

“ How does teaching creativity across the curriculum lead to young people who are better prepared for their future in a changing workforce? ”

Penryn Creativity Collaborative:

Preparing for a Creative Future

Embed and Grow - The impact story in schools
Years 1-3

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In an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world, creativity has become a cornerstone of success for children and young people, shaping not only their personal futures but the future of society as a whole. Nurturing and developing creativity in the classroom is therefore essential, helping young minds to think critically, solve problems, engage in dialogue, collaborate, and innovate in ways that will empower them throughout their lives.

In 1999, the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCE) defined two essential dimensions of creativity in education: teaching creatively and teaching for creativity. While the former refers to the innovative approaches teachers use to engage students (i.e. focused on teacher creativity), the latter is about fostering students' own creative potential (i.e. focused on learner creativity). It is through teaching for creativity that educators unlock and nurture the innate creativity in students, equipping them with the tools and confidence to approach challenges from fresh perspectives. The research literature, however, suggests that there is still confusion between these two expressions of creativity in teaching and learning and that teaching for creativity remains rare in classroom practice, even in schools that claim to prioritise creativity.

It is within this context that the Penryn Creativity Collaborative (PCC) set out to explore, over the past three years, how teaching for creativity can be characterised and enacted within everyday teaching practice, in order to address the question "how does teaching creativity across the curriculum lead to young people who are better prepared for their future in a changing workforce?" In this third year of the pilot project, PCC delves into how teaching for creativity can be embedded and grown within, across and between schools, ensuring that teaching for creativity has a crucial future place in the curriculum across the Penryn Partnership.

With creativity often sidelined due to other educational pressures, this report examines what it takes to keep creativity at the forefront of educational practice over the long term. By presenting a roadmap for embedding creativity in education, the PCC sets a course for educators, policymakers and researchers who aspire to create classrooms and school communities where creativity thrives. The report also raises important provocations about sustaining teaching for creativity into the future. The work here holds relevance not only locally but also internationally. It demonstrates that teaching for creativity does not have to remain rare, and it provides a powerful resource for educators across the globe who are committed to fostering creativity in the next generation.

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Executive Summary



Creativity Collaboratives is a national pilot programme of eight clusters of schools across England who are working together to test innovative practices in teaching for creativity, sharing learning to facilitate system-wide change. Launched in 2021, the programme is funded by Arts Council England with support from the Freeland Foundation. Creativity Collaboratives: Penryn Partnership is the South-West pilot, and over three years has focussed on exploring one central question:

- How does teaching creativity across the curriculum lead to young people who are better prepared for their future in a changing workforce?

This report provides insight into how Penryn Creativity Collaborative (PCC) has been delivered, and its impact. The project's Year 3 ambition has been to ensure that teaching for creativity has a crucial place in the curriculum across the Penryn Partnership for the future. The accompanying Year 3 research has focussed on capturing the overall impact of the pilot from 2021-2024, exploring the ways in which this ambition has been achieved.

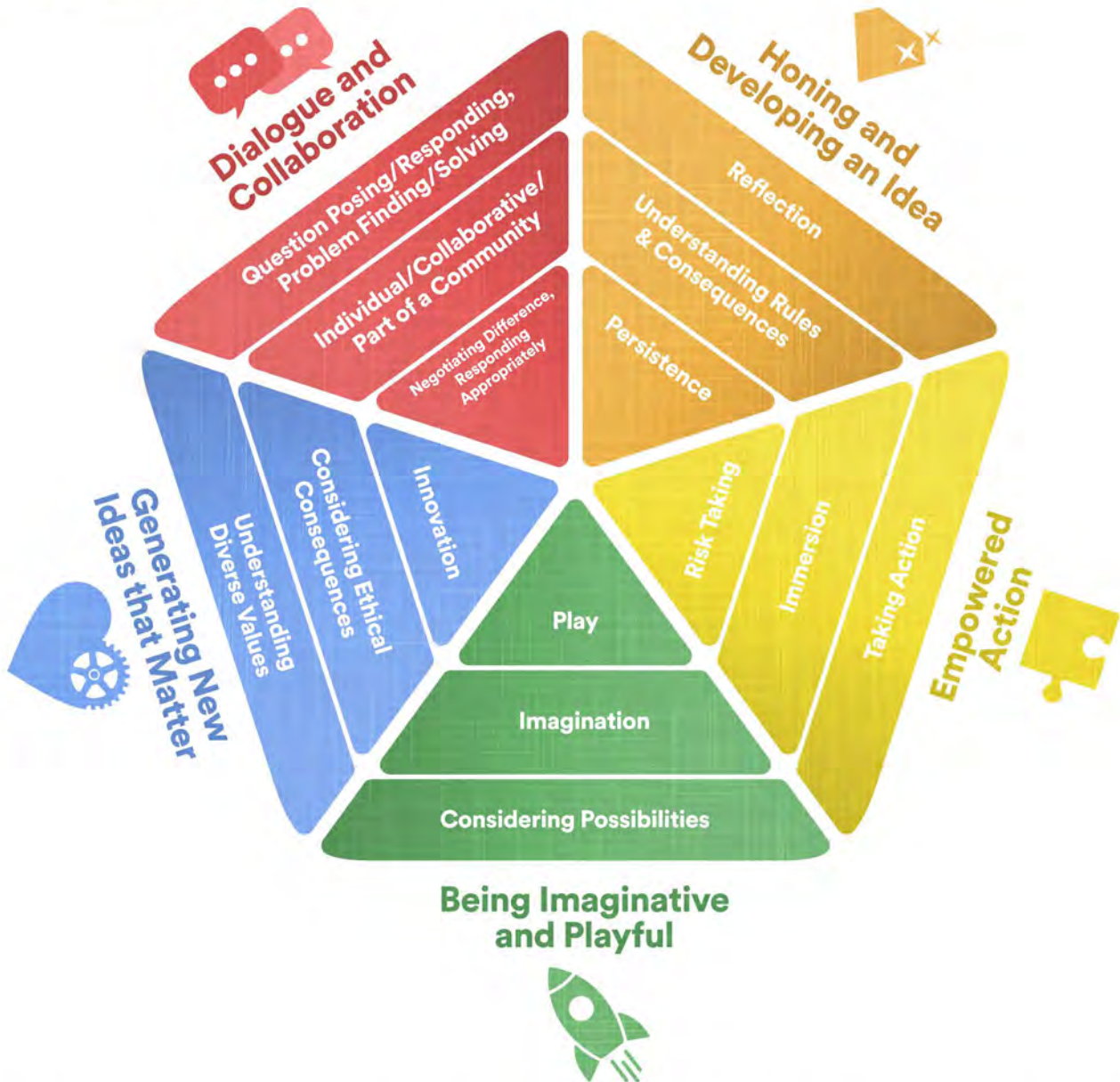
About Penryn Creativity Collaborative

PCC is led by Penryn College, an 11-16 school on the south Cornish coast, and incorporates the existing Penryn Partnership, a Creativity Collaboratives Network that comprises a group of industry and cultural partners and research partner, the University of Exeter (UoE).

PCC Year 1: Question, Challenge and Explore

In Year 1 we asked: *Why are creative skills needed in a changing workforce? What creative skills are needed to be developed by Cornish students to become better prepared? How do we best prepare schools and teachers for teaching for creativity?* Using a literature review and a range of data collection methods with partners, teachers and students, we developed the PCC Creative Skills and Pedagogies Frameworks. We built understanding of how curriculum Teaching and Learning is developed across PCC and what this looks like in the classroom. We also provided CPD to introduce teaching for creativity and Action Research.

Figure 01 PCC Model of Creative Skills



We also learned that students moving into a modern workforce were being met with an uncertain future and change, meaning there is a need for continuous adaption in a modern workforce. We also learned that creativity is hard to define – teachers and students often associated ‘creativity’ initially with the arts. Teachers’ and leaders’ understanding and pedagogy therefore needed development.

Read more here:

Crickmay, U. Childs, S. Chappell, K. (2023).

Preparing for a Creative Future: Year One Report Question, Challenge and Explore.

<https://penryn-college.cornwall.sch.uk/creativity-collaboratives>

PCC Year 2: Build and Test

In Year 2 we asked: *How do creative pedagogies manifest in the Penryn Partnership? How do students' creative skills progress?* We carried out teacher-led collaborative action research projects facilitated and mentored by UoE researchers who also synthesized overall findings with PCC-wide data collection, whilst providing CPD to develop creative pedagogies.



NEWS

England | Local News | Cornwall

Teaching creativity benefits teachers and pupils



Researchers investigated if teaching for creativity helps students prepare for the future

Figure 02 BBC news article

Covered in a **BBC news article**, teachers told us about the freedom they had to take their own risks during the Action Research process.

Students were more motivated, engaged and felt more empowered in their own learning, often using problem-solving approaches used in real-world problems. Teachers identified the need for time for creativity to flourish in the classroom.

Read more here:

Crickmay, U. Childs, S. Chappell, K. (2024).

Preparing for a Creative Future: Year Two Report Build and Test.

<https://penryn-college.cornwall.sch.uk/creativity-collaboratives>

PCC Year 3: Embed and Grow

In Year 3 we asked: *What is the map of teaching for creativity in the PCC? How are teachers using PCC resources and experiences to teach for creativity in PCC? How are students' creative skills manifesting? How does this prepare young people for a changing workforce?* Using a range of data collection methods we responded to the Year 3 research questions, carried out a second cycle of action research focused on assessment, provided CPD to embed and grow creativity, and launched the **PCC Toolkit** at the PCC Symposium at UoE Penryn Campus in March 2024.

Better Prepared for a Creative Future Framework PENRYN PARTNERSHIP					
	FOUNDATION (EYF)	Key Stage 1 Typically, by the end of Year 2.	Key Stage 2 Typically, by the end of Year 6.	Key Stage 3 Typically, by the end of Year 9.	Key Stage 4 Typically, by the end of Year 11.
Dialogue and Collaboration	Asking and responding to questions based on personal interests in real and online contexts, working collaboratively with peers to generate ideas, respond to others.	Asking and responding to questions based on personal interests and experiences of the world 2D and 3D artefacts, working collaboratively with peers to generate ideas, respond to others.	Asking and responding to questions based on personal interests and experiences of the world to find and solve problems, working collaboratively with peers to generate ideas, respond to others.	Thinking and responding to questions to find and solve problems, working collaboratively with peers to generate ideas, respond to others.	Thinking and responding to complex questions to find and solve problems, working collaboratively with peers to generate ideas, respond to others.
Hoisting and Developing an Idea	Expressing alternative and shared ideas, using persistence.	Expressing alternative and shared ideas, using persistence.	Evaluating, assessing and responding alternative to develop ideas, using persistence.	Analysing, evaluating and responding alternative to develop ideas, using persistence.	Evaluating, assessing and responding alternative to develop ideas, using persistence.
Empowered Action	Taking ownership of creative actions with teacher support through risk taking, being self-motivated and persistent in activity.	Taking ownership of creative actions with teacher support through risk taking, being self-motivated and persistent in activity.	Taking ownership of creative actions with teacher support through risk taking, being self-motivated and persistent in activity.	Taking ownership of and acting on creative ideas with teacher support through risk taking, being self-motivated and persistent in activity.	Taking ownership of and acting on creative ideas with teacher support through risk taking, being self-motivated and persistent in activity.
Being Imaginative and Playful	Using imagination to generate ideas, being playful and persistent in activity.	Using imagination to generate ideas, being playful and persistent in activity.	Using imagination to generate ideas, being playful and persistent in activity.	Using imagination to generate ideas, being playful and persistent in activity.	Using imagination to generate ideas, being playful and persistent in activity.
Generating New Ideas that Matter	Exploring with persistence, being playful and persistent in activity.	Exploring with persistence, being playful and persistent in activity.	Exploring with persistence, being playful and persistent in activity.	Exploring with persistence, being playful and persistent in activity.	Exploring with persistence, being playful and persistent in activity.

Figure 03 PCC Better Prepared for a Creative Future Framework

This **Framework** (please see full-sized version on pages 23-24 of this report) is based on the PCC Creative Skills and envisages how those creative skills may develop over time, from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 4. Whilst this framework has the potential for further development it has been used across the Penryn Partnership during the 3 year pilot phase.

Capturing the Impact of PCC

In Year 3, Penryn Creativity Collaborative set out to embed and grow, ensuring that teaching for creativity has a crucial future place in the curriculum across the Penryn Partnership.

Methodology

Students, teachers, Headteachers and senior leaders, parents, local industry and cultural partners, and symposium attendees participated in the research. This utilised focus groups, surveys, portfolios, fieldnotes, and the findings from a second cycle of assessment-focused action research (Van Veen et al., 2024). Data was analysed qualitatively and quantitatively using thematic analysis and descriptive statistics. Ethical permission was gained from the University of Exeter Ethics Committee, and ethical processes have been based on the British Educational Research Association (2024) Research Ethics Guidelines.

Findings

Findings are summarised below according to the four research questions (RQ) explored in Year 3 of the programme.

RQ1: What is the map of teaching for creativity in PCC?

During year 3 all schools report cascading the practice across their school communities. The detail of how this has taken place are mapped into these areas:

Creative school cultures are represented by openness, a drive to try things out and staff who have been re-energised, with teachers reporting that the status of creativity has risen in a number of schools, particularly notable in the PCC Lead school. It can be observed across other schools where PCC is: included in five participating schools' improvement / development plans, included in whole staff action-plans, being cascaded upwards to MAT level, included in whole school visions and values, and built into communications branding. Developing a shared language around creativity has been particularly powerful in terms of integrating creativity into school cultures, as has the ownership of this language and its integration into practice through action research, particularly in understanding creativity beyond an arts context. Parents are part of the culture shift in some areas, but several schools report that more work needs to be done to engage parents.

Creative leadership: Commitment to creativity at leadership level was specifically commented on across five schools. They described leadership involvement in incorporating initiatives and action research findings into practice, engaging the creative pedagogies in response to OFSTED feedback, and in providing time for staff to work on PCC. A leadership challenge came in the relationship of the project within MATs where priorities or approaches at this time did not align. One of the MATs has been looking for links that could be made, suggesting potential in developing this level of leadership further in the project.

Creativity in the curriculum: Every participating school reported changes to their curriculum in relation to PCC. Curriculum design trialled through the Action Research projects was being applied more widely during year 3, with further roll out planned. Schools report curriculum development in English, Science, Humanities, Maths, PE, Media, STEAM and Forest school. Developing skills in the PCC Creative Skills area of 'dialogue and collaboration' was reported as a priority in curriculum development for seven schools, and all except one of these linked this to an increasing focus on oracy skills. Whilst a dialogic approach is much broader than spoken conversation, the data here shows that a link is often being made between oracy, dialogue and communication which could be explored further.

Assessment for creativity: Discussions highlighted the dilemmas that emerge when considering assessing creativity. In Lead school Penryn College, changes to assessment practices were made at the start of year 3 of the project, notably a reduction in KS3 assessment points creating more time and space for creativity. An action research project then explored assessment in more detail in Science and KS4 English (see Van Veen et al., 2024). Penryn College reports that each faculty is developing new assessment language for 2024-2025 incorporating PCC Skills language for learning.

Developing creative teachers: All schools report engagement with PCC CPD and cascading learning to a wider staff via staff meetings, Teaching and Learning briefings and coaching. September refresher training is already planned in some schools for new members of staff. Survey data showed that by December 2023 (i.e. before the significant work to embed the project during Year 3 had taken place), 38% of teachers reported the impact of the project on their own practice at 4 or 5 on a 5-point Likert scale where 5 = a high level of impact. Findings thus suggest that PCC has impacted schools' provision of training and support for teaching for creativity, and that there is still scope to involve more teachers. Several sources voiced the ambition to extend PCC to initial teacher education so that newly qualified teachers would be equipped with the skills to teach for creativity.

Collaboration and partnership: Partnership and collaboration has been the model for project delivery, and can now be seen embedded in practice, for example: collaboration between PCC leaders and schools; working regularly with high quality visits and visitors to bring learning to life; developing resources to support teaching for creativity with cultural partners; engaging in CPD with cultural partners; connecting PCC work with Primary Careers Hub / Cornwall Careers Hubs; supporting pathways to the workforce through links with Young and Talented Cornwall, and developing knowledge of post-16 apprenticeships; co-developing projects in school with industry partners; linking with local community arts festivals; disseminating practice through existing partnerships such as MATs and the Cornwall Association of Primary Heads and Cornwall Association of Secondary Heads.

Areas for development: In its third year, PCC is a project which is still developing, and this is seen both in reference to future plans and to ongoing challenges. The most widely reported barriers to developing impact from PCC were time and capacity. Work continues to be required in developing understanding of creativity, in changing (negative) pre-conceptions about what it is, and in securing staff commitment. Changes in staffing, including leadership and administrative staff have presented challenges. It is a concern for several schools how to maintain priority with governors, or to further involve governors and parents.

Linking creative skills and careers: PCC has led to developments in schools' careers education. In Penryn College, this has comprised development of an existing programme. In several primary schools it has prompted new work in careers, through connections with the Careers Hub CIOS.

Resources: PCC has impacted the development and use of resources for teaching for creativity, notably through the PCC Toolkit. Further resources continue to be produced to add to the toolkit and in addition to this, individual schools have produced in-school resources which support their own teaching for creativity.

RQ2: How are teachers using PCC resources and experiences to teach for creativity in the PCC?

Analysed through the PCC Creative Pedagogies Framework, results show that the creative pedagogy teachers report using most is encouraging empowerment, autonomy and agency. This is ranked considerably higher than it was in Year 2. The pedagogy which teachers report using least is facilitating ethics and trusteeship – this is in line with Year 2. The dynamics of the PCC Creative Pedagogies manifestation were as follows:

Teachers continued to express their commitment to supporting student **empowerment, autonomy and agency**. They expressed its value in terms of the independence it gave for students to think for themselves, and the need to respond to students' own interests rather than focusing exclusively on pre-set knowledge.

A small number of examples of teachers explicitly considering **ethics and trusteeship** were strongly integrated with creative processes, including for example: responses to global problems, utilising the arts to work in a transdisciplinary way on topics including war and role playing to consider ethical issues in history.

Teaching regularly provided opportunities for **risk, immersion and play**, through open-ended play with materials, immersing in different environments, using playful approaches even with older age groups. Taking risks was seen as an important part of learning with teachers seen as key to modelling risk taking, and immersive and playful approaches helped students develop knowledge with more '*stickability*'.

Possibilities -rich thinking and spaces were generated in a variety of ways including: providing a range of activities and modes of working, allowing multiple different approaches or responses to a given task, approaches which encouraged students to broaden their thinking by considering different perspectives or by using multi-disciplinary approaches, using open-ended tasks, using 'what if questions' to support students' own creative responses and also to analyse the creative work of others.

Generating and exploring ideas was seen across Key Stages with a high level of acceptance of children's ideas, including in art, music, media, science, maths, forest school, English, PE and STEAM. Teachers, from EYFS to KS4, gave detailed accounts of their skill in stepping back and stepping in to balance control and freedom, and holding the tension between openness and structure in their work.

Teachers valued a **problem-solving** approach as a way to bring different areas of the curriculum together, for being inclusive, and for helping students learn about the world without spoon feeding them answers. Problem solving was also seen in enquiry-based learning and students were able to give multiple examples of using enquiry skills or problem-solving skills.

A wealth of references were made to **individual, collaborative and communal activities for change** pedagogies. This is consistent with Year 2 findings. Teachers continue to use collaboration as a core approach for supporting the development of creative skills across all key stages and subjects, with some demonstration of a co-constructed approach. Engagement with community was also evident.

As in Year 2, **teacher creativity and wisdom** is more apparent in the evidence of inventive and reflective teaching practices than it is through direct comments. Parents and cultural partners both commented directly on witnessing teacher creativity, observing that PCC was not only about nurturing pupil creativity.

RQ3: How are students' creative skills manifesting?

Notable quantitative findings are that there are only small differences between perceived level of ability across the different creative skills. Comparing primary and secondary results shows that primary students are giving higher self-ratings of 'generating new ideas that matter.'. Other skills are self-assessed at a more consistent level across primary and secondary students.

Dialogue and collaboration was the skill yielding the largest set of qualitative data, related to speaking and listening, to oracy, or to working collaboratively. Students valued collaborative skills for making learning more enjoyable, helping them concentrate, broadening their views, developing their subject-related ability and developing skills for the future; some students would welcome more focus on collaboration at school. Teachers observed students' collaborating across a wide range of contexts and were able to note progression. Students described the challenges and pleasures of learning to negotiate difference and respond appropriately and developed their skills in question posing and responding, and problem solving in different ways.

There is a bias in the data relating to **being imaginative and playful** towards examples in English, art, drama and media and the younger age groups. Examples in science and at secondary school were given, but were less common. Although some examples supported possibility thinking, little data was collected in this area. Teachers observed that early years children immersed themselves in self-directed **play** on a daily basis; other examples of play almost all related to English.

There were a good number of examples of students from KS1 through to KS4 **generating new ideas that matter**, with the focus of skill development primarily on innovation and idea generation. Teachers and students both felt confident that this skill was being nurtured in English at different levels, although students in the KS3 and 4 focus groups were not convinced that there were many opportunities to generate new ideas at school. There were few responses that related to the skill of understanding ethical consequences, nor understanding diverse values.

Honing and developing an idea was the creative skill that students self-assessed themselves mostly highly in through the survey. KS4 students attributed this to having some hesitancy in taking initial steps in being creative, but having more confidence to develop ideas once they were initiated. Teachers were able to identify students showing this skill. Parents expressed concern that there was not enough time to reflect and redraft work in school compared to in a real-life scenario, and some students expressed their reluctance to engage in reflection or revision.

Students self-assessed **empowered action** lowest in the surveys. KS4 students suggested that this was to do with many things in school being 'safe' or 'the same'. This view was reinforced by KS1 students and by parents, the latter of whom suggested that there was too much focus on learning 'certain ways to answer certain questions for exams'. Contrastingly, teachers rated students' skills in empowered action most highly and observed increases in this skill through a 'can do attitude' and willingness to trial ideas. Teachers described careful interventions to support students to take risks, scaffolding the confidence of individuals to help them share their ideas. Immersion continued to be a focus skill in some classes, although the issue of time continued to be raised in relation to this.

RQ4: How does teaching for creativity prepare young people for a changing workforce?

Aspiration and the Cornish workforce - low aspirations are repeatedly cited as impacting the readiness of young people for Cornwall's changing workforce. Five key elements were felt to be in need of attention:

Life experience and cultural capital are seen as lacking in many children and young people, and as challenging within Cornwall's geographical context.

Role models and mentors are seen as important particularly for students in rural and coastal areas, some of whom come from the most deprived 20% of the national demographic.

Developing awareness and understanding of local opportunities is an area in which PCC has made some impact. Concern prevails that more needs to be done to make local opportunities visible including self-employment and remote working models.

Learning to leave, or the 'story of leaving' was a common theme. Countering this were comments about the Cornish workforce being locally driven and outward looking, globally oriented, having aspirations beyond the borders.

The importance of nurturing **self-belief and confidence** were noted regarding developing students' aspirations and their readiness to work independently.

Creativity and positive engagement with a changing workforce - key elements noted here are:

Resilience, linked to reflection, persistence, problem-solving, positivity, adaptability and accepting failure, was widely seen as an important attribute for young people to thrive in their diverse future pathways. Industry partners urged young people to recognise that they did not only need to adapt, but also be empowered to influence the changes happening.

Empowerment, related to agency, confidence and self-motivation, was seen as an important dimension of positive engagement. Teachers and cultural partners described it as students finding the 'thing they're passionate about'.

Collaboration and communication are emphasised as core skills within the workplace. Teachers were able to describe how they were building these skills through utilising the PCC Creative Pedagogies.

Wellbeing was also linked to workplace resilience and positively linked with creative skills by students. Cultural partners commented that workplaces were becoming more concerned with wellbeing and that young people with awareness in this area may be able to drive positive change.

Pathways to success was seen as a crucial part of preparing young people for the changing workforce. Evidence suggests that as PCC starts to embed, it is beginning to make a contribution attending to:

The need to provide creative pathways for the community recognising **diversity** in terms of socio-economic status, ethnicity and neurodivergence. Parents felt that diversity and accessibility needed attention in schools and workplaces. Industry partners emphasized the value of a diverse workforce which they actively sought to innovate and address problems.

Real-world learning opportunities have led teachers to note student's improved understanding of how their learning links with local industry, and that they are linking PCC Creative Skills with future careers. Partners commented on role models as important guides of pathways to success.

Particular industries emphasised through PCC include the creative industries and STEM industries: these industries were most extensively linked with the PCC Creative Skills. Students linked PCC Creative Skills most readily to careers in the creative sector. Teachers made most references to future work in STEM.

PCC Skills scaffolding the pathway: Developing greater understanding of the creative skills and their importance in industry was reported as an area in which PCC was contributing to workforce readiness by all participant groups. Students most readily connected dialogue and collaboration and generating new ideas that matter with future workforce skills. They saw dialogue and collaboration as important in terms of teamwork, communication, working with others, helping others and listening. For adult participants, dialogue and collaboration dominated workforce readiness discussions.

Outstanding Questions: Provocations for the future

The third year of the project generated a number of questions worthy of further exploration:

- How can diversity be celebrated and sustained, whilst also tracking the impact of the work on students going forwards?
- How can PCC maintain and develop the PCC Creative Skills, Pedagogies and Progression framework within and beyond PCC after the pilot phase?
- How can a more consistent picture of PCC Creative Skills and Pedagogies be established moving forward?
- How can the ongoing development and renewal of staff skills in teaching for creativity be supported in the long term, including across changes in staffing and leadership within and beyond PCC?
- Can the need for time continue to be acknowledged, and are there further innovations, such as the reduction in assessment points which was trialled at Penryn College this year, that can help to create time and space for creativity at school?
- How can the growing understanding of progression be harnessed to further develop teaching for creativity in PCC?
- How can teachers' own developing creativity and wisdom continue to be supported to offer appropriate balance between student and teacher agency?
- How can the research going forward be streamlined to minimize the impact on participants and maximise the strength of the data collected?
- How can PCC build on the strong partnerships established and grow understanding of this core issue to actively develop students' readiness for their future in a changing workforce in relation to creative skills?

What next?

PCC can conclude that teaching for creativity makes a valuable contribution to preparing young people for their future in a changing workforce. It is recommended that the following aspects of PCC are extended and developed:



Reinforce and disseminate
the new PCC model



Develop and extend
collaboration and partnership



Celebrate diversity



Encourage creative,
dispersed leadership

To cite or access the full report:

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Creative Skills

PENRYN PARTNERSHIP

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