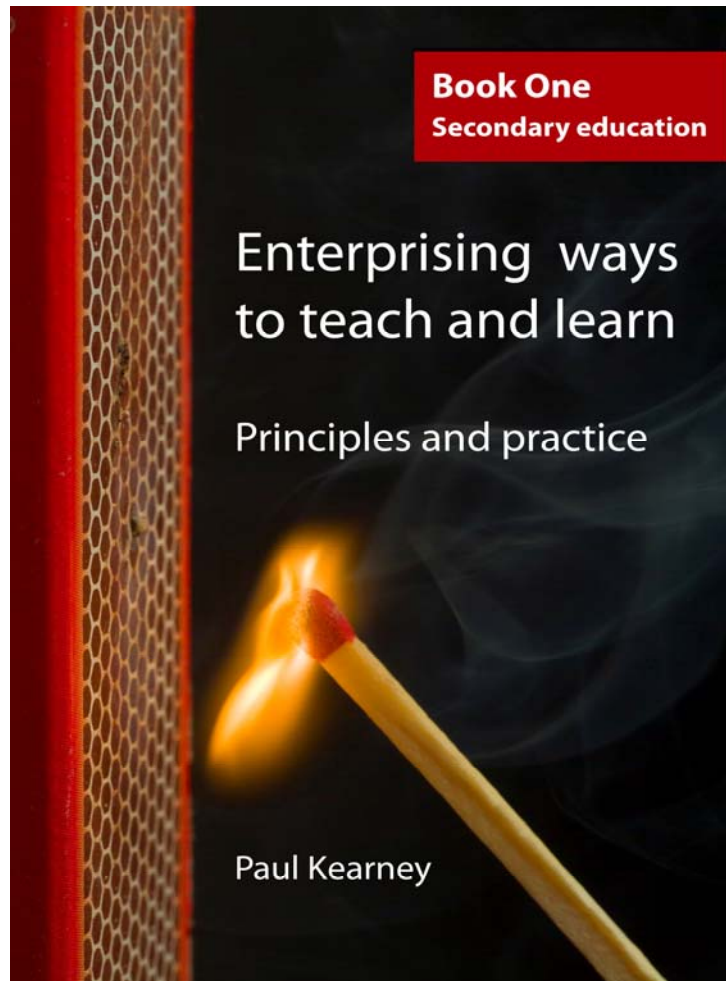


Extract

# Basic concepts



## Introduction to Enterprising-Learning

Available from

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# ENTERPRISING-LEARNING

## the basics

An enterprising approach to teaching and learning has much in common with problem-based, project, inquiry, discovery, and active learning approaches.

Enterprise learning simply means that to **a greater degree** learners use initiative, resourcefulness and other enterprising skills in the very way they learn.

Learning this way offers *two for the price of one*:

- 1 **Curriculum outcomes** are better, because learners are constantly engaged in authentic and useful activities.
- 2 **Enterprising attributes** are nurtured, almost as a by-product – because developing enterprise attributes, like all generic skills, demands constant practise in a range of contexts.

This is not rocket science but it is too often overlooked in favour of the one-off mini-project. Teachers need an enterprising approach to their every day teaching. This is not to say that projects are not valuable; on the contrary they are central to Enterprise Learning. But without the everyday approach the value is transitory and diminished.

It can be argued that enterprise is already there in our young waiting to be developed. But for many people, it is locked in a small range of situations. The generic type of attributes, such as confidence, negotiation, initiative and opportunism are situational-specific. Some examples illustrate the point:

- At a recent biannual collectors and exhibitors expo, a shy collector was stationed next to an older toy car collector. The older enquired from where the lad sourced his impressive range of die-cast buses. The younger launched into a long story of investigation and intrigue. Excitedly he talked of solving problems, negotiating, overcoming set-backs, striking deals, risking his savings... The shy collector talked cogently with a compelling confidence. Lunchtime came and the lad allowed others to push in front of him at the canteen. He was unable to assert himself. His confidence and strategic powers had deserted him.
- Similarly, many of us sing in the shower but many wouldn't dare sing in the staff room. A confident staff member moans after a promotion interview that her responses didn't do her justice – her usual persuasiveness had gone missing.

People are more confident and competent in 'known situations'. To transfer their competence to other contexts people need to practise them across a range of contexts. This not only makes them more confident and capable, but

also allows people to deal with unfamiliar situations. This is especially true with complex areas such as problem solving, dealing with risk and other enterprising skills. Without constant practise across a range of situations, enterprising skills and behaviours remain 'stuck' and

underdeveloped. **Reusing or adapting skills is labelled 'transference', which is at the heart of learning.** David N. Perkins uses the concept of *near and far* to demonstrate the nature of transference. For example, if you learn how to fix a 1997 car, you should be able to fix a 1998 model but transferring your 'fixing skills' from a 1998 model to a 2003 model may be very difficult. Learning in an enterprising way is a 'must' for the development of enterprising attributes.

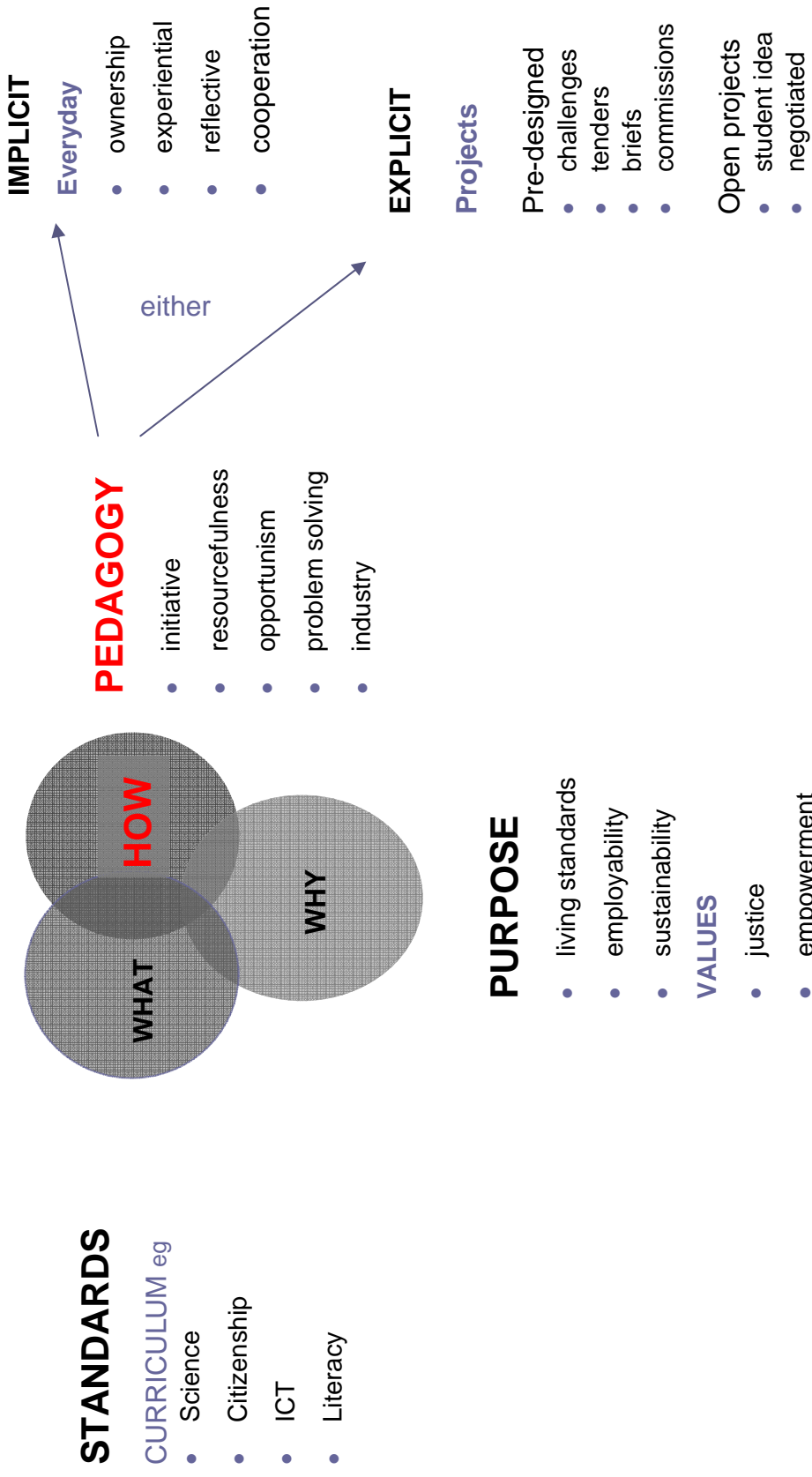
### **A summary**

- a) If developing enterprise requires constant practise across a range of situations
- b) If learning is what students do most of the time
- c) If this learning is across a range of situations (the entire curriculum)

And if learning is undertaken in an enterprising way

**Then** everyday learning at school offers the greatest opportunity to develop enterprise.

# TEACHING IN AN ENTERPRISING WAY



## Explicit approach – projects

Projects are the most common form of an enterprising approach to learning. They should be a regular feature of learning in an enterprising manner. Projects are a good place to start.

Projects are:

- low resource
- low impact on curriculum i.e. do not demand significant change
- little threat to the rest of the staff
- highly visible

For learners they can provide an intense and holistic experience of enterprise for honing specific 'skills' such as opportunism, risk taking and determination. For teachers, they provide a format and processes that are familiar. And success at this simpler level will encourage teachers to take on a broader more enterprising pedagogy, e.g. allow learners to exercise more responsibility in general.

However there are limitations such as:

- they can result in intermittent and disjointed experiences
- being prone to adult domination
- degenerating into discovery learning

### Enterprising Projects

Three styles of projects are identified:

- **The Guided project** involves a relatively high level of teacher facilitation to shape the activity and outcomes. As expected the level of learner autonomy is relatively low.
- **The Designed project** uses a brief-style format to shape the experiences and outcomes. Although based on teacher ideas, learners can negotiate changes but once they accept responsibility they have a high degree of autonomy. The approach allows the teacher to keep a distance from the activity, while concentrating on the learning.  
[Designed-Project Template page 257](#)
- **The Open Project**, seemingly based on learners' ideas, involves a relatively low level of structure and facilitation. Negotiation should be the primary tool in shaping activity, otherwise it can be 'hit and miss' when it comes to outcomes.

## Enterprising processes

An area often overlooked is enterprising processes, where students manage an on-going function within the school. For example, they may run a Learner Agency; where, with a budget, students poll their peers and lobby on their behalf. In some cases they may provide services, such as maintaining 'sustainability systems' in the school environment. A simple example is running the school newspaper.

## Enterprising activities

Although lacking authenticity, enterprising activities e.g. scenarios, case studies, simulations and games can command great enterprise and be very valuable for learning knowledge and processes.

The explicit enterprising activity could be labelled as the Big Print of enterprising-learning, whereas the implicit approach of teaching in an enterprising manner everyday could be called the Small Print.

## Implicit approach

Enterprising Learning simply means that to a greater degree learners use initiative, resourcefulness and other enterprising skills in the way they learn, every day at school.

It is proposed that teaching built around the four great progressive traditions below offers the **most opportunity for practising** enterprising attributes when learning. These traditional approaches can be seen as four 'properties' that when blended make a more enterprising approach to teaching and learning.

### PROPERTIES

TRADITION	APPLICATION
<b>Responsible learning</b>	Taking more responsibility and control, subsuming the notion of ownership
<b>First-hand learning</b>	Learning more from first-hand experience (similar to the notion of experiential learning)
<b>Reflective learning</b>	Turning experiences into meaning i.e. lessons for the future
<b>Cooperative learning</b>	Learning with <b>and</b> from one another

## Enterprising detector



It helps to think of the traditions as the ‘properties’ and to use the metaphor of an Enterprise Learning Detector for scanning lessons and programs – to gauge the degree to which teaching and learning is enterprising.

Firstly, the detector would identify **who has the most responsibility** for managing the learning, teacher or learners. Where could the students increase their management? Given the age of the students, the learning area and other factors, is the teaching over-teaching or under-facilitating – and where should it be.

Secondly, the Enterprise Learning Detector would identify the degree to which learners are learning from **first-hand experience**. Is there an over-emphasis or premature focus on learning knowledge and conceptual understanding?

Thirdly, how much is the teaching helping learners to understand their experience and how it may be used **in the future**? Typically, too much time is spent on the activity and not enough on structured reflection. There is a feeling that students will learn from experience through some kind of osmosis.

And fourthly, how much structure is in place to support students learning with **and** from one another? Does the teacher believe that learners are also teachers? And to what degree are learners organised to work together? Are they left to their own devices or are techniques used to enhance team approaches? Too often learners are put in groups as a matter of course or simple convenience.

The metaphor of an Enterprise Learning Detector is only a *conceptual tool that reminds us* to consider ways of making the learning more enterprising. For example:

- It may remind you to consider the value of the learners devising a list of success criteria for a particular activity you are designing.
- It may remind you to consider the value of peer assessment.
- It may help you to identify activities where you should make a conscious effort to avoid interfering e.g. student decision-making – or areas where you need to facilitate reflection.
- It may prompt you to consider the involvement of non-teaching adults.

## Re-balance







Over-institutionalisation of education has led to an imbalance, where learning has become teacher dominated and anchored in too much abstraction.

The result has been inactive learners, unable to help themselves and others and lacking in the spirit of inquiry and reflection. The task for modern educators is to rectify this imbalance. Enterprising Learning helps the process.

### **Over-teaching – Under-facilitating**

## Re-balancing the basics

RESPONSIBILITY		
<b>Teacher</b>		<b>Learner</b>
teacher-managed		self-managed
dependent		independent
fixed		negotiable
EXPERIENCE		
<b>Second-hand</b>		<b>First-hand</b>
abstract		concrete
passive		active
imitation		authentic
REFLECTIVE		
<b>Incidental</b>		<b>Priority</b>
occasional		constant
unstructured		structured
COOPERATIVE		
<b>Convenient</b>		<b>Strategic</b>
unplanned		planned
unstructured		structured

# Mixture



Strategies based on a mixture of responsibility, first-hand experience, reflection and cooperation create learning that nurtures enterprising attributes.

And of course there are times when teachers need to be very didactic and other times when discovery learning is more appropriate. But extremes are rarely appropriate.

In many cases the properties are integrated and are *concurrent*. For example peer assessment may bring into play all properties at once.

The properties of an enterprising approach are presented on a spectrum. There are degrees. It is not a matter of 'either or' but a question of emphasis that can be influenced by a number of factors e.g.:

- where learners are 'at'
- where they could be
- how fast they could get there
- diversity of need e.g. cultural imperatives
- individual preferences

## SUPER QUESTIONS

Every day ask yourself how do I encourage or require learners

To take more **responsibility** for their learning?

- Will the students learn more and better by managing the activity themselves?
- What am I doing that the learners could be doing themselves?
- What are the consequences of over-teaching i.e. helping too much?
- What will be the consequence of under-teaching i.e. not helping enough?

To learn more from **first-hand experiences**?

- What will give the learning usefulness?
- What conditions would make context more authentic i.e. life-like
- Who else would value the outcome /product/project?

To **reflect** – turning experience into lessons for the future?

- For which key activities/phases should I prepare reflection processes?
- How do I get the learners to 'preview' the likely learning goals/outcomes?
- How do I ensure that reviewing is done in detail?
- What methods can be used to systematically analyse the what has happened?
- How do I get learners to draw conclusions/generalisations?
- How do I get learners to speculate how the 'lessons' might help them in the future?

To learn **cooperatively** with and from others?

- How can students teach one another?
- How can they work together?
- Who can they work with others than peers?

What **exactly** must I do? What **exactly** must not I do?