

Inspiring world-class teaching
professionalism



Creativity in learning and teaching

A professional guide for teachers



**In partnership with
the National Creative
Learning Network**

What is this guide for?

Scotland needs to prepare its young people for life and work in an uncertain economic and social environment if they are to thrive in a world of increasingly rapid change. Well-developed, higher-order skills will be a key part of the toolkit they will need, and the ability to think creatively will be one of the most important elements in that toolkit.

Making a professional commitment to learning and learners that is compatible with the aspiration of achieving a sustainable and equitable world embodies what it is to be a teacher in Scotland as set out in the Professional Standards. This means teachers commit to living the professional values and engage in lifelong learning, reflection, enquiry, leadership of learning and collaboration practice as key aspects of their professionalism.

Who is this guide for?

The purpose of this professional guide is to provide support for teachers to reflect on their actions and consider whether they may need further advice or professional learning in developing creative learning and teaching. It is part of a series of guides produced by GTC Scotland. The guides do not form part of the Professional Code for teachers. Teachers and schools may find

them useful professional learning and discussion tools but they are not intended for use in any competency or conduct process. It is designed to enhance teacher professionalism as part of GTC Scotland's advisory role as the professional body for all of Scotland's teachers.



What is creativity?

Creativity is a process that generates ideas which have value to the individual and to society. It involves looking at familiar things with a fresh eye, examining problems with an open mind, making connections, learning from mistakes and using imagination to explore new possibilities ([3-18 Curriculum Impact Report/ Creativity across Learning/Scotland's Creative Learning Plan](#)).

The core creativity skills are:

- Curiosity;
- Open mindedness;
- Imagination; and
- Problem solving.

They are higher-order skills, transferable across learning, life and work. They increase engagement, support learning and enhance employability.

Creative learning describes the range of activities and approaches undertaken by an individual which supports the development of creativity and other skills.

Creative teaching describes approaches and activities, developed and delivered by those who lead learning, which are usually exciting, innovative and often use unexpected techniques to engage learners.

Though often associated with the development of creativity skills in learners, creative teaching approaches might not necessarily do this. They might for example, be used to help learners acquire knowledge and understanding effectively, rather than on the development of creativity skills in learners.

A typical creative process involves investigating a problem or issue, exploring multiple viewpoints and options, generating and testing out ideas, developing, refining and communicating solutions and evaluating whether or not they have worked.

Words to describe this creative process include: problem-solving, imagination, open-mindedness, curiosity, inquisitive and resilience.



Problem-solving



Imagination



Open-mindedness



Curiosity



Inquisitive



Resilience

What is expected of teachers?

Scotland's Creative Learning Plan was first published in 2013, setting out a shared vision for the importance of creativity in education and as a result, there has been growth in a shared language and common understanding of creativity and creativity skills.

However, the landscape is now very different, and the impact of Covid-19 has required a rapid rethink of Scotland's education, skills employability and careers provision. Employers cite creativity as one of the top five skills they look for in employees (*The Future of Jobs Report 2020*, World Economic Forum). It is essential that young people are developing their creativity skills now.

[The Creative Learning Plan](#) has been refreshed to ensure the Scottish education system enables everyone to recognise, develop and apply their creativity to ensure they thrive in an increasingly complex and fast-changing world, with a commitment to the following outcomes over the next three years:

- Creativity embedded in curriculum design;
- Learners' mental health and wellbeing is improved;
- Learners confidently applying creativity skills in all contexts;
- Learners directly influencing their own creative learning; and
- Quality cultural experiences accessible to all learners.

How to develop and embed creative learning and teaching

The following prompts are designed to help teachers embed creativity into their teaching while supporting the development of creative learning experiences and creativity skills. They also support self-evaluation.

Teaching and context for creative learning

This checklist can be used to help teachers embed creativity in planning and teaching:

- Opportunities for developing creativity skills are identified and planned;
- Creative challenges are designed to meet the needs of learners;
- The task and learning approaches are discussed and agreed with learners, with input from learners;
- Staff and learners work together to develop thinking and enquiry skills;
- Teachers guide learning, and encourage responsibility and decision-making by learners – they do not always provide all the answers;
- Learning spaces are organised to accommodate choice and offer flexible approaches to learning;
- Learners have opportunities to learn with and from others;
- Learners are offered opportunities to manage a creative project, with appropriate interventions by teachers;
- Teachers encourage learners to review and develop their work; and
- Teachers help learners to give and receive constructive feedback.

Development of creativity skills – the task

These prompts invite teachers to consider whether a planned activity will help learners develop creativity skills.

The task or learning experience:

- has a strong element of personalisation and choice;
- stimulates curiosity and open-ended exploration, for example:
 - problems; issues; objects; stories; topical events; scenarios; role play or forum theatre
 - external stimulus – contact with creative people; unfamiliar environments;
- builds on prior knowledge, skills and experience while taking learners into unfamiliar areas; and
- contains helpful parameters.

Development of creativity skills

This checklist can be used to evaluate whether learners are developing and applying their creativity skills.

Learners:

- ask good questions;
- make connections and recognise patterns and anomalies;
- define problems and explore potential interventions;
- explore, synthesise and refine multiple ideas, options and viewpoints;
- use imagination and problem-solving skills to explore ideas;
- hypothesise;
- manage uncertainty and respond positively to the unexpected;
- take responsibility for their own creative approaches (alone or in groups);
- develop initial ideas and follow through on those with most potential;
- present ideas – include timescales, team responsibilities and any potential constraints;
- adopt creative approaches to overcome obstacles to progress;
- continuously check ideas against the creative challenge criteria;
- respond positively to mistakes and failures;
- evaluate the final solution and reflect on what went well and what could have been done better;
- talk about how this creative experience could apply in other areas of learning; and
- describe how creativity skills were used in the task.

What you can do

When developing and embedding creative learning and teaching, ask yourself:

- How well are creativity skills recognised, articulated and valued by teachers and learners?
- Are opportunities to develop creativity skills evident across all areas of the curriculum?
- Are learners transferring their creativity skills to new contexts?
- To what extent do I encourage curiosity, offering space and safety for questions and encouraging learners to follow their interests?
- Am I encouraging open-mindedness by challenging expectations, dispelling preconceptions and offering multiple perspectives?
- Am I engaging my learners' imaginations, asking What If...? questions and encouraging invention?
- Am I developing problem-solving skills by setting complex and open-ended challenges?
- Is creativity practically applied as a higher-order thinking skill?
- Which areas of my own context naturally engage learners in creative learning, and can I develop these elements further?
- How might interdisciplinary learning and partnership working between sectors, challenge my learners to develop their creativity skills and engage in creative learning?
- How well are learners' creative endeavours at home and in the community acknowledged and celebrated?

You might also:

- Familiarise yourself with the refreshed [Creative Learning Plan](#) and think about how the vision, mission and values-based goals align with your teaching
- Take a look at the [Pinterest Board](#) that showcases visuals others have made using the Everything is Creative poster maker
- Reflect on how creativity skills feature in your own subject or context by creating your own poster using the [Everything is Creative poster maker](#)



Additional resources

Engaging with Parents and Carers

Share and explore the National Parent Forum of Scotland's [Creativity in a Nutshell Guide](#)

Creativity 3-18 curriculum review (impact report)

[This report](#) evaluates practice in Scotland in the development of learners' creativity skills across all curriculum areas.

Learning Activities

Creativity Portal

Explore the Creativity Portal for more on creative teaching, creative learning and creative change

The Creativity Toybox

This contains activities for the classroom, or community setting – 21 short videos and related activities that can be used to develop creative thinking skills

National Improvement Hub

Find all Education Scotland's Creativity resources, tools, posters and infographics on the National Improvement Hub

Planning and Evaluating

Explore the Planning for and Evaluating Creativity resource – a set of tools to help educators and learners plan for creativity, identify creativity skills and reflect on their learning

Professional Learning

Contact your local Creative Learning Network coordinator or find your local Creative Learning contact

Subscribe to Kaleidoscope

his national e-newsletter provides a quarterly update on creativity resources, news and opportunities



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