

# TEACHING FOR

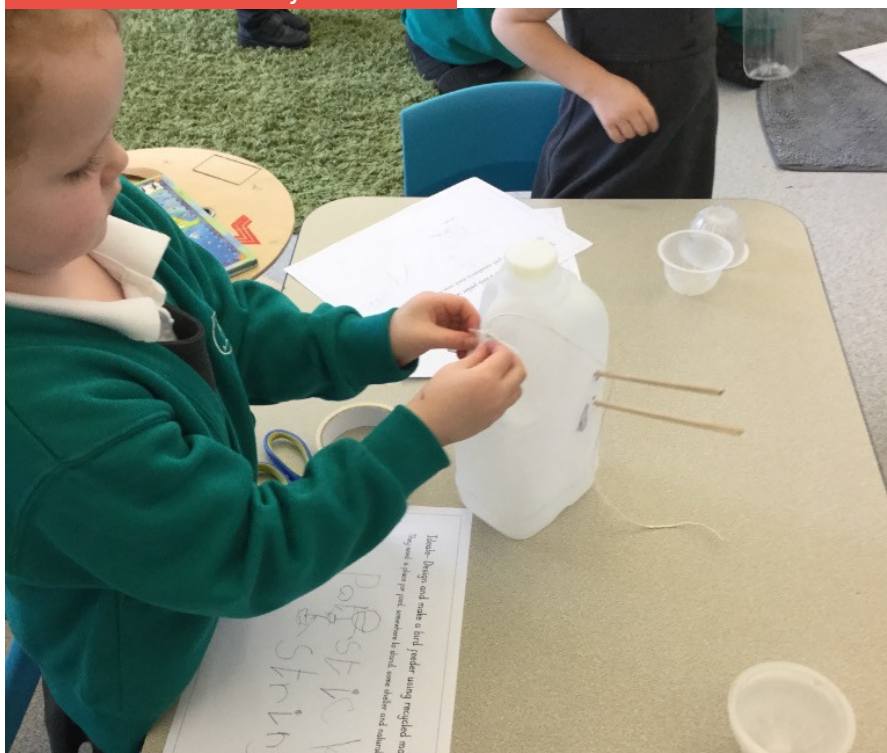
# CREATIVITY

## In Arts & Design, Understanding the World, and Personal, Social & Emotional Development for Year R

### UNIT OF WORK EXEMPLAR

**Naomi Vaughan**

Wellow Primary School



### How to read this document

**This document contains three main components**

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



## Context: UWinAT Creativity Collaborative

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

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

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

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

## The Creativity Navigator: A Framework of Teaching for Creativity

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

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

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

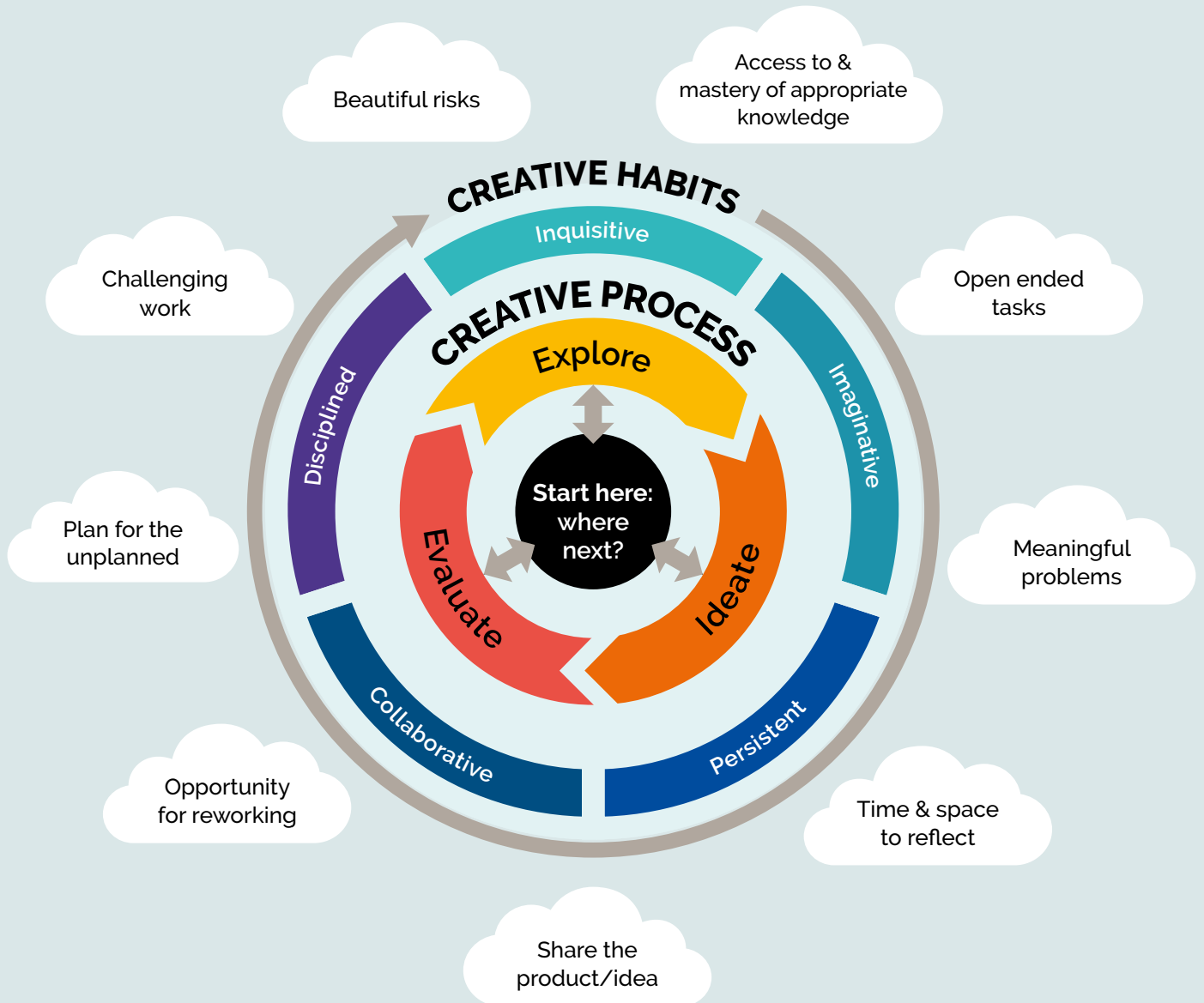
The final aspect of our Creativity Navigator focuses on the types of climate and task design that can support creativity to flourish in the classroom. For instance, tasks need to be personally meaningful, challenging, and open-ended, with children having some autonomy over aspect(s) of their learning.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



### TO CITE THE CREATIVITY NAVIGATOR PLEASE USE:

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

# CREATIVITY NAVIGATOR



## TO CITE THE CREATIVITY NAVIGATOR PLEASE USE:

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

# KEY UNIT INFORMATION

## Brilliant Bird Feeders



### INTENDED FOR:

Reception Class



### SUBJECT FOCUS:

Expressive Arts and Design,  
Understanding the World,  
Personal, Social Emotional  
Development



### UNIT DURATION & FORMAT:

4 x 2-hour learning sessions



### LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES:

#### 1. Learning objectives/outcomes:

- To understand what animals need to survive and how we can support this.
- To use a range of recyclable materials to produce something new.
- To set and work towards simple goals.

#### 2. Creative outcome:

- To make effective bird feeders out of recycling materials.

As part of our Spring unit 'What on Earth...?', we looked at recycling and how we can turn something old into something new. Linking to our previous work on seasons, we decided as a class that we wanted to make some feeders for the birds that would start venturing out as the weather got warmer. From here we explored a variety of bird feeder styles and identified four key elements ours would include to make them successful. Then we created a plan including materials we would need to complete our projects.

We then spent a morning creating our bird feeders, showing great resilience and problem solving along the way. When they were completed, we explored suitable locations for our bird feeders around the school grounds before placing them up to be enjoyed. We evaluated the success of our feeders based on the amount of food which had been consumed from each, which we checked every few days for 2 weeks.



### STEPS FOR SUCCESS:

- Step back and allow children time to problem solve themselves before intervening.
- Adapting plans as you progress through the creative processes leads to a better outcome.
- Model the language of the creative habits by labelling what you can see the children doing as they work.





# FULL UNIT DESCRIPTION

## Brilliant Bird Feeders

### Introduction

As part of our Spring unit 'What on Earth...?', we looked at recycling and how we could turn something old into something new. Linking to our work on the seasons, we decided as a class to create some feeders for the birds that would start venturing out as the weather got warmer. Over a period of four mornings, we worked

through the creative process of **explore**, **ideate** and **evaluate**. Having learnt from previous units where I had over-planned how each part of the process might look, I decided that this time I would be more adaptive with my plans so that I could respond to the children's ideas as we worked through the journey, creating an outline for how each stage might look instead of a rigid plan.

### Explore (Session 1)

We decided as a class that we were going to make bird feeders using recyclable materials which linked to our learning on looking after the Earth. Therefore, before we started making our plans, we needed to understand what a bird feeder looked like and which materials would work best for our project. We started by completing some research as a class on bird feeders, looking at images online and inspecting some of the feeders we have around school. From this, we found that bird feeders came in all different shapes and sizes and were often made of materials such as wood or plastic. After our

initial research we decided as a class that our bird feeders would need to meet four key criteria.

We identified our bird feeders must be:

- waterproof
- secure
- able to hold seed
- a natural colour.

Once we had set our criteria, we then investigated a range of recyclable materials that we could use such as cardboard, paper, plastic and wood. We touched, bent, and dropped water on the different materials to see which ones would be best suited to meet our criteria. Then we were ready to plan.



### Ideate (Session 2)

Ideate (Session 2): We brought together our ideas from what we had learned in the 'explore' stage by creating a plan for what our bird feeders might look like. I created a basic planning sheet which had a space for children to draw and label their plans. I then modelled the process of planning to the class, thinking out loud to show the children how I refer to our 4 criteria points to inform my ideas. For example, I might say "the feeder needs to be waterproof so I think I will use 4 plastic containers which I can connect together using a stick to make them secure". I then labelled the different materials I was planning to use in my design so that I knew what I needed when it came

to making it. The children worked with an adult in groups of 6 to talk through their ideas as they created their plans, using word mats to help with labelling. This was a key part of the process as the children shared ideas and supported each other with suggestions when someone wasn't sure about a part of their plan. The adults were also able to label the habits that they saw the children using during this part of the process 'You're showing great collaboration by helping your friend figure out a solution to their problem'. Once everyone had created their plans, we then showed some of them and celebrated how creative everyone had been with their designs and discussed the importance of celebrating the uniqueness of each person's ideas.

“

**This was a key part of the process as the children shared ideas and supported each other with suggestions when someone wasn't sure about a part of their plan.**

”

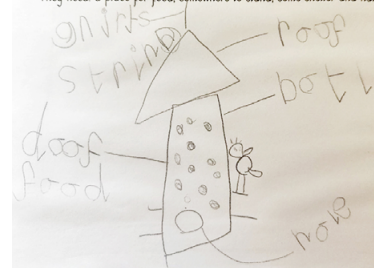
### Ideate (Session 3)

With the plans made, it was now time to create our product. Having collected a range of recycled materials and seen the plans, we were able to gather most materials that the children needed for their bird feeders. After revisiting our plans and the criteria which we had set out to meet, the children were then able to go and find the materials they needed to start making their bird feeders. Previously this would have been a time where the classroom environment could have lost its focus as everyone would want the same item or there wouldn't be enough of something, however due to the time we had taken to think through our plans and the work on problem-solving we had focused on much earlier on in the year, this wasn't the case. The children knew what they were looking for and due to everyone's designs being different, they were very specific in what they wanted, which meant the room was calm and focused. If children couldn't find what they wanted, they were very resilient in picking something else and thinking of a way that they could use this to make it work within their

plans. The room was calm but full of excited energy as the children got to work.

After a while, we started to come across a few problems such as only an adult could cut holes into the plastic due to having to use a sharp tool to penetrate the item which meant that there were a few queues of children waiting. To overcome this next time, I would investigate getting a tool which the children could use safely to do this as well as highlighting this potential problem in the planning stage so the children could think of something different. There was also a selection of children who made holes to slide sticks into for the birds to sit on but then realized that the birds then couldn't get the food out of the bottle. This is when we paused the whole class and addressed the problem with them, and we were incredibly impressed by their responses. As a class, we used our knowledge from the explore stage of the process and realised that a window would need to be made for the birds to access the food. We then continued with our creating, with many children showing real perseverance when making adaptations to their designs.

Ideate- Design and make a bird feeder using recycled materials.  
They need: a place for food, somewhere to stand, some shelter and natural colours.



## Evaluate (Session 4)

In previous projects, our evaluations have mostly included peer or parent feedback, however for this project I thought that the best way for the children to see whether their product had been successful was by testing it out on their intended users- the birds.

We went for a walk around the school and using our knowledge from our previous learning, we identified areas which would be suitable to place our bird feeders. We looked for high spaces in bushes and trees where there was a bit of shelter and height from the ground so that predators couldn't get to them. Once we had chosen our spots, we headed back to class to fill our feeders with some tasty bird seed, and marked our feeders with a pen line so that we could see how much seed we started with. We then went off in small groups with our bird feeders and placed them in our chosen spots around the school. This caused great excitement as the children loved pointing out and checking their bird feeders as they went

around school. Once they had been placed, we discussed how we could evaluate the success of our feeders with the children identifying that watching and comparing how much food had been eaten every few days over the next 2 weeks would be the best way to see how successful the feeder and location had been.

We checked the feeders every few days and the children loved seeing how much food had been taken. We identified that in the first week not a lot of food had been eaten due to the birds getting used to these new objects. But in the second week, more and more feed started to disappear. We reflected along the way, with some children choosing to move their feeders due to not as much seed being taken as others but this decision was never met with defeat but with determination to make their project a success.

Overall, the children loved completing the processes and the application of skills they showed us along the way was remarkable in children who were only 4 and 5 years old.

“

**Overall, the project was a huge success which has led to us completing more projects like this every half term.**

”

## Impact on learning

Through completing this unit, the children were able to put into practice the the habits which we have been practicing within our provision throughout the year (e.g. being resilient, imaginative, and disciplined within their learning). Through giving the children opportunities to practice these habits within their learning prior to our project, the children were able to problem-solve more effectively, think more imaginatively, and show teamwork in ways which we might not have seen at this point in the year before. By spending more time in the explore phase than we might have done previously, the children

grasped a deeper understanding of the aims of the project and were more creative in their designs for their bird feeders having developed the 4 key elements required themselves. Being more involved in the process from the start also led to greater engagement with the project as the children were determined to reach their end goal having researched the importance of food being provided for birds as spring comes. Throughout the whole project, the processes were made accessible to all children regardless of their ability or need. For children who struggle with writing, an adult helped them to label their ideas on their plan and for those who struggle to regulate

themselves at times, due to work we have done on problem-solving, these children were able to ask for help or turn to their peers for some support before getting frustrated. Overall, the project was a huge success which has led to us completing more projects like this every half term so that the children are able to practice applying the habits and the creative process more independently with less and less modelling. This has only made them even more ready for Year 1 where they will continue to explore, ideate and evaluate more independently, which will hopefully make the new challenges that Year 1 will bring more of an exciting experience for them.





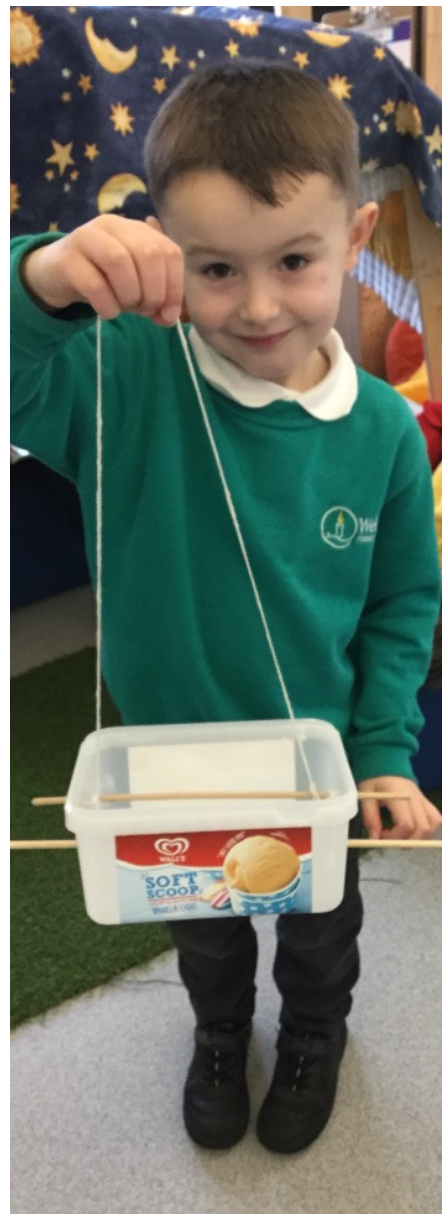
## FINAL REFLECTIONS:

Creativity is usually something which links quite naturally when you think of a Reception class. However, learning more about the creative process has challenged me as a practitioner to develop activities which aren't just creative but are creative for a real and meaningful purpose for the children. Developing activities from as early as the Autumn term, which specifically develop a skill or habit such as resilience or collaboration, has enabled me to plan activities which I may have before thought to be too tricky for children of 4- and 5-years-old. However, developing my teaching for creativity has shown me that introducing practice in these skills early on just encourages greater engagement with their learning and independence. This then means that we have been able to introduce projects that combine the creative process and habits processes much earlier than before. By Spring 1, children are ready to start applying their skills to units of work, such as this one, enabling us to spend more time completing similar projects throughout the rest of the academic year as the children recognise the process needed to be successful. Writing and designing plans is now something the children complete on a day-to-day basis within our provision as children

are confident with using these from the practice they have had. The impact has also been noticed from our Year 1 class teacher, who reports a meaningful difference in the children who were in Year R last year in that they are more resilient, independent, and ready for the challenge of Year 1 compared to previous years.

Being a Reception class teacher, it has been an interesting process developing the habits and creative processes to suit our age group, but I have enjoyed the flexibility we have been given to make it work. Our work on teaching for creativity has meant that I have developed planning formats which work for our curriculum as well as aligning the creative habits to our school aspirations and core values. This has made it easier to spread creativity through the school as teachers have used the processes to develop more engaging and interactive lessons in subjects such as science, history, and art with children gaining a secure understanding of what our school values look like in practice.

Through developing my teaching for creativity, I feel like the skills I have learnt as a practitioner will be continually used and developed as I continue on in my career.



## CONTACT US:

 [uwinatcreativitycollaborative@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:uwinatcreativitycollaborative@winchester.ac.uk)

 <https://www.winchester.ac.uk/research/Our-impactful-research/Research-in-Humanities-and-Social-Sciences/Research-projects/creativity-collaborative/>

