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Study of Creative Partnerships' Local Sharing of Practice and Learning

Research conducted by the National Foundation
for Educational Research (Northern Office)
for Creative Partnerships

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Executive summary

About the research

Creative Partnerships (CP) commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to research the **sharing of practice** generated through CP within and **between schools locally**. The research explored levels of school engagement with CP, local approaches to sharing and 'cascade', and the factors that enable, hinder and sustain local sharing.

The research involved a desk-based study of the CP monitoring reports of outputs, a **scoping study** in two CP locations, and **interviews** in four CP locations involving a range of school and CP personnel. The research also briefly explored the sharing approaches in two complementary programmes, namely the Regional Partnerships programme and the Creative Action Research Awards (CARA) Programme.

'Levels' of engagement and cascade

Three years into the programme, CP described schools' engagement on five levels through which learning appeared to 'cascade' or ripple out from level 1 schools. Our investigation revealed a wealth of approaches to sharing creative teaching and learning between teachers and schools, which allowed learning to radiate out, but were distinct from the conventional notion of cascade.

Broad characteristics of sharing activity

CP strategies for sharing ranged from **integral ethos** to exploiting **organic and serendipitous** links. The purposes of sharing ranged from **widening participation** beyond CP-engaged schools to **building capacity within** and between engaged schools.

Most of the sharing took place through existing local clusters, CP coordinators' meetings or thematic groupings of schools. **School-school initiated sharing** was less common than CP-facilitated sharing, but was particularly valued for building on new and existing relationships.

Approaches to sharing

The research identified a model of nine approaches to sharing that schools and CP engaged in. These approaches are set out below in order of the frequency that they were experienced.

- **Meetings** varied in their purpose, from those with a focus on creativity, to those with creativity or CP activities as an agenda item, to the ad hoc raising of creativity or CP activities.

- **Conferences and events** in which sharing took the form of workshops (a valuable place to demonstrate and disseminate practical resources) and teacher-to-teacher discussions and networking.

- **Observations and modelling** of creative approaches and activities often involved 'hands-on' sharing over a period of dedicated time, where teachers saw the impact of working in a creative way.

- **Discussion and relationships**, where teachers share learning by talking informally together.

- **Dissemination of information and resources** either by CP, through working groups or through IT media. This approach was most effective when materials were relevant to and accompanied by some face-to-face sharing.

- **School visits** in which sharing happened in a school context, thus providing more convincing evidence of the practicability and the success of CP activities. These were mostly facilitated by CP.

- **Telling CP: central distribution** where schools informed CP about their learning and experiences and CP then disseminated that information to other schools in various ways.

- **Mentoring** which was more common between teachers within the same school, and particularly effective in developing the competencies of new or inexperienced staff.

- **Formal In-service Education and Training (INSET)** in which sharing took place through planned workshops and training sessions, usually involving the whole school staff, and taking place both within and, in some cases, between schools.

The impact of these different approaches varied. In particular:

- within-school meetings **built capacity within school**; between-school meetings tended to **widen experience of CP**

- observations and modelling appeared to have the most potential to **change practice** through collaborative and supportive approaches over a period of dedicated time

- informal sharing (such as discussion, networking and building relationships), whilst somewhat intangible to measure, seemed an important stepping stone for teachers' **initial engagement** with creative practice, as well as for their **continued reflection and learning**.

Factors that enable, hinder and sustain

A range of enabling and hindering factors to sharing creative teaching and learning highlight the places to intervene to enhance the effectiveness of sharing. In particular, these include: greater provision of **opportunities for teachers to take risks** in a **supportive environment**, encouraging a **professional learning culture** and **demonstrating the impact** of creative teaching and learning.

Teachers and CP staff planned future activity around peer-to-peer approaches and exploiting natural and/or existing links. **Future sharing** would need: funding; time; internal support; external support; networks; promotion and dissemination; and changing thinking. Perhaps channelling limited resources to those schools committed to deploying them for sharing expertise between professionals, rather than only for experiences for young people, would lead to more sustained development in schools.

Indicators for successful sharing

This research sets out a model of sharing professional learning from creative activities. The model describes the inputs, outputs and methods by which sharing can be achieved. A **four-step** approach is set out for planning appropriate sharing, covering: your **aim**, your **intended outcome**, your **selected approach**, and the **benefits** of that approach. Aims, planning and outcomes are again emphasised in a proposed **diagnostic tool** for considering whether successful sharing has taken place.

Concluding comments

Interviews with schools revealed a **wealth of approaches** to sharing learning between teachers and schools. Many of these approaches could relate to almost any aspect of learning undertaken by teachers. The fact that so many approaches were embraced so widely in relation to CP learning is itself encouraging.

This report demonstrates that some of the approaches to sharing can be **teacher led**, suggesting a clear sense of their **ownership**. As well as sustaining the resources to enable creative experiences that would otherwise be beyond the capacity of most individual schools, **CP need to nurture and guide an increasing ownership** of the concept of creativity and creative learning **amongst teachers**.

Sharing can also occur through more **formal or branded** approaches (suggesting higher status and concomitant resourcing). However, what is also clear is that **informal** approaches (e.g. teacher-teacher discussions, networking and building relationships) can be an important stepping stone for **teachers' initial engagement** with creative practice, as well as for their **continued reflection** and learning. CP needs to balance how it organises and manages its sharing activities, and its resourcing or **enabling** of sharing processes by others. Supporting schools in exploiting the myriad opportunities for sharing their experiences of creative teaching and learning would enhance the chances that such teaching and learning becomes a sustained element of education.

1 About the research

1.1 Introduction

In April 2006, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was commissioned by Creative Partnerships (CP) to carry out research into the processes whereby the experiences, learning and practice that have been generated through CP are being shared by schools locally. The research is concerned with the approaches and factors associated with effective sharing, and thus the continuing development of work by CP in this area.

To date, CP has focused its efforts on 'core' schools (limited in number) within each of 36 CP locations. The initiative is funded up until 2008, but with an intention that its impact will be sustained beyond that point. As part of this, it is intended that the work being undertaken most intensively in the targeted group of 'core' schools, will have a cascade or ripple effect on schools less directly involved with CP. That is, the learning and practice gained by teachers from their experiences of CP will be shared locally with teachers in other schools.

Both sustainability and roll-out of programmes are frequently a high priority in educational initiatives. As with most educational change initiatives, resources are allocated to develop the activity, materials and expertise needed to enable the implementation. However, in subsequently sustaining a programme, previous research has shown that a number of challenges can be faced, including: changes in political direction, shortage of resources, the withdrawal of funding and support, the experience of less than successful outcomes, failure to strategise a process of embedding, and the arrival of new initiatives (e.g. Downing *et al.*, 2003 Fullan, 2001; Moor *et al.*, 2005).

In recognising these challenges, CP acknowledges a need to share some of the professional development, learning and practical experience gained by teachers through CP activity with other teachers and schools. A 'cascade' approach offered by CP is one strategy that aims to achieve both roll-out and sustained development. Other local approaches between schools and within CP areas might also provide further strategies for the sharing of practice and learning.

Research by Moor *et al.* (2005) identifies some of the factors that can affect the sustainability of any change once achieved. These include the opportunity for teachers to continue networking, support from senior managers, active promotion and dissemination and continuing external support. As Fullan (2001) stresses, time is perhaps the greatest factor – both time for individuals to focus on the change issue and the period of time over which embedding needs to be nurtured. Sustained impact needs sustained attention, and this research seeks to identify the process features that can ensure a sustained impact.

1.2 Aims

This research project addresses the *processes* whereby the experiences, learning and practice that have been generated through CP are being shared and cascaded to schools with less involvement in CP, and sustained in CP areas. The research is concerned with the approaches and factors associated with effective sharing, and the continuing development of work established by CP in this arena. It is not, therefore, directly concerned with the educational outcomes of the programme, except in as much as evidence of such outcomes may be a factor in determining both ripple effects and sustained impacts.

The overall aim of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of the sharing and dissemination processes between schools in CP areas, both now and for the longer term. To do this, the research sought to:

1. establish the extent to which there are different levels of engagement with CP in the schools involved in the research

2. explore approaches to local sharing and 'cascade'

3. identify the factors that enable and hinder the effectiveness of local sharing

4. identify the factors and strategies needed to continue with sharing in the longer term

5. establish a set of indicators against which sharing and cascade can be assessed within CP both now and in the longer term.

1.3 Design and methods

The research design involved three strands.

Strand one	A desk study of the CP database of outputs (to highlight levels of engagement and cascade activity).
Strand two	A pilot study in two CP locations (to explore levels of engagement, and to establish key enabling and hindering factors involved in the cascade process, and other approaches to sharing).
Strand three	Interviews in four CP locations, involving teachers, head-teachers, CP coordinators, CP regional staff, creative professionals and local authority personnel, to develop and refine and/or expand the set of factors and approaches established in Strand two.

Strand one: desk study

The desk study explored the monitoring reports already collated by Creative Partnerships, in order to highlight, if possible:

- evidence of cascade activities already undertaken – including levels of engagement across the Phase 1 and Phase 2 CP areas in the study

- the number of schools and teachers involved with CP 'sharing' opportunities and the nature of those opportunities (e.g. INSET/continuous professional development (CPD), school-school visits, events, conferences, etc.)

- the identification of any areas of particular strength/frequency or weakness/scarcity in the range and levels of 'cascaded' activity (or potential for such cascading).

The desk study helped to orientate and inform the research team on the themes and topics for questions for the pilot study (strand two). The results of the desk study are reported in Section 2 on 'Levels of engagement'.

Strand two: pilot study

The pilot study explored perceptions and experiences of levels of engagement and 'cascade' through *open* questioning. This strand, in two CP areas, consulted on:

- the classification of CP 'levels of engagement'

- perceptions of enabling and inhibiting factors to 'cascade', and the issues facing schools in cascading

- what participants would regard as indicators of effective cascade.

A range of views was sought in the pilot stage, including those of teachers, headteachers, school Creative Partnership coordinators, and Creative Partnerships' staff.

Other approaches to 'cascade' also emerged during this pilot phase, and these were incorporated into a framework of approaches to sharing. The issues and factors emerging from participants' responses were also used to form a thematic framework 'from the ground'. These two frameworks – i) of approaches and ii) of factors – were then more fully explored in strand three of the research.

Strand three: interviews in four CP locations

The interviews conducted in strand three used both open and specific questioning around the frameworks that emerged in the pilot stage. This more focused questioning sought to:

- clarify and validate the classification of levels of engagement

- develop, refine and/or expand the set of approaches and factors established in the pilot exercise

- extrapolate more fully to the wider roll-out and sustainability of sharing learning and practice by producing a set of indicators with which to identify successful approaches to sharing.

In strand three, we wanted to include schools from across the different levels of engagement (rather than representing only the range of views as in the pilot study). To this end, the research attempted to include examples of local schools where sharing or 'cascade' might be evident, as well as schools more

disparately related. We wanted to consider the relationships between schools and levels of engagement – and to collect data both from 'active' sharing and 'cascades' as well as from other participants (including their views on potential sharing and cascade).

In the event, this kind of 'cascade' model did not present itself as an identifiable and explicit practice. Hence the research broadened to also include other approaches to sharing, as these emerged.

1.4 The sample: Creative Partnerships' areas

The CP case-study areas were selected to include both Phase 1 and Phase 2 CPs, and to cover a range of geographical and demographic features (e.g. inner city, rural, etc.). CP areas are smaller divisions of the Arts Council regions, and are focused on the most deprived areas of England. As mentioned above, there are 36 CP areas. When CP started in 2002, Phase 1 activity involved 16 CP areas. Phase 2 launched in September 2004, adding a further nine areas, and more recently a third phase has added 11 more areas.

The pilot study took place in two Phase 1 CP areas. The main interview study took place in a further four CP areas; one was a Phase 1 CP area, the rest were Phase 2. Table 1.1 displays some of the key characteristics of the sample.

Table 1.1   Key characteristics of the CP areas in the research

CP area	Phase	Multi-LA	Urban/rural	Size of CP area•
Pilot sample				
A	1	Yes	Both	Large
B	1	Yes	Urban	Medium
Main sample				
C	1	No	Urban	Large
D	2	No	Urban	Small
E	2	Yes	Urban	Medium
F	2	No	Rural	Large

*   Size of CP area is categorised here according to the total number of schools in the CP area. More than 300 schools was categorised as large, 175-300 schools as medium, and fewer than 175 schools as small.

Table 1.2 displays the characteristics of the case-study CP areas in terms of the number of schools with which they work and, as far as is known, the breakdown of schools according to the levels of engagement.

Table 1.2   **Numbers of schools case-study CP areas work with**

CP area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Pilot sample					
A	22	22	27	105	230
B**	14	9	13	18	0
Main sample					
C	6	3	6	5	41
D*	20	2	0	0	0
E**	13	26	0	30	181
F	22	9	11	5	285

*   Seven of the Area D Level 1 schools were classed as 'level 1 or 2'. Figures for Level 2, 3, 4 and 5 schools obtained from April 2006 monitoring report.

** Figures obtained from April 2006 monitoring report

1.5 The sample: interviewees

The interviewees were selected to cover those involved in CP across a number of variables, including:

- levels of engagement (where these were apparent)
- school clusters
- schools involved with CP INSET activity
- primary/secondary/special, etc.

Given that the features associated with the effectiveness of sharing learning and practice might be found at various levels (e.g. at operational level, senior management level, individual teacher level, and so on), a range of interviewees were included in the study. These included:

- Creative Partnerships' staff (directors and programmers)
- school CP coordinators
- teachers
- headteachers
- local authority personnel
- creative professionals.

Interviews were conducted either face to face or over the telephone.

Table 1.3 displays the characteristics of the interview sample for both the pilot and main samples. The total number of interviewees in the main sample was 93 individuals. In addition, there were a total of 21 interviewees from the pilot sample, four of which were CP staff.

Table 1.3   Interview sample

CP area	CP staff	Creative prac-titioners	LA staff	Head-teachers	Deputy head-teachers	School CP co-ordinators	Teachers staff	Other
Pilot sample								
A	2	0	0	1	1	3	4	0
B	2	0	0	1	0	3	4	0
Main sample								
C	2	1	1	2	2	9	9	4
D	2	1	0	2	2	5	4	3
E	3	0	2	2	3	3	3	2
F	3	1	0	4	6	9	3	0

Finally, Table 1.4 displays the schools in the main sample, including the type of school and the level of engagement as classified by the CP areas. It should be noted that, in the event, most of the interviewees were from Level 1 and Level 2 schools – i.e. those more fully engaged with CP. These were the teachers who felt more willing and able to take part in the research.

Table 1.4   Schools in main sample

Type of school / classification	Number of schools
Secondary school	11
Junior school	1
Primary school	16
Infant school	6
Nursery school	4
Special school	3
Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)	1
Level 1	30
Level 2	8
Level 1 or 2	1
Level 3	1
Level 4	2

1.6 The Regional Partnerships strand

In addition to the pilot and main study, the research also explored the Regional Partnerships programme, which aims to broaden the impact of CP within each Arts Council England (ACE) region. It was hoped that researching this programme would inform knowledge about disseminating and sharing professional learning beyond CP localities and into the regions of which they are a part.

The dissemination role of Regional Partnerships was explored through case studies in three ACE regions. In each region, we aimed to conduct interviews with:

- the ACE regional coordinator

- a local authority contact for each local authority that was not covered by a CP area

- a school-level contact in one school in each local authority that was not in a CP area, as nominated by the ACE regional coordinator.

In making initial contacts to conduct this strand of the research, it became clear that it would not be possible to achieve the desired sample due to the early stage at which the local authorities were with their Regional Partnerships Strand, and, in some cases, due to staff changes and fluidity in local authorities. The achieved sample is displayed in Table 1.5.

Table 1.5   Regional Partnerships Strand achieved sample

ACE Region	ACE/CP rep.	LA staff	School staff
Region 1	1	2	0
Region 2	1	2	2
Region 3	1	3	1

In addition, the research also briefly looked at another complementary programme – the Creativity Action Research Awards (CARA) Programme – in order to gain further insight into the sharing of creative practice.

These additional interviews explored the strategies and approaches used to share learning from these programmes; perceptions of the most effective methods for sharing with LAs and schools across the region; and any impact of such sharing on schools or LAs. The interviews were summarised into a template that mapped onto that used for the main CP strand of the research. They were then incorporated into the same data set and analysed alongside the main sample data. Throughout the report, where findings from the Regional Partnerships strand differ from that of the main CP strand, this will be highlighted within the text. Elsewhere, it should be taken that the views and opinions of the Regional Partnerships strand interviewees were similar to those of the main CP sample.

1.7 The structure of this report

Following this introductory chapter there are five further chapters in this report, as follows:

- **Chapter 2** covers '**levels of engagement**' and 'cascade' within Creative Partnerships.
- **Chapter 3** explores the **approaches to sharing** identified in this research.

- **Chapter 4** considers **the factors that facilitate or hinder** the effectiveness of local sharing between schools.

- **Chapter 5** examines the **future of sharing** and factors and strategies needed to continue with sharing in the longer term.

- Finally, **Chapter 6** concludes the report by presenting some guidelines on approaches to sharing and some **key indicators for successful sharing**.

2 'Levels of engagement' within Creative Partnerships

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the first aim of this research: *to establish the extent to which there are different levels of engagement with CP in the schools involved in the research.*

It first sets out the extent to which a model of 'five levels of engagement' posited by CP is borne out in practice. The chapter then examines the notion of 'cascade' between schools. It then sets out the broad characteristics of the strategies for facilitating sharing identified in the study overall, and in the four CP areas involved in the main study. This sets the scene for the other approaches identified in this research and explored in Chapter 3.

The findings presented here draw on interview data from CP regional staff and from schools (school CP coordinators, other class teachers, deputy head-teachers and headteachers) in both the pilot and main study. In addition, the findings also draw on the CP monitoring reports of activities with schools where appropriate.

2.2 Identifying 'levels of engagement'

A range of levels of engagement by schools with the CP programme were set out by CP, and envisaged in the following way:

Level 1: 'core' schools that: receive substantial investment in projects, host a broad range of projects, have senior management engagement, receive CPD training, become 'exemplars' for CP work, and will continue to encourage good practice after the CP has ceased to be active.

Level 2: schools that: work closely with Level 1 schools, receive a high level of CPD training, host action/research projects, have input to conferences, develop a long-term relationship with CP, and assume some responsibility for disseminating good practice to other schools after CP has ceased to be active.

Level 3: schools that have received the benefits of a level 4 school (see below) but in addition, their pupils have direct experience of CP projects in their own schools or in other core schools.

Level 4: schools where teachers have: attended pan LA and other conferences at which CP practice is presented, benefited from CP CPD training, or been provided with opportunities to discuss and analyse CP approaches.

Level 5: schools where CP has connected with teachers who have received targeted mailings of published materials.

In order to identify 'levels of engagement', the research included:

- a brief examination of the CP monitoring reports, to highlight any evidence of the five levels of engagement in the Phase 1 and Phase 2 CP areas studied

- consultation on the classification of CP 'levels of engagement' as part of the pilot study in two CP areas, where CP regional staff were asked: *Do the various five levels of school engagement set out by CP fit with your experience here? In what way?*

- further clarification on the levels of engagement in the main study of four CP areas, where CP regional staff were asked: *In your CP area, how do the five levels of school engagement fit in with your experience of how learning is shared?*

The **CP monitoring reports** recognised and made reference to the five levels of engagement, providing details of the numbers of schools classified at each level in each of the CP areas. Within the area summaries there was more information about the programme of work in each area; however, there was little explicit indication of how the programme related to the levels of engagement.

CP regional staff in all six CP areas involved (i.e. in the pilot study and in the main study) **recognised the classifications** of the five levels of school engagement. However, just **one** of the six CP areas **actively used** these five levels. Three of the CP areas actively used **levels 1 and 2** only, with some variation, e.g. splitting level 1 schools into two further categories: 'research' schools and 'creative' schools, or referring to level 2 schools as network, associate or partner schools. The remaining two CP areas in our study **did not**

use the five levels of engagement: it was 'too early' for one of these CP areas to actively use these levels, and for the other, a school self-promoting/self-reliant model of engagement was being used, allowing fluid and shifting levels of engagement:

> *We have a motto here of chasing the energy. So, if schools, partners, boroughs, work with us, that's where we will put our resources ... if someone genuinely wants to join the party, then we're very open to it.*
> CP regional coordinator

Teachers readily **recognised engagement levels 1 and 2** (as appropriate to their own school), and assumed the nomenclature commonly used in their CP area (e.g. lead school, core school, associate school, etc.). Some teachers also knew which other schools in their locality had engagement levels 1 and 2.

Whilst the monitoring reports, and to some extent the regional CP staff, identified schools with engagement **levels 3, 4 and 5**, these were **less easy to distinguish** on the ground. Teachers in these schools were, on the whole, unable to identify the level to which they were engaged. (Note that these teachers formed a small part of our sample, which focused mainly on those who were engaged in some way with CP.)

2.3 Identifying 'cascade'

In order to explore the notion of 'cascade', the research included:

- a brief examination of the CP monitoring reports, to highlight any evidence of cascade activities already undertaken in the Phase 1 and Phase 2 CP areas in the study

- asking teachers the extent to which they would describe their school's involvement as: *a leader in sharing, being actively involved in sharing, a recipient of shared learning, or not involved in sharing learning or receiving shared learning?*

- asking teachers where they would place their school in any kind of cascade of learning: *top, middle or bottom?*

The **CP monitoring reports** and area summaries did not offer explicit insight into whether/how core schools were sharing with other schools in the

CP areas under investigation. While it was clear that sharing was occurring through a range of approaches, such as conferences, dissemination events, schools working together, etc., it was not apparent from the monitoring data which schools were benefiting from these approaches and/or how they had been classified in terms of their level of engagement.

Cascade, in the sense of learning being passed through the levels of engagement, did occur **between levels 1 and 2 schools** (e.g. through formal networks and partnerships set up for this purpose – for example, some of the CP areas specifically encouraged their core and associate schools to work together). On occasions, cascade rippled out to level 3 schools. However, this tended to be directly from level 1 schools, rather than via level 2. The notion of cascade through the levels of engagement did not happen further than this.

Very few teachers in our sample noted a 'cascade' of learning in a traditional hierarchical sense. Rather than describing their place in a cascade as being at the top, middle or bottom, the most common response from teachers about their involvement in sharing was that they were '**actively**' **involved** – both giving and receiving, often **via a school CP coordinator**. In our sample, this was closely followed by teachers who felt their school was a 'leader' in sharing – typically describing learning and practice **radiating outwards** from their school to other schools: 'Every bit of knowledge that we gain we automatically share out to five other schools'. Notably, this level of activity often involved **a number of teachers within the lead school** (i.e. more than just the CP coordinator). A small minority of our sample felt that their experience was as a recipient of sharing only, and a very small number noted that they had not been involved in any sharing activity at all.

A key finding from this study, however, is that more than local 'cascade' was occurring: **learning was being shared through other approaches**. This included approaches that were both formal and informal, had flatter structures than traditional 'cascade', made links with existing networks, and used a range of media such as paper, email, visual presentations, hands-on experience, and so on. This research has sought to identify and explore such other approaches to local sharing of learning more fully. **Chapter 3 sets out a typology** of the approaches identified and explores each of them in turn.

Before turning to Chapter 3, we first set out here the broad characteristics of sharing activity as identified in the four CP areas in the main study.

2.4 Broad characteristics of sharing activity

The following broad characteristics of sharing activity were identified across the four CP areas of the main study:

- most of the sharing between schools was regional or **local**, involving schools from **within a CP area**, typically through existing local clusters or thematic groupings of schools (e.g. schools using dance, looking at outdoor play, or those working in an early years network)

- however, around a third of school staff interviewed had been involved in sharing activities with teachers from **other CP areas** (e.g. cross-regional and national conferences with teacher input)

- **most** of the sharing activity between schools was **facilitated by CP**, or had CP involvement, typically through events or coordinators' meetings

- **school-initiated sharing** occurred much **less frequently**; non-CP-facilitated sharing tended to occur through existing school networks and established relationships (e.g. federated schools, shared sites, etc.)

- **school-to-CP** requests for shared learning focused on opportunities to receive learning from (rather than give learning to) other schools.

It is important to acknowledge that some of the interviewees commented that they were in the early stages of their projects, and were not yet ready to share between schools. It is possible that in time more interviewees, especially from the Phase 2 CP areas, would be involved in more sharing, and would be more likely to organise and initiate sharing activities.

In addition to the broad characteristics outlined above, there were some distinct strategies for facilitating sharing in each of the four CP areas in the main study, as described below.

Area C, the longest established CP area in the main sample, has developed an '**apprenticeship**' model of working, facilitating sharing with others from different perspectives (e.g. teachers and creative professionals sharing together). '**Natural connections**' between schools are seen by CP staff as important, and schools are grouped with other schools working on **similar activities** or themes.

CP staff described regular meetings where teachers share learning and receive input from CP and artists as an **integral part** of the CP programme. The meetings happen out of school to give teachers a different space in which to take time to reflect and learn. They include practical and discursive elements. As one of the CP staff commented: '*It's like setting up little communities really, so that they don't feel they are sharing, but they are!*' CP staff feel that key to the sharing in their CP area is this **structured programme**, such that **schools share as part of their CP activity**, rather than as an additional activity.

Area C has a version of cascade that could be better described as **widening participation. Facilitated by CP, schools new to CP work with lead schools** to gain from their experience, e.g. through school visits, meetings between schools, and working together on specific CP projects.

In **Area D**, a pressure to improve key stage 2 results in this CP area was noted as a contextual feature that has impacted on the extent of school-school sharing so far. CP staff described a strategy tailored for the local educational context. They emphasise an **organic approach**, and encourage schools to share their learning and build relationships with CP schools working around similar activities only when a **natural link** becomes apparent and there is a willingness and capacity from the

school. Regular **school CP coordinator** meetings have encouraged such links. In addition, an existing cluster of schools is building on a previous history of sharing and collaboration between the schools.

In terms of sharing beyond the engaged schools, CP have emphasised a 'viral' and **non CP-branded** approach, encouraging key individuals (e.g. headteachers) to spread learning and ideas to other teachers and schools. CP are encouraging schools to set up internal mechanisms for sharing that are effective for the school context, with the hope that sharing eventually becomes part of the culture of the school.

Area E

In **Area E**, CP staff see their role as enabling the development of creative teaching and learning in schools by providing funding, artists, ideas and inspiration, with the schools taking responsibility for 'making it work'.

CP staff reported school-school sharing mainly where CP activity has mandatory sharing as a part of it, or is the focus of the work. To aid sharing, CP have organised the schools into **themed clusters**. Each cluster functions as a network, sharing ideas and practice related to their theme. In addition, CP arranges **school exchanges**, including nationally, so that schools can learn from good practice in other areas. They try to stress that both involved schools can learn from each other.

There is also a CPD strand in Area E, such that artists are modelling activities to teachers, with a focus on skills sharing as part of activities.

2.5 Summary

In summary, engagement levels 1 and 2 were the most distinguishable of the five levels of school engagement posited by CP. Cascade, in the sense of learning being passed through the levels of engagement, did occur between levels 1 and 2 schools. However, this research found that more than local 'cascade' was occurring: **learning was being shared through other approaches**.

The majority of sharing was local or regional, mostly with schools engaged with CP at levels 1 and 2; and generally facilitated and initiated to some extent by CP.

The four CP areas in the main study have distinctive strategies, ranging from sharing as **an integral ethos**, to **organic and serendipitous links**. Some strategies emphasise **widening participation** beyond engaged schools, whilst others focus on **building capacity within** and between engaged schools. The extent to which CP wishes to extend its influence is a key area for consideration.

3 Approaches to sharing

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the approaches that teachers use to share their CP-related learning. Almost all of the school-level interviews (hereafter referred to as teachers) had been involved in some sharing of learning:

- nearly all interviewees had shared with **teachers within their school**, and around a third of those described ongoing sharing activities

- slightly fewer, although still a large majority of interviewees, had shared with **teachers from other schools**, and around half of those had shared extensively and/or were involved in ongoing sharing activities.

3.2 A typology of approaches to sharing

During the pilot phase of the research an initial typology of approaches was developed. This has been refined following the main phase of data collection. There were nine distinct approaches. They have been ranked according to the proportion of interviewees who have experienced them.

Figure 3.1 A typology of approaches to learning

UNIVERSAL (Experienced by nearly all)	• Meetings
HIGH (Experienced by a majority)	• Conferences and events • Observations and modelling • Discussion and relationship
MEDIUM (Experienced by a large minority)	• Dissemination of information and resources • School visits
LOW (Experienced by a small minority)	• Telling CP • Mentoring • Formal INSET

Each approach is discussed in turn below. The typology of approaches was developed from the experiences of all interviewees. However, the discussion and exemplification of each approach is only based on the views of those interviewees who talked in further detail about their experiences. The issues raised are not necessarily based on a majority view. They should be seen as examples of the experiences and views of interviewees that were generally congruent with opinions expressed across the whole data set.

3.3 Meetings

Meetings were the **most common** approach used by teachers to share or learn about creativity or about CP activities and experiences. All but one of the 77 teachers (i.e. school-level interviewees) in the sample reported that they had participated in at least one meeting where they had shared their learning or had learnt from others.

The **purpose** of meetings varied. Meetings might be set up specifically with a creativity focus (e.g. shared learning group and creative learning team meetings). On the other hand, meetings might have creativity/CP activities as an **agenda item**; or there might be **ad hoc** mention of creativity/CP activities during a meeting.

3.3.1 How meetings were experienced

Meeting with teachers from the same school

Just under half of all teachers had shared or learnt through school **staff meetings**. These comprised **full staff** meetings, **year group meetings** in primary schools, **departmental meetings** in secondary schools, **meetings specifically for NQTs**, planning meetings, curriculum meetings and evaluation meetings.

The **content** of school staff meetings varied, covering such aspects as the **definitions of creativity, information about CP**, and **the use of creativity in the classroom**. The **impact** of staff meetings was also diverse, ranging from developing teachers' understanding of creativity, to raising the profile of CP, to driving creative teaching and learning forward in the school.

School staff meetings provided teachers with the opportunity to **reflect on their engagement in creative activities** and consolidate their learning by sharing this with other teachers through discussion. Sharing the impact of a successful project with other colleagues (i.e. what you have '*got out of it*') was particularly valued in encouraging other members of staff to be more creative and 'take a risk' in their own practice.

Sharing at staff meetings took the form of:

- **verbal teacher feedback** (the most common form), e.g. on the progress and outcomes of teachers' own (and sometimes other schools') CP-related activity, highlighting where creative approaches had worked well and where they had been less effective

- **showing materials and resources**, e.g. a teacher showing photos of a trip to Bologna where she had worked with a theatre group, which prompted her colleagues to ask more about what the trip had entailed

- **demonstration of new techniques**, e.g. to share new ideas and expertise (e.g. how to use photographic equipment), in some cases followed up with teachers one-to-one in the classroom at a later date.

As well as school-facilitated meetings, a small number of teachers described **CP-facilitated staff meetings** in school (e.g. the work of creative learning teams – see example box below). Such meetings often took the form of planning sessions to discuss ideas and themes for creativity projects, new ways of working, individuals' experiences, any issues encountered so far and how these had been resolved.

The creative learning team

In one school, through their work with Creative Partnerships, they have set up a creative learning team that acts as a coordinating group for creative learning activities in the school. Rather than imposing a role on this team on staff members, the school opened the opportunity to any member of staff who wanted to be involved and have been surprised at the enthusiastic response. The team has also attracted parents and governors.

This school worked with a coach '*who was excellent and she came in and got us all in one room. It was fun and we looked at creativity and vision. We came out with a sort of vision and strategy*'. The team is inviting another creative practitioner to come and work with them in the near future. They then plan to extend these opportunities to other staff members who have been involved in another CP project. '*That's the thing that I like about CP, it expands and it extends and it keeps on rolling and you hit more people all the time. No matter what you do though, it needs to become embedded.*'

Meetings with teachers from other schools

Just over two thirds of interviewees in the sample had participated in meetings with teachers from other schools where they shared or learnt about creativity or CP activity. These included both non-CP-facilitated and CP-facilitated meetings.

Non-CP-facilitated meetings between schools typically took place **via existing school groups/clusters**, both local and LA- or CP-area-wide. These included both CP and non-CP schools, thus **widening experience** beyond CP-engaged schools. Examples of non-CP-facilitated meetings included:

- headteacher meetings
- LA-wide subject teacher meetings (e.g. in areas such as art, music, English, maths)
- LA-wide staff groups, e.g. nursery staff, teachers of early years/foundation stage
- link/partner school meetings including feeder schools and extended schools-network meetings
- meetings between schools that are linked through their status (such as performing arts status)
- education-business-partnership meetings
- other creative learning programme meetings.

The majority of these non-CP-facilitated meetings were **organised through the LA** or by **headteachers** themselves. Creativity was often **incidental** to the main meeting rather than being on the agenda. However, at such meetings, a great deal of understanding was **shared and gained**, including practice and ideas on working creatively, the planning of joint creative projects, informing each other about creative events, and discussing national agendas with respect to creativity and the curriculum.

CP-facilitated meetings occurred in the following three ways.

- **CP coordinators' meetings** – involving school CP coordinators from **across the LA** (e.g. one coordinator per CP school), CP staff, and often creative professionals. In some CP areas these meetings were regular and well attended; in others they were less so. Coordinators shared their **problems**, **successes and plans associated with their CP activities**, sought advice from other teachers, and shared publications on creativity or project work that they had found useful. Group discussions on specific areas of creativity such as divergent thinking also occurred.

The CP-coordinator meeting

One CP coordinator attended a CP-facilitated coordinators' meeting along with creative development workers and artists. The creative development workers facilitated the meeting, which was spread over a morning and broken into sections. They had presentations on philosophy of learning and student voice, which they then discussed in relation to their own experiences. The theme of the session and presentations helped facilitate the sharing of work.

- **CP project activity meetings** – involving a range of staff (not just confined to school CP coordinators) from **two of more schools working in partnership** on the same project. Such meetings included planning and discussing project-related work, and the **evaluation of activities** – considered particularly useful in sharing and learning. Sometimes schools with more experience of CP projects were paired with other schools new to CP in order to support their planning and development of project activities.

Meetings between partner schools such as this provided a support mechanism for staff.

- **Themed research/topic meetings** which brought together teachers, as well as in some cases creative professionals, who were working on projects on a similar topic e.g. raising boys' achievement). Some theme group meetings involved presentations of work or practical sessions.

The majority of CP-facilitated meetings between schools were organised or led by CP staff, **related specifically to CP activity**, and usually involved CP schools only. This approach to meetings was not about widening participation to non-engaged schools.

3.3.2 The effectiveness of meetings in practice

Factors that facilitated sharing and learning in meetings

Factors that contributed to staff meetings as an effective approach to sharing and receiving learning could be grouped into six overarching aspects. Staff meetings provide:

- an **existing medium for sharing** (what 'teachers automatically do'), including an established culture within schools of sharing in this way and a **familiar environment/informal setting** where teachers feel relaxed and that they can share openly, ask questions and 'chip in'

- an approach that **is not perceived as an additional burden** or extra to current duties – meetings generally do not require teachers to come out of school or leave their class, impact on their time, or incur additional costs to the school (often highlighted as barriers to sharing see Section 4.2)

- an opportunity to learn from colleagues **firsthand**, noted as a key factor in inspiring others to be more creative, and important to hear from a fellow colleague (rather than from someone external to the context) that a creative activity or approach had worked

- an opportunity to include the **whole staff** and **a wide audience** (e.g. sharing through staff meetings 'actually hits a lot of people') as well as **tailoring to a particular audience** (e.g. year groups or curriculum areas)

- **regular and timely opportunities** to share about creativity (e.g. when an artist was in school, or just after participating in a creative event)
- **an arena for building staff confidence** to share learning with the rest of the staff team, with CP coordinators and others.

Barriers relating to sharing and learning in meetings

Barriers to sharing and learning through in-school meetings included: the rigidity of staff meeting agendas, the end of day exhaustion often accompanying meetings, and the difficulties of reaching all of the members of a particularly large staff.

Barriers to sharing with other schools through meetings included **finding convenient dates**, and occasionally finding actual time and cover for lessons and associated funding (if in school time). A lack of focus or **irrelevance** to their own context was an occasional criticism of teachers about some CP-facilitated meetings with other schools.

3.3.3 Appropriateness of meetings for specific kinds of teacher learning outcomes

Teachers believed that meetings were particularly effective for **awareness raising** and as a useful way to **receive information** and **gain new ideas**. Interviewees also believed meetings to be a way of **inspiring teachers** to try out new approaches and 'fire up' staff, providing stimulus for further discussion.

3.3.4 Sustained impact of meetings

Sharing through **in-school staff meetings** and meetings of **existing between-school groups** were believed to be the most effective types of meetings to sustain and embed creative teaching and learning in schools. The first of these (in-school meetings) **builds capacity within a school**; contrastingly, the second of these (existing groups) has the potential to **widen participation and experience** of creative teaching and learning beyond CP schools.

Whilst these approaches were not generally facilitated by CP, it was also asserted that **CP or other external input** would be important in maintaining impetus and stimulus for such meetings and the longevity of the practice gained.

Summary: meetings

All but one of the teachers in the sample shared through meetings which occurred both within and out of school. Meetings were seen as an effective means of sharing because they were:

• held **in or after school** (hence teachers did not usually require cover)

• an **existing and familiar medium for sharing**

• an opportunity to learn from colleagues **firsthand**, noted as a key inspiration to others.

In terms of sustaining and embedding creative teaching and learning in schools, sharing through **in-school staff meetings builds capacity** within a school; and sharing through existing **between-school groups widens experience** beyond CP schools. Whilst these approaches were not generally facilitated by CP, teachers also asserted the **importance of CP or other external input** in maintaining impetus and stimulus for the longevity of the practice gained.

3.4 Conferences and events

For the purposes of this report, a conference or event is defined as a large-scale meeting, involving presentations, demonstrations or talks, and lasting a significant length of time, such as a day or half day. Just under two-thirds of interviewees had experienced this approach to sharing learning.

3.4.1 How conferences and events were experienced

The conferences and events that teachers described tended to be **regional or local** rather than national, and **facilitated by CP** rather than non-CP facilitated. Non-CP related conferences were described by a minority of interviewees (e.g. DfES conference, *Aimhigher* conference, arts events). Sharing activities at conferences and events took the form of listening to presentations from creative professionals and/or teachers, participating in

workshops and teacher-teacher discussions/networking. Those with an interactive focus are discussed further here.

Participating in workshops

Teachers experienced the following interactive elements in workshops:

- **visual elements** – seeing activities and work in practice e.g. video or photos of activities in schools, examples of props used in the activities, or examples of pupils' work

- **asking questions** to the teacher and/or artist running the workshop – in general, a teacher perspective was felt to be particularly valuable

- **demonstrations** including where workshop participants take the place of the children e.g. touching water and describing what it feels like – an activity children had done as part of the CP activity being explained.

Teacher-teacher discussions/networking in conferences

Teachers experienced the following interactive elements of teacher-teacher discussions/networking at conferences:

- **small group discussions** – these were opportunities to discuss ideas that teachers had heard about, as well as their own experiences and learning

- **activities** – e.g. 'learning walks', where teachers paired up and went 'off for a walk' to find out about the creative learning each had been involved in

- **displays** – typically including photos and film of activities in progress, and examples of work and materials used, and manned by teachers and/or artists who had been involved in the activity.

Teacher-teacher discussion was often **timetabled into** a conference or event, to ensure that teachers got time to talk to each other. Alongside this, some interviewees also commented that they **networked and shared their learning informally** with other teachers at conferences or events.

> ### *Roads to creativity*
>
> 'Roads to creativity' is a two-day annual sharing event run by one CP. Although it is difficult for teachers to be involved in a two-day event due to a lack of time, CP wanted a conference that did more than just 'skim the surface' of issues. Participants at the event included teachers, artists and CP staff from other CP areas, as well as from schools in the region. The participants took on the role of researchers into the CP themes, spent some time gathering information about the CP practice of others, and brought that together in a discussion for each theme.
>
> Day One started with an introductory session at the conference venue. Then participants were taken out on buses in theme groups to core schools working under those themes. At each school, artists and school staff demonstrated activities for the visitors, often in the classroom and involving pupils. Day Two involved a workshop, where participants got together in theme groups to discuss what they had learnt.
>
> This was felt to be an effective way of sharing. Interviewees felt it was good to see activities happening in the classroom, and a sense of 'how they worked in reality'. CP staff felt that participants were more likely to take ideas on board as they had actually seen them work in a school environment, and that it was also a good way for teachers to share and feel more confident, because they were sharing in a familiar environment.

3.4.2 The effectiveness of conferences and events in practice

Features of effective conferences and events

Presentations that just involved a talk and a PowerPoint presentation were not seen as a particularly effective way to share. Teachers suggested that workshops were more effective when they were **interactive or visual**, enabling participants to grasp how the ideas and activities could be applied to their own context, e.g. through:

- showing film or photos of activities

- seeing demonstrations of activities modelled with children

- getting participants involved in practical activities.

What is shared at conferences and events also needs to be **practical** in nature, **applicable** to and **achievable** for individual teachers in their classroom: 'More localised examples are really useful because [teachers] can apply them in their own context and really take learning and ideas from it'. Presentations on large programmes of CP work might give a flavour of what is possible, but were deemed less effective than **specific examples and resources** for teachers to 'take away'. Knowing the **reality of how projects have worked**, including **the challenges** teachers had to overcome to make activities work, was also felt important (rather than just hearing about positive aspects of projects).

Who presents at conferences was important: a **teacher perspective on the work was particularly welcomed** (rather than just a creative professional). Teachers also appreciated opportunities to **ask questions** about the work being presented.

Practical barriers to conferences and events

Some teachers found it difficult to find **time** to go to conferences and events, especially when they took place during the school day. It was also difficult if teachers had to **travel** any distance to attend, especially in rural areas.

On occasions, there was some criticism of **not enough time given over to teacher-teacher discussion/networking** with other teachers, as they suggested that this was an important means through which to share and learn.

> ### *Running a workshop at a conference*
>
> One secondary-school PRU teacher had run a workshop at a CP conference alongside the artist involved in their CP activities. The workshop involved practical demonstrations of the ways the school had been using creativity to engage with different learning styles.
>
> There was time for questions after the activities. Other teachers wanted to know how it had worked practically, how she had found working

with the artist, and what the benefits were for the students. They also wanted to know what happened when the artist was not there. It is important to have a teacher perspective in such workshops as they can answer questions that relate to the activities in the context of a school environment and from a teaching and learning perspective.

The teacher and artist also gave out resources during the workshop, such as the report about the project and a pack that gave teachers ideas that they could take and use straight away in the classroom. Teachers especially valued these kinds of resources – they could be used without much preparation and in the knowledge that they have been tried and tested in a classroom environment.

3.4.3 Appropriateness of conferences and events for specific kinds of teacher learning outcomes

Some teachers suggested that conferences and events were a good approach for **sharing resources** that teachers had developed as part of their CP activity. Teachers said that in merely 'giving' resources to colleagues, they would not be used. However, in **handing resources out after a workshop or demonstration**, participants would be more likely to use them. They felt enthused about the activity, and would have seen evidence that it can work in a school context.

Summary: conferences and events

Two-thirds of interviewees had experienced conferences and events, most of which were regional or local, and facilitated by CP. Sharing at such events took the form of workshops and teacher-teacher discussions/networking, and was most effective when:

- workshops had a **practical or interactive** element (including the demonstration and handing out of resources)

- what was shared was **directly applicable** in the classroom, and reflected the **reality of projects** (i.e. talking about challenges to overcome, not just positive outcomes)

- time was given over to allow **teachers to share and discuss** issues together.

3.5 Observation and modelling

Observation and modelling of creative approaches and activities occurred marginally more commonly between teachers **in the same school** than between teachers from other schools. The majority of teachers in the sample reported that they had participated in this type of sharing on at least one occasion.

3.5.1 How observation and modelling were experienced

Observation

Interviewees discussed both **being observed** and being the **observer** in shared learning. Teachers found it useful to observe creative teaching practices in their own school. A small minority of teachers also commented that they valued the opportunity to **observe another school setting** (e.g. observing creative displays) to get new ideas.

The purpose of observations varied. Observations included those set up specifically to observe **CP project-related activities and creative teaching approaches**; those carried out as part of **performance management** (and not undertaken specifically with the aim of sharing about creativity itself); and those that were far less formal, e.g. the **open plan** nature of a school building meant that teachers were able to observe each other's creative practice with relative ease.

Some schools had introduced **peer observation days/weeks** with the specific aim of sharing and learning about creativity. For example, in one school, a creative activities day was held which enabled teachers who had

not had the opportunity to work with the creative practitioners themselves to see and experience those same activities from a colleague who had.

Reflection on the observation process was also important in order to gain a deeper understanding about the practicalities of using the creative approaches and how things work in practice. Some teachers who had their practice observed also commented that they had provided **follow up support** to teachers when they had used equipment or a particular approach/technique in their own classrooms. As one teacher noted: 'It's the sort of school, where I can pop out of class for a few minutes and go and help, if someone is stuck and struggling with it'. For some interviewees this supportive element was key to effective observation and thus sharing.

Modelling

In addition to observations, modelling was also used to share or learn about creativity. Modelling usually occurred through **team-teaching activities in the same school**, also described as 'working together' and involving 'hands-on activity'.

> #### Modelling through team-teaching activities
>
> '*Over the last three years we have had a focus of where we want to develop. We have used team teaching as a way of modelling work. We wanted to develop music in key stage. So throughout the year the music specialist team taught in each of the year 2 classes with the teachers. By the end of the year all of the teachers were confident to deliver their own music.*'

Modelling activities also occurred **between teachers from different schools**. For example, teachers from secondary schools (e.g. drama or music specialists) modelled activities with primary teachers; and teachers from schools with specialist status (e.g. in art) modelled activities with teachers from schools with non-specialist status.

> ### *Modelling best practice between schools*
>
> In one CP area, modelling activities have taken place through the creativity network and each school this year selected a focus of best practice: '*Our school had music and ICT as our areas to focus on. We invited a key teacher, a teaching assistant and four pupils from a targeted year group at another school to spend an afternoon with the teacher in this school to do hands-on activities. This has been very useful because they have been able to go back to their own schools and put those things in place.*'

> ### *Modelling as specialist colleges to primary schools*
>
> As part of their performing arts college status, two schools are sharing creative learning with local primary schools. For example, the drama teacher goes into primary schools and works with the pupils and teachers there so that pupils experience the activities. The drama teacher models activities, then gradually steps out and leaves the staff there to take over, going back every so often to check that things are still working well. Sometimes students go in as well, and help to take classes. It is planned to extend this to music as well.

Modelling was also seen as an effective method of **cascading the specialisms of a creative practitioner** (e.g. some teachers reported occasions where one teacher had worked with a creative practitioner as part of CP and that teacher had gone on to teach colleagues those same techniques). Where teachers reported the types of activities they modelled, these included the use of digital cameras, animation skills and performing arts techniques.

3.5.2 The effectiveness of observation and modelling in practice

Factors that facilitated observation

The majority of interviewees rated observations as an effective sharing approach because they provided:

- **direct experience** of examples of creative teaching and learning in practice, with the benefits of observing a **real-life situation** (as opposed to reading about a technique for example)

- the opportunity to see **pupils' positive reactions** to an activity which in turn encouraged teachers to use creative approaches in their own lessons. As a teacher from a special school, who had colleagues observe her practice, noted:

  I'm not a specialist, but I'm someone who doesn't have too many inhibitions about too many people watching me teach, whether I'm any good or not. If it's musical I will blast away, and hopefully showing by example and encouragement just gives the people who feel that they are not as musical the confidence that perhaps they can do it.

- realisation that being creative was **achievable in their own classes**, i.e. through observing a classroom, resources and equipment in classes of similar sizes.

Factors that facilitated modelling

Several of the interviewees also highlighted particular aspects of modelling that made it an effective and **enjoyable** approach. These included:

- being able to participate in a '**hands-on**' creative activity themselves which helped teachers to understand how to use an approach or implement a technique (i.e. **sharing though doing**)

- team-teaching as a '**non-threatening**' approach to sharing and learning, which helped teachers who perceived working creatively as 'taking a risk' that might be particularly challenging in front of their pupils

- the opportunity to **gradually try things** alongside someone more experienced, where the modeller could take a step back, but could also support the teacher through any difficulties and confidence building

- the **collaborative nature of the approach**, where working alongside a colleague meant that teachers could discuss and evaluate how things had gone and how they could improve.

Barriers relating to sharing and learning though observation and modelling

Barriers to sharing through observation and modelling included **time**, **logistics** and the **intensiveness** of these approaches. These were particularly emphasised for observation and modelling, which, by their nature, take place over a period of time, require teachers to leave their own classrooms and schools to provide cover if taking place at another venue. In addition, overcoming teacher **embarrassment** and self-confidence were cited as challenges to the success of modelling activities.

3.5.3 Appropriateness of observation and modelling for specific kinds of teacher learning outcomes

A small minority of interviewees commented that observation and modelling were particularly appropriate for **learning new teaching approaches and skills**. This was due to the practical nature of the approach and through learning from peers.

Summary: observation and modelling

Just over half of the teachers in the sample reported that they had participated in observations and modelling on at least one occasion. In general:

- observations meant that teachers were able to see the **impact** of working in a creative way

- modelling and 'hands-on' sharing were particularly effective for cascading **specialist or new techniques** and practices

- collaborative, peer-to-peer working was supportive for teachers trying out new creative approaches or techniques that they felt were challenging.

Through such collaborative and supportive approaches, observation and modelling appeared to have the potential to **change practice**. By their nature, however, these approaches **require dedicated time** over a period, where two (or more) people can work together.

3.6 Discussions and relationships

Discussions and relationships relate to teachers sharing learning by talking informally together. Just over half of interviewees had experienced this approach to sharing.

3.6.1 How discussions and relationships were experienced

Discussions and networking within schools

There were several ways that such sharing happened **within schools**:

- **discussions in the staff room**, e.g. talking about activities that have just happened or general discussions about teaching practice

- **discussions as staff work together**, e.g. sharing learning and ideas when clearing up after activities or as part of general conversation when team teaching.

These informal discussions were often sparked by a colleague having seen an activity happening, or work produced as part of an activity, especially in small or open-plan schools: 'You say "Oh, that looked really good – what were you doing?" And so they'll tell you what they were doing, so then you try it or you modify it ... so we're always sharing ideas with each other within our setting'.

Discussions and relationships between schools

Informal sharing between schools happened less often than within schools. It related to **networks and relationships**, including:

- **CP relationships**, e.g. emailing or ringing other CP coordinators to dis-cuss activities or ask for ideas and advice

- **teacher networks**, e.g. informally talking to other teachers when attend-ing events (CPD sessions, subject network meetings, conferences, etc.)

- **personal networks**, e.g. sharing learning with friends or family who are teachers. One interviewee had shared about her CP activities at her daugh-ter's school. They subsequently became interested and got involved in CP.

3.6.2 The effectiveness of discussions and relationships in practice

Discussions and relationships were generally seen as **effective ways of sharing**. Interviewees appreciated the insights and ideas they got from colleagues in this manner, and felt that some teachers were **more likely to give their views and ideas** in an informal setting, rather than in a formal meeting. One interviewee also appreciated the **immediacy** of this approach within schools:

> *... it's usually on the back of something that's gone really well and you're enthusiastic about it and it's immediate, rather than something that's been planned in advance. We find that very beneficial.*
> School CP coordinator

The only problem interviewees raised was finding the **time** within the school day, or at other events, to talk to colleagues.

Summary: discussions and relationships

Just under half of interviewees had shared through discussions and building relationships in school, and with teachers from other schools. These **informal** means were seen as **effective ways of sharing**. Strategies to facilitate such organic and informal sharing could be effective in passing on the CP agenda, and learning from CP more widely.

3.7 Dissemination of information and resources

Just under half of interviewees had experienced sharing through the dissemination of CP-related learning. Shared information included **descriptions of CP activities and projects**, their outcomes, and what teachers had learnt from them. There was also some sharing of **resources** that had been developed through the activities (e.g. lesson plans). Dissemination was by various means (e.g. newsletters and email bulletins, websites, DVDs, displays). **More teachers had received information and resources from CP than had disseminated information and resources themselves**.

3.7.1 How dissemination of information and resources was experienced

Dissemination by CP

The most common dissemination mentioned was the **CP newsletter** for the area, where interviewees found information about CP activities in schools, articles about creative teaching approaches, and examples of good practice. Interviewees also received information and resources via **email bulletins** and the **CP website**, as well as from **DVDs** of CP activities happening in schools. In a few cases schools indicated that their work had been featured in what CP disseminated via these means.

Dissemination within schools

Information and resources were shared in schools in various ways:

- **displays showing activities and outcomes**, created for staff, parents and governors to see what was happening in the school

- **writing about activities in school newsletters**, mostly general school newsletters, with a minority specifically aiming to collate and share professional learning for teaching staff

- **email**, which was especially important in large secondary schools where people did not necessarily see each other in the course of a day.

Research and development group

One interviewee was part of a secondary school that had a research and development group. The aim is for this group to collate learning and ideas from colleagues. This can be learning from external training/sharing or from classroom experience. Information is then shared with the rest of the staff via a regular newsletter. The newsletter contains ideas, hints and tips, conference reports, and resources.

Dissemination between schools

Dissemination between schools happened through **conferences** and **clusters**. Some schools passed on **reports and resources**, whilst others shared **DVDs** that they had produced. One group of schools had set up a **newsletter** to ensure that staff wider than the CP coordinators were able to see what had been happening, and another emailed a **photographic journal** to other schools in their cluster to keep them up to date with what had been going on.

Using photos to share

One school was involved in a CP activity around outdoor learning in partnership with three other schools. A member of staff was responsible for taking photos of the activities as they were happening. The images were then put to two uses. Firstly, to display what the children had done with explanation of the activity and outcomes. This was partly for the parents and partly for the staff, so that everybody could see and be involved in what had happened. Once the displays were taken down they were turned into a book, which is available at reception so that there is a permanent record of the activities for staff.

Secondly, the photos were used to create a photographic journal of the activity, which was then emailed to the other two partner schools. This ensured that they were kept up to date with what was happening.

Using the internet

In one CP area, the local authority has developed a virtual learning environment (VLE) around creative teaching where CP learning is shared. Originally, it was only available to CP schools, but it is now open to all schools in the area. On the VLE they can access examples of school-based activities, classroom-based activities, lesson plans, schemes of work, photographs of activities, dates of training and network meetings, and contact details for School Improvement Advisors,

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CP staff and relevant Advanced Skills Teachers. Schools can download materials, email people both within the region and with other regions, as well as access national CP information.

3.7.2 The effectiveness of disseminating information and resources

An advantage of disseminating information and resources within a school is that **everyone has the opportunity to find out** about the information or learning. However, in general, disseminating learning in the ways described above was not thought to be effective: **information, post and email overload** prevents teachers reading such material. One **successful way to deal with information overload was when CP coordinators filtered information**, ensuring that teachers received less overall, but more that was relevant to their interests. This was welcomed by the staff in those schools, and they were perhaps more likely to look at the information.

In order to enhance the impact of information and resources, they can be disseminated as part of an event that has a **personal or experiential** element. **Giving out information or practical resources relating to an activity at the end of a workshop or demonstration** means teachers have already seen or heard about the activities firsthand, and are more likely to use what they have been given. For example, a teacher was given a CD-Rom of activities and worksheets which could be used immediately and with minimal preparation. In addition **DVDs are more effective than paper-based dissemination** as you see the activity and people involved, giving more of an experience and a personal dimension.

3.7.3 Sustained impact of disseminating information and resources

It was felt by some that the dissemination of information and resources could sustain learning within a school because such materials are a **reminder** of what has been done and learnt, and teachers can refer back to them when planning. Examples are films of activities, visual displays, and resources that

can be used again. Without these, it was suggested, teachers can move onto the next thing and forget what they have done or seen in the past.

Summary: dissemination of information and resources

Just under half of interviewees had experienced dissemination of information and resources, mostly through receiving them from CP rather than having disseminated themselves. In general:

- **sending information and resources to teachers was seen as ineffective** as they do not have time to read or look at them

- **giving out information and resources at events** where teachers have seen or heard about activities was seen as an effective way to share

- **information and resources were useful in sustaining activities** providing a reminder of what had been done.

Overall, disseminating information and resources as a standalone technique is not an effective way of sharing learning. Information and resources need to be filtered, or contextualised and experienced to enhance the chance of teachers using them.

3.8 School visits

One approach to sharing CP learning was through staff visiting other schools. Teachers shared learning in various ways during the visits, but the key element to the approach was that the sharing happened in a **school context**. Just under half of interviewees have experienced this approach to sharing.

3.8.1 How school visits were experienced

Most of the school visits described were **facilitated by CP** and were driven by three main purposes.

- **Widening participation** visits were often to enable schools new to CP to get an idea of different CP activities, and how they worked in practice.

- **Thematic** visits involved schools working around a set of issues visiting another school working on similar issues to learn from their practice.
- **CP project activity** visits involved teachers sharing their learning as they took part in a project, e.g. an outdoor learning project, where the same artist worked across three schools, and all the schools visited one another during the project to learn from and share their experiences.

Those visits not facilitated by CP tended to be through other networks that schools were involved in (e.g. Excellence cluster, Extended schools network), through relationships they had with other schools (e.g. sharing a site), or by non-CP schools asking to come and see CP activities.

Themed school visit

One CP brought together two schools interested in the same kind of activity. A secondary school has worked with CP to enable a team of ten students and a teacher to produce a regular radio programme about what is going on in and around their school. The show is broadcast within the school and is available as a podcast via the school's website.

A local primary school, working with the same creative partner, wanted to produce a similar radio show. CP-facilitated sharing to enable them to learn from the secondary, prior to setting up their facilities and getting started. Eight pupils and three teachers from the primary came to visit the secondary school. During the visit they listened to a show, were shown how the show is produced and discussed the show with the pupils and teacher who were already doing it.

The teacher from the secondary commented that it gave the primary school the opportunity to learn from their experiences and mistakes. She also felt that it was important that she shared with other teachers wanting to do similar things. This was because her method is realistic and achievable given the time constraints and pressures faced by a school.

The key component to a school visit was that it enabled visitors to learn by seeing and hearing about activities in a school context, arguably giving them a greater insight into the activities than just by hearing about them. The content of school visits included:

- **observing activities**, e.g. in the classroom

- **participating in creative activities**, e.g. teachers visited with their pupils, who also got involved in the activities

- **discussions with staff**, e.g. about the activities, how they had experienced them, and the impact they had on children.

School visits built into project activity

One level 1 interviewee had been involved in a dance project in partnership with five other CP schools. As part of the project they visited each other's schools to observe the artist and teacher work with a class and learn from what had happened in each school.

Each school hosted a visit, and the artist and resident teacher worked with a class and demonstrated activities, whilst the teachers from the other four schools observed. There followed a collaborative evaluation session where all the teachers discussed what they had seen, how it had gone and how it could be improved. The meetings were a forum to learn from and support each other: 'We also supported each other. You know, if somebody said "Yes I tried that, couldn't do it", somebody else would say "Well I tried it this way" and so through each other we learnt more as well'.

The interviewee felt that this had been a very successful way of sharing, as they had been able to see different activities taking place, but also to learn from their peers as part of the process.

3.8.2 The effectiveness of school visits in practice

Visits provided convincing evidence of the practicability and the success of CP activities. For example, as one teacher commented, seeing activities work with a mixed ability group of children gives more confidence in the usefulness of the activity than seeing it working with just a group of high achievers. Visits were also more likely to engender enthusiasm than when activities were described in meetings and reports.

Challenges relating to school visits included:

- Teachers were not convinced that they could learn from activities delivered in a **different context** to their own (e.g. phase, socio-economic circumstances of pupils). However, this issue can be dealt with by **matching schools** well, to ensure that they can learn from the visits. Teachers also **built up trust in CP staff** over time, meaning that they are more likely to take up visit opportunities that CP staff suggest will be helpful, even if they at first feel it is not relevant.

- **Finding time and cover** for a visit. Where teachers and pupils came on the visit, there was not the issue of cover, but the visit required much more organisation between schools (e.g. transport, permissions), which made it more difficult to set up.

- A perception that **many headteachers do not see school visits as CPD** for their staff, and therefore are reluctant to let them participate. In these cases, the value of such visits for professional learning needs to be explained.

3.8.3 Sustained impact of school visits

The fact that interviewees were generally positive about school visits suggests that teachers find them useful, and that consequently there may be a sustained impact on their practice. One interviewee suggested that this was because just walking round another school was a great way to pick up new ideas. Another explained that 'we really value the experiences that allow us to go into another school and work alongside the teacher with the children'. School visits can be arranged between schools, with no CP input, and are an **effective way to sustain CP learning** if teachers are enabled to participate.

Summary: school visits

Just under half of interviewees had been involved in school visits, mostly facilitated by CP. Visits were seen as an effective way of sharing as they **provided more convincing evidence of the practicability and the success of CP activities**. However, there were two barriers to sharing in this way:

- some teachers were not convinced that they could learn from activities delivered in a **different school context** from their own

- some teachers are unable to **find time and funding for cover** to attend school visits.

3.9 Telling CP: central distribution

Another sharing approach was central distribution, where schools told CP about their learning and experiences, and CP then disseminated that information to other schools in various ways. Around a third of interviewees had experienced this form of sharing.

3.9.1 How schools told CP about their learning and heard about other schools

There were several ways that **schools told CP** about their activities and learning.

- **Face-to-face contact** between CP staff and teachers either when CP staff visit schools or at meetings (e.g. CP coordinators' meeting). They implied that this would be passed on by CP staff when they met with other schools.

- **Writing an article** for the regional CP newsletter, or providing information specifically for an article.

- **Sending project information** such as evaluation materials, examples of work, and film/photos recorded as part of their activities. Some schools were not really sure whether or how this information was passed on to

other schools. Others knew how the information would be used (e.g. uploaded to CP website, put on a DVD and disseminated).

Central distribution via the CP website

One CP coordinator explained that all their CP activities have been recorded and that they have DVDs, still photographs, evaluation sheets/reports and interviews with children. They have passed this on to CP and it will be presented on the CP website in due course so that other schools can learn from their experiences.

Such information was then centrally distributed from **CP to the schools** via:

- **face-to-face contact** between CP staff and teachers either when CP staff visit schools or at meetings (e.g. CP coordinators' meeting)

- **dissemination** via various media such as email bulletins, newsletters, DVDs, and websites. For example, one member of CP staff explained that, 'one of the things that I do is to issue an e-bulletin several times every term and as part of that I will include examples of good practice to encourage the others and to make them feel they can do it too'.

Passing on information from other CP areas

One CP area distributed information and learning related to the activities of schools in other CP areas at the start of their programme, in order to give schools ideas of what they could do. Schools in the area have been inspired by hearing about such activities. For example, some schools were interested in the notion of an '*edible playground*' that originated from a school in Cornwall. Consequently they wanted to integrate health issues into their curriculum, and used the literature passed on by CP to plan relevant activities.

3.9.2 The effectiveness of central distribution from CP

Information overload

Interviewees saw sharing by disseminating information and resources as being an ineffective way of sharing. This was because interviewees felt that teachers **don't have the time or energy to read everything** they are sent, and even when they do, some commented that reading about something was nowhere as near as good as seeing it.

Not knowing whether information is passed on

A small minority of schools said that they sent materials to CP, but **do not know if they had been passed on to other schools or not**. Arguably, knowing how others have benefited from your experiences is a key motivation for continuing to pass them on to CP. In order to ensure that teachers continue to pass on their learning to CP, they **need to know how it is used and therefore how it benefits others**.

> #### Sending project information to CP
>
> One CP coordinator explained how at the end of every term there is an internal meeting with staff and creative partners where they look back at what they have done and jointly evaluate it. Out of this meeting they produce evaluations, ideas to feed into their next cycle of CP activity, and project reports. They send all this information to CP, along with examples of what that has been done, and resources that have been generated. However, the CP coordinator said that she did not know what CP do with the information they send to them, or whether they pass anything on to other schools.

Teachers are best placed to share their learning

One of the CP staff members said that they did distribute learning from CP activities, but felt that in reality teachers were best placed to share their learning effectively. This was because she felt that **teachers are more likely to take note of and believe what other teachers say**, rather than what CP staff

say. Teachers know that if another teacher says an activity is effective, it probably is, but feel that CP staff have to say that activities are effective because their job is to try and encourage schools to use creative teaching approaches. She explained that 'teachers listen to teachers, practitioners listen to practitioners and [teachers] view us obviously as people who are paid to do it'.

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Summary: central distribution

A third of interviewees had experienced central distribution either by receiving information from CP, or by sharing their learning with CP. Key issues with this method are that:

- teachers **don't have time to read what is sent to them**, and would **prefer to see activities**, not read about them

- **teachers are best placed to share their learning** effectively as they are more likely to take note of and believe what other teachers say than what CP staff say.

In order to create an effective two-way flow of information between CP and schools, the schools need to know why they are sending in information and how it is being used, and CP need to target what they send to ensure it is relevant to the schools that receive it.

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3.10 Mentoring

In addition to observing and modelling, a small minority of teachers reported sharing or learning about creativity through mentoring. This was more common **between teachers within the same school**, but there were also occurrences of mentoring with teachers in other schools.

Five interviewees referred to mentoring **initial teacher trainees and newly qualified teachers** (NQTs) within their school to develop competencies in various aspects of teaching and learning including creativity. Such groups of teachers often had existing mentors who supported them though their training and first year as a qualified teacher. In some cases, these same mentors

would support and encourage teachers in their use of creative teaching approaches. In other cases, they were mentored in creative aspects of teaching by more experienced teachers who had previously participated in a CP project. For example, one teacher described how the NQT observed staff involved in the first phase of CP. They would also participate in team teaching and the mentor would provide ongoing support and feedback to the NQT as he/she trialled the new approaches in his/her own classroom.

There also were a small number of examples from one LA in particular where interviewees discussed how mentoring was an approach to be used in the near future to share creativity with teachers from other schools through the **role of a teacher consultant**. Finally, in one school which had specialist performing arts status, teachers gave an example of a drama teacher who shared with their feeder primary schools though observation and modelling. She mentored teachers by regularly revisiting schools to help and support teachers with particular aspects of creative practice they wanted to develop.

Teacher consultants

Teacher consultants are teachers who have been working with CP from the start and have much that they can share with other teachers. One CP invited teachers to apply to be 'teacher consultants' and there are now approximately six of them from a mix of primary and secondary schools. CP has contacted schools by letter to outline the different ways that these teachers can share (e.g. staff meetings, team teaching, help with planning). CP has put this information on a website, along with a link to information about the consultants, their areas of expertise, and the areas that they are interested in developing.

Each teacher consultant has a minimum of five days allocated including their planning time. The consultants are now setting up meetings with interested schools to explore what they want. Initially they wanted to aim the programme at non-CP schools, but they do have a couple of schools who will be involved that are new to CP this year. Part of the role is also about a teacher perspective on different things that CP are doing e.g. on events, or talking to artists. It is important to have that teacher perspective at the central CP level.

Summary: mentoring

A very small minority of teachers shared though mentoring. In general this approach was most effective in developing the competencies of new or inexperienced staff by subject specialists or by those who have considerable experience of CP projects and activities.

3.11 Formal INSET

A small minority of the sample reported having either received shared learning or sharing their creative learning and development with other teachers through formal In-Service Education and Training (INSET).

3.11.1 How formal INSET was experienced

The **format** of INSET varied. **Within school**, in some cases INSET was run entirely by school staff; in other cases, jointly between teachers and creative professionals. INSET involved whole staff as well as sessions aimed at class teachers and support staff only. Some INSET was held over whole days while others were shorter twilight sessions.

Between schools, there were examples of joint-delivered INSET, where staff from each school jointly participated in the training; where teachers worked jointly on CP projects or had links with other schools through existing clusters, there were some reports of participating in other schools' INSET delivered by teaching staff relating to aspects of creative practice; and in one case, INSET was being delivered by a group of schools to each other in order to pass on expertise.

Sessions included presentations and/or practical demonstrations of creative practice. The **focus** of such formal CPD sessions could be grouped into the following three categories.

- **Training on the remit and ethos of Creative Partnerships** and the benefits of using creative approaches in the classroom (e.g. formal INSET sessions with teachers about the aims and remit of CP, INSET

to share with peers about the notion of creativity and how it can be used in the curriculum).

- **Feedback on CP project activity,** e.g. to raise teachers' awareness of CP projects and activity going on within school and in other schools).

- **Sharing of creative skills and practice**, mostly skills and techniques obtained by teachers working with creative professionals as part of CP (e.g. digital photography and animation skills, planning for creativity lessons, etc.). Here the demonstration of equipment and techniques provided a valuable opportunity to see in more detail what had been going on and ask questions etc.

3.11.2 Issues with formal INSET in practice

Factors that facilitated sharing and learning through INSET

Formal INSETs were **planned** sharing activities and teachers **had scheduled time** away from their class to share. INSETs meant that sharing could be to a **wide audience**, often involving the whole staff and facilitating a deeper understanding of creative practices **across the school**. Teachers sharing **in their own school** through INSET were able to **tailor training** to make it appropriate to their particular context (unlike some of the INSET provided by external trainers).

Barriers relating to sharing and learning though formal INSET

The main barrier highlighted in respect to sharing and learning about creativity through whole-school INSET was that these sessions were **not voluntary** and therefore that not all staff in attendance **wanted to engage** with creative learning or participate in creative activities (e.g. where training involved audience participation). Feeling embarrassed and not wanting to take a risk in front of colleagues was a barrier to receiving shared learning in this way.

Summary: formal INSET

A small minority of teachers shared or received shared learning about creativity from their peers through formal INSET training. Key issues with this method are that sharing of information and new skills could be achieved with a large number of staff **facilitating a deeper understanding** of creative practices **across the school**.

3.12 Summary of approaches to sharing

Of all the approaches discussed, **staff meetings** were the **most common** method of sharing around creativity experienced by teachers. Staff meetings historically may not have been perceived as the most effective from of CPD *per se*. However, there were many aspects of staff meetings that meant they were **particularly useful for cascading learning from CP activity throughout school** (e.g. they were an existing medium for sharing both within schools and between schools, sharing could be firsthand and school relevant and could be delivered though demonstrations, presentations and dissemination materials).

Peer-to-peer or 'hands-on' sharing approaches were also highlighted as common methods for sharing and particularly effective **in sharing creative ideas and techniques**. This included through **formal workshops** and INSETs, **observations**, **modelling** and mentoring.

Through **networking and discussions** teachers were able to hear about how things had worked in practice as well as hear about the impacts of working in such a way. This **raised the profile** of creativity and creative teaching and learning approaches. It also **encouraged and motivated** those teachers who had not been directly involved in a CP project, and enthused those who had reservations about using creative practices in their teaching to do so. **Informal sharing** of this type (discussion, networking, building relationships), whilst somewhat intangible to measure, seemed an important stepping stone for teachers' **initial engagement** with creative practice, as well as for continued reflection and learning.

4 Enabling factors and barriers to sharing

4.1 Factors that facilitate sharing

Interviewees highlighted a range of factors which facilitated the sharing and learning of creativity. These factors could be grouped into the following five themes:

- type of activity
- school level factors
- relevance and personalised sharing
- logistics and organisational features
- value and purpose of sharing.

4.1.1 Type of activity

- **Collaboration and participation in the learning experience** – participating in 'hands-on' activities were particularly effective forms of sharing as they allowed teachers to gain an in-depth understanding of how an approach or technique works in practice as well as an insight into problems or issues they might encounter whilst doing the activities in their own classroom.

- **Peer-to-peer sharing** – teachers were seen as powerful advocates, they had a shared understanding and were able to describe firsthand how approaches and techniques worked in practice as well as being able to give accounts of pupils' reactions to it. Hearing from a fellow teacher rather than external 'expert' encouraged teachers to give new ideas a go.

> *It's like people that are working on the shop floor that are giving the course, rather than somebody who obviously worked years and years ago and they've done lots of reading up and they're not in contact with the shop floor. This means that you can discuss practical issues and obstacles to using the learning with the person running the course, as they are facing the same or similar issues.*
> School CP coordinator

4.1.2 School-level factors

- **Embedded culture of sharing** – having an existing or embedded culture of sharing generally in school-facilitated sharing and learning to do with creativity. Teachers were less likely to work in isolation and had common practices and mechanisms for distributing information and new ideas.

    It's built in that we share all the time. We're not the type that close the door and say 'This is mine'. The notion of sharing practice is embedded within the school culture and is a normal part of what we do, both outside and inside the school. Teachers always think about 'How can I share this?' or 'What can I learn from what others are doing?'.
    School CP coordinator

- **School leadership** – having a supportive headteacher and senior management team helped to encourage and facilitate sharing. Having the support and approval of senior leaders encouraged teachers to become involved and to share their practice.

- **CPD fitting into existing school plans and priorities** – where creativity fitted into school plans (e.g. school improvement plan) and was seen as a priority area (e.g. a staff development priority, an area for improvement highlighted by Ofsted, or linked to an aspect of a school's specialist status) sharing and participating in CPD (particularly formal approaches such as INSET) was more likely to occur.

- **Sharing at a whole-school level** – sharing with the whole staff allowed everyone to gain an insight into creative teaching and learning practices and witness how their colleagues responded to different activities. Whole-school sharing around creativity also gave teachers the opportunity to enthuse and inspire one another and discuss things together as a group.

4.1.3 Relevance and personalised sharing

- **Using a varied approach to sharing** – implementing a combination of sharing approaches depending on the nature of what was being shared as well as the learning styles of those participating was particularly effective. Approaches/projects need to be '**personalised**' to enable teachers to learn and successfully apply it in their own situation. Tailoring sharing

approaches to individual teachers and schools needs was more effective than the 'one model fits all' approach.

You have got to use every piece of ammunition you have got. Teachers are a lot like a group of students really and if you go at a session where there is lots of listening, then you will hit a third of them but you won't hit the others. What you need to do in school, particularly the one that I'm in, is give them a variety of avenues. I have found historically that if I wanted to get anything across to the whole school then I have had to do all of the things that you could possibly do.
School CP coordinator

- **Relevance** – sharing needs to be relevant and linked to existing projects or areas of work.

4.1.4 Logistics and organisational features

- **Having dedicated time to share** – having a planned sharing activity meant that teacher-to-teacher sharing was more likely to occur. Dedicated time meant that teachers could focus on creative learning and not be distracted by other pressures.

- **The sharing environment** – sharing or receiving shared learning was particularly effective when it occurred **outside of teachers' own schools**. This meant teachers had time to reflect and space to think away from their pressured working environments where there were likely to be other distractions. **Informal environments** for sharing meant that teachers felt relaxed and comfortable and thus were more likely to participate in discussions and activities.

- **Characteristics of those delivering the shared learning** – those delivering the shared learning were most effective when they were **enthusiastic**, had a **commitment** to the creative approach/activity they were sharing about, were able to '**sell the benefits**' or impacts of what they had experienced, and were an **effective communicator**. In a few cases, CP coordinators talked about involving their enthusiastic staff in CP activities so that they could motivate others in the school to get involved.

- **Relationships** – existing relationships between schools helped to facilitate sharing around creativity. Where teacher-to-teacher and school-to-school

relationships were newly established, taking time to build up rapport and trust enabled teachers to talk confidently and openly about aspects of their creative practice that had been successful and aspects that had been less effective.

4.1.5 The value and purpose of sharing

- **Sharing which shows impact** – demonstrating impact that could be achieved from implementing a creative process/technique was necessary. Teachers were more receptive when they were either told about the impact firsthand from a fellow teacher or had witnessed impacts (particularly on the pupils) themselves.

  CP is seen by lots of the staff as something extra, something a bit wacky and they just want to get on with their job and haven't got time for it. This is something that can only really be broken down by seeing and hearing about impact and that has to be the impact that CP has made to this school, rather than someone from CP saying 'this is the type of impact CP can make or has made to a school'. The sharing of impact has to come from within the school.
  School CP coordinator

- **Permission** – in order to share, learn and implement creative practice teachers needed to be certain that they had both 'permission' to work in this way and that it was not 'detrimental' to the priorities of the school and its pupils. Schools need to be encouraged to get involved and take a risk. There was a need for advocacy at school/senior management team (SMT) level, at LA level and a national level through CP and Ofsted. Sharing should be 'non-threatening' (e.g. not about performance management) to allow risk taking to take place.

  In order to get people more interested in learning about teaching creatively, you get the county down and you get them to stand up in front of all the science teachers and say: 'Hey guys, don't worry. Take a risk, do music in Chemistry.' I think that level of authorisation is one that really helps teachers, particularly at secondary. You need the big boss to say 'It's ok'.
  School CP coordinator

4.2 Barriers to sharing

4.2.1 Introduction

There are some generic barriers to sharing CP learning which had the potential to impact on all the sharing approaches. This section sets out the identified barriers, many of which are intertwined.

4.2.2 School-level barriers

Some barriers operated at the level of the school.

- **Lack of time** is the **most common barrier** to sharing learning due to being busy (e.g. everyday teaching, out-of-class work such as planning, marking etc.). Sometimes **teachers feel unable to take time for sharing**, even if they are offered dedicated time (e.g. due to workload, feeling they must re-cover material taught whilst they are out of the classroom).

- The **cost of cover** is not necessarily funded by CP; school **budgets are tight**, and monies might be prioritised elsewhere.

- **School priorities**, **particularly improving attainment** can mean that creative teaching approaches are **not always prioritised by school leaders** (there is a perception that creative teaching approaches are not a certain route to improving attainment).

- A **rural location** where schools are geographically dispersed can make meeting with other teachers difficult due to the **costs and time** involved in travelling large distances.

- Schools often have one committed and enthusiastic staff member who advocates for CP and creative teaching. **The loss of key individuals in schools** (e.g. due to their other responsibilities, leaving the school, etc.) can mean diminished sharing.

- A **culture of keeping ideas rather than sharing them** in some schools (e.g. due to being under pressure to produce results, being in a competitive environment).

4.2.3 Teacher-level barriers

Some barriers related to individual teachers.

- **A lack of self-confidence**, i.e. some teachers **do not feel that they have anything worthwhile to share** with colleagues, and others **do not feel creative enough** to share about creative teaching approaches.

- **Perceptions of good practice**, e.g. some teachers feel that what they share will **not be seen as good practice**. Other teachers are happy to present the positive aspects of their practice (i.e. what worked) but are not confident enough **to share the challenges they have faced** as part of their development.

- **A lack of understanding of creativity, creative teaching approaches, and the benefits for themselves and their pupils** means some teachers are put off being involved in any sharing.

- Interviewees highlighted **a tension between the demands of the National Curriculum and planning and implementing creative teaching approaches** (e.g. creative approaches are new and take more time to plan, a perceived risk of a negative impact on attainment if unsuccessful, and experience of the National Curriculum as prescriptive with a lot of material to teach).

- **Perceived lack of relevance**, e.g. when activities are **not directly applicable to their schools**, or when learning from schools that are **significantly different from their own** (e.g. in terms of intake, phase etc.). Some CP staff suggested that teachers **missed out on useful learning opportunities** by assuming they can only learn from schools that are similar to their own.

- A **reluctance to change** their approaches to teaching, and try something new means some teachers are not interested in sharing opportunities. One interviewee suggested that this is more the case with **subject specialists** in secondary schools than with primary teachers who teach a wider range of subjects with a range of teaching approaches.

4.2.4 Regional Partnerships

There were some barriers that were specific to Regional Partnership areas.

- **Rationalisation and restructuring** in many local authorities means that LA staff have taken on **multiple responsibilities**, and are less able to give time to CP-related activities.

- **Some LA staff lack high-level support for creative teaching and learning** in the authority. Consequently it is harder to engage schools, as the schools can see that it is not a priority.

- A **lack of funding** restricts the sharing activities that can be funded (e.g. money to pay for teacher cover or events themselves). There can be **tensions if CP schools work with non-CP schools**, as the CP schools get much more funding for their creative activities.

4.3 Summary

Many of the factors and barriers described above impact on sharing regardless of the approach used. They operate at the level of the individual teacher, the school, and the sharing activities themselves, and these are the places to intervene to enhance the effectiveness of sharing.

Individual teachers can to some degree be fearful of creativity, or lack understanding about it, seeing **creativity as a risk** (e.g. due to lack of confidence, perception that it could negatively impact on attainment, not fit with curriculum etc.). They need **opportunities to take those risks in a supportive environment**, as well as **seeing for themselves how creativity can be successfully applied** (e.g. enhances attainment, fits with curriculum).

The culture of **schools** and the attitudes of the SMT influence whether teachers are able to be involved in sharing their learning. It is important to have **SMT support for creativity** as this leads to permission for teachers to share, learn about and try new creative approaches. A **professional learning culture** that encourages sharing in a relaxed and informal way based on established relationships also enhances sharing activities.

Sharing activities need to **demonstrate impact** to teachers so that they can see the tangible benefits of being creative, and are more likely to be creative,

and convince their SMT to prioritise creativity. They should also be **personalised** for those teachers receiving the learning, so that those teachers can modify the activities for their situation. The sharing itself and the activities described should be flexible to different situations.

5 Future sharing and sustainability

This chapter begins by examining the plans and intentions for future sharing of CP activity in the academic year 2006-2007 and beyond. It then goes on to look at the factors, strategies and resources needed to continue with and build on the sharing of learning around creativity in the longer term.

5.1 Future sharing: plans and opportunities

Interviewees were asked what plans, if any, were in place for the future sharing of their Creative Partnerships' activity. In general, across the data set, future sharing had **not been planned**, but there was an **avowed intention** that this would become a large part of future work with Creative Partnerships.

At a **strategic level** (i.e. as noted by CP staff), there were plans in place to encourage and support future sharing and dissemination between schools. CP staff described three main approaches for this as follows.

- **Peer-to-peer approaches** – the most common e.g. **mentoring, modelling, teacher consultant approaches, workshops, CP events, CPD programme or enabling school-to-school visits**. One Phase 2 CP area intended to set up a mentoring programme where teachers from CP-engaged schools would mentor staff from schools with less CP experience. Another Phase 1 CP had set up a teacher consultants programme, which again encouraged CP-experienced teachers to meet and support other teachers.

- **Action research networks** – in two CP areas, CP staff were supporting small networks of schools conducting action research into shared themes or questions of interest. It was planned that these groups of schools would undertake sharing and dissemination of what they were learning through their research with one another at regular network meetings.

- **Exploiting natural links** – CP staff planned to work on a more individual basis with schools, encouraging them to exploit their own natural links with others. For example, in one CP, the CP programmer was helping an infant school to engage the local junior school to come in and work with

staff and pupils. In other cases, these may not be existing links, but links that would be advantageous to two schools that, for example, are working on the same theme.

There was a general feeling, at the **school level**, that it was **too soon** to know what or how CP activity would be shared in the future, although interviewees felt that it was important to share it with others. A number of schools felt that although sharing was not planned for, it would happen at an **informal level**: 'With Creative Partnerships we don't know what is happening after next year but I am certain that a lot of the bonds that are being made will carry on at an informal level' (School CP coordinator). In addition, there was a pervading feeling amongst school-level interviewees that sharing of CP activity needed to happen **within the school**, to provide opportunities for reflection, before being shared more widely with other schools. A minority of schools felt that they had embedded sharing between schools as part of their school culture. In these schools, **future sharing would occur organically** rather than being specifically planned for.

In approximately a third of schools there were plans in place for future sharing and dissemination between schools. School staff described these as follows.

- **Peer-to-peer approaches** – e.g. **visits to other schools** to showcase or demonstrate activities; a school-to-school request for some **modelling activities**; several schools were offering workshops to staff from other schools; and, in one case, a school was offering itself for **consultation** to other schools in the local area.

- **Exploiting networks and links** – sharing events within their cluster, or network of associate schools through, for example, a team-building away day and planned meetings for schools developing in similar areas. Two schools, from different CP areas, were providing INSET for teachers in a network organised by the local authority.

To sum up, the kinds of future sharing and dissemination activity planned by schools depended largely on their progress or experience with CP to date and the extent of their within-school developments.

5.2 Factors, strategies and resources needed to continue with, and build on, sharing in the longer term

Interviewees were asked what they felt would be needed to continue with and build on the sharing of learning in the longer term. The responses from all interviewees were considered and categorised into the following seven key factors or themes (not listed in order of frequency): funding; time; internal support; external support; networks; promotion and dissemination; and changing thinking.

Both data sets (i.e. the CP data set and the Regional Partnerships data set) raised the same broad themes in response to the question on sharing in the longer term and are discussed together in the following section.

5.2.1 Funding

Funding was widely commented on by interviewees of all types, but especially by teachers. There did not appear to be any differences by CP phase or by type of school. '**More funding**' was both stated as a general wish for the continuation of CP-style activities and for the following specific activities:

- funding to allow schools to meet as networks

- funding teachers, creative practitioners, local authority staff and others to attend large-scale dissemination events, such as *Exciting Minds*

- funding to release staff to develop the work, to attend meetings and to share within and outside the school

- continued funding for creative practitioners to work with schools, in order for schools to have learning to share.

Without funding, in the face of falling school rolls and dwindling budgets, it was largely felt that the activities and sharing that had started in schools through Creative Partnerships would struggle to continue. It was felt that without funding, teachers would have fewer opportunities to learn and share.

Funding is the critical element that is needed as this pays for artists to come into schools and teachers to be able to take time out to learn and to share.
School CP coordinator

You need the funding to buy the time for staff to be out of their classroom and be able to share what they've learnt.
Nursery nurse

One school-interviewee from a Phase 1 CP suggested that Creative Partnerships might introduce **tapered funding** to aid the longevity of learning and sharing between schools that could be allocated to core schools to be used for this purpose beyond 2008.

5.2.2 Time

Time was considered by interviewees to be key to the future of sharing CP learning, particularly the **availability of time to dedicate to sharing**. Interviewees were concerned about workloads, other pressures and responsibilities; as well as teacher release time (related to funding) – all of which would impact on their capacity to share learning around creativity and their school's activities.

Time is needed. It is needed to plan, to meet outside the rush of the school day and involve all participants. It also takes time for the learning to be valued in different parts of the school and by other teachers. It also takes time to really grasp the concept of the way CP learning and sharing works.
School CP coordinator

As well as finding time, interviewees noted the **longer-term nature of the aims of Creative Partnerships** and thus of the work they were doing. In this regard, a number of interviewees, especially those in Phase 2 CPs, felt that time was needed for reflection, for teachers to apply new resources or approaches and for evaluation and consolidation, before they would be ready to start sharing their CP learning.

It's a fear-driven environment and it takes time to embed things in schools and it needs to be done through building relationships and trust and a lot of strategic thinking.
CP director

5.2.3 Internal support

As with other areas of school or staff development, in the light of the scarcity of time and funding, a clear message from the data sets was that (the continuation of) **internal support** would be crucial to both the sustainability of creative partnerships-style activities and to the sharing of learning within and beyond schools. Internal support was characterised by four interrelated key areas and each is described in turn below.

Building sharing into school structures and staff development programmes was considered by a large number of interviewees to be crucial to the development of both the work and sharing in the longer term. This **capacity building** model (e.g. Bolam *et al.*, 2005; Griffiths and Woolf, 2004) was described by staff in schools that had developed mechanisms for sharing learning amongst the whole school staff. It was felt that, from such a starting point, in a school with a headteacher who has a vision and a stable core of staff, sharing would become established within a school culture and would be sustained. Practical suggestions included:

- validating/safeguarding staff time for learning and sharing
- whole-school INSET opportunities around creativity and creative learning
- establishing groups (e.g. *working, steering, teaching and learning*) to look at creative learning together, especially effective if these are cross-curricular and cross-hierarchical
- building creative learning into the curriculum structure of schools and look at opportunities to expand these
- delivering CPD in schools in a creative way
- capitalising on opportunities for modelling, observation and peer-to-peer sharing.

It was strongly felt that those schools in which **creative learning was prioritised** would be better supported to continue with their work and to share the learning they gained. Some of the strategies for prioritising creative learning were as follows:

- creative learning was written into the **school development plan**

- schools had **dedicated some of their budget** to employing creative practitioners
- schools had funded a **creativity coordinator** style management post, to work across departments on a consultancy basis and keep creativity on departmental and school agendas (see also Ofsted, 2006).

We need schools that are independently pursuing this agenda in amongst all their others, who see it as integral. That will be the greatest advocate because they will be promoting something that they know has been effective for them, which gives you confidence to do it and I think the more schools that we can bring up to this level, the better. The core schools that are committed to having creativity at the heart of their curriculum will ensure that this way of working continues.
CP programmer

The **support of the senior leadership team** within schools was felt by many interviewees to be important to schools' commitment to sharing learning in the longer term, e.g. in leading working groups involved in developing creative learning. This would enable dedicated staff time, validate the activities and raise the profile of creative learning and sharing within the school.

Linked to building sharing into school structures, and with the model of the effective professional learning community (Bolam *et al.*, 2005) was **establishing a learning culture** within schools. Local authority interviewees felt that a move towards a learning culture within schools would be positive. In such a learning culture, teachers would welcome having their practice observed and there would be a praise culture for staff being learners. Creative learning could both inform and form part of a strategy to develop staff and build capacity in the workplace. This might take the form of setting up coaching systems and peer-to-peer support within schools.

5.2.4 External support

Support from external agencies was cited as an important factor for the continuation of sharing (if not the most important) by a number of interviewees. External support was seen as potentially available from a number of sources including: CP; creative practitioners; the local authority; government and policy; and other agencies.

Creative Partnerships

A number of interviewees felt that Creative Partnerships could support the continuation of learning and sharing in the following ways.

- **Develop structures to support sharing** – for example: grouping core schools; linking core schools with new schools; establishing partnerships between schools; developing sharing networks; establishing models of practice from successful core schools and sharing these; developing teacher or school consultants/advocates.

- **Create opportunities for sharing** – for example: large-scale conferences; putting schools in touch with one another both within and outside CP areas; organising other events (workshops, CPD programmes) that bring people into contact with one another and allow them to pass on their learning or contact details.

- **Conduct an audit of expertise** – some interviewees would like to see a central store or access point where the expertise of schools, teachers and creative practitioners could be accessed and downloaded. This might also encompass past activities and curricular links. Such a database could be stored and accessed (and updated?) beyond CP so that if a school were interested in working in a particular medium they could find a school that has previously done it, or a creative practitioner they could approach.

- **Enable school-to-school visits** – both within and between CP areas to allow schools with common interests to see activities in practice.

- **Link in with other agencies** – for example, local arts organisations or the local authority. Of course, there may be implications here for CP's remit, and how that fits in with the agendas of other agencies.

> *I think there is going to have to be a network built ... to exchange what is going on in each other's schools, to keep people in contact and the ideas used. It needs a solid basis, not so much a creative curriculum, but something that people can pick up and say 'This is a creative idea I can use in science' and an example of how it can be used in science.* Teacher

Creative practitioners

Many interviewees expressed the view that the creative practitioners would be essential to the continuation of the work they had been undertaking with Creative Partnerships. A small number of interviewees also felt that these creative professionals could also be instrumental in sustaining the sharing of learning between schools. The following suggestions were made for their involvement.

- **Continue working with schools** and sharing what they learn with other schools (sustain their relationships).

- Get together as a **network of professionals**/creative practitioners to develop structures to exchange their learning – there is a need for hands-on practical exchange of ideas and activities.

- **Support schools to find funding** and opportunities.

    Without CP it would be difficult. Some [activities] would stop completely. The keen ones would continue but they'd run out of ideas without the support and input from the creative practitioners coming in. Teacher

The local authority

Some external support from the local authority was additionally felt to be of value for schools. This was particularly viewed as an area of lost potential at the current time.

- Link up with **advisory support** – the LA advisor, as a source of knowledge, expertise and critical guidance, knowing both what was happening in schools and what expertise was available elsewhere.

- **Prioritise creativity** at a strategic level in order to validate some of the work that schools are doing and to encourage wider interest and support from around the authority, especially schools that do not take an interest in the activities of CP schools at the present time.

- **Offer INSET/CPD on creative learning** – it was felt that the LA were well placed to exploit school-level expertise in this regard.

- **Coordinate a network of schools** in the sharing of learning around what is currently Creative Partnerships' activity, but looking towards the longer term, creative learning and sharing.

- **Use Advanced Skills Teachers** (in authorities that employ them) to share some of the learning that has been developed more widely. This might be especially effective in those subject areas that are generally perceived as 'non-creative' such as science or mathematics.

> *It would be helpful to have people who can support expertise needed at a strategic level to ensure it happens and to facilitate schools working together in working groups. From a local authority level, it would be good to have support and expertise to help schools to begin to innovate. The local authority supporting schools would help sustainability in the longer term. There really needs to be energy at local authority level.*
> Headteacher

> *It is quite difficult for schools to coordinate getting themselves together. The local authority could coordinate a team from every school who worked with creative professionals so you could see something that was happening throughout a borough that was standardised across the schools.*
> School CP coordinator

Government and the policy agenda

There were isolated calls, amongst all types of interviewee, for the DfES and government to put creativity at the top of the policy agenda. It was felt that strategic support for creative learning and teaching would validate the activities undertaken by schools and generate interest in them.

> *The whole culture of education accountability and measurement has got to shift because until Ofsted is remodelled it is going to be hard not to stay in that performance attainment groove as your only priority. Creativity is not measured and not recognised in performance targets. Until that changes, it will be difficult. CP and other organisations need to chip away at the ministers until something changes.*
> Headteacher

Other agencies

There was a resounding cry from some interviewees for the continuation of external agency support (whether this be CP or other appropriate external agencies). It was felt that without such support, and in the face of competing priorities at LA level, activities and the impetus to share would wane. There is a requirement in schools for an organisation to serve the function of flagging up opportunities, acting as a brokering service, putting schools in touch with one another and finding funding etc.

In summary, external support, whilst in place, has provided an impetus for schools to use some of their time to progress with CP activities and to share their learning. Without CP and the funding it offers, the question is raised: to what extent can these activities be maintained? Interviewees did not offer an optimistic prognosis for the future of sharing without elements of internal (4.2.3) and external support being in place, especially given the time pressures teachers and schools are under from other commitments (see 4.2.2).

5.2.5 Networks

Future sharing and sustaining the sharing of learning between schools would, it was felt, also require **establishing sharing networks**. Alternatively, CP could **tap into existing networks**. Suggestions included:

- set up formal partnerships between schools with overlapping interests
- support the continuing developments of CP-related networks, such as associate schools networks and action research clusters
- tap into existing LA-wide networks, e.g. for early years, specialist schools, excellence clusters etc.
- focus on 'natural' links, such as between feeder schools or locality links – with a view to sharing resources in the future
- set up and support specific age-group/phase networks of CP-engaged schools (differences between primary and secondary were thought to be too great).

Of course, supporting and exploiting such networks might have funding implications for both the present and future. However, a small number of

interviewees expressed the view that effective and vibrant networks would find a way to continue working and sharing together without specific funding from Creative Partnerships.

5.2.6 Promotion and dissemination

Active promotion and **effective dissemination** of Creative Partnerships, the opportunities it affords and the expertise that has been developed through the course of the programme was also felt to be important for the longer term. Some suggestions of things CP could do included:

- **who's who?** related to the 'audit of expertise', a central database or web-tool providing information about the schools involved in CP activities, key members of staff, creative practitioners, existing expertise in schools and amongst creative practitioners – although it is of concern that this would place pressure on certain schools to share, but with no recompense

- **practical tips and hints** including web-based resources offering practical ideas for introducing creativity/creative activities into specific subject or curriculum areas

- **link up with other virtual learning environments** e.g. using existing gateways to reach more teachers than those already involved in CP. In addition, arts organisations and agencies such as ALITE might be other possibilities.

- **signposting** e.g. upcoming dissemination.

> *It would be useful to build up some kind of database of schools to see who is the key member of staff and what their specialisms are in terms of creativity and what types of projects they've been involved in so that you could contact them in future.*
> School CP coordinator

> *We need someone to signpost relevant things that are coming up because sometimes with time and pressures of people working, things that could have a real impact pass people by.*
> School CP coordinator

A minority of interviewees expressed the view that CP should **raise awareness** amongst schools about CP and what it offers. This was especially the

case in the Regional Partnerships data set, where CP would, naturally, be less known.

5.2.7 Changing thinking

The continuation of the collaborative aspect of sharing in the longer term would require the development of a **shared vision and language for creativity** between individuals, schools, creative practitioners, CP and to some extent the local authority. It was felt that changed thinking about creative learning and **the value of sharing experiences** would be key to ensuring some sustained sharing in the longer term. In this regard, in some CP areas, attention was moving towards working with teachers at Initial Teacher Training (ITT) in order to instil creative and sharing practices from the very start of a teacher's career. Developing shared vision and changing thinking, however, was a task that schools too were engaging in and that was felt to be beneficial to sustaining sharing in the long term.

> *We've always worked in this way ... we've always been responsive to students and people find it quite an informal place to be. CP gave us permission to be proud of that in a way that wasn't just pastoral. I think having got that little edge teachers have really got their teeth into 'Actually, what I do is right and what I do is good...' I'm hoping, by the time the money comes to a finish, that, if nothing else, people will have got their teeth into it and be able to carry it forward.*
> School CP coordinator

5.3 Future sharing and sustainability: summary

In summary, the kinds of future sharing and dissemination activity planned by schools depended largely on their progress or experience with CP to date and the extent of their within-school developments. Some CP areas saw action **research networks** as a future locus for sharing. In addition, both teachers and CP staff planned future activity around:

- **peer-to-peer approaches**
- **exploiting natural and/or existing links**.

The factors, strategies and resources that would be needed to continue with, and build on, sharing of CP learning in the longer term, encompassed the following seven key themes:

- funding
- time
- internal support
- external support
- networks
- promotion and dissemination
- changing thinking.

There were a number of practical strategies that it was felt would be advantageous or instrumental in allowing sharing to continue in the longer term. The **internal support from the school** and **external support** from a number of agencies were felt to be especially important. In particular, stakeholders could adopt the following strategies.

Creative Partnerships

- develop structures to support sharing
- create opportunities for sharing
- conduct an audit of expertise
- enable school-to-school visits
- link in with other agencies.

Local authority

- link up with advisory support
- prioritise creativity and creative learning
- offer INSET/CPD on creative learning
- coordinate a network of schools
- use Advanced Skills Teachers.

Creative Practitioners

- continue working with schools and sharing what they learn with others
- build a network of professionals and develop structures to exchange learning
- support schools to find funding and opportunities.

Schools

- validate and safeguard time for learning and sharing
- establish working groups to look at opportunities for creative learning in and out of school
- fund a creativity coordinator as a management post
- (with other schools) dedicate some of budget to employing creative practitioners.

Many of the factors and strategies for supporting the sharing of learning between professionals that have been identified in this data set mirror those found in the literature on building capacity, professional development and managing change initiatives (see e.g. Bolam *et al.*, 2005). In this sense, there is nothing 'new' about creative development and learning.

In considering their approach to roll-out and sustained development beyond core schools: 'increased reach' (Creative Partnerships, 2007:7), CP might find it effective to target their funding to those schools with a fundamental, not secondary, aim of reaching out and sharing expertise. Certainly, it has been the case that CP flourishes in schools that have commitment to the CP agenda and the support of their leadership team. Schools also flourish where serendipity (or an external agency) provides them the support and resources they require to explore and take risks (e.g. Burns-Owen-Partnership, 2006: 32). Perhaps channelling limited resources to those schools committed to deploying them for sharing expertise between professionals, rather than only for experiences for young people, would lead to more sustained development in schools?

6 Indicators for successful sharing

6.1 Introduction

This chapter draws on the findings and messages raised by this research in order to set out some tools and indicators to assist CP and practitioners in considering how to share, in a sustainable way, creative learning activities.

Three years into the programme, CP described schools' engagement on five levels through which learning appeared to 'cascade' or ripple out from level 1 schools to those schools less directly involved with CP. It was suggested that learning would 'cascade' through the five levels of school engagement with CP i.e. from the core schools, out through the levels. On investigation, it was found that learning was shared through a wealth of other routes, distinct from this notion of 'cascade'.

Interviews with schools revealed a wealth of approaches to sharing learning between teachers and schools. Many of these approaches appear to be generic across all teacher professional development and could relate to almost any aspect of learning undertaken by teachers. The fact that so many approaches were embraced so widely in relation to CP learning is itself encouraging. In addition, some approaches seemed to be more significant when related to creative learning and teaching and were clearly being exploited effectively in this respect.

Creative Partnerships' current thinking is that their future development should aim for 'an increased reach, serving more young people, schools and areas' (2007: 7). However, it remains the case that there are still many young people, schools and areas that fall outside of CP's reach, both within CP areas and beyond. The challenge for those who wish to widen the benefits of CP activities to such schools, is to find a way to mediate creative experiences (which contain risk, challenge, unfamiliarity and which may refract the focus from a standards agenda) in such a way that other practitioners can learn from them.

This section sets out:

- a model of sharing professional learning from creative activities (6.2)

- a set of indicators for planning appropriate sharing (6.3)

- a formula for practitioners to help plan effective sharing (6.4)

- a set of indicators to diagnose whether successful sharing has taken place (6.5).

6.2 Sharing professional learning from creative activities: a model

Figure 6.1 sets out the model of sharing shown in this research to be taking place, to varying degrees.

Figure 6.1 A model of sharing professional learning from creative activities
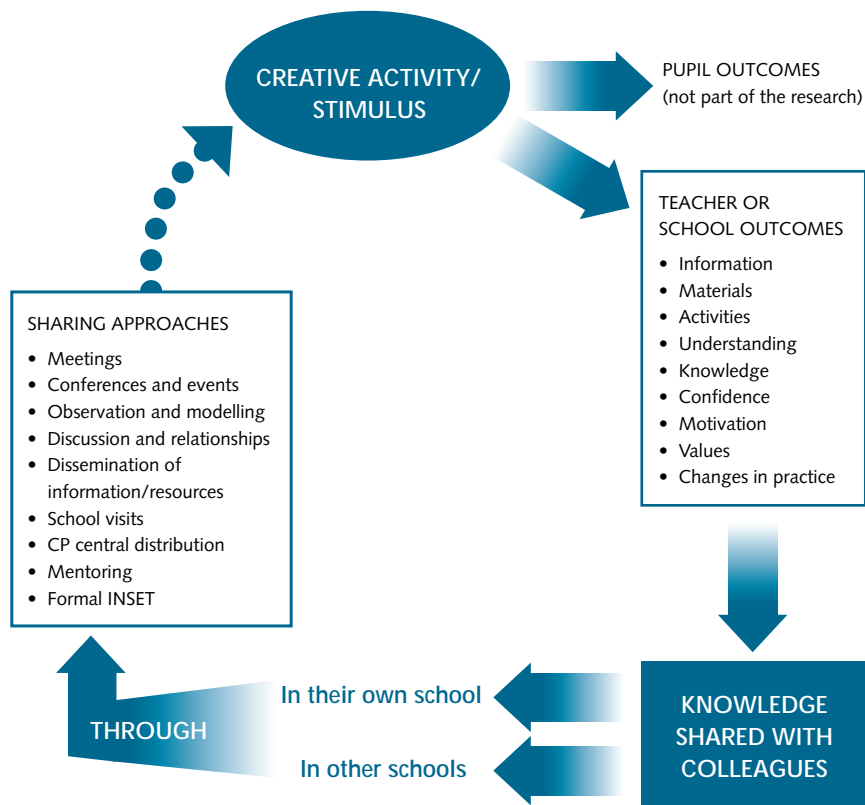
In this model, learning first occurs through some kind of creative activity or stimulus resulting in outcomes for pupils (not considered in this research) and for teachers. The outcomes listed here derive from a long-established hierarchy of professional development outcomes for teachers that culminate in teachers changing their practice (Harland and Kinder, 1997). The most important step in terms of the focus of this research is the next one: that these outcomes, in whatever combination, may then be shared with colleagues either within their own school or in other schools. This sharing can occur through the nine approaches listed in the final point in the cycle. This can be seen as an iterative process, whereby those in receipt of sharing may enter the cycle having been exposed to a creative stimulus, or activity. It is likely that through the iterations, the learning changes and metamorphoses like any creative process. It may also be diluted and thus needs replenishment through exposure to creative practitioners and activities.

While some of the sharing described in the research required formal organisation by CP, much of it took place organically. The creative activity or stimulus enabled by CP, sometimes accompanied by a strategic push, seems to have engendered a desire amongst teachers to share their experience of that stimulus. It also gave them learning to share: the creative partner enabled by CP funding and expertise is an essential component of this model.

As an example of this model in action: a creative experience enabled by CP may have been followed by a staff meeting. This meeting could have been specifically about the CP experience, could have included an agenda item about CP (as a brand) or creative learning, or creative learning could have been raised through another agenda item. Convening a staff meeting about creative learning may suggest that it represents a high status issue. However, introducing creative learning into another agenda item might suggest that members of staff have 'taken ownership' of the creative agenda and wish to propel it into prominence. What is important in this context is the way the approach to sharing has been conducted and how it matches the intention behind sharing.

6.3 Indicators for planning appropriate sharing

This section considers the various different approaches to sharing that were identified in Chapter 3, and asks how each might be appropriate for sharing professional development about creative teaching and learning. It is intended to provide a number of discussion points to aid the practitioner (within CP, in school etc.) in selecting the most appropriate or effective sharing method to achieve their aim.

Step 1 Your aim

- Is the aim of sharing to promote creativity?

- Is the aim of sharing to promote Creative Partnerships?

- What aspect of teacher professional development does it, or could it, address?

- What aspect of school development does it, or could it, address?

- Is the aim to 'widen participation' beyond CP-engaged schools?

- Is the aim to build capacity within and between CP-engaged schools?

Step 2 Your intended outcome

- Do you want to convey new information?

- Do you wish to share new materials?

- Do you wish to celebrate success, share activities and pupil out-comes?

- Do you want to observe or model activities?

- Do you want to share new understanding?

- Do you want to pass on new knowledge?

- Are you hoping to build teachers' confidence?

- Do you wish to inspire and motivate teachers?

- Would you like to change teachers' and/or schools' values?

- Are you hoping teachers will change their classroom practice?

Step 3 Select your approach

- A meeting?

- A conference or big event?

- An opportunity to observe and model activities?

- Develop discussions or relationships?

- Dissemination of information or resources?

- A school visit?

- CP central distribution: tell CP about it?

- Mentoring?

- Formal INSET?

Step 4 Which approach will best provide...

- an opportunity to experience the creative process/activity under consideration?

- a safe environment to enable teachers to explore risk taking?

- that chance to practise the technique with pupils?

- the opportunity to reflect on their own practice?

- the most efficient way of conveying information?

- the inspiration to motivate teachers to take further risks?

- the assurance to SMT that investment will support school development?

- the likelihood of resulting in changes in practice in the school?

- the ownership by schools and teachers of a creative learning agenda?

- reach to other schools (beyond those already CP-engaged)?

- sharing within the school?

- sharing between engaged schools?

Different approaches would appear to be more or less suited to fulfilling the above objectives. The following list attempts to identify those features of different sharing approaches that had **particular relevance to creative learning and teaching**. It draws upon the perspectives of teachers and CP staff who have been involved in each of these approaches, but does not purport to be a comprehensive catalogue of benefits from sharing about creative teaching and learning through each approach.

Meetings can provide:

- a secure environment in which teachers can share

- the chance to debate and reflect (for example, about the definition of creativity)

- a forum to raise the profile of CP itself

- encouragement for others to take risks, based on testaments of good experience

- a chance to infiltrate discussion about creative learning and teaching into existing agendas

- open sharing of experiences (especially during in-school meetings)

- a chance to inspire colleagues and to give them confidence to be creative

- awareness raising, information exchange, sharing ideas.

Conferences and events can provide:

- opportunities for conveying visual evidence of CP work (e.g. through IT media) that might otherwise be hard to describe

- demonstrations of creative activities for teachers to observe or experience

- informal sharing opportunities, providing support for those most challenged by risk taking

- activity-based learning

- resource sharing, supported by demonstrations and descriptions

- a buzz – generating a feeling of being part of something important.

Observations and modelling can provide:

- opportunities to observe or participate in creative teaching approaches that might be hard to describe without 'doing'

- chances to reflect on what has been observed

- confidence to take creative risks

- cascade sharing of the skills and expertise of creative practitioners

- real-life situations, avoiding 'It wouldn't work with our kids'

- collaborative approaches, dialogue and discovery.

Discussions and relationships can provide:

- encouragement for enthusiasm

- more familiar, less formal contexts (supporting greater risk taking)

- immediacy, capitalising on recent successful experiences of creative teaching and learning.

Information and resources can provide:

- scope for describing projects, through DVDs, photographs etc.
- practical resources to share after events have been observed.

However, information and resources were most effective when utilised alongside face-to-face interactions.

School visits can provide:

- credibility for otherwise incredible ideas (seeing is believing)
- chances to participate in creative activities in relevant contexts
- opportunities to discuss, explore and understand the work observed.

Central distribution by CP can provide:

- economy of scale in sharing materials, examples and experiences
- a two-way information flow between schools and CP.

Mentoring can provide:

- very focused and individualised sharing of experience and expertise, particularly for NQTs
- support and confidence for greater risk taking.

> *Formal INSET can provide:*
>
> - some opportunities for experiential learning, depending on the approach taken
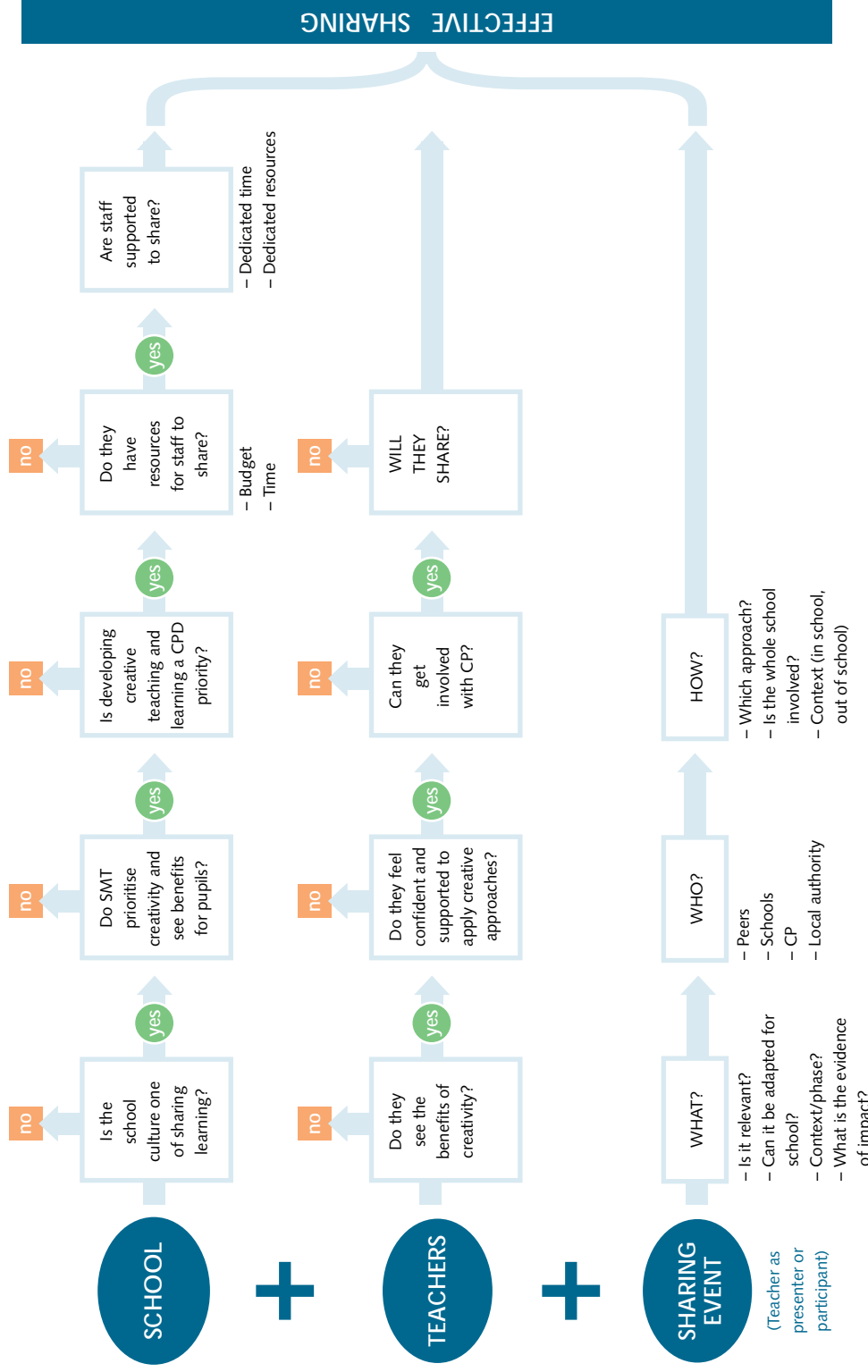> - reach to the whole-school staff.

CP staff and practitioners might want to consider their purpose for sharing and then select approaches to deploy for sharing creative learning and teaching experiences within and between schools on a local or national level.

6.4 A formula for effective sharing

Figure 6.2 presents a formula for engendering successful sharing within and between schools. While the school is the primary focus, it should be a useful tool for CP staff or practitioners planning for effective sharing of CP activities.

The figure indicates that there are three separate layers at work to bring about effective sharing for schools: the school; teachers; and the sharing event itself. For each of these, a number of conditions have to be in place. These are raised as questions in the figure. A 'no' indicates that the condition for effective sharing requires some attention. Where all conditions are met, one might expect effective sharing. However, other factors, such as the receptiveness of colleagues to receiving learning may intervene.

Figure 6.2 A formula for effective sharing

EFFECTIVE SHARING

SCHOOL +

- Is the school culture one of sharing learning? — no / yes →
- Do SMT prioritise creativity and see benefits for pupils? — no / yes →
- Is developing creative teaching and learning a CPD priority? — no / yes →
- Do they have resources for staff to share? — no / yes →
  - Budget
  - Time
- Are staff supported to share?
  - Dedicated time
  - Dedicated resources

TEACHERS +

- Do they see the benefits of creativity? — no / yes →
- Do they feel confident and supported to apply creative approaches? — no / yes →
- Can they get involved with CP? — no / yes →
- WILL THEY SHARE? — no

SHARING EVENT
(Teacher as presenter or participant)

- WHAT?
  - Is it relevant?
  - Can it be adapted for school?
  - Context/phase?
  - What is the evidence of impact?
- WHO?
  - Peers
  - Schools
  - CP
  - Local authority
- HOW?
  - Which approach?
  - Is the whole school involved?
  - Context (in school, out of school)

6.5 Indicators to diagnose whether successful sharing has taken place

CP staff and practitioners may wish to reflect on the sharing of creative learning that has taken place. To this end we produce here a set of indicators to help to structure discussion and evaluation within schools, networks, and/or CP. These indicators should operate as a diagnostic tool concerning the sharing of learning about creative teaching and learning (CT&L).

Indicators of effective aims for sharing

- Have the aspects of learning to be shared been sufficiently specified? (e.g. a technique, a scheme of work, evidence of learning outcomes, tips on generating or running projects etc.?)

- Has the aim of sharing this aspect been sufficiently specified? (e.g. to stimulate commitment, to engender confidence, to transfer skills etc.?)

- Is the intention to promote CP, CT&L, or both?

- What aspects of professional or school development are being targeted for improvement through sharing?

Indicators of effective planning for sharing

- Is the approach, method or medium of sharing appropriate to the specified aims?

- Have any potential barriers to sharing through that approach been addressed?

- Are the resources available for this form of sharing? From whom?

- Are those resources being targeted at those most committed to sharing?

study of creative partnerships' local sharing of practice and learning

- Who is taking ownership of the sharing process? (e.g. CP and its staff, school staff or creative practitioners?)

- Is contributing to sharing about CT&L becoming embedded in the fabric of school development?

- Is this widening sharing? Or reinforcing learning amongst those already involved?

- Is it promoting CP and/or CT&L amongst teachers?

- Is it promoting CP and/or CT&L amongst decision makers, including school SMTs and governors?

- Is a commitment to CT&L likely to occur amongst decision makers, managers and practitioners as a result of this sharing?

- Is the desire to share CT&L from CP activities being spread amongst a wider constituency?

6.6 Conclusion

Our findings suggest that much sharing is the product of opportunism, either on the part of those with the knowledge to share, or on the part of those seeking it. Chance conversations are always a potential opportunity for sharing and creativity can be introduced into a meeting about any aspect of the teaching or learning experience.

Other forms of sharing may require both planning and resources. For example, for a teacher to attend a CP conference requires classroom cover, travel time and expenses and management approval. It requires prioritisation above other, equally important, activities and therefore will need to be considered a valuable investment by the school.

What is demonstrated by some of the approaches revealed in this report is that sharing can be teacher led, suggesting a clear sense of their ownership.

It can also occur through more formal approaches, which suggest higher status and concomitant resourcing.

As CP progresses, it seeks to establish creativity as part of the life-blood of the education experience, for both teachers and pupils.

> *Setting out to embed the concept of creativity deeply in the educational establishment is the greatest challenge, offering the greatest prize of all. That prize would be the realisation of an ethos of creativity, rather than a compartment of creativity.*
> NACCCE Report 1999

As well as sustaining the resources to enable creative experiences that would otherwise be beyond the capacity of most individual schools, CP needs to nurture and guide the increasing ownership of the concept of creativity and creative learning amongst teachers. Their sharing efforts may be harder to monitor or quantify, but their impact on securing the place of creativity in schools will be at least as significant as the branded activities of CP itself. Supporting them in exploiting the myriad opportunities for sharing their experiences of creative teaching and learning would enhance the chances that such teaching and learning becomes a sustained element of education.

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Study of Creative Partnerships' Local Sharing of Practice and Learning

Experiencing creative learning and teaching is one thing: sharing the excitement of such experiences with those that were not present is another. Conventional reports, and even presentations, can only convey part of the picture. Direct interaction seems to be necessary for effectively passing on the experience.

How can such learning be shared more widely? What factors enable, hinder and sustain such sharing? How can teachers plan for and carry out effective sharing?

Based on 93 interviews with teachers and Creative Partnerships' staff, this report explores the relationship between the well-resourced dissemination of the work of Creative Partnerships and the more informal means by which teachers learn directly from each other. It looks at how both ends of this spectrum contribute to the greater sharing of creative teaching and learning.

The research found that teachers learnt a lot from attending conferences and events about creativity, but they also engaged very directly with each other, in the classroom, in the corridor, in the staffroom and in the staff meeting, sharing their enthusiasm and their techniques. The study formulates a four-step plan for appropriate sharing, and sets out a model to help ascertain when sharing is successful.

This report will be useful for those involved in building capacity for creative teaching and learning within schools, as well as in widening the reach of creative teaching and learning between schools, whether within Creative Partnerships schools or beyond.