

Acknowledging Creative Thinking Skills (ACTS) Project

Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

The Acknowledging Creative Thinking Skills (ACTS) project is a 3 year project (2015 – 2018) sponsored by the Erasmus+ programme to develop a valid alternative high school Diploma. The aim is to create two qualifications, one for 14 – 16 year olds, another for 16 – 18 year olds that will be a widely recognised alternative to what is currently available in most countries.

These Diplomas will take a transdisciplinary approach and will be designed to encourage students to think beyond the usual separate “strands” of learning and to develop their experience of interconnection and context and develop their capacity to use creative thinking across the entire curriculum.

There will also be a strong independent project element where students will need to direct their own learning and take greater responsibility. As well as including the more traditional formal elements of education, the diplomas will encourage a degree of non-formal and informal learning to be included and recognised, in order to allow the unique talents and interests of each student to be acknowledged.

The diplomas will be at level 2 UK (level 3 EQF), and at level 3 UK (level 4 EQF) and are designed to also meet the national curriculum requirements of each of the partner countries.

The Erasmus+ bid was extensively reviewed by the Erasmus+ programme reviewers. They said our proposal was *“a forward looking, highly strategic proposal... based on research and solid analysis with ambitious outputs”*. Furthermore it includes *“Novel working methods to motivate students....and is a “highly credible, valid, portable alternative.”*

Who is it for?

These Diplomas will be available to any schools that are interested in delivering them anywhere in the world. The key requirement for schools will be that they have a passion for innovative approaches to teaching and learning, an interest in teaching a broadly integrated curriculum, encouraging a transdisciplinary approach to education where students are challenged to think creatively, show initiative and take greater responsibility for their own learning.

Although the project was initiated by the Steiner Fellowships in the four partner countries, this is not a specifically Steiner Waldorf curriculum. Other schools that meet the requirements will be encouraged to participate. To date we have had interest from a variety of schools all over the world, including Southern Africa, Brazil and the USA.

Why Creative Thinking Skills?

A number of reports from employers and research organisations including the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics have reported that whilst school leavers and university graduates are leaving with ever increasing qualifications, many are not well equipped for the world beyond the classroom. Employers in particular are noting this and recognise that in many ways the education systems in many countries are failing to develop young people with the skills they need to succeed in the world such as good communication, the ability to work as part of a team, the ability to think creatively and situational awareness. This project is an attempt to address this problem.

A set of creative thinking skills have been identified by researchers as being key to success, these include:

- Written Linguistic Articulation
- Verbal Linguistic Articulation
- Imaginative, Non-Linguistic Thought Pictures in 2 dimensions
- Imagined Inner Structure/systems in 3 dimensions and over time
- Resonance and Patterns in Thinking
- Heuristic Thinking/Improvisation
- Co-ordinated Thinking
- Observational Thinking:
- Contemplation
- Critical Analysis
- Reflection on Perception

These Diplomas are being designed in such a way as to encourage the development and recognition of the following core competencies in students:

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision making
- Sustainable, responsible action

The aim is to encourage independence, self-confidence, curiosity, problem solving, innovation, imagination and the ability to self-direct.

Who is involved?

There are five partners working on this project:

- Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (UK),
- Sammenslutningen af frie Rudolf Steiner skoler i Danmark (Denmark);
- Steinerskoleforbundet (Norway);

- Steinerkasvatuksen liitto (Finland)
- Crossfields Institute (UK).

In addition to the 5 project partners a group of about 50 teachers from the member countries have been deeply engaged in discussing and designing a curriculum for the Diplomas.

Where are you in the process?

As of December 2016 we are at the end of the first year of the project. We have spent the last year holding a series of transnational events in the UK, Finland, Denmark and Norway. Groups of up to 50 teachers, teaching different subjects have come together to work in subject specialist groups to discuss and debate what they believe a creative, innovative curriculum for their subject could look like. It has been very exciting to see that there has been broad agreement on this through most of the curriculum areas across the different countries.

The task now is to develop the material from these research groups into a rigorous qualification that sets high standards, challenges students and yet leaves them free enough to pursue their own passions within the Diploma.

What subjects will be included?

The proposed curriculum will include:

- Language and Literature (first/native language)
- Mathematics
- Natural Science
- IT
- Movement and Physical Education
- Foreign (acquired) Language
- Global Awareness (Humanities)
- Art, Craft and Design
- Performing Arts

There will also be an Independent Project Module and a separate Creative Thinking Skills module which will draw evidence for assessment from all areas of the curriculum

Can my child use it to get into university?

This qualification is equivalent in level and scope to a range of other access to HE qualifications.

What will it cost?



We intend that the costs will be broadly in line with those for similar high school qualifications. The project is run by a charity so our intention is not to make a profit but simply to cover costs. We envisage that there will be an annual school/centre approval fee for any participating school and a registration fee for each learner that registers to take the Diploma – this is typical for any qualification such as this. It is too early to give exact costs.

When will it be ready?

It is our intention to launch the Diplomas in 2018, subject to specific regulatory requirements that must be met by that date.

What will teachers need?

Any teachers delivering these Diplomas will need to undertake a specialist teacher education programme we are developing to align with the needs of the qualifications. It will be a part-time, work based learning programme which involves approximately 500 hours or learning over two years. The programme will be certified within the Crossfields International University partnership and will be delivered at postgraduate level.

Who should I contact?

If you are interested in finding out more we suggest that you contact the national representative in your country:

UK: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship

admin@steinerwaldorf.org

Norway: Steinerskoleforbundet

Henrikke.Morck@steinerskolen.no

Finland: Steinerkasvatuksen Liitto

eeva.raunela@steinerkasvatus.fi

Denmark: S sammenslutningen Af Frie Rudolf Steiner Skoler rp@steinerskolerne.dk

We will keep updating this page as more information becomes available.