

Creativity

This section is taken from the QCA National Curriculum in Action Project for further details see <http://www.ncaction.org.uk/creativity>.

What is creativity?

The National Advisory Committee Report 'All our futures: creativity, culture and education' (DfEE 1999) defined creativity by breaking it down into four characteristics:

- It always involves thinking or behaving imaginatively.
- This imaginative activity must be purposeful in that it achieves a desired objective.
- The processes must generate something original.
- The outcome must be of value in relation to the objective.



Why is creativity important?

Creativity:

- Improves pupils' self-esteem, motivation and achievement - Pupils who are encouraged to think creatively and independently become more interested in discovering things for themselves, more open to ideas, keener to work with others to explore ideas and willing to work beyond lesson time when pursuing an idea or vision. As a result, their pace of learning, levels of achievement and self-esteem increase.
- Prepares pupils for life - If pupils are given opportunities to think creatively and critically to solve problems and to make a difference for the better, it should help them become creative, innovative, enterprising and capable of leadership to equip them for their future lives as workers and citizens. These opportunities to practise and develop creativity should also enable pupils to respond positively to challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change and adversity.

- Enriches pupils' lives - By promoting creativity, teachers can give all pupils the opportunity to discover and pursue their particular interests and talents. Everyone can be creative to some degree. Creative pupils can lead richer lives and in the longer term make a valuable contribution to society.

How can you spot creativity?

When pupils are thinking and behaving creatively you are likely to see them:

- Questioning and challenging
- Making connections and seeing relationships
- Envisaging what might be
- Exploring ideas, keeping options open
- Reflecting critically on ideas, actions and outcomes.

How can teachers promote creativity?

Teachers can help promote and develop pupils' creativity by considering:

- Their planning
- The way they introduce learning
- Their teaching
- Their review and evaluation.



Planning

- Build creativity objectives into your planning (you could integrate these with subject-specific objectives)
- Look for opportunities to promote creativity in your existing schemes of work and lesson plans. Could you adapt any activities so that they offer more potential for creativity?
- Devise activities that are personally and culturally authentic. Try to build on pupils' interests and experiences (both in and out of school)
- Plan for a range of teaching and learning styles so that as many pupils as possible have the opportunity to demonstrate their creativity. Role play can increase pupils' imaginative engagement and give them freedom to explore ideas. Hands-on experimentation, problem solving, discussion and collaborative work all provide excellent opportunities for creative thinking and behaviour.

- Never lose sight of the importance of knowledge and skills. Pupils are only able to engage creatively and purposefully with the challenges they encounter if they have a solid base of knowledge and skills.



Introducing learning

- Give pupils a clear goal that is challenging yet achievable.
- Share objectives with the pupils and give them opportunities to choose ways of working and how to shape the direction of their work.
- Stimulating starting points such as sights, sounds, smells, visits and contact with creative people capture pupils' interest and fire their imagination.
- Give pupils a set of constraints (for example, limit time and/or resources). This makes an activity more approachable and can encourage pupils to improvise and experiment.

Teaching

- Actively encourage pupils to question, make connections, envisage what might be and explore ideas. Promote and reward imagination and originality.
- Ask open-ended questions such as 'What if ?' and 'How might you ?' to help pupils see things from different perspectives

- Value and praise what pupils do and say. Establish an atmosphere in which they feel safe to say things, take risks and respond creatively.
- Create a fun, relaxed working environment if you want to encourage pupils to be adventurous and explore ideas freely.
- Create conditions for quiet reflection and concentration if you want to encourage pupils to work imaginatively.
- Make the most of unexpected events. When appropriate, put aside your lesson plan and 'go with the moment', but ever lose sight of your overall learning objectives.
- Be willing to stand back and let pupils take the lead. However, make sure that you are always on hand to provide prompts and support as needed.
- Join in with activities and model creative thinking and behaviour. Showing the pupils that you are a learner too can help to create an open, constructive learning environment.
- Give pupils opportunities to work with others from their class, year group and different age groups.

Review and evaluation

- Help pupils to develop criteria that they can use to judge their own work, in particular its originality and value (this can be as simple as asking, 'What makes a good?')
- Stop regularly for open discussion of the problems pupils are facing and how they can solve them. Encourage pupils to share ideas with others and to talk about their progress.
- Help pupils to appreciate the different qualities in others' work and to value ways of working that are different from their own.
- Help pupils to give and receive constructive feedback.


The website <http://www.ncaction.org.uk/creativity> has some excellent examples and is well worth a visit.



Creativity and Dance

This has been discussed in the National Curriculum section but it is considered worthy of revisiting here. Many of the aspects identified above are included and promoted in the PESS Approach to Teaching Dance. One aspect not discussed in the QCA documentation is the accelerated learning technique to aid creativity **SCAMPER**.

This is an acronym that identifies some of the main actions pupils can consider to help them develop new, innovative approaches and ideas. This concept is used in business to help diversify and maximise business opportunities.

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- S** *Substitute something in the concept, idea, action or process for something else*
 - C** *Combine concepts, ideas, actions or processes*
 - A** *Adapt concepts, ideas, actions or processes*
 - M** *Modify concepts, ideas, actions or processes*
 - P** *Put concepts, ideas, actions or processes to another use*
 - E** *Eliminate concepts, ideas, actions or processes*
 - R** *Reverse concepts, ideas, actions or processes*

If **SCAMPER** is compared to Motif Development at Key Stages 2 and 3 many similarities can be identified, so in gaining knowledge and understanding of motif development pupils are also gaining an insight into how they may be creative, innovative and entrepreneurial. What teachers need to do is to draw out these similarities and to provide pupils with opportunities to apply this knowledge in a variety of differing contexts.

PESS

Key Stage 2
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Motif Development KS 2

Repetition - repeat the whole thing or part of it

Cut and Paste - reorder the actions in the motif

Deletion - take an action out

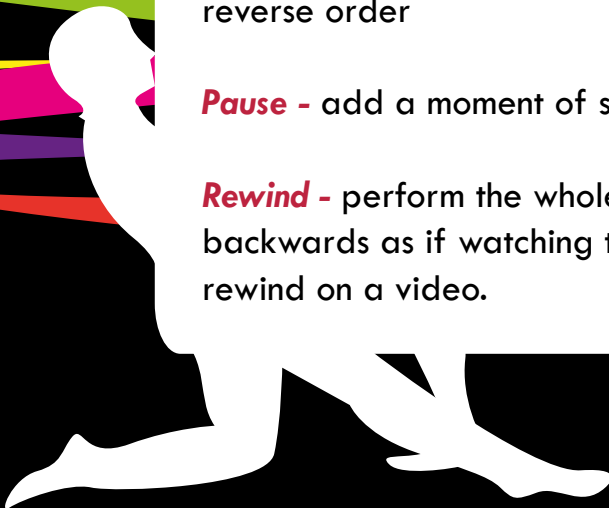
Addition - insert a new action

Substitution - take out an action and replace it with another

Reversal - perform the whole motif or parts of it in reverse order

Pause - add a moment of stillness

Rewind - perform the whole motif or part of it backwards as if watching the performance on rewind on a video.



Motif Development KS 3

Changing actions - travel, turn, jump, gesture, stillness, contact or lift

Changing aspects of variety - level, speed, direction, pathway

Developing - contrasting actions

Developing - complementary actions

Changing the number of dancers performing at any one time - solo, duo, trio, quartet, etc.

Changing the spatial arrangements/formations - circle, square, triangle, line, near, far, random, etc.

Changing the body parts used - arms, legs, fingers, head, hips, etc.

Changing the relationship between the dancers by changing the focus of the dancers' gaze or orientation of their bodies - looking at each other, looking away, looking at the floor, etc.

Changing the motif to include a prop - hat, cane, chair, ball, umbrella, mask etc.

Changing the choreographic device used - unison, lead & follow, mirroring, action & reaction, question & answer, highlight, transition etc.

Changing the meaning of the motif by changing the way the dancers' dance, by changing how they dance - for instance, exchange the light 'happy' skipping for heavy 'sad' trudging

Breaking it down - making the motif simpler, less complicated

Elaborating - making the motif more complicated, more detailed.