ENTERPRISING STUDENTS IN AN ENTERPRISING SCHOOL

BY

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ENTERPRISE EDUCATION

I read and I forget

I see and I remember

I do and I understand

(Confucius)
ENTERPRISE EDUCATION

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

SCHOOL CONTEXT

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

IMPLEMENTATION

EVALUATION OF PROJECT

LEARNING PRINCIPLES

STUDENT OWNERSHIP

REAL-WORLD LEARNING

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

REFLECTION
WHAT IS ENTERPRISE EDUCATION?

Enterprise education

“focuses on identifying and developing opportunities, resources, and personal talents in all aspects of young peoples’ lives”

(Ellyard, cited in DEST, 2002:1)
HISTORY


AIM

☢ To achieve a learning culture which results in greater numbers of students equipped and enthused to identify, create, initiate and successfully manage personal, business, work and community opportunities
RATIONALE

Young people had identified the need for assistance in identifying career pathway strategies in both traditional and non-traditional educational structures, and that more needed to be done in schools to instill in young people a sense of optimism about the future and the faith that they themselves have the ability to do this

(DEST, 2002:3)
CORNERSTONES OF ENTERPRISE EDUCATION

To facilitate in young people:

- Confidence
- Self reliance, and
- Self management

(Keary, 1999)

What is enterprise education?
Enterprising learning is

“A modern pedagogy concerned with the attainment of standard curriculum goals; an attempt to make teaching and learning more engaging, more relevant, more effective and more value-added”

(Kearney, 1999: 7)

The **basic aims** of enterprise learning are:

1. To achieve standard curriculum goals
2. To develop the learners’ enterprising capabilities
**Enterprise Learning involves**

1. Student ownership of curriculum through negotiated enterprise projects
2. Experiential real world learning
3. The involvement of members of the outside community, and
4. Structured and spontaneous reflection, critical thinking, documentation and communication
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

ACTION RESEARCH

DEFINITION:

“People reflecting and improving their own work and their own situations by tightly interlinking their reflection and action and also making their reflection public”
(Bessant and Holbrook, 1995: 253)

AIM:

“To develop or improve peoples’ actions, understandings and situations through collaborative action within a process of critical reflection and self-reflection”
(Bessant and Holbrook, 1995: 252)
FEATURES OF ACTION RESEARCH

• Participant (teacher) oriented and controlled
• Data-gathering by participants themselves
• Learning by doing
• Research contributes towards practice through practice
SCHOOL CONTEXT

• History of the school

• Underlying pedagogic frameworks

• Boats: organisation and management

• Formation of the enterprise boat:
  - planning
  - staffing
  - students

• Relationship with parents and community
ACTION LEARNING MODEL

- planning
- understanding
- acting
- Reflecting and evaluating
IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF PROJECT LEARNING PRINCIPLES

STUDENT OWNERSHIP

REAL WORLD LEARNING

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

REFLECTION
IMPLEMENTATION

CLASS BEGINNINGS: INITIATING THE PROJECT

EVALUATION

THE K.L.A. APPROACH TO LEARNING

• Knowledge of what we already knew

• What we Learned

• Assessment of what we learned
STUDENT OWNERSHIP

• **Knowledge**: That student motivation and effort improves with student choice and ownership.

• **Learned**: that self-selection of enterprise projects resulted in increased student motivation and effort, and increased feelings of success and engagement.

• **Assessment**: Many of the students worked very hard on their own projects. However, there was a need to provide highly structured activities to scaffold their choices, and to supervise the planning and implementation of the self-selected student enterprise projects.
REAL WORLD LEARNING

• Knowledge: That enterprise projects needed to be realistic, useful, achievable and in keeping with the ethos and needs of the school.

• Learned: Students often tried to avoid working through all required steps, resulting in abandonment of projects. Students were often either overly ambitious or lacked ideas. Projects needed thorough planning so that they fully addressed the requirements of the 8 KLAs. There was a need to create meaningful and comprehensive business plans and have them approved before commencing work on the projects.

• Assessment: Project planning and implementation need to be thoroughly scaffolded and continuously checked.
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

• **Knowledge:** That the involvement of parents, the rest of the school and the community was essential for the success of the enterprise learning project.

• **Learned:** That students and teachers in the enterprise boat needed to approach relevant members of the surrounding community to obtain mentorship and skilled craftspeople to work with the students on their projects. That other teachers in the school, the students themselves and their parents often viewed the projects as ‘work for dummies’, lowering the students’ self concept and of the status of their projects.

• **Assessment:** There needs to be continuous publicity re the progress of the projects, and that projects need to be valued and acknowledged publicly.
REFLECTION

**Knowledge**: That regular critical reflection about the progress of enterprise projects would position students and teachers as co-researchers in the action research, and that they would learn by and through doing.

**Learned**: That students tended to use their journals as personal diaries rather than a forum for critical reflection on their projects.

**Assessment**: That the timetable needs to include regular time slots when students and teachers critically reflect on and share ideas re the progress of the projects by means of sharing journal entries. That there needs to be formal and structured processes in place to scaffold and model productive critical reflection.
POSITIVE RESULTS

• End products of the enterprise projects were highly visible and useful additions to the new school site
• Students developed practical hands-on skills that would contribute to their employability after leaving school
• Skills and processes associated with the 8 KLAs were learned and developed in innovative and creative ways
• Students had experience of, and learned to work effectively as members of teams
• Students began to develop an awareness of how their community, including business and industry, worked
• The enterprise projects increased student awareness of the relevance of their schooling for the outside world.
• There was increased success in student outcomes and increased satisfaction with their schooling.
AREAS OF CONCERN

• That some other staff members, parents, members of the outside community, and the students themselves viewed those involved in the projects as “not very bright” or academically able.
• That not all school-directed projects had rigorous educational value.
• That the students in the enterprise class, particularly the senior students, were somewhat marginalised.
• That there were communication difficulties both between the team of enterprise classroom teachers and with the rest of the school and members of the community
• That the range of teacher expertise to fulfill the needs of the project was insufficiently wide-ranging
• That there was high teacher turn-over and a lack of continuity for the students
SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

• There need to be clear lines of communication
• There needs to be a spread of teacher expertise in technical skills
• There needs to be a highly structured and scaffolded approach to all enterprise learning tasks
• There needs to be continuity and consistency within the team of teachers appointed to lead such classes
• It is problematic to combine senior VET education courses with students undertaking junior work programs in composite classes, and to marginalise such classes.
• Enterprise projects need to be valued and held in as high regard as are traditional educational work programs.
• All enterprise projects need to have both intellectual and practical outcomes.
CONCLUSION

• Overall this was a productive action research project – participants learned both from the successes and the disasters experienced during this educational exercise.
• Many of the students who were at risk of dropping out of school early had they followed a more traditional educational approach didn’t do so.
• This pilot study provided the opportunity of testing out new ways of teaching and learning.
• This year’s experiences will ensure a more efficient and effective approach to enterprise learning in this enterprising school in future years.
• There is a need to critique market discourse and neo-liberal market ideologies that underpin enterprise education, and to question whether the market good should take precedence over the common good.
REFERENCES


