Case study

How Cambois Primary School is creating more persistent learners by improving teacher confidence with their teacher training programme.

As part of Culture Bridge North East's (CBNE) Creative Classrooms programme we visited Cambois Primary School, to find out how they have worked with creative practitioner Sophie Crocker to help support the staff in developing their own creative practice and how they can use creative thinking to adapt and plan their own lessons.

Sophie, can you tell us a little bit more about yourself and your work with Cambois school?

I'm Sophie Crocker and I'm working with Cambois Primary School as a creative practitioner as part of the North East Creativity Collaborative.

I saw that the school was looking to work with a creative practitioner and I simply applied for the position as I was interested in this project specifically because it was about the teachers' mindset and how they would approach creativity, it wasn't about learning a specific CPD skill.

There are eight Creativity Collaboratives across England in each region and essentially it's a network of schools that are testing a range of innovative approaches to teaching for creativity.

The North East has eight schools in the network who are taking part and Cambois Primary School is one of them. All of the schools are different and each one was asked to identify a small enquiry. Cambois Primary School's chosen enquiry is creativity and how they can embed creativity across the curriculum. I plan to do this by working with the staff to develop how they approach creativity and how they can feel more confident in delivering creative lessons.

The school hopes that by investing in teacher development that they will empower their staff and help create more persistent learners.

In this project you will be using the Creative Habits of Mind model as a teaching tool. Can you explain what this is?

The Creative Habits of Mind model was developed from the Habits of Mind model (HOM) to help teachers both cultivate and assess creativity. The model specifically looks at ways of thinking and acting that people can adopt when learning. It has been argued that being creative requires one to act in a certain way. This model looks at how 'Intelligence is the habit of persistently trying to understand things and make them better.'

The five-dimensional Creative Habits of Mind model was developed by Lucas, Claxton and Spencer (2012) from the Centre of Real-World Learning at Winchester University in partnership with Creativity, Culture and Education to help teachers both cultivate and assess creativity.
https://www.oecd.org/education/ceri/50153675.pdf

> **"Intelligence is the habit of persistently trying to understand things and make them better."**
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> A Five-Dimensional Model of Creativity and its Assessment in Schools by Bill Lucas
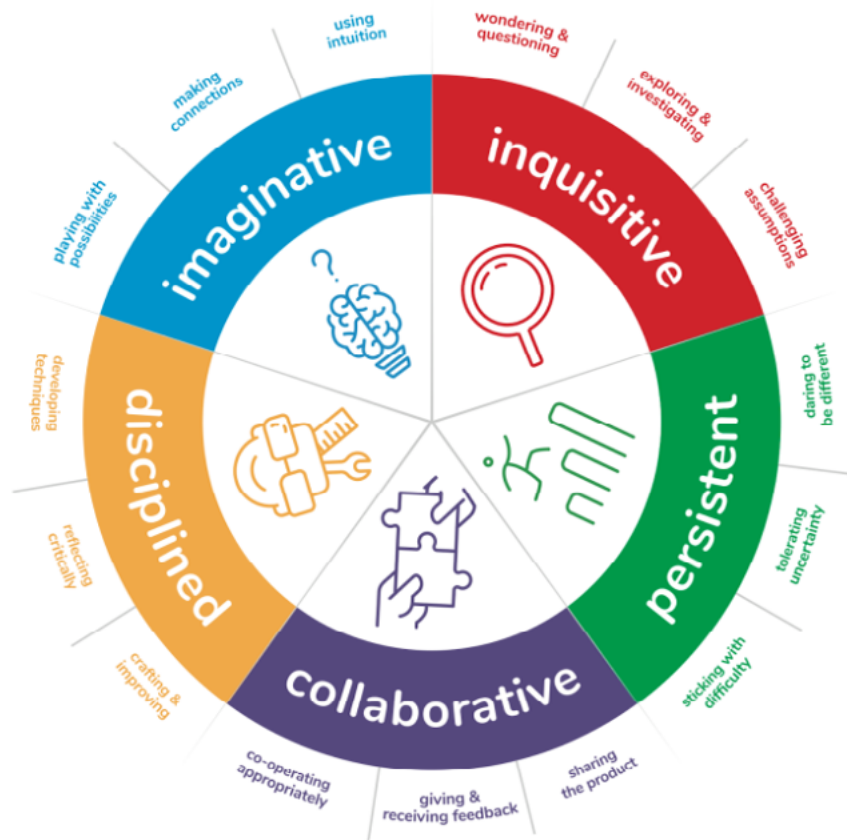
Can you explain a bit more about the Habits of Mind wheel and how you have used it?

So there are five habits of mind that are on the wheel. And Cambois Primary School has particularly identified persistence as one that they want to look at. We've been having a lot of discussion around where opportunities to develop persistence might be within those lessons. Where it's already happening really well and where we could add to things.

Alongside that, each member of staff has been asked to identify a second habit of mind that they feel most needs development within their classroom, and that's different for every class.

I have also helped the staff to introduce The Creative Habits of Mind model to their students, we have talked about explaining the new words and language to the children and the diagram is in all of the classrooms for the pupils to see.

How did the staff development work?

I worked with Ryan Longstaff, the Deputy Head Teacher, to think about what the school wanted to get from our sessions and combine what they were hoping to get from the sessions with how I might deliver them.

It's definitely been a collaborative process between myself and the teaching staff. Initially I had an idea of how things might look, but every time I've come in, you have to adapt so I've come up with different ideas and the process has developed naturally.

I came to this with an open mind and I feel that I am also here to learn from the staff too as they are the experts. I work in the classroom in a more informal way, so it's been good to learn from each other and bounce ideas around.

What were you hoping to teach the staff?

I wasn't aiming to teach the teachers any specific thing, I suppose I'm not really aiming to teach them at all. Actually, I'm kind of here to act as a reflective tool for people to use. I am always around to have a conversation with members of the teaching team. They can use me to reflect on their own practice and to brainstorm ideas with.

What do you hope the teachers will take away from the sessions?

I hope that people feel that they understand the model a bit more and that by using the model it gives them more confidence in delivering and adapting their lessons. I also hope that it becomes easier for the staff to embed these new approaches into their own practice.
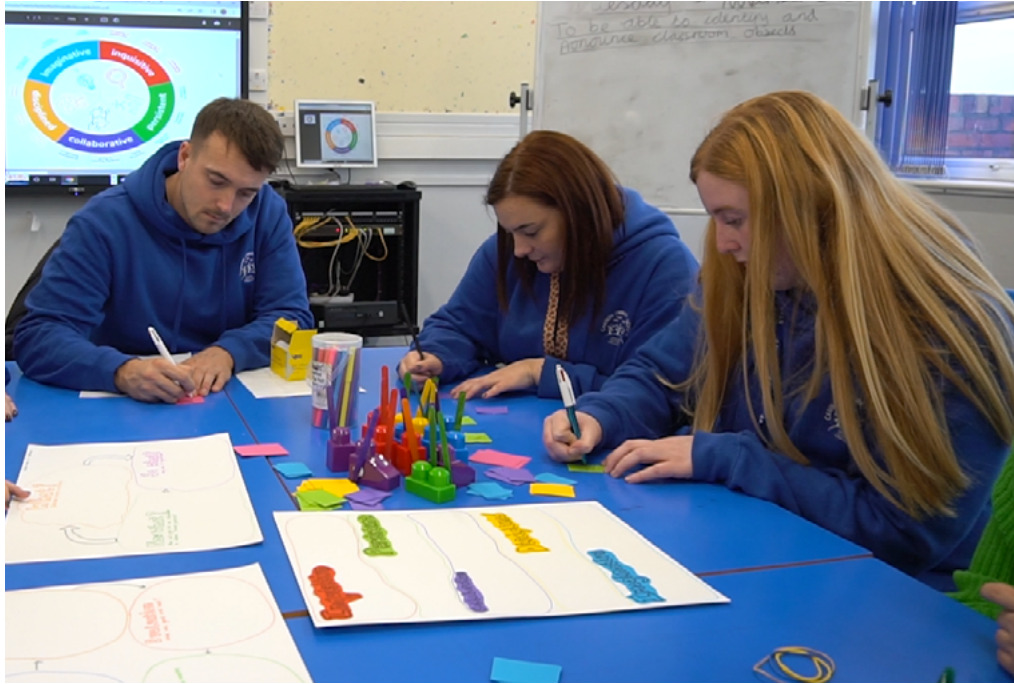
How will the teachers use The Creative Habits of Mind tool in their lesson planning?
I think the teachers can now approach their planning with this tool in mind and they will be looking at fitting at least one habit into every lesson. The aim is to try and develop the chosen habit in each lesson. Then, over the next few weeks I will be observing lessons and feeding back to the teachers on how I think their planning has improved the delivery of the lessons.

What benefit do you think the teacher training will have on the pupils?
I think that being in a classroom with a teacher who is creating opportunities to develop those habits is really useful. As the children get to grips with the language and they start identifying those habits themselves they can measure their own persistence too.

As a creative practitioner what have you found challenging about this project?
It's been quite a new experience for me to just work with staff rather than young people as I've had to engage on a more theoretical level with this team of adults, and that in turn has made me reflect massively on my own practice.

Ashlynn Jackson – Year 1 & 2 teacher

How did you introduce The Creative Habits of Mind project to the pupils?
Mr. Longstaff did an assembly with the whole school and introduced the project and explained in detail what we were going to be doing and how we wanted to focus on persistence. But I know with my pupils being so young, I explained everything in a bit more detail and we used more simple language so they could fully understand the concept. However, I do know further up the school that pupils are noting down the skills they are using.

From a teaching point of view can you explain how the sessions have gone?
Although there has been an agenda in each of the sessions, Sophie has been very open and has listened to what everyone has had to say.

In the first session we all sat down in the hall together, and thought about creativity in general and what we thought creativity was, and what we thought we were doing well and also where we thought the school could improve.

Sophie went away and took all of that on board, ready for the second session, which was last week and in that session we looked at our lessons. So, we all reflected on where we need to develop and how we can plan for the future which was really, really helpful.

Today I planned a new lesson based on my feedback from Sophie and it will be interesting to see how that goes. After I have delivered the class I will meet up with the other teachers and Sophie to talk through how my lesson went and how using the Creative Habits of Mind has helped.

Danny Driver – Year 5 & 6 teacher

What do you personally think you will take from the teacher training?
I think I am becoming a more self-reflective practitioner, and when you break down your lessons and look at the sub categories, within the Habits of Mind model, it really makes you tailor your lessons and you can think about how you can improve them for each pupil.

What challenges have you faced in the training so far?
The challenge for me, personally, I think with the Habits of Mind, I was originally thinking about, how would you truly implement every single subcategory in each of your lessons but then I realised you can just focus on one per lesson. By doing this I have found it is actually easier to tailor lessons for each student.

And another challenge I've found is how do we offer emotional support to the children and how does this fit into the Habits of Mind model. So this is something that I am currently looking into. Yet, you have to think that if the teaching staff are putting all of this effort into their lessons it will help the pupils and hopefully they will get more out of it.

Ryan Longstaff – Deputy head teacher / Year 3 & 4

Can you share an example of a positive experience that has come out of the training so far?
In my lesson today, for example, I found that all of the little groups I had created were leading themselves in their task and deciding what slogans they were going to advertise on the side of their white elephant picture. The pupils were approaching their task with confidence and this was really wonderful to see.

What do you think the benefits will be for the children?
I hope that the staff become more reflective practitioners, more well-rounded practitioners and can use their planning to adapt sessions for each child's needs. My hope is that by upping the skill level of our staff we will uplevel the children's skills too and really display and model the values of persistence for the pupils.

What do you hope the impact on the children will be?
We want to create learners who are not scared by the unknown. Learners who can problem solve and persist with an activity even when it is difficult. Currently we have many pupils who can be reluctant to continue with tasks that can have more than one solution. They prefer it when problems have one clear answer. They prefer it when problems have one clear answer, but we want our pupils to embrace problem solving and creative thinking..