

Year Two Report: Build and Test

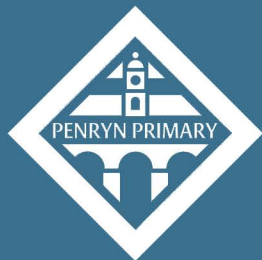
Penryn Creativity Collaborative Action Research Report

Research Question:

How do you develop children's independence through the use of reflective and self-regulation strategies?

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This Action Research project is part of the Penryn Creativity Collaboratives.

To cite the report please use:

Joyce, K. (2023). *How do you develop children's independence through the use of reflective and self-regulation strategies?* Penryn Creativity Collaboratives. <https://penryn-college.cornwall.sch.uk/creativity-collaboratives>

CONTEXT

Creativity Collaboratives is a national pilot programme of eight clusters of schools across England who are working together to test innovative practices in teaching for creativity, sharing learning to facilitate system-wide change. The programme, launched in October 2021, is funded by Arts Council England with generous support from the Freelands Foundation. Creativity Collaboratives: Penryn Partnership is the South-West pilot for the programme and over the course of three years is focused on exploring one central question:

Does teaching creativity across the curriculum lead to young people who are better prepared for their future in a changing workforce?

The Penryn Creativity Collaborative is led by Penryn College with eight local primary schools and research partner, the School of Education at the University of Exeter. This report presents findings from one of thirteen action research projects which took place during Year 2 of the Penryn Creativity Collaboratives programme. Each action research project was led by a teacher with students from their own school, included a link with a partner from a local industry, and the lead teacher was supported by researchers from the University of Exeter through a programme of training and mentoring.

Full findings from Year 2 can be found in the research report. To cite this report please use:

Crickmay, U. Childs, S. Chappell, K. (2023). *Preparing for a Creative Future: Year Two Report Build and Test* <https://penryn-college.cornwall.sch.uk/creativity-collaboratives>

Penryn Primary Academy is a school set in Cornwall which educates children from 2 to 11 years old. It is a part of the ASPIRE Academy trust which currently has 36 schools. There are 379 children on roll, 25% are SEN (5% have an Educational Health Care Plan), 34% are pupil premium and 4% have English as an additional language. It was graded as 'Good' by Ofsted in 2021 after previously being rated as 'Requires Improvement' in 2017.

Within the school, there are 85 pupils (25%) on the record of need (not including Nursery): 22 girls and 63 boys. 67 pupils (19%) are accessing SEN support which is 6% higher than the National average. 18 pupils (5%) have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) which is 3% higher than the National average and 4 additional pupils are through to 'part 2' of receiving an EHCP. There are also 15 pupils in the 'evidence gathering' stage of receiving an EHCP.

At Penryn Primary Academy, our aims are to give all children the knowledge, skills and understanding to achieve their full potential academically, socially and emotionally through high-quality teaching. This takes place in the context of a safe and nurturing school environment where each individual child is known, feels a part of the school community, and knows their learning journey is unique to them. High-quality provision is underpinned by strong relationships between all stakeholders.

We aim to give children the necessary skills to prepare them for life in modern British society and for all children to have the same opportunities and experiences as each other. We want to remove barriers, so that each child is aspirational, fulfilling their potential and reaching the highest of expectations that we have of them.

We are committed to working closely with our families, building strong relationships to ensure that they receive high quality support in order to secure the best outcomes for their children.

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DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Creative Skills

The research drew on the Penryn Partnership Creative Skills Framework developed during Year 1 of the Penryn Creativity Collaboratives programme (Crickmay, Childs & Chappell, 2023). The framework defined creative skills in a five-part model, and this action research focused on two sections of this model as follows:

Dialogue and collaboration

Drawing in notions of dialogue, questioning, communicating and collaborating, in both verbal and embodied ways. Features of this skill are:

- **Posing and responding to questions**, including finding and solving problems
- **Working individually, collaboratively and within a community;**
- **Negotiating difference**, responding appropriately to others' ideas

Honing and developing an idea

This combines the skills needed to develop creative ideas, incorporating aspects of self-reflection together with development of techniques and understanding of the rules, and the persistence needed to progress creative ideas and actions. Features of this skill are:

- **Reflection** – analysing, evaluating and considering alternatives
- **Understanding the rules and consequences** of different kinds of creative action, developing the techniques needed to progress
- **Persistence** – sticking with difficulty, tolerating the unknown, crafting and improving work

In my research I have focused on two aspects of the skills described above: reflection, and children being able to work individually. These are fundamental building blocks for a creative approach in the classroom which relate to our school's interest in reflection and self-regulation, and to children becoming independent learners.

Metacognition

Metacognition 'is about the ways learners monitor and purposefully direct their learning. For example, having decided that a particular cognitive strategy for memorisation is likely to be successful, a pupil then monitors whether it has indeed been successful and then deliberately changes (or not) their memorisation method based on that evidence' (Muijs and Bokhove, 2020, p. 9). This links to 'reflection' within the creativity skills framework.

Self-regulation

'Self-regulation is about the extent to which learners ... are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and the strategies they use to learn. It describes how they can motivate themselves to engage in learning and develop strategies to enhance their learning and to improve' (Muijs and Bokhove, 2020, p. 8). This also links to reflection in the creativity skills framework.

Learning partner

When children work with each other to improve their learning. This is from talking about the learning, to discussing their thought process, and so on. In terms of the creative skills framework, this links to the idea of 'dialogue.'

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Input

When a learner has been provided with knowledge.

Coaching

A one-to-one conversation between two teachers after a short observation. This conversation focuses on the development of teaching and learning by increasing self-awareness. From this conversation, a small manageable target is set which will improve outcomes.

AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The specific issues the study tackled:

Assessment, observations, and discussions with pupils suggested some pupils generally have a lower self-esteem and a need to be successful can deter them from the challenge and risk-taking associated with creative skills. They can lack the learning behaviours (effective self-regulation/metacognitive strategies and resilience) to approach learning in a creative way. Whilst the study therefore focuses on only two of the sub-skills of the PPCC creative skills framework, this is with the long-term intention of building the fundamentals of strong creative learners.

We want children to develop a lifelong love of learning, and we also aim to narrow the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and non-disadvantaged children. Our aim is to improve children's self-esteem and instil resilience within them so they can work through any challenges they may face and ultimately become strong creative learners. Our approach will be reactive to common challenges and individual needs, informed by our assessments. The approaches we have adopted ensure children thrive in order to reach their full creative potential. To ensure they are effective we will do the following:

- Ensure pupils are challenged and supported holistically within the school.
- Be proactive in supporting children as needs are identified.
- Ensure all staff take full responsibility for all children's outcomes and wellbeing.

The following questions were raised from this analysis:

- What are the best reflective and self-regulation strategies to use to improve independence?
- How do we eradicate barriers which hinder children's independence?
- Do self-regulation strategies and reflective strategies improve children's creative learning?
- How do you facilitate children becoming independent learning when using different strategies including the environment around them?

METHODS AND PARTICIPANTS

Participants in this study came from a class of 32 Year 6 students (aged 10-11). 15 members for this class were the focus on this study.

The project started in the Autumn term and ran for 17 weeks. During this time, I trialled and analysed different reflective strategies to see which one had the most impact on children being able to independently reflect on their learning and therefore improve their rate of progress. I used a visualiser so I could link the learning to the 'steps to success' and improve the piece of learning. Also, once a child had completed their learning, they were taught to look at each step and find it in their learning. I used three different data collection strategies to gather the information for this project.

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At the beginning of this project, I selected three children, with a range of attainment levels, to observe in a lesson. I observed them in the Autumn term and then again in the Spring term. To be able to make a clearer comparison, I observed them in a maths lesson where I could observe their learning behaviours and strategies that they were using.

Furthermore, I also conducted a pupil voice interview in the Autumn term and then again in the Spring term. For this interview, I used the same questions in both terms so I could compare the responses.

My third method of data collection was using coaching (where I was the coachee). Each week for 17 weeks, I used my coaching session to set a personal small step linked to improving the children's ability to independently reflect on their learning. After this step was embedded for a week, I then wrote a small reflection looking at the impact this had on the children.

Data analysis was carried out via immersion in all data. All data was then systematically coded using low level through to higher level coding which led to a thematic analysis. This is written up below in this report. Ethical research practice was ensured by following the ethical guidelines of the University of Exeter ethics committee which are grounded in the British Educational Research Association (2018) guidelines; protocols involved seeking informed consent for all research activity from all participants alongside careful data protection practices.

MAIN FINDINGS

The findings are presented in relation to two areas of the Penryn Creative Skills Framework: Dialogue and collaboration and Honing and developing ideas: reflection. These relate to my core enquiry as children are developing their reflective strategies.

Dialogue and collaboration

There is strong evidence of children using problem finding and solving strategies in the analysis, with this seen as a key component of self-regulated learning and the use of metacognition. I split the data into sub categories, analysing examples of the children working with no adult input, and examples of children working with adult input or with a learning partner. There is stronger evidence in the section 'problem finding and solving no adult input' compared to 'problem finding and solving with a learning partner or adult input'. All data sources show children using different strategies in order to problem find. When looking at the data in this section as a whole, it is apparent that children have moved from relying on adult input in order to problem solve (Autumn term data), to being able to independently problem solve in the Spring term data. Some examples of the data are as follows:

Problem finding/solving - adult input

Autumn Term child 1 observation 01.11.2022: *The HLTA asks him to remember what the teacher said about fraction relationships and to look at the steps to success on the board. He looks at the first one and agrees he has done it, then looks at the second and says "Ooo they are brothers and sisters and have to be treated the same, I didn't multiple the numerator by 2." He corrects himself and then moves onto the next question which he gets correct.*

Problem finding/solving - no adult input

Spring Term child 2 observation 17.02.2023: *Before they start, they look at the board and read to themselves the steps to success. As they apply their learning to the first section, they say, "To find 50% of a number you divide by 2." They then complete the question correctly. This is repeated for each part. When they finish, they recite the key bit of learning and look at the board for each step.*

Creative Pedagogies

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Honing and developing ideas: Reflection

I split the data relating to children reflecting on their learning into subcategories which included children working independently, and children reflecting with a learning partner. Overall, there was strong evidence of children developing ideas through reflecting. There is strong evidence of students reflecting independently (all data sources show children using metacognitive strategies in order to independently move their learning forward), but less evidence of them needing to use their learning partners in order to be able to do this. Data to support this:

Autumn Term Coaching Week 3

Small step: To use the visualiser to model a misconception showing my thought process.

Reflection: When the misconception went on the board, the GDS children were able to work out the mistake, however most children were not able to work out the mistake as they didn't know where to start. When I modelled my thought process, the other children were also able to apply this to their learning.

Autumn Term child 1 observation 01.11.2022 Reflecting **adult input**

The HLTA asks him to remember what the teacher said about fraction relationships and to look at the steps to success on the board. He looks at the first one and agrees he has done it, then looks at the second and says "Ooo they are brothers and sisters and have to be treated the same, I didn't multiple the numerator by 2." He corrects himself and then moves onto the next question which he gets correct.

Spring 1 Term Coaching Week 4

Small step: On the working wall, put dates to sign-post children to pieces of learning which will help them with their writing (e.g. 26.01.2023 – dashes if that is needed in next week's writing).

Reflection: Children's independence increased. Children used their books as revision guides. They were looking at the structure of the sentences and adapting to their plan.

Spring 1 Term Coaching Week 6

Small step: Children to tick against a tool kit at the end of writing to reflect on their learning.

Reflection: Children read through their learning and ticked the sheet when they found a feature. If they were missing a tick, they went back and added in the feature.

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DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROJECT AND FINDINGS

From this research, I have seen an increase in children needing less scaffolding throughout the year. They master the concept quicker, and they are effectively using strategies modelled by the adult. Furthermore, when children are discussing their thought processes and learning together, it has become a part of the classroom culture for children to coach each other. They ask open questions which skilfully allows the other child to come to the conclusion by using previous learning/strategies. When children became more confident with using self-reflective strategies, we saw an increase in children independently using resources around the room to aid their learning. Ultimately, we hope this will develop in combination with other elements of the creative skills framework to allow the children to grow as holistic, creative learners.

Significance of these findings for my school

It is clear from this research, that visualisers have a positive impact when used as a tool to enhance the modelling and teaching of metacognitive strategies. Visualisers have allowed more children to access 'live' modelling of strategies on children's learning and 'live' addressing of whole-class misconceptions. There has been a significant positive impact for the children to be able to see how the strategies can be applied instantly to the work in their books. For example, when a child finished a piece of learning, we were able to put a tick against where each part of the 'steps to success' had been used. It was then very clear if a child had or had not applied each step, and therefore where they needed to correct their work. In turn, their peers were able to apply this modelling to their learning independently. As a school, our ambition is to purchase a visualiser for each class, as this project has highlighted how much impact they can have to a child's success in the classroom.

Moving forward from this experience, as a leadership team, we will be exploring the best approach to take in order to disseminate this research to all practitioners. We will be refining how we teach children to reflect on their learning using successful strategies found from this project (e.g. the use of visualisers in the classroom). We will be ensuring that there is a consistent approach across the school, as well as monitoring the impact this has on student outcomes. We hope to continue to work with other elements of the framework to explore more of the creative skills with PPCC colleagues.

REFERENCES

Muijs, D. and Bokhove, C. (2020). *Metacognition and Self-Regulation: Evidence Review*. London: Education Endowment Foundation.

Crickmay, U. Childs, S. Chappell, K. (2023). *Preparing for a Creative Future: year one Report Question, Challenge and Explore*. <https://penryn-college.cornwall.sch.uk/creativity-collaboratives>



Creative Skills

PENRYN PARTNERSHIP

“Does teaching creativity across the curriculum lead to young people who are better prepared for their future in a changing workforce?”

