

'Scrapbook' Teacher Resource - Enterprise Skills: Concepts and Definitions

<p>TEAM WORK: The degree to which a group of people can work together effectively can be a decisive factor in whether they can achieve their goals. Much of good team work comes down to how well people get on with each other and their ability to apply basic social skills to get the best out of others and their situation. These skills include flexibility, sensitivity, compromise, persuasion, respecting and participating. With these skills a group can commit to a common purpose and attain their goals, they can act as effective mentors and nurture the best in one another.</p>	<p>RISK : What is risk? A hazard? A misfortune? The possibility of losing? The possibility of failing? Contemplating any of these seemingly negative outcomes could put a person off taking action if success is not a given. However learning to cope with and manage risk is imperative for anyone who wants to progress in life. Managing risk is the process of identifying different threats and possibilities and seeing how they can be mitigated, controlled or simply accepted. But learning to manage risk develops the confidence to take informed decisions which can turn risks into opportunities.</p>
<p>NEGOTIATING AND INFLUENCING: People spend a lot of time and effort trying to persuade each other to do what <i>they</i> want, whether in personal or professional situations. Effective negotiation requires a high level of communication, the ability to build rapport and persuade rationally, and the confidence to deal with 'difficult' situations that could be a block to success. Negotiating and influencing also encompasses the ability to listen and compromise. It includes the ability to be turned down, knocked back, but to still participate.</p>	<p>EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION: This is an essential skill for life. From understanding the importance of first impressions to having the confidence to speak in meetings, from sending appropriate emails to making a connection with someone over the phone – a high level of communication is essential. Children benefit from activities which give them the tools and language to express themselves. Students need new vocabulary to be able to describe their learning, skills and experiences, as well as activities with a 'presentation' element which challenge them out of their communication 'comfort zones.'</p>
<p>CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION: These skills can be seen in a number of ways – the generation of ideas and concepts, making things or even taking a new approach to teaching and learning. It is about being imaginative – thinking 'outside the box' – looking for solutions, solving problems, inventing new ideas. And then imagining that something 'extra' which will be the spark for innovation or improvement. Teachers have a key role to play here, providing creative learning opportunities which fire the imagination of children and create that spark.</p>	<p>POSITIVE ATTITUDE: When Henry Ford said: "If you think you can, or you think you can't, you're probably right," he succinctly summed up the influence attitude can have on outcome. Negativity says 'I can't...' It anticipates difficulties and creates images of failure and embarrassment that hold people back. Positivity says 'I Can...' It manifests itself in self belief, constructive thinking, finding solutions and optimism. Many successful people credit their energy, motivation, creativity and success to maintaining a positive attitude. Some say it is the single most important factor, the factor that stopped them giving up, and gave them the power to keep going until they achieved their goal.</p>

<p>INITIATIVE: Initiative can be seen as the willingness to take the first step, or make the first move. If no-one was willing to take the initiative nothing would progress. How many people talk wistfully of big ideas they've had, but never acted upon? Sometimes the gap between idea and reality is the hardest one to bridge because it requires tangible action. Taking the initiative includes elements of risk, positive attitude and good judgement. Importantly though, it includes the willingness to 'go for it' – which is essential in a fast paced competitive world where every job, business idea and opportunity will have many people chasing it.</p>	<p>ORGANISING AND PLANNING: There are many occasions where existing school activities could be turned over to children to provide opportunities for them to develop invaluable management skills. Planning and organisation is a key factor in the success of projects and activities. This includes being able to manage time and workload, being able to rank priorities and ration scarce resources against competing claims and the ability to take a project from an idea through to final product despite any obstacles that may arise. Children learn these skills best by 'doing', overcoming problems as they go, evaluating their experiences, identifying weakness and planning for improvement in the future.</p>
<p>PROBLEM SOLVING : Make intelligent and timely decisions and you're on the road to success, but a string of poor and ill considered decisions can leave you struggling to get back on track. Decision making and problem solving are closely linked. For both it is necessary to work out the likely consequences for any course of action, identify and weigh-up pros and cons, evaluate evidence, consider alternatives and choose and implement the best course of action. Identifying opportunities becomes part of this process – it may be that a brilliant opportunity is spotted when a 'problem' is being solved. To be able to develop and implement these skills independently through an enterprise activity will build a child's confidence in their own abilities and judgement.</p>	<p>LEADERSHIP: Good leaders have the ability to motivate and influence, they get things done - by their own hard work and their ability to engage others. Leadership is a quality that seems to include many of the other enterprise capabilities. Good leadership requires communication, a positive attitude, initiative, creativity and the ability and confidence to negotiate and influence. In adult life good leadership can be the difference between failure and success, satisfaction and frustration and profit and loss. Providing leadership opportunities for pupils is essential – so they have a taste of what it is like to take responsibility, make decisions, manage peers and problems and deliver a final product or activity successfully.</p>
<p>MAKING ETHICAL DECISIONS: No person, enterprise or corporation operates in a vacuum and every action can have a consequence, positive or negative. Issues which affect people's lives, the environment and society should be considered with integrity and thought. Where previously profit ruled, the rise of Corporate Social Responsibility highlights how increasingly business is being asked to consider the 'triple bottom line' of People, Planet, Profit. Work that groups like Fair Trade, 1% for the Planet, and Oxfam have done a great deal to increase awareness of issues around sustainability, the environment and the exploitation of Third World Workers. Now, not taking responsibility for the impact a business has in these areas can irreparably damage a company's reputation and diminish a brand's popularity.</p>	<p>FINANCIAL LITERACY: How do you manage a budget? How much do things cost? How much do you need to live? What is profit and loss? Developing a real awareness of how the world of money works is vital for a young person. While ever an endless source of materials, resources and funds seem to abound from home and school to meet their requirements then they are not developing the knowledge and awareness of the 'real world' that will give them purpose and motivation for studying and working. Learning about how money works in a practical way can be fun – but the lessons are real: nothing comes for free, you can work hard and improve what you had, and sometimes things go wrong and you have to start again.</p>
<p>PRODUCT AND SERVICE DESIGN: All the goods and services that are available for consumers to buy have been through some kind of design, development and production process. Simulating this process can be highly illuminating and addresses the development of many other enterprise capabilities. For a production process to run smoothly and successfully a team has to work well and communicate. For a product to be successful it has to be creative, for a service to survive it has to be well planned. An activity which addresses elements of production process is a coherent way of bringing together these enterprise skills and identifying, in a very real way, their importance.</p>	