Creativity in the Curriculum: Planning with Depth and Progression in the Arts

Rationale

A creative curriculum is a system of teaching and learning where there is some fluidity between subjects, and a move away from specific subject teaching. This may involve children exploring a theme or topic in a variety of ways through problem solving and investigating. It is clear the benefits that a creative curriculum can have to children’s learning, with varied literature showing that it creates problem solvers, creative thinkers and more resilient learners. Not only can a creative curriculum benefit children’s learning in school, the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE) suggested that, by incorporating creativity within school, it would help to develop society culturally (NACCCE, 1999).

In a current educational climate in England, where national testing is becoming increasingly important and there is a need for teachers and children to work to national interim frameworks, which are essentially a checklist in which children must meet all criteria to reach the expected standard, creative teaching and learning can be seen to be becoming diluted and replaced with discrete, abstract teaching that train children to take a test or an assessment. Personally, I have found this a challenge teaching in a national testing year at school. Examination pressure may also help explain the increasing struggles of teacher recruitment and retention. The NUT (National Union of Teachers) have suggested that the Government confirmed that nearly a third of teachers (30%) that started in 2010 had quite by 2015 (Weale, 2016).

With workload and pressures felt by the current teaching workforce, it poses more barriers for creative curriculum teaching as this in itself can be challenging and require more time, planning and risk-taking than discrete subject teaching. ‘A creative curriculum involves both children and teachers taking risks’ (Craft, 2000; Jones and Wyse, 2005). From my own experience, and from discussions with colleagues, this pressure is felt widely, where teachers feel they find it difficult to always plan and find time to create an enriching, creative curriculum as well as adhering to all of the other demands involved in the teaching profession.

At Primary School A, our school vision and drive is to create an environment where learning is fun and all children succeed. This mantra is already deeply embedded throughout the school, with a thematic approach driven through key questions to inspire children’s thinking and
learning throughout a period of time (this could be a week, two weeks or longer). These questions will be made using a cross-curricular and creative approach, incorporating expectations from the national curriculum and the current interests of the children. However, teaching within a creative curriculum is not just teaching based around a thematic approach; it involves risk-taking, exploring and problem solving and this is something that is not as strongly embedded.

Within the school, I am the Key Stage One Curriculum Lead. It is my role to ensure that, as a school, we are constantly developing and improving the learning experiences we provide for the children who enter our classrooms, together with tailoring continued professional development for colleagues so that teaching is consistently outstanding across the curriculum. In my role, I also co-ordinate subject leaders so that they can specifically celebrate and develop their own subject areas and contribute to the continued professional development of their colleagues. At Primary School A, the pressures and challenges of teaching to a creative curriculum are felt, and it is in my role to help to overcome these and develop strategies to offer our children the best learning experiences that we can.

An important part of my role is ensuring consistency throughout Key Stage One, whilst working with my Key Stage Two colleague to ensure progression throughout the whole school. One way in which I do this is through regular learning walks where I observe the teaching throughout the key stage, carry out book scrutinies and through the analysis of the key question documents referred to earlier. From this, I have found that there are clear thematic approaches in year groups and a wide breadth of subjects are covered, although the depth and progression of learning in all subjects is not always seen, notably in the Arts subjects (Art, Music and Design and Technology).

In an earlier research project, namely the assignment for the Masters in Teaching and Learning, I explored the pedagogy and practice of singing in schools, which included designing professional development sessions to engage teachers and help to remove barriers to the teaching of singing. I will be using the knowledge and understanding from that to help to inform me of teachers’ next steps in planning and delivering teaching in the Arts, most notably Music. As a specialist in this area, I feel confident in my understanding and ability to offer teachers high quality development sessions.
On reporting these findings to our Head Teacher, I explained that I felt there was a need for a professional development session to improve the quality of planning, teaching and learning of these subjects throughout the school. I wanted to share the relevant literature with staff, to help support their creative teaching and providing examples of planning in depth and progression so this would then impact on the engagement and progress of all children’s learning.

From this discussion, I generated the three main areas I wanted to further investigate and address throughout the project:

What benefits can a successful creative curriculum have?
What barriers are encountered when approaching a creative curriculum?
How can teachers effectively plan with depth and progression in the Arts within a creative curriculum?

Through an analysis and review of literature, exploring relationships between theory and practice and a collection of quantitative and qualitative data through different forms, I will deliver a professional development session tailored to the needs of teachers (the participants) at our school to improve the quality of teaching and learning in a creative curriculum. Upon completing the development session, I will review and evaluate the impact of the project through data collection and reflect upon where, as a school, we need to further develop.
Methodology and Methods

In order to find out what the developmental needs are, as a key stage and school, I need to explore different areas of creativity in the curriculum, including the confidence levels of participants and the pedagogical approaches and resources being used in lessons. Exploring what is happening now in classrooms and with participants would then, in turn, promote a question of what happens if? This continual cycle creates reflection, both for myself and for my colleagues and lends itself to an action research project (Baumfield, Hall & Wall, 2008), because it will provide the best outcomes for the project. Action research is described as a strategy rather than a method and often involves a collaborative and participatory approach (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005) and this is something that is key within my project. Collaboration within a school is essential when introducing new ideas, as sharing and experiencing the journey of the vision and a common goal is more effective. Other advantages in choosing an action research method is that research can be set within a specific context or situation, researchers can be participants and the research can lead to open-ended outcomes (Koshy, 2005:21). The benefit of this is that the research can adapt and change to suit the needs of the project and once the project is finished, the participants are able to continue to grow and develop. Even though action research has many advantages for professional development, there are some disadvantages and considerations to be made when completing this type of project. Koshy (2005) comments that ‘action research is sometimes described as a soft option by some, so the researcher needs to define the parameters of the study at the start.’ (Koshy, 2005:21). This means that I need to be clear and specific about the areas for development and why they have been chosen.

Koshy (2005) further suggests that ‘there is also the issue of ethical considerations which is of particular significance within action research’. (Koshy, 2005:21) As outlined in the online ethical approval application, I have noted that there are minimal risks for participants in this project. The main ethical issue is of the impact of the participants’ well being. This will be monitored throughout the project and staff will be reminded of the robust mechanisms in school to help combat any undue stress, and resources will be made readily available, as is routine procedure. The amount of time spent on the project is a potential risk for participants, however, this has been mitigated as any questionnaires and professional discussions the participants are involved in will be completed during scheduled meetings agreed by the participants. This approach will feed into the collaborative nature of the project, as teachers are already used to planning and collaborating in developmental sessions. The project will ultimately provide a time benefit for participants, as it will help address confidence, pedagogical and resource issues and help them
with their lesson planning in the future. These aspects will be explained to the participants in the recruitment process for the project. I will give participants an information sheet and a consent form for them to sign to show their consent to the project (see Appendix 1.1). The participants recruited will comprise of teachers within the school, because they are the people who the planning and teaching will directly affect.

Phelps and Hase (2002) explain that action research ‘provides a vehicle for researcher and co-researchers (the participants in the research) to seek and share meanings constructed from shared experience.’ (Phelps and Hase, 2002:514). However, collaboration is not always at the forefront of action research and Kemmis and McTaggart (2007) state that ‘action research is frequently a solitary process of systematic self-reflection.’ (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005:277). The development of the project needs to be based upon the needs of the participants and the school, so in engaging them, supporting their reflection and involving them in the action of the project, will promote better outcomes.

Baumfield, Hall and Wall comment that ‘Many teachers involved in action research are concerned that their enquiry is not sufficiently ‘scientific’ if they do not have control groups or if the comparison classes are not precisely matched to the experimental ones.’ (Baumfield, Hall and Wall, 2008:71). To address this concern, within this project I will not be using data such as end of key stage tests, that are published and used to measure the progress and outcomes of schools. Instead, I will be using a wide range of data to analyse the impact of the action research, including quantitative progress and attainment data in the specific subject areas, quantitative and qualitative data from questionnaires by the participants and qualitative data from the book scrutinies. The data I will collect is adequate and suitable for this study as it will help to measure the success of the project and identify next steps following the end of the project.

To explore what is happening in the school currently, I feel it important for there to be two data collection methods. The first will be to collect both quantitative and qualitative data through a baseline questionnaire that includes a range of open and closed questions. Although I will be analysing the quantitative data, I will focus more heavily on the qualitative data and the answers given from the open questions due to the numbers of participants. Participants will be included if they are teachers in the school as they are the people who will be planning and delivering the lessons. This is a purposive sampling limited to colleagues in school. I will discuss the project at an agreed time with the potential participants, outlining the project and, once consent is
received through a signed form, I will ask them to complete the questionnaire before a scheduled staff meeting, to minimize the risk of affecting the participants’ well-being. Denscombe (2011) advises to only ask those questions which are absolutely vital for the research and ensure that the task of responding to the questionnaire is as straightforward and speedy as possible. (Denscombe, 2011:162) Therefore, I need to make sure that my questionnaire is specific, easy to complete and will establish what the participants think a creative curriculum is, barriers they feel there are to planning in a creative curriculum and how they plan to ensure depth and progression. I will also include scaled questions (1-5) referring to their confidence levels of planning different subject areas (example questionnaire can be seen in Appendix 1.2).

The other form of initial data collection will be through a book scrutiny. Book scrutinies are regular practice in school settings to establish the quality of teaching and learning by both internal and external bodies, such as Ofsted. I have chosen this method of collection, rather than lesson observations or learning walks because it will allow me to assess children’s learning and progress in all subject areas over time. A lesson observation, although extremely valuable as part of assessing teaching and learning, would not be the correct method for a research project of this type. As well as this, I have not chosen to complete lesson observations because of the participants’ well being. A lesson observation can cause far more of a negative impact on participants’ well being than a book scrutiny.

At Primary School A, pupils use a topic book, where all areas of the curriculum are included, apart from English, Maths and Science, to show a creative journey rather than discrete subject teaching. This will make it easier for me to assess the curriculum as a whole and compare the coverage of different subjects. I will also be able to assess the standard for work within these books compared to the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science. The sample of books will be purposive, asking the participants (teachers) to choose three books to represent the range of abilities within their class (above age-related expectations, at age-related expectations and below age-related expectations). In order to assure anonymity, I will ask the participants to photocopy the work from these books and remove any names that are on the work. I will collect mostly qualitative data from the book scrutiny, displaying the results as strengths and areas for development/where next? In likeness to the questionnaire, I will need to make sure I have a clear focus for the questionnaire with key questions to be answered. Upon reflection, these questions will be:
Does the book show a clear, thematic approach?
Is there a breadth of subjects covered?
What ways is the learning being evidenced?
Is there a clear development of skills showing deep learning and progression?

From both of these data collection methods, I can then structure a group discussion to collaborate with the participants (teachers of the classes) to further discuss the key points of the questionnaire and any reflections from the book scrutiny. According to Krueger (1988), focus group discussions are for this purpose, allowing the participants to give their opinions and ideas to emerge from the group. He comments that group discussions should not be used when you are teaching or leading the group, or if you do not intend to use their ideas. From this I have learnt that it is important for me to give the starting points of discussion and let the discussion lead its own pathway. However, even though Krueger (1988) voices the benefits of focus group discussion, Billson (1989) questions the text’s methodological purity, through his attempt to quantify what Bilson and Kreuger state is a qualitative method.

I will collect this data by making notes on large pieces of paper whilst the group is discussing topics. I will not use participants’ names in the notes so that all of the data remains anonymous. Making notes during the session allows the participants to reflect upon what they have discussed and gives more reliability to the data, as the other participants can quality assure what I have written.

In addition, I will be collecting and analysing the quantitative data for key focus subjects, focusing on the progress and attainment of pupils, celebrating successes and narrowing the gap in these areas. These aspects are part of my role as Key Stage One Curriculum Lead, hence I will compare the data analysis at the start of the project to the end so that I can see the measurable impact that the development session has had. Similarly to the book scrutiny data, all of this data collected and analysed, will be anonymised and be referred to as Class A, Class B etc. and will be shared publicly within the school, the governing body and any external agencies that request to see it. This data is reliable, as it is used as our school assessment procedure, however, I will need to make sure that rigorous assessments using Primary School A’s assessment policies are being used correctly and that colleagues are moderating their books with each other, to ensure accurate comparisons.
Once the project is finished, I plan to repeat some of the earlier data collection (questionnaire and book scrutiny) to compare against the baseline. The scaled confidence scores in the questionnaire will give a measurable impact and the answers in the qualitative data will allow me to see any changes or developments in ways of thinking. Completing another book scrutiny, choosing the same sample as the first so that they are directly comparable, I will focus on the same questions as in the baseline. This will allow me to see any changes in the books and reflect upon where improvements have been made and how, as a key stage and school, we can develop further, again, giving a further measurable impact of the project.
Upon starting this project, one of the first questions I reflected upon was what are we (at Primary School A) doing now? Are we truly a creative school, as it is considered in theory, or have we labelled ourselves as a creative school, when actually, we have drifted from the true meaning of it? In order to know this, I needed to analyse the literature and truly understand what it means to be teaching in a creative curriculum. I also wanted to find out what the participants thought the meaning of a creative curriculum is and how well they thought they were teaching it. From my own personal experiences, some schools have labelled themselves as a creative curriculum school, however, they teach English and Mathematics discretely in the morning sessions and use their afternoon sessions as a topic-based approach to inspire the other curriculum areas. In contrast, other schools promote creative thinking and problem solving approaches to learning across the whole curriculum.

The theory behind what a creative curriculum is can also vary. In Creativity in Education (Ed. Craft, Jeffrey and Leibling, 2001), the authors discuss the differences between teaching creatively and creative teaching. Teaching creatively is defined as using imaginative approaches that are exciting for children, however, it does not necessarily develop creative thinking. Creative teaching is different and involves the teacher taking risks, learning from the children and exploring their own creative talents (Ed. Craft, Jeffrey and Leibling, 2001). These subtle differences are clearly defined and it is easy to see how schools can think that they are using creative teaching strategies, when in fact they are teaching creatively. Notably, Cropley (2001) discusses how creativity is a way of thinking. He comments on the difference in divergent and convergent thinking, where convergent thinking is the drive towards the best answer to a given question (Cropley, 2001) and divergent thinking ‘involves processes like shifting perspective, transforming, or producing multiple answers from the available information, and thus does not produce novelty.’ (Cropley, 2001:32). Again, this supports the notion that creative teaching is about developing creative thinking, not just planning exciting and stimulating learning.

Cropley (2001) further discusses the importance of problem solving and how this is a form of creativity. He describes how problem solving is a creative process and can be broken into four main stages which require divergent thinking (as mentioned above) and evaluation of the conclusions made (Cropley, 2001). Problem solving is a key pedagogical approach used, notably in the teaching of Mathematics, and is a strategy that can be used in other areas of
teaching to promote creativity. This understanding is also supported by the theory of children’s cognitive development by Piaget, by which Piaget explores factors that stimulate intellectual growth, including an equilibrium of finding a balance between things already known and new understanding (Barrouillet, 2015). The support of cross-curricular learning with little subject barriers was also supported through a 1967 Government report named *Children and their Primary Schools* (Plowden, 1967), or more commonly known as ‘The Plowden Report’. This report was commissioned to consider all aspects of primary school education and the transition to secondary school. The report was heavily influenced by Piaget’s theories on learning, which are reflected in the report. Plowden (1967) supports and suggests that learning through experimenting and exploring, with little subject barriers and discrete subject teaching, will raise standards in our education system (Plowden, 1967).

In *Creative Children: Imaginative Teaching*, Beetlestone (1998) discusses that ‘Piaget’s emphasis on action and self-directed problem solving supports a creative approach and creative activities which involve practical and first-hand experiences.’ (Beetlestone, 1998:13). Creative teaching is not simply a cross-curricular approach involving exciting learning; it also incorporates the pedagogical approach of deeper thinking and learning, allowing children to reflect upon previous experiences to solve new problems.

In the 1920s, the British philosopher, Bertrand Russell, suggested that ‘We are faced with the paradoxical fact that education has become one of the chief obstacles to intelligence and freedom of thought’ (Ed. Craft, Jeffrey and Leibling, 2001). This was continually suggested in subsequent years, and in the 1990s members of the educational establishment felt this approach continued to be apparent in the current education system, and approached the Government to form the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE). They set out to establish what was preventing creativity from blossoming in the education system and actions the Government could pursue to combat this. They published the report *All our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* in 1999, an independent report that avoided political interference. In this report, the NACCCE, define creativity as ‘imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value’ (NACCCE, 1999: 29). Again, this is another piece of literature defining the difference between creative teaching, which is investigative, risk-taking and open-ended, compared to teaching creatively, with a focus on the stimulus used to engage the children.
One main impact is the achievement and attainment of children. There has been evidence that schools that support creative teaching achieve higher results in national assessments. In a research project entitled *Creative Curriculum Delivery at School Level. Practioners’ Perspectives*, (Căpiţă, 2015). a set of 12 practitioners from different schools were observed and questioned about their teaching and creative curriculum. The results obtained indicate that the higher achieving schools showed a better understanding of creativity within the classroom and showed more risk-taking and thinking strategies in their lessons. However, it also comments that further research might be needed to explore the limitations within an individual teacher, in terms of flexibility, creativity and reflection and the effect on learning that this can have (Căpiţă, 2015). This is also supported in *Is there still a need for gifted education? An examination of current research.* (Reis and Renzulli, 2010). In this article, case studies were undertaken focusing on the gifted and talented children in classrooms across America and the results showed that children who were learning in an enriched curriculum, with a higher focus on problem solving and child-led learning, achieved more than children who weren’t (Reis and Renzulli, 2010).

Current research suggests that children in a creative curriculum can achieve more in their academic potential. One reason attributed to this is the engagement of learning within tasks that children are completing in their classrooms. A creative curriculum and teaching creatively can engage learners in their tasks and as Beetlestone (1998) explains, ‘Children who are interested concentrate; if they see the relevance of the activity they will engage in it until they feel they have mastered it.’ (Beetlestone, 1998:11). As a practitioner myself, this is clear in everyday practice, as I have found that in a classroom where tasks are abstract and provide little relevance, it can be very difficult to fully engage children in their learning.

The learners’ engagement is now beginning to be supported by research in neuroscience, where brain scanning is being developed and, as discussed in *Cross-Curricular Learning 3-14* (Barnes, 2007) ‘Neurology can support many of the principles of cross-curricular learning. A cross-curricular approach which maximizes the use of the widest range of mental and physical faculties is likely to be more effective than one which only uses some’ (Barnes, 2007:97). However, Barnes also discusses that ‘the techniques of brain scanning are still in their infancy and we should therefore be tentative about conclusions of neurology’ (Barnes, 2007:97), showing that even though it is being recognised scientifically, the research is still not completely reliable and needs developing.
Creativity in the curriculum cannot just improve children’s learning, it has also been seen to have benefits on children’s social and emotional development. Beetlestone (1998) discusses that a creative curriculum can let children explore without fear of limitations. She also explains that children being allowed freedom to explore ideas, take risks and problem solve, become more resilient and have a higher self-esteem (Beetlestone, 1998). The importance of the curriculum is also discussed by Reid and Webster-Stratton (2004), where they undertake an evaluation of a curriculum designed to develop children’s social and emotional well being. This report found that in the study of a small group of children diagnosed with oppositional and defiance disorders, a curriculum heavily focused on problem solving, creativity and the development achieved not only results with better social and emotional development, but with improved academic achievement as well (Reid and Webster-Stratton, 2004).

Conversely, there is also some theory and examples of how children learn that has not supported a creative curriculum. For instance, Singapore is used as an example of a country with an outstanding educational system, where their results of international tests are consistently high and children achieve highly. Explaining the Success of the World’s Leading Education Systems: The Case of Singapore (Dimmock, C. and Yong Tan, C., 2016) addresses the Singapore curriculum, and interestingly explains that teachers are allowed very little input into the redesign of the curriculum. In a survey conducted, it also shows that the majority of teaching in Singapore schools is spent in whole-class situations with a dialogue of questions and answers (Dimmock, C. and Yong Tan, C., 2016). This is a very different pedagogical approach to all of the views mentioned previously, and yet the progress and attainment of the children is at the highest level. There are other factors mentioned in the report besides the design of the curriculum that contribute to the children’s success, including the professionalism and respect for the teaching profession, the relationships with parents, the backgrounds of the children and the political involvement within the education system (Dimmock, C. and Yong Tan, C., 2016) which need to be taken into consideration. However, it is important to establish that this is clear evidence that children can succeed academically in a curriculum that is not based around creativity.

Having discussed the meaning of a creative curriculum and the benefits and impact it can have on children’s learning, I then began to investigate the potential barriers to teaching with this approach.

The National Curriculum in England: Primary Curriculum (Department for Education, 2013) is a set of requirements across all subjects for schools in England to follow and use to design their
own school curriculum. This curriculum was designed and implemented in September 2014 and is split into discrete subjects, with both skills and knowledge requirements for each subject. With these requirements, it naturally puts up a barrier to creative and cross-curricular teaching.

The debate of a skill-based cross-curricular curriculum versus a discrete subject knowledge curriculum has been on-going, and was addressed in an independent review published in 2009 by Sir Jim Rose entitled The Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum. Within this, Rose discusses that rather than having discrete subjects of learning, the curriculum can be split into six areas. This approach is more aligned to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), where children learn and are assessed against seven different areas that include Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive and Design. Rose’s (2009) model shown below draws similarities to the EYFS curriculum.

(Rose, 2009:46)

As you can see, with this recommended model, it would be much easier for teachers to design a creative curriculum that is heavily focused on problem solving and investigating and as Rose (2009) comments ‘Areas of learning provide powerful opportunities for children to use and apply
their knowledge and skills across subjects. This builds on their enthusiasm for learning from first-hand investigations and researching knowledge from a range of sources to deepen their understanding’ (Rose, 2009:29.) However, in the International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education, Hayes discusses that:

‘As other contributors to this edition have noted, the Independent review of the primary curriculum (Rose 2009) under the chairmanship of Sir Jim Rose focuses solely on the curriculum and not on primary education as a whole; most notably, it does not take account of issues relating to assessment, which is deemed by most commentators as a regrettable omission. Indeed, it can fairly be stated that a curriculum without the assessment criteria contradicts all the evidence (and not a little rhetoric) that has been issued from government in recent years about their inter-connectedness.’ (Hayes, 2010:382).

Even though Rose does not condemn discrete subject learning and proposes the solution as a blend of cross-curricular and discrete, giving real examples of how successful this learning can be, evidence that he has collected is not complete and does not give a true picture of school life, as assessment is an intrinsic part of teaching and learning.

Assessment, as mentioned, is intrinsic to any pedagogical approach and can take many forms including formative (in the moment of the lesson and through marking) and summative (tests and exams). The pressures on schools to perform and achieve results in Reading, Writing, SPaG (spelling, punctuation and grammar) and Mathematics is very high, as the data collected from these assessments is used and analysed as a main basis of judgment or measure about a school by external agencies, such as Ofsted.

The interim framework (Standards and Testing Agency, 2016) is a checklist of skills that children MUST include in order to meet the expected standard. The list, which has some differing statements from the National Curriculum, can become excessive and teachers have to prove to moderators that the children have shown all skills on the list confidently. This, in itself, is a huge pressure upon teachers and it can be much easier and safer for teachers to plan discrete lessons that just show the skill out of context and not within a creative curriculum. At Primary School A, this has been something that has been addressed and developed in our English teaching, through staff meetings and training days.

This approach is also reflected in literature. Through qualitative data collection in questionnaires throughout schools in Northumberland, analysing the relationships between teaching thinking
and performance in national testing, Jones (2010) suggests that ‘The data analysis had suggested, for example, that the teaching of thinking skills was felt by some to raise standards, but also that ‘performance pressures’ left little time for the teaching of thinking skills’ (Jones, 2010:69). This article is reflecting upon testing before the current curriculum, however, it still applies that pressures from national testing can inhibit teachers’ creative teaching.

National testing and the expectations that arise from this can, as mentioned, put lots of pressure upon teachers. To plan lessons that are creative and challenge children’s thinking, as well as all of the other expected roles a teacher is expected to complete including marking, assessing and undertaking any leadership roles can put a strain on a teacher’s work-life balance. Nationally, there is a current teacher recruitment and retention crisis, where the Government have confirmed that a third of teachers who joined the profession in 2010 have now left (Weale, 2016). It is easy to see why schools will follow and adapt schemes of work for discrete subjects created by professionals, rather than planning creatively themselves, as it lessens their workload. In *Primary Science*, Victoria Pooler (2012) comments that ‘The ‘sitting back and thinking’ part is not something for which many class teachers have time.’ (Pooler, 2012:3) This is an organisational issue with creative teaching. If the learning is to be rigorous and effective, it puts a bigger strain on teachers, as it requires more intense and long term planning with more detailed subject knowledge.

The teacher is an intrinsic component to creativity in the classroom; they are the defining factor in the creativity being driven and successful, or creativity being non-existent. ‘Many teachers undoubtedly feel uncomfortable about the idea of teaching creatively, for, like leadership, they argue it cannot be learnt.’ (Ed. Craft, Jeffrey and Leibling, 2001:38) As mentioned previously, teaching within a creative curriculum involves risk taking, adaptability and an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the children in one’s classroom. For some teachers, they will find this more comfortable and natural to do than others, as we are all individual. *Creativity in Education* also discusses that:

‘It would help the cause of ‘creativity teaching’ if we conceptualize it as a particular ‘state of mind’ rather than as an ‘imaginative activity’. Teachers could then create an environment in which creativity can thrive, instead of worrying about whether they are being ‘imaginative’ enough to pass on their talents to their pupils.’ (Ed. Craft, Jeffrey and Leibling, 2001:38-39)
Resources, especially in the Arts subjects, are key to offering children an enriched curriculum, however, quality resources will cost schools money. Controlling and managing school budgets is becoming increasingly difficult due to a range of factors including Government funding and employer contribution to pensions, and, as discussed in *Teaching primary school music: coping with changing work conditions*, (Andrew de Vries, 2016), it is suggested that ‘School budget restraints also have an impact on school administrators’ decisions about music programmes, with negative consequences in primary school music programmes in terms of staffing cuts and resourcing cuts’ (Andrew de Vries, 2016:2). This article is referring to the Australian and American education systems, where traditionally specialists have taught Music, however, there are parallels that can be drawn, as teaching the Arts does require funding for resources.

As well as resources, training of the Arts teaching can also be a barrier to teachers and this can be seen within relevant literature. Russell-Bowie (2009) suggests that teacher confidence levels are low in delivering Music as they were not adequately trained, with much more emphasis placed upon the teaching of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, as these are the subject areas that are assessed (Russell-Bowie, 2009). This was something that was considered in the group discussion, as some teachers commented on their lack of training, both at initial teacher training and throughout their career on teaching the Arts subjects. Russell-Bowie also comments that:

‘This attitude, and resulting decrease in funding for effective Arts education, is seen particularly in many English-speaking countries. The situation in many European countries appears to be somewhat different, given their history of valuing music education and viewing it as a significant part of a child’s schooling’ (Russell-Bowie, 2009:24).

Again, this finding highlights the lack of importance given to Arts training, funding and resourcing, which in turn contributes to lack of confidence and barriers to teaching the Arts within a primary school curriculum.

The lack of confidence in the Arts areas can cause teachers to ‘play it safe’ and not take risks to develop thinking and creativity. In *Real-life Maths and Science*, Tanya Shields comments that ‘In many primary classrooms, where teachers may not be subject specialists, the confidence and willingness to take this risk is not always forthcoming.’ (Shields, 2012:25). Although this research is studying the concept of teaching Maths and Science collaboratively, it is relevant within this concept. If teachers are not confident in planning and delivering lessons in the Arts, they are less likely to take risks and teach creatively.
Throughout this section, I have analysed the barriers to planning and delivering a creative curriculum in relation to relevant literature. There are many external pressures that I cannot change, only help and uncover strategies to help overcome, however, I can develop the confidence and expertise of the teachers in this project through tailored development sessions. The key concept coming from the data collection in the book scrutiny, baseline questionnaire and group discussion is the lack of understanding and knowledge when planning in depth and progression within the Arts in a creative curriculum. This focus allowed me to further research and discover ways in which to develop the staff at Primary School A. The Arts subjects (Music, Art and Design and Technology) comprises a broad range of subjects, so in order to have a clear impact on development, I decided to focus on one subject within the Arts and then further development would look at how to apply these learned skills across the other Arts subjects.

As I have mentioned, schools in England follow the National Curriculum of England: Primary Curriculum (Department for Education, 2013) and in Music, as with all subjects, it is split into requirements for Key Stage One and Key Stage Two. The whole curriculum for Music is set out on one page and is very brief, outlining four strands of Music teaching; listening and appraising, theory, performing and composing. Music specialists have criticised the current curriculum as being too theory and knowledge-based, and argue there should be a bigger emphasis on exposing children to different genres of Music and giving them opportunities to play and experiment with different instruments.

Music education specialist, Paul Harris, puts forward his theory of teaching Music through a holistic approach. In *Teaching Beginners: A new approach for instrumental and singing teachers* he comments that ‘the two fundamental principles of Simultaneous Learning are that everything connects and that we should always be teaching through the ingredients. The result of this kind of teaching is that pupils really understand what they are doing and are then able to apply their understanding.’ (Harris, 2008:27). Harris develops this theory in this work and draws elements from all areas of music (listening, theory, performing and composing) when teaching a beginner to play an instrument (Harris, 2008). Even though this book is primarily focused upon teaching an instrument or singing, it is still relevant for non-specialists, as at the end of Key Stage Two, children are expected to read and play basic rhythmic and melodic notation on an instrument. This approach is also supported by McPhail, where he discusses the argument for and against changes in the Music curriculum to base it more around today’s interests and genres, rather than a theoretical and analytical based curriculum. McPhail (2016) notes that ‘it is
clear both informal and formal knowledge and pedagogy must play their part in music education’ (McPhail, 2016:44). McPhail, like Harris, supports holistic-based teaching within Music.

Curriculum Music teaching can also be delivered by specialists in termly projects. Lots of schools have adopted this approach with a ‘wider opportunities’ scheme, supported by the Music Education Authorities. There is a large-scale project in Birmingham, where Primary School A is situated, which involves specialist peripatetic teachers teaching a whole class how to play an instrument (this could be brass, woodwind or strings). There is also El Sistema, an education project based in Venezuela, where children all learn an instrument together as a group and form an orchestra. These projects have been proven to have huge success in Music teaching as it focuses on removing economic barriers for children who would like to experience an instrumental study within an orchestra (Lesniak, 2013). This type of project would take pressure away from non-specialist music teachers in a primary school, however, there is an argument that by employing specialists in that way, the teachers are becoming de-skilled. There is also an increasingly important factor, as mentioned previously, of budgets within schools. As they are becoming increasingly tighter, schools become more reliant on existing staff within schools to provide opportunities for children in areas such as Music, or parents have to pay for lessons from specialist, peripatetic music teachers. Projects such as El Sistema, even though successful, would not fit in with the ethos at Primary School A in a creative curriculum, as it would be taught discretely and not fit into the relevant topics or learning that is happening in the classroom.

The El Sistema model could be perceived as having a very narrow focus within music teaching, as there is such a diverse range and repertoire of music to be seen, and in Primary Music: Later Years, Glover and Young (1999) comment that ‘in approaching planning for music in the later primary years, some thought needs to be given to the implications of this diversity in relation to the whole school approach to music’ (Glover and Young, 1999:5). This belief is also supported by Elisabeth Manouchehri (2017), a Canadian Music educator, who discusses that Music can be used as a tool for cross-curricular teaching and can embed other skills within the curriculum (Manouchehri, 2017). This was an issue that participants at Primary School A found during the discussion as they commented that they often found it difficult to include Music within the creative curriculum. Manoucheheri (2017) lists ways in which Music can be combined with other subjects to create a more ‘authentic and engaging learning experience’ (Manouchehri, 2017:25) which further embeds the creative curriculum approach. Manoucheheri (2017) also comments on the neural benefits of this approach to teaching music, however, she does note that studies
of the brain have not directly proven this (Manouchehri, 2017). Although this article supports the teaching of cross-curricular music, it is written in relation to a Canadian educational system, with different expectations within the curriculum. However, it does provide clear examples of how to teach Music within a creative curriculum.
Data Collection and Analysis

From my understanding of the relevant literature, I believe that Primary School A is a creative school. At our setting there is no timetable and teachers are given the freedom to teach subjects when they choose to. The planning and inspiration for this is driven through a key question that children will be exploring and investigating over a week, two weeks or more. Everything that we teach is embedded into that question and the focus of the question could be any subject, for example, a Geography driven question could be ‘Etna or Vesuvius: Where would you live?’ and a Science question could be ‘What would happen if all of the lights went out?’ The key questions are generated by using the National Curriculum in England (Department for Education, 2013) and by Primary School A’s assessment policies. Through this, it is evident that, as a school, we are teaching creatively, inspiring and engaging children and that we are also using creative teaching, as our curriculum approach is investigative and based around problem solving. This finding encouraged me to further investigate how well we were delivering creative teaching and if it is consistent across all subjects.

As mentioned in the methodology, the baseline questionnaire would include the open question ‘What does teaching in a creative curriculum involve?’ Most participants included answers such as cross-curricular teaching, stimulating and engaging learning and learning based around a key concept. As the theory suggests, the confusion has come between teaching creatively and creative teaching. None of the participants commented upon developing creative thinking, risk taking or problem solving, which is a key approach to our school curriculum. This was something I wanted to explore further within the group discussion to gain a better understanding, as participants may lack clarity in their individual understanding.

In the group discussion, I posed the question to the participants again of what is involved within a creative curriculum and, at the start; the answers were the same as in the questionnaire (notes taken can be seen in Appendix 1.3). To promote further discussion, I asked the participants to think about their short-term lesson planning, analysing the pedagogical approaches. From this, the participants started to talk further about solving problems, investigation and child-led learning. I asked them to discuss what they thought the opposite approach to this would be and they spoke about the teacher dictating the learning, imparting knowledge and passive learning. The group then discussed what skills the children would gain from those different pedagogical approaches and they commented about how their approach promotes and develops learning skills, whereas, the second method is just giving information to
the children. The results from this showed me that the participants had a firm understanding of pedagogical approaches and ways in which to teach creatively; however, as the theory suggests, they were not aligning this understanding with creative teaching, something that I identified would need to address in the professional development session.

The qualitative answers in both the questionnaire and the group discussion were shown in the results of the quantitative analysis. I asked the participants to scale themselves in confidence from 1-5 (five being extremely confident) in their understanding of creative teaching and learning. Out of fourteen participants, two participants (14%) rated themselves as a 2 on the scale, eleven participants (79%) rated themselves as a 3 and one participant (7%) rated themselves as a 4. This reflects that most participants considered themselves to have a good understanding of creative teaching and learning, albeit they weren’t completely secure in their knowledge.

In the questionnaire, I also asked the participants what are the benefits of a creative curriculum?

Answers to this questions included responses such as:

- Develops problem solving skills
- Engaged and enthusiastic learners
- Real-life situations in learning
- Allows children to reflect on their learning

The data mentioned above are a very small sample taken from Primary School A and as part of the project, this is another important issue I wanted to address and develop, as in order to fully engage and support a creative curriculum, you need to have a full understanding of why you are doing it.

Comparing and aligning theory with my own teaching experiences, I can see the benefits in teaching within a creative curriculum. Being involved and teaching children in a classroom every day, I always reflect upon the teaching and learning during and after the lessons. The key aspect that indicates the effectiveness of my lesson is the involvement and engagement of the children with their learning and the progress that they are making. I have measured this previously with the Leuven scale. This is a simple scale measured from one to five, articulating the level of involvement of a child through descriptions (an example of the Leuven Scale can be
seen in Appendix 1.4). When teaching myself, and through observing other lessons in different settings, it is always clear that children are more engaged and enthused about their learning when it is part of a wider context within a creative curriculum, and this in turn contributes to accelerated progress and attainment amongst all groups of children.

Another question included in the baseline questionnaire given to participants was:

What barriers (if any) do you encounter when planning and teaching within a creative curriculum?

All fourteen of the participants (100%) mentioned the National Curriculum, or the requirements of the National Curriculum, as a barrier to planning and teaching within a creative curriculum. I wanted to discuss this further in the group discussion and asked the group to discuss what elements of the National Curriculum posed barriers to their creative teaching. The group of participants have a range of experiences from a newly qualified teacher (NQT) who is in their first year of teaching to a teacher with fifteen years of experience. The participants with knowledge and experience of previous versions of the National Curriculum explained how they felt that this curriculum had a heavy focus on knowledge and that it could preclude/supersede the teaching of skills. They voiced how in previous versions of the National Curriculum, they felt they had more freedom to teach to the needs and interests of the children.

This approach was also reflected in the book scrutiny I conducted. In all of the books I studied, I noticed and commented that most of the lessons evidenced within the books were about the specific knowledge in the subject, rather than the skills that were being developed, so I identified this issue as something that I would need to develop throughout the project.

Other barriers to creative teaching that appeared on the questionnaire were the interim framework for teacher end of key stage assessments (Standards and Testing Agency, 2016) and workload or work-life balance, with all fourteen participants (100%) identifying end of key stage assessments and ten out of fourteen participants (71%) labelling work-life balance. This aligns with findings from literature and the NUT, and I have personally found this a barrier to creative planning, as there is such a volume of work to undertake as a teacher, that sometimes you can struggle to find the time to plan and think as creatively as you might.
The individual’s creativity also became apparent in the data collection, as well as in literature. In the baseline questionnaire, seven out of the fourteen participants (50%) noted their own creativity as a barrier to creative teaching. I wanted to explore this further within the group discussion and asked the group to create qualities and characteristics of a creative teacher (see Appendix 1.5). As you can see, the main elements that came out as a creative teacher were heavily focused on being able and confident at the Arts subjects (Art, D.T. and Music), whilst there was little emphasis on facilitating thinking and enabling children to be creative in their thought processes. This was something I wanted to address in the professional development session.

In the group discussion, as mentioned above, the participants labelled a creative teacher as being confident within the Arts subjects. This concept also came through in the baseline questionnaire. In the questionnaire, twelve out of the fourteen participants (86%) noted their subject knowledge of the Arts subjects as a barrier to their creative teaching. In the group discussion, I asked the participants to further discuss this and, as seen in Appendix 1.6, they listed their training, understanding, confidence and resources as main reasons why they found teaching the Arts as a barrier. These barriers are clear in literature and are what I have found previously at Primary School A, whilst undertaking a research project about singing in schools.

In the book scrutiny, it was also apparent to me that the Arts were the subjects being taught in an abstract approach and not being taught in depth. The evidence in books was sporadic and in most cases there was no clear evidence of the learning having a context and being taught in depth. Because of this, I included a quantitative data question in the baseline questionnaire where I asked the participants to rate themselves in confidence of planning and teaching the Arts subjects (Art, Music and Design and Technology) from 1 – 5 (5 being extremely confident) and then to rate themselves in confidence from 1 – 5 in the Humanities subjects (History, Geography and Religious Education so that I could compare confidence levels and see if it matched what was happening in the book scrutiny. The results showed the following:
The results showed that participants were generally more confident at teaching the Humanities subjects than Arts subjects, aligning with the findings in the book scrutiny. Ten participants (71%) rated themselves as 4, compared to five participants (36%) rating themselves as 4 when teaching the Arts subjects. This was also reflected in the lowest confidence level, as this was 3 for Humanities subjects and 2 for Arts subjects.

After analysing these findings, I wanted to explore this further within the group discussion. The participants commented that they sometimes found it difficult to and had a lack of understanding in planning a series of Art or Music lessons and putting it into a context for children to understand. Again, this was clearly reflected within the literature, and, on reflection, was a key concept in the project that the participants and I agreed was a development need. The Arts subjects (Music, Art and Design and Technology) comprises a broad range of subjects, so in order to have a clear impact on development, I decided to focus on one subject within the Arts and then further development would look at how to apply these learned skills across the other Arts subjects. I chose Music as the subject to focus on as this is my specialism, and I felt I could offer the most development and guidance to teachers in this area. In order for me to develop professional development approaches, I needed to investigate the theory of planning and delivering Music, and how this relates to every day practice, taking into account the barriers mentioned previously (resources, subject knowledge and confidence).

From the group discussion, it was clear that participants were not confident in the expectations of teaching Music within their year group. Because of this, I wanted to create a document that would act as guide for teachers to use in their planning. Using the National Curriculum, I broke down the end of key stage requirements into year group expectations to make a continual

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<tr>
<td>Rate yourself in confidence from 1 - 5 (5 being extremely confident) in your ability to plan and teach the Arts lessons (Art, Music and Design and Technology) within a creative curriculum.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
<td>7 (50%)</td>
<td>5 (36%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate yourself in confidence from 1 - 5 (5 being extremely confident) in your ability to plan and teach the Humanities lessons (History, Geography and Religious Education) within a creative curriculum.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (14%)</td>
<td>10 (71%)</td>
<td>2 (14%)</td>
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</table>
learning and assessment journey for teachers. They would be able to use and follow this as a guide for teaching Music and it would ensure it was being taught progressively throughout the school (Music Learning Journey can be seen in the attached document). I would share this with the participants in the development session and engage the participants in reflecting upon their confidence levels in teaching the requirements for their year group.

From understanding all of the relevant literature, using the data I had collected and taking the circumstances of Primary School A into consideration, I designed and created a continued professional development session (two hours in length) that was agreed with the Head Teacher to be delivered to the participants at an agreed time.

The key points I wanted to address in the session were:

- What does creative teaching look like at Primary School A?
- What are the expectations for your year group in Music?
- How do you plan with depth and progression in Music within a creative curriculum?
- How can you apply this sequence to the other Arts subjects?

The first question would be addressed through a sorting activity of statements. I would engage participants to work in groups and sort statements under three headings; creative teaching, teaching creatively and both. After discussing the groups' answers and comparing this to the theory behind it, I would then ask the groups to order their statements into a 'diamond nine'. A diamond nine is a way of representing statements in an order of importance, with the statement at the top being the most important and the statement at the bottom being the least important, creating the shape of a diamond (as seen below). I would ask the participants to order their statements in order of importance to supporting a child’s learning, as seen below in the diagram:
From this, I would then discuss our current situation at Primary School A, and how as teachers we felt that there were barriers to teaching the Arts subjects in a creative curriculum, this also being clear in the evidence found in pupils’ books. I would show the participants the National Curriculum and explain how the progressive learning journey for Music (see document: Music progressive learning journey) has broken these statements down further into expectations for each year group.

After addressing the expectations of Music teaching I would then pose the question of what does Music teaching look like within a creative curriculum, gaining ideas from the groups and discussing the relevant literature I have found. I would then model a week’s planning of Music lessons, showing how to incorporate a holistic approach and incorporate within the key questions and curriculum in that week (see presentation slides attached separately). After the modelling process, I would then ask participants to work in year groups, and choosing a key question within the next few weeks, to plan a series of Music lessons that would be taught that week using the planning document issued (see Appendix 1.7). I would then act as a facilitator, supporting different year groups and offering support and guidance where needed. These lessons would be the evidence I would look for when completing a final book scrutiny at the end of the project. I would allow quite a lot of time for this part of the session, as I felt that the discussions within groups would be important and it would give me enough time to work with all year groups.

After this planning time, I would then bring the participants back together to share and discuss ideas, focusing on what skills they had developed, elements they may have found challenging and how the lessons fitted into their wider curriculum and creative teaching. To conclude the session, I would then ask the participants to discuss how this model of planning could be transferred and applied to the other Arts subjects.
Following on from the professional development session, I would then conduct a final book scrutiny, ask the participants to complete a second questionnaire and analyse the school data to measure the impact of the training and the project.

**Evaluation**

My aim for this project was to develop depth and progression in the Arts within a creative curriculum. Being a creative school is a vision that we share proudly, noting the benefits and impact it can have on children’s learning. However, it had become apparent to me that with rising pressures from national testing, a knowledge-based curriculum and some lack of teacher confidence, there were barriers arising to creating a learning environment that encouraged creative thinking. In my role as Key Stage One curriculum lead, I wanted to further my understanding of the development need within Primary School A and facilitate a development session to impact upon the quality of teaching and learning in a creative curriculum.

Using an action research model with a purposive sample of staff (teachers) at Primary School A, allowed me to tailor the professional development session to the needs of the participants. The action research model also allowed the group to continually reflect and act upon where we are as a school and what needed to be addressed.

After the development session, I reflected upon its success and I was pleased with the discussions that developed and the furthering of understanding of creative teaching. The planning and ideas produced after showing the modelled example were creative and showed depth and progression of skills, including creative thinking, whilst maintaining the theme in the creative curriculum. On reflection, I feel that the session would have been better received as two shorter sessions, one with a focus on creative teaching and the second solely on developing planning and teaching of the Arts within the creative curriculum.

In order to measure the impact of the project, I wanted to compare both quantitative and qualitative data from the beginning of the project. One way in which I did this was through
completing a second book scrutiny. The first book scrutiny showed that the learning in the Arts subjects was sometimes sporadic, did not always relate to the rest of the curriculum surrounding it and did not show depth or progression of skills. When I completed a second book scrutiny, there was a drastic improvement to the quality of work within Music teaching. The books mirrored the planning and ideas that were produced in the development session and showed depth and progression of skills. In some books there was also evidence of more skills-based learning rather than knowledge. This is an area that I will need to further develop, so that there is consistency across all subjects.

Another set of data I decided to analyse were the results from the questionnaire. I gave the participants another questionnaire to answer and used it to compare to the baseline to measure the impact. In the quantitative data collected, they showed the following:

**Rate yourself in confidence from 1 -5 (5 being extremely confident) in your understanding of creative teaching and learning.**

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<th>Scaled score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of participants (% of participants) in baseline questionnaire</strong></td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (14%)</td>
<td>11 (79%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of participants (% of participants) in final questionnaire</strong></td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (21%)</td>
<td>10 (72%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
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It is clear from this that there has been an increased confidence level. At the end of the project, none of the participants rated themselves below a 3, whereas in the baseline questionnaire two participants rated themselves as a 2. The majority of participants had also shifted from 3 in the baseline questionnaire to 4 in the final questionnaire, again indicating a general trend of increased confidence. There was also one participant who rated themselves as a 5 in the final questionnaire, whilst no participants rated themselves that highly in the baseline questionnaire.

This finding was also reflected in the qualitative data collected from the question ‘What does teaching in a creative curriculum involve?’ In the baseline results, it showed answers such as cross-curricular teaching, stimulating and engaging learning and learning based around a key concept. In the final questionnaire, those concepts were still mentioned, however, there were
also increased mention of problem solving, developing creative thinking and investigating. This showed a clear impact of the project; the participants now had a much better understanding of creative teaching, compared to teaching creatively. However, not all participants wrote these concepts down and this is something I will have to continue to instil to develop further.

Another quantitative data measure I analysed from the baseline questionnaire were the confidence levels in planning and teaching the Arts subjects compared to teaching the humanities subjects. I asked these questions again and compared the confidence levels in teaching the Arts subjects at the beginning of the project to the end.

Rate yourself in confidence from 1 - 5 (5 being extremely confident) in your ability to plan and teach the Arts lessons (Art, Music and Design and Technology) within a creative curriculum.

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<tr>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants (% of participants) in baseline questionnaire</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
<td>7 (50%)</td>
<td>5 (36%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants (% of participants) in final questionnaire</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (28%)</td>
<td>8 (62%)</td>
<td>2 (14%)</td>
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</table>

In this question, there is a general shift upwards in confidence with a 26% increase (three participants) in participants who rated themselves as 4 from the baseline questionnaire to the final questionnaire. There was also an increase of 7% (one participant) of participants who rated themselves as 5 compared to the baseline questionnaire. The lowest confidence level had also increased from 2 to 3. On reflection, to show more specific impact, I could have broken the question down into individual subjects so that I could look more specifically at the impact upon Music teaching.

The final form of data I wanted to analyse to measure impact was the school’s assessment data. At the end of every academic term, teachers assess the children against assessment criteria and measure their progress in that term. In my role as Key Stage One Curriculum Lead, I summarise the data and analyse it to study the progress made across all subjects. As my
focus was the teaching of the Arts subjects, I wanted to analyse the impact the project has had on the progress in the three areas of Art, Music and Design and Technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less than Expected progress</th>
<th>Expected progress</th>
<th>Better than Expected progress</th>
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### Average Point Score (APS) Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Design and Technology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before project</td>
<td>After project</td>
<td>Before project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class A</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class B</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>4.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class C</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>5.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class D</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class E</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>6.79</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class F</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>4.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The key shown above shows that the data highlighted in green is better than the expected progress for that point in the academic year, the data highlighted in red is less than expected progress for that point during the academic year and the data not highlighted is expected progress for that point during the academic year. When data was analysed before the project, the expected APS progress was five and at the end of the project the expected APS progress was six.

Across all three subjects, the number of classes making better than expected progress had increased after the project and the number of classes making less than expected progress had decreased. Music was seen to have the most impact, with all classes making better than expected progress after the project, compared to two classes before the project. This reflects in the book scrutiny and the standard of work across all classes after the development session.
The most dramatic improvement in progress was seen in Class F, where the progress measure moved from 0.14 below expected progress to 0.82 above expected progress.

In Art, two more classes were making better than expected progress at the end of the project compared to previously. In Class B, children were still not making expected progress after the project, however, the data was marginally closer to being in-line with expectations. This is a development point and as mentioned in the analysis of the book scrutiny, only some classes were beginning to apply the creative strategies shown across all of the Arts subjects.

In Design and Technology, five classes were making better than expected progress at the end of the project compared to two at the start of the project, with the most change seen in Class C and Class F. However, Class E has moved from making expected progress at the beginning of the project to making less than expected progress at the end of the project. Investigating this further, I found that this was due to the teaching in Class E being focused on Music and Art within the project, with Design and Technology becoming a clear focus during the next part of the academic year.

It is clear from all of the data collected and analysed, with comparisons made before and after the project that the development session had a clear impact upon the teaching and learning within Primary School A. The participants’ understanding of the differences between creative teaching and teaching creatively had been a key issue that has been developed, as well as an understanding of how to promote creativity within the curriculum and the misconceptions surrounding this. Alongside this improvement, there has been a clear impact upon the quality of teaching and learning within the Arts subjects and participants are better equipped to combat some of the barriers they have found to teaching in this way. Some of the external pressures, for example, national testing and the interim framework cannot be changed or ignored, however, I have focused on the internal barriers within Primary School A, including subject knowledge and confidence levels in order to raise standards.

Through using an action research model, I have been able to involve participants throughout and continually reflect within a cycle. This has benefitted and directed the project towards the developmental need within Primary School A and has allowed me, as the project lead, to create the biggest impact that I could. Collecting both quantitative and qualitative data through the baseline questionnaire allowed me to structure the group discussion and collect more in-depth qualitative data. This in turn helped me to gain a further understanding of the participants’ needs.
and reflect on the next steps, something I had identified to develop in my role as Key Stage One Curriculum Lead.

Throughout this project, I wanted to develop a better understanding of the benefits and aims of a creative curriculum and through the analysis of literature, including the advancement of brain scanning, scientific proof is being seen of the development of the brain and the deepened thinking involved in a problem solving environment. In countries such as Singapore, where teaching and learning is regarded to be of a very high standard, a creative curriculum approach is not used, however, as discussed previously, the circumstances of the children and the schools are very different to those in England and I believe that cross-curricular and creative learning will have most benefit to the children in our education authority.

In addition, I wanted to develop my leadership experience and expertise within this project and I feel I have achieved that. Through leading and facilitating the group discussion and the development session, I have enhanced in myself the need for collaboration and leading within a school to achieve the best outcomes possible. This is an area that I want to continue to develop through my role as Key Stage One Curriculum Lead and, as mentioned previously, will use the school’s next steps identified from this project to help me to achieve this.

From analysing the final data, it was clear that the project had a positive impact on Music teaching, albeit the impact made across the Arts was not as strong. I now look forward to addressing this in more detail through further development sessions and analysis of staff needs. This will then help me to assure consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across all of the Arts subjects within our creative curriculum.
Reference List


Appendix

Appendix 1.1 Participant information sheet and consent form
Dear Colleague,

I am currently studying a number of academic modules as part of my Master’s in Teaching Learning (MTL). As part of my studies for this programme I am required to undertake some practice-based research in to an aspect of my teaching.

I am therefore writing to you to request your consent to take part in the research I am doing as part of my everyday duties as a teacher at Hill West Primary School. The purpose of this research project is to analyse the quality of teaching and learning in the Arts subjects within a creative curriculum. This research will form part of an investigation which focuses on:

What are the aims and benefits of a creative curriculum?
What barriers are encountered when approaching a creative curriculum?
How can teachers effectively plan with depth and progression in the arts within a creative curriculum?

The research is designed to help to improve an understanding of teaching the Arts within a creative curriculum and as a participant, you would be involved in completing questionnaires, participating in a group discussion and receiving a professional development session to help to improve the quality of teaching and learning you provide to children in the Arts.

This research is being conducted by me as part of my Master’s in Teaching Learning (MTL) programme at Birmingham City University. Participation is voluntary and if you decide to grant permission to participate in it, you have the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. All data gathered as part of this research will be kept confidential and will be held securely in line with data protection guidelines and all results will be reported in an aggregated and anonymised form. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only and will be shared with Birmingham City University academic staff for assessment purposes. This research will also undergo scrutiny by Birmingham City University’s, Faculty of Health, Education and Life Sciences, Faculty Academic Ethics Committee to ensure that appropriate ethical protocols are being observed.

If you would like more information about this research, please contact me using the email address below and I will do my best to answer any questions you may have. If you have any concerns over the conduct of the researcher (Lara Jones) please contact the project supervisor Louie Lambert at Louie.Lambert@bcu.ac.uk.

Otherwise, please sign the tear-off slip below and return the slip to me. You have fourteen days to respond.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Lara Jones
Research Lead/KS1 Curriculum Lead
Lara.Jones2@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Name of Colleague: % % % % % School/Position: % % % % %

Colleague – I agree/do not agree to take part in this research as described in the above.

Signed: % % % % % % % % Date: % % % % % % % %
MTL Professional Practice Enquiry Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions as best and honestly as you can and return to the secure post box in Lara Jones’ (project leader) classroom. All answers will remain anonymous so please **DO NOT** put your name on the questionnaire.

1. What does teaching in a creative curriculum involve?

2. Rate yourself in confidence from 1 - 5 (five being extremely confident) in your understanding of creative teaching and learning.

3. What are the benefits of a creative curriculum?

4. What barriers (if any) do you encounter when planning and teaching within a creative curriculum?

5. Rate yourself in confidence from 1 - 5 (5 being extremely confident) in your ability to plan and teach the arts lessons (Art, Music and Design and Technology) within a creative curriculum.

6. Rate yourself in confidence from 1 - 5 (5 being extremely confident) in your ability to plan and teach the humanities lessons (History, Geography and Religious Education) within a creative curriculum.
Appendix 1.3 Notes taken from group discussion (what is involved in teaching a creative curriculum?)

Appendix 1.4 Example of the Leuven Scale
Appendix 1.5 Notes from the group discussion (qualities and characteristics of a creative teacher)
Appendix 1.6 Notes from the group discussion (barriers to teaching the Arts)
A creative curriculum can let children explore without fear of limitations (Beetlestone, 1998).