

TEACHING FOR



IN LITERACY FOR YEAR R

UNIT OF WORK EXEMPLAR

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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

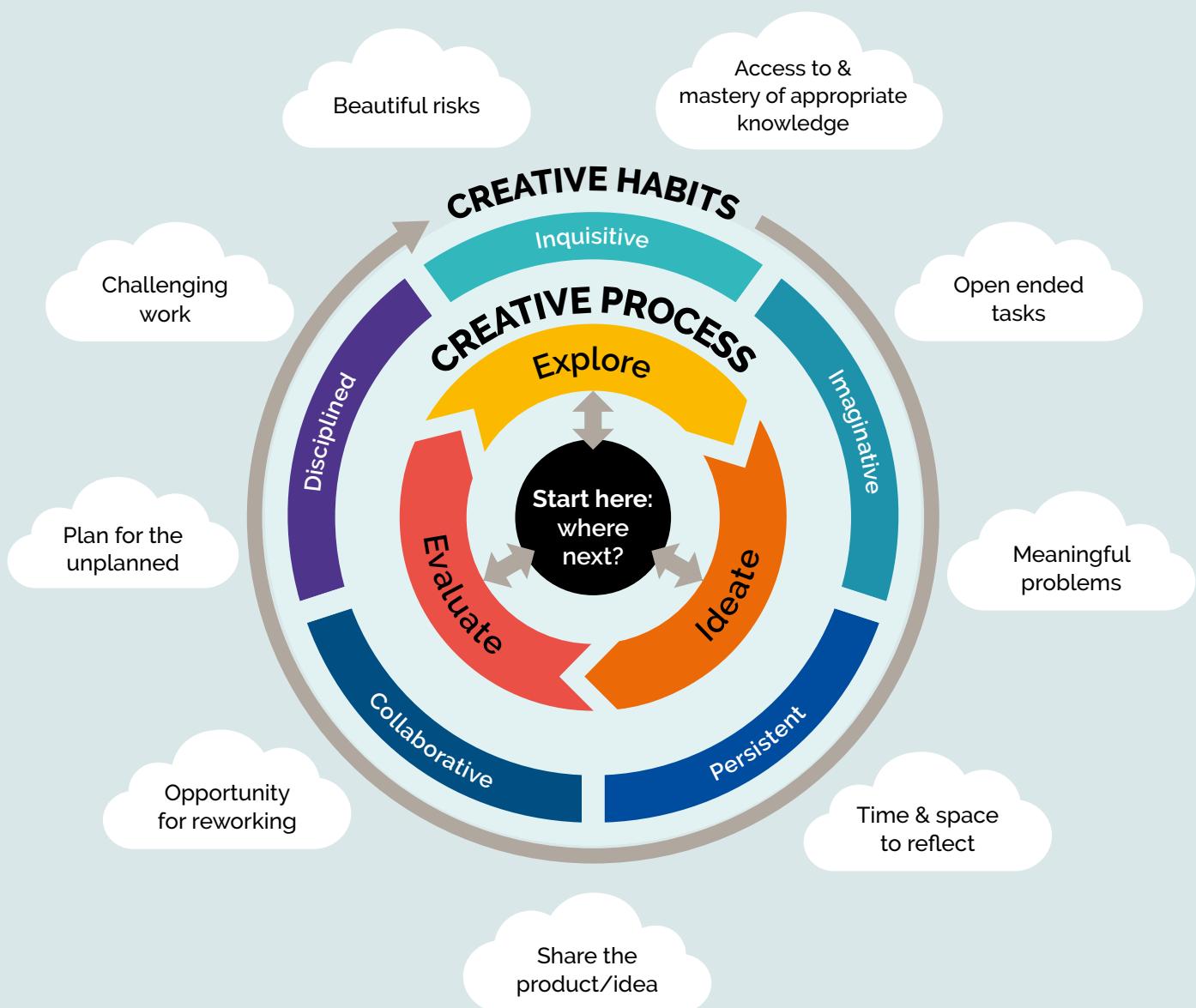
process. For instance, a think-pair-share learning behaviour could support children to collaborate on gathering relevant information as they explore at the beginning of a creative learning task. The same collaborative habit could later be used to support the evaluate stage of the creative process through 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/jcb.70005>

CREATIVITY NAVIGATOR



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KEY UNIT INFORMATION

Julia Donaldson Study



INTENDED FOR:
Year R



SUBJECT FOCUS:
Literacy



UNIT DURATION & FORMAT:
Weekly for 6 weeks or
daily for 1 week



LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES:

1. Learning objectives/outcomes:

- a. Early Learning Goal – storytelling and role playing to share ideas and questions. Model and invite children to use a wide range of vocabulary and language in their play and writing.
- b. All habits with a focus on teamwork, imagination, resilience and problem solving.

2. Creative outcome:

- a. To plan, create, and evaluate a book inspired by Julia Donaldson for the children to share with their Y6 'buddies'

This unit of work focused on an author study of Julia Donaldson, inspired by children's love of The Gruffalo. It offered them the opportunity to explore her other books and to spot similarities and differences between the texts. Children were encouraged to explore and

discuss the message of each book drawing comparisons to their own experiences, with the aim of building towards a story time with their Y6 buddies where the children could share and give them their books.

Children developed skills such as their letter formation, pencil grip, initial final sounds, special friends, and free talk strategies to attempt phonetically plausible words, using red words, writing a sentence, and using a full stop at the end of a sentence. This unit allowed children to feel enthusiasm for the author and her books as well as allowing them to see and experience themselves as an author.

Children were able to show their understanding of what a character is through the exploration of a variety of books, keeping in mind the question: What will my Julia Donaldson character do next? They role played different characters, working collaboratively to retell the stories and suggest new story lines. They had to work collaboratively and think creatively to retell the stories.



STEPS FOR SUCCESS:

1. This topic was sparked when the children realised their favourite author has more than one book – take your starting point from the children's interest.
2. Plan for the unplanned



FULL UNIT DESCRIPTION

Julia Donaldson Study

The children are in the Gruffalo class, and it is a book we read regularly. The story is well-known to the children, and most can retell it using the pictures.

Explore

Hook:

Children have a job to tidy up the reading area. We found 4 copies of the Gruffalo (our favourite class book) and then found some more books written by Julia Donaldson. Once we collected as many Julia Donaldson books as we could from around the school, the children chose which ones they would like to explore further.

Lesson 1: Charlie Cook's Favourite Book

The first lesson started with a discussion about the

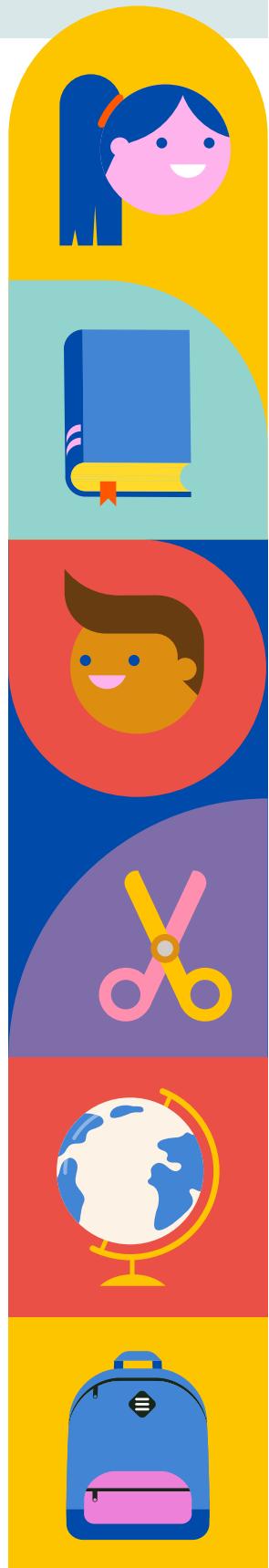
books we enjoy. Children were asked to consider and discuss the following sorts of questions:

What is your favourite story book? Why? What is special about it? Do you know what an author is? Do you have a favourite author? We are The Gruffalo class, I wonder who wrote The Gruffalo story?

Having talked about the author of The Gruffalo, the children were then introduced to another of Donaldson's books, Charlie Cook's Favourite Book. They were encouraged to notice the similarities between the two stories through investigation of both books (e.g. looking for hidden Gruffalos) and were then asked to bring in their own favourite books to school the following week to share with each other.

Lesson 2: The Smartest Giant in Town

We started the next session by reading my favourite Donaldson story to the children, 'The Smartest Giant in Town'. Children were again asked questions to encourage exploration in more depth, such as noticing anything about the book (i.e. having the same author), as well as picking out the similarities/differences with this and last week's Julia Donaldson's story. Children were then encouraged to share their favourite books with each other and adults, before each making a bookmark for their book with a sentence explaining what they like about the story. They also used a tens frame to rate each other's stories.



Ideate

Lesson 3: Stickman

We started the lesson by reading another Julia Donaldson story, 'Stickman'. Children were then tasked to create their own stick character. They started by 'ideating' a plan for their character. To help generate ideas, children were taken on a stick hunt around the school grounds, and encouraged to talk about the kind of stick they were looking for. This provided an opportunity to draw, model

and stretch language, and the descriptive words suggested by children were written on post-it notes.

Children then created their own stick characters, having free access to a wide range of materials to make their stick into their design. Throughout the process, children were given opportunities to evaluate what was going well and what could be improved. Their stick characters were then displayed along with their design plans and a sign explaining what they had made.

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We talked about the similarities and differences between the characters, as well as discussing what makes them unique.

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Explore and Ideate

Lesson 4: The Smeds and the Smoos

This time, I read the story of 'The Smeds and the Smoos' to the children. As a class we then explored the story in more depth

through the use of role play; I took on the role of the older characters and the children played and responded as the Smeds and the Smoos. We talked about the similarities and differences between the characters, as well as discussing what makes them unique (and the need to value everyone).

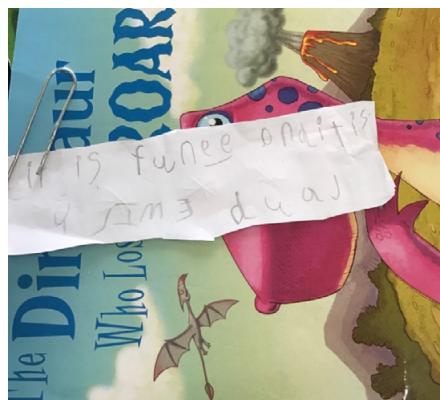
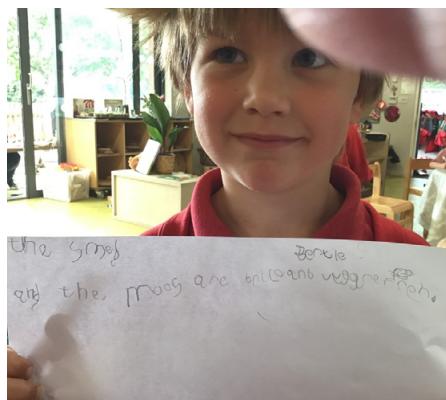
Explore and Ideate

Lesson 5: Room on the Broom

The final Donaldson story we read together in this unit was 'Room on the Broom', focusing on its emphasis on teamwork, collaboration, and helping each other. This time, I started the story on the last page, and we looked at the pictures backwards, asking the children whether it made sense this way. This led to a discussion about how important it is for us to think carefully about what happens next

in stories so that they make sense. We then read the story correctly, and discussed what happened at the beginning, middle, and end of the story.

Children were then given the opportunity to play around with sequencing the story. They collaborated, working together using 'props' from around the classroom to create various scenes from the story (scarves, blankets, tyres, planks, grass etc). These were then labelled by the children, and we then moved around the different areas re-telling the story.



Lesson 6: Making a storybook

In the final session of the unit, I reminded the children of all the Julia Donaldson stories that we have shared, and we made a list of all the characters. Children were encouraged to think about their favourite and to imagine the different characters appearing in the other stories (e.g. a giant living in space, or a witch going on holiday). This gave them the opportunity to imagine alternative events and to share their ideas with the rest of the class.

Children then chose their favourite Julia Donaldson character and created a new story for them. They needed to think about a beginning, middle, and end for their story, and were then encouraged to share their story with a friend or an adult in the classroom. This gave them the opportunity to evaluate their story, thinking about whether it made sense or if there were any changes/additions that they wanted to make to their stories. Children were then given access to a range of resources and were free to present their book in their own format (e.g. a zig zag books, beginning/middle/end pictures, flip books, cartoons)

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They enjoyed activities involving movement, using the school grounds, and choosing the books themselves.

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Final evaluation

Children then shared their completed books with their Y6 buddies. The buddies were asked to write a letter to the younger children thanking them for the story, suggesting other ideas and explaining what they liked best about the story. We also talked about the creative habits we

had needed during this topic. The children are becoming familiar with vocabulary including persistence, imagination, collaboration, discipline etc.

Throughout the unit, teachers modelled the language and habits of the creativity navigator throughout. All habits were explored throughout the unit however

collaboration and imagination were our main focus. In reception the explore, ideate, and evaluate process is particularly iterative, with many lessons including all 3 parts of the creative thinking process.

It was useful to have my key language on display for myself and other adults in the room to ensure they were included.

Impact on learning

Throughout this unit of work, children practised sharing ideas, working as a team, and problem-solving alongside improving their writing skills. They learnt about the structure of a book including characterisation, beginning, middle and end and writing for

an audience. Teaching in this way meant that the children were more creative and engaged because the unit followed their own interests as a starting point, allowing them to think creatively. Follow-up activities were often practical, open-ended and extended into the classroom provision, allowing the children to follow their own ideas.

They enjoyed activities involving movement, using the school grounds, and choosing the books themselves. The authentic purpose provided them with motivation to write, impacting their enthusiasm and creativity. Reluctant writers were keen to participate. They enjoyed working as a team and sharing ideas.



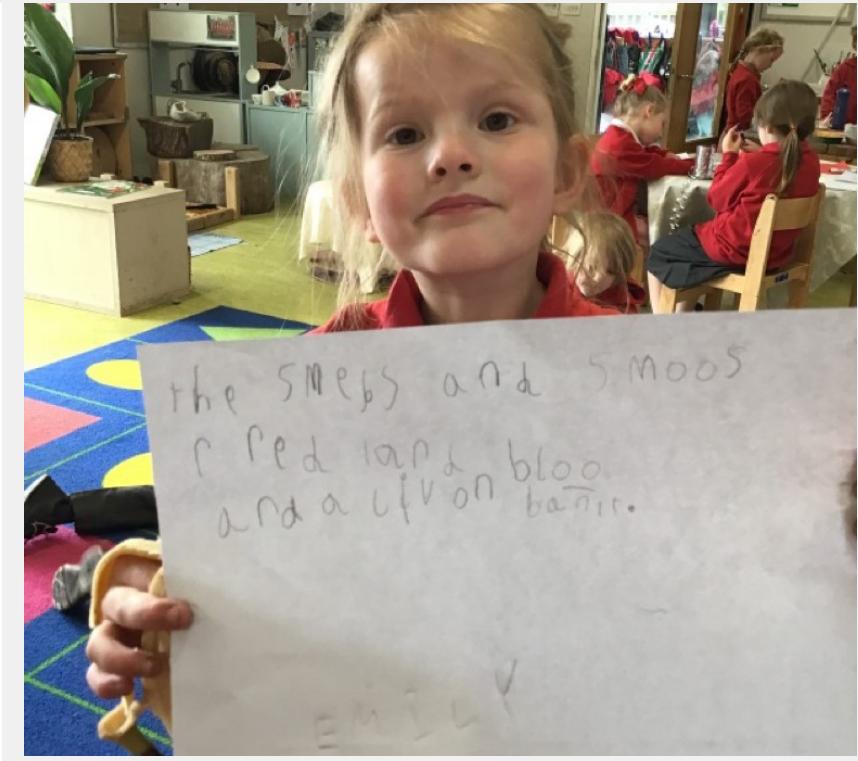
Supporting evidence of impact



FINAL REFLECTIONS:

This was an enjoyable unit to teach which allowed the children to follow their ideas and develop the creative habits.

We were able to say 'yes' to the children's ideas and requests which increased their self-confidence and ability to think creatively.



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