shape, colour, line, space, texture, value to create artwork (ACAVAM115)
- Presentation and reflection of ideas, feelings, beliefs and viewpoints expressed in artwork, including consideration of audience and feedback (ACAVAM116)

Cross-curricular Links

- History, Art, Health, Literacy, Drama, Biology

WHAT WE DID

In Term 2 the focus had been on developing authenticity, creative independence and imagination in the students' written work. The teacher and I had agreed early on that in order for language to have impact there had to be a meaningful connection, or deeper engagement, between the subject and the author. In this instance the subject had been Kadidjiny Park (Noongar for 'place of learning'). As a result, much of the eight week program had been devoted to establishing an outdoor classroom in which the kids could fully immerse themselves in the natural surroundings. Through deepening their self-awareness and connection to the park, they were able to document the way their different senses responded to the site's stimuli, resulting in a rich, sensory word bank for them to tap into.

Term 3 saw a continuation of our figurative language activities but with an emphasis on cultivating poetic expression. Although the students had their sensory word bank to draw from, and had demonstrated a reasonable amount of confidence in using it, understanding how seemingly very different words can connect to evoke strong feelings and powerful imagery required a different approach. I began thinking back on my own learning experiences at that age and recalled a time when my imagination had been captured while viewing the night sky through a telescope. I remember the compulsion to write a lengthy poem about a star constellation I had seen called Alpha Centauri. I recall going into a trance-like state and not being able to stop writing. The images in my mind, and the sensations that accompanied them, were so rapid and vivid that the writing itself became effortless. I really wanted the students to experience a similar level of excitement and fervor for writing. The question became, how do you get kids excited about writing poetry? Words can look beautiful on their own. Together they can shake internal worlds. How do you communicate that potential to a class of 11 year olds?

Abi and I decided that we would try to revisit the outdoor classroom model as often as possible and develop activities that offered not only a basic framework for conceptualisation, but also a process for distilling ideas out of infinite possibilities. The kids had spent most of Term 2 making personal connections to Kadidjiny Park so it made sense to continue our learning there. Most of our activities, such as 'poetry bocce' involved an element of randomness and we encouraged the class to persist with the word selections they were given and/or making. Simple word combinations were transformed into highly imaginative narrative poems that related back to the park experience in some way.

We also explored the visual impact of language through 2D and 3D art making. The result was a system for extracting and connecting words and images that provided students with a foothold for their imaginations to take off from. It also allowed them to see how words and language can mean different things to different people.

Interestingly in Term 3 we saw a shift take place in the class, which moved from the reflective individual to a more collaborative team dynamic. It appeared that this particular group of students developed a greater appreciation and enthusiasm for poetry through collaboration rather than through solitary practice. Each week Abi and I saw a significant improvement in their poetic expression and written dexterity.

Towards the end of the term we also began to see the Creative Habits of Mind really coming together. In the final week we asked the class to visualize a creative habit through assemblage art and explain the connections they had made. The kids were thinking in highly imaginative ways. They were persisting through complex problems and had learned the value of process. As a class they were collaborating effectively and supporting one another, as well as applying discipline to their tasks. It was fantastic to see.

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT

CREATIVE

Students learned to discover their own voice and the confidence to express it. As in all creative disciplines, authenticity is key. While the curriculum focus was on improving literacy and figurative language, I believe the real lesson was in self-awareness and connecting with the world in meaningful ways.

STUDENTS

“I think we are learning to step outside of our own shadows and stop trying to be like others.”

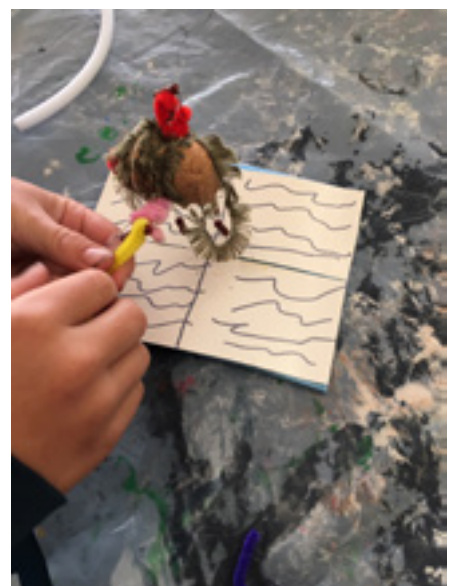
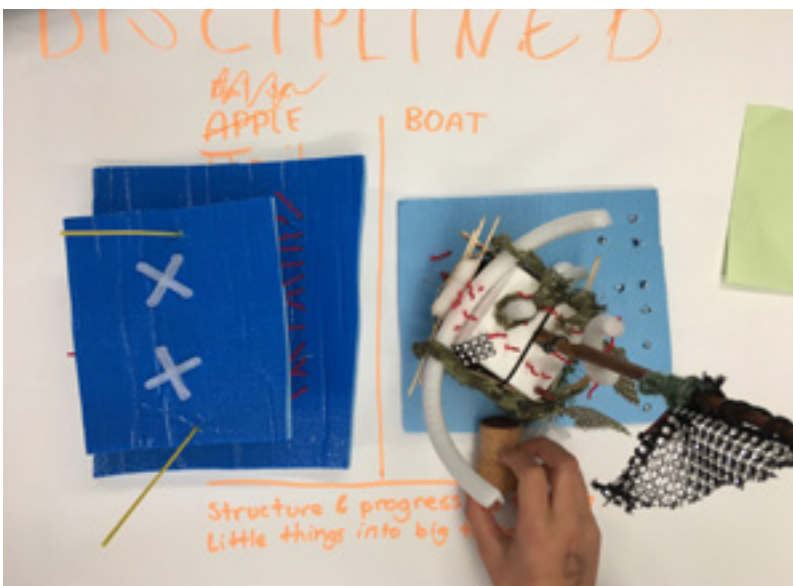
“We get to explore new things with our own thoughts.”

“I got to learn about the park in a whole new way. We use hearing and touch. We made a new name for the park. I really liked that.”

“I think Australia is built on myths” (A student said after mythological poetry week)

SCHOOL COMMUNITY

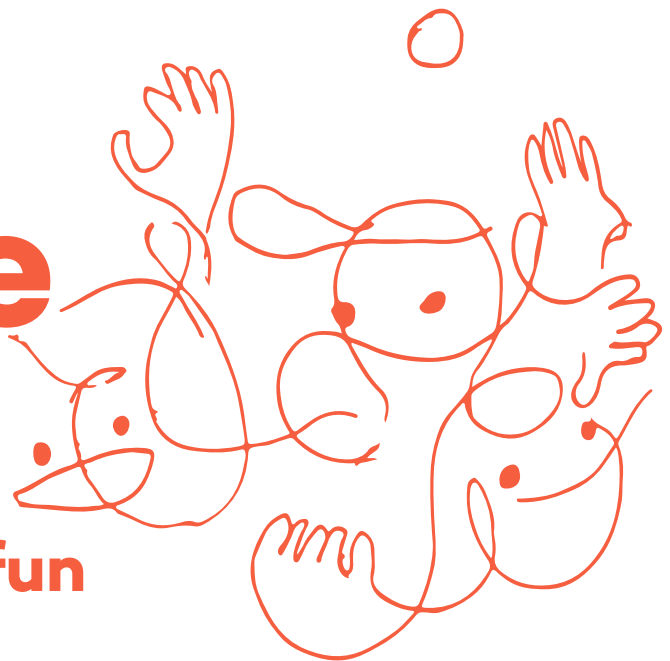
“I have received feedback and it has all been very positive with parents noting enthusiasm, a willingness to share experiences, and new found confidence and resilience in their children.”



FORM. creative learning

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deep learning, hard fun



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Education