

TEACHING FOR

The word "CREATIVITY" is written in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font. Each letter is composed of two overlapping geometric shapes in different colors: teal, red, yellow, and blue. For example, the 'C' is a teal circle with a wedge removed, and the 'R' is a red vertical bar with a teal semi-circle on its right side.

IN ENGLISH FOR YEAR 3/4

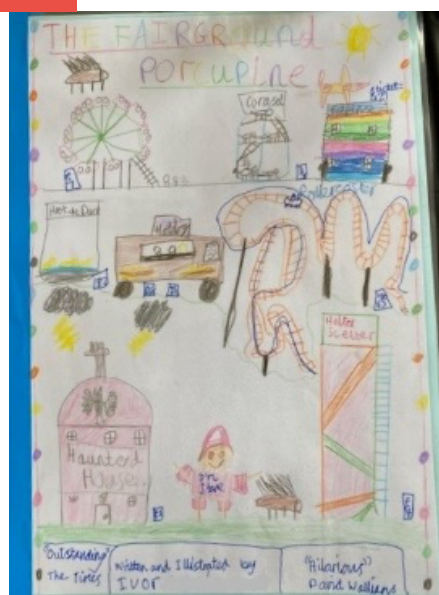
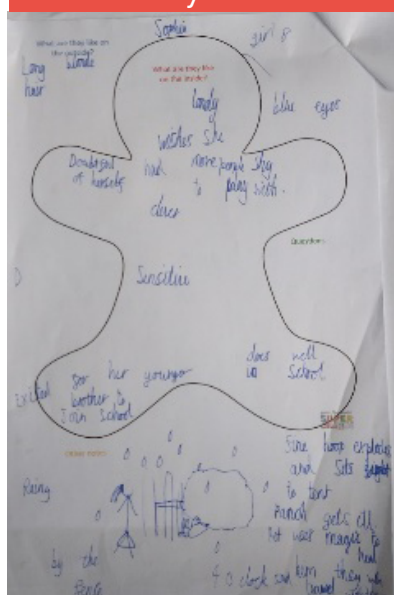
UNIT OF WORK EXEMPLAR

Kelly-Anne Sweetnam

Awbridge Primary School

Judy Waite

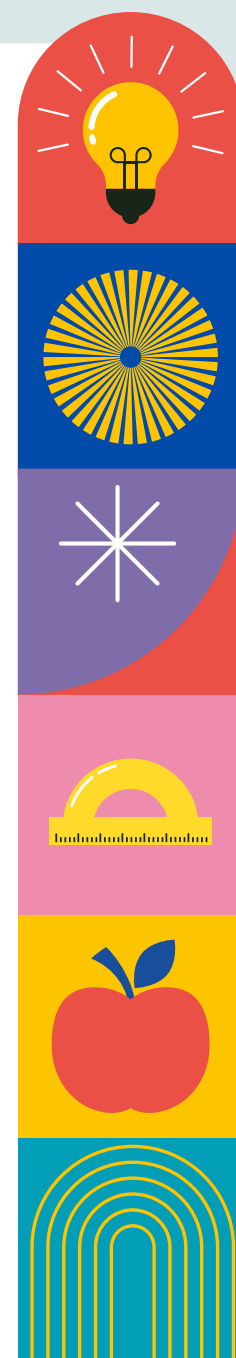
University of Winchester



How to read this document

This document contains three main components

- A description of the Creativity Collaborative programme context and our framework of teaching for creativity
- The key unit information provides an overview next
- Finally, the full unit description gives detailed information



Context: UWinAT Creativity Collaborative

Creativity Collaboratives is an action research programme, funded by Arts Council England and the Freeland Foundation, that aims to build networks of schools to test a range of innovative practices in teaching for creativity, with the explicit intention that learning is shared to facilitate system-wide change. The University of Winchester, the University of Winchester Academy Trust, and a network of Hampshire Infant, Junior and Primary schools became one of the eight national funded collaboratives, coming together with the key ambition of fostering pupils' creativity in subjects drawn from across the curriculum. Overall, our collaborative aims to enrich children's life chances by developing them into confident and creative problem-solvers, engaging them through authentic, meaningful problems, embedded in their schools and lives.

The focus on creativity as a key skill in education is increasing (James et al.,

2019), reflecting its value within wider society. Indeed, according to the 2023 'Future of Jobs Report' (World Economic Forum, 2023) creative thinking is the skill showing the greatest increase in importance for employers (p. 38) and after analytical thinking, is the second most frequently cited skill that is 'core' for the workplace (p. 39). Our collaborative has focused on:

- Understanding and addressing the barriers and enablers of creative thinking
- Developing leadership for creativity in schools
- Developing new approaches to teaching for creativity across the curriculum
- Building children's and teachers' knowledge and understanding of creativity
- Developing children's and teachers' sense of themselves as creative and their ability to be creative in subjects across the school curriculum..

The Creativity Navigator: A Framework of Teaching for Creativity

To support our planning and implementation of teaching for creativity, we use a planning tool called the Creativity Navigator (see back cover). This was co-developed in our Creativity Collaborative and draws on a wide range of models, theories and frameworks of creativity. The Navigator emphasises that creativity can be a planned for process, that follows a typical sequence of explore – ideate – evaluate, but that this sequence can be varied and cycled around many times whilst working through a creative process. The process starts with the question 'where next?' emphasising the importance of metacognitive planning and monitoring throughout a creative process.

In a classroom context, a creative process can be operationalised through a set of learning behaviours. These behaviours can be grouped under creative 'habits' each of which can be used to support the creative

process. For instance, a think-pair-share learning behaviour could support children to collaborate on gathering relevant information as they explore at the beginning of a creative learning task. The same collaborative habit could later be used to support the evaluate stage of the creative process through getting constructive feedback from peers on each other's creative work and how it might be improved further.

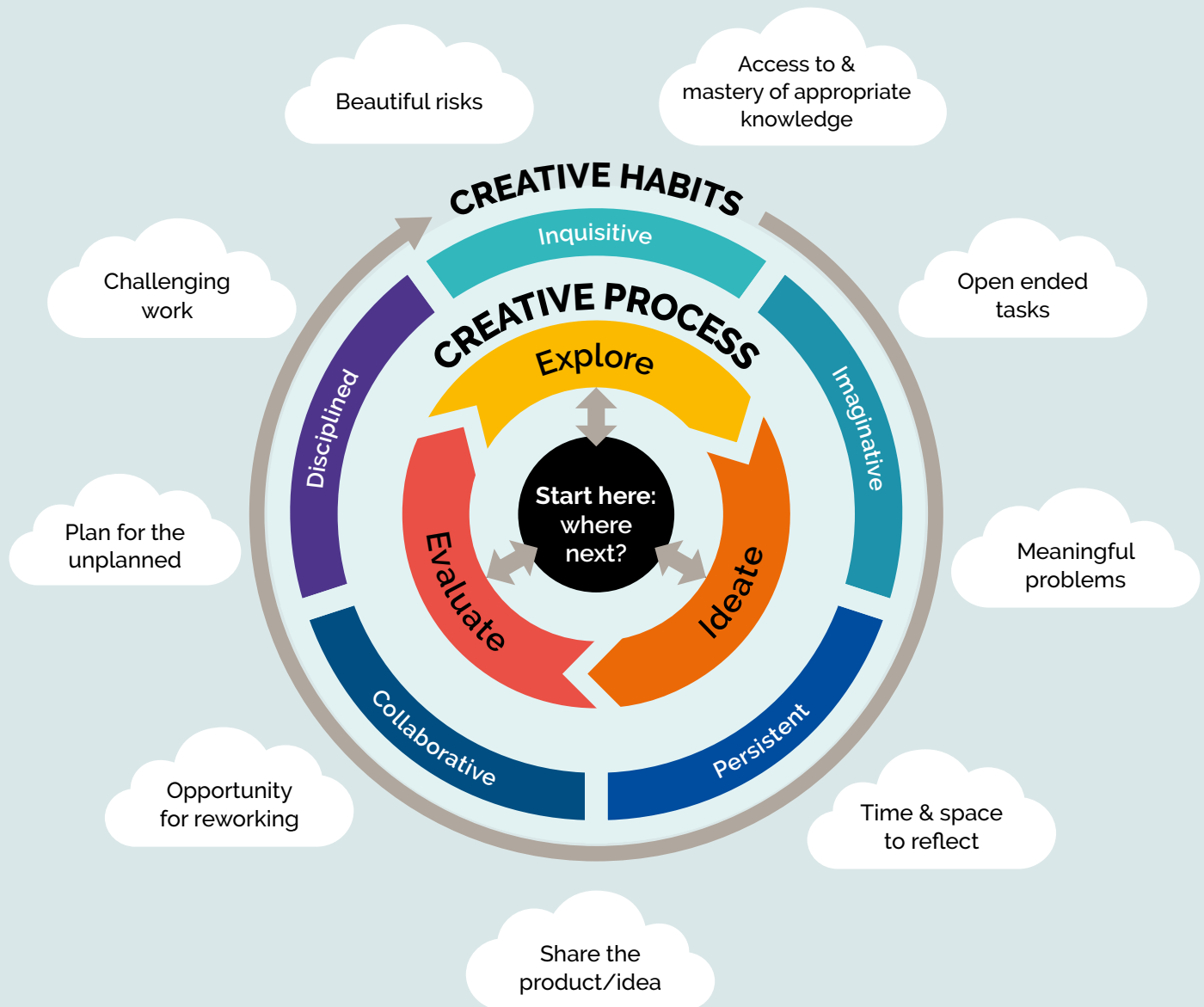
The final aspect of our Creativity Navigator focuses on the types of climate and task design that can support creativity to flourish in the classroom. For instance, tasks need to be personally meaningful, challenging, and open-ended, with children having some autonomy over aspect(s) of their learning. The classroom climate needs to provide psychological safety for children to take risks, make mistakes, learn from them and rework.



TO CITE THE CREATIVITY NAVIGATOR PLEASE USE:

Sowden, P.T., Warren, F., Seymour, M. Martin, C., Kauer, A. Spencer, E., Mansfield, S., Waite, J. (2025). A Creativity Navigator to Guide Teaching for Creativity: Implementation and Teacher Impacts in a Creativity Collaborative of Schools. *Journal of Creative Behavior*, 59(2), e70005. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jocb.70005>

CREATIVITY NAVIGATOR



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KEY UNIT INFORMATION

English unit based on the book *The Boy Who Swam With Piranhas*



INTENDED FOR:

Year 3/4
(mixed year
group class)



SUBJECT FOCUS:

English (narrative
writing)



UNIT DURATION & FORMAT:

6-week unit with daily
lessons (some blocked
together)



LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES:

1. National Curriculum Writing:

- Composition: Planning and drafting writing
- Draft and write in narratives, creating settings, characters and plot
- Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation: using conjunctions, adverbs, prepositions to express time and cause, fronted adverbials, speech.

2. National Curriculum Reading:

- Comprehension: Authorial intent – promote positive attitudes to reading, discuss words and phrases that capture interest and imagination
- Inference: understand what they read, draw inferences about character feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions and justifying inferences with evidence

3. Creative Outcome:

- To write and 'publish' an original story as a 'published' book
- To work alongside a published author as an expert
- To hold a Book Fair and author interview as a celebration event

This English unit saw us take an existing plan and weave in additional creative thinking approaches, enhancing pupil confidence through kinesthetic and mindful approaches

to learning. The starting point was David Almond's *The Boy Who Swam with Piranhas*, which connected with curriculum needs and was already available in the school. The existing lesson plans were scrutinised to ensure core National Curriculum requirements were maintained, acting as a platform for embedding new creative practices.

The initial two chapters introduced readers to the main characters and an initial setting, although this was only a starting point and the central premise of the story – running away to a funfair – was not yet evident. To clarify, the main character Stanley Potts, lived in a specific place and had a pet. Pupils would go on to create their own characters and specific home lives and create an original pet. Stanley ran away from home with his pet. Pupils' characters would run away with their pets. Stanley reached a funfair. Pupils' characters would reach a funfair. This approach enabled the children to continually make connections with Stanley's story and add specific details to their own, making their own meaningful connections. By the time they came to write their own story, they knew their characters inside-out, freeing the children cognitively, to write their own original story with a confidence not seen previously.

The final, reflective session included a 'meet the author' Book Fair where the pupils, as authors, displayed complete 'published' books. Their full stories, complete with cover and 'blurb', were displayed in the class, and pupils, staff, and guests interacted with the authors and their work, discussing the ideas and the ways the stories had evolved. Pupils celebrated with a final performance of their favourite scene or element of their publication. The pride the children took in their final outcome was palpable.



STEPS FOR SUCCESS:

1. This would work with any book! Keep the integrity of your original English unit planning but with extra lessons added in to enhance and deepen the learning experience.

2. Provide extra opportunities for children to write parts of the creative outcome throughout, rather than wait until the end of the unit. By allowing more thinking and connecting time, the quality of the outcome improved and the children were more invested throughout.
3. Leave space for the unplanned and let the children bring the magic! You will be amazed at how they will create unique writing journeys if you let them!

FULL UNIT DESCRIPTION

English unit based on the book *The Boy Who Swam With Piranhas*

What did we change?

This English unit was based on the book *The Boy Who Swam With Piranhas* by David Almond. The starting point was the original planning that had been written using the three-phase approach of stimulate and generate, capturing ideas and create, refine and evaluate. These phases were reframed and layered which provided opportunities to use the creative process of explore, ideate, and evaluate.

Much of the original planning, especially in the second phase of grammar-based lessons remained the same. The difference was that the children created a character in the first phase and grew this character right from the start, based on their initial exploratory work on Stanley Potts, the main character in Almond's book. In order to explore

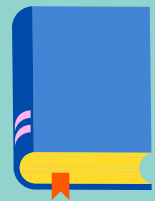
their character, children took their learning outside and through a 'loose part' funfair activity generated word banks and role played by 'walking in the shoes' of their characters – this brought the learning alive for the children before they wrote. We also erected a marquee as a 'big top'.

Writing often occurs more in the third phase when traditionally, children would plan, write, and edit. Whereas with this unit, the children thought, walked in the shoes of, and used mindfulness activities to imagine their character and knew their unique character inside-out, before they wrote a thing. More opportunities were provided to write at length along the way. Children could continue the next part of the story each time they wrote. They became invested in their characters and thinking deeply to make connections and carry on their story, making sure it made sense.

How did we use the creative process of **explore**, **ideate**, **evaluate**?

The cyclical nature of the creative process drove the planning of this unit. By using the language of the process throughout the lessons, alongside the habits and sub-habits, the children were able to unlock different ways of thinking. For example, creating their own character at the start of our unit rather than waiting until the end, allowed the children to get to know their characters slowly. The children

were given the opportunity to walk in their shoes and 'experience' the world through their character's eyes in different situations which reflected Almond's story. This enabled them to use their senses and then ideate using their imaginations about how their character would feel and be able to express that in their writing. They were encouraged to add to their character as often as they wished, as new ideas came. After each writing opportunity, they were able to then evaluate their writing by peer review and also by teacher and self-reflection.



Overcoming challenges

The approach of this unit was especially beneficial for reluctant writers, who were fully invested in their characters and excited to write. By putting in extra kinesthetic and reflective opportunities and allowing all children to think and process what they wanted to write, we found the children wrote more naturally and authentically. For example, the use of loose parts in creating a funfair removed all barriers for imagining this setting. All children could access this learning and were able to articulate and 'experience' being at their own version of a funfair before writing a word bank to use the next lesson. No idea was off-limits and by allowing this culture through creativity, the children were even more motivated to write. The unit

was self-levelling and saw children of all writing abilities fully engaged and able to become successful and proud authors.

Planning frame

We developed this planning frame as a tool to be used at the start of a unit. A place to plot ideas and separate out the strands of the creative process and identify creative habits and sub-habits that could potentially be in play. It also ensures that the intention of learning was at the forefront of the lessons by identifying the enquiry question and National Curriculum focus. This was important to ensure that the required coverage of skills and knowledge would be at the heart of the learning from the outset and not lost in the creative process.

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By enabling the children through this low-threshold, high-ceiling creative approach, there were no limits on their imagination in bringing their stories to life!

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Enquiry Question: Can you become a published author like David Almond?

National Curriculum focus: Writing to entertain using narratives, creating settings, characters and plot

Creative processes:

Explore

Ask, Learn, Look, Play

By exploring the book cover, illustration and blurb, the children will have the opportunity to be inquisitive and generate questions. They will learn about the different characters, setting and plot through a series of reading (inferring and predicting) and grammar-based lessons to get a feel for how the author entertains through words.

Ideate

Think, Fuse, Make, Share

To generate original ideas, the children will walk in the shoes of the character they create and experience through their senses how the character might feel. By reflecting using mindfulness techniques, children will be given extra time to think before writing. Create funfair from loose parts to secure how the setting would look like/feel like using a sensory approach. Plenty of opportunities for children to make connections, use their intuition and dare to be different will be given.

Evaluate

Choose, Reflect, Improve, Relearn

Children will be allowed to make decisions by choosing how to create their own characters and storylines. Regular opportunities to reflect, edit and improve their work by playing with possibilities and crafting and improving and the giving and receiving of feedback from peers and adults alike.

Creative Habits:

	Imaginative	Persistent	Collaborative	Inquisitive	Disciplined
Pedagogic Approaches	- Making connections - Playing with possibilities - Using intuition	- Sticking with difficulty - Daring to be different - Tolerating uncertainty	- Cooperating appropriately - Giving feedback - Receiving feedback	- Wondering and questioning - Challenging assumptions - Exploring and investigating	- Crafting and improving - Developing techniques - Reflecting critically

Creative outcome:

Publish an original story and create a book for a book fair

Impact: What and how to measure

Children to measure themselves against how creative they think they have been. Choose the REACH friend they have been most like and say why. Record on a bar chart as a visual.

Impact on learning

What did the children learn?

The children learned to use their imaginations inspired by studying the main character of Stanley through the author's eyes, allowing them to believe in themselves as authors. By wondering and questioning the book, children were able to apply their imagination to develop their own characters and storyline.

The children grew in self-esteem because nothing was off limits. They would ask if they could include something, and we said yes. By allowing this freedom and encouraging them to dare to be different and, the children had full ownership and accountability for their stories.

Children of all abilities made more progress than expected. This was evident in the quality of the work that they produced. It was fully accessible and adaptable for our two children with SEND through to our greater depth writers exceeding our expectations by a mile!

How did the unit impact learning?

The key to success was allowing the children to create their very own character. Nothing was off limits – they really could play with possibilities and dare to be different. Only they knew their character. They became their character, knew how they felt, how they would behave, how they would react in situations. As the decision makers, the children were so invested, they became authors and enjoyed watching their stories unfold, as did we. Even though the children have moved on to another year group now, they still speak fondly about this writing journey nearly a year on!

Was the children's work more creative and novel?

Absolutely. We could not have planned for what they produced! We provided a platform within which the children's creativity flourished and they did the rest. In a traditional unit of work, it might be suggested that you would end up with 30 similar scaffolded stories.

However, by enabling the children through this low-threshold, high-ceiling creative approach, there were no limits on their imagination in bringing their stories to life!

Each lesson their ideas grew, and they were asking to edit so that they could craft and improve. By sharing their stories with each other at various points, they were able to give and receive feedback and then act on it.

Vocabulary uplevelled

One of the most apparent ways in which the children shone was through their choice of vocabulary.

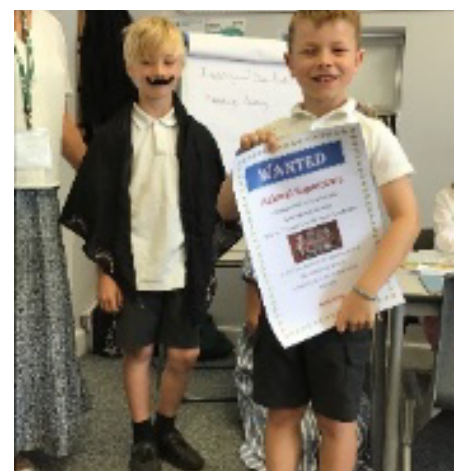
The loose part lesson was just one example, unlocking new ideas and ways of making connections for the children. By working collaboratively in creating their fun fairs, they could discuss ideas together and supported each other to level-up their use of vocabulary.

During this activity, they created their own word banks to use in their writing the following session. By experiencing it in this way, the funfairs jumped off the page and could become reality for the reader. They thought deeply and critically about how their character would feel and react in the setting of the funfair they had created. Each idea and reaction was authentic.

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Challenging children to dare to be different enabled them to feel freer in their designs.

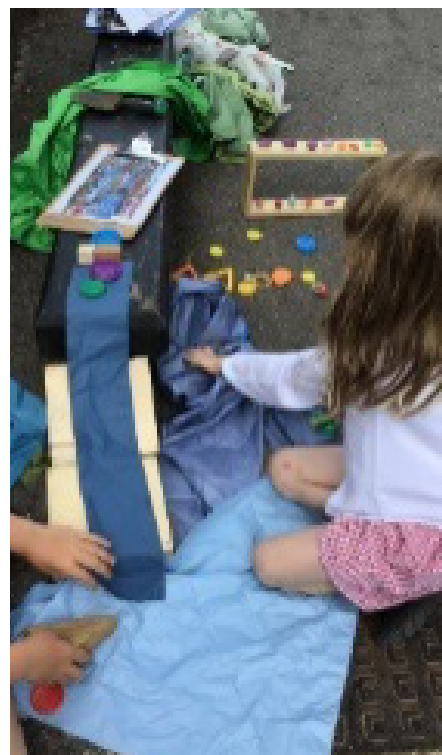
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Supporting evidence of impact

Final outcomes: The children produced a piece of writing they were proud of. They had full ownership of their own novel ideas

from the start and embraced this more than ever before. They were proud to publish their own books and present them in a book fair, to a published author and other special visitors.



FINAL REFLECTIONS:

This would work with any book! Keep the integrity of your original English unit planning and National Curriculum objectives but with extra lessons added in to enhance the learning experience. Provide extra opportunities for children to write parts of the creative outcome throughout, rather than wait until the end of the unit. By allowing more thinking and connecting time, the quality of the outcome improved, and the children were

more invested throughout. Leave space for the unplanned and let the children bring the magic! You will be amazed at how they will create unique writing journeys if you let them! Every single child exceeded our expectations on all levels – we could not have planned for where these 30 original, unique stories took us as a class. The children realised that they had exceeded their own expectations too, the pride was palpable!

CONTACT US:

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