

Learning Resource

Creativity and Religious & Moral Education



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Purpose

This learning resource provides support to develop links between RME and Creativity skills. This resource will help you to develop a shared language and understanding of creativity as a higher order thinking skill, a cross-cutting theme of CfE, and to value its role in RME.

Learning outcomes

As a result of engaging with this learning resource you will have:

- an understanding of what creativity skills are and why they are important
- the opportunity to reflect on your current practice
- knowledge about where to access support and information
- an understanding of the connections between RME and creativity

Who is this learning for?

This resource has been developed to contribute to professional learning for practitioners at all levels. This incorporates those working with children and young people in the any context and in any sector.

What are Creativity Skills?

As skills for life, learning and work, and a higher order thinking skill, creativity skills are a responsibility of all. However without a clear understanding of what creativity skills are it can be difficult to recognise and develop them.

Sometimes people assume creativity is only about the expressive arts and whilst the permission to be creative has always sat well within these subjects, creativity skills can be developed across all subjects and sectors and at any stage, and all educators are responsible for developing these skills in their learners.

Research tells us that different subjects have historically defined creativity very differently. However, here in Scotland we have a working definition of creativity skills that allows us to identify and apply creativity skills within almost any context. This shared language allows all practitioners to identify where they are already developing creativity skills and where further opportunities might exist.

Scotland's national *Creative Learning Plan*¹ defines creativity across learning as:

“The capacity to generate ideas; things that have value to the individual. Looking at things with a fresh eye: examining problems with an open mind: making connections: learning from mistakes and using the imagination to explore new possibilities.”

The *Creativity Across Learning: 3-18 Curriculum Impact Report* identified four core creativity skills, which taken together can define the creative process:

- **Curiosity**
- **Open-Mindedness**
- **Imagination**
- **Problem Solving**

Educators working in any subject and sector can easily relate the development of creativity skills to their work using this shared language. It also allows you to explore the strengths and weaknesses in a learner's creativity skills, and how your work might engage and develop each skill.



¹ Scotland's Creative Learning Plan is endorsed by Scottish Government and delivered by Education Scotland, Creative Scotland, GTCS, SQA, Skills Development Scotland, College Development Network and ADES.

Read the 'What are Creativity Skills?' infographic: <http://bit.ly/whatarecreativityskills>



Reflect on your own creativity skills using the *Creativity Skills Spidergram*: <http://bit.ly/creativityspidergram>

Consider your strengths against the five statements around the spidergram, and make a mark against them, 5 being strong and 1 being weak. Next connect the dots to create a shape that will offer a visual way of sensing the balance and strength of your creativity skills. If you are working with others you might compare your spidergram with others in your team.

Curiosity

- Being inquisitive
- Asking effective questions
- Researching
- Noticing patterns and anomalies

Open-mindedness

- Being open to new ideas
- Able to think about different people's points of view
- Being flexible, adaptable and coping well with uncertainty
- Able to see a range of possible outcomes

Imagination

- Having ideas
- Exploring, combining and refining multiple options
- Inventing

Problem-solving

- Able to identify problems
- Developing, refining and presenting solutions
- Demonstrating initiative, discipline, persistence and resilience

Applying Creativity

- Able to apply a creative process to other situations
- Being motivated and ambitious for change
- Being confident in your own views
- Working well with others

CREATIVE LEARNING NETWORKS

Why do creativity skills matter?

The *Creativity Across Learning: 3-18 Curriculum Impact Report* (<http://bit.ly/creativityimpact>) outlines why creativity skills are important skills for learning, life and work:

“Creativity skills help children and young people not just to understand their world, but be sufficiently equipped to influence its shape and to exercise control over their interactions with it. In a climate of continuous uncertainty, change and challenge, this should enable young people to:

- *interpret, anticipate and respond to developments and trends in, for example, technology, the economy, politics and social interaction;*
- *be adaptable and inventive in changing circumstances in, for example, the workplace or through enterprise activities;*
- *challenge the status quo constructively, and generate ideas for improving it;*
- *have a sense of control over their lives; and*
- *make a positive contribution to society.”*

The Level 5 illustration of Quality Indicator 3.3 in *How Good is Our School?* (Edition 4)², explains that when creativity is embedded across the learning, children and young people become actively involved in the process of learning and teaching and are able to benefit from as well as offer new perspectives in the classroom:

“Learners are confident and ambitious with high levels of self-esteem. They are motivated to explore and challenge assumptions. Children and young people take ownership of their own learning and thinking. They are imaginative, open-minded, confident risk-takers, and appreciate issues from different perspectives. They can ask questions, make connections across disciplines, envisage what might be possible and not possible, explore ideas, identify problems and seek and justify solutions.”

Creative thinking skills are also highlighted across all levels of *Curriculum for Excellence Benchmarks* and in many subject areas including Sciences (“Provides creative solutions to scientific issues and problems.”), English and Literacy (“writing imaginatively and creatively”), Expressive Arts (“I can use my skills and creativity to generate original ideas”), Health and Wellbeing – Food and Health (“I am developing dexterity, creativity and confidence when preparing and cooking food”), Health and Wellbeing – Physical Education (“apply movement skills and strategies, creatively “), and Technologies (“using problem-solving strategies and showing creativity in a design challenge”).

² [How Good is Our School? 4](#), page 52

Creativity skills are also clearly referenced in the RME Benchmarks through: 'sharing thoughts', 'expressing opinions', 'analysing and evaluating beliefs and values' for example. These kinds of activities mean that learners apply their curiosity and open-mindedness, and then use imagination and problem-solving approaches to consider some very complex beliefs and values.



ACTION Explore the *Creativity – The Big Picture* infographic:
<http://bit.ly/creativitybigpicture>



CONSIDER

Reflect on the following questions:

Can you identify an example of creative **teaching** in your context?

Can you identify an example of creative **learning** in your context?

Reflect upon Quality Indicator 3.3 from *HGIOS 4* (above). Take each element of the quote above and consider how strongly the learning in your own context delivers against them:

Why are creativity skills important in RME?

Curiosity

Curiosity underpins everything that RME does. In fact, since RME deals with some of the biggest questions around human existence, it could be argued that curiosity is the reason why RME (and religion) actually exists! Good RME takes a questioning and curious approach to life – challenging and questioning the way things are. Why does someone believe one thing rather than another? What values do people have and how do they put them into action? Why does one religion pray while another meditates? (and are these things the same?). How did the universe begin? Does life have a purpose?

Open-Mindedness

In a world where there are many varied beliefs, values, practices and traditions, customs and cultures, good RME supports learners to approach all of this variety in a spirit of open-mindedness - avoiding snap judgements, stereotypes and caricatures. Religious and other beliefs can be complex, varied and of course, often conflicting. Good RME helps learners to start to make sense of this complexity and so to develop their own beliefs and values and to reflect carefully upon their actions. In good RME, learners are challenged to listen and reflect and so build their own picture of a very complex world.

Imagination

RME often deals with ‘What if?’ questions, supporting learners to consider options and possibilities in relation to complex beliefs and values. Importantly too, RME supports learners to consider what kind of world they live in and what their contribution to it is

and... could be. In RME, learners are often challenged to consider not only 'What if?' – how things would be different if the world they live in changed, but also, 'What might be?' – how things would be different if they changed the world. This involves learners thinking about how their own beliefs and values can be put into action to bring about positive change. In RME too, learners are often invited to 'put themselves in someone else's shoes'. This might be in the context of a discussion about an issue of belief or morality, or to think about what it might be like to follow a religion or belief-system which is different to your own. All of this involves exercising imagination skills and while no-one can know where those leaps might take you, they might help learners to understand themselves and others better.

Problem Solving

In RME, there are many issues of belief and morality which lend themselves to a problem-solving approach. For example, many moral issues considered in RME might require decisions to be made at the conclusion of discussion and reflection. Learners will have to consider a range of options and reach a decision about what they might do in such a situation – or what they would advise others to do. In addition, RME often makes use of 'thought experiments' which will help learners think about matters which are sometimes very complex and try to reach a conclusion. For example, consider the question: 'How do I know that I have objective existence and am not just a character in a book?' Answering this question might involve thinking about the kinds of data we might gather to reach our conclusion and how we might interpret that data. Finally, many of the 'Big Questions' can be approached taking a problem solving approach. For example, the question of what, if anything, comes after death? How would learners deal with the problem this presents, since what counts as evidence for (or against) life

after death is very varied. How would learners solve the ‘problem’ of what comes after death – or indeed, does life have a purpose?



How do we develop creativity skills in our learners?

Humans are born with a strong set of creativity skills, with babies, toddlers and young children demonstrating seemingly boundless capacities for curiosity, open-mindedness, imagination and problem solving. However these skills are often ignored

or even blocked off. We can replace curiosity with familiarity; open-mindedness with fixed understandings of the world; imagination with tried and tested thinking; and even learn helplessness and apathy instead of being active problem solvers.

Case Study

In 2017 Scottish Interfaith Week had as its theme, ‘Creativity and the Arts’. This theme encouraged people to consider how creativity can support inter-faith dialogue and so promote community cohesion. As part of this week, [Interfaith Scotland](#) set a challenge – to design an interfaith venue.

How might you support learners with a challenge such as this? What features would there be in a building which could be used by a range of faiths? How would you ensure that this building met the needs of each faith group using it? What features might exist in this building which were unique to each faith group using it and what features might be unique to each faith group? How would this building respect the faith’s differences while also celebrating their similarities?

In what other ways might creativity support inter-faith dialogue and understanding?

The research shows that the first steps to strengthening creativity skills are to understand them, to recognise them, and to celebrate them. Simply by recognising the creativity skills in ourselves, helps us to focus on them and empowers us to use them more often, in more places, and in more ways.

Creativity skills can then be practised, developed, and strengthened.

There are a range of tools that you can use to help learners to identify their own creativity skills including the *Creativity Skills Spidergram* (see page 5) and the *Everything Is Creative* poster maker (see below) which challenges the user to put into words how they or the subject they are studying demonstrate the four creativity skills. You may wish to share your own *Creativity Skills Spidergram* with your learners as a personal example, outlining areas for development.



ACTION

Take a look at the Pinterest Board that showcases visuals others have made using the Everything is Creative poster maker: <http://bit.ly/creativitypinterest>



CONSIDER

Reflect on how creativity skills feature in your own subject or context by creating your own poster using the Everything is Creative poster maker: <http://bit.ly/creativityinfomaker>

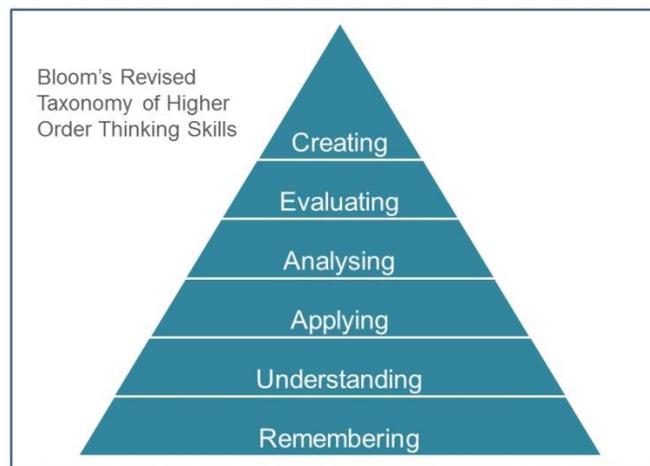


RECORD

Share your finished poster on social media with the hashtag **#creativelearning** or by emailing it to creativityportal@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk

Higher Order Thinking Skills

All subjects and learning environments will involve some focus on technical skills and factual knowledge. These things are hugely valuable, but may not challenge learners to use their creativity skills or follow a creative process. Creative learning challenges us to raise the bar by supporting learners to use all of their higher order thinking skills together in a highly engaging way.



Any experience that challenges learners to design, invent, explore, synthesise, experiment and lead can develop creativity skills.



CONSIDER

- How often do I challenge learners to use all of their higher order thinking skills and engage in creative learning?
- Which areas of my own context naturally engage learners in creative learning, and can I develop these elements further?



CONSIDER

It is also possible to take an individual learning experience and use creative learning to enrich it and make it more challenging.

- To what extent do I encourage curiosity, offering space and safety for questions and encouraging learners to go 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?



RECORD

Learning experience – a topic, lesson plan, project or activity.

How do I support curiosity?	
How do I develop open-mindedness?	
How do I develop imagination?	
How do I encourage problem solving?	

You can also work with other subjects in an interdisciplinary way to challenge learners' imaginations, open-mindedness and other creativity skills. The intersections of different subjects can be rich areas for creative learning and thinking and the expressive arts can be a natural interdisciplinary partner for any subject.



Creativity in RME: Exemplars

So how might a more creative approach to RME bring topics, ideas and learning to life?

If you currently use the story of the 'Good Samaritan' think about how you use the story. How do you support learners to understand this complex story? Why do you use this story and how do you use it? Can it be used to fire up creativity in your learners? The 'Good Samaritan' Bible story is one which is often used in schools. Sometimes however, it might be presented in a way which implies there is only one 'moral' to the story – and a socially desirable one at that. Often too the 'moral' is provided by the teacher rather than reached by the learner. In fact, the story is likely to have multiple

meanings, which can be considered using the four key elements of creativity, here are some suggestions about how this story might be approached more creatively.....

Learning experience Questions to support a creative approach to the story of the Good Samaritan.....	
Curiosity	<p>Learners should be encouraged to generate their own questions, however here are some suggestions that might be used to challenge them. You may wish to use Questorming, asking the learners to brainstorm questions as a way of exploring the topic – the process is available as a 2 minute film clip in the Creativity Toolbox - http://bit.ly/ToolboxQ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the religion followed by the Good Samaritan – and does it matter? • Why did the robbers 'leave the man for dead' – when he might have been able to identify them after he recovered? • Why did the two people who ignored the injured man do so? • What would I have done in the same situation? • This is a religious story told by Jesus – why did God allow the man to be attacked? • Why did God not help the man, but another man did? • What might the two people who ignored the injured man have felt afterwards? Guilt? Shame? Relief that they didn't get involved? • Might the injured man have felt he owed a great debt to the Samaritan? Was that fair? • The Samaritan remained anonymous – so the injured man could never repay the debt owed to the Samaritan – is that fair? <p>Do you think this story is true?</p>
Open-mindedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We usually think of the people who ignored the injured man as the 'baddies' in this story – is that fair? Weren't they just looking after themselves? How might they have defended their actions? Could you defend their actions? • 'It's perfectly normal to look after yourself first and others second'. Is that a fair judgment about some of the characters in this story? • Did the Samaritan take a risk? Was taking that risk right to do? What might his family have said? • Unless the Samaritan was very wealthy, was he right to spend his money on someone he knew nothing about?
Imagination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would you say to the characters in this story? • Imagine you're one of the characters in this story – what would you say about your actions on that night? • What do you think each of the people looked like? Sounded like? How were they dressed – and does any of this matter? • What happened after the story ended? Did the Samaritan and the injured man ever meet afterwards? What would they have said to each other? • Imagine, weeks later, the injured man sees one of the men who ignored him in the street. Would they have spoken? What would they have said? • If this story took place today who might the characters be? • What if Twitter/Instagram/Snapchat had been around at the time of this story – how might it have been reported? Creative writing, improvised drama, digital content creation and visual art might be useful in exploring these ideas creatively. You may wish to consider working in an interdisciplinary way to support this.

Problem solving

- Should we always help people no matter who they are? How could you help someone today?
- How much risk (if any) should we put ourselves in to help others? If you were in a similar situation to the Good Samaritan, what different actions could you take?
- Does this story just prove that God allows suffering? What would happen if all suffering came to an end?
- Should the men who ignored the injured man be punished? How? Why? If the men had the chance to go back to the situation, how could they have acted differently?
- Should the Samaritan have received some kind of reward? What would that be? Is it right to give rewards for this kind of behaviour- or might that just encourage people to behave recklessly? What kinds of actions should be rewarded? How would you have rewarded the Good Samaritan?
- What factors do/should people take into account before helping someone in a situation like this? Imagine you had been present during the story of the Good Samaritan – but you were invisible – what advice would you have given to the Good Samaritan?
- In the 21st century, we still hear of situations where people don't help others in need. Why don't they? Which groups of people or individuals are most in need in society today and what could you do to help them?
- This story tells us a lot about human nature, and yet it is 2000 years old. Has human nature improved since then? If not, why? What kinds of things might help to 'improve' human nature?

Support and Resources

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: <http://bit.ly/planforcreativity>

Learning Activities

- Use the *Creativity Toybox* activities in the classroom, hall or any setting - 27 short videos and related activities that can be used to develop creative thinking skills in the classroom or community setting: <http://bit.ly/toyboxfilms>
- Subscribe to the Creativity Portal News Feeds by email, Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn: <http://creativityportal.org.uk/newsfeeds> to receive the latest opportunities for creative learning from quality assured creative partners.

Professional Learning

- Contact your local **Creative Learning Network** or find your local Creative Learning link person: <http://bit.ly/creativitycontacts>
- Find all of Education Scotland's resources, tools, posters and infographics on the **National Improvement Hub**: <http://bit.ly/NIHcreativity>
- Explore the **Creativity Portal** for more on creative teaching, creative learning and creative change: www.creativityportal.org.uk
- [Subscribe to the Kaleidoscope Newsletter from Scotland's Creative Learning Plan partners: http://bit.ly/KaleidoscopeScotland](http://bit.ly/KaleidoscopeScotland)

Engaging with Parents and Carers

- Share and explore the National Parent Forum of Scotland's *Creativity in a Nutshell Guide*: <http://www.npfs.org.uk/creativity-in-a-nutshell/>

Using Creativity in RME

[Sign up](#) for a fun, engaging and interactive workshop on creativity in RME – drawing upon the expertise of Education Scotland's Creativity and RME Teams.

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