Creativity Collaboratives

YEAR 2 INTERIM REPORT 2023

Birmingham City University

The Centre for the Study of Practice and Culture in Education

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1. Executive summary

This Interim Report documents Year Two of the Elliot Foundation Academies Trust Creativity Collaborative in Birmingham. The report draws together findings from school observations, teacher reflections, learner focus groups, and creative partners. Using qualitative, creative, and arts-based methods, we investigated the experiences and perceptions of learners, teachers, and creative practitioners to answer the question, how can empowering teachers to develop creative pedagogies facilitate the environment in which learners are enabled to flourish and fulfil their creative potential?

During Year Two of the project, nine primary academies took part in collaborations with local organisations Open Theatre and Stan's Cafe. Creative practitioners from these organisations visited schools weekly for one, two, or three terms. Typically, Open Theatre practitioners worked with small groups of learners in non-verbal physical theatre sessions every week throughout the school year; Stan's Cafe worked with schools on shorter-term projects addressing needs identified by teachers (such as getting to know the local area or improving learners' imaginations).

Through regular school observations and analysis of teachers' reflective diaries, it was possible to identify how sessions with creative practitioners were characterised by creative spaces, creative play, and creative responses. Spaces were welcoming and flexible, allowing learners to move around and engage with non-human objects as they wished. A child-led approach encouraged playful, enthusiastic, but self-regulated responses. However, teachers believed that this approach was made possible by the skill and expertise of the visiting practitioners, and were not confident that other classroom teachers would be comfortable adopting similar pedagogies. Nevertheless, they recognised that the sessions were beneficial for learners—because they encouraged active participation, personal development, and critical reflection—and they hoped that further collaboration with creative partners would develop learners' understanding and awareness of creative processes.

Focus groups held with 21 learners from four schools indicated that learners commonly found sessions with creative practitioners to be fun and memorable. They said that they usually enjoyed themselves during sessions, but that they might sometimes feel nervous or embarrassed if they had to perform in front of others or if they thought they had made a mistake. They defined creativity as involving novelty, diversity, and evaluation, but typically referred only to arts-based creativities (such as drawing, dancing, or acting) to illustrate their understanding.

Aside from creative sessions that took place in the classroom, teachers and creative practitioners in the project took part in regular reflection sessions. These included creativity framework sessions, in which participants explored existing scholarly notions of creativity and how these may or may not equip them to teach for creativity in their schools. Themes that emerged from participants' discussions included the importance of being able to practically apply and assess creativity in everyday classroom contexts. However, they recognised that applications of creativity in the classroom could be diverse and varied, and would be predicated upon individuals' prior personal and cultural experiences. They also acknowledged the place of collaborative, child-led relationships that were scaffolded according to expert knowledge to allow for the development of iterative, imaginative, and reflective encounters.

By the end of Year Two of the Creativity Collaborative, it was clear that learners, teachers, and practitioners had gained an insight into some kinds of collaborative environments that could enable creative teaching and learning. However, given that teachers remained unsure of how to apply creative pedagogies across the wider curriculum, we recommend the following as ways forward in Year Three:

Recommendation 1: Integrating creative learning within the wider curriculum.

Schools should continue to reinforce their learning from working with Open Theatre and Stan's Cafe in Year Two; however, they should focus on connecting this learning with the wider curriculum rather than simply consolidating it through repetition. Schools should consider how they integrate their new knowledge of creativity across wider curriculum lessons, both independently and in collaboration with creative partners.

Recommendation 2: Fostering professional learning networks for creative pedagogies.

Schools should focus on building professional learning networks that will help all their teachers develop and apply creative pedagogies in their classrooms.

Recommendation 3: Establishing senior management support for creativity in education.

Schools should ensure that their senior management are engaged with and supportive of the place of creativity in the wider curriculum.

Recommendation 4: Accessing financial support for post-session reflection.

The Creativity Collaborative should have budget available to provide teachers and practitioners with reflection time immediately following every creative session.

Recommendation 5: Evaluating progress using the Theory of Change.

The Creativity Collaborative should return to the Theory of Change developed in Year One to evaluate which aspects of the project have been successful and which need further attention.

Recommendation 6: Exploring the potential of a Trust-wide approach to creativity.

The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust should deliberate on the need for a Trust-wide approach to creativity which accounts for the Creativity Collaborative's innovative approach to inclusive, affective, situated, and posthuman aspects of creativities.

Recommendation 7: Nurturing affective and material dimensions of creativity in education.

Schools should encourage teachers and creative practitioners to explore and integrate affective and material dimensions of creativity in their pedagogical practices.

Recommendation 8: Sustaining impact through documenting and sharing creative pedagogies.

As we move into Year Three of the project, the Creativity Collaborative should carefully consider the lasting impact and legacy of the knowledge, theory, and creative activities.

Recommendation 9: Recognising the global impact of diverse notions of creativity.

As the Collaborative continues to explore inclusive and diverse notions of creativity through creative affect, non-verbal communication, historical context, and localised curriculum, it should recognise the originality and potential impact of its explorations on creativity research internationally.

2. Introduction

The Arts Council England Creativity Collaboratives programme seeks to build networks of schools to test innovative practices in teaching for creativity, and to share learning to facilitate system-wide change. Working alongside existing institutions and educators, the programme seeks to co-develop creative strategy and pedagogy, test out approaches to teaching and learning, and evaluate their impact on learners, schools, and communities. The outcomes to be achieved are as follows:

1. Young people's creative capacity is nurtured, and personal, social, and physical wellbeing and academic development is greatly enriched, reduced inequality across protected characteristics.
2. Career pathways are supported by skills developed through creative learning and thinking.
3. Teachers and school leaders are skilled and confident to teach with creativity and advocate teaching-for-creativity pedagogies and practice across their networks.
4. Teaching for creativity is a whole-school priority and practised across the curriculum.
5. Schools integrate teaching for creativity across the curriculum, including in science, engineering, and the arts.
6. The role of arts and culture in supporting teaching for creativity is understood, as are the conditions for establishing a culture of creativity in a school.
7. Schools work with a range of external partners including a university.

This Interim Report documents Year Two of the Elliot Foundation Academies Trust Creativity Collaborative in Birmingham. The report draws together findings from school observations, teacher reflections, learner focus groups, and creative partners. It offers insight into the successes and challenges of the Creativity Collaborative and concludes with recommendations for Year Three.

3. Methodology

Participants

The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust Creativity Collaborative is one of eight projects being run as part of the nationwide programme, Arts Council England Creativity Collaboratives. The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust is a multi-academy trust with primary academies in the West Midlands, East Anglia, and London. Of its 12 primary academies in the West Midlands, nine were involved with Year Two of the Creativity Collaborative. These are listed in *Table 3.1*.[1]

Following on from the Year One Interim Report (2022), during Year Two each of the nine primary academies worked in partnership with one of two local arts organisations: Open Theatre (www.opentheatre.co.uk) and Stan's Cafe (stans.cafe). Open Theatre is a charitable organisation that works primarily with young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Their practitioners use non-verbal physical theatre to explore young people's creativity, enhance learning outcomes, and develop sense of self. Stan's Cafe is a theatre company that specialises in creating bespoke, collaborative art to help schools better support the needs of their learners.

Over the course of Year Two, each academy developed a partnership with one or two practitioners from Open Theatre or Stan's Cafe. The same practitioner would typically visit the academy once a week over one or several terms, to work with a group of learners specified by the academy. This varied from small, mixed-age groups of learners with Social, Emotional, or Mental Health (SEMH) needs or SEND, to whole classes or year groups. *Table 3.1* indicates the partnership at each school and which young people were involved.

Several members of staff at each academy were involved in the creative partnerships. Every academy had one teacher who acted as the Creativity Collaborative Lead; at some schools they attended the sessions with Open Theatre or Stan's Cafe. At other schools, other teachers (class teachers or SEND support staff) attended the sessions with their learners, with or without the Creativity Collaborative Lead.

Methods

As in Year One of the Creativity Collaborative, this evaluation centred on exploring the impact of creative collaborations upon teaching and learning. Using qualitative, creative, and

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[1] One additional school in the Trust began engaging with the project partway through Year Two; however, their activities are not reported in the present evaluation.

Table 3.1. Academies and their partnerships with creative organisations.

Academy	Creative partner		Participants
Croft	Open Theatre		Year R, Year 1, Year 3, SEND class
Kings Rise			learners with SEND or SEMH (Year R – Year 5)
Shirestone			learners with SEND or SEMH
Woods Bank			learners with SEND or SEMH; Year R, Year 1, Year 6
Billesley		Stans Cafe	35 learners with SEND or SEMH (Open Theatre) Year 6 (Stan's Cafe)
Chandos			Year 2, Year 4
George Betts			Year 4
Shireland Hall			Year 4
Tiverton			Year 3, Year 4

arts-based methods (Barone & Eisner, 2011), we investigated the experiences and perceptions of teachers, learners, and creative practitioners. Engaging in creative approaches to data collection allowed us to explore 'the affective-material life' of creative classroom spaces (Niccolini et al., 2018, p. 324) and consider the importance of intra-action between human and non-human agents in prompting new ways of knowing, communicating, and collaborating (Burnard, 2022; Taylor & Fairchild, 2020). Arts-based methods in particular enabled participation from young people who preferred not to communicate using literacy-based approaches (such as questionnaires or surveys) (Blaisdell et al., 2018; Mand, 2012). We did not pre-define our method, but designed it in response to practices that developed within the Creativity Collaborative over the year. The methods therefore remained flexible, but also allowed us to reveal complex narratives around participation and impact without losing the rigour of more traditional approaches. This responsive mode of data collection will continue in Year Three.

The Year Two evaluation has included:

1. Observations of school-based sessions run by Open Theatre and Stan's Cafe, focussing on teaching for creativity and shared learning.
2. Teachers' termly reflection diaries on creative pedagogy and practice in sessions run by Open Theatre and Stan's Cafe.
3. Creative focus groups with learners using visual elicitation (Epstein et al., 2006; Lapenta, 2011) and arts-based activities (Blaisdell et al., 2018), exploring learners' experiences and perceptions of creative development.
4. Online focus groups with teachers and creative practitioners, using arts-based activities and dialogic discussion to investigate frameworks for teaching for creativity (cf. Sternberg & Karami, 2021).

Analysis

Observations, reflection diaries, and focus group transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2013). This iterative approach enabled us to become familiar with participants' perspectives before identifying emergent themes. Using multiple cycles of coding and categorisation (Saldaña, 2009), we were able to delve 'beneath the surface' (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 174) and explore the reasoning behind participants' understandings of the Creativity Collaborative.

In instances where arts-based data were collected (such as photographs, mind-maps, and drawings), we adopted an analytical frame in which reflective questions from the Theory of Change (e.g., How can we rethink pedagogical practices to value a range of creativities? What does teaching for creativity look like?) were used to guide our interpretation (cf. Blaisdell et al., 2018).

Ethics

This evaluation was approved by Birmingham City University Faculty of Health, Education and Life Sciences Ethics Committee. It was conducted in adherence with the British Educational Research Association (2018) guidelines on ethical practice in educational research. Participants were informed of the research objectives via an information booklet and consent form, and were made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time. For learners who consented to participate in the evaluation, further consent was also sought from their parent(s) or guardian(s). In this report, all participants have been anonymised in order to protect their identities.

4. Theory of Change

The Theory of Change for the Creativity Collaborative was developed in Year One, at the outset of the project. In consultation with key partners—including researchers, teachers, and creative practitioners—we established the central research question: How can empowering teachers to develop creative pedagogies facilitate the environment in which learners are enabled to flourish and fulfil their creative potential?

Sub-questions included: How can working with creative practitioners enable teachers and learners to expand their knowledge of their own creativities? How is creativity activated in learners' classroom encounters? How can we rethink pedagogical practices to value a range of creativities? What does teaching for creativity look like? A complete list of sub-questions can be found in the Year One Interim Report (2022).

In the Theory of Change, Year Two was conceived as a year of implementation and growth. Although the project was not extended to the East Anglian academies in the Elliot Foundation (as originally intended), the nine academies in the West Midlands were able to sustain and develop their creative programmes. Teachers were provided with time to re-imagine creativity in the classroom, both through sessions with Open Theatre and Stan's Cafe and through the creativity framework sessions hosted by Birmingham City University. Teachers developed their understanding of creativities and considered how they could implement creative pedagogies. Learners were able to build fruitful and creative relationships with the practitioners who visited their schools each week, and shared their reflections on creativity during focus groups. The creativity framework sessions also enabled teachers and practitioners to discuss the potential to develop a localised model of creativity that would account for the affective and environmental factors unique to the Elliot Foundation.

5. Walsall Adventure Day

In September 2022 the Creativity Collaborative participated in the Walsall Adventure Day, which was devised and delivered by Stan's Cafe. A previous iteration had been produced for the lead school in the Collaborative, Billesley Primary School. Members met at St Paul's Church in central Walsall (*Figure 5.1*), roughly one mile away from another school in the Elliot Foundation Academies Trust.

The Adventure Day was formed of grouped 'adventure activities' at various indoor and outdoor locations, landmarks, and cultural sites around Walsall town centre. It aimed to offer teachers a first-hand experience of how a school's locality, history, and heritage beyond the classroom could be used as a stimulus for creative teaching and learning: 'it is about using your city as a resource. Let's look at the place around us in a different way' (Stan's Cafe, Adventure Day).

Stan's Cafe employed chance as a structural device. At each stage of the Adventure Day, groups were invited to choose between two envelopes (*Figure 5.2*), each of which contained a separate creative task. Groups therefore had 'more ownership' (Teacher, Adventure Day) as they pursued different task sequences and physical routes across the town.

The creative tasks and respective locations included:

1. Gathering information about the Sister Dora statue (*Figure 5.1*);
2. Creating a 'street haiku' inspired by the main high street;
3. Creating an origami rose following non-verbal guidance from a Stan's Cafe artist at Walsall Arboretum (*Figure 5.3*);
4. Commentating on what could be seen in a Victorian shopping arcade;
5. Creating a keyring at a fabric store with support from a Stan's Cafe artist (*Figure 5.4*);
6. Using geometric shapes to sketch the skyline viewed from the upper floor of Walsall Art Gallery;
7. Researching the history of Walsall using a range of artefacts and documents at Walsall Archives (*Figure 5.5*);
8. Creating stop frame animation at Walsall Leather Museum.

Groups were also tasked with finding and photographing, for example, flowers, uniforms, and reflections. This enabled groups to pay closer attention to their surroundings as they moved between each task: 'you focus on the positive details as you walk past. Rather than just walking blindly past things you get stuck in... I think it's a nice skill to have' (Teacher, Adventure Day).

The Adventure Day was followed by a whole-group reflection, which included thinking about how the tasks fostered learning. Teachers believed that the tasks enabled 'chance for critical discussion' and the development of 'research skills', 'non-verbal communication' and 'concentration'.

Figure 5.1. Collaborative members meet at St Paul's Church, Walsall and the Sister Dora statue.

Figure 5.2. Task envelopes.

Figure 5.3. Creating origami roses.

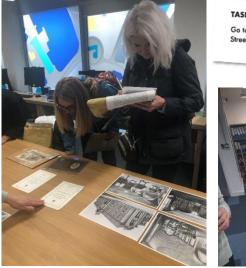*Figure 5.4. Task Five in the fabric shop.*

TASK FIVE – A Stitch In Time

Go to the Hole In The Wall Fabric shop. Find the main entrance (which is under an awning) by turning left on the top of High Street, near Upper Rushall Street. Look for Abeda who will be at the back of the shop in the café area. She will give you further instructions.

Figure 5.5. Task Three in the library archives.

TASK THREE – Memory Lane

Go to the Archive Centre on the ground floor of the Library on Lichfield Street. Ring the bell and ask for Cath. She will give you further instructions.

6. School observations

Researchers observed 18 Open Theatre and Stan's Cafe creative sessions across the academies throughout Year Two, as well as an end-of-term performance produced by Billesley Primary School and Stan's Cafe at Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham. The observations were guided by key inquiries from the Theory of Change, from which a number of key themes emerged.

The observations revealed the following key findings:

1. As schools' connections with creative practitioners and creative learning processes deepened across the year, learners were empowered to be creative, creativities were normalised, and teachers' creative practices expanded. Enablers for this included developing diverse and inclusive creative learning opportunities, promoting and valuing creative processes such as non-verbal communication and make-believe, and allowing ideas to percolate so that learners' creativities could emerge over time, on learners' own terms.

2. The creative practitioners introduced pedagogical practices which enabled a wider range of creativities to be identified and valued. Key Open Theatre practices included embracing learners' individual creative trajectories; using non-verbal communication, movement, embodied creativity, and materials as a means of connection; and being open to the creative potential of what may normally be categorised as disruptive behaviour. Key Stan's Cafe practices included promoting flexible thinking; building situated learning experiences including the exploration of outdoor spaces; and using learners' life experiences to activate the imagination. This encouraged diverse creative interactions and intra-actions between learners, teachers, creative practitioners, and more-than-human materials.

3. Affective human and non-human qualities of creativity were central in the sessions. Learners had the opportunity to respond to, manipulate, and reimagine materials; to engage their bodies in acts of individual and collaborative creativity; to interact with the rhythms of nature and the surrounding environment; and to grapple and sit with a range of feelings. Through being immersed in these multi-sensory affective aspects, learners developed a more nuanced understanding of the entangled qualities underlying creative work.

4. The extent to which schools followed set criteria varied, enabling some learners to develop their creativities in response to predetermined parameters. Nevertheless, however strict the boundaries were, the creative practitioners always emphasised

divergent thinking whereby all the learners' ideas were valued and acknowledged. This removed the fear of doing things wrong, enabling creativities to flourish.

5. A range of creative processes were valued and explored in the sessions including role play, silliness, playfulness, improvising, experimenting, dancing, and abstract movement (Open Theatre), and imaginative thinking, questioning, hypothesising, creative and open-ended thinking, working with uncertainty, dancing and tumbling, engaging with everyday school materials, and joint problem solving (Stan's Cafe).

6. Learners could experiment with different ways of engaging, from contributing more subtle or more flamboyant physical gestures, to engaging individually or collaboratively. Creative practitioners built on learners' actions and valued the plurality of engagements in the space, enabling learners to find inspiration from others' ideas, music, and the surrounding environment. This also involved enabling creative engagement to occur progressively and incrementally. There were times when the social dynamics between learners influenced engagement. For example, some learners were resistant to sharing ideas in front of their peers.

7. The roles of the creative practitioners and teachers impacted creative learning opportunities. The creative practitioners modelled creativities and were careful to identify and value the creativities of the learners. In some of the projects, creative practitioners drew on their expertise in particular artforms. Teachers' roles varied in each school. In cases where teachers participated in the creative encounters, learners' creativities were validated further and normalised, and their vulnerability was lessened. However, there were also cases where the teacher and creative practitioner's practices clashed, suggesting a need for more co-planning and dialogue in the next phase. Additionally, some teachers did not participate in the sessions, suggesting a need for more support mechanisms to be put in place to enable meaningful and sustainable collaboration.

8. The sessions were formed of physical, playful, sonic, material, and dialogic interactions, allowing teachers and learners to explore and experience multidimensional creative learning processes.

9. The environments accessed during the projects were a gateway for exploring new dimensions of creativity. Activity moved beyond the classroom to open, green spaces enabling learners to dwell in and respond to aspects such as the feel of the grass and the sounds of the area. School spaces were transformed into multi-sensory sites with an abundance of materials, music, and novel approaches, which offered learners a newfound appreciation of their everyday surroundings.

Open Theatre observations

As shown in *Table 3.1*, Open Theatre collaborated with five academies. There was substantial contact time: academies typically worked with creative practitioners for a whole day or half a day every week from October to July, which enabled several groups of learners to experience the sessions over an extended period of time.[2] Open Theatre are experienced in taking year-long school residences in special schools, but this was the first time they had run an equivalent model in mainstream settings. A diverse range of year groups took part, encompassing Reception to Year 6.

Based on Open Theatre's long history working in special schools, several academies focused the opportunity on their learners with additional needs, sometimes forming mixed-age groups. In these cases, it was agreed that the same groups of learners would participate throughout, enabling the practitioners to form strong relationships with the learners and teachers and for participants to fully explore Open Theatre's non-verbal physical theatre approach. Building on Year One of the Creativity Collaborative, the sessions centred on non-verbal communication and movement, facilitated by music and a range of props. Open Theatre have a process-oriented and child-centred ethos and seek to build meaningful connections with learners through non-verbal encounters. This requires working in an open-ended way as opposed to having set outcomes. As such, the sessions did not have planned for outcomes or work towards some kind of final sharing event.

Open Theatre findings

Working with creative practitioners to enable teachers and learners to expand their understanding of their own creativities

a. Normalising creativity

Sustained encounters with theatre practitioners normalised being creative and in some cases, 'markable positive differences' in learners' creative responses in later sessions compared with earlier sessions were noted. This included more divergent thinking, increased focus, and becoming more responsive to others' creative ideas. The substantial access to creative practitioners enabled teachers to adjust to this new way of working at a pace that was comfortable for them.

b. Permission to be creative

Through modelling practices, the creative practitioners gave learners and teachers

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[2] Due to ongoing challenges with staffing, Open Theatre's visits to Shirestone ended in early Spring Term. Visits to Billesley commenced from this point onwards.

permission to be creative. This enabled teachers to connect with and understand their learners anew. For instance:

> [the teacher] joined in enthusiastically with the activities, following [the practitioner's] lead in making eye-contact with the learners and smiling and laughing with them. It appeared to be a valuable time for her to get to know her learners better, with time to spend observing the learners while they were playing and while they were sitting quietly, watching their peers.

A key factor in these scenarios was having the support of another adult in the space, allowing teachers to explore and observe creativity in action and enjoy being a participant alongside their learners, therefore disrupting the conventional teacher-learner dynamic:

> the teacher […] is happy to be shown what to do and be led by the learners. This shift in power is likely to be a new experience for many of the learners, and there are lots of giggles and gasps.

By participating in the activities, teachers legitimised and validated learners' creativities. This was especially important at Kings Rise, as the chosen learner participants had historically been excluded from other creative opportunities in school.

The permission to be creative and share new ideas also developed through learners watching their peers. For instance:

> the Year 6 learners paid rapt attention to the one boy who deviated from the original treasure hunt model: they seemed to recognise the value and novelty of his new idea, and wanted to see how the scenario would end. After his turn the other learners were more likely to try out creative ideas and build new scenarios and relationships with the practitioners, casting them in different roles (e.g., subservient follower rather than leader) instead of copying their original example.

c. Diverse creative outlets

The creative practitioners introduced dozens of playful scenarios and games during the sessions, which provided learners with a range of creative outlets. Scarves became nail-biting tightropes, plastic discs became stepping-stones surrounded by strong water currents, and learners were blown off their chairs by imaginary handheld fans. The creative practitioners' vast repertoire and props—supported by atmospheric music—created ideal conditions for creativity to flourish and illustrated how everyday non-human objects (e.g., scarves, chairs) could be used as stimuli. This was a trial-and-error approach; some games appeared to be more effective in connecting with the learners than others. For example:

the statue game offered learners' playfulness and creativity a better outlet. It combined the creativity offered by the hat game with the teamwork intended in pass-the-slap: the learners all had time to dance freely and choose their own poses, but they were also encouraged to evaluate the freeze frame as it developed and align their own responses accordingly.

Practitioners did not simply focus on what they knew worked, but rather they explored what worked for the particular learners in each encounter. This could be likened to 'doing activity *with*' rather than 'doing activity *to*' the learners. Responses were influenced by learners' ages and additional needs. For example, some learners with SEND became 'frustrated' when their classmates changed the rules seeking to 'take their own initiative and move the game in different directions', and other learners with SEND struggled to follow the original rules. Key Stage 1 learners often appeared to have a more limited understanding of their own creativities, and (with some exceptions) they tended to copy the creative practitioners and be more easily influenced by verbal cues.

Building on Open Theatre's child-centred ethos, the creative practitioners changed and adapted their personas to suit whatever creative pathways the learners were in the process of constructing:

> one learner decides that [the practitioner] is his nemesis; he menacingly follows him and then quickly tries to hide from him once noticed. [The practitioner] is happy to play the part, enabling the learner to keep experimenting with these roles.

d. Expanding teachers' practices

Teachers' involvement in the sessions significantly varied by school, from no participation to being fully active. This had implications for sustaining learning. In sessions where the teachers were not engaged, their role included intermittently managing behaviour or observing at a distance. This did not have a direct impact on the learners' participation and may have compounded the notion that Open Theatre's practice was 'other' to classroom learning and everyday school interactions. This is an aspect that will be important to address in the next phase of the project so that teachers can experience the value of such practice first-hand.

In instances where teachers were engaged, one teacher commented on becoming more accustomed to communicating non-verbally with their learners. Another teacher mirrored practice immediately after a session:

> [the teacher] maintained the spirit of the non-verbal practice, using hand gestures to remind the learners when to sit down and when to stand and line up at the end of the session.

By integrating practices in this way, the teacher began to normalise non-verbal communication.

Re-thinking and re-imagining pedagogical practices to observe, value and acknowledge a range of creativities in the classroom

a. Slow pedagogy

Open Theatre favoured repetition and familiarity, which resonates with the notion of slow pedagogy (Clark, 2022). Repeating familiar warm-ups and gestures gradually enhanced learners' creative responses: 'responses became more imaginative and explorative as they had more turns'. This highlighted the importance of enabling sufficient time, and setting constraints or parameters, to foster creativity. It was also important to embrace learners' individual journeys and pathways towards sharing creative ideas. For instance, even when learners seemed less involved, their short-lived engagement was still valued and this positively impacted subsequent behaviours. For example:

> when [the practitioner] passed the letter to [the learner], he engaged minimally before passing the letter back to the other learners. Although this did not seem especially successful or creative, shortly afterwards he re-joined the circle and became much more engaged and imaginative.

When practitioners debriefed with teachers and researchers after their session, learners' participation was acknowledged and valued—however brief. Rather than looking for full participation or identifying who had been the 'most' creative, they sought out even the most fleeting 'significant moments'.

The fluid structure of the sessions coupled with occasional pauses and physical stillness enabled practitioners to 'be with' (Clark, 2022) the learners and allow their ideas to come forwards organically. This supported divergent thinking. For example, learners' responses were 'slower and longer' than those of the creative practitioner, which sparked further variations. Being attuned to learners' creative comfort zones included being mindful of where, physically, they felt safe to experiment:

> one learner connects with [the practitioner] during the hat sequence. This only works once [the practitioner] moves closer to her, having sensed that she doesn't want to place herself in the middle of the circle.

b. Reframing disruptive behaviour

What may usually be perceived as low-key disruptive behaviour in schools was harnessed by the creative practitioners, whereby 'as long as learners were fully engaged in the interaction, they could keep pushing those boundaries'. One creative practitioner likened this to creatively 'diverting' learners' energies into positive social interactions, thereby turning the disruptive behaviour on its head. This had implications for developing creative and other-centred classrooms but could be difficult to enact with a larger group of learners, where activities, space, and noise levels necessarily restrict how many interactions can happen at once. For example, in classroom lessons a positive interaction between two learners could be perceived as negative if it distracts the class from attending to the teacher.

c. Individual and collaborative autonomy

As captured in fieldnotes:

> the group-based collaborative dimension of creativity is important within Open Theatre sessions, but it is not the only approach. Learners are also free to express themselves through physically moving around the space as individuals.

In one session, enabling learners the freedom to take an individual path 'helped the learners to understand how their individual contributions to the scene could enhance or detract from the end-product or outcome'. Furthermore, the ideas that arose provided practitioners with more creative possibilities and ways of connecting. This illustrated the importance of spending time working with individuals and with a whole class during creative pedagogies.

d. Non-verbal problem solving

Teachers' awareness of the efficacy of non-verbal cues could also prompt creativity in the classroom. For example, challenging learners to problem-solve without talking could generate creative and inclusive teamwork:

> there was one notable quiet moment during the hoopla when about six learners got up and worked together to try to hold [the practitioner's] fingers still so that they could successfully loop the hoop onto his arm. They worked together in a spontaneous moment of creative problem-solving.

e. Varying conditions for creativity

The contrast between the different age groups in these sessions was a valuable reminder that creative pedagogies may need to be adapted for different classes. For learners in Years 1 and 2, creative activities typically took place within carefully delineated boundaries (one-to-one interactions with each learner in turn), because creative practitioners were aware that working without such boundaries could unnecessarily upset the learners and distract from

the activities. In Year 6, the responses were more obviously gendered, with the more mature girls seemingly uncomfortable in engaging with something that could be perceived as 'silly' or 'child-like'. With learners of this age there was a greater concern that they would be judged by their peers depending on how they acted and participated in the session: creativity was bound up with social capital, whereby each creative action was perceived as a potential risk to the learner's social standing in their friendship group.

Giving value to the affective (human and non-human) aspects of creativity

a. Materials

Materials were the bedrock of Open Theatre sessions, influencing and interacting with bodies, spaces, music, and imagined scenarios. Learners were encouraged to be tactile and explore materials' textural qualities. For example, newspapers were 'satisfying viscerally and texturally to scrunch up, tear, separate'. Likewise, 'learners were fascinated by the sponge building blocks, the way they felt, and how they could handle them', and they wanted to 'experiment' with 'stretching and winding' elastic. The objects and their physical properties fostered and sustained a diverse range of creative responses, enabling learners to be agentic and invent 'whole new imagined scenarios', gestures, and cues for the creative practitioners to build upon. Reflecting the deepening connections learners were building with objects, one learner brought their own toy snake into a session, using it to interact with the creative practitioner. This relates back to the notion of 'slow pedagogy': through repeated opportunities to interact with objects, learners were increasingly driven to explore their creativities in this way. Moreover, interacting with materials such as inspecting a paper 'map' gave learners with fewer creative ideas time to decide what to do next. Creative practitioners were attuned to and worked with the pace at which ideas came forward.

Objects also promoted social bonding. For example, hastily and playfully passing around a hot potato (bean bag) promoted an openness between participants as bodies caught the potato then swerved towards other bodies to pass it on. Reading a newspaper while trying to catch out and hide from potential onlookers encouraged a lot of eye contact between participants, and learners were able to use their facial expressions and body language for communicating affect and emotion. When a speaker fell off a shelf in a Year 1 session, it 'seemed to "break the ice" for the more reticent learners, who laughed and smiled at the creative practitioner's response'. Witnessing the practitioner's response to this unexpected event validated the way in which things that 'go wrong' could be used for creative purposes.

The value afforded to objects also inspired novel interactions with everyday school objects such as chairs. For example, 'the learners engaged with the chairs and benches, falling off them, moving them, and crawling underneath them'. In one session, which took place in the

school staff room, 'the "adult" chairs in the staff room stimulated a whole dance revolving around rocking between the arms of the chairs'.

Ways of interacting with these materials encouraged learners to tap into the creative potential of their classrooms, school halls, and breakout spaces, whereby inhabiting the entire space was the 'natural default'. Softer, comfier stools could be jumped on and used as hiding places rather than just sat on, and chairs could be 'moved around and lifted off the ground, so learners could take scenarios like the "sticky chair" as far as possible'. This extended to clothes which were no longer just school uniforms, but materials that could be hidden behind or used to form a human hoopla (as was the case with one creative practitioner's hoody). In some cases, the space beyond the circle provided 'refuge' for learners when they wished to step away from the core activities.

b. Feelings

Physical objects provoked and were containers for enacting and evaluating different human feelings—including intrigue, joy, laughter, fear, pride, anger, happiness, and frustration—therefore creating entanglements with affective aspects of creativity. For example, in an encounter with a bird puppet and a toy snake,

> both the bird and the snake were powerful prompts because of their associations with live animals; one boy in Year 6 seemed to be afraid of birds and did not like the puppet. When the bird puppet "attacked" the learners it typically caused shrieking and screaming, as well as laughing. There was a sense of tension and fear, as well as one of humour and fun.

Being and feeling joyful was central to all the Open Theatre sessions. Accordingly, appropriate music was chosen to create a particular affect for each stage of the session. Yet equally, in times when learners appeared to be nervous or upset, teachers and creative practitioners ensured that they were supported and developed inclusive and responsive ways for them to join in, such as by initiating creative exchanges alongside them rather than inviting them to stand up within the centre of the space. Alongside this, learners were free to engage in solitary activity (which would in some cases later develop into a reciprocal relationship with the creative practitioner) or interact only with the materials. For instance, while using a blank sheet of paper as an imaginary map:

> some learners also found it less intimidating to interact with the map than directly with the practitioner: they were happy to look at the map and point at the map even if they were reluctant to communicate directly with the practitioner. The map enabled the development of inter-relationality through joint attention.

However, teacher intervention—such as taking learners out of the classroom and cautioning them against misbehaving—created tension and negative affect, which was sometimes a barrier to the development of creativity and a distraction to others.

c. Bodies

Bodies were also key sites for creativity as learners, teachers, and creative practitioners stretched and interlinked with their neighbours to form different shapes, co-construct freeze frames, crawl around as cats, become statues, sign thank you, and share high fives. These physical stances promoted movement and stillness. Stillness, for example, was important during a game in which learners had to sense an opportune time to contribute ideas while all other participants were still. This way of being gave value to being present and observant and quietening other thoughts, which is an outlook that Open Theatre shared as being important to their practice.

Movements and gestures were also shaped by memories and subjectivities:

> the learners' interest in pretending to be animals comes out strongly in this session. Perhaps this reflects their experiences and memories of interacting with animals, and/or their impulse to be playful and free.

These animal movements were an example of spontaneous creative acts initiated solely by the learners. The freedom to act on impulse and play at being non-human could be attributed to the safe and familiar spaces built by creative practitioners, that counteracted possible 'fear of the unknown, disappointment, or insecurity'. This was complemented with space for reflection and evaluation:

> in the statue game, the creative practitioner asked the learners to describe what they thought their freeze frame represented, which encouraged them to evaluate and verbalise their thoughts and feelings and consider how contrasting representations could be brought together without conflict.

Tactile interactions extended from being with materials to being with and connecting to other bodies. For example, in a Year 1 session,

> creative behaviours arose around shapes and movements of the human body. [The creative practitioner] commented that the learners were sensitive but decisive when they moved each other's bodies—they were able to communicate confidently and meaningfully but with respect for one another.

Shared gestures were important, forming a new (body) language between participants. Building on the ritual of doing high fives to celebrate each other's creative contributions,

other rituals included learners gently tapping their classmates' faces or heads depending on who was wearing a pair of costume glasses provided by the practitioner. These seemingly small acts became significant because learners repeated and embedded them into their practice over an extended period of time.

Teaching for creativity without criteria

While sessions were taking place, one creative practitioner discussed Open Theatre's outlook on working towards planned outcomes or a set criterion with schools. They likened their practice to a conversation between friends which unfolds organically and does not require a set agenda or prescriptive plan. Therefore, they described their focus as not upon planned outcomes, but upon 'unexpected outcomes'. This conversational, dialogic approach centred learners' ideas, and afforded space for learners to initiate ideas such as the animal movements discussed earlier. It also meant that the value of particular activities could be negotiated between the creative practitioners and learners:

> it is about offering ideas and being open to seeing where the learners take them. There is still structure, and lots of activities that are practitioner-led, but learners can dwell on ideas or quickly move on from them. Therefore, the value placed on each activity is determined by adults *and* children.

This meant that practitioners could spend longer on games which yielded more positive, creative responses from the learners, therefore deepening connections and intra-actions in the space. Furthermore, the practitioners would occasionally work verbally if beneficial. One practitioner, for example, found that a particular group 'loosened with speaking'. This approach to teaching for creativity without criteria required practitioners to:

> make quick decisions and sometimes change the expected direction of the session. Sometimes this meant [the creative practitioner] was unable to pursue the activities they had planned, and that they had to exercise their own creativity in deciding how to move forward in the sessions.

The responsive nature of each encounter reinforced the notion that teaching for creativity is not 'one size fits all'. Having no existing criteria enabled the creative practitioners to adapt their practice to each learner's individual needs and to employ a 'wide variety of different creative prompts' such as music and rhythmic improvisation, and one-to-one or collaborative activities. This meant that learners could engage in a way that was meaningful to them, ranging from participating in 'whole sequences of creative problem-solving that took the drama in new directions' to more small-scale interactions. This required practitioners to be comfortable with uncertainty: 'they would validate new ideas by following wholeheartedly,

even if it was unclear what would happen next (e.g., remaining in character while letting the younger learners ping the elastic).' This had a positive impact on learners who were initially resistant to taking part and led to unexpected and unprompted moments of creativity.

Alongside being open to learners' emerging ideas, the Open Theatre practitioners put boundaries in place to promote creativity. This had the dual benefit of facilitating a safe and happy environment, while also encouraging learners to challenge creative constraints and bend the rules. For example, 'when the learners were not allowed to kick the blocks they came up with inventive ways of hitting them instead'. Such 'what if' thinking and action could be seen in how learners and practitioners related to materials:

> using simple props such as fans and coloured spots introduce elements of semantic indeterminacy into the session: a fan can be used as a fan, or a sword, or a shield, or a hat… the coloured spots can be stepping stones, hats, frisbees, paint, or glue… This degree of indeterminacy means learners have options for different responses, none of which are "right" or "wrong" or "better" or "worse" than any others.

Creative processes

A range of creative processes were valued and explored in the sessions including role play, silliness, playfulness, improvised comedy, experimenting, dancing, abstract movement, working with creative constraints, working with the unexpected, incubation, rule breaking, coming up with alternatives, divergent thinking, idea generation, development, and expansion, thinking independently, critical thinking, using senses, observing others, divergent thinking, and collaboration. The following excerpt exemplifies some of the creative processes explored in a single session:

> improvisation (with props, in response to others), teamwork (turn taking, constructing moments together), imagination (what to do with the hat and what types of physical gestures to share), problem-solving (where to place hoops on the statue).

Silliness and playfulness were particularly important processes. For example, 'while lying down, one boy tickles another boy on the neck. They progress on to wiggling their legs in the air while lying down'. Similarly,

> two boys staged a whole narrative in which the hats were functioning like telephones: they would take turns to whisper into the hat and then the other would respond after 'listening' to their own hat. Sometimes they pretended that the messages were so loud or shocking that they fell over or stumbled around.

Ways of engaging

a. Patterns of engagement

The learners engaged differently in the creative encounters depending on their age, their imagination, and the group dynamic in the session. In one school visit:

> typically, the youngest learners were most likely to copy [the creative practitioner's] actions or engage in repetitive actions such as running in circles or picking up objects from the floor. The Year 3 learners were more likely to spend time developing creative responses: thinking carefully about what responses would be funny or original (such as being blown off the chair or pretending to fight with the fans). The eldest learners often adopted leadership roles during the session, such as when [the creative practitioner] passed the hand puppet onto individual learners, or when the learners explained the instructions for wink murder.

There were nuances linked to each unique school context. For example, there were times when the older groups were the most resistant to being silly and playful, but in one breakthrough moment when using a piece of elastic as an imaginary diving board, a Year 6 class discovered unexpected moments of creativity: 'these moments came across like sparks of intuition, when the learners dropped their adult-like pretence and let themselves have fun and be child-like for a moment'.

b. A spectrum of physical engagement

There was also a spectrum of physical engagement ranging from subtle to more flamboyant gestures. The former included shifts in facial expressions and eye contact, and gentler movements while seated. For example:

> [the creative practitioner] gently invites one young boy to get up by placing the hat on his head. The boy does not get up but tilts his head playfully and knocks the hat to the ground. This is a lovely example of meeting the learners where they are and marvelling in the smaller, more discreet acts of creativity.

This gentleness and acceptance of smaller acts of creativity was promoted elsewhere when learners were playing at being statues and deciding what they wanted their statues to 'do' (e.g., do the splits, create dance moves, become stiff and immovable). The challenge of working with bodies alone and no props meant that they 'had to be creative by using the human body in careful and caring ways'. It is possible that the diverse engagements with materials helped learners to connect with and be creative with theirs and others' bodies in novel ways.

c. Engagement with others

Learners' creative thinking was often characterised by deeply attentive expressions and alert body language. For example, as one creative practitioner moved around the space, learners 'watched him carefully, responding when he least expected it'. This careful watching allowed learners to mirror or create variations of gestures: '[the creative practitioners] drag [the learner's] chair towards the centre (while he is seated on it) and then he playfully drags himself back'. This extended to the way the learners engaged with their peers: 'some new ideas (such as hiding or stealing the blocks) would be initiated by one learnerand then copied collectively by all the learners'.

However, the excitement of being in the session with peers would sometimes negatively impact creative learning. In one session:

> they appeared to be more focussed on attracting others' attention or making each other laugh, rather than working as a team to achieve the goal or allowing everyone in the circle to have a go.

d. Multiple approaches to activating creativity

The creative practitioners' guidance and choice of encounter influenced and was influenced by learners' ways of engaging. For example:

> creativity was activated through familiarity with the props and minimal verbal instruction. In pass-the-slap there was a greater focus on working within set rules or boundaries, which had previously worked well when the class were willing to work together as a team. In this session, however, this was less effective because learners' playful creativity undermined the rules and meant that not all the learners could engage equally. The statue game seemed to be pitched just right for this group, since it offered them a structured scenario but with the freedom to be playful in their individual and group decision-making.

Creative practitioners sometimes found it challenging to enable creativity to flourish while also ensuring that all of the learners could access the session.

Some learners were particularly engaged with imagined characters and stories. During one session learners decided they were experiencing a zombie attack, shouting 'sir, watch out, there's a zombie!'. While there was therefore some verbal expression, this followed a series of non-verbal encounters which were important catalysts for the zombie story.

e. Progressive creative engagement

Creative engagement occurred progressively and incrementally. For example, as more learners bought into the aforementioned zombie story and took on different roles, the space

gradually became more animated and dynamic. Likewise, in a Year 1 class learners became more adventurous in their creative responses as the games progressed, and learners who were minimally engaged and reluctant to leave their seats might later get up when prompted to cross over some stepping stones.

A number of factors were important for enabling creative progression: the creative practitioners prompted persistent and repeated decision-making so that creativity could be activated and sustained; there was time to develop and expand on ideas; the practitioners were skilled improvisers who 'were able to take seemingly uninteresting actions and generate an engaging and creative dialogue'; and the learners had the permission to explore an enact a range of roles.

f. Engagements with music

Music, which is used continuously in Open Theatre sessions, often engaged the learners participating. It signalled the beginning of sessions, cueing everyone to tune into their bodies and explore creativity. For some learners, the music was a key creative outlet which manifested individually or with others. For example,

> one learner is really immersed in the music. They tap their hands on their knees to the beat and throw their arms out. […] Later, the music features a crowing sound, and several learners pretend to be chickens.

Some learners developed new gestures or movements based on the music, such as 'tapping others' knees instead of their own'. Others who were less keen to join in were, nonetheless, moved by the music:

> one boy in Reception did not join in with so many activities, but he was always swinging his legs in time to the music and seemed sometimes to be chanting or rapping under his breath. He was exploring his own individual musical creativities while others were working collaboratively on something with which he was less comfortable.

On one occasion, a learner asked to perform a song after a session, which the teacher and creative practitioner welcomed. It seemed that the music and other creativities explored in the sessions prompted them to share this part of their identity.

Teacher and creative practitioner roles

a. Creative practitioner roles

The creative practitioners' roles included being catalysts for creative ideas, to validate, support, and extend others' ideas, and to tune into participants' responses. Tuning in

effectively would sometimes mean taking a step back—so that learners could work individually or exclusively with their peers—or working only in one-to-one exchanges to better meet the needs of groups where not getting a turn was a worry. Practitioners celebrated the varied ideas offered by learners during sessions:

> during the statue activity, excitement levels build and [a learner] lifts up [another learner] and puts them on the floor (this is all done warmly and with good intentions). [The creative practitioner] immediately joins this learner on the floor—and lies down alongside them—supporting them and ensuring they do not feel alone. [The creative practitioner] high fives them, signalling that this physical pose is encouraged and OK in this space.

The practitioners' role also included setting the tone through curating the music. For example:

> [the creative practitioner] switches to some more upbeat music. Two boys are growing excited, and the music gives them an opportunity to channel their energy as they take turns freestyling in the middle of the circle.

b. Teacher roles

Teachers' roles varied depending on how fully they participated in the sessions. In one school where the teacher was highly engaged in the activities, they too played the role of validating, inspiring, and supporting the learners' creativities. Some learners sometimes gravitated towards this teacher more than the creative practitioner and benefitted from their usual pastoral role for reassurance: 'perhaps with all of the creativities being explored, learners feel a bit more vulnerable. One learner goes over to [the teacher] and hugs them'.

Some teachers were encouraged to take part if the learners initiated an activity which required a response such as throwing and catching a bean bag, whereas others took on the role of audience members to validate learners' participation:

> the Teaching Assistants [TAs] tend not to take part, but they do sit within the circle and nod and smile encouragingly at the learners' ideas. They also engage as audience members, sharing in the surprise, laughter, and shock, which no doubt supports the learners to engage.

There were several sessions where teachers did not participate apart from intervening to manage behaviour. This would sometimes inhibit creative learning, as learners' positive creative responses were sometimes perceived negatively by teachers:

throughout the session, one TA seemed concerned that the learners stayed quiet and seated on their chairs. Even when they were copying the sound effects that [creative practitioner] was making, [TA] told them to be quiet and prevented them from moving round the room outside the circle. [One learner] struggled to stay seated and kept trying to tickle [the creative practitioner]. The TA kept taking [the learner] back to their seat.

This suggests that in some schools, more work is required to translate the approach of the visiting cultural organisations and develop a shared understanding of what good practice looks like. Formal or informal dialogue between teachers and practitioners has the potential to help teachers recognise and foster creative engagement, such as in one school where discussion after a session helped a teacher to refine their understanding of what being 'engaged' and 'disengaged' looked like in the context of Open Theatre's work.

Types of interactions

a. Physical interactions

The sessions encouraged a diverse range of physical interactions which included, but were not limited to, crawling on the floor, crouching, pursing lips, dramatically staring, creeping around, striding as if on a catwalk, skipping, holding planks, doing press-ups, jumping, lying down with legs in the air, freezing, dancing, tapping, doing the splits, arching backs to create bridges, creating heart shapes out of hands, swaying, and silent beatboxing. The freedom to be physically expressive opened up possibilities; one learner exclaimed, 'I can be a ballerina' while dancing and whirling around the space.

b. Sonic interactions

Learners were encouraged to interact sonically through embodied engagement with the accompanying music, or through making their own sound effects and noises. For example:

there is a great use of tension in the music while learners are passing glasses to one another—they do this in sync with the music and it reminds me of mickey mousing, "a film technique that syncs the accompanying music with the actions on screen".[3] This is always humorous in cartoons and has exactly the same effect here—the creativities are entertaining and compelling to watch.

Non-verbal sound effects often prompted new and creative interactions, such as when 'there is a lovely interaction when a learner makes a buzzing noise and in response [the creative

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[3] en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mickey_Mousing

practitioner] pretends to swot it'. Making these noises gave learners an additional outlet and way of connecting with practitioners:

> learners start making chicken noises and appear to do it when [the creative practitioner] is not looking at them. […] Perhaps they would like to regain the practitioners' attention and they are learning that thinking out of the box (by making an unexpected noise) will be effective and valued.

One creative practitioner used music to gauge energy levels and would change the music accordingly if they felt that the group would benefit from a different pace or tone.

c. Material interactions

Interacting with materials was an important dimension of Open Theatre's practice. The props were diverse (including scarves, newspapers, elastic bands, bottles, plastic discs, bean bags, and glasses) which captured and sustained learners' imaginations, while offering different textures and sensory experiences from which to build imaginary scenarios.

The environment and its impact on creative interactions

All of the Open Theatre sessions took place in indoor school spaces including classrooms, school halls, libraries, and other breakout rooms. The creative practitioners were excellent at adapting to and adjusting each environment, ensuring that furniture was cleared as much as practically possible to allow space for physical expression. Open space was a 'must-have' for Open Theatre, and set their choice of environment apart from more conventional classroom spaces. Learners' interactions varied based on their environment. For example, in a small room, 'space is quite limited in this room, but this does not hinder learners' creative expression. Learners enjoy hiding behind bookshelves, tables and chairs but quickly re-join the circle'. On the other hand, within a school hall,

> a sequence in the second session involving throwing a hat around and catching it begins within the circle the of chairs. However, this soon leads to learners running around the circle of chairs together. […] This total freedom over how to be in the space is welcome, and there is a feeling of pure joy.

So, while each environment sparked and afforded different types of interactions, it was possible to be creative in all of the spaces. However, in one school, which had a smaller space, learners were worried about bumping into others, which resulted in them being more reserved and cautious in their interactions. Therefore, larger spaces were potentially better suited to this practice.

Stan's Cafe observations

Stan's Cafe partnered with five academies and worked with Years 2, 3, 4 and 6. Year 4 was the most commonly selected year group. In contrast to Open Theatre, who ran weekly sessions spanning the majority of the academic year, Stan's Cafe typically ran projects over one term comprising a series of weekly workshops (summarised in *Table 6.1*). While all of the Open Theatre academies explored non-verbal physical theatre practices, the Stan's Cafe projects were bespoke to each academy. This required a more substantial, three-step planning phase between Collaborative members, which is outlined below:

1. Whole group meeting between Stan's Cafe and the academies to identify project needs: the Stan's Cafe Artistic Director and Creative Learning Producer met with the Creativity Collaborative leads in October 2022 to begin planning. They described their approach as 'bespoke […] not like a shopping list' and as 'school-led at the service of the school'. In response, schools were invited to share their 'wicked problems'—issues they were interested in addressing in and through collaboration with Stan's Cafe. *Table 6.2* provides an overview of the issues identified by schools. There were some evident synergies across the schools: many felt that activating learners' imaginations was a key area for improvement; cultural capital was also a common thread. There was also an underlining education policy link with regards to developing learners' literacy skills.

2. Initial project outlines: based on the 'wicked problems' shared in the initial planning meeting, Stan's Cafe produced an initial project outline for each school. The respective project titles and briefs are shown in *Table 6.3*.[4] The full briefs also included details on how Stan's Cafe wished to respond to the briefs, examples of what this could potentially look like in practice, and next steps. The Chandos project brief also touched on the potential legacy of the project, stating 'ultimately we would aspire to have [the teachers] responding to the challenges without support'.

Table 6.1. Academies and their partnerships with Stan's Cafe.

Academy	Participants	Timespan
Billesley	Year 6	Summer Term
Chandos	Year 2, Year 4	Spring / Summer Term
George Betts[5]	Year 4	Spring Term
Shireland Hall	Year 4	Summer Term
Tiverton	Year 3, Year 4	Spring Term

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[4] Since the project at Billesley did not commence until the Summer Term, the project brief was not developed at this stage.

[5] All projects were observed with the exception of George Betts.

Table 6.2. 'Wicked problems' identified by schools underpinning Stan's Cafe projects.

Academy	Wicked problem	Potential project approaches
Chandos	**Lack of imagination a barrier to literacy**: Chandos wanted to explore strategies to improve learners' reading experiences (including reading for pleasure) and noted that due to learners' limited life experiences—some rarely leaving their immediate neighbourhoods—learners found it hard to activate their imaginations and contextualise what they were reading. They noted that reading was a focus due to their high population of learners with English as an Additional Language, and that language barriers could impact learning: 'it is about getting them to overcome that confidence barrier, that wall that they've built'. They were open to ideas for the project and sessions did not have to focus on reading per se, but rather on finding ways to promote imagination.	Activities that support and stimulate imagination.
George Betts	**Year 4 learners and teachers lack creative inspiration**: George Betts wanted to inspire more Year 4 learners to come out of their shells and to empower the Year 4 teachers to teach more creatively. They were concerned that the year group was especially introverted and felt that they would benefit from a project that explored language development and oracy. They also wanted the project to tie in with their Spring Term history topic, the Birmingham Blitz. Explicitly thinking about how the teacher could benefit from the project was noted as valuable and pertinent to the central Creativity Collaboratives research question.	Language, oracy, and language development and linking with history curriculum topic The Birmingham Blitz.
Shireland Hall	**Lack of imagination a barrier to creative writing**: Shireland Hall, like Chandos, felt learners' limited life experiences beyond school hindered their imagination and their ability to describe different environments. They gave examples of how this was a barrier to creative writing and 'working with a premise in an open-ended way'. The impact of wider factors including the pandemic and learners missing opportunities to play and socialise during Early Years, was also highlighted. Teachers recognised how some teaching and learning created 'a fear of getting things wrong' and how, due to the issues outlined above, teachers were more likely to guide learners towards particular outcomes instead of building on learners' own ideas. In light of this, Shireland Hall used the following descriptors for their hoped-for project: 'memorable moments […] big themes […] something out of the ordinary […] wow moments […] it becomes a dot then that they can pin things onto'.	Something big, memorable, and out of the ordinary.
Tiverton	**Being able to write more imaginatively and creatively**: Tiverton wanted their project to be history-based and have a writing focus, and to connect with their Spring Term topic Explorers and Adventurers. Inspired by the Walsall Adventure Day, they were also	Creative writing inspired by Explorers and Adventurers topic

	interested in Stan's Cafe running a staff training day looking at the local area of Selly Oak, 'so we can take our experiences and promote them to the learners within our teaching'. They hoped the project itself would be grounded in the locality and offer their learners further inspiration and support in writing creatively and imaginatively.	and the school locality.
Billesley	**Learners are ready for a new creative challenge**: Billesley, building on their long-term relationship with Stan's Cafe and more established arts provision, wanted to do something that would challenge the school. It was already agreed that Stan's Cafe would write a play especially for Year 6 and that this would be rehearsed and performed in the Summer Term, providing a short but achievable timeframe.	For Year 6 to perform a play especially commissioned and written for them in a professional setting.

Table 6.3. Initial Stan's Cafe project proposals.

Academy	Project title	Brief
Chandos	**Imagine if…**	We took the challenge of a project that could develop the imagination of learners throughout the school. We noted that the school faces multiple challenges because its learners have limited life experiences from which to build their imaginations.
George Betts	**The Show**	Put simply we have interpreted our brief as to inject more 'oomph' into Year 4. We understand 'oomph' to mean energy, excitement, self-motivation, exploration and fun.
Shireland Hall	**Here is the News**	We took the challenge of an ambitious project that would stretch the school and have a widespread impact from Year 2 upward. Young people's imaginations and writing skills are to be developed.
Tiverton	**Tiverton Voyages**	The challenge is to create a project for Years 3 and 4 that will address the topic of Explorers in an imaginative and stimulating way. We also noted that there was interest in a staff training session focusing on using the local area as a learning resource.

3. Individual follow-up meetings to feedback on project outlines and arrange next steps: the researchers attended the follow-up meeting at Chandos to observe an example of how the planning progressed. The meeting took place at the school and was attended by the Stan's Cafe Artistic Director and Creative Learning Producer, and two Chandos teachers who worked with Year 2 and Year 4. The teachers were very positive about 'Imagine If…', which would involve using prompts such as, 'what if you had to live at school?' as stimuli for creative exploration in each session. Stan's Cafe believed the project offered 'more of an idea—a way of thinking' and hoped to stimulate 'imaginative thinking in the classroom'. Referencing the teachers' needs analysis from the initial planning meeting,

they noted how learners' lack of cultural life experiences posed a 'theoretical challenge'. Nevertheless, they wished to show that it was possible to harness learners' imaginations, no matter how limited they seemed. They added that it was about 'challenging orthodoxy: do you need life experiences to activate the imagination?' The teachers agreed with this thinking, and discussed how the project would 'give [learners] freedom […] room for mistakes […] room to think'. This points to the wider issue of creativity being side-lined in the primary curriculum and suggests that learners were not typically afforded the space to engage in imaginative processes. One teacher felt that schools were 'restricted to having tick boxes', and that the project would be a welcome change. Stan's Cafe wanted 'Imagine If…' to build a 'resource for teachers' to later pass on to others.

Overall, the teachers were very supportive and wanted Stan's Cafe to 'have the freedom' to decide on aspects such as the number of sessions, ideal school spaces, and artists. In general, Chandos' project was more open-ended in comparison to the other schools. While the project would explore the imaginative prompts through artistic domains such as drama, music, and dance, Stan's Cafe emphasised that it was important not to get diverted in terms of purpose: 'it is not about doing dance but *imagine if* you were 37cm tall. Or what if you're 4m tall?' This framing distinguished the Stan's Cafe's project at Chandos from more conventional arts-based projects.

Stan's Café findings

Working with creative practitioners to enable teachers and learners to expand their understanding of their own creativities

At Billesley and Shireland Hall, the Stan's Cafe projects were rooted in the dramatic arts and film-making respectively, and the creative practitioners had strong expertise in these domains. Through working with the creative practitioners, the learners were able to experience authentic, real-world practices and the kind of persistence and discipline that is required to produce creative outcomes. For instance, at Billesley—where the learners were cast in a play that had been written especially for them by Stan's Cafe—the creative practitioner gave the learners coaching to support them to develop vivid and believable characters. This gave learners the experience of being directed, as well as the permission to play with new identities and experiment with aspects such as body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice.

At Shireland Hall, the creative practitioners introduced the learners and teachers into the world of film-making (*Figure 6.1*). Learners were able to try out different roles including camera operator, sound operator, and assistant director, and were guided through a range

Figure 6.1. Producing the Daily Greens news programme at Shireland Hall.

of technical and creative considerations for creating news features: from how to ask effective interview questions, to how to film high-quality footage, to communicating as a filming crew, to creating back-ups of their work. The creative practitioners used their knowledge to equip learners with specialist vocabulary and skills, but also took learners' own ideas seriously and helped them realise them. The teacher was present all day so that they could also learn the skills necessary for potentially continuing with the project during the week and in future years. The different sections of the day offered the learners different ways of being creative: they had time for discussion and evaluation, creation and recreation of filmed content, presentation and acting, and developing and refining diverse ideas. The practitioners' dialogue constructed an authentic film-making environment and maintained the kind of momentum expected in a studio. They cued the learners with phrases such as, 'camera rolling… sound rolling… action!... repeat… rolling… rolling… let's de-rig, let's take it all down… quiet on set please!'

The projects at Tiverton and Chandos were broader and drew on domains such as music, dance, history, and locality. At Chandos, the creative practitioner supported learners to delve more deeply into imaginary scenarios. In response to a learner's idea to flood the school in order to have a bath, they asked questions such as, 'what will we need?' and 'what could we do to drain the water?' They facilitated the creative process by modelling the 'what if' mindset, scaffolding learners' creative thinking. In another session at Chandos, which was led by a dance practitioner, learners explored new creativities in response to 'the star-breathing tigers in outer space'. The practitioners helped the learners investigate the boundaries between acting like tigers (crawling and roaring) and creating abstract dance-like movements to represent tigers. This was supported by simple by effective equipment—LED finger lasers and background music—which excited the learners.

At Tiverton, the learners explored famous explorers and expeditions. They developed their own creative responses including their own individual flags, which would later be flown when they went 'exploring' on a geocaching trip. Creating the flags enabled learners to express their own identities (e.g., through incorporating images, colours, and mottos that were important to them in or outside of school) and illustrated how curriculum topics could inspire creativity through connection to learners' own life stories. The creative practitioner facilitated this process by asking questions such as 'what does the flag look like?' They offered constructive boundaries to the learners, asking them to choose three colours to use on their flag to represent something meaningful.

Re-thinking and re-imagining pedagogical practices to observe, value, and acknowledge a range of creativities in the classroom

a. Stepping out of comfort zones
Stan's Cafe's novel project approaches required schools to step out of their comfort zones. Billesley valued this opportunity and believed that through creatively challenging learners, they were 'setting the bar high'. Valuing less comfortable creative practices and stepping into the unknown as a means to raise standards was an important acknowledgement of the potential for creativity to impact learning trajectories. Learners were also pushed to improve their film-making skills at Shireland Hall, with comments such as, 'we could do something a little bit better with the skillset you've got', and feedback like, 'loud, clear voice, look at the camera, try not to stutter, be friendly and smiley as your audience is the school'.

b. Creativity allied to procedural knowledge
The Shireland Hall sessions highlighted the complementarity between creativity and procedural skills and knowledge. By teaching new vocabulary and skills and then giving learners the chance to put their knowledge into practice, Stan's Cafe offered a pedagogy in which creative learning reinforced new (and sometimes complicated) concepts. The creative practitioners' continuous guidance in supporting learners to create a high-quality film demonstrated that creative pedagogy requires consistent attention to detail and the repetition and reinforcement of new skills. This emphasised the importance of investing sufficient time to develop and sustain creativities in the classroom.

c. Flexible thinking
The practices of Stan's Cafe demonstrated the value of flexible thinking for enriching creative processes and outcomes. This included framing dilemmas that arose as valuable. For instance, at Shireland Hall it was noted that,

last time the class had to move rooms during filming as the school lunch was on a different schedule. The creative practitioner uses this as an example to discuss flexible thinking: "roofs can fall down—this happens".

This thinking supported learners to move beyond the idea of there being 'right' and 'wrong' ways of film-making, and was similarly promoted at Tiverton:

> the flag-making activity allowed learners to be messy and to engage in a personalised task where there were no 'wrong' answers. All of the learners' responses were validated by [the creative practitioner] or their teacher, who admired their work and asked them what it meant to them. The learners were also encouraged not to get side-tracked by questions like, 'which piece of paper should we use?' This ensured that it was their creativity that was being valued, rather than their adherence to certain 'rules'.

d. Valuing the make-believe

At Tiverton, practices were multi-faceted and allied to project-based learning. Creativities were fostered through research (into maps and past voyagers' experiences), making (flags and geocaches), and exploring (the local environment). Yet they were also encouraged to make-believe, to collectively turn their school voyage into an extraordinary occasion. This was valued by the creative practitioner who used language such as, 'we are going on a very, very exciting expedition this morning'.

This was also the case at Chandos, where the creative practitioner ensured that learners received praise for all their efforts, but especially drew attention to learners who invented new ideas. The prompts Stan's Cafe created (such as 'imagine if all the roads of Birmingham were canals', 'imagine if you shrank to be 30cm tall', and 'imagine if an animal could talk to you') were integral to this approach and fostered flourishing make-believe environments. Learners' imaginative thinking was also supported through dialogic pedagogies, which encouraged learners to do the majority of the talking. By giving learners space to talk, they were also offered the space to think aloud, problem solve, and suggest alternatives. Their imaginary worlds were therefore rooted in their own ideas, rather than being alienating.

e. Progression pedagogies

In the dance session observed at Chandos, steady progression from imitation towards abstract creation enabled all learners to engage creatively, regardless of how confident they were at developing their own dance moves. This emphasises the potential of spiral or progression pedagogies for valuing all learners' creative contributions while also giving opportunities for novel ideas to emerge from the most confident or engaged learners.

Giving value to the affective (human and non-human) aspects of creativity

a. Feelings

Feelings were explored from various angles across the projects. At Billesley, learners received a comedic script and enjoyed embracing the opportunity to emphasise funny moments. This complemented some of the learners' playful dispositions (one suggested adding more sarcasm to a particular line), and demonstrated that their personalities were valued and could inspire more reserved peers with their creativities. The use of old-fashioned slang and archaic terms (for example 'eejit' and 'anointed') heightened this sense of play, enabling the learners to embody their characters through conversing in the fashion of a bygone era. Music was also a central part of the storytelling. Learners co-created songs with a professional musician, which served to punctuate key developments in the play, highlight feelings such as bravery ('we're not afraid of anything, we will fight in the name of the King') and grit ('fight 'til death, off with their heads').

At Shireland Hall, learners designed interview questions for professional swimmers who visited their school (see *Figure 8.4*). This included affective aspects (e.g., 'how did it feel to lose (or win) the competition?') enabling learners to see how feelings could shape their creative outcome and make it more engaging.

At Tiverton—where learners created their own geocaches to hide in the local area—learners revelled in the uncertainty of where their geocaches could go next. The geocaches, while formed of physical matter, therefore carried affective qualities. Additionally, whole-class discussion enabled learners to express ideas and images that were important to them, allowing individual thoughts, feelings, memories, and personal and cultural identities to be foregrounded.

At Chandos, the creative practitioner encouraged learning that centred on how it *felt* to be in school, not just on what learners *did* in school. This offered learners an opportunity to sit with and explore different emotions, deepening their connections to the imagined scenarios they were participating in. Several prompts were based on dilemmas (such as the school flooding), which heightened affective aspects of creativity.

b. Bodies

Learners were encouraged to use facial expressions and body language to cement and enhance their creative ideas, including showing the class what their faces would look like while watching television at school (Chandos), roaring and crawling in response to the tiger prompt (Chandos), and thinking about how they could recreate 'normal' communicative expressions (e.g., looking at someone when speaking to them, laughing at jokes) in a studio

setting (Shireland Hall). At Chandos, the dance practitioner encouraged learners to pay attention to their bodies—to make small moves and big moves, to crouch down and stretch up. When they moved across the hall they had space to create novel movements, and some took the opportunity to do cartwheels or breakdance moves.

c. Materials

At Shireland Hall, objects and materials anchored learners' ideas and supported storytelling. For instance:

> the group would like to improve a segment about gaming and how to stay safe online. [The creative practitioner] says to a learner, "so, Director, have a think about things you could do to make it more gamey". The teacher inputs into this and suggests collecting a tray of iPads and laptops from the tech suite to add in the background as a useful visual backdrop.

This demonstrates how materials and spaces beyond the classroom were valued for their creative potential, in turn promoting a curiosity about other materials and spaces that could be incorporated. Additionally, learners had to set up the filming equipment (e.g., cameras, tripods, microphones, headphones, and clapper boards) carefully and correctly, which reinforced the value of patience and planning for creativity. One of the news segments centred on an origami tutorial, which meant that learners had to consider the role of the paper folding in their recording, how they would film it, and how they would teach it to others. The pace at which they could record was determined by how quickly the learner could fold the paper; therefore, the natural affordances (or constraints) of the material were evaluated and accommodated. This pointed to the benefits of being allowed the space to linger over and explore the possibilities of materials to promote creative learning.

At Chandos, the LED finger lasers intra-acted with bodies, empowering learners to act more expressively and dramatically as though they had their own laser or weapon, and to enjoy the way their physical gestures mingled with the light. At Tiverton, using craft objects (e.g., coloured pencils, coloured paper, and scissors) meant that learners moved around the classroom a lot to collect paper or share resources. This animated the space as bodies circled around the tables and meant that learners were able to share in their peers' ideas.

d. The outdoors

The use of the outdoors for creative stimulation was central to the Tiverton Voyages project. Fieldnotes recorded the school's rocket launch trip, which took place in the local park:

> the park becomes an exciting site of a rocket launch and helps to emphasise this important occasion. After the launch, as learners dash around excitedly on the

search for geocaches, I wonder if the feeling of grass beneath their feet adds to the experience and helps them to embody their roles as explorers and voyagers. Their playground is mainly concrete from what I can tell, so perhaps this organic matter is adding something special. […] As the park is a large open space and it is a windy, showery day, everyone is more exposed to the elements. This adds another dimension to the adventure: learners huddle around each other and stare up at the sky, possibly imagining that voyagers before them that would have also braved the elements.

This illustrates the multiple affordances of working outdoors for developing embodied and multi-sensory experiences. As feet hit soft grass rather than concrete, learners' geocache search could be more fast-paced and urgent. Moving from a sheltered indoor space to being underneath an open sky with unsettled weather offered genuine twists and turns, connecting learners to past explorers' considerations and experiences. This project was rooted in Tiverton's curriculum, which further demonstrated the potential for utilising the outdoors more frequently for curriculum learning and teaching for creativity.

As part of the film-making at Shireland Hall, learners were encouraged to pay attention to non-human materials such as backgrounds, chairs, plants, light, and wind. In a similar vein to the Walsall Adventure Day, this encouraged the learners to explore and be sensitive to their surrounding environment.

Teaching for creativity without criteria

The open-ended 'what if' questions at Chandos were not designed to elicit specific responses, nor were they built on particular criteria. This generated rich creative thinking, and by only focusing on one prompt or 'what if' question per session, learners had more time to explore and develop their ideas. In turn, the creative practitioner and teacher could be more open to the ideas that unfolded. As noted during a visit, 'perhaps the learners can sense this openness, and it helps them to lose any inhibitions. They do not need to worry about getting things wrong'.

A similar mindset was fostered at Tiverton, which impacted their engagement with the rocket launch field trip:

> learners can be explorers and step into the world of the rocket launch in the knowledge that there is no right or wrong. Perhaps this fosters a compassionate outlook—when the rocket spirals back onto the school field they still clap and cheer. The launch has not gone 'wrong' but rather it is part of a story they have been building together.

In the more physical Chandos session, which involved dance and movement, some ground rules were required to ensure everyone would be safe and could hear instructions clearly. Nevertheless, all learners' contributions were valued and there were not any pre-established criteria determining 'creative' input. For example, some learners contributed by acting like tigers (crawling and roaring), and although they were encouraged to make these actions more like dance moves (exaggerating them or slowing them down) there were no strict instructions for how to do this. Learners had the freedom to express their ideas how they wished, rather than worrying about how to fulfil the task at hand.

At Tiverton, putting creative parameters in place (e.g., design a flag using three colours, design a flag using one symbol) encouraged learners to think creatively. Framing such activities as a challenge meant that the learners were more likely to engage in creative problem-solving. This illustrated how teaching for creativity without criteria may involve no criteria for the assessment of creativity itself (e.g., how original is the idea? is the idea fit for purpose?), but may still have specific criteria or boundaries to enable creativity.

Like the sessions at Tiverton, projects that were working towards set creative outcomes did employ some specific criteria. Shireland Hall had to work to the agreed outcome of recording and producing a school news episode, which necessitated set timeframes at each stage of the creative process. Similarly, Billesley were working towards a performance of their play at a professional venue (see *Figure 6.2*). However, these constraints actually enhanced creative processes because learners were pushed to learn new skills, adapt them for using 'in the field', and work collaboratively to get their work done to the highest possible standard within the time available. This demonstrated that having a pre-prepared plan could help facilitate teaching for creativity. It is also worth noting that the learners at Billesley had sat exams in the same term as their project. While they were expected to work to a high standard, the play did not come with assessment criteria and may have offered a timely creative outlet and sense of accomplishment that was not bound up in exams.

Creative processes

Stan's Cafe projects at all four schools were underpinned by multiple creative processes. For example, at Billesley learners engaged in role playing, storytelling, listening, persistence, refining, and stepping into the unknown. At Shireland Hall the emphasis was upon creative thinking, storytelling, design, film-making, generating ideas, closely observing the surrounding environment, problem solving, curiosity, reflection, criticality, communicating with others, persistence, perseverance, and thinking about abstract concepts (such as framing and angle).

Figure 6.2. '(No Such Thing as a) Civil War' performed by Billesley Primary School.

At Tiverton, learners were encouraged to pursue personal, cultural, and artistic expression, research, exploring locality, physical exploration, imagining, make-believe, and working with uncertainty. Moving beyond the school site presented new creative processes as learners experienced outdoor elements such as the sound of the breeze, the swaying of tree branches, the smell of damp grass, and the feel of turf under their feet. At Chandos, learners explored imaginative thinking, questioning, hypothesising, creative and open-ended thinking, working with uncertainty, being silly, developing and expanding on ideas, role playing, dancing and tumbling, engaging with everyday school materials, and joint problem solving. Across the four schools, the contrasting projects emphasised differing and overlapping creative processes. This suggests that planning for creative work in the classroom should include consideration of which creative processes could be facilitated.

Ways of engaging

During projects which were working towards set outcomes, learners were 'very absorbed by the script', 'focused on creating footage', and 'completely invested in and excited by the rocket launch'. The prospect of performing to an audience, sharing a news channel with the wider school community, and participating in a successful voyage drove the creative learning forwards and captured learners' attention.

Pride also encouraged creativity. A creative practitioner at Shireland Hall commented, 'I love your ambition' when the learners wished to use a range of shots and frames. At Tiverton, 'they appear to be proud of their flags, and the learners who have been nominated to carry the large flag up the hill to the park carry it very carefully'.

At Chandos, engagement was discursive and lively:

> learners think aloud and problem solve about things like buying a bed, using teachers' laptops to watch films, stealing sweets, and how sleeping by the schoolbooks would work well as there are cushions there.

Learners engaged with their peers to enrich their creative contributions:

> groups are sharing their typical routine living in a school, and one group is watching telly and an onlooking learner is happy to play along and asks, "is that popcorn you're eating?".

Joint problem solving was also noted. For instance:

> one group imagine painting a teacher who then becomes real. This excites the group, stimulating animated discussion. This idea develops into drawing a cook who will also become real and can therefore cook all of their food […] another learner says that they could draw a house and live in it.

Teacher and creative practitioner roles

A range of teacher and creative practitioner roles were observed throughout the Stan's Cafe projects. At Shireland Hall, the professional film-maker taught the learners and teachers domain-specific knowledge and skills, and therefore had teaching role as well as a directing role. The other creative practitioners helped to cement this learning and quality-assured specific elements by, for instance, directing and scripting the learners who were acting as news anchors. The creative practitioners regularly pretended to be audience members, and invited learners to do the same, to imagine and evaluate how the news episode would be received by the school community. The teacher was also very active in the session. They utilised their school knowledge to enhance shoots (e.g., by locating props) and helped learners understand the tasks they had been assigned. For example, when the creative practitioner suggested using b-roll in some of the news clips, the teacher reminded the learners that they had seen this in other films.

At Chandos, the creative practitioner had the role of initiating, sustaining, and elevating learners' creative responses to the 'what if' question. This included detecting the creative potential in learners' ideas and supporting them to take them further. Guest practitioners such as the dance specialist provided opportunities for learners to develop alternative creative responses. This meant that they were not restricted only to verbal creative responses. Building on the positive planning meeting between Chandos and Stan's Cafe, one of the teachers repeatedly praised learners' creative thinking. During one visit, the

teacher was 'really engaged in the session, thinking about it, and making notes while chipping in with imaginative ideas'. However, during another visit involving a different classroom teacher, they did not appear to be engaged in the session at all (they were working on their laptop at the side of the hall), and therefore did not have the opportunity to explore the creative interactions first-hand.

At Billesley, the creative practitioner and teacher adopted similar roles. They moved around each group as acting as audience members or directors, and helped with aspects such as lines and stage directions. For instance, during a scene run-through the teacher shared 'why doesn't [the learner] walk over here?'. The learners appeared to appreciate this ongoing feedback and benefitted from both the teacher and the creative practitioner perspective.

At Tiverton, the creative practitioner facilitated learning and adopted a more teacher-like persona while delivering 'topic' (i.e., geography and history) on explorers. The teacher was fully involved in the session, but their outlook differed to that of the creative practitioners, and this seemed to frustrate the creative process:

> the teacher kept on intervening whenever the classroom became too noisy or chaotic, which meant that all creative practices were restrained by the existing rules and expectations in the classroom. For example, when learners came up with imaginative ideas of flags their ideas were dismissed or closed down as 'silly' or 'not real'. Instead, they could have been offered new creative opportunities to explore 'what if…?' questions.

Furthermore, the creative practitioner shared that they would have rather taken a less structured approach with the learners, but that the teacher wished to guide them towards structured discussions and activities. In the next phase of the Creativity Collaborative, it would be beneficial to support more pre-project communication between teachers and creative practitioners so that alternative approaches can be shared and understood. Ideally, this should support the development of mutual trust and willingness to take risks.

Types of interactions

a. Physical interactions
Physical interactions were particularly prevalent across the projects. For example,

> the film-making is a physical process: learners set up and de-rig equipment, carry it from one shoot location to another and firmly sound the clapper to cue the next bit of filming. Likewise, they have to be very still when needed. The creative practitioner (gently) has to repeatedly instruct a learner not to tap their feet during takes!

Alongside the physicality of filming at Shireland Hall, the sessions at Chandos promoted physical interactions as a form of self-expression. This included creating the shapes of vegetable and fruit, being butterflies, and joining hands together to form a cake. Additionally, 'in response to living in school "forever", learners physically demonstrate life stages and, for example, crawl. One learner hunches over pretending to be elderly'. At Tiverton, the affordances of accessing the local park enabled physical freedom:

> it is a physical experience as learners proudly and purposefully make their way up the hill to the park from school with their flags and rockets, and dash from one side of the park to the other in search of additional geocaches.

b. Playful interactions

In the spirit of Stan's Cafe's wider work, playful interactions were encouraged across the projects. At Billesley, for instance, playful interactions were a key part of the script, with lots of deadpan jokes and quips between characters. At Chandos, one learner playfully found a workaround to living in school forever:

> another learner discusses eating carrots in order to make his eyesight good. That way he will be able to see his parents from far away and they can come and collect him from school!

In another example from Chandos, 'learners mention that toys might get broken and suggest that if this happens they can just put them in the toilet and flush them or put them in the oven'. At Tiverton the atmosphere during the school trip was 'very playful as learners will the rocket launch to succeed—while knowing only too well it is not a "real" rocket!'

c. Dialogic interactions

Dialogue also underpinned many of the interactions. At Billesley

> dialogue is central, especially at this early rehearsal stage where the costumes and scenery haven't been developed. The learners are encouraged by the creative practitioner to hone their lines and be expressive. They are also easing into the physicality of the characters.

At Shireland Hall, the creative practitioners illustrated how dialogue on and off camera was important for enabling effective communication, a smooth filming process, and producing a strong news feature. This was connected to learners' critical interaction with the footage, through verbal prompts such as, 'watch this quite critically' and 'be a critical audience'.

The environment and its impact on creative interactions

A distinct affordance of the Creativity Collaborative projects with Stan's Cafe was the opportunity to work outside, including filming interviews by basketball courts, gathering together in the park for a rocket launch, and rehearsing a script in the fresh air of the school playground. With regards to the latter, we noted:

> it is useful to have this sort of open space so that learners can break off into smaller groups and act out the scenes, especially scenes which require more dramatic physical gestures. […] The change in scene may be helpful for them in terms of experimenting with being new characters and losing inhibitions.

Other benefits of working outside included the way in which learners could reinterpret and gain inspiration from their surrounding environments, enjoy energetic physical interactions on softer grassy surfaces, work to the rhythm of the unsettled weather, and feel a sense of freedom:

> the considerable space in the park adds to the sense of awe during the rocket launch—there is no school fence so there is unbounded freedom as to where the rocket may go.

Furthermore, at Tiverton the practicalities of going on a field trip and requiring parents and carers to volunteer as chaperones made the experience more memorable, as learners witnessed the rocket launch with their families. It was notable to have this parental involvement without there being some kind of staged sharing event.

Creatively interacting with the various spaces imbued typically overlooked materials with a new sense of value and meaning. For example, at Chandos, 'the group of learners I observe utilise the materials in the school hall. There are hanging paper lanterns and they decide that they will be used to make fake currency'. The majority of activity at Chandos took place in the school hall, and this environment did present challenges:

> many of the Year 2s found it difficult to stay still in their lines and ended up skidding around the floor or crawling over each other. Negotiating the freedom of the large space (without the limitations of desks and chairs in a classroom) while also maintaining a sense of order and progression was difficult for the practitioners and may have been even more so for a teacher who was unfamiliar with facilitating dance and drama.

Furthermore, the use of different coloured lights to create the impression of outer space in the school hall was ineffective because it was impossible to make the hall dark. This

reflected some of the more challenging aspects of transferring creative activity from the classroom to other spaces.

At Shireland Hall, the environment reflected authentic practices of film-making:

> the school space (a multipurpose breakout room) is set up to model a professional television studio including a green screen, cameras, and sound equipment. This helps learners to get into the creative mindset.

Introducing specialist equipment, professional expertise, and procedural knowledge within the everyday school setting helped to prompt learners' awareness of creative and reflective processes and their application in real-world contexts.

7. Teacher reflections

Reflection and evaluation took place on an iterative basis throughout Year Two of the Creativity Collaborative. At each school, teachers were asked to fill in a weekly reflection diary for their own professional development—these were collected and reviewed by the Elliot Foundation Academies Trust. Teachers were also asked to fill in a termly reflection diary for the purposes of the evaluation by Birmingham City University. These were completed either by the Creativity Lead or by a teacher who had been present in sessions with Open Theatre or Stan's Cafe. They posed questions on eight subjects:

1. What has been happening in your Creativity Collaborative?
2. What is the planned outcome, if any?
3. Were there any unexpected moments?
4. What does the creative environment look and sound like? How is space and movement used?
5. What gestures or interactions happen in the sessions? How do the sessions give value to the affective (human and non-human) aspects of creativity?
6. How do the learners engage creatively? How do the learners understand their creativities?
7. How do the sessions offer new ways of thinking about pedagogies that develop creativities?
8. How and why are you assessing creativities or creative progress in the sessions?

Teachers were also asked to include photographs, videos, or artefacts relating to their sessions.

Table 7.1 details the reflective diaries that were collected for the present evaluation. At the end of each term, we analysed the data from the submitted diaries to identify emerging themes describing and explaining the creative practices being fostered across the Collaborative.

Autumn Term

Open Theatre began sessions with four schools during the Autumn Term. Teachers' reflective diaries described the *creative spaces*, the *creative play*, and learners' *creative responses.*

Table 7.1. Reflective diaries collected from teachers.

Academy	Creative partner		Autumn term	Spring term	Summer term
Croft	Open Theatre		✓	✓	✓
Kings Rise			✓	✓	
Shirestone			✓	n/a	n/a
Woods Bank			✓		✓
Billesley		Stans Cafe	n/a*	n/a	
Chandos			n/a	✓	
George Betts			n/a	✓	✓
Shireland Hall			n/a	n/a	
Tiverton			n/a	✓	n/a

*n/a indicates terms in which sessions were not running. Stan's Cafe sessions did not begin in any schools until the spring or summer term; Open Theatre sessions at Shirestone finished after the autumn term.

Creative spaces

The spaces used for creative sessions with Open Theatre—such as school halls or libraries—were calm, safe, and welcoming. Typically, seats would be laid out in a circle (see *Figure 7.1*); acting as a material delineation of the equitable and collaborative work that would take place:

> we conduct the sessions in the library, which is a quiet, peaceful space. […] The seats are arranged in a circle and then the session takes place in the middle. [The practitioner] welcomes all the children when they enter and makes eye contact with each of them individually and gives them a smile which really sets the tone of a calm, fun space. (Kings Rise, OT)

The seating arrangement allowed each learner to access the central performance space where the drama unfolded.

Creative play

Teachers characterised their sessions with Open Theatre as playful opportunities for self-expression and communication through non-verbal, musical drama: 'children are given new ways of being creative. […] We can see the benefits of [non-verbal practices] and the children are developing other ways of exploring and communicating' (Shirestone, OT). Foregrounding non-verbal, physical communication ensured that all learners could actively participate, regardless of their verbal capabilities or self-confidence. Using 'gesture rather

Figure 7.1. Open Theatre sessions using scarves and boxes.

than vocal instruction' (Woods Bank, OT) and incorporating different musical excerpts helped delineate the structure and atmosphere of the sessions without the need for verbal explanation.

While listening to the accompanying music, learners would follow practitioners' visual gestures and facial expressions. For example,

> the children continued their warm-up session where they joined in copying [the practitioner] with his body-tapping dance moves. The children then had to find a rose under flowers and then choose a child to give the rose to. Then, the child with the rose turned around whilst the other child hid the rose—this was a repeated activity. (Croft, OT)

Through 'collaboration and a gradual reduction of scaffold from [the practitioner], children can be free to take ownership over their own learning' (Croft, OT). Learners were given the autonomy to create new responses—exploring or exceeding previous responses by, for example, moving objects or crawling, running, or dancing—sometimes in competition with one another:

> children are going against the grain in the sessions almost competitively with their peers to see who can think of something different or more exciting than the example given. […] [They are] investigating boundaries. (Kings Rise, OT)

However, within the sessions learners also had to practise 'waiting their turn and learning empathy' (Kings Rise, OT). Using visual cues and non-human objects—such as the scarves and empty shoebox shown in *Figure 7.1*—the learners engaged in creative interactions. Teachers explained how navigating these encounters without verbal instructions required learners to share and be patient:

> children have been learning not only to express themselves through drama but to also take turns whilst enjoying the experience. [...] [For example] they would wear the hat and then offer it to another child. (Woods Bank, OT)

These attributes developed over time as learners learnt to self-regulate their own behaviour and that of their peers, so that they had equal opportunities for active participation:

> certain children would sometimes rush into the activity without waiting for cues but these children are now learning to participate actively in the game or scenario, giving their peers chances to participate as well and are encouraging their peers to join them. [...] Now these children are seeing the value in teamwork, collaboration, patience, and communication with their peers. (Kings Rise, OT)

Creative responses

Although many learners quickly learnt to co-operate with their peers and the creative practitioners within the sessions, teachers explained that some were nervous or 'sometimes struggled with the boundaries as these are more implied than explicit. [...] The lack of boundaries and structure can be tricky' (Shirestone, OT). Nonetheless, most were able to join in following encouragement from their peers:

> children are supporting each other to be creative and confident, giving their peers the hat which indicates it is their turn, or encouraging them to get up and have a go— reassuring them if they are nervous. (Kings Rise, OT)

Generally, learners gained confidence over the term and were engaged, enthusiastic, and eager to have fun: 'lots of children have come out of their shell more than we anticipated. [...] [They] engage enthusiastically. They enjoy the sessions and look forward to them' (Shirestone, OT).

However, teachers reflected that learners perceived the sessions as worthwhile because they were fun—and perhaps distinctive from other school activities—and did not 'understand what creativity was being developed' (Shirestone, OT). They suggested that 'most children think they are there to have fun—they don't see the value of learning that is not academic and is not outcome-driven' (Croft, OT). Nevertheless, it is possible that the implicit nature of

the creative learning (without the burden of learning objectives or assessment frameworks) was important for supporting learners' perceived agency and their consequent creative decision-making. Even though no teachers were explicitly assessing learners' creative development, they all reported observations such as 'children who were reluctant to join in became more confident', and 'children over time expressed themselves more using their own ideas when asked to engage' (Woods Bank, OT).

Spring Term

Reflective diaries submitted at the end of Spring Term included those from schools working with Open Theatre and Stan's Cafe. In addition to reinforcing teachers' observations about *creative spaces*, *creative play*, and *creative responses* from the Autumn Term diaries, they offered detailed insights into three further themes: *facilitating creativity*, *experiencing creativity*, and *developing creativity*.

Facilitating creativity

Teachers working with both Open Theatre and Stan's Cafe reflected that the artist practitioners were highly skilled, and were able to model creative activities to the learners using scaffolding. Nevertheless, even though their own skills were inspirational, 'value is given through the child-led approach and the serious way [the practitioners] take all [the learners'] contributions' (Tiverton, SC). Learners' ideas were encouraged and affirmed through being directly incorporated into sessions. For example, at one school learners partnered with a songwriter from Stan's Cafe (*Figure 7.2*):

> each class wrote lyrics and recorded their own songs based on the stimulus. […] Having their ideas turned into lyrics, and then [the artist's] ability to turn these into four totally different-sounding songs was wonderful. (Chandos, SC)

Figure 7.2. Collecting learners' lyrics on a jamboard during songwriting with Stan's Cafe.

He's got stripes and he's is strong, and he's the king of the zoo.
He feels soft and strong, but he wants to eat me.
Tiger, Tiger, chomp, chomp
Tiger, tiger breathing fire, YIKES!
Roar, roar, ahhhh,ahhhh, roar, roar, ahhhh, ahhh, CHOMP!

Although sessions with creative practitioners were 'an amazing experience' (Chandos, SC), teachers also recognised the need to integrate creative activities into their everyday lessons with long-term recurrence. Some found that sessions with Open Theatre or Stan's Cafe directly impacted learners' behaviours during lessons, and wanted this to continue in the long term: 'their confidence and patience […] [is] obvious when the children are back in the classroom' (Kings Rise, OT). But others identified the need for increased curriculum integration, saying that the impact of sessions was limited by their separation from usual timetabled lessons: 'in the sessions, I see children who are normally quiet in class engaging. However, they continue to be quiet in class sessions' (Croft, OT).

Some teachers felt they had gained confidence to teach for creativity through working alongside visiting practitioners: 'we already use most of the [creative] strategies but it's good to see them modelled' (Tiverton, SC). Others, however, believed further training would grow their awareness of creative expressions and dispositions:

> [I] would be more confident than other members of staff who haven't seen [Stan's Cafe] in action […] I think some staff training on this would be beneficial so that teachers are better aware of the ways they are already, or could further integrate this into their teaching. (Chandos, SC)
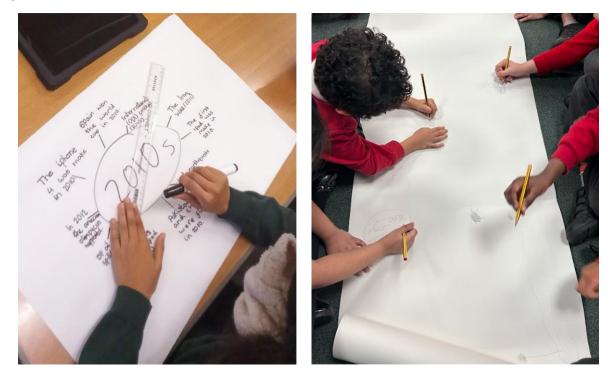
Experiencing creativity

Teachers recorded how sessions with Open Theatre and Stan's Cafe allowed learners to express creativity through play, music, drama, and art. Games were used to warm up and cool down and encourage the learners to participate:

> the sessions have been starting with warm-up games. These were always active to get all of the children up and involved. These included things like mimicking and passing on sounds and actions in a circle, or games with movements and actions like the bean game. (Chandos, SC)

Background music was used to accompany the Open Theatre sessions, and some Stan's Cafe sessions included song writing and musical performance. Drama was frequently used to act out imagined scenarios, such as 'see[ing] a spot on the ground as something to balance on […] [or] as a pancake [to] create a whole scene [with]' (Kings Rise, OT), 'becoming a rescue team to find and save a person stuck in a dangerous forest' (Chandos, SC), or 'a performance based on […] the Birmingham Blitz' (George Betts, SC). Drawing and writing was used by Stan's Cafe practitioners to record thoughts and feelings and create props (*Figure 7.3*).

Figure 7.3. Creative drawing and writing with Stan's Cafe.

The opportunity to take part in creative sessions was perceived as 'a real excitement' (Chandos, SC), and 'something special to look forward to every week' (Kings Rise, OT). Sessions were typically filled with fun: 'children are praising and encouraging others, children are laughing' (Croft, OT). They often followed unexpected paths and had surprising—but meaningful—outcomes: '[the children] are now so free in their thinking and ideas that the sessions can often take on a whole different pathway than initially intended' (Chandos, SC). Often, learners would 'gain some [confidence] and come out of their shell' (Kings Rise, OT); however, occasionally they experienced disappointment or resignation if they did not get their own way: 'at times children can get upset when not chosen to go first. […] Some children are resistant to join in' (Croft, OT).

Developing creativity

Teachers commented that the creative sessions promoted personal development through encouraging imagination, confidence, and openness. With Open Theatre,

> children have had to react spontaneously to the games and be part of an 'audience', which means sitting back and waiting to see what happens rather than always running into the circle to have their turn. (Kings Rise, OT)

In sessions with Stan's Cafe, 'the children were much more reserved and in their shells at the start, and this is the total opposite now. The learning space is now alive with all sorts of

ideas [and] collaboration' (Chandos, SC). Critical reflection was also an important aspect of all the sessions, especially when learners had to research new topics and respond appropriately to feedback. For example, one school worked with Stan's Cafe to produce a performance about the Birmingham Blitz, and learners spent time rehearsing and developing their work to ensure the final performance was as good as possible (*Figure 7.4*). At another school, learners engaged in 'imaginary exploration, geocaching, finding out about explorers, planning an expedition, [and] designing flags' (Tiverton, SC) (*Figure 7.5*).

Figure 7.4. Rehearsals and the final performance on the Birmingham Blitz.

Figure 7.5. Going on an expedition planned by learners.

Learners also developed a sense of autonomy and ownership during their sessions, with opportunities to 'think freely, without boundaries, while also leading their own learning' (Chandos, SC), and 'to think of their own ideas after being inspired' (Croft, OT). They were encouraged to express themselves—non-verbally in the case of Open Theatre, and through discussion and drama with Stan's Cafe:

> [the practitioner] was extremely good at ensuring the children were engaged, through showing them images, statistics, and sounds. The children were able to feedback their opinions at each step when creating the script […]. Children were also able to carry out their own research of important events throughout the years [of the Birmingham Blitz], allowing them to broaden their knowledge. (George Betts, SC)

Nonetheless, whilst growing in self-confidence and independence learners also learnt skills for social engagement and collaboration, such as turn-taking and leadership:

> children hold space for their peers that are feeling nervous or uncomfortable, encouraging them to have a go or making it easier for them by passing them the hat or a prop that will help them to feel more confident. (Kings Rise, OT)

In addition to noting creative dispositions such as autonomy, self-expression, and collaboration, teachers highlighted specific learners who had particularly benefitted from working with Open Theatre or Stan's Cafe. Often these were learners with specific SEMH needs or SEND:

> one of our learners who has SEMH needs performed in front of an audience which is something he never would have done before. He made a bond with [the practitioner] and enjoyed the sessions. It also had the same impact on a child with ASD. (George Betts, SC)

One teacher also explained how they hoped that fostering creativity in the classroom would help tackle issues of deprivation affecting many of their learners, counteracting the fact that 'our children do not have as many wider-world life experiences as we also have a lot of families in poverty' (Chandos, SC). For them, introducing weekly creative sessions with Stan's Cafe supported the development both of their learners' self-identities and their cultural capital.

Whether the development of creativity was an explicit or implicit aim of sessions varied across schools. Some teachers identified instances in which learners gained a better understanding of creativity, such as when 'children used the constructive criticism given by [the practitioner] and the teachers to better their performance' (George Betts, SC). However, many shared similar reflections to those collected in the Autumn Term, that learners believed

'they are there to have fun' (Croft, OT), or that they were not explicitly 'recognising the different types of creativity they are using' (Chandos, SC). Nonetheless, teachers remained unsure whether 'identifying [creativities] to them would help them to better connect with the sessions and their own activeness in them' (Chandos, SC).

Summer Term

Only three reflective diaries were completed following the Summer Term: two relating to sessions with Open Theatre, and one to those with Stan's Cafe. In addition to reiterating experiences and expressions of creativity noted in the Autumn Term and Spring Term, teachers expressed their particular *future aspirations* and *future concerns* when looking forward to Year Three of the Collaborative.

Future aspirations

Teachers were hopeful that the skills and dispositions fostered through working with creative practitioners would equip learners and staff to grow in creativity. For example, one teacher highlighted how their learners had developed in their recognition of creative processes as well as creative products:

> I think at the beginning the children did not understand that the process itself was creative, they thought only the end-product was the creative part. I think it clicked with them when they worked with an artist to create their own song and saw that there was creativity in the process as well as the end-result. (George Betts, SC)

They added that, alongside their learners, 'my understanding of creativity has changed and I am more reflective in my own practice now about how I can better the creative process rather than a creative outcome' (George Betts, SC). This was also the case in schools where 'some TAs [teaching assistants] have been very involved in the process and have gained skills from these sessions' (Woods Bank, OT). Some teachers also identified specific aspects of practitioners' approaches that they hoped to adopt in their own everyday classrooms:

> the non-verbal approach has had an impact on my own practice as we are trying to reduce the amount of teacher talk within a lesson, so I have implemented approaches that I have observed in these sessions within my own classroom. (Woods Bank, OT)

Future concerns

However, upskilling staff to become more creative was not always easy:

the outcome of these sessions was to […] develop the staff's knowledge of creative approaches. […] However, we have not developed as many staff as we would have liked. […] Although we can access funding, it has been hard in some cases to get staff out of the classroom to observe and be a part of the sessions. (Woods Bank, OT)

There remained a concern that—without formal training opportunities—many teachers could remain distant and disengaged from creative sessions as they continue into Year Three.

It was also acknowledged that even when teachers were actively involved in working with creative practitioners, specific creative approaches could seem at odds with everyday classroom teaching. Both learners and teachers could find this a challenge:

the children cannot replicate what they have done in the sessions elsewhere as most of teaching practice involves partner talk and collaboration in the classroom. […] I feel it hasn't impacted my teaching practice as it is not practical to have non-verbal sessions in a mainstream classroom where there is a lot of pressure for the children to perform. (Croft, OT)

Performative pressures in the classroom also caused problems for assessing creativity. Either teachers felt that 'creativity is so broad, it cannot be truly assessed' (George Betts, SC), or they differentiated the creativity enacted in sessions with practitioners from 'structured creativity. For example, in art, music, dance—where there are set guidelines and formative assessment criteria' (Croft, OT). This perceived conflict between the creativity fostered by Open Theatre and Stan's Cafe and the performance and assessment criteria used in schools could become problematic in Year Three. If the creative approaches promoted within the Collaborative are considered incompatible with classroom pedagogies and assessment, they are less likely to have an impactful and long-lasting legacy.

In addition to reservations over the long-term impact of the Creativity Collaborative, teachers also noted some practical issues that hindered progress in their schools. In the case of Open Theatre, they reflected that learners' 'progression is slow and [it] has taken over the year to see the difference' (Croft, OT). This poses the important question of whether longer partnerships with Open Theatre (ideally more than three years in duration) may be necessary for the ongoing development of creativity. With Stan's Cafe, one school commented that while planning a Summer Term project, 'unfortunately communication broke down and we were unable to complete a project together' (George Betts, SC). Although they hoped to collaborate further with Stan's Cafe in Year Three, their experience in Year Two highlights the importance of clear and timely communication to ensure that future opportunities are not missed.

8. Learner focus groups

In order to understand learners' perceptions of the creative sessions delivered by Open Theatre and Stan's Cafe during Year Two, we undertook focus groups at four of the participating schools. Learners who took part in the focus groups were selected by their teachers using convenience sampling, to ensure that the appropriate permissions were in place for them to participate. In total, we held six focus groups with 21 learners: three groups were from schools that had worked with Open Theatre; three groups were from schools that had worked with Stan's Cafe (*Table 8.1*). Each focus group was audio-recorded and then transcribed by hand.

The focus groups followed the same structured schedule comprising four questions. The first two questions were accompanied by printed images to elicit learners' recollections (Epstein et al., 2006; Lapenta, 2011), and the final question centred around a creative arts-based activity (Blaisdell et al., 2018) to enable learners to express their experiences and perceptions in non-verbal media. This activity was particularly important for ensuring that learners of different ages and with additional educational needs could participate fully.

1. Can you remember what activities you have done with [Open Theatre or Stan's Cafe] this year? (Show photographs of sessions as a visual prompt, *Figure 8.1*.)
2. Which of these pictures best shows how you felt during the sessions? Why did you feel that way? (Pick from pictures of hand gestures: happy, teamwork, worried, bored; *Figure 8.2*.)
3. These sessions help us be creative: what do you think it means to be creative?
4. Let's draw the things that helped us be most creative in these sessions. What do your drawings represent? Why did you pick these things? (Make drawings around an outline of a body on A2 paper.)
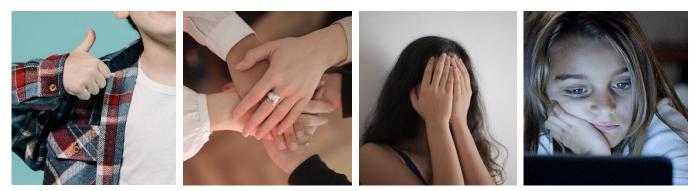
Table 8.1. Learner focus groups.

Academy	Creative partner		Focus groups
Croft	Open Theatre		1 x 4 learners
Kings Rise			2 x 4 SEND learners
Shirestone			n/a
Woods Bank			n/a
Billesley		Stans Cafe	n/a
Chandos			1 x 2 learners
George Betts			n/a
Shireland Hall			1 x 4 learners, 1 x 3 learners
Tiverton			n/a

Figure 8.1. Photo elicitation prompts for Open Theatre and Stan's Cafe.

Figure 8.2. Photo elicitation prompts for discussing feelings and emotions.

Experiencing creativity

Analysis of learners' responses to the first two focus group questions revealed the creative activities that they had found most memorable and the affects they most closely associated with the creative sessions.

Creative activities

All learners' descriptions centred around 'do[ing] some fun activities with [the practitioners]' (Croft, OT). With Open Theatre, learners emphasised play-related activities including scarf-dancing, creating statues, imagining pretend scenarios, and playing tug-of-war. One learner called them 'the drama sessions' (Kings Rise, OT), while another described the games with the scarf as 'magic tricks' (Croft, OT). Interactions with the practitioners were central to these games—often the learners would begin by copying the practitioner and then be given a chance to lead the activity themselves: '[in the warm-up] we move to copy [the practitioner]. And then when he has [had] a turn, maybe he will pick someone else to have a go' (Croft, OT). Several learners explained how they liked to try to prompt a response from the practitioner, perhaps by snatching the scarf out of his reach: '[my favourite is when the practitioner], with the scarf, when he's moving it around and then we try to catch it' (Croft, OT).

At schools working with Stan's Cafe, learners were more likely to identify a range of creative activities associated with formal, structured projects. These included acting, dancing, songwriting, and drawing. Many of them were also involved in film-making projects, which entailed planning, reporting, interviewing, filming, and evaluating. Learners explained how they would have to negotiate different roles with their friends, and that the activities they took part in would depend on the role they had adopted:

> A: [My favourite role was] when I interviewed people, because I like being on camera and I like interviewing.

> V: [Mine was] when I was director, because I got to like… I was director and camera and I got to do two jobs. And being director just feels good because we get to, like, control the camera basically. (Shireland Hall, SC)

Some of the most memorable topics of the activities facilitated by Stan's Cafe were astronauts in space (see *Figure 8.3*), a tiger coming to school, King Charles III's coronation, and the pop-up swimming pool (*Figure 8.4*) that was being hosted by one school.

Creative affects

When choosing between the images of happiness, teamwork, worry, and boredom, learners were most likely to select 'happiness' as representative of how they felt during creative sessions. Learners enjoyed Open Theatre sessions because the games were varied: 'what makes me feel good is that we always do different things, and even if we do the same thing, it's different people so we all get a turn' (Croft, OT). The activities were fun and offered learners a chance to behave how they wanted: 'you get to like, be yourself and be a bit crazy'; 'we get to… like, get up and run around and do whatever we want to do' (Kings Rise, OT).

Figure 8.3. Imagining a space rocket.   *Figure 8.4. The pop-up pool (theguardian.com).*

Learners enjoyed similar aspects of sessions with Stan's Cafe. They liked to 'do things with my friends' (Chandos, SC), and appreciated how the activities were different to their usual lessons and how they were free to interact as they wished:

> OK, I feel sometimes happy, 'cause I'm like, "oh, that's good", 'cause I got out of a lesson or something. Or I'll be like, "ah, we get to use, like, finger lights", or we just going to do dancing or something. (Chandos, SC)

They were proud when they achieved high-quality outcomes that were praised by the practitioners:

> M: When we do our filming and we're really happy with it, that's when we feel happy.

> Y: [When] we didn't have to do, like, a re-filming or anything. [Once,] we… we were about to retake one but then there was… then [the practitioner] could fix it because we filled in the clapper board. (Shireland Hall, SC)

Learners working on film-making projects with Stan's Cafe were also likely to identify teamwork and friendship as important aspects of their experience:

> V: You have to trust each other.

> A: So if you're doing something, you can rely on others to help you.

> V: So like, in my group there was two people doing one job. So, like, just in case one wasn't here, they trusted the other to do the job properly for them.

> L: If you, if you don't trust each other, then it'll take a long time and you'll fight with lots of people most of the time. (Shireland Hall, SC)

Some learners said they had had arguments when working in groups 'when two people want to do the same job', and that therefore it was important to 'work together, then you can get it done more eas[ily] and without any arguments' (Shireland Hall, SC).

Learners at other schools said that teamwork was less important during their sessions, or was only significant for some activities:

> M: I don't get it how you build teamwork, because most of the things you do alone in Stan's Cafe, 'cause when we do the dancing you mostly do it on your own.

> T: You do it in groups!

M: You do it in groups, but each person in the group does it, like, slowly, by themselves. […] So you're doing it by yourself, it's not like really, teamworking, 'cause I can do it by myself.

T: [But] you remember I said, like, the tiger one? When we did the play? So, technically, like, so we did, like, sticky notes on the whiteboard, and also, like, giving song lyrics on every part. And then we like, mixed them together and made a song with it. (Chandos, SC)

In Open Theatre, some learners said that during sessions with their friends they tried to 'make them smile, or if they're, like, not happy you can just cheer them up' (Kings Rise, OT); but they were more likely to identify the teamwork between the practitioners than between themselves: 'it's like how, Open Theatre, like all the people doing it, they're like a team. […] So they like work together as a team. So two people makes one team' (Croft, OT).

One reason why learners said they did not feel like a team was because of the emphasis placed on individual performance during some creative activities. This was typically why they described sometimes feeling worried, shy, or scared: '[I] feel like that when… you know, when I'm dancing and everybody's staring at me, […] Because you're all alone, no-one's, like, dancing with you' (Croft, OT); 'when we were doing the first episode I was the interviewer, and I was scared 'cause I kind of wanted to, and then I kind of didn't want to do it' (Shireland Hall, SC). Learners were most worried by roles that meant that had to do something on their own, perform in front of others, or act as a leader. They also acknowledged that it could be embarrassing if there was a high-stakes outcome and a risk of making a mistake:

maybe the camera operator, maybe if you, like, mess up and first AD [Assistant Director] says, "camera rolling?" and you're like, "yes", but you haven't actually done it. And then midway in the scene, you're like, "oh, I forgot to press record". And you're like, "oh no, I'm so embarrassed". And everyone's like, "oh, what did you do that?" (Shireland Hall, SC).

Overall, the consensus between learners was that they enjoyed creative activities with Open Theatre and Stan's Cafe, especially when working in teams with their friends. Some preferred not to perform on their own since this could be scary or embarrassing. Most learners agreed that they did not get bored during sessions, but that 'I always [get bored] when I'm at home' (Kings Rise, OT). However, a few pointed out that sessions could become boring when they were overly repetitive: 'when we're doing the warm-ups, it just repeats it all the time, the exact same warm-up. He doesn't do anything different for the warm-up' (Kings Rise, OT).

Defining creativity

In each focus group, learners were asked what they thought was meant by 'creativity'. Their answers highlighted four themes: *novelty*, *diversity*, *evaluation*, and *arts-based creativity*. First, learners agreed that creativity involved making new things: 'it's like, doing things that you've never done before' (Kings Rise, OT); 'making new things and like, your own ideas, putting them and mixing it up' (Shireland Hall, SC); 'like, if someone new came to the school, you can interview that person. […] We're just, like, telling you new things too' (Shireland Hall, SC).

Second, learners emphasised that creative ideas and activities involved trying out different things: 'I think it means to try different things' (Kings Rise, OT); 'choosing different things every time as well' (Shireland Hall, SC). One learner said that with Open Theatre,

> so like, I feel creative when like, you know when [the practitioner] gets different things out: he gets like different hats out, he gets all different things out. And I feel creative then because it's like, because it's lots of different, then it reminds me of like, everything else. So I feel creative. (Croft, OT)

In another group, learners gave examples of choosing different techniques while film-making:

> you could also, when you're creative, you could do different things on the camera, different effects. So there's like different shots you take. And you can say—when you're the director—you can point to where, what angle you want it and what place you want it. (Shireland Hall, OT)

Third, learners explained that new and different ideas or activities required reflection and evaluation to make them creative: 'I think it means to try different things, and if you like it then you can try and make it even better and do different ways of it' (Kings Rise, OT); 'it's like, doing things that you've never done before, to see how, like, it would work. And if it works, you'd do it again, try and make it better' (Kings Rise, OT). Evaluation could take place in the earliest stages of creativity—'when you're planning, because you need to think about what you're going to do' (Shireland Hall, SC). Other learners emphasised that evaluation depended on the reception of an idea by peers—if it was new and different but not considered 'funny' or 'cool' then it was less appropriate:

> when you, when you've got a good imagination. Like, when you've got, like, some weird thoughts, but it's also funny at the same time, but it's also cool at the same time. (Chandos, SC)

When describing their experiences of creativity, learners primarily gave examples of arts-based activities: 'you might do some drawing, you might put on some TV and just start doing dance moves' (Croft, OT); 'you can draw which will make you, like, more creative; or painting; or like writing stories' (Chandos, SC); 'how to do origami roses […] [and] they did drawing as well' (Shireland Hall, SC). However, when asked explicitly whether creativity was only about art, learners all disagreed. One boy referred to examples from science and history:

> so like, if there's something in science, maybe you can make something. So, like, [a boy] in our group, once I had an idea: we were doing something about the Anglo-Saxons, and he's really good at making things out of paper. So I thought, maybe you can make, like, a sword out of paper, and you can pretend to fight, and then you're like, "hi, today, we're going to do something about Anglo-Saxons". (Shireland Hall, SC)

Illustrating creativity

Learners' drawings at the end of their focus groups closely mirrored the themes that they had earlier discussed. The pictures they drew representing creative activities highlighted *play and games* and *music and dance*. They also illustrated creative affects and experiences including *happy and nervous* and *sharing and collaboration*. Finally, their drawings demonstrated the importance of non-human *materials and environment*, and *expertise and equipment* in facilitating fruitful creative encounters.

Play and games were a prominent theme in pictures drawn by learners involved in working with Open Theatre practitioners. Annotation (A) on *Figure 8.5* shows pictures of the 'pancakes game' and the 'scaf [*sic*] game'. Annotation (B) indicates where one learner illustrated a whole session with Open Theatre: involving the

Figure 8.5. Croft focus group (OT).

'warm up movement', 'pancake' game, 'kick blocks', 'statue game', jumping, dancing, and a 'choo-choo train' conga line. Similar games are shown in *Figure 8.6* at point (E) (the coloured tower blocks) and point (F) (the coloured 'pancakes'). (G) illustrates the importance of music and dance with a drawing of the portable speaker used by the Open Theatre practitioners; music notes were also used in *Figure 8.5* (C) and *Figure 8.8* (H) to represent dancing and moving to music.

Learners typically illustrated affect using broad smiles, as evident in both the pictures in *Figure 8.6.* However, annotation (D) on *Figure 8.5* shows two examples of the 'happy wigley [*sic*] face', which learners decided represented the combination of enjoyment and anxiety sometimes experienced when performing during Open Theatre sessions. A similar approach was adopted by one group who had worked with Stan's Cafe: in their drawing in *Figure 8.7*, label (F) shows a smile on the left-hand side and a crooked expression of trepidation on the right-hand side.
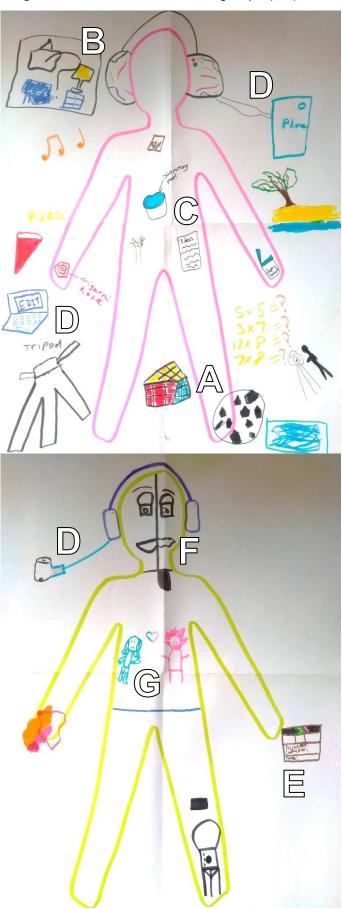
Learners also represented affective experiences through pictures of the heart and brain to represent thinking and feeling (*Figure 8.6* (I); *Figure 8.8*

Figure 8.6. Kings Rise focus groups (OT).

(I)), and pictures of collaborative relationships. The latter is particularly evident at annotation (H) on *Figure 8.6*, where a learner drew several stick figures representing himself and the two Open Theatre practitioners. A similar central image—drawn by two learners together—appears at (G) in *Figure 8.7*.
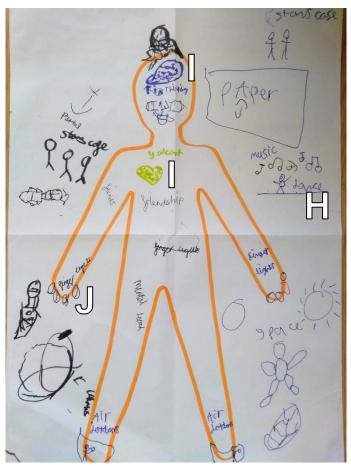
Learners' illustrations in *Figure 8.6* emphasised the value of non-human materials in encouraging creative activities. Annotation (J) shows the hat often used to stimulate interactions in sessions with Open Theatre; (K) shows the blanket and (L) the spray bottle used by practitioners in some games. Other objects are apparent in *Figure 8.7*: annotation (A), for example, points to a Rubik's cube and a football representing materials used in a film-making session with Stan's Cafe. In contrast, (B) shows a learner's drawing of a room in their school where they shot a video about 'mystery rooms' behind doors that were usually locked. This drawing demonstrated learners' awareness of their environment and its impact on their creative ideas and processes; others added pictures of swimming pools and beaches to represent videos they had recorded at different locations.

Figure 8.7. Shireland Hall focus groups (SC).

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A recurring theme—particularly in *Figure 8.7*—was the importance of expert knowledge and specialist equipment in sessions with creative practitioners. As shown at (D) and (E) in *Figure 8.7*, learners drew items such as tripods, laptops, headphones (connected to a smartphone), and clapperboards. These were of specific importance to film-making projects run by Stan's Cafe. Nonetheless, other unique equipment appeared in *Figure 8.8*, where annotation (J) shows learners' drawing of the 'finger lights' that they had used to create star constellations when imagining tigers in space.

Figure 8.8. Chandos focus group (SC).

9. Creativity framework sessions

During Year Two of the Collaborative the teachers met online for two creativity framework sessions. The sessions were held on Monday 6 February 2023 and Tuesday 18 April 2023, and each session ran twice to ensure that all teachers could participate. The first session was also repeated on Tuesday 7 February with creative practitioners from Open Theatre. The sessions were hosted by Birmingham City University on Microsoft Teams, using the creative mind-mapping website Miro (miro.com) to capture data. The five sessions were recorded and transcribed using Microsoft Teams.

In addition to the online creativity framework sessions, teachers and creative practitioners met together at two in-person reflection days on Thursday 18 May 2023 and Wednesday 12 July 2023. These meetings gave participants the opportunity to update the Collaborative on their partnerships and were fruitful for exchanging and evaluating outcomes. As researchers, we used these days to collect further data on participants' developing perspectives on creativity frameworks.

Aims and scope

The purpose of the creativity framework sessions was threefold. First, we explained and evaluated existing theories of creativity; second, we guided participants in their own conceptualisations of creativity; and third, we clarified emergent notions of a creativity framework specific to the Elliot Foundation Academies Trust.

During the first session,[6] participants reflected on how their definitions of creativity had changed between Year One and Year Two of the project. We then introduced them to four existing frameworks of creativity that have been influential in the development of scholarly research and practice: the Four Ps (and its expansion to Eight Ps, Sternberg & Karami, 2021); the Four-Stage Cognitive Approach (as elucidated in Burnard & Younker, 2004); the Five Creative Habits of Mind (Lucas & Spencer, 2017); and the Eight-Factor Propulsion Model (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2006, pp. 21-22). Participants were then asked to choose one of these four frameworks and reflect on the following questions:

1. What qualities of creativity are and are not explored in the framework?
2. How do the creativities explored in the framework compare to the creativities you've experienced in Creativity Collaboratives?
3. What would be the benefits of using this framework for teaching and learning in the classroom?

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[6] See miro.com/app/board/uXjVPdCOAyw=/?share_link_id=229370711440.

4. What would be the limitations of using this framework for teaching and learning in the classroom?

We then outlined recent developments in policy around creativity, beginning with the definitions of teaching for creativity expounded in *All Our Futures* (NACCCE, 1999), followed by the Durham Commission on Creativity and Education (2019), *Let's Create* (ACE, 2021), and *Thinking Outside the Box* (OECD, 2022). This offered participants an insight into the kinds of creativity frameworks applied to practice in the cultural industries and across education.

In the second session,[7] we began by asking teachers to share examples of the creative experiences that had taken place in their classrooms while working alongside their creative practitioners. Teachers shared photographs, case studies of individual learners, and extracts from their termly reflective diaries. We then briefly revised the four creativity frameworks previously introduced, and the two most recent policy examples (ACE, 2021; OECD, 2022). Teachers contributed notes on the benefits and limitations of these frameworks.

Next, we studied some examples of educational frameworks from outside the field of creativity (Anderson, 2019). These included the spiral of musical development (Swanwick & Tillman, 1986), the five domains of artistic experience (Boyce-Tillman, 2004), and a tripartite model of learning and competence development (Illeris, 2009). Teachers shared examples of frameworks and models that they used in their classrooms, such as National Curriculum assessment frameworks, metacognition strategies, Kagan techniques, and Philosophy for Children. They then summarised their reflections on key characteristics and behaviours associated with creativity, and how these could be integrated into an Elliot Foundation Academies Trust model of creativity.

During the reflection day in May, participants added to the Miro board from the second creativity framework session, offering specific comments on possibilities and ways forward for assessing characteristics of creativity in the classroom. In the reflection day in July, they took part in an interactive model-building activity in which they explored how the emergent themes they had previously discussed could contribute towards a Trust-wide creativity framework. Following principles of the co-construction of knowledge between researchers and practitioners, we presented our initial analysis of the first and second creativity framework sessions and asked participants to add further themes or issues that they thought were relevant. We then invited them to begin to build relationships between these themes by

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[7] See miro.com/app/board/uXjVMTHxAAU=/?share_link_id=561980133376.

moving, connecting, and annotating parts of a flowchart designed to incorporate the distinctive jigsaw puzzle design of the Elliot Foundation Academies Trust.
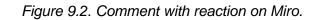
Findings and discussion

The creativity framework sessions and reflection days enabled us to collect data in varied and creative formats, including focus-group discussions, the sharing of photographs and artefacts (*Figure 9.1*), annotations and reactions on the Miro boards (*Figure 9.2*), and physical documentation of mind-maps and flowcharts (*Figure 9.3*).

Following thematic analysis of this data, we identified eight emergent categories relating to creative *classrooms*, *domains*, *experiences*, *relationships*, *scaffolds*, *processes*, *ideas*, and *affects*.
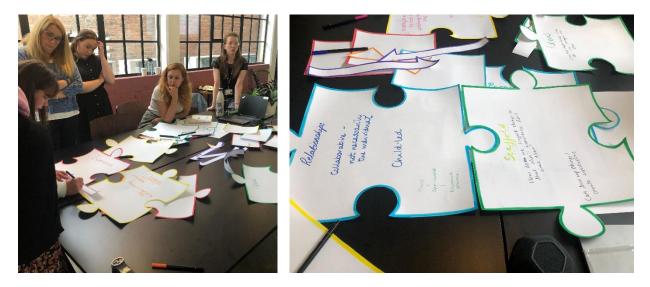
Figure 9.1. Photograph shared on Miro.   *Figure 9.2. Comment with reaction on Miro.*

Figure 9.3. Mind-mapping with emergent themes on the Reflection Day in July.

Classrooms: Application and assessment

Teachers' comments and reflections highlighted the importance of conceptualising or modelling creativity in a way that was applicable to everyday classrooms. They believed that, for a creativity framework to be operational, it needed to be both a helpful tool for teachers and a simple guide for learners:

> I like this [Eight-Factor] framework as a teacher tool. It reminds me of the SAMR model[8] for how technology can be used more creatively. It would guide staff to consider how they might redesign or reconstruct learning opportunities to be more creative. However, it doesn't provide as clear a framework for learners. (Framework Session 1A)

They explained that they would need to know 'how we would evidence such pedagogies' in relation to National Curriculum guidelines (Framework Session 1A), and that creative practice would have to be aligned with internal school policies:

> the artist seems to click on pretty sharpish to, sort of, the school behaviour policy and what we do to gain the children's attention and what our expectations are of the children. They don't give them so much freedom just to do completely what they want. (Framework Session 1A)

Teachers were also able to identify resonance between some creativity frameworks and other pedagogical tools such as Kagan techniques and Philosophy for Children, both of which supported creative, collaborative, and child-led ways of learning.

Questions around assessment for creativity arose repeatedly during sessions with teachers. Models such as the Five Creative Habits of Mind were understood as 'essentially a formative assessment tool' (Framework Session 2A). Yet some teachers were critical of the notion of using frameworks to prescribe assessment criteria:

> that in itself doesn't feel creative to me, just picking a framework and just following it. […] Then are we putting too much emphasis on the idea that we can pin down what creativity is and assess it? Should we have to assess creativity? (Framework Session 1B)

This was a perspective shared by the Open Theatre practitioners. They acknowledged that classroom teachers often gravitated towards models and frameworks to justify their teaching,

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[8] The SAMR model outlines how educational technology can be implemented through Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition, either to enhance or transform classroom learning.

but that these could promote 'end-driven' processes that negated open and creative opportunities for learning:

> quite often teachers like things like [frameworks]. They like structures and they like to be told, "this can be measured in this way". And, "this has this outcome", and that makes them feel safe and comfortable. And I think that that's something we're constantly battling with. (Framework Session OT)

Nevertheless, participants agreed that—regardless of whether creativity should or should not be assessed—adopting one framework across multiple, diverse schools would require standardisation and the dissemination of best practice to ensure well-structured and consistent delivery:

> the range of children in class will make following [the Five Habits of Mind] a really difficult task as each stage might look different for every child. Unless work went in to standardise the elements. (Framework Session 1A)

Domains: Diverse and inclusive

To apply across diverse classrooms, teachers emphasised how their conceptualisation of creativity needed to account for diverse creative and cultural practices and diverse educational needs. Teachers frequently commented on how their partnerships with Open Theatre or Stan's Cafe had allowed their learners to 'explore different forms of creativity that I never thought they would' (Framework Session 1A), or how they had realised that 'there are lots of things we already do […] in the classroom that would be considered creative' (Framework Session 1A).

The concept of 'little-c' and 'Big-C' creativity (cf. Sternberg & Karami, 2021) was considered particularly helpful for understanding the diverse domains in which creativity could be activated:

> I like that [the Eight-Factor Model] affirms that little moments of creativity are also creative. If we didn't acknowledge the importance of replication [and] redirection then there would be very few moments in education that children could showcase their creativity in a Big-C sense. (Framework Session 1B)

Teachers appreciated the opportunities to work with 'a number of different artists […]: they're all good at different things and it's nice to work with people with different sets of skills' (Framework Session 2A). They highlighted how embracing diverse ways of being—such as embodied through dancing and acting—allowed certain learners new opportunities for engagement and enjoyment:

it's kind of, like, the children who usually won't say much or aren't comfortable to put [up] their hands on the carpet […] [because] they're using their body, they're dancing, they're acting towards their peers. (Framework Session 2A)

In this sense, including multiple forms of creativity was synonymous with including all learners, regardless of their specific educational needs or learning preferences. Open Theatre practitioners highlighted, for example, the importance of valuing non-verbal expressions of creativity, since while 'for us, ideas are premised in your head, in words, for a lot of our young people [with SEND], the notion of having an idea is redundant' (Framework Session OT). This was particularly evident in a case study shared by one teacher:

> the whole point of Open Theatre is that they are non-verbal, to… just to give these children other ways of expressing themselves. […] [This boy, (see *Figure 9.4*)] chooses not to speak because, I think, [of] that anxiety factor. […] [But when] he realised that he didn't have to talk in the sessions—there were no expectations to talk, it actually was discouraged—and he suddenly was allowed to just shed this, like, suit of fear he had on him about talking, and could join in, because it didn't matter if he stood up and he went over and he did the silly things, because he wasn't expected to speak. (Framework Session 2B)

Similar cases were recalled in relation to work with Stan's Cafe, as shown in *Figure 9.4* (Creativity Framework Session 2A).

Overall, participants emphasised the need for frameworks of creativity to be general rather than specific, and descriptive rather than prescriptive. This would promote inclusion by validating diverse ways of being and knowing in the classroom.

Figure 9.4. Case studies of specific learners shared on Miro.

I think the benefit of [a framework] would be about… sort of… shared common language. So yeah, I think keeping a framework with broad enough terms for it to be interpreted and free would be important […], that if there were governing principles that might be more helpful rather than having a framework with lots of spokes or specific criteria. (Framework Session 1A)

Experiences: Personal and cultural

Throughout the creativity framework sessions, teachers underlined the significance of a general, descriptive creativity framework that would allow for differentiation and individualisation to meet the specific needs of learners, teachers, and schools. This was considered particularly important because of learners' varied personal and cultural backgrounds, and the impact this had upon their creative behaviours:

I remember taking a Year 2 class to a zoo, looking at some of the animals that we were going to go and see, and a kid thought a lion was a dragon. [They had] never seen what a lion looks like. […] Each child's individual experiences are going to govern, like, their ability to access that [creative] framework. And then the teacher would then need to be in some way assessing where those children are, or adapting just in their own practice. (Framework Session 1A)

Several of the schools within the Elliot Foundation Academies Trust were located in deprived areas, where learners rarely had opportunities to engage with their local environment or cultural offer. Their teachers saw their partnership with creative practitioners as essential for 'giving the children experiences' that they would not otherwise be able to access, and addressing 'their lack of cultural capital' (Framework Session 2A). In some instances, this involved exploring the local area, 'because a lot of these children spend most of their time inside, even though there's loads of lovely places for them to go, they never actually get those opportunities' (Framework Session 2B). On other occasions it meant sharing expert knowledge (on subjects such as nocturnal animals or film direction) in order to facilitate richer imagined worlds: 'if they haven't got those life experiences or, like, we're talking about nocturnal animals, if you don't know what that is, we can't go on to imagine our own' (Framework Session 2A).

Relationships: Collaborative and child-led

For teachers and practitioners to recognise and account for their learners' diverse personal and cultural experiences, they had to foster safe and trustworthy relationships with them. They described how 'learning happens between the teacher and the learner, the practitioner

and the child' (Framework Session OT), and that to be able to engage in risky, creative decision-making

> [learners] need to feel emotionally safe. […] It's alright, you know, having new artists come in and they could be free with them. But they've also got the security blanket of the people that they do know and they are comfortable with. They've got that relationship first. (Framework Session 2A)

Learners were more likely to engage in novel behaviours if they were supported by patient and encouraging relationships with their peers, teachers, and visiting practitioners. Some teachers saw the most pronounced impact on their learners when Open Theatre artists had been visiting every week for the whole school year, since this developed a relationship and routine that learners found reliable and comforting. In turn, learners were more likely to feel safe and happy, whereas 'if the child's feeling low or sad, they're not going to have that urge to, you know, express themselves in a particular way' (Framework Session 2A).

When working with peers, teachers, or practitioners that they could trust, learners engaged in collaborative and co-operative creativities:

> children are playing, dancing, singing, acting, and performing, children are encouraging others to join in, children are moving around freely without inhibitions, children tap into their own personal experiences and will reflect these through the session. (Framework Session 1A)

Collaboration became an important driver during sessions, with the creative practitioners capitalising on learners' teamwork to develop their work in new directions:

> we do, like, a lot of active visual collaborative work anyway. […] Stan's Cafe obviously have done it on a bigger scale and for, like, a longer amount of time and it's been much more productive. And then […] the child-led learning. […] All of the outcomes that I've seen for every session that we've had have been really, really good. And the children just went with it. (Framework Session 1B)

Many participants commented on how learners seemed more creative when not restricted by 'expectations to get them to a certain place, […] these high expectations all the time' (Framework Session 2A). Open Theatre explained how they sought to avoid predetermined expectations of learners' achievements, asking 'not, "this is what we want to achieve", [but] "what if we were able to achieve that?" (Framework Session OT). Participants typically found that opportunities for autonomy and originality made child-led learning fruitful and exciting:

sometimes [learners] say, like, really whacky things, and you kind of have to [go along with it and] question, "OK, so if that happened, then what would be the impact of that? And then what would happen after that?" (Framework Session 2A)

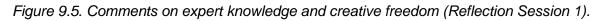***Scaffolds: Expert knowledge and creative freedom***

Within collaborative and child-led relationships, participants recognised their own role in scaffolding and modelling creative participation: 'I found it interesting to consider that there might be a framework to scaffold learner progression in creativity' (Framework Session 1A). When evaluating existing creativity frameworks, they identified that some frameworks 'de-emphasise[d] the importance of teacher knowledge, skill, subject knowledge, [and] knowledge of how children learn and experience' (Framework Session 1A). In contrast, they found that sessions with Open Theatre and Stan's Cafe were underpinned by practitioners' expertise, and that this expertise could help upskill teachers at their schools:
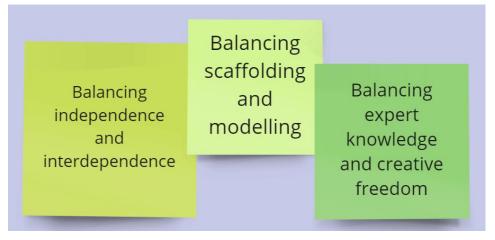
> I wanted to target a particular member of staff with the [Open Theatre] training as well—so he works in our pastoral team—to give him strategies to work with children around school as well. (Framework Session 2B)

Teachers recognised that practitioners' skills enabled them to facilitate creative opportunities in which learners had freedom and autonomy within purposeful, defined boundaries: 'children have explored different forms of creativity, and with certain restrictions' (Framework Session 1A). Through observing and working alongside practitioners, they began to understand the careful balance between utilising expert knowledge to delineate creative constraints, and offering freedom from pre-determined criteria. For example, in one school, each session with Stan's Cafe began with picking an 'imagine if…' statement from an envelope:

> the artist doesn't know what they're going to pull out the envelope, the same as we don't know, the children don't know. Which obviously is a lot harder for them because... but you can have things kind of bullet-pointing out, 'if this was going...', but you can't think through it properly. […] [When we did] 'imagine if you were nocturnal', [the artist] was going to do like a David Attenborough kind of like sketch. […] But actually, because the children got so involved with talking about nocturnal animals, they decided to kind of create their own, like, mythical one and draw it themselves, […] and they really went kind of a lot farther than she thought they would in that session. (Framework Session 2A)

Figure 9.5. Comments on expert knowledge and creative freedom (Reflection Session 1).

Nonetheless, teachers acknowledged that it could be difficult to achieve an appropriate balance between expert scaffolding and creative freedom (*Figure 9.5*), and that modelling could become over-prescriptive:

> if we put limitations on what we're expecting the outcome to look like, [learners] might not be able to share their creative approach to something because we're telling them how we want them to do it. […] You know, you could have really creative children who cannot articulate what's going on in their mind to you, or even they have additional needs and they can't share with you what it looks like. (Framework Session 1B)

Processes: Iterative and non-linear

Although teachers came to realise that creativity—like other classroom-based skills—could be scaffolded and result in progression, they also agreed that conceptualisations of creativity ought to 'put a lot of weight on the *process* as a part of that creativity' (Framework Session 1B). Although some schools worked with their creative partners to create an end-product such as a song or a show, sessions were more typically process-driven rather than outcome-driven:

> it's the journey, not the destination. With a lot of these young people, just the connection in itself is both the product and the process together, and that just goes into every facet of, every part of your life. (Framework Session OT)

For this reason, teachers and practitioners were less in favour of creativity frameworks that specified an end-product (such as the Four Ps), and more in favour of those that illustrated the cyclical or iterative nature of creative processes:

I think a lot of them just show it can go from one to another, it can go back again. It can go round to somewhere else. It's… or you can be in multiple places at one time, and that kind of is what creativity is. You're never just doing really one thing at one time, or it's come from somewhere else first. (Framework Session 2A)

In one discussion, the non-linear progression associated with creativity was described like fitting together pieces of a jigsaw puzzle:

different puzzle pieces can fit together. […] So we liked the circle [model] because it was a lot of, you know, touched onto different things. You can flow one way and then flow the other, and it's not linear. But puzzle pieces, you can also kind of, take them out and fit [them] different ways if they're doing more than one thing. […] It's the idea that each thing can be in its own right, but does merge together to form a bigger picture. (Framework Session 2A)

In this case, teachers pointed out that different puzzle pieces (representing different skills and qualities) could be used to create a complete picture, but that they could also be fitted together in unlimited variations, extending indefinitely. This flexibility—and the ability to engage in original, critical thinking—was highlighted as having 'massive [benefits]: creative, critical, and inquisitive children are needed to drive Britain forward for future generations. I think the curriculum in its current iteration stunts creativity' (Framework Session 1A). This concept of interlocking puzzle pieces was explored further in the second Reflection Day.

Ideas: Imaginative and unexpected

The non-linear, creative processes that teachers saw in their partnerships with visiting practitioners often resulted in ways of thinking that were imaginative and inquisitive. For example, one teacher described how working with Stan's Cafe on a project about exploring the local area was 'stretching [learners'] imagination—pretending to be explorers. They are definitely inquisitive about previous explorers and how they can be explorers' (Framework Session 1B). Using language from the Five Creative Habits of Mind model, another explained how 'Open Theatre focuses on developing the imaginative strand, in particular playing with possibilities. It also develops persistence, in particular tolerating uncertainty and daring to be different' (Framework Session 1A).

Learners' ideas were also described as 'experimenting', 'thinking outside the box', and 'pushing the boundaries' (Framework Session 1A). Through varied creative activities, learners were encouraged to be open-minded and to explore unexpected directions:

they had a joint piece of paper that went down the middle of the classroom, all the tables were moved. It [was] that… something a little bit different, that they're not used to. Then there was song-writing based on images that they were drawing, and […] it really engaged them and they got quite a lot of it. (Framework Session 2A)

This was perhaps most obvious in the 'imagine if…' sessions with Stan's Cafe, where a whole day's worth of activities would be fundamentally shaped by learners' initial reactions to the prompt inside the envelope:

being a teacher, you kind of already have, like, an idea of where you want it to go— so I find myself kind of, like, steering things. […] But like, when the artists do it, it's always just like, you know, whatever [the learners] come up with: [the artists] almost get them to, like, question themselves, […] when they're coming up with the initial ideas and things. (Framework Session 2A)

Teachers repeatedly reflected on how they could continue to foster these imaginative and explorative dispositions in their learners, asking 'how do we ensure that children are happy with open outcomes?' and 'how can we make novelty normal?' especially 'for children who have limited life experiences' (Reflection Session 1). In contrast, Open Theatre practitioners highlighted how such qualities needed to be approached differently depending on the scenario:

there isn't a scale of one to ten or whatever in terms of, "yes, I'm nine out of ten inquisitive, five out of ten persistent", you know, and you kind of get, well... actually, this child is very persistent in this particular circumstance, [but] in other circumstances, they're not persistent at all. (Framework Session OT)

Affects: Brave and reflective

Just as learners could be reticent to participate in creative activities if they felt insecure or upset, teachers could likewise find teaching for creativity daunting or intimidating. Creative practitioners observed how teachers struggled to 'relinquish the normal power that they have, or authority or whatever, and [become] willing to engage in a very different way' (Framework Session OT):

the child-led learning… that's something that would scare me, to just think, "right, I'm going to start with this and we'll just see where it goes", because, you know, I'm a planner and like to have things in my head and an idea of where I want to steer them. (Framework Session 1B)

Misconceptions of creative genius or Big-C creativities could lead to

what [our colleagues] probably think creativity is, which a lot of people think it's, you know, gigantic, like, lightbulb moments. [Then following a creativity framework] would feel so intimidating and unachievable with everything else they've got it going on. (Framework Session 2B)

However, in the face of seemingly 'terrifying' challenges (Framework Session 1A), both teachers and learners could foster bravery, confidence, and resilience. Practitioners described how their sessions prompted even the least-engaged teachers to question their existing practices:

it's not that the teachers are walking away going, "oh, creativity has led to this outcome and I can integrate that into my lessons", but it has opened up conversations around, "hey, this is different and it's doing something different for the child or I can see a child behaving in a much, you know, more engaged way. How interesting. What's going on there?" (Framework Session OT)

Likewise, teachers described their learners 'being much braver in exploring different forms of creativity' (Framework Session 1A), 'com[ing] out of their shell' (Framework Session 2A), and being free to engage in 'self-expression and exploring things that they wouldn't normally' (Framework Session 2A). Even those who perhaps lacked confidence could be transformed in their behaviour:

at the start, it was… they kind of just didn't really know what they were being asked to do at all. And it's really the opposite now […] [they engage] with ultra-confidence, to the point where we have to watch their behaviour sometimes now! (Framework Session 2A)

Teachers were therefore inclined to note resilience as an important facet of any creativity framework for learners:

we don't want children to be judged, […] we don't want anyone to feel that way when they're sharing something [creative] that's quite, you know, personal to them. So I think they have to be kind of resilient about that, because not everybody appreciates everything you do. Yeah, just, if they're challenged on something or something doesn't work, they've got a kind of, 'OK, I'm not just going to stop here, I'm going to keep going'. (Framework Session 2A)

Nonetheless, they also acknowledged the need for themselves, their colleagues, and creative practitioners to be resilient when working outside their usual comfort zone. They emphasised the importance of reflection, through which teachers and practitioners could debrief and evaluate their own practice:

when I speak to [the practitioner] it's mostly afterwards—it looks almost like a reflection thing, and they'll say things like, 'oh, it was interesting because I had this idea that we were going to do this, and follow this path, and actually that happened in the session'. (Framework Session 2A)

Several teachers, however, pointed out that time for reflection was often constrained by curriculum delivery—especially in schools where measures were being taken to improve their Ofsted ratings. They therefore concluded that a fundamental aspect of an Elliot Foundation Academies Trust approach to creativity would need to be opportunities for sharing best practice and promoting reflexivity (*Figure 9.6*).

Figure 9.6. Concluding reflections from Framework Session 1.
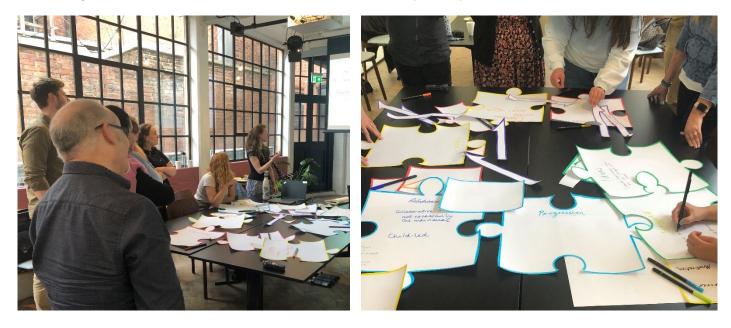

Conclusion

The Reflection Day with teachers in July provided a valuable opportunity to establish how the categories that had emerged from their earlier dialogues—creative classrooms, domains, experiences, relationships, scaffolds, processes, ideas, and affects—might be perceived to interact with one another (*Figure 9.7*). Broadly speaking, they agreed with the themes that had been identified,[9] but added one more: 'what I'm missing is… […] the driver. What kickstarts that creative process in the first place?' (Stan's Cafe, Reflection Session 2). Yet they described the driver, motivation, or catalyst as different in nature to the other themes: 'it's either at point zero of the explosion or it's in the [middle]' (Stan's Cafe, Reflection Session 2). Teachers also suggested that the subcategories of creative domains—inclusivity

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[9] Since the analysis was still in progress, the themes shared at the Reflection Day in July were domains, experiences, relationships, scaffolds, progression, ideas, and affects. Further analysis after the Reflection Day identified 'classrooms' as a theme and replaced 'progression' with 'processes'.

Figure 9.7. Discussion of themes at the Reflection Day in July.

and accessibility—were of a different nature to the other themes, and should 'run through them all' (Collaborative Lead, Reflection Session 2) rather than be self-contained.

Specific discussions emerged around the interrelationships between experiences and ideas, and relationships and scaffolds. Experiences and ideas were understood to have a reciprocal relationship:

> ideas either limit or excel experiences. I just think that the ideas come from the experiences you've had, so if your experiences are limited then your ideas are going to be limited. It's about enriching experiences to create sustainable, imaginative ideas. (Teacher, Reflection Session 2)

However, some teachers warned against the potential reification of imaginative ideas—since 'you might not gain any new ideas by being creative, but you might see progression in, like, reaction to experience […] like, they start to regulate themselves' (Teacher, Reflection Session 2).

The concept of scaffolding gained some criticism: 'there's a risk with scaffolding, because scaffolding can provide a limitation to flexibility—it can box things and restrict things' (Stan's Cafe, Reflection Session 2). Teachers therefore shifted towards emphasising the role of relationships within scaffolded creativity:

> I would link then relationship and scaffold together, because that's where the collaboration is taking place. Because you have to have trust in the adult. Because [the learners] perform differently for different people for example, depending on […]

who else is in the room and the scaffold they're providing. (Teacher, Reflection Session 2)

Although teachers recognised the importance of scaffolding support to deepen learners' experiences and ideas, they also identified the need to balance their own authority and expert knowledge with a less interventionist approach:

we've got our expert knowledge, and we've got our expert knowledge on those children, and I found it really hard at first, with Stan's Cafe, to [relinquish] my control over those children I thought might be challenging… but actually knowing that it was best to take a step back in the end, because I had to trust myself, trust in the children, trust in [the practitioner]. (Teacher, Reflection Session 2)

They recalled how allowing learners greater freedom and autonomy (perhaps against their better judgment) had often had exceptionally positive results:

our kids learnt so quickly because they had so much scope to explore and experiment because we were so free with them […] [and] because they had experiences in there that they don't get in the classroom. (Teacher, Reflection Session 2)

Allowing creative scaffolds to be shaped by personal and interpersonal factors emerged as significant when considering the application of creative frameworks or categories in everyday classroom scenarios. One practitioner from Open Theatre exhorted the group to

come at this from a more practical context. Because I feel like we're all applying these words to our own concepts—of how we imagine this works in our own settings, with our own children, in our own classes. If we could maybe work from a point that we could all see and understand… (Open Theatre, Reflection Session 2)

Teachers then began to think about specific applications of the emergent themes: how they would apply to non-verbal learners or learners with SEND; how they would apply to their colleagues as well as their learners; and how they would apply in lessons such as maths and science as well as drama and music. But ultimately, they acknowledged that 'children are unpredictable as well […] sometimes what we think they're going to do, they do something completely different' (Teacher, Reflection Session 2).

Overall, the teachers and practitioners at the Reflection Day arrived at the working model illustrated in *Figure 9.8*. Annotation (A) shows the driver or catalyst for the creative process, demarcated using a rectangle rather than a puzzle piece to differentiate it from the other themes. Point (B) represents the overarching facets of accessibility, inclusivity, and diversity.
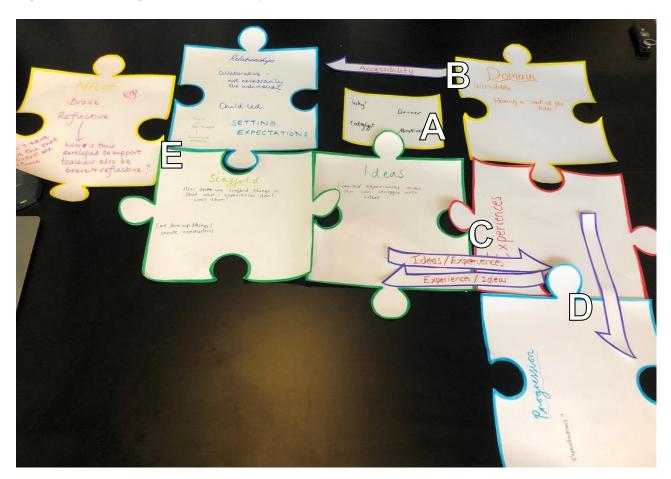
Figure 9.8. Working model of creativity from Reflection Session 2.

(C) demonstrates the interrelationship between ideas and experiences, and (D) illustrates how progress can be related to experiences and reactions to experiences, rather than to concrete ideas or outcomes. Finally, E highlights the tripartite relationship between affect, relationship, and scaffold, all of which feed into the ideas and experiences facilitated within the creative classroom.

Nevertheless, although constructing a working model of creativity was a thought-provoking exercise for the teachers and practitioners, and us as researchers, there were many limitations to visualising a creative framework in two dimensions. One teacher highlighted that, ideally, the model should resemble a three-dimensional network which 'completely depends on every part—because I think you could link an arrow back and forth between every piece in every way' (Teacher, Reflection Session 2). A practitioner from Stan's Cafe provocatively summarised:

> you know when you just take a jigsaw puzzle, you just open the box… and it's just a pile of jigsaw pieces…? It's got so much more potential than the finished picture in many respects. (Stan's Cafe, Reflection Session 2)

With this in mind, it is possible to see the utility of moving away from a determinate framework and towards a more 'rebellious' (cf. Burnard, 2022) act of creative being and becoming (Barad, 2012). A more flexible approach to conceptualising diverse creativities in the classroom would potentially allow for the foregrounding of aspects that have previously been excluded from models of creativity—such as creative affect, environmental situatedness, verbal and non-verbal communication, and human–non-human interaction. Each of these aspects emerged as significant themes in the experiences of learners, teachers, and creative practitioners in the present Creativity Collaborative, and should therefore be accounted for when considering new ways of theorising creativity and its pedagogical role. Nonetheless, pursuing rhizomatic approaches that are always becoming and 'never arriving' (Young, 2021) should not necessarily be at the expense of relevance and application in the classroom.

10. Conclusion

Over the past two years, the Elliot Foundation Academies Trust Creativity Collaborative, in partnership with Arts Council England, has embarked on a transformative journey to empower primary-school teachers and learners by re-imagining creative classrooms through a multidimensional and methodologically creative lens. Within the partnerships established between schools and creative practitioners, we have begun to identify characteristic recurring features of creative classrooms, domains, experiences, relationships, scaffolds, processes, ideas, and affects.

This evaluative process has not only equipped learners, teachers, and practitioners with greater awareness of their own creativities, but it has broadened existing understandings of creativity adopted in scholarly and pedagogical literature (e.g., Lucas & Spencer, 2017). In particular, we have highlighted the affective qualities of creative learning spaces. Valuing non-verbal, physical, historical, and localised elements of creativity has been instrumental in inspiring teachers, learners, and practitioners to explore new dimensions of creativity. In turn, this has demonstrated the potential facility of a posthumanist perspective upon creativity, which would shift our focus from solely human-driven encounters towards acknowledging the dynamic 'becoming-with' that takes place between humans and non-human elements within creative learning environments (Haraway, 2008, p. 244).

Year Two of the Creativity Collaborative has also provided valuable opportunities for professional development and reflexivity, equipping classroom teachers with innovative pedagogical strategies to nurture creativity. The engagement of local cultural organisations—such as during the Walsall Adventure Day—has significantly contributed to the creation of a sustainable ecosystem of creativity, which has enriched the educational experiences of schools, teachers, and learners. Working with creative practitioners, whose practice explores affective and non-verbal aspects of creativity, has encouraged teachers and learners to engage with creative processes that exceed traditional boundaries, facilitating expressive, embodied, and inclusive modes of communication. In Year Three, we suggest that the Collaborative continues to explore notions of creativity that are inclusive and diverse, recognising learners' lived experiences, cultural backgrounds, modes of communication, and creative environments.

Moreover, drawing on recent cultural and educational policy and the scholarly literature conceptualising creativity, we have collaboratively debated and discussed various creativity models and frameworks. Through uncovering the richness and diversity of perspectives of creativity within the pedagogical landscape, teachers and practitioners have come to understand the novelty of this project and its potential impact on creativity research both

nationally and internationally. This has also enabled us to consider localised interpretations of creativity that could be most relevant to teachers and learners within the Elliot Foundation Academies Trust.

As this Interim Report documents, this project has already yielded impactful results. Findings indicate the significance of welcoming creative spaces, playful child-led approaches, skilful expert practitioners, critical reflection, and joyful, active participation. These features— among many others—have been fundamental in equipping teachers to adopt creative pedagogies in their everyday practice.

Looking ahead, further novel research investigating posthuman, affective, non-verbal, historical, and localised approaches to creativity holds the promise of influencing current creativity pedagogic policy and practices. The potential of this ongoing work lies in enabling teachers to recognise a more inclusive notion of creativity and give value to emergent and unexpected creative processes. This, in turn, will allow teachers to engage meaningfully with learners and foster inclusive and diverse creativities within the primary classroom.

11. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Integrating creative learning within the wider curriculum.

Schools should continue to reinforce their learning from working with Open Theatre and Stan's Cafe in Year Two; however, they should focus on connecting this learning with the wider curriculum rather than simply consolidating it through repetition. There is some merit to offering schools the opportunity to work with alternative creative partners in Year Three (i.e., schools that have worked with Open Theatre work with Stan's Cafe, and vice versa). However, this should not simply entail a repetition of Year Two. Instead, schools should focus on how to engage their whole staff in teaching for creativity, and how to embed teaching for creativity within the wider everyday curriculum.

The ongoing involvement of creative practitioners as critical friends to teachers is vital. This collaborative approach fosters a supportive environment where teachers can negotiate their roles alongside practitioners and confidently take ownership within their own planned lessons (cf. Nenadic, 2023). Creative practitioners have the potential to encourage teachers to push boundaries and explore the affective and posthuman aspects of creativity. As teachers integrate creative approaches into their teaching practice, they can draw upon the expertise and guidance of creative practitioners to ensure that creativity remains a dynamic and integral part of their pedagogy.

As researchers, actively engaging in observing teachers' classroom lessons and practitioners' creative sessions will significantly enrich our understanding of how teachers incorporate their newly acquired creative knowledge into the wider curriculum. Such observations will offer a more nuanced insight into the effectiveness of the creative pedagogies, learning, and research over Years One and Two, and identify areas for improvement that could further enhance participants' creative learning experiences.

Recommendation 2: Fostering professional learning networks for creative pedagogies.

Schools should focus on building professional learning networks that will help all their teachers develop and apply creative pedagogies in their classrooms. Such networks will help schools disseminate their knowledge of teaching for creativity among their entire staff and maintain the legacy of the work done within the Creativity Collaborative.

Networks could be developed *across schools* by regular meetings between the representative Creativity Leads (as in the creativity framework sessions during Year Two) and opportunities to observe each other's practice. Networks could be developed *within*

schools through continuing professional development sessions on teaching for creativity. These could be delivered by Creativity Leads, creative practitioners, or affiliated researchers.

Recommendation 3: Establishing senior management support for creativity in education.

Schools should ensure that their senior management are engaged with and supportive of the place of creativity in the wider curriculum. Ideally, each school should have a nominated Creativity Lead (who regularly attends sessions with visiting practitioners) and a member of senior leadership who is engaged with the project. This will ensure that research and peer networking opportunities reach a representative sample of teachers who are involved in the day-to-day implementation of the project and teachers who are involved in wider school development and decision making.

To engage members of senior leadership, we recommend that all headteachers are invited to participate in a practical session with Open Theatre or Stan's Cafe at the beginning of Year Three. This will ensure that they are aware of what their learners are experiencing through the Creativity Collaborative. We also suggest that headteachers take part in focus groups or interviews with researchers to contribute to the evaluation of the project.

Recommendation 4: Accessing financial support for post-session reflection.

The Creativity Collaborative should have budget available to provide teachers and practitioners with reflection time immediately following every creative session. In Year Two, some of the most fruitful creative sessions were those after which the teacher and practitioner had time to debrief. We suggest that this is made an integral aspect of all creative sessions in Year Three. Teachers and practitioners should be released from other immediate commitments so that they can debrief together. This may mean making creative sessions shorter or providing cover teachers for other classroom lessons.

Unless specific issues have arisen during a session, teachers and practitioners should allow their discussion to be guided by the questions in the termly reflection diaries. Regularly debriefing on these questions will also grow participants' awareness of what is taking place during sessions, strengthen relationships between teachers and practitioners, and provide a more consistent means of data collection than the termly diaries used in Year Two.

Recommendation 5: Evaluating progress using the Theory of Change.

The Creativity Collaborative should return to the Theory of Change developed in Year One to evaluate which aspects of the project have been successful and which need further attention. Year Two—which was initially intended to be a year of implementing the

programme and extending it to schools in East Anglia—has not followed the original project plan as laid out in the Theory of Change. Although there have been valid reasons for adjusting the pace of the project, we recommend that in Year Three the Collaborative returns to the Theory of Change to establish where there might be the best opportunities for growth. This will ensure that the Creativity Collaborative remains focussed on its original goals and makes the best use of the remaining funding available.

Recommendation 6: Exploring the potential of a Trust-wide approach to creativity.

The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust should deliberate on the need for a Trust-wide approach to creativity while considering the innovative work undertaken thus far by the Creativity Collaborative. In the research evaluation of Year Two, it has become evident that many previous creativity frameworks lack inclusivity and neglect affective, situated, and posthuman perspectives on creativity. However, the Collaborative have actively explored and embraced these missing dimensions, and it is worth considering that these aspects could serve as valuable guiding principles in shaping the Trust's approach to creativity.

While teachers, practitioners, and researchers have engaged in discussions surrounding the possibilities and constraints of a Trust-wide creativity framework, our vision extends beyond conventional structures. We encourage the Collaborative to look beyond predefined pathways to consider how to nurture learners in their ongoing creative becoming. Instead of adhering to prevalent educational frameworks that often seek to standardise and confine, we offer up the possibility of embracing the fluidity of our collective research findings and cultivating a creative legacy that defies the boundaries of traditional frameworks.

As we move forward, incorporating inclusive, affective, situated, and posthuman perspectives on creativity should ensure that the Trust's approach to creativity not only addresses past limitations but also remains responsive to the evolving needs of our educational community. By embracing these diverse dimensions, the Trust can cultivate notions of creativity that empower teachers and learners alike, fostering a culture of creativity that is dynamic, diverse, and inclusive.

Recommendation 7: Nurturing affective and material dimensions of creativity in education.

The Creativity Collaborative should encourage teachers and creative practitioners to explore and integrate affective and material dimensions of creativity in their pedagogical practices. Emphasising emotional intelligence, empathy, and non-verbal communication can enrich learners' creative experiences and foster a deeper connection to the creative learning process. Likewise, activities that are rooted in the local environment, sociohistorical context,

and material surroundings can help learners engage with their locality and foster creativity that is culturally situated. By providing opportunities for reflection on these creative habits and becomings, combined with professional development in these areas, teachers will be supported in effectively nurturing learners' creative potential.

Recommendation 8: Sustaining impact through documenting and sharing creative pedagogies.

As we move into Year Three of the project, the Creativity Collaborative should carefully consider the lasting impact and legacy of the knowledge, theory, and creative activities that have been explored thus far. To ensure that our valuable findings and practices can continue to benefit teachers and learners beyond the project's funding period, we should proactively document and synthesise successful creative pedagogies, methodologies, and insights. To ensure the lasting impact of our creative activities, we should consider distilling our experiences into resources, allowing us to effectively share our findings with the broader Elliot Foundation Academies Trust and foster a culture of collaborative learning and knowledge exchange.

There are many options for how we could do this, such as hosting workshops, a website, webinars, or collaborative sessions. Emphasising knowledge transfer and sustainable implementation will maximise the enduring influence of the Creativity Collaborative long after the project's conclusion.

Recommendation 9: Recognising the global impact of diverse notions of creativity.

As the Collaborative continues to explore inclusive and diverse notions of creativity through creative affect, non-verbal communication, historical context, and localised curriculum, it should recognise the originality and potential impact of its explorations. Embracing these novel dimensions in creativity will not only enrich the local context of the Elliot Foundation Academies Trust, but also holds the potential to contribute significantly to creativity theory, practice, and policy on an international scale. By actively engaging with and promoting research and collaboration in these areas, we can pave the way for a broader understanding of creativity in education and its transformative potential for learners nationally and internationally.

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