

Mapping Enterprise Capabilities

'The development of PLTS is an essential part of meeting these aims. PLTS have considerable impact on young people's ability to enter work and adult life as confident and capable individuals who can make a positive contribution.'

Qualifications & Curriculum Authority - 2008

QCA has developed a framework for describing personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that applies to all young people aged 11-19. The skills are embedded within the new Diplomas so that they form an integral part of teaching and learning. These generic skills, together with the functional skills of English, mathematics and ICT, are essential to success in life, learning and work. The six skills are: Independent enquirers; creative thinkers; reflective learners; team workers; self-managers; effective participators.

The 'Bright Sparks' system for assessment of enterprise learning – initially developed by SSAT and profiled in an NFER research report – is designed to enable students to develop a portfolio of evidence of their personal enterprise capabilities, which will help to equip them for life after school. Recognising current DCFS guidance, the system focuses on twelve enterprise learning outcomes. These are based on research during a prototyping project and later refinement during a pilot programme involving 50 secondary schools. The learning outcomes reflect enterprise capability (i.e. not business & economic understanding or financial literacy): Coming up with ideas; solving problems; planning & organising; taking decisions; weighing up the situation; communicating with others; getting things done alone; working within a team; taking the lead; taking risks; responding to change; keeping going when it's tough.

In addition, the 2007 CBI report 'Time Well Spent' promotes a range of competences that should be built into work experience programmes that form an essential part of Work-Related Learning. A positive attitude is the key foundation – this can be summed up as a 'can-do' approach, a readiness to take part and contribute, openness to new ideas and a drive to make those ideas happen. This underpins the seven competencies: Self-management; teamworking; business and customer awareness; problem solving; communication and literacy; application of numeracy; application of IT.

This briefing paper proposes how PLTS can be effectively mapped against enterprise learning outcomes to create a framework that brings together these two important aspects of 11-19 learning.

Independent enquirers

QCA focus:

Young people process and evaluate information in their investigations, planning what to do and how to go about it. They take informed and well-reasoned decisions, recognising that others have different beliefs and attitudes.

Enterprise learning outcomes:

- Taking decisions (using information to take decisions; considering a number of options; being prompt about taking decisions)
- Weighing up the situation (learning from successes and failures; seeing things from other viewpoints; doing the right thing and being fair)

Creative thinkers

QCA focus:

Young people think creatively by generating and exploring ideas, making original connections. They try different ways to tackle a problem, working with others to find imaginative solutions and outcomes that are of value.

Enterprise learning outcomes:

- Solving problems (recognising problems that need solutions; identifying resources to solve problems; improving things by solving problems)
- Coming up with ideas (seeing opportunities for fresh ideas; finding different ways to do things; coming up with creative ideas)

Reflective learners

QCA focus:

Young people evaluate their strengths and limitations, setting themselves realistic goals with criteria for success. They monitor their own performance and progress, inviting feedback from others and making changes to further their learning.

Enterprise learning outcomes:

- Responding to change (being positive about change and uncertainty; adjusting plans when situations change; finding practical ways to keep things going)
- Taking risks (choosing to do things that scare me; seeing the benefits from taking risks; finding ways to minimise possible risks)

Team workers

QCA focus:

Young people work confidently with others, adapting to different contexts and taking responsibility for their own part. They listen to and take account of different views. They form collaborative relationships, resolving issues to reach agreed outcomes.

Enterprise learning outcomes:

- Working within a team (playing a useful role alongside other people; helping other people to be successful; helping to create a sense of team spirit)
- Communicating with others (listening to other people and viewpoints; using different methods of communication; communicating with different people)

Self-managers

QCA focus:

Young people organise themselves, showing personal responsibility, initiative, creativity and enterprise with a commitment to learning and self-improvement. They actively embrace change, responding positively to new priorities, coping with challenges and looking for opportunities.

Enterprise learning outcomes:

- Getting things done alone (knowing my own strengths and weaknesses; seeing what I can do and when I can do it; doing things without needing to be asked)
- Keeping going when it's tough (overcoming problems and obstacles; putting in extra effort when necessary; seeing a project through from start to finish)

Effective participators

QCA focus:

Young people actively engage with issues that affect them and those around them. They play a full part in the life of their school, college, workplace or wider community by taking responsible action to bring improvements for others as well as themselves.

Enterprise learning outcomes:

- Taking the lead (being confident about my views and abilities; motivating other people around me; standing out from the crowd if necessary)
- Planning and organising (organising people and other resources; managing time and meeting deadlines; planning each stage of a project)