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## Creative Teaching for Tomorrow: Fostering a Creative State of Mind Deal

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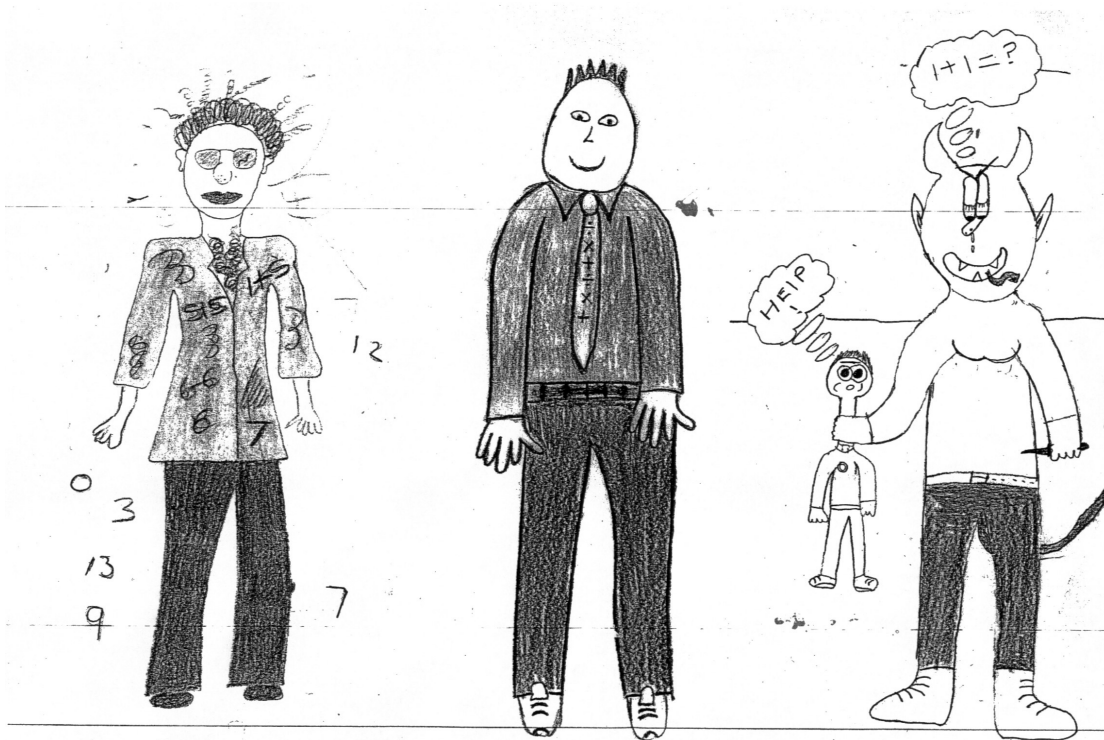
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# Creative Teaching for Tomorrow

## Fostering a Creative State of Mind



Teresa Cremin, Jonathan Barnes, Stephen Scoffham

A research study undertaken for Creative Partnerships (Kent) by  
Canterbury Christ Church University

**hmm**  
**Creative Partnerships**

 **Canterbury  
Christ Church  
University**

November 2006

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

## Context

In recent years there has been a growing interest in creativity in education. The publication of *All Our Futures* (DfEE, 1999) laid the foundations for a more expansive and outward looking ideas about the nature of education. More recent government statements such as *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES 2003) and *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2004) have encouraged schools to be innovative in the construction of a creative curriculum. At the same time, the government has funded a national programme, Creative Partnerships, to help bring the creative talents of practitioners into the classroom. Since its inception in 2003, the Kent branch of Creative Partnerships (CP Kent) has worked at a number of different levels with over 100 schools.

This report describes a research project into creative teachers and creative teaching undertaken between 2004-2005. The research involved a survey of 20 schools which had worked with Creative Partnerships Kent since the start of the programme all of which had received significant input. Detailed studies were undertaken in four of these schools - two primary and two secondary - where the quality of creative teaching in particular classrooms was acknowledged to be outstanding. The research was conducted by a team from Canterbury Christ Church University who are particularly indebted to Esmé Chilton for her ongoing advice, support and encouragement.

At the current time, a great deal of research focuses on procedural and organisational issues. This project, by contrast, sought to recognise the complexities and subtleties of different teaching situations. As the research progressed it became clear the teachers employed a common frameset, a creative state of mind, and sought to foster this in their pupils. The subtitle of the report 'Fostering a Creative State of Mind' is derived from this perception.

## Research aims

The research had two main aims:

- To explore the key features which characterise creative teaching and effective practice in the context of programmes established by CP Kent
- To provide insights that might support Creative Partnerships develop its work with teachers and pupils in the future.

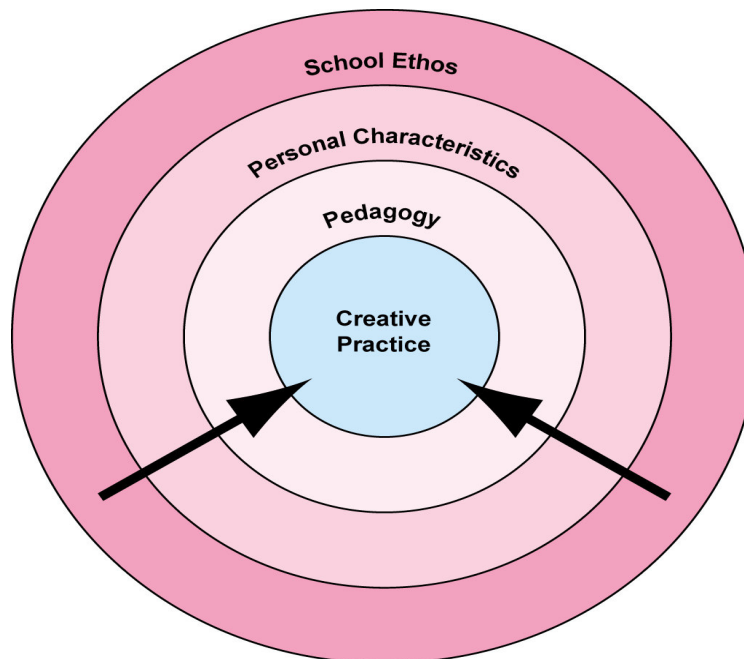
## Main findings

1. The research recognises that learning is situated within a cultural and social context and highlights three inter-related dimensions of creative teaching, namely:

- a) the personal qualities of the teacher
- b) the pedagogy they adopt and

c) the ethos of the class and school.

The interplay between these three dimensions appears to be central in understanding creative practice (Figure 1). It is suggested that this model provides a valid structure which could be used to frame future investigations in this area.



*Figure 1 Model of the Creative Teaching Framework*

**2. Although each teaching and learning situation was unique, a number of characteristics seemed to be conducive to promoting creativity in children and were identified as common to the creative teachers in this study. The core features in each of the dimensions of creative practice include:**

- curiosity and questioning
- connection making
- originality
- autonomy and ownership

**3. The research also identified a number of significant sub features of creative teaching and creative practice:**

- The commitment, enthusiasm and involvement of the teacher and Creative Practitioner
- The way the teacher and Creative Practitioner relate to the children, personalise their teaching and appear to understand pupils' worlds
- The extent to which the teacher and Creative Practitioner are flexible in their approach and use humour and anecdote as a conscious teaching strategy
- The presence of strong relationships with pupils based on mutual trust and respect.
- The depth and extent of the teachers' and Creative Practitioners' subject knowledge

- The use of diverse teaching approaches to provide pupils with multiple entry points and allow them to explore links and connections
- The importance of a safe and secure learning environment in which pupils feel free to ask questions, set themselves challenges and take risks
- A clear learning focus which engages pupils on an emotional as well as an intellectual level
- The involvement of a Creative Practitioner and access to an appropriate range of resources, both human and physical
- A school environment which supports the development of creativity and positive values

Underpinning these sub features and rendering them effective were the active support of the school leadership, the involvement of CP Kent and the impact of the wider school environment, including its ethos.

## **Significance of the findings**

It is recognised that the research involved the detailed study of only a small number of schools and teachers. In future it will be important to establish the validity of the findings in a range of other educational settings across the country. There may also be significant differences between male and female teachers and in the techniques for fostering creativity at primary and secondary school level. What the research *has* succeeded in doing is to identify, albeit tentatively, some of the general features of creative practice and to provide a methodology for further investigation. It highlights the crucial role of the teacher and Creative Practitioners in promoting creativity and draws attention to the importance of whole school change.

The study concludes that the creative teacher is one who is aware of and values the human attributes of creativity in themselves and seeks to promote this in others. The creative teacher has a creative state of mind. If the teachers of tomorrow are to develop a more creative mindset and are to be able to foster such a mindset in young people, then the involvement of Creative Partnerships and Creative Practitioners in the training and the professional development of young people is seen to be critical.

# 1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

## Context

**1** This research project grew out of the growing interest in creativity in education. It explores the characteristics of creative teaching and the impact of CP Kent on effective practice. One of the main aims was to provide research evidence which might help to enhance the long term sustainability of these CP initiatives. The opportunity to contribute to a wider debate about creativity in schools was an additional motivation.

**2** Over the last few decades, the work of Howard Gardner, Robert Sternberg, David Perkins and other colleagues in the United States has heralded a new debate about the nature of human intelligence. Ideas which have emerged from this discussion and which are proving of great interest to teachers include the notion of ‘multiple intelligences’ (Gardner, 1983), ‘emotional intelligence’ (Goleman, 1996), ‘creativity and flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) and ‘thinking styles’ (Sternberg, 1997). At the same time, some of the recent discoveries about the working of the human mind have served to emphasise the urgent need to re-evaluate current educational practice. This debate has now been taken up in Europe by Philip Adey (2002) and others.

**3** Parallel with the developments in the United States, the constant process of review and evaluation that surrounds the UK National Curriculum has also led to a spotlight being turned on creativity. *All Our Futures*, the report by the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (DfES, 1999) heralded a discussion about how to free the curriculum from the mechanistic constraints of attainment targets and level descriptions. When the revised version of the National Curriculum appeared soon afterwards ‘creative thinking skills’ were highlighted as one of a number of generic qualities permeating all school subjects (DfEE/QCA, 1999). More recently, the government strategy for primary schools, *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES, 2003) has called in its executive summary for schools to ‘be creative and innovative in how they teach’ (p4). Creative Partnerships is one of a number of government initiatives which has been developed both nationally and locally in helping to implement this agenda.

**4** Creativity is an area which is surrounded by mystery, partly because it is intangible and partly because it is subject to a variety of interpretations. One of the distinctions which was identified in *All Our Futures*, and which emerged from the work of Anna Craft in the UK (Craft et al., 2001) and David Feldman in the US (Feldman, 1994), concerned the difference between teaching for creativity and creative teaching. As *All Our Futures* puts it:

*‘There is an obvious sense in which children cannot be ‘taught’ creativity in the way they can be taught the three times table.....By teaching creatively we mean teachers using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting, exciting and effective.’ (p89)*

**5** Although there is a short section in *All Our Futures* about the creative teacher (paras 175-178) the report has little to say about how teachers can best promote creative learning in their pupils. A simple review of published literature confirms this as a deficit area where further research is required. However, at the same time, Creative Partnerships, working at a national and regional level, has developed considerable practical and professional experience in promoting arts education and stimulating whole school change by bringing Creative



Practitioners into the classroom. It was in this context that a research bid was submitted to and approved by CP Kent entitled 'Creativity for Tomorrow' for a small-scale study based in East Kent. This report outlines the findings of this study.

## Research partners and sites

**6** The research was conducted between September 2004 and December 2005 by three experienced researchers from Canterbury Christ Church University:

**Professor Teresa Cremin**, Faculty of Education, Trustee of the UK Literacy Association and joint convenor of the British Educational Research Association's Special Interest Group on creativity

**Jonathan Barnes**, Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education, Fellow of the Royal Society for Arts, ex headteacher and education field officer for English Heritage

**Dr Stephen Scoffham**, Principal Lecturer in the Faculty of Education, Publications Officer (Honorary) for the Geographical Association and consultant/author for educational atlases

The research was targeted at the core of around 20, 'level one' schools which had received significant investments from the CP Kent programme since it was set up in 2003. All these schools were located in East Kent. By definition, it was precisely in these schools and classes that creative teaching and learning could be expected to be found

**7** Four of the schools in this core group, two primary two secondary, were selected by the Director of CP Kent for more detailed investigations on the basis of the excellence of their practice. Two teachers in each school were nominated by senior management for a programme of systematic lesson observations and structured interviews. Eight teachers and six Creative Practitioners working with young people aged 5-16 were involved in this research.

## Research questions

**8** The aim of the research was to explore the key features which characterise creative teaching and effective practice in the context of programmes established with CP Kent. In striving to isolate these qualities a number of overlaps were inevitable; namely between creative teaching and creative learning and creative teaching and teaching for creativity. It was recognised from the outset that a small-scale study only involving the detail analysis of eight teachers could never yield nationally significant results. Instead, the research had the more modest aim of beginning to construct a better understanding of creative teachers, with particular reference to the impact of CP Kent.

**9** There were also a number of related strands. These were to:

- render the work of CP Kent more sustainable in the future by generalising the features of creative teaching evident in partnership schools
- make the features of creative teaching more explicit to teachers in other schools and contexts where CP Kent were not already operating
- lay the foundations for more substantial research into this area in the future.

Underpinning these strands were a number of shared understandings and perspectives. The most important of these were:

- i. that arts based projects and their associated practitioners have a generative impact across the curriculum
- ii. that because teachers and schools operate as communities effective change involves the entire institution rather than isolated individuals
- iii. that creative learning needs to be viewed in wider social and cultural contexts
- iv. that creativity, while it may draw on innate ability, can be taught and enhanced
- v. that all learning needs to be set in a values context.

**10** The research sought to recognise the complexities and subtleties of different learning situations. Rather than focussing on procedural and organisational features, it attempted to offer a more profound analysis of what actually happens beneath the surface in successful, creative learning situations. Anna Cutler (2006) in her paper at a recent UNESCO conference has alluded to this challenge declaring that it is in ‘the space between doing and showing that one finds the potential for deep analysis.’ Many others have also recognised the importance of hidden and unconscious motivation when it comes to exploring human behaviour. For example, Claxton and Lucas (2004) argue that a ‘soft focus’ can sometimes be more rewarding than clearly articulated targets, Tuan (1977) explores how we are limited by our ability to articulate deep experiences and Jung (1963) argues powerfully for the importance of exploring our inner being. As he reflects in his autobiography:

*‘My view of the world is like a vision such as one who undertakes, deliberately, with half closed eyes and somewhat closed ears, to see and hear the form and voice of being.’*

These kinds of perspectives can shed a valuable light on research into creative teaching.

# 2

## EXISTING LITERATURE

**11** In this research we take the definition of creativity from *All Our Futures; the report of the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education* (DfEE, 1999) as:

*‘imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value.’*

We also derive our working definition of creative education from this same report where it is defined as:

*‘Forms of education that develop young people’s capacities for original ideas and action.’*

These definitions make it clear that we are talking about what Margaret Boden (1994) has called ‘small c’ creativity; creativity, which involves individuals and groups making connections which are original for them. ‘Capital C’ creativity, that which ‘changes some aspect of culture’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) is very rare, but probably could not happen without a grounding in small ‘c’ creativity.

**12** *All Our Futures* (DfEE, 1999) made multiple recommendations which have resulted in a greater emphasis on creativity and creative thinking in England, exemplified in the national curriculum (DfES/QCA, 1999), the guidance given by the Qualifications and Curriculum Agency (QCA, 2002, 2005), the advice given to schools by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED, 2003, 2004, Inspection Framework 2005) and in government policy towards schools and children (DfES, 2003, DfES, 2004). Creative Partnerships is also a prominent and positive outcome from the wealth of recommendations found in *All Our Futures* regarding promoting partnership between creative and cultural community organisations and schools.

**13** With regard to our central question, ‘What is a creative teacher?’ it is evident that definitions in this area are harder to find. Recent research has tended to focus on teachers’ perceptions of creative teaching rather than specific observations of and reflections upon the craft of teaching itself. Much of this work has been based in primary classrooms. Most writers imply that the creative teacher is the teacher who promotes the creativity of pupils. This study and a previous pilot which we undertook in an institution of Higher Education (Grainger, Barnes and Scoffham, 2004), focuses specifically on the characteristics of creative teachers themselves; the character traits, thinking and pedagogy which mark them out as creative professionals. Inevitably, the divide between creative teacher as a person and the creative teacher as the teacher who promotes creativity in others, is blurred and inevitably, too, creative teachers are not all alike. However, in our pilot study we suggested that creative teachers possessed qualities such as:

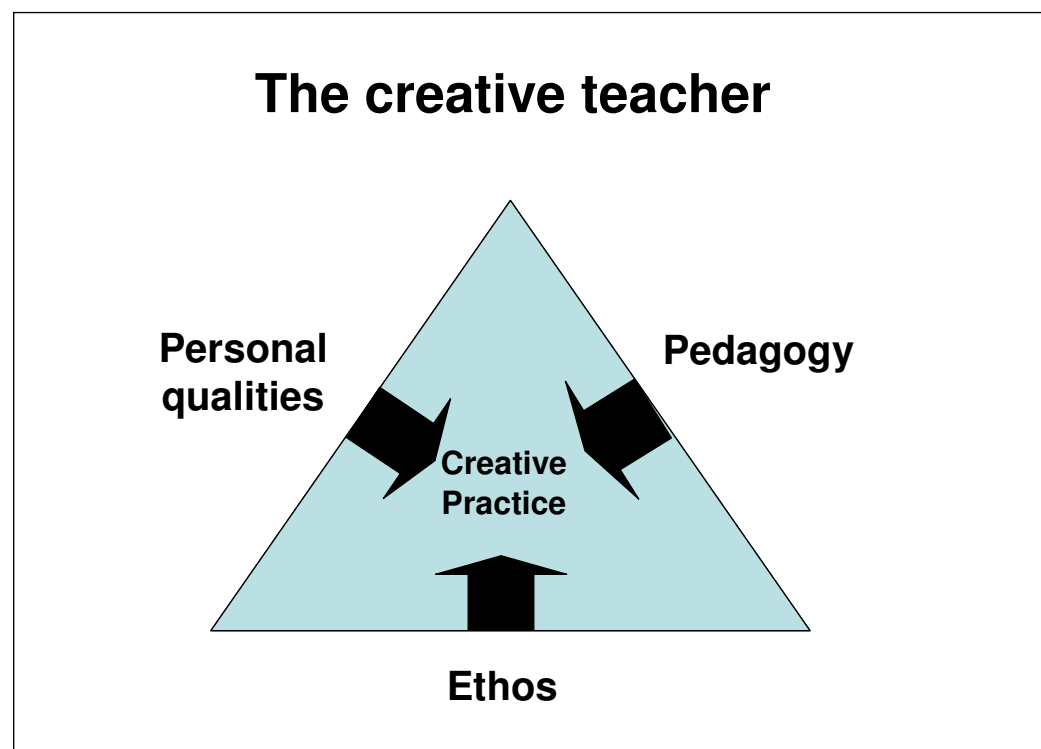
- confidence and conviction
- humour and ability to inspire
- wide subject knowledge
- an awareness that they were creative
- and a clear sense of values.

**14** This resume of personal characteristics may arguably describe a good teacher, not just a creative teacher. However, in the current research the awareness of self as a creative being emerges as a significant factor in defining the creative teacher. The originality and the curiosity of the teachers in the present study mark out their practice as creative as does the suggestion that creative teachers are role models themselves (Sternberg, 1997)

**15** Our previous research (2004) also suggested that there may be distinctive pedagogical attributes which all creative teachers share. These include:

- the ability to make students feel valued
- the ability to switch between different styles and paces
- a willingness to engage pupils on an affective level
- the desire to challenge students to question, engage and reflect
- the intention to support students in making new connections and
- and the decision to place teaching in the wider context of values.

**16** Some writers such as Gardner (1999) and Csikszentmihalyi (1999) confine their examples to creative teachers and practitioners who change a domain through their creativity. Others obtain their illustrative examples from everyday creativity (Fryer, 1996, 1998; Craft, 2000; Craft and Jeffrey, 2003; Claxton and Lucas, 2004). Both these perspectives are useful in building up a profile of features to consider in relation to the creative teachers identified in the CP Kent schools that featured in this research. The literature reviewed revealed that research in this area relates to three interrelated elements of creative teaching, namely the personal qualities of the teacher, their pedagogy and the ethos created in their classrooms. As Figure 2 indicates these are key dimensions of creative practice.



*Figure 2 Dimensions of creative practice*

## Personal characteristics of creative teachers

**17** Historically, research into the personality characteristics of creative individuals, highlights considerable diversity, and it is widely recognised that such features are difficult to elucidate (Fryer, 2000). Torrance (1965) lists a number of characteristics including: having the courage to hold an opinion, curiosity, independence in judgement and thinking, intuition, idealism, risk taking and a capacity to become preoccupied with tasks. Stein (1974) has also collated key personality characteristics noted in a variety of research studies, these again include: curiosity, independence in thinking and judgement and the tendency to be focused, preoccupied and persistent. In addition, Stein suggests other characteristics such as the capacity to be constructively critical, openness to emotions, assertiveness and self sufficiency, a seeking of order, achievement within domains and a tendency to be less formal/conventional.

**18** In relation to research in educational contexts, several writers (Beetlestone, 1998; Jones and Wyse, 2004) overtly support our pilot research finding (Grainger et al., 2004) that enthusiasm and commitment are necessary qualities in a creative teacher. Indeed Craft (2001) recognises an almost 'siege-like' energy in some creative teachers. However, like us she has also observed creative teachers who are more calm and quiet in their delivery. There is more general agreement that the source of teacher self-confidence is a secure knowledge of their subject (QCA, 2003; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Gardner, 1999; Nickerson, 1999). The sense of the self as a creative being is also widely held to be an important aspect of the confidence to be creative (Ofsted, 2003; Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Sternberg, 1997).

**19** Personal commitment to a clear set of values is particularly emphasised by those researching creative teaching and leadership in a business context (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon 2000). In the secondary school context, writers like Richhart (2002) stress that effective and creative teachers look for the larger picture behind the skills and knowledge to be imparted. They frequently display from within themselves a sense of wonder at examples of beauty, meaningfulness, scale, complexity and simplicity in various contexts. In primary schools also 'keeping the picture big' and developing what Craft (2001) calls 'humane creativity' seems a common feature. Several writers, including Gardner (1999) and Csikszentmihalyi (1996) emphasise the combination of both childlike play and exploration with adult-like self awareness. There is something childlike, too, in the common observation that teachers deemed to be creative are curious and ask lots of questions themselves (Richhart, 2002). Both Craft (2000) and Claxton and Lucas (2004) follow the Jungian tradition and stress the way that creative people recognise the importance of intuition and the unconscious. Haringman (2001) also highlights the value of this characteristic. In his autobiography, Jung (1963), a creative thinker, psycho-analyst and teacher, states:

*'...my works are a more or less successful endeavour to incorporate this incandescent matter [the unconscious] into the contemporary picture of the world. The years when I was pursuing my inner images were the most important in my life – in them everything essential was decided....later details are only supplements and clarifications of the material that burst forth from the unconscious... It was the prima materia for a lifetime's work.'* (Jung, 1963:225)

**20** Though the creative individual may be introspective and embrace solitude at times, Csikszentmihalyi (2002) in a classic study of creative people remarks on the frequency with which those same people are simultaneously gregarious. There is some educational evidence (Craft, 2001; Boden, 2001) that creative teachers and other practitioners alike, are comfortable with risk taking in both private and professional lives. They may be asked to demonstrate their own creative engagement and expose the false starts, ambiguity and

uncertainty inherent in creative endeavour. De Bono (1999) argues that creativity involves divergent thinking and the implication is that creative teachers would also be divergent thinkers. Craft's work (ibid) suggests however that some element of convergence is necessary to bring projects to a conclusion.

**21** The research work of Peter Woods and Bob Jeffrey has been influential in this area, particularly in documenting the creative response of primary professionals to the changing face of education and the increased prescription and accountability in recent years (Woods, 1993; Woods, 1995; Woods and Jeffrey, 1996; Woods, 1996; Jeffrey and Woods, 1997). Much of this work highlights the openness of creative teachers to emotions and feelings, their humanist approach and strong moral and political investment in their work. In addition, it has highlighted their independence and ownership of knowledge, their evident sense of passion and their commitment to their work. Such characteristics lead us towards a sense of the creative teacher in action; one whose pedagogy and practice is also creatively oriented.

## Pedagogy

**22** Creative teaching has been characterised as teacher centred, whilst teaching for creativity is seen to be learner centred (Jeffrey and Craft, 2003). There is, however, as we acknowledged earlier, a close interrelationship between the two. The features of the former have been listed by Woods (1990) as innovation, ownership, control and relevance, to which Craft and Jeffrey (2004) add co-participation. In addition, other research suggests further core features of creative pedagogical practice, which may in fact be subsets or strategies of these more encompassing elements.

**23** The term 'high expectations' has become so commonplace in the educational discourse that it often goes unnoticed and may have lost much of its power. Nonetheless high expectations are commonly numbered as amongst the qualities of good teaching. What makes them part of a definition of the creative teacher is more subtle. Firstly, high learner expectations are demonstrated in the intentions of creative teachers to promote thinking, and in particular metacognition, but also in their use of challenge and cognitive conflict in setting up problems for learners. Secondly, goals are clear, lesson objectives may imply learners stretching further than their current ability but in the judgement of the teacher they are still within their grasp (Shayer and Adey, 2002). Drawing on wide research evidence, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority suggest that setting clear purposes and goals as well as high expectations are a key part of creative pedagogical practice (QCA, 2005).

**24** Flexibility of style and pace seems to be the most commonly held characteristic of creative teaching (Sternberg, 1999; Richhart, 2002; Nickerson, 1999; Halpin, 2003). Government documents (DfES, 2003; QCA, 2005) agree that varying the tempo, allowing time for students to have their say, a willingness to be spontaneous and the desire to give each child an opportunity to excel, mark out those who are called creative. In teaching terms the creative teacher often recognises the value of team work, building teams with different leaders (Cook, 1998), identifying and distributing peers willing to experiment (Gardner, 1999) and being good team players themselves, aware of their ability to inspire others. The encouragement of real dialogue and collaboration, teacher - pupil and pupil - pupil, where children are frequently placed in a position where they have to explain and justify their decisions to others is highlighted as a necessary aspect of creative pedagogy (Russell and Wyse, 2003).

**25** Creativity also involves asking and attempting to answer real questions and the creative teacher/leader is seen by many writers as one who uses open ended questions frequently, who finds problems and promotes speculation (QCA, 2003; Robertson, 2002). A questioning

classroom is one, which according to Fisher (2003), makes use of open questions to promote deeper, transferable thinking. It is evident that questions which promote thinking are not used enough in schools (Burns and Myhill, 2004) but teachers who do use them not only promote new connections in the minds of children but seem to improve standards of understanding and knowledge (Shayer and Adey, 2002). This metacognitive theme has been taken up in a recent QCA video which demonstrates at all primary and Foundation levels the effectiveness of teacher questions in promoting creative responses (QCA, 2005).

**26** Creative teachers also encourage children to reflect on their work; *All Our Futures* recognises this complex mix of drafting, shaping and refining and that reflection may take many forms. Some teachers encourage creative reflection through drawing (Barnes, 2004; Brice Heath and Wolf, 2005) while others focus on the questioning of assumptions, redefining of problems and looking for what else might be possible (Richhart, 2002; Craft, 2000). What Fisher (2003) calls ‘critical evaluation’ may happen in a variety of contexts, but teachers who allow space, time and freedom are clearly more likely to promote reflection both between and within learners.

**27** When speaking of Charles Darwin’s ‘creative originality’ Koestler, (1964) makes the point that creativity is not making something:

*‘out of nothing, but rather out of a combination of well established patterns of thought – a process of cross fertilization.’* (Koestler, 1964:131).

Koestler prefigures a number of current writers and researchers who argue that creativity is largely a matter of making connections. Indeed in the context of mathematics in the primary school (Briggs, 2005) dwells on the strong relationship between ‘connectionist’ teachers and those who foster creativity. There are many ways of representing the connections made in the brain which constitute thought. Gardner (1995) speaks of ‘many windows into the same room’ to explain the different ways in which we can think and learn and Claxton and Lucas (2004) refer to ‘surfing the inner net’ to explain the soft focus attention needed for creative thought, indeed most writers resort to metaphor to explain and exemplify it.

**28** Our own work highlighted the many ways in which creative teachers use metaphor, anecdote and analogy (Grainger, Barnes and Scoffham, 2004). It seems clear that what Perkins (2002) calls ‘the eureka effect’ is an archetypal feature of creative thought and occurs in breakthrough thinking from well before Archimedes to present day Nobel prize winners. The use of stories, metaphors and visualisations by the teacher clearly encourages and affirms such thinking in pupils (Woods, 1995). Helping learners make connections Jensen (1996) also argues is often best done by encouraging metaphorical thinking and Csikszentmihalyi (1997) shows, in his pairing of apparent opposites held together by successfully creative people, how they seem able to alternate between fantasy and reality. Connecting visualisations using memory or imagined worlds with a real problem can also result in startlingly original solutions (Claxton and Lucas, 2004).

**29** Connections are also important in helping pupils see the purpose of their work. There is considerable literature in educational psychology on the importance of relevance to the learning process itself (Damasio, 1995; Goleman, 1996). Creative teachers are seen as most effective when they help children see what is valuable about their work (Woods, 1990; Woods and Jeffrey, 1996). They may help students look for applications, or plan work in the context of its practical application or relevance to daily life (Richhart, 2002), or ensure the work has emotional relevance (Woods, 1990). As Sternberg (1997) points out those who work most creatively identify and reward creativity in others and thus the appreciation of their own creativity becomes a motivator in itself. Identifying the purpose of the work may prompt the condition which Csikszentmihalyi describes as ‘flow’; one in which the participant becomes so involved in the activity that the sense of self is merged with it. Time flies; the

sense of day to day worries and self consciousness retreat and the activity is done for its own sake. Alongside physical activities, creative activities appear to be the main generators of the sense of flow in human beings (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The teacher has to ensure that such activity becomes self-directed if it is to be sustainable and self direction seems to arise most effectively from activities and a pedagogy which seeks personal significance, relevance and passes the locus of control to the learner (Woods and Jeffrey, 1996).

**30** Humour and its use in delivery is the pedagogical strategy which most surprised us in our students' assessments of what made a teacher a creative teacher (Grainger, Barnes and Scoffham, 2004). Koestler (1967) explains the connection; humour uses the unexpected meeting of two separate and unconnected planes of thought for its effect and the 'bisociation' of two previously unconnected ideas is what constitutes creativity. Bruner (1962) also talks about 'effective surprise' being the hallmark of the creative enterprise. British researchers in the field (Craft, 2000; Claxton and Lucas, 2004) additionally comment on humour. Perkins (2002) observes the way that the 'cognitive snap' of humour provides us with a miniature version of breakthrough thinking, and argues that humour has enormous educational potential in that it advances cognitive acuity and 'sharpens our awareness of conceptual boundaries' as probing questions.

**31** An emotional component to learning is widely recognised (Damasio, 2003; Goleman, 1996). Our previous research indicated that ensuring learners' engagement on an emotional and personal level was one of the vital aspects of creative teaching. Abbs (2003), too, recognises the importance of the existential in all deep learning as does research conducted by Woods and Jeffrey (1996). First hand experience, 'real' questions, active, self directed engagement and enquiry based learning are all terms frequently used by teachers evaluating their own good work, but again one is left with the question 'is emotional engagement, not simply a requirement of good teaching and not specific to creative teaching?' Perhaps creative teaching depends more upon emotional engagement because creativity is so closely bound up with meaning. Csikszentmihalyi calls creativity a 'central source of meaning in our lives' and points out that archetypal creative activities such as dance, music, painting, drama are in every society 'activities designed primarily to improve the quality of experience' (2002:76)

## Ethos

**32** The dividing line between a pedagogy for creativity and a creative ethos in the classroom is a difficult one to draw. Craft (2005) notes that creativity is best fostered in inclusive environments which foster, for both teachers and learners, the key features mentioned above, innovation, ownership, control and relevance. Much of the atmosphere of the classroom is the direct responsibility of the individual teacher. The current Healthy Schools programme (NHSS, 2004) quotes psychologist Ginott expressing the impact every teacher has on their classroom:

*'I've come to a frightening conclusion: that I am the decisive element in my classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humour, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides where a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanised or dehumanised.'*  
(Ginott, 1972 quoted in HDA, 2004)



**33** The atmosphere a teacher following Ginott's philosophy would wish to generate would be one of security. Positive forms of emotional engagement are difficult to envisage in settings which are not safe, supportive and secure. This leads current educational thinkers (Halpin, 2003; Gardner, 1999; Woods, 2003) to stress the links between creative learning and emotional security. The students in our pilot study (Grainger, Barnes and Scoffham, 2004) also highlighted the importance of an environment in which they felt safe, valued and trusted as an essential feature of the creative teacher who encourages risk taking. Indeed from September 2005 each school has been required to report on 'learners personal development and well-being' (DfES, 2005). Emotional security is clearly on the agenda, as Halpin notes...

*'While a certain amount of failure is inevitable and necessary for the creative learning process, being a 'loser' in school or within a system of schooling cannot be... From the pupils' perspective, it is a matter of them feeling able to react positively to self help questions like, 'Am I safe here?' 'Do I belong?' 'Can I count on others to support me?' (Halpin, 2003:111).*

**34** Positive relationships appear to be crucial in fostering creativity. Creativity flourishes in situations where there are trusting educator– learner relationships (Craft, 2003) an expectation that teachers will respond to children's feelings and protect them from ridicule (Jeffrey and Woods, 2003) and the toleration of mild or polite rebellion (Shayer and Adey, 2002). There are also likely to be similarly positive relationships between staff, for there can be no genuine atmosphere of support and security for children unless the teachers and other staff feel secure, supported, growing and happy in themselves; this represents a major staff development issue (Barnes, 2003). The work of Amabile (1988) suggests that individual creativity is affected by even very minor aspects of the immediate social environment and with regard to schools it is clear that the ethos of individual institutions will affect the ethos created by each teacher in their classrooms and thus the opportunities for creative teaching and learning.

**35** In schools with a secure ethos, children will be happy to ask and answer questions, confident to take sensible risks and indeed get safe risk-taking rewarded. A value system which encourages questions will soon encourage elements of creativity; the speculative, the tendency to find problems rather than wait for them to be assigned and the expectation of challenge. These features are all recognised in some way in the sources cited in this chapter. In addition, the teacher who shows their own creativity by constantly questioning themselves is well placed to generate such an attitude in others, thus potentially generating the unexpected, the unusual and the original. Linked very closely with the tendency to question is the confidence to deal positively with uncertainty, to tolerate ambiguity (Sternberg, 1997b; Halpin, 2003; Grainger, 2006) and the presence of an attitude which perceives failure as a learning opportunity (Cook, 1998). These are attributes which we would suggest need critically to be acknowledged and developed in the teacher, before they can become part of the overall classroom/school ethos.

## Creative learning

**36** An understanding of the ways in which children's minds develop has an important role in informing educational practice. More specifically, recent psychological and neurological research touches on many aspects of creative teaching. Psychologically it is suggested that children:

- enjoy (even need) an audience for their creative efforts (Craft, 2001, 2005)
- are happy to play with ideas and materials (Nickerson, 1999)
- use metaphor and analogy naturally (Grainger, Barnes and Scoffham, 2004))

- respond to creative activities with enhanced concentration, calm and better interpersonal skills (Fredrickson, 2000)
- learn better when they are in a state of ‘positive emotion’ (Fredrickson, 2000, 2003)
- are more at ease with making creative connections than most adults (Sternberg, 1997)

**37** Furthermore, current research in the growing interface between neurology and education suggests that young people:

- develop neurologically to take more and more risks and learn from their mistakes (Thompson *et al*, 2000)
- find abstract thought difficult until their teens (Gogtay *et al*, 2004)
- have very well developed senses of sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing (Gogtay *et al*, 2004)
- have brains which display a growth spurt between 9 and 12 (Geidd, 1999)
- have brain capacity which ‘self prunes’ if not used (Robertson, 1999)
- have physical and sensory abilities which develop in advance of their intellectual abilities (Gogtay *et al*, 2004)
- have relatively undeveloped executive (decision making, rationalising, judging) functions in their brains which do not fully mature until the late teens and early twenties (Beckman, 2004)

**38** Against the background of such research on aspects of creative learning QCA (2005) propose five areas of evidence of learner creativity, namely:

- Questioning and challenging
- Making connections and seeing relationships
- Envisaging what might be
- Exploring ideas and keeping options open
- Reflecting critically on ideas, actions and outcomes.

As can be seen from the earlier argument, potentially these features may also apply to creative teachers.

## Summary

**39** Teachers are currently working in a ‘performativity discourse’ that focuses on accountability, target setting and adherence to a prescribed agenda. Many perceive their hands have been tied and their professional autonomy reduced (Burgess *et al.*, 2002). Yet if teachers are to find ways forward that maintain their professional integrity, make use of their pedagogical knowledge and achieve high standards then the adoption of a more creative stance and the assertion of their own agency in the classroom is essential. As Joubert observes:

*Creative teaching is an art. One cannot teach teachers didactically how to be creative; there is no fail safe recipe or routines. Some strategies may help to promote creative thinking, but teachers need to develop a full repertoire of skills which they can adapt to different situations’*  
(Joubert, 2001:21)

**40** The repertoire of creative teachers is complex and develops through focused experience, engagement and reflection found, for example, through establishing effective links between schools and the cultural and creative sectors via Creative Partnerships. Education is engaged

in a massive cultural shift and teachers as Esmé Chilton (CP Kent Director) has observed, need support as they 'learn, change, develop and evolve their practice with others' (Chilton, 2006). It is our argument that more teachers will find fulfilment in their work through recognising, affirming and developing features of creativity in their own practice. Through working with Creative Practitioners they may come to recognise and celebrate their own professional artistry and see themselves as creative people. If, as positive psychologists like Fredrickson (2000, 2003) Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 2002) Morris (2005) and Seligman (2004) all suggest, the sense of the self as a creative being is an essential factor in feeling human, and creative activity is an efficient way of enhancing ordinary experience, then it is of paramount importance that more teachers feel like creative teachers. Our own experience has shown us that it was the identification and recognition of ordinary aspects of good teaching in our own practice as creative or as promoting creativity that made us more inclined to see ourselves as creative professionals. This increased our job satisfaction.

**41** The distinction between the good teacher and the creative teacher is inevitably problematic. Good teachers have probably always been creative, in the same way that good thinking is always in some way creative thinking. The value of identifying features which seem to relate more specifically to creative teaching is that they may help give permission to more teachers to see themselves as creative, and thus gain the benefit of an enhanced sense of meaning and well-being, which it is argued accrue from being aware of the creative aspects of their practice. The significance of recognising oneself as a creative professional teacher should not be underestimated, particularly in terms of the related capacity to enhance young people's creative development.

**42** Creative Partnerships has the potential to leave behind a sustainable legacy of creative thinking and learning through its work with schools. It could also make a significant contribution to the growth and recognition of teaching as a creative profession. This in turn is likely to have a significant impact upon the challenging issue of teacher retention. Teachers who perceive themselves to be developing and fulfilled will be more likely to remain in work and will be in a stronger position to shape and influence the local and national agenda, making a difference to both pupils and to themselves.

# 3

## METHODOLOGY

### Scope of study

**43** Observations and interviews were conducted between March and June 2005 in four CP Kent schools, two secondary and two primary, involving pupils between the age of 5 and 14: The teachers were identified at the start of the research as highly creative professionals by both CP Kent and the senior management in the schools involved. The research team aimed to adopt a creative methodology in line with the spirit and objectives of the project to identify the features of the creative teacher. The methodology involved a rich combination of desk studies and the perspectives of children, teachers, school managers and Creative Practitioners.

### Reliability and validity

**44** The collection of data was done partly by the university based researchers and partially by the teachers themselves. Two teachers were observed in each school and each teacher was observed at monthly intervals across the period of the research. The study also built in opportunities for in-depth discussion between the case study teachers, the head teachers and the researchers. The team worked to achieve validity and reliability through: making use of multiple sources and forms of data; making use of multiple perspectives, (students, teachers, head teachers, creative practitioners and researchers) and using an emergent theoretical frame to inform the analysis of creative teaching.

**45** We consider the findings valid in that they represent the views of practitioners and teachers themselves and not the views of researchers or CP Kent as an organisation. We feel that the wide range of data sources offer internal validation of the opinions and observations of individual participants in the research. By our method of collating and extracting themes from these disparate sources we hope to ensure that the views of single researchers, CP Kent, children, school managers and teachers are not allowed to dominate.

### Ethics

**46** Each of the researchers was checked by CRB. All participants were asked if they wanted to be involved in the research and informed of their right to withdraw from the research. They were told that their names, schools and views would not be identifiable by anyone apart from the particular researchers involved. All were informed that they did not have to answer any question they did not wish to answer. The interim findings of our observations were discussed at a data surgery and participants had the opportunity to give their opinions on and influence the emerging themes. This report includes many verbatim comments from teachers, Creative Practitioners and children. We have decided to report these directly so that the voices of different individuals can be clearly heard. In each case, however, the name of the speaker has been changed to an alias so as to protect their anonymity

### Analysis and data collection

**47** The researchers began their work in this area in 2003 when they embarked upon research to investigate creative teaching in their own practice. This resulted in the publication of an article entitled *The Creative Cocktail* (Grainger, Barnes and Scoffham, 2004) in which we

developed the beginnings of a list of attributes of creative teaching. We built upon this by conducting a wide ranging literature review (Section 2) which highlighted three core dimensions of creative practice:

- personal characteristics.
- pedagogy
- ethos

**48** Data was collected from a variety of different sources using a range of techniques as follows:

*Interview with head teacher or department leader:* This largely involved opportunities to outline the place of creativity in the strategic plans for the school, but also explored the place of creativity in the school ethos and the particular features of the named creative teacher.

*Interviews with class teacher:* This involved an initial discussion on the teacher's view of their own creativity and led to the completion of a questionnaire based upon a grid which resulted from the literature review. Later interviews were also undertaken and then recorded and transcribed by a secretary.

*Interview with the Creative Practitioner:* This followed a similar format to the initial interview with the teachers

*Interview with children:* This was intended to be in the form of a focus group discussion on what they felt was important to their teacher, how the teacher made children feel good about themselves in his/her lesson, and how the teacher might help them think of new ideas. However, the interviews were developed and adapted according to the age of the children.

*Annotated drawings:* The aim here was to explore the children's perception of their teacher. Pupils were given an outline drawing to annotate and were invited to add labels and arrows, drawings, symbols or speech bubbles to indicate things which they felt were important to their teacher (Figure 2). They were introduced to the exercise as follows:

*We have been told your teacher is very creative. Tell your neighbour in what way you agree. Can you now add to this drawing of your teacher to show what is important to them and what matters to them.*

*Video diary:* The teachers involved in the research were asked to select three children from various ability ranges to make a video diary to try to capture the atmosphere of an active and purposeful classroom where Csikszentmihalyi's sense of 'flow' is illustrated. We asked each group to compile around 3 minutes of footage. In the event, the diaries failed to provide any useful information so they do not feature in the analysis of results.

*Creative moment diaries:* The teachers were invited to keep a diary of 'creative moments' over the period of the research and to reflect upon their practice. These were discussed with the researchers.

*Observation:* The researchers visited each classroom regularly across the research period and compiled written reports identifying the features of creative practice evident in sample lessons.



Figure 2 Pupils were invited to annotate a drawing of their teacher.

*Data surgery:* Participants were invited to a data surgery (June 2005) in which they were presented with the interim findings and main categories describing the creative teacher and invited to discuss these. Comments were recorded and formed part of the final notes considered at subsequent meetings of the research team.

*Survey:* Fifty per cent of CP Kent schools were sent a survey on teaching styles in order to place the research in a wider context. The results from the survey were collated but no overall pattern emerged.

## Identifying themes

**49** The researchers adopted a standard format in observing and analysing lessons. The notes they made in the classroom were structured using an analysis grid which also helped to direct attention to specific features and qualities (Appendix E). These notes were then turned into prose summaries incorporating additional information from the children's drawings, interviews with the teacher and teachers' diaries. These profiles were structured under the following headings – teachers' personal qualities, pedagogy, ethos and resources. Finally, for each lesson the researchers attempted to identify emerging themes.

**50** The researchers held a number of team meetings in which the dimensions emerging from these summaries were discussed. Our first meeting considered all aspects of the teachers' personal qualities for which we had evidence. From these discussions we arrived at subheadings denoting particular and commonly revealed qualities such as caring, flexible, curious and relaxed. The second meeting explored the pedagogies and the team arrived at seven clear subheadings under which to present evidence. At the third meeting it was decided to conflate 'ethos' and 'resources' since they overlapped in our findings, and again our sharing of the collected evidence generated a number of further subheadings. These discussions and their subsequent writing up under the emerging themes formed the substance of our research. (See sections 4, 5 and 6 of this report).

## 4 FINDINGS

**51** The general findings from this study draw on the full range of data, including: repeated observations, creative diaries, children's representations and discussions and interviews with teachers, head teachers and Creative Practitioners. This section reports on subcategories within the three dimensions researched which were:

- teachers' personal qualities and characteristics,
- issues to with pedagogy
- school ethos.

The key themes which were evident across the three dimensions are reported on in section five.

### Teachers' personal qualities

*"I think often creative teachers are the ones you least expect to be creative."*  
(Creative Practitioner)

**52** The personal qualities of a teacher are likely to have a major impact upon the style and effectiveness of their teaching. In these personal qualities we have tried to isolate those aspects of the teacher which are to do with what they seem to be as people. We do not know them in other contexts and therefore cannot comment upon overall personality, but feel it is possible from the evidence collected to make comments upon characteristics common to all these practitioners. The key themes which we identified include:

- commitment to the children
- personal curiosity and desire to learn
- flexibility and enthusiasm
- risk taking and curiosity
- understanding children's needs and interests
- personalising teaching
- using humour to make learning fun
- secure knowledge base.

### Commitment to the children

*"She has a happy face all the time."*  
(Child describing her teacher)

**53** Whilst each teacher had a different manner, they all appeared to care deeply for children in their classes. This was evident from the outset in each context, through focused eye contact, broad smiles and personal warmth. Several of the teachers either specifically mentioned or implied in interview their personal interest in the emotional well being of the children that they taught. These teachers seemed to be driven by a deep and genuine concern for human welfare. Positive affirmative feedback for behaviour and for learning was also in constant evidence, *'I'm impressed especially by their attitude that they can do better.'*

**54** The children too noted the good personal relationships they had with their teachers and the genuine interest shown by them. For example, one year 11 pupil observed *'He looks at*



*work from a child's view, ... he encourages you. If you're stuck he makes you believe in yourself. A year 9 pupil with learning difficulties put it this way, 'she never shouts' and 'she doesn't keep us in a box'. A year 1 child commented 'Its nice to see you have a happy face on again today Mrs M'.*

**55** It was apparent that all the teachers knew the children extremely well. They demonstrated knowledge of their individual aptitudes, their personal interests and the aspects of learning which they might find challenging. In the primary phase, the teachers also knew about weekend events which the children were likely to have attended and sought out such personal information. The early years' teachers in particular demonstrated a desire to build on and value this information in the context of the Foundation/KS1 curriculum. This interest in the learners was expressed by some as a quiet committed enthusiasm and by others as a more lively engagement. All the teachers were relaxed and demonstrated close relationships with the learners. Several referred to the importance of calmness and one to the need for a 'listening ear'.

### **Personal curiosity and desire to learn**

*"I think he is a good teacher because he looks at work from the child's view."*  
(Child)

**56** The teachers all perceived themselves as learners and were eager to understand more, particularly about learning, not just subject knowledge. *'I always look for new interests and publications that keep me going as a teacher'*. The professional development opportunities they had engaged in were diverse. Some had recently received subject specific training, others had attended innovative courses in early years practice in Reggio Emilia, Italy and one had applied to do an MA in Education. All those who had been involved with Creative Practitioners through CP Kent voiced the view that the experience had been stimulating, for example, *'the conversations we have had about how children learn have been absolutely fascinating - he has really challenged me to think differently, although I'm not sure he's aware of that.'* Dawn also expressed the curiosity engendered by contact with her Creative Practitioner in saying, *'Working with Richard has made me question and re-consider the nature of learning'*.

**57** The teachers were committed to advancing their own learning with the clear intention of shaping their pedagogy and practice. They demonstrated considerable implicit knowledge of pedagogy and the vital roles of interaction, autonomy and engagement through their work. They all flexibly manipulated the lesson plans in response to the children, indicating again their commitment to ensuring learning and not merely to curriculum coverage.

**58** Some of the creative teachers displayed a clear, confident subject knowledge (most notably the secondary teachers). On the other hand, others, (often primary and early years teachers) whilst more modest in their understanding of a particular discipline, showed a marked and assured understanding of the skills and processes of teaching itself. Similarly their knowledge of children, their world and their learning were the focus of their knowledge. This kind of professional and pedagogical knowledge was evident at a very high level.

### **Flexibility and enthusiasm**

*"I try to show children there are no boundaries to their imaginations."*  
(Teacher)

**59** The flexibility and enthusiasm of the teachers was highlighted throughout the observations, interviews, diaries and unprompted drawings. Thirty percent of the children across the study described their teacher as 'fun' in their annotated drawings. In this context, fun was often linked with their teacher's willingness to depart from the expected. The

teachers' flexibility was shown in their response to the moment by moment challenges of teaching. Examples include:

- spontaneous responses to answers, situations and interjections from pupils,
- finding different ways into a subject,
- allowing children to take control and
- the lively and humorous use of questioning.

There was evident openness to events, an ease with the inherent risks of experimentation and an element of tactical opportunism in the teachers' responses. These features of flexibility appear more to do with personal characteristics than a considered and planned pedagogical style.

**60** Listening to the teachers describing themselves proved revealing. Dawn simply described herself as flexible, saying she was keen to '*seize the moment*' and enjoyed '*finding out what makes little children tick*'. Another teacher described a similar character trait when she said, '*I just go off at a tangent with them,*' or '*I just rolled with it.*' One teacher, when talking about what creativity meant to her described her own flexibility; she referred to creativity as '*more of a state of mind...just being confident and open with your ideas and with accepting ideas from others and recognising... whatever personality traits you have to share, when they are put together, much bigger things can happen*'. Such openness obviously has an immediate effect upon pedagogical style. To take another example, when a year 3 child was deciding what his, Dr Who-loving, head teacher might have in her handbag, he drew a Dalek. Kelly used this to take his thinking forward; '*...but a Dalek might be too big for a handbag...how could we still know that she liked Dr Who?*' 'It might be a toy one.' the child replied. '*That's such a good idea*' Kelly responded. '*just like the toy I borrowed from Darren this morning.*'

## **Risk taking and curiosity**

*"It's all about taking chances...letting them take risks with their own learning."*  
(Teacher)

**61** Risk taking and spontaneity were similarly evident in each classroom and connected closely to the flexible stance and mindset demonstrated by the teachers. Chris, for example, spoke of things '*just occurring*' to her or '*spotting opportunities within a lesson*' and '*...going off at a tangent and linking with other subjects.*' She also invented, '*... a silly thing like 'the long-shore drift shuffle,*' namely a spontaneous dance which arose during field work on the beach. Each pupil picked up a pebble, linked arms and moved up and down the beach in the direction of the prevailing wind to show how the shingle beach on which they were standing was formed. This activity, original as it was memorable, was referred to independently by a number of the pupils.

**62** Not only were the teachers keen to promote curiosity in others, they also tended to be questioning people themselves. All of the teachers used a large number of questions, usually open rather than closed, during their teaching. This was more than just a matter of teaching style. Often in class they seemed to be genuinely curious as to what answer a child was going to give and in their interviews, several teachers displayed a personal interest in finding out more. Kelly said her sense of curiosity had developed as result of working with Creative Partnerships. Charlotte spoke of '*wanting to learn*'. Dawn reported in her diary that she was '*seeking new interests*' and of the way she was growing due to the children's own fascination with the world.

**63** One of the Creative Practitioners observed that creative teachers are '*honest and self critical.*' That sense was revealed in a number of interviews where teachers were relaxed about sharing uncertainty in their own definitions of creativity and very clear about the changes in their own thinking since contact with Creative Partnerships.

## Understanding children's needs and interests

*"When I follow their interests I feel I am able to be creative."*

(Teacher)

**64** All the teachers in the study demonstrated a clear ability to relate to the needs and perspectives of the children they were teaching. This was attested not only through the lesson observations, but also through the interviews with the teachers, the notes the teachers made in their diaries and the comments and drawings made by the children.

**65** The way which the teachers related to pupils varied considerably according to the age range and personalities involved. For example, Dawn was clearly adept at seizing the moment and exploiting the educational potential of casual and unexpected events. When, during a weekend 'news' slot, one of the children reported how a fox had attacked his family's chickens, she adroitly developed a speculative discussion that quickly involved the whole class. In another instance the same teacher noticed a child playing with the hot air from the hair dryer in the toilet, and used this as the basis for an impromptu science enquiry with a small group of children. Her responsiveness was connected to a detailed knowledge of individual pupils and their learning needs together with an understanding of their attraction to the new. Charlotte also recognised the importance of knowing the children, *'I know the interests of each and every single child and so you can just go off at a tangent with them.'* This was clearly rewarding for the teachers concerned.

## Personalising teaching

*"She used extensive personal connections and gentle humour throughout the lesson."*

(Researcher)

**66** Evidence emerged throughout the research that when teachers personalised their teaching it had the effect of engaging pupils and stimulating creative responses. In one particularly imaginative lesson, for example, the children were asked to draw what might be found in the head teacher's handbag. In another, the teacher announced she was going to bring her own home-grown carrots to school so the children could find out what they tasted like. In a third, the teacher showed the class some pictures of herself standing next to waterfalls in Iceland as part of a lesson on rivers.

**67** The opportunity to personalise teaching and make a subject seem original, often occurred spontaneously and emerged naturally either during the lesson itself or during the planning process. Interestingly, the teachers concerned were not always aware of the value of personalising their teaching and bringing themselves into the picture. However, in observing the lessons it was clear that the pupils were motivated by this approach which not only made learning more vivid, but also served to reveal more about the character of their teacher, who as a role model, has a major opportunity to influence the pupils they are teaching.

## Using humour to make learning fun

*"Fun in a serious way"*

(Child describing his teacher)

**68** Humour and general sparky-ness was a notable feature of many of the lessons. The evidence from the children's drawings and comments shows an overwhelming recognition that the teachers succeeded in making learning fun, exemplified in phrases such as *"funny"*, *"she makes lessons fun"* and *"she makes the stuff we do fun."* One secondary school child perceptively observed *"He lowers to our age and makes us laugh"*. The ability to relate to children is clearly an essential element in bringing enjoyment into the classroom.

**69** The form of humour varied considerably according to the age of the children and their teacher's personality. Some devised activities which pupils clearly found enjoyable in their own right. Others employed humour more directly as a teaching device. One teacher, for example, mimicked the way pupils found it difficult to say certain words such as 'wuler', 'skissors' and 'mathematatics' to build up a rapport with the class. The pupils clearly appreciated this, declaring "*Sir makes up silly riddles to help us remember hard words.*" The same teacher also made effective use of gentle sarcasm. As one child commented: "*He uses sarcasm which makes you want to battle against him and prove him wrong. He uses it as a form of encouragement.*"

## Secure knowledge base

*"There could be little doubt that the teacher was confident of her subject knowledge and interested in the topic."*

(Researcher)

**70** Many educationalists and writers on children's creative learning pick out the importance of a secure knowledge base as one of the key indicators of the creative teacher. The QCA for example specifically states that creative teachers have 'good subject knowledge' (QCA, 2005) and Anna Craft speaks of the existence of 'mastery' or 'agency' in relation to the subject (Craft, 2000, 2005). Our research has found a more complex picture. Some of our creative teachers displayed a very clear, confident and broad subject knowledge; this was mostly true of the teachers in secondary education. On the other hand, others, more often primary and reception teachers whilst more modest in their understanding of a particular discipline, showed a marked and assured understanding of the skills, and processes of teaching itself. Similarly, their knowledge of children, their world and their learning were the focus of their knowledge.

**71** It can be convincingly argued that *all* the research subjects showed a high level of professional and pedagogical knowledge. Margaret, for example, conducted a lesson for a small group of year 8 and 9 children with complex emotional and physical barriers to learning. She decided to create a 'guy' to be a friend for Simon, the Creative Practitioner, who was to be marooned on a mid channel fort for months. In discussing the qualities this friend should have the children arrived at the decision, '*We'd much rather have a friend who listened to us rather than talked at us.*' The pupils then considered how their friends might describe them and how that matched their expectations of friendship. Finally they drew a sketch of an ideal 'fort friend' – a 'guy' who would be able to listen to Simon. The link with the Creative Practitioner had clearly given this teacher an original and effective starting point for a significant lesson in emotional intelligence.

## Pedagogy

*"The most creative teachers I see are constantly questioning their practice"*

(Creative Practitioner)

**72** Any choice of pedagogy inevitably communicates a conception of the learner and the process of learning. It is for this reason that pedagogy formed one of the three main strands in this study. The key themes which we identified include:

- using diverse teaching approaches
- identifying entry points for individuals
- linking ideas
- connecting pupils' lives to the curriculum
- using ICT
- adopting a questioning stance
- encouraging pupils to ask questions

- encouraging independence and responsibility
- working together
- establishing a clear learning focus.

## Using diverse teaching approaches

*“The more ways you have of conveying information – the better.”*

(Teacher)

**73** The teachers in this study adopted a wide variety of teaching approaches and a wide range of resources and activities. No single method could be singled out for its value or effectiveness. Rather, creativity was promoted by mixture and combination of styles. Over thirty different approaches were observed in the 16 lessons observed (See Figure 3)

Child initiated activity	Explanation	Library research
Discovery	Problem solving	Fieldwork
Reverse/open questioning	Investigations	Breaks for ‘Brain Gym’
Music	Conversation	Photographs
Practical activities	Time for reflection	Slides and videos
Construction	Shared and individual writing	Map work
Demonstration	Stories	Competition
Electronic games and worksheets	Role play	Presentations
Edible and visual aids	Drama	Tests
Classroom displays	Dance	Class league tables
Interactive whiteboards	Crosswords	‘Merit’ marks
		Personal computer

Figure 3 *Teaching techniques and activities used by creative teachers*

**74** Teachers adopted a variety of different class groupings; from individual presentations and ‘talking partners’ through group work to whole class teaching. Moments of apparent chaos and times of silent and intense concentration were witnessed. This huge variety of ‘cocktail ingredients’ (Grainger, Barnes and Scoffham 2004) and the flexibility, curiosity and confidence to mix them in various combinations, seemed to characterise creative practice. One teacher describes this mixing of styles as, *‘adapting to changing circumstances but staying true to the learning objectives.’*

**75** In their interviews some of the teachers observed that the change in their attitudes had been brought about by contact with Creative Partnerships. Dawn commented on how she responded when a creative curriculum was introduced in her school:

*‘...to be honest at first I was a little bit unsure and a bit wary of it because I used to quite like the children being quiet – sitting on their chairs and doing as I told them to do...At first I found it a little tricky because I didn’t seem to have that type of structure but now I am more likely to go with the flow...The fact that Steve wanted to go outside and get pebbles in the last lesson is fine with me now...but a few months ago I would have thought ‘oh goodness! He can’t do that! He’s not following the plan!’*

## Identifying entry points for individuals

*“When I first started teaching I was wary about using role play because that’s not my learning style, but I have to do it now because the children enjoy it so much.”*

(Teacher)

**76** The teachers all used a wide range of ‘entry points’ (Gardner, 1991) Many of them departed from the main focus of a lesson to accommodate particular learners interests and strengths. In groups streamed by ability, some teachers decided upon unusual routes towards a learning objective. Charlotte reported that her class ‘...*would find too much reading too difficult. [so] she asked students to make puppets and turn the [R.E.] stories into puppet plays.*’. Later she decided to ask the students to ‘*turn the story of [St] Paul’s journeys into a board game.*’ Margaret used stamping and chanted words to communicate a complex rhythmic combination. Chris made a waterfall model out of books in the classroom to help particular students grasp the concepts of flow and erosion. Some of the older students recognised the importance of these practical demonstrations when they commented on their teacher’s practice.

**77** Some individual entry points consisted simply of making reference to a personal detail of an individual’s life which caught their attention and motivated them. Charlotte asked a red-faced child, ‘... *do you know why I know you’re hot?* When introducing the subject of temperature however, the most frequent use of individually tailored entry points to understanding or engagement came from the teacher’s knowledge of children as individuals. Dawn described this as ‘*having your antennae up for talent spotting or interests they’ve got ... to show you what they’re really ‘into’*’ For example, she noted that a group of boys were interested in rock music, so she took them to a music shop and obtained a demonstration disc of guitar music. This prompted the children to make their own guitars Kelly used a particular child’s interest in Dr Who, Margaret capitalised on one girl’s knowledge of horror films in helping her compose music for the video and Chris used interest in televised football matches to get some students to consider public transport and wider planning issues.

**78** None of the lessons observed in this study involved fieldwork directly. However, both teachers and pupils made passing references to previous experiences that had involved outdoor work. When Margaret took her children outside to work on a warm day she declared it had a calming effect and the researcher noted how interactions between pupils improved as a result. In their drawings some children singled out how ‘*going outside for research*’ was a feature of creative practice. These observations were clearly echoed by one of the teachers who declared ‘*Its all very well talking about something within the confines of the classroom but there is no alternative to going out there and getting muddy.*’ There can be little doubt that fieldwork and practical activities are hugely important pedagogically and extremely important from a motivational point of view. The fact they do not feature in this report specifically simply reflects the nature of the lessons observed.

## Linking ideas

*“She was encouraging the children to make connections.”*  
(Creative Practitioner)

**79** The lesson observations reveal the extent to which the teachers sought to encourage pupils to associate ideas. One child who was making music on a keyboard was encouraged to make their music more ‘scary’ to enhance its emotional impact. In another lesson about money, the teacher challenged the young children to think why people decided to make 10p coins rather than to use lots of penny coins instead. Elsewhere, the physical links between tropical islands were used as a metaphor for the connections between people. A particularly interesting example concerned making spots for a model dragon. This activity required young children to apply what they had learnt about transparency in science to a practical model-making context; and it gave those who had not fully grasped the idea a chance to revisit or consolidate their ideas. In this way the teacher not only promoted the creative application of new learning, she was also able to undertake ongoing, formative assessment.

**80** Another way of making connections involved establishing links between subjects. Several of the lessons featured in this study started with pupils thinking back to their previous work. Some topics provided particularly rich opportunities for cross curricular study; and there was general agreement among the teachers about the value of making connections. *‘In our school’, Charlotte declared, ‘there are opportunities to teach subjects alongside each other.’* One of the other teachers explained *“It’s just going to make them have such a bigger picture of the world and their place in it.”* Finally the importance of applying new knowledge was also recognised by the teacher who commented, *“Until it’s applied you cannot say whether they have actually learnt anything.”*

### **Connecting pupils’ lives to the curriculum**

*“She reminded them of links with their own lives.”*

(Researcher)

**81** The lesson observations and diaries highlight the way the teachers sought to make lessons relevant to pupils’ lives. In one instance, the children were asked to create a recipe for an ice cream sundae - something that would be close to many of their hearts. In another, where the children were finding out about the Egyptians, the teacher encouraged pupils to identify modern day links and equivalents. Similarly, secondary school pupils were challenged throughout a week to reflect on how the Renaissance had had an impact on their own lives.

### **Using ICT**

*“Watching videos is fascinating and helps to explain what is going on.”*

(Child)

**82** Creative practice was quite strongly associated with the use of ICT. Although the extent to which ICT was observed varied according to the circumstances, it was evident in one form or another in all the classes in this study. An enthusiasm for ICT was particularly apparent in the drawings and notes made by the children. In one mathematic class, 23 out of 27 pupils referred to way the teacher used the smart board as part of his creative practice. In another class in the same school pupils variously mentioned the internet, computers, videos, films, tapes, slides, and laptops as contributing to a creative learning environment. The fact that every pupil in that particular class associated creativity with ICT is highly significant.

**83** Children growing up today have been born into the electronic revolution and naturally look to modern technology to explore and communicate their ideas. Computers and the internet, in particular, have brought a flexibility to learning which is transforming the nature of the process itself. In the past, equipment of this kind could be viewed simply as resources that aided learning. Nowadays it is part of the learning process itself. This is a vast topic which can only be touched upon in a report of this kind.

### **Adopting a questioning stance**

*“I don’t think it’s the teacher who has to ask unusual questions, it’s the children who need to.”*

(Teacher)

**84** All the teachers demonstrated a questioning stance and without exception employed a diverse range of questions within their teaching. This was reported both by the researchers and the Creative Partners. Questioning was common amongst the experienced practitioners, but in this research the open ended speculative nature of the questions was particularly noticeable and the consequences of this questioning stance even more so. The quality of the learning situation would appear in part to be measured by the quality of the conversations that it involves.

**85** Whilst the teachers were conscious of wanting to help pupils develop a questioning stance, they were surprisingly unaware of the techniques which they used to do this. Two approaches stand out. Generative questions appeared particularly effective in encouraging open-ended reasoning. Reverse questions, in which the query was thrown back to the pupil who asked it, were equally engaging. The research feedback (offered from both the researchers' and the Creative Practitioners' perspectives as well as the teachers' diaries) appeared to help the teachers recognise their stance and affirm its evident value.

**86** Many of the teachers sought to actively model question seeking and problem finding. Whilst the nature of their questions varied, they were frequently asked in a focused and genuinely interested manner. The teachers' personal interest in the children was often demonstrated in this way. For example, when Gary arrived at school wearing a number banner the teacher welcomed him and then said to the rest of the class *'I wonder who knows why Gary is wearing a number banner. I think I do!'* A significant proportion of the questions recorded were generative, creating further interest, enquiry and thinking. The questions were not in the main assessment driven or closed. There was considerable evidence of the teacher pondering on issues and demonstrating open ended thinking, as well as on occasion feigning ignorance to prompt deeper engagement.

**87** Often the teacher employed reverse questioning by turning children's questions back to them e.g. *How could you deal with this problem do you think? What ideas have you got?* This very high proportion of open questions asked by the teachers pushed the children back on their own resources, encouraged knowledge sharing, and fostered increased autonomy. For example Margaret asked *How could we make the music so that we could get a chance to get scared?* The teachers questions often encouraged speculative thinking e.g. *where do you think this photograph was taken?* Kelly also used lots of unusual and challenging questions about the handbags the children were designing with an emphasis on new ideas and new actions e.g. *How are you going to keep it closed? How can you keep the two halves together?* The teachers kept the children on track through their excellent questioning focus, asking probing and open ended questions which centred on thinking and generating ideas, e.g. *If I were to take another aerial photograph in 200 years time where would the waterfall be?*

## Encouraging pupils to ask questions

*"They got into some really deep things."*

(Teacher)

**88** It was clear that the teachers wanted the children to question and to identify questions about the various lesson foci. Kelly specifically positioned the children as researchers and enquirers and focussed on them generating questions. This was also the case in many of the other classrooms although sometimes less explicitly explained to the learners. As Dawn commented *'Creativity makes for a school where children are brave enough to make suggestions and ask questions and know that they'll have them listened to and come in buzzing with ideas. Rather than having things done to them it's about them being at the centre.'*

**89** The children's myriad questions were treated with respect and valued as genuine. On many occasions teachers sought to help the learners by acting as mirrors and reflecting back to them other questions, e.g. *'Did you hear what you just said?'* and *'So how could you solve this?'* In this way the teachers sought to ensure the autonomy of the learners. Many of the small group challenges which were set were enquiry based and framed around the children's own questions. In one class the teacher gradually drew more and more of the class into a discussion about foxes attacking hens. Towards the end, one little girl who had not contributed verbally before came up to her teacher and offered an innovative idea about



creating decoys to distract the fox. This genuinely innovative idea grew out of the open ended and speculative discussion.

## Encouraging independence and responsibility

*"I treat all children as equals. They **are** equals."*

(Teacher)

**90** The amount of free movement around a classroom is one measure of the pupils' independence. In this study, it was noted that almost all pupils were allowed to talk to each other and move around without constraint. One observer commented *'There was an almost total absence of direct control.'* Another noted that *'children were able to wander around and beyond the room.....there was no sense of oppression or overbearing rules.'* This sense of independence also extended to work that pupils were doing and was remarked upon by the observers, teachers and children alike. In all the classes there was a strong sense that pupils were in control of their work and proud of their independence.

**91** Both the teachers and Creative Practitioners were aware of the way they were handing power to their pupils. For their part too, pupils seemed aware of the confidence that their teachers placed in them. As one child eloquently declared *'She doesn't keep us in a box'.*

**92** Responsibility is a central part of trust and the two serve to reinforce each other. The children were responsible for their own learning and shared this responsibility with their teacher. In one of the classes the teacher asked the children how they wanted her to arrange the furniture in the room. In another, pupils were allowed to determine the parameters of their homework exercise. It was interesting too to see how information technology appeared to be giving pupils' greater responsibility for their learning. Not only was this evident in observations but pupils remarked on it, saying they liked using laptops because of the freedom this gave them.

## Working together

*"Working with a Creative Practitioner has made me question and reconsider the nature of learning."*

(Teacher)

**93** Each of the teachers observed and interviewed used group work as an important feature of their lessons. Sizes of groups differed and the percentage of time devoted to grouped activity varied, but the authenticity of the interactions between group members remained constant. As Maria observed, working together can make *'much bigger things happen'* and all the classes observed were remarkable for the relaxed sense of cooperation they displayed. Working together can promote creativity and creative thinking because the genuine meeting of minds offers different perspectives on experience.

**94** The researchers saw a number of telling examples of specific pedagogical planning or practice to maximise on the potential of co-operative work. In two of the classes studied, working together was clearly a major objective for the small groups of potentially very disaffected pupils. Specific and subject based outcomes were subservient to social and personal learning intentions and the sense of being creative was essential to this. Cathy commented, *'...creative activity with Creative Partnerships is really important because they can build relationships with artists, with each other and with members of staff here....'*

**95** In the creative teachers' classrooms, groupings were genuinely used to promote interaction and group work. In Maria's class children worked together to make different parts of a giant dragon to parade around the playground. In Kelly's class children worked in teams either to find out about a particular aspect of Egyptians or to help each other think about the

contents of their head teacher's handbag. It was in Kelly's class too that the children used 'thinking partners' to good effect to promote thinking skills. Also noteworthy was the way Kelly deliberately pointed out examples of good listening behaviour e.g. *'I love the way you turned round to listen to Lorna'*.

**96** The establishment of the group ethos was encapsulated by frequent use of the word 'we', remarked upon by all researchers. As a result children were observed to be working well together and sharing materials calmly and easily. Again such sharing and good community behaviour was picked out for praise, *'...So polite and well mannered, we like that in 3T don't we?'* Identification with the group was also expressed in children's comments. One child clearly spoke for the group when she offered, *'...we'd much rather have friend who listened to us.'* Also as Charlotte observed, *'Now that I have mixed ability grouped them their speaking and listening is a joy to watch, they definitely work much better as a group...scaffolding each other's learning'*

**97** Genuine group work can have a creative impact. Maria articulated the view that creativity was stimulated by sharing thoughts and arriving at shared understandings, *'I think everyone has a certain way of thinking ...ideas can be shared and if they are explained in a particular way, because we all listen in different ways..., they can be shared.'*

**98** At a secondary level, the association between group work and creativity was not nearly as marked as it was with younger children. Mike saw group competitiveness as a spur to learning and Chris used it more as a method of assessment and consolidation. However, in a class with various learning difficulties Cathy also working at secondary level, asked three girls and a boy who had made up an impromptu dance to give it a communication theme, thus stimulating creative responses.

**99** Finally, the teachers who had been involved in working closely with Creative Practitioners all commented unprompted upon the significance of the children working with them with *'really talented folk like Paul.'* *'Richard really listens to them but he doesn't speak down to them, he works with them, not for them and that makes all the difference really.'*

## Establishing a clear learning focus

*"Creative teachers have an ability to allow children to think that they don't know everything. They ask them questions that make them (the teacher) appear slightly vulnerable."*  
(Creative Practitioner)

**100** In all the lessons observed there was a clear learning focus, communicated to the children at the outset and then revisited at various points throughout the session. Direct and immediate feedback was offered in relation to the expectations during the session and the children were consistently brought back to the main aim of the session. As Mike observed *'there is nothing wrong in aiming high and telling them so.'*

**101** The teachers sought to ensure the children saw the meaning and value of their work and were able to contextualize the learning intentions in an often wider and more purposeful frame. The teachers, whilst conscious of staying close to the learning objectives, were ready to adapt to changing circumstances and the children's developing interests.

## Ethos

*"The most creative teachers show a marked openness and willingness to learn"*  
(Creative Practitioner)

**102** It would be impossible to explore classroom ethos without referring to pedagogy and the

teacher's personal qualities. Thus this section overlaps with the previous ones. However, it also takes the argument further as it shows how the features which characterise creative teaching are couched in a values context. The key themes which we identified include:

- environment reflects positive values
- environment promotes positive engagement
- environment encourages children to feel safe
- environment encourages speculation and risk taking
- work with appropriate teaching and learning materials
- impact of school leadership.

**103** Ethos is central to a consideration of what makes a creative teacher. The ethos pervading in two parallel classrooms may be substantially different depending upon the character and actions of the teacher and other adults in the classroom. One of the key features of creative teaching is that it involves arranging resources, children and lesson plans so that authentic group work happens and generates new thinking or new products. Establishing a general atmosphere of trust and security is also crucial.

### **Environment reflects positive values**

*"Pupils were given the opportunity to contribute to the planning of the lesson and their working environment. The date for handing in homework was negotiated and agreed."* (Teacher).

**104** A number of words to describe the atmosphere of classes recurred consistently in observations. The following terms, correlated between observations, interviews and diaries were used to describe the ethos: *enthusiasm, freedom, flexibility, confidence, self esteem, celebration, relaxed, happy, questioning, engaged, humour* and *focus*. Such vocabulary emphasises positive values.

**105** Teachers were conscious of the way the physical environment contributed to creating an ethos, although a typical style of classroom environment was not identified. Some, like Kelly's class, were ordered, tidy and clean and children knew where materials were. Others were more haphazard and 'arty', but children had the confidence to collect materials from sources they clearly knew well. Key Stage 1 classrooms were characteristically more celebratory and '*visually interesting with displays and mobiles*', whereas secondary classrooms were more often randomly timetabled and the displays were not necessarily subject or class specific.

**106** The values relating to personal relationships like trust, listening and respect between children and between teacher and children, were extremely well represented in every classroom. The teachers' comments also reflected positive values.

**107** Some of the values which the teachers promoted had an ethical dimension. It has been noted earlier how the term 'we' was used to describe classroom activities and to denote equality between teacher and pupil (see para 90). Several teachers made a point of ensuring that children took the lead in conversations, explanations and reports. Some attempted to shift the locus of control towards the children by taking a genuinely quizzical stance over issues. Respect for the children was a related, common feature: some showed respect loudly and theatrically, others quietly, almost self effacingly. The following researcher observation was entirely typical: *'The dominant value in the room seemed to be one of respect for the children, shown in the quiet and calm way the teacher interacted with each child in turn and the way she did not allow low level challenges to sway her from this attitude.'*

**108** Many of the teachers expressed their belief in the importance of the class as a community in the liberal use of nicknames and terms like 'darling', 'guys', and 'sweetie'.

Others showed their interest by asking children about what they did at the weekend or other important events in the week outside the school curriculum. One teacher invited children to say something personally to them during the register and responded personally to each one. Mike's remark in his diary, '*...they know me too well,*' was in the context of the joking and light hearted atmosphere which characterised the observations in his class. The sense of personal security was remarked upon by many children in interview and noted by the observers. One of them commented: '*It was clear from the interactions between pupils and the teacher that the children felt secure that their personal needs and circumstances were being taken into account. For example the teacher stood by the door to welcome each child at the start of the lesson*'.

## **Environment promotes emotional engagement**

*"There was a real sense of love in the room between the teacher and the children. No other word could describe the atmosphere"*

(Researcher)

**109** In all the lessons observed the pupils seemed engrossed in what they were doing. Where possible children were provided with practical work, but desk exercises were also in evidence. The teaching was varied, used a range of techniques and was organised on an individual, group and whole class basis. It involved and engages the learners. There was a sense of the new and original, regardless of where a piece of work fitted in the wider curriculum

**110** The researchers noted many ways of getting children emotionally engaged. In one geography lesson, for example, the teacher skilfully steered a spontaneous conversation about a football match into a discussion about the problem of travelling by public transport and more general planning issues. In another lesson the teacher provided the children with a short educational video, which clearly captured their attention. Practical work had a powerful motivating effect too. The observers noted how pupils became '*totally engaged*' when making things and solving real life problems.

**111** The way in which pupils were given control over their learning and were able to gain a sense of ownership was significant. From a teacher's point of view this involved an element of trust. Maria commented in interview that when she was relaxed she felt able to give the children materials which others might not be confident to supply. From the child's point of view being given responsibility is highly affirmative, it has the effect of making them feel, as one Year 9 child put it, '*part of the lesson.*'

**112** The links between trust, motivation and engagement are neatly summed up in this cameo reported by one of the researchers. The young pupils, having been firmly guided in whole class work, were given the freedom to make their own ice cream sundaes using a range of resources provided. On the way out to break at the end of the activity one child spontaneously voiced to another '*I love this school.*' Informal emotional remarks like this provide invaluable feedback on the ethos which has been established and the learners' engagement.

## **Environment encourages pupils to feel safe, valued and trusted**

*"If children have high well-being they are going to take risks and have a go.... They are more inclined to be free; to be creative"*

(Teacher).

**113** In all the classrooms observed, the teachers actively sought to build the pupils' self esteem. Praising pupils and reinforcing positive behaviour was a common feature. In one class the teacher went out of her way to praise pupils for their achievements, telling them how proud she was of them. In another the teacher burst out, '*Ryan, how clever you are! You've*

*made my day.*' In a third the teacher used merit points as a reward for good work. One particularly telling example, which indicates how praise can be internalised, occurred at the end an activity with a lower junior class. When the teacher told the children they had been doing Year 6 work, one boy suggested they should give themselves a clap!

**114** Self-esteem and self-confidence were promoted in more subtle ways too. Displays and examples of children's work adorned the walls of all the classrooms making them both more personal and visually interesting. One teacher reported in her interview that the school had a weekly celebration assembly. *'Celebrating things,'* she declared, *'is a massive part of creativity.'* Another teacher went a stage further and talked in her diary about the importance of fostering a positive attitude towards learning in parents. They too, she argued, are partners in learning and ultimately what matters is to promote the pupils' sense of well-being.

**115** The lesson observations and interviews highlight the importance of a supportive environment which is both relaxed and friendly. Not only was there a *'friendly and lively chatter'* in several classrooms but there was also a general sense of security and warmth. In one classroom it was observed how the teacher *'focussed squarely on the children, gave them much positive affirmation and a very personal smile'* In another school the teacher reflected in their interview *'There's this level of trust around the room. They know when they come here there are no hassles, no telling off. It just isn't there'*

**116** Trying to isolate the features of a supportive environment is inevitably problematic but the quality of relationships was evident. All the reports noted how the teachers interacted with the pupils, were aware of their needs and respected them as individuals. As one observer put it *'the tenor was warm and accepting – not judgemental. The way that pupils related to each other was also striking. Children were encouraged to listen to each others' ideas, to work co-operatively and help each other.'*

## **Environment encourages speculation and risk taking**

*It's all about taking chances... letting them take risks with their own learning.*  
(Teacher)

**117** All the classrooms in the study were characterised by strong sense of security, safety and personal self confidence on the part of both teachers and learners. In such emotionally secure contexts, it seemed more possible for pupils to feel supported when taking risks and expressing curiosity. In addition, the researcher noted the children had a marked degree of autonomy and control over their learning; such agency in itself fosters self –determination and the capacity to take risks.

**118** It was clear that for some teachers the opportunity to work with Creative Practitioners had in fact involved a degree of risk. Many had capitalised upon this and had begun to perceive the need for increasing support for risk taking in the classroom. For example, *'The Creative Practitioner freed me up from the mindset I had got into; this mindset of using the NLS and now I listen to the children more.'*

**119** On occasions the teachers encouraged pupils to take risks although this was more difficult to determine from the available data. For example Dawn commented *'I was conscious today of trying to build in challenge and risk before they tire.'* Charlotte too noted in her diary how she encouraged adventurous thinking *'Because they were asking in depth specific questions I just rolled with it because it showed me exactly where their interests lie and then moving it on that much more. So it was a risk particularly for the less able, but they were able to take risks on questions that were appropriate for them.'*

## Work with appropriate teaching and learning materials

*"We have quite a number of computer suites, so very rarely do we have a problem getting to a computer now."*

(Teacher)

**120** The schools visited were all more than adequately resourced, and if anything extra was needed for a particular activity it was found, bought or borrowed. As Maria observed *'we make sure we share resources so we don't have to re-invent the wheel all the time.'* New technologies were in evidence with smart boards and lap tops and digital cameras in fairly constant use in the secondary contexts. Two critical issues which related to resources included the fact that the children in each class had very good access to the resources and knew where they were and that they could make use of them. As Charlotte put it, *'I keep saying to them that its their classroom and they have free access to it no matter what resources they need.'*

**121** In one school the teachers made inventive use of smart boards. Pupils were asked to arrange a list of features under a number of pre-selected headings. Using their fingers they moved the words round 'magically' to an appropriate new position. As smart boards become more common it is likely that their interactive qualities will be exploited by creative teachers in a wide range of ways.

## Work with Creative Practitioners and the wider community

*"We've been so lucky to work with Richard who is a clever teacher and a good communicator with little children, I have learnt so much from him."*

(Teacher commenting on Creative Practitioner)

**122** The impact of working with a Creative Practitioner was clearly evident in all the schools. Collaborative working led to a marked enhancement of teachers' knowledge and understanding as well as an increased focus upon creativity. The opportunity to have regular contact with and to work with such practitioners in the classroom also prompted at least two of the schools to allocate more finance to pay for additional resources. As well as supporting the Practitioner's immediate activities, the money also supported the teachers in extending this kind of work. The second year of working with others was clearly perceived as more valuable than the first, particularly in the case of a sustained relationship.

**123** The teachers found working with a Creative Practitioner valuable in different ways. For instance, Dawn commented, *'For me it was all about questioning him all the time and making the most of having a specialised adult in your room to question and look at how he does things and learn.'* In contrast, her colleague in the same school who had worked less directly and for a shorter period of time with Creative Practitioners perceived considerable benefit to the children in terms of their linguistic repertoire. *'The vocabulary the children use when working with Creative Practitioners is so different. They are introduced to new terms and I find that over time these become part of their vocabulary and although its much more specialised in a way they don't see it that way and use it appropriately and are so stretched conceptually.'*

**124** Though only one of the teachers worked directly with a Creative Practitioner during the period of research, most had had contact with them through their previous year's work in wider contacts with the school. All, however, identified and commented upon Creative Partnerships' ideals and the influence of a Creative Practitioner on their school. These acted as a trigger for the approach they were adopting and also offered support in its delivery.

**125** In several schools the teachers specifically credited CP Kent with a change in their views about themselves as creative people. In addition, the research processes described in this report also helped to confirm teachers in their belief in themselves as creative beings,

with all the potential for originality and connection making exhibited by the Creative Practitioners. There was no doubt that in all the schools creativity and creative approaches to teaching had a high profile and this was perceived positively.

**126** In one school where CP Kent had conducted research, both the teachers interviewed noted how the researchers' questions had provoked new learning in themselves. In another school, the teacher reported that the involvement of a Creative Practitioner had had a powerful influence on individual children who had been given greatly increased self esteem through a radically changed curriculum inspired by the partnership. During the research conference too teachers said that their confidence and understanding of creative teaching had grown through the experience of working with CP Kent and being in a 'Creative Partnership School'.

**127** Interviews with the head teachers also highlighted the impact CP Kent had made on individual teachers. For example, *'Working with Richard has made her challenge herself more and now she has developed the Early Years' Curriculum so that it develops the interests of children. It's stunning to see. The poet too has made a difference and the teachers have been shocked to see/hear Early Year's poetry because of the emphasis on oral poetry and word play and the fact that it isn't always written down.'*

**128** In addition, the schools referred to receiving and welcoming visitors almost every week. One school, for example, had a storyteller, two visiting teachers, two students in training and two teaching assistants working in the classroom on a single observational day. This breadth of individuals offered rich opportunities to both children and staff and prompted a multitude of professional conversations. Such contacts in turn clearly promoted an increased sense of ownership of the idea of creativity among the teachers. Researchers from abroad also added to one school's sense of pioneering and planning a more consciously creative curriculum. One researcher had given Dawn an article she'd written on her teaching. As Dawn wrote in her diary *'How can any teacher fail to be influenced when they read such heady stuff relating to their work. It struck me that we usually learn the theory and then apply to our practice; here the work of Susan reverses that. Does every school need an academic friend like her?'*

## Impact of leadership

*"Everything here is so creatively based ... being creative is just second nature and it is purely because of the atmosphere of the school ... we are actively encouraged to think of the bigger picture."*  
(Teacher)

**129** Creativity was afforded high value in the four research schools. Each head teacher had put it high on the agenda and each school responded enthusiastically about their relationships with CP Kent. In interviews with head teachers, the principles of creativity, creative learning and teaching for creativity were clearly articulated and passionately expressed by the senior management. The head teachers and other leaders in school were fully aware of the issues involved in the creativity debate and particularly that it was an attribute not confined to the arts.

**130** Every teacher acknowledged the importance of leadership. Dawn articulated feelings expressed by several others: [our head teacher] *is very much, 'we'll try and see'... whereas a lot of people are under pressure to get children to hear things or do worksheets, we don't have that sort of pressure here because of the leadership of the school.'* In her diary Dawn noted, *'supportive leadership is crucial in encouraging teams to move forward by allowing the exploration of research into the impact [of creative teaching] on daily practice.'* Other colleagues also attributed the opportunities afforded to them (through working with Creative Practitioners) to the vision and leadership of their head teachers.

**131** At some stage in the research all the teachers referred to the support they had received from head teachers, deputy heads or department heads. The National Audit Office (BBC News, 11.01.2006) reminds us of the importance of head teachers in turning round failing schools, and it is clear from many areas of research that the whole atmosphere in all schools is very much linked with the leadership they receive. When teachers spoke of ‘the school’ it appeared from our sample that they generally mean something like, ‘*the school under the leadership of the current head teacher.*’

## Teacher perspectives from questionnaires

**132** The questionnaires which the eight creative teachers completed about their underlying philosophies revealed a wide range of values, theories and perspectives (Appendix F). As we had come to expect, there was no predictable pattern of teacher philosophy. All the teachers wished to qualify their judgements and many found the idea of placing a mark on a continuum problematic, often agreeing with Maria when she said, ‘*both [extremes] have importance.*’ Views on class organisation prompted the widest range of results. Two teachers opted firmly for the ‘whole class’ extreme of the spectrum while one felt that *all* modes of class organisation best expressed their teaching style and philosophy. There were however some commonalities:

- All teachers felt that *learning* was more the result of environmental influences than of genetic inheritance
- Almost all felt that their *lesson outcomes* focussed upon process rather than product
- The majority felt that the *teacher’s role* was as co-learner with children, though Mike pointed out that there were important times when as a teacher he had to be an instructor.

**133** These results generally line up with our core findings that creative teachers focus on curiosity, connection making, originality and ownership. These key themes which operate personally and pedagogically as well at the level of ethos are detailed further in section five. Our sample teachers’ interest in process, their commitment to children’s independence as learners to their own learning and their interest in working together are all well evidenced in the observations, interviews, diaries and children’s comments. Many of the aspects of creative pedagogy (questioning, relevance, link making) and personality (willingness to take risks, curiosity and an interest in children’s lives) suggest that process is likely to be a major focus for these teachers.

**134** There was no clear agreement on other aspects of teacher philosophy.

- Teachers were evenly divided between those who felt *behaviour* was more a matter of self control and those who felt it was more teacher regulated. Interestingly there was no correlation between age group taught and teacher opinions on behaviour.
- They were also split on the *purposes of education*, half feeling education was more a preparation for adult life and half that it had more of an intrinsic value. Perhaps predictably, secondary teachers alone were represented on the education as ‘preparation for life’ end of the spectrum.
- There was also a Key Stage split in views related to *creativity* itself. Teachers of children 4 -11 felt that creativity was perhaps taught, whilst most teachers of Key Stage 3 and 4 felt that innate ability was more involved.

**135** Answers regarding teaching style were interestingly divided. The continuum in the questionnaire had ‘focus on play’ at one end and ‘focus on work’ at the other. Whilst Dawn reminded us that ‘*work is play for Reception children*’, several primary and secondary



teachers placed their mark firmly in the middle of the continuum. Indeed most did not express a view far from the middle and only one teacher suggested that there was a significantly stronger focus on work rather than play.

## Conclusion

**136** The detailed analysis of the findings confirms the validity of using the three dimensions of creative practice adopted for reporting purposes. Although these are in many ways of equal importance, it was clear from the interviews with both the teachers and school managers that a supportive ethos was essential to all the other dimensions of creative practice. We would therefore suggest that there may be a hierarchy of factors which influence creative practice. This is an area that merits further and investigation.

# 5

## DISCUSSION of KEY THEMES

**137** The commentary and analysis of creative teaching that is offered in this section draws upon the data documented in section four and connects to the literature and theoretical perspectives reviewed in section two. The schools featured in this research were all involved with CP Kent and were by definition, therefore unrepresentative. However, the advantage of this in methodological terms was that it enabled the senior management of the CP Kent chosen schools to identify teachers recognised as creative professionals. By involving the teachers in documenting their creative practice and through direct observation, interviews and work with the children we were able to move towards an understanding of the features of their practice, personally, pedagogically and in terms of the ethos created in their classrooms.

**138** The pursuit of narrow quantifiable targets coupled with the relentless quest for higher standards which has dominated education over the last decade, has tended to obscure the personal and individual dimensions of teaching and learning and has led to the reification of checklists of curriculum objectives. In contrast, this research did not seek to create an index of features of creative teachers but to throw light on the personal qualities, pedagogy and ethos in the classrooms of creative education professionals. Creative teaching, is both multilayered and complex, and at the close of this research it is clear that certain core characteristics are more in evidence than others. The teachers in the study, all of whom had been identified by the senior management as highly creative, combined a range of personal qualities and pedagogical strategies and thoughtfully created environments of possibility in their classrooms. In particular, it is clear that each was developing a creative mindset and that each demonstrated a number of core characteristics. These were evident in all three dimensions of creative practice at a personal level, in relation to pedagogy and in relation to classroom ethos. The main themes were:

- Curiosity and a questioning stance
- Connection making
- Originality
- Autonomy and ownership

The teacher's own perception of themselves as a creative role model also emerged as a contributory factor. The role of Creative Practitioners in helping the teachers to develop their self image and a creative mindset was significant. The concept of a creative state of mind is examined first.

### A creative state of mind

**139** The teachers in this research all had a belief in themselves as creative beings. For some, calling their teaching 'creative' was a relatively new and tentative feature, whilst others had recognised and in some cases honoured their own creativity for much of their lives. All were more conscious of using their creative capacity in the context of education since the inception of and support offered through CP Kent. Personally, each teacher related a similar story regarding the impact of developing a more creative frame of mind; they remarked upon enhanced job satisfaction, success in pupil learning and the pleasure and engagement which they encountered through teaching creatively. It is perhaps significant that none of the teachers equated creativity exclusively with high levels of artistic skill or product, they recognised 'little c' creativity in their words, actions and ideas (Boden, 2001).

**140** With regard to their pedagogic practice it was clear that the teachers were all focused on teaching for creativity and on developing their pupils' creative mindsets. This meant that they employed diverse pedagogical strategies to enable their pupils to ask questions, make connections, generate innovative ideas and take ownership of their learning. So whilst each teacher gave evidence of their own creative thinking they were focused upon developing similar ways of thinking and learning in their pupils. In this regard, contact with CP Kent and particularly their assigned Creative Practitioners, seemed to have made these teachers both more sensitive to their own inherent creativity and to ways in which they could develop their children's creativity.

**141** In relation to the wider ethos within which these teachers worked, it was evident that the senior management of the schools involved provided a supportive ethos which actively encouraged the development of the teachers' creative dispositions. Most of the teachers in our sample had had their creativity identified for them through their work with Creative Practitioners, through the research itself or through colleagues. However, without the overarching creative mindset of their schools, enabled through working with CP Kent, these teachers might never have discovered the personal and professional satisfaction in creative endeavour which they expressed in interviews, observations and diaries.

**142** The difference between being a good teacher and being a creative teacher is, we perceive, perhaps one of emphasis and intention. Teachers in this study had been labelled as creative, and this very act of recognition appeared to have made a significant impact upon them. The findings suggest that these creative teachers were increasingly alert to the potential mental connections between imagination and personal/professional experience both when they were planning and when they were teaching. The evidence from the interviews with teachers demonstrated the high value they attribute to curiosity and risk taking, and to the discovery of imagination and curiosity in themselves and their pupils. Recognising and exercising personal creativity appeared to have become an important part of their professional and personal meaning making. Whilst all good teachers reward originality, we suggest that creative ones depend on it to enhance their well-being and that of their pupils. Furthermore, they see the development of creativity and originality as the distinguishing mark of their teaching.

**143** In sum, the ability to be creative may be one of the few distinguishing marks of human behaviour, but not all of us feel as if we are creative beings. The creative teacher is, we suggest, one who is aware of, and values the human attribute of creativity in themselves and seeks to promote it in others. The creative teacher has a creative state of mind, and one which continues to develop (Figure 4).

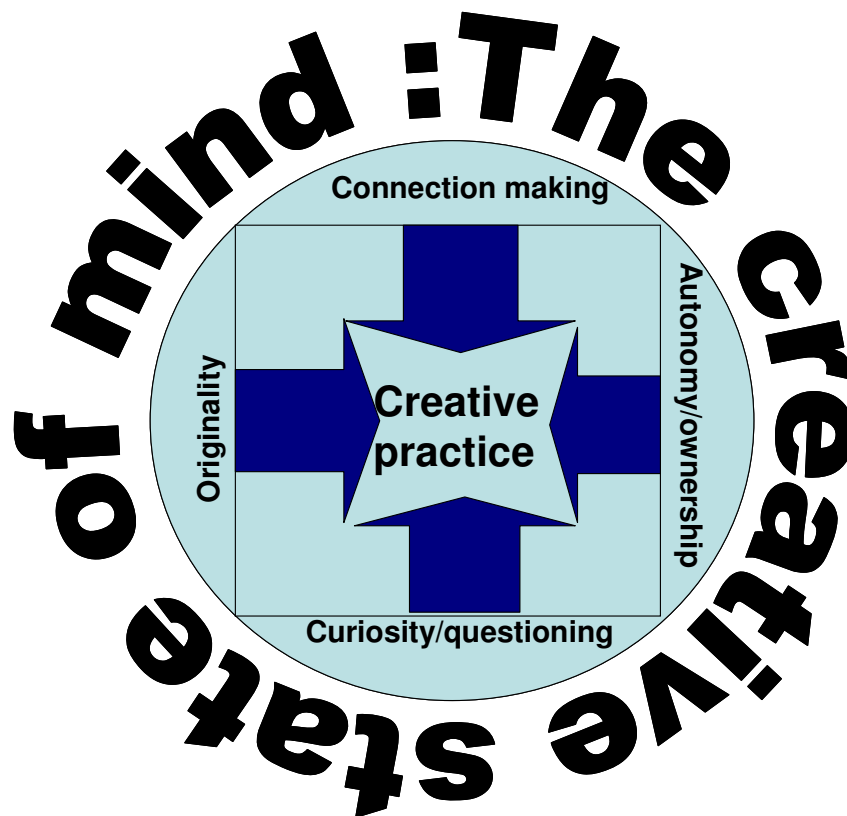


Figure 4 *Creative practice stems from a creative state of mind.*

## Curiosity

**144** As individuals the teachers in this study all demonstrated remarkable curiosity and a deep desire to learn more about the world. Professionally many were involved in undertaking further qualifications and reflected a genuine interest in advancing their own learning in different domains. They were also curious about the children they taught and saw knowledge of the young learners as an essential feature of their practice. The teachers shared their curious nature with the learners. Many felt that working with Creative Practitioners had made them re-consider the nature of teaching and learning.

**145** Pedagogically, the teachers frequently adopted a questioning stance. They employed multiple open questions and questions which passed the control back to the learners encouraging increased autonomy and involvement in the process. Their teaching styles differed, but the role of framing questions and the extensive use made of tentative speculative questions was noticeable (Fisher, 2003). Such questions demonstrated to the children that the formulation of a problem is just as important as the resolution of one. The teachers encouraged the children to identify and share their own questions and sought to challenge their thinking and foster risk taking. The Creative Practitioners too asked unusual questions and had clearly modelled for the teachers a deeply curious enquiry based approach to their work.

**146** Being able and willing to have a go at expressing oneself, asking questions and generating possible thoughts in response involves talking risks (Craft, 2005; Grainger, 2006). This is an integral element of creativity. But such risk taking is only possible in safe and affirmative environments, in which individuals feel supported and do not expect to be judged. It was clear that the ethos created by these teachers both in individual lessons and in their

classrooms was positive, secure and inclusive. The environments observed appeared to encourage questioning, both confident questioning and the more tentative and reflective questions which emerge in small group conversational contexts. Indeed the children's curiosity and their questions were often celebrated and profiled in the environment, both verbally and in the physical displays.

## Making connections

**147** The creative teachers in this study recognised connection-making as central to their craft and to themselves as individuals. They were committed to personalising their teaching and often made personal and other connections and voiced these to the pupils, modelling the process of sense making through imaginative connections. They were aware of potential and existing connections across the curriculum and sought to avoid the limiting nature of subject boundaries. They also knew a great deal about the children's own needs and interests, and saw this as essential knowledge in order to facilitate their ability to make connections in different contexts and to see the purpose of their work (Richhart, 2002).

**148** The pedagogical strategies employed and the diverse teaching styles and entry points offered, appeared to enable new connections to be formed in the minds and work of the pupils. In the lessons observed, the children had little difficulty in making links between subjects and within the subject, they also demonstrated the ability to make connections to their personal lives, as modelled by their teachers. The curriculum offered by these teachers had real relevance to the learners and through the questioning stance adopted, the teachers actively sought to encourage pupils to make associations and connections.

**149** The environments of the creative teachers tended to be open and encouraging contexts for learning, in which respect for the learners was genuine and their emotional comfort and engagement was thoughtfully considered. There was some evidence that this relaxed yet focused atmosphere tended to foster lateral thinking and the making of connections.

## Originality

**150** Many teachers involved in the research initially reported that they did not feel they were particularly original in their teaching. Perhaps one reason for this is the restricted and often exclusive meanings assigned to words like 'originality' which can refer to any thought or action new to the person who instigates it. On closer questioning and an examination of their own practice, all teachers interviewed came to the conclusion that they indeed employed numerous original techniques and had innovative ideas in the school and classroom. Some acknowledged that the process of participating in this research project had caused them to recognise their own originality for the first time.

**151** Pedagogically, the creative teachers were assured and left space for uncertainty and the unknown (Claxton and Lucas, 2004). They demonstrated considerable flexibility and the capacity to respond spontaneously, shifting the orientation and focus of sessions in response to the children's interests and questions, yet still bearing in mind the long term intentions of the work. There was evidence of the teachers intervening in the children's learning in such a way as to generate innovative questions and unusual ideas on the part of the learners. There was also evidence that the Creative Practitioners too voiced original insights and enabled the students to make innovative connections.

**152** When the atmosphere in a school is one in which small examples of originality are identified and celebrated, then the concept of originality becomes more inclusive. This was

evident in all the schools in this research. Such affirmation helps teachers and children to identify and appreciate the development of their own creative thinking and the importance of novel ideas.

## Ownership

**153** The creative teachers all showed a considerable degree of autonomy and ownership in their classrooms. They felt supported by the ethos and management of the school and the work with CP Kent also enabled them to develop a strong sense of their own professional autonomy. Their personal and professional flexibility and confidence indicated that they were able to make their own choices and defend these if necessary. None felt hide bound by National Curriculum constraints and all had exerted their own professional autonomy and wished to offer such independence to the children as well.

**154** Pedagogically, a critical part of the teachers' practice focused on the development of agency and self determination. The teachers' trust, interest and respect for the children's ideas, facilitated and bolstered the youngsters' sense of autonomy and the degree to which the learners were in control of their own learning. The children were frequently set small group tasks which they had to organise for themselves and this independence was expected of even the youngest learners. The teachers and the Creative Practitioners with whom they worked were aware of handing control to the children and collaborative group work was common. This appeared to engender a greater degree of self-direction and provided scope for collaborative creativity.

**155** The classroom ethos of the creative professionals also reflected this central focus on the need for children to shape their own learning and share or even control the learning agenda (Woods and Jeffrey, 1996). They were genuinely viewed as co-participants who had to make decisions for themselves (in consultation with each other) about their own classroom environment. The rooms were regarded as the children's spaces, their classrooms and they were given a degree of responsibility for them.

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## 6 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**156** The ownership, motivation and feeling of self-worth that stem from creative activities have a very significant role to play in promoting an inclusive society. Creativity also has deep importance for education.

*Economically*, the mental agility, originality and other creative capacities of our workforce are vital ingredients for success in a competitive and increasingly globalised world.

*Academically*, creative thinking is one of the keys to raising standards and levels of understanding in and across all school subjects.

*Socially*, developing pupils' creative abilities enhances their sense of the relevance of education and connectedness with others.

*Personally*, creativity is a central source of meaning. Involvement in creative activity enhances the sense of personal happiness, well being and health.

**157** The implications and recommendations which have emerged from our research need to be viewed in the light of a number of basic premises. The most important of these are that:

- (a) creativity is a natural capacity and one of the defining characteristics of human beings
- (b) creativity describes a way of thinking and approaching the world that is original and curious and applies to all subjects and curriculum areas
- (c) creativity is teachable.

**158** The eight teachers, both primary and secondary in this study, all held a creative outlook. The value of identifying features which relate to creative teaching is that this may prompt teachers to see themselves as creative. Positive psychologists like Fredrickson, Csikszentmihalyi, Morris and Seligman suggest that the sense of the self as a creative being is an essential factor in feeling human and that creative activity is an efficient way of enhancing ordinary experience. It is important for more teachers to feel creative, particularly in terms of the related capacity/desire to enhance young people's creative development.

**159** This research indicates that there are a number of key features of creative teaching. It also highlights the importance of the whole school ethos and support structures such as CP in promoting creative teaching. Additionally, it suggests that through allowing themselves to make use of their creative capacity and artistry in the classroom context, teachers can find increased pleasure and satisfaction in their work.

**160** It is recognised that this study only involved a small number of schools and teachers. In future it will be important to establish the application of these findings in other schools and in a full range of subject disciplines. More importantly perhaps, since creative teaching is likely to, but may not necessarily, lead to the development of learner creativity. Data on students' creative development also needs to be collected. In this way the interplay between creative teaching and teaching for creativity may be explicated. Furthermore, the schools involved in this study had worked intensively with CP Kent and had experienced significant support from them. It would therefore be interesting to ascertain whether the characteristics identified are in evidence in teachers who are working in less apparently creative schools.

**160** In order to clarify our recommendations, we have divided the implications into three sections, each addressing a different audience – schools, Creative Partnerships and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) institutions (Figure 5).

Implications for schools and teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers need help to recognise their own creativity, whatever their subject specialism</li> <li>• Schools and teachers need to prize a questioning stance which encourages pupils to undertake their own enquiries and fosters their curiosity</li> <li>• Schools and teachers need to exert their professional autonomy to construct the curriculum in conjunction with pupils and foster learner autonomy</li> <li>• Schools and teachers need to celebrate and share examples of originality in both teachers and young learners.</li> </ul>
Implications for Creative Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative Partnerships should continue to support teachers by promoting whole school change and development</li> <li>• Creative Partnerships should explicitly devote its resources towards whole school change and mutual ownership of the projects initiated in each school.</li> <li>• Creative Partnerships needs to build on its successes by working with ITE institutions – key levers for educational change</li> </ul>
Implications for Initial Teacher Education institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ITE institutions need to highlight connections within and between subjects</li> <li>• ITE institutions need to foster a creative mindset and originality in lesson planning, evaluation and delivery</li> <li>• ITE institutions should aim to foster creative practice in their staff and all teacher trainees</li> <li>• ITE institutions should consider developing partnerships with Creative Practitioners in order to develop creative learning experiences for trainee teachers</li> </ul>

Figure 5 Summary of recommendations for schools, Creative Partnerships and ITE institutions

**161** Educational change only happens slowly. There are no quick fixes and the recommendations outlined here are unlikely to yield immediate results. Nor will the outcomes be easy to quantify. However, there is clear evidence that these creative teachers, working in schools with clear leadership and with CP Kent support were engaging the learners and fostering their own and the children's creativity.



**162** In conclusion, the creative teacher is aware of and values the human attributes of creativity in themselves. The creative teacher has a creative state of mind and seeks to foster such a mindset in young people. If the teachers of today and tomorrow are to develop more creative frames of mind they will need support. It will fall to teacher training institutions and later development opportunities to profile teachers' development and foster their curiosity, connection making, ownership and originality, both as people and as classroom practitioners.

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## Headteacher's Interviewing Schedule

### 1. Introduction

Explain purpose of project and our involvement

### 2. Ethics

Explain ethics and how we will handle this. No one will be asked to do/say anything they are uncomfortable with. All information is confidential. Right to opt out at any time, even retrospectively. We will explain ethics to teachers and children when we start working with them. Do they mind if we take notes now?

### 3. Creative Partnerships

Why/how did their school get involved?

Who is their creative partner and how is the relationship evolving?

How is creativity viewed in their school/fit in with ethos?

Where does creativity fit into the School Development Plan?

Is creativity just another band-wagon?

### 4. Identifying Teachers

Can they suggest two teachers from any area of the curriculum who they think are highly creative.

What do these teachers do which makes them creative? Examples please.

### 5. Timetable

Meet teachers in April

First observation in early May – interview, annotated drawing, focus group, cameras/video recording of creative moments

Second observation in late May

Data Surgery 23 June. Full supply cover

### Notes for Teachers Participating in Research

*Creativity for Tomorrow* is a small-scale research project being conducted by tutors from Canterbury Christ Church University on behalf of Kent Creative Partnerships. The aim of the project is to explore aspects of creative teaching to see if there are any common qualities which might be of value to schools in other situations. Your school has been identified by Creative Partnerships for the quality of its creative practice. You are one of a number of teachers who the head teacher or senior management team believe we might usefully approach.

There are four schools – two primary and two secondary – involved in this research, all which have benefited from projects developed in conjunction with Creative Partnerships. What we are seeking to do is to celebrate positive aspects of your practice and see the different ways in which you encourage pupils to be creative. We propose the following methodology to provide an element of triangulation and allow different voices to be heard:

- initial discussion about the project with head teacher or member of senior management team
- observation by researcher of two sample lessons in your class at monthly intervals (early May – early June 2005)
- discussion with a focus group of three children who will then compile a simple photographic record or video diary of ‘creative moments’ during the research period
- annotated drawings of ‘creative moments’ by all children in class
- interview with you about your perceptions of teaching and creativity, including a short questionnaire
- simple diary of creative moments compiled by yourself
- interview with artists from Creative Partnerships about their involvement

We are inviting all participating teachers to a meeting on June 23<sup>rd</sup> (1-5pm at Canterbury) where we will be able to share findings from the project. Funds are available for supply cover for this event.

#### Ethical considerations

We would like to stress from the outset that our research will be conducted according to normal ethical principles. All schools, teachers and children will be anonymous. We will explain the purpose and nature of the project to everyone involved and obtain their consent. We will share our findings and any notes or recordings that we make with all those involved. Should any of the participants wish to retract something that they have said or done they will at full liberty to do so.

We will seek full permission to use any photographs of pupils in any publication or report on our work.

## Diary/notes of creative moments

During the period of the research (approximately one month) we would like to you keep a simple diary or set of notes in which you record examples of how you promote creativity in your everyday practice. These creative moments may take a variety of different forms and could include situations where an idea suddenly occurs to you that you have not had before, the point at which you see a new link or connection, the circumstances in which you help a pupil to grasp a new idea, the casual comment from a pupil which shows they have been mulling something over and made sense of it in their own way perhaps by relating it their personal experience. Your notes might vary from a single sentence or phrase to a detailed description of a learning situation.

Your diary will provide important research evidence that we hope will complement the photographs/video diary made by the pupil focus group. It would be extremely useful if you could aim to include around half a dozen entries each week.



## Appendix C

### Interview with class teacher

(To be conducted after first lesson observation and tape recorded)

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. Where did you train and what are your qualifications?
3. Are there any other experiences which you draw on significantly in your teaching?
4. What is your current position and responsibilities?
5. What first attracted you to teaching?
6. What changes and developments have you witnessed since you first started teaching?
7. Have you been involved in any way with the work of Creative Partnerships in your school?  
If so, how?
8. Do you think of yourself as a creative teacher? If yes, give examples. If not, say why.
9. Do you think creativity is important and why?
10. Do you think creativity can be taught?
11. What do you think the impact of creative practice is on (a) individual children (b) your class (c) the school?

After interview share notes from class observation

12. After second interview ask if the research has impacted in any way on the teachers own practice.

#### *Interview with creative partner*

(To be tape recorded)

1. Do you think creativity is important and why?
2. Do you think creativity can be taught?
3. What attributes/qualities do you think creative teachers have?
4. In what ways do you think you have influenced teachers in the school to be more creative?
5. Do you think this impact will be long-lasting?

# Notes for researchers working with pupils

## Introduction

Explain purpose of the project to class. Describe methodology. Draw attention to ethical considerations.

## Annotated drawings

Provide pupils with appropriate drawings to annotate. Explain the exercise using following script.

We have been told your teacher is very creative. Perhaps he/she encourages you to think in new ways, perhaps the work you do in class makes you have new ideas, perhaps your teacher asks you questions that help you understand something for the first time, perhaps you find yourself working with others to puzzle out a problem.

We would like you to add notes to this drawing to show the ways in which you think your teacher helps you to be creative. You could add arrows, speech bubbles or labels. You may want to tell about just one example that sticks in your mind. You may be able to think of quite a number of things. What matters is that you are as honest as you can be. As we said earlier, nobody will be able to identify what it is that you say. Hopefully though you will be able to think of some really good things to tell us.

## Video diary/photographs

Three pupils will be selected to compile a video diary of creative moments over the research period. Ask them to complete around three minutes of film footage capturing different aspects of creativity. They might work collaboratively or individually or as a team and they may need to edit what they have filmed. Again, stress the ethical dimension. No film will be used that makes any of the participants feel uncomfortable.

## Appendix E

### Lesson Observation Grid

School..... Teacher .....

Lesson ..... Date..... Researcher .....

Teacher's Personal Qualities	Evidence or comment
Enthusiastic	
Confident	
Secure subject knowledge	
Curious/divergent thinker	
Aware of own creative practice	
<b>Teaching style/pedagogy</b>	
Flexible/varied teaching style	
Willing to take risks	
Asks unusual/challenging questions	
Encourages pupils to reflect/see connections	
Uses humour	
Plans activities that engage pupils emotionally	
Sets clear and high learning expectations	
Ensures pupils see purpose and value of their work	
Provides access to appropriate resources	
<b>Ethos</b>	
Pupils feel safe and valued	
Pupils have control of their work	
Learning is set in a values context	
Head teacher/senior management provide active leadership	

## Appendix F

### Class teacher's questionnaire

Name .....

The values, theories and perspectives that underpin your teaching are liable to have a significant impact on your classroom practice. So that we can take this into account in our research we are asking you to complete the following questionnaire. Decide where you would locate yourself on the continuum between these various poles or opposites either by drawing a circle or putting a cross at the 'best fit' point on the line.

#### Class organisation

Whole class

Individual

#### Teaching style

Focus on play

Focus on work

#### Behaviour

Mainly pupil  
self control

Mainly teacher  
regulated

#### Teacher's role

Co-learner

Instructor

#### Lesson outcomes

Focus on product

Focus on process

#### Learning

Chiefly result of  
environmental influences

Chiefly result of  
genetic inheritance

#### Creativity

Mostly natural ability

Mostly taught

#### Aim of education

Preparation for adult life

Learning for its own  
sake

## Appendix G

### Class Teacher's Reflections

*Creativity for Tomorrow* is a small-scale research project being conducted by Canterbury Christ Church University College on behalf of Creative Partnerships. The aim of the project is to explore aspects of creative teaching to see if there are any common qualities which might be of value to schools in other circumstances. We appreciate situations differ but your informed, intuitive responses to the following statements will be most valuable to us. Please complete the questionnaire using the number score (1-low, 6-high) to indicate your general response.

	low		medium		high	
<b>Your personal qualities</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
I am enthusiastic about what I teach						
I am a confident teacher						
I am secure in my subject knowledge						
I am a curious/divergent thinker						
I see myself as being creative in my teaching						
I have been influenced by Creative Partnerships (leave blank if not relevant)						
<b>Your teaching style/pedagogy</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
I use flexible/varied teaching styles						
I uses metaphor and analogy in my teaching						
I am willing to take risks in my teaching						
I ask unusual/challenging questions						
I encourage pupils to be reflective and make connections						
I provide children with immediate and constructive feedback						
I uses humour and anecdotes in my teaching						
I plan activities that engage pupils emotionally						
I set the children clear and high learning expectations						
I ensure pupils see purpose and value of their work						
I provide access to appropriate resources						
<b>Your classroom/school ethos</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Pupils feel safe and valued						
Pupils have control of their work in my lessons						
Learning is set in a 'values context' in my lessons and around the school						
The head teacher/senior management provide active supportive leadership						

Appendix H Drawings for pupils to annotate



## Ethical Statement for Participating Schools

*Creativity for Tomorrow* is a small-scale research project being conducted by tutors from Canterbury Christ Church University on behalf of Creative Partnerships. The aim of the project is to explore aspects of creative teaching to see if there are common qualities which might be value to schools in other situations. Your school has been identified by Kent Creative Partnerships for the quality of its creative practice and you are one of eight teachers who have been interviewed personally and who practice has been observed.

As with any academic research any findings or publications that are disseminated will follow established ethical conventions:

- 1) We will see that you are fully aware of the aims of the research and the details of the research methodology before beginning.
- 2) Your participation is entirely voluntary.
- 3) We will share our findings with you and involve you with the research as it develops
- 4) Any data (verbal, written, electronic) that we collect during the research will be confidential
- 5) You have the right to see any notes and data that we collect.
- 6) Should we record any information in the course of our research that you would rather not have recorded then we will delete all references to it at your request.
- 7) If you decide retrospectively that you would like something that we have recorded deleted we will again delete it immediately at your request
- 8) No school or teacher will be identified by name in reports and dissemination of findings and any references to schools and individuals will be entirely anonymous
- 9) We will see that you receive details of our findings.

Please complete the form below to agree to the protocols outlined above.

Name .....

School .....

Date .....

Signature .....

### Definition of terms

A number of specialist terms and abbreviations are used in this report. The following definitions indicate how they are used.

#### Creativity

We have followed the definition used by NACCE in *All Our Futures* namely: Imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value.

#### Creative Practitioner

The professional worker funded by Creative Partnerships to run a project in a school. Most Creative Practitioners are artists, dramatists or musicians. They range from the self-employed to employees of large organisations.

#### Creative Partnerships (CP)

The organisation set up nationally by central government to broker relationships at a regional level between schools and the cultural and creative sectors.

#### Creative Partnerships Kent (CP Kent)

The regional organisation set up by Creative Partnerships in Kent.

#### Triangulation

The use of different perspectives to help to ensure the objectivity of data and other research evidence.



