

2025



The Master Collector Impact Report

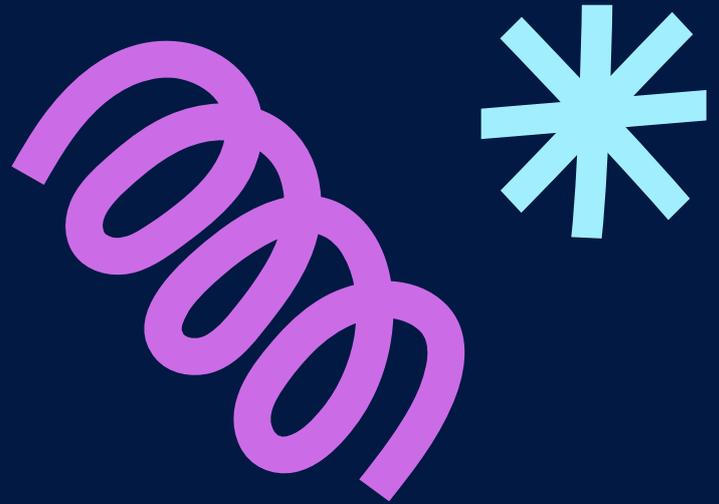
Immersive Program
2023 - 2025



Prepared by
Upbeat Digital

Executive Summary

The Master Collector invites students to step inside the magical world of Emery Whipple and Kip, two intrepid collectors who find themselves in Western Australia with a mystery to solve. They need the students' help, and through improvisation, imaginative play and storytelling, the children are encouraged to immerse themselves in a fantastical world of their own creation.



The Master Collector was delivered across nine Western Australian primary schools in 2025 as part of Barking Gecko Arts' IMMERSE Learning and Engagement Program. The five-week residency blended live performance, puppetry, and participatory storytelling with curriculum-aligned creative learning.

Teachers reported exceptionally high levels of student engagement, strong creative outcomes, and meaningful improvements in confidence, imagination, and participation. Feedback demonstrates that the program created memorable learning experiences and supported teachers in fostering creativity within their classrooms.



Program Background

IMMERSE brings theatre into classrooms through hybrid performance workshops that connect directly to the WA Curriculum. Students step 'inside the story', take on active roles, and help shape the narrative through imaginative decision-making and drama-based activities.

The Master Collector was inspired by Shaun Tan's *The Lost Thing* and followed Emery Whipple and Kip as they enlisted students to help solve an unfolding mystery about belonging and difference. Each session included participatory storytelling, character interaction, guided reflection, and optional between-session learning activities.

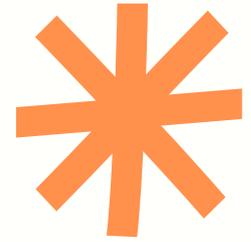
Participating Primary Schools 2025:



Method of Evaluation

Evaluation data was collected through a Google Forms survey completed by teachers at the conclusion of the residency. Nine responses were received across participating schools. The survey included a mix of scaled questions, open-ended reflection prompts, and questions designed to assess learning outcomes, engagement, and teacher experience.

Key Findings



The overall findings reflect a highly successful residency that delivered both creative learning outcomes and emotional engagement.

Teachers consistently described The Master Collector as deeply engaging, well-structured and developmentally appropriate. Students connected strongly to the characters and themes, particularly concepts of belonging, difference and imagination. Teachers reported that even students who typically struggle with focus or participation became noticeably involved in the immersive sessions.

Many teachers noted that the five-week structure supported continuity, confidence building and incremental creative risk-taking. Classrooms observed increased collaboration, improved willingness to share ideas, and greater enthusiasm for drama and storytelling activities.

Teachers also emphasised the quality of the teaching artists, describing them as skilled, warm and able to establish trust and rapport quickly. Multiple responses highlighted that the program modelled effective creative learning pedagogies, contributing to teachers' own professional practice.



Key Themes

100



Student engagement and excitement

Students were highly invested in the story world and eagerly anticipated each new session. Teachers observed sustained concentration and enthusiasm.



Creative expression across multiple modes

Students confidently expressed ideas through drawing, movement, drama, writing and collaborative storytelling.



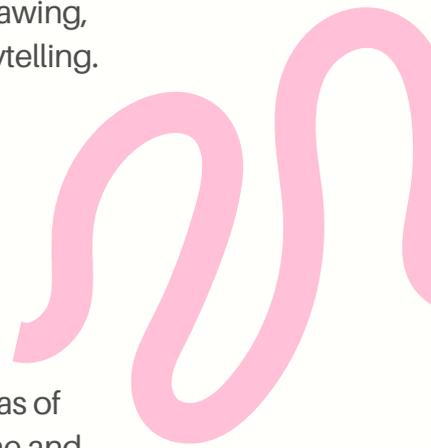
Belonging, empathy and difference

Thematically, students connected strongly to ideas of acceptance and imagining places where everyone and everything belongs.



Teacher experience and professional growth

Teachers valued seeing drama-based approaches modelled in action and found the workload between sessions highly manageable.



Key Findings: Teacher Quotes

"MY STUDENTS WERE COMPLETELY ABSORBED EVERY WEEK. EVEN THOSE WHO RARELY PARTICIPATE WERE CONFIDENT TO JOIN IN AND TAKE CREATIVE RISKS."

"THE MASTER COLLECTOR BROUGHT OUT IMAGINATION I DID NOT KNOW SOME OF MY STUDENTS HAD. THEY WERE EXCITED, ENGAGED AND ASKING WHEN EMERY AND KIP WOULD RETURN."

"THE PROGRAM SUPPORTED BELONGING BEAUTIFULLY. STUDENTS MADE STRONG EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS TO THE CHARACTERS AND THEMES."

"WATCHING THE TEACHING ARTISTS MODEL DRAMA STRATEGIES WAS INCREDIBLY VALUABLE. I FEEL MORE CONFIDENT USING CREATIVE LEARNING APPROACHES IN MY OWN TEACHING."

"THE FIVE-WEEK STRUCTURE WAS PERFECT. EACH WEEK BUILT ON THE LAST, AND WE SAW STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE GROW NOTICEABLY."



Key Findings: Teacher Perspectives



100%

Felt the program was valuable, engaging and creatively rich



67%

Observed increased student engagement in classroom activities



100%

Reported that students enjoyed drama and storytelling activities



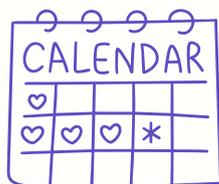
100%

Agreed the program supported creative expression



100%

Believed the program has long-term value in the classroom



100%

Found the program manageable alongside normal teaching duties



67%

Reported a positive contribution to their own professional development



89%

Would like more experiences like this offered in schools

Conclusion

Feedback indicates that The Master Collector continues to be an exemplary model of immersive creative learning in primary schools.

The program successfully engaged diverse learners, strengthened creative confidence and supported curriculum outcomes across Drama and English. Teachers expressed strong enthusiasm for its continuation and expansion, reinforcing its value as a signature offering within the IMMERSE program. In addition, teachers noted that the residency supported a range of curriculum outcomes beyond Drama and English, further highlighting its value as a holistic creative learning experience.



Credits



Inaugural Creative Team

Created by: Carla Nirella, Luke Kerridge, Adriano Cappelletta and Grace Chow

Written by: Luke Kerridge and Adriano Cappelletta

Designer: Amalia Lambert

Sound Designer: Tim Collins

Puppet Construction: Stewart Campbell

Props and Building: Stewart Campbell and Luke Salfinger

Video Content: Grace Chow

Creative Learning Manager: Fiona Lane

2023 - 2025 IMMERSE Teaching Artists/Performers

Emery:

- Jo Morris
- Carla Nirella
- Teresa Jakovich
- Asha Cluer
- Kim Walsh

Kip:

- Hannah Davidson
 - Grace Chow
 - Isaac Diamond
 - Caitlin McFeat
 - Lily Baitup
 - Lucy Wong
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Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our findings further, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

