

five habits of learning

creative schools



FORM University of Victoria

creative schools

GOVERNOR STIRLING
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CASE STUDY — TERM 2 & 3

TERM 2

creative schools

Creative Practitioner

Bernard Taylor

Teacher

Dean Sharman

School

**Governor Stirling
Senior High School**

Year group

Year 10

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

CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING

The inquiry was based on whether setting challenges and creating ownership would improve this cohort's interest and understanding of macroeconomics.

CURRICULUM FOCUS

Business and Economics

- Indicators of economic performance (e.g. economic growth rates, unemployment trends, inflation rates, human development index, quality of life index, sustainability indexes) and how Australia's economy is performing
- The links between economic performance and living standards, the variations that exist within and between economies and the possible causes (e.g. foreign investment, employment rates and levels of debt)
- The distribution of income and wealth in the economy and the ways in which governments can redistribute income (e.g. through taxation, social welfare payments)
- The ways that governments manage the economy to improve economic performance and living standards (e.g. productivity policy, training and workforce development policy, migration), and to minimise the effects of externalities (e.g. regulation)

CROSS-CURRICULUM LINKS:

Humanities and Social Sciences

- Construct, select and evaluate a range of questions and hypotheses involving cause and effect, patterns and trends, and different perspectives
- Analyse and clarify the purpose of an inquiry using appropriate methodologies, ethical protocols and concepts to plan for, and inform, an investigation

Evaluating

- Draw evidence-based conclusions by evaluating information and/or data, taking into account ambiguities and multiple perspectives; to negotiate and resolve contentious issues; to propose individual and collective action in response to contemporary events, challenges, developments, issues, problems and/or phenomena
- Analyse the 'big picture' (e.g. put information and/or data into different contexts, reconstruct information by identifying new relationships, identify missing viewpoints or gaps in knowledge). Apply subject-specific skills and concepts in familiar, new and hypothetical situations

Geography

- The role of international and national government and non-government organisations' initiatives in improving human wellbeing in Australia and other countries

CREATIVE HABITS:

Collaboration Persistence and Discipline

THE LEARNING PROCESS

Teacher, Dean Sharman specifically chose a remedial class with a very low level of engagement as a trial class for the Creative Schools program at his school. As such, the overarching question when the term began was – will creative teaching interventions, a conscious focus on creating high functioning class environment, and the introduction of the five creative habits result in more engagement and greater learning outcomes?

The strategy used this term was to divide the class up into groups, and these groups then became the government of their own fictitious countries, and these countries became the constructs through which teaching and learning could be accomplished. The students got to create the geographic features of these counties along with the identities of political leaders, flag design, country name etc.; and in doing so they became invested in the outcomes of their creation. Each of the term's classes required students to govern their country within a given context, and through the discussion and debate that each decision required, meaningful learning was being achieved.

The role the Creative Habits played in your project.

Being the core pedagogical scaffold the Creative Habits were central to the planning of every class activity, and they were taught to the students within class sessions in order to provide them with tools which may aid them throughout all their future education.

Every one of the Creative Habits were touched on many times throughout the term, however the central habits that were focussed on during the program were: -

- Engaging the skill of 'discipline' in the process of 'reflecting critically', and by 'crafting and improving';
- Utilising the benefits of collaborative thought and exploration with peers and 'giving and receiving feedback'; and
- Being persistent when faced with uncertainty and by working through difficulties in a courageous and focussed manner.



IMPACT OF LEARNING

Teacher Dean Sharman – “some of the kids in the class told me that they really enjoyed what we were doing in class. Almost the whole class have performed much better than usual in their end of term test.”





TERM 3

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Bernard Taylor

Teacher

Dean Sharman

School

**Governor Stirling
Senior High School**

Year group

Year 10

CURRICULUM FOCUS

Geography: Environmental change and management.

CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

Throughout the term links formed to areas such as art and design; technologies, processes and production skills; and measurement and geometry. General capabilities that were informed existed in the spaces of critical and creative thinking, and personal and social capability.



WHAT WE DID

In Term 3 we built upon the approach taken in Term 2 and leveraged the premise that learning will significantly improve if teachers and facilitators can find a way to get students invested in the process; and that student engagement is at its highest when they care about the outcomes of the encounter. This cohort of students had been notorious for their lack of engagement and disinterest in learning, and it had even been said that this group were regarded as 'the unteachables' within their school. However, the results of Term 2 had been encouraging, with engagement very high throughout most of the program's classes, test results being much better than usual, and with students specifically commenting on how much they were enjoying this creative approach to lesson structure and content.

The first conceptualisation about how to approach Term 3 at Governor Stirling and the term's new subject of geography, was about how to make it a tangible and memorable learning experience rather than merely existing in the abstract as it does when taught traditionally. The core planning concept soon became about a class based on the concept of 'curriculum as lived-experience' and the experiencing of geography from a multitude of perspectives in order to present a whole and relevant understanding of the topic.

We felt that it would be most appropriate to employ our planning concept by beginning the term with a class outdoors where geography was a first-hand matter to the students. The purpose of this initial class was for students to capture their surroundings through field studies, and to have the students undertake the translation of the real world into their own depiction or abstraction. The rationale here was

that having the students go through the process of abstracting their surroundings would provide them with a genuine and embodied understanding of the codification used in the subject of geography. It was believed that this process would begin to provide them with tools and confidence to decode geography as it is normally presented.

During the latter part of the term the class was broken up into groups of twos or threes and was assigned the task of reading and decoding topographical maps in order to build a scale model of a hilly region in outer Perth. We felt that model making was not only likely to engage the students, but it was also a powerful way to allow students to conceptualise the subject matter, and it added symmetry to the Creative Schools Program by having them decode information at the end after having encoded it at the beginning.

As the Creative Habits of Mind effectively constituted the guiding philosophy on which the Creative Schools program was based, every lesson was checked against the Habits as it was conceived, ensuring that it included several attributes at all stages. The Habits most represented throughout the term were:

- The skill of 'discipline' in the process of 'reflecting critically', and by 'crafting and improving';
- Collaboration in thought and exploration with peers and 'giving and receiving feedback'; and
- Persistence when faced with uncertainty and by working through difficulties in a courageous and focussed manner.

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT

Creative Practitioner

Having been introduced to the teacher and students for the first time at the beginning of the program there was no long-term context from which to draw comparisons in regard to engagement and academic performance. However it was apparent to me how much the students changed in their attitudes just from the beginning of the program. My very first encounter was with a very disengaged group from low socio economic backgrounds who had little interest and much suspicion about the strange activities I was trying to compel them to do. Much to my relief and satisfaction the students soon became receptive to the new structure of the class, and the more they saw me in class the greater my rapport with them became. The feedback I got from the teacher, Dean was that test scores had gone up and students had mentioned how much they were enjoying the program. When asking the students for the quotes noted below they all mentioned how much they enjoyed the program and how the practical approaches we had taken had been a more effective way to learn, I found this to be very heartening and satisfying to hear.

Teacher

The main benefit of the program was engagement with the students, many of them really looked forward to the sessions whenever we did them, and I found that they were able to understand some of the more complex concepts – and especially some of the stuff that they wouldn't be able to grasp if they weren't able to do the activities in a practical way. This was most obvious with the economics unit where the scores overall were much higher than compared to last year, and a lot of the concepts that the Years 10's weren't able to grasp could now be attained because we were doing it in a different way. Engagement and attendance increased overall and a lot of the kids that were usually unwilling to engage with the content were more willing to do so because of the format it was provided in.

What was also great was that this approach could be used not only with the class we were doing Creative Schools with, but also with other classes. My Year 8, my Year 9, and my upper school classes all benefited from using some of those activities to engage them in thinking creatively at the start of the session. Something really important about the course was that it got them to reflect on what they were learning, usually we just have them as passive onlookers where they do the activity, they complete it, and then we move onto the next subject without students actually getting time to engage with how they learnt, what they learnt and why it's important to the wider world.

QUOTES ABOUT THE PROGRAM

“Well, it was very hands on which I think, for me, it helped a lot because I’m used to doing book work which doesn’t really help – and hands-on does get it into my brain a lot faster. I did think it benefited the class because we actually paid attention because we weren’t just doing the same old stuff that we could learn from a book, this was doing stuff that we will probably use in real life.” (Student)

“The class was a lot better, it was so much more fun and it was a lot easier to learn when we were doing the hands on stuff.” (Student)

“The classes were pretty good, we didn’t really change much stuff except that it was a lot more fun. It made learning fun.” (Student)

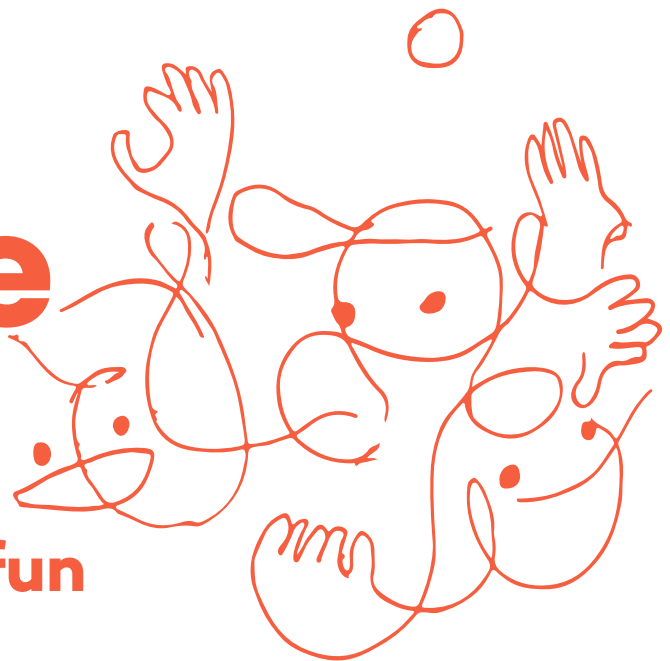




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deep learning, hard fun



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Education