Assessing Enterprise Capability: Guidance for Schools

ENTERPRISE EDUCATION

Purpose of this document

This document offers guidance to schools on how assessment can support enterprise education. It presents the interim findings from research carried out by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) for the DfES (working with QCA, SSAT and Ofsted) in secondary schools in England.

What is enterprise capability?

Enterprise capability is the key outcome of enterprise education. Enterprise education aims to raise all young people's aspirations, improve their achievement in school and develop valuable skills for higher education, employment and life after school.

> *Enterprise education motivates learners and can help raise aspirations and develop valuable skills for further education and employment. Learners enjoy being given some autonomy to tackle problems, take responsibility for their own actions, engage in real issues and evaluate the outcomes of their decisions.*
> QCA, 2007

To this end, the DfES has defined enterprise capability as consisting of innovation, creativity, risk-management and risk-taking, and a can-do attitude and the drive to make ideas happen.

Why is the assessment of enterprise capability important?

Schools are delivering enterprise education in many different ways – most successfully by embedding it into the curriculum. However, students' enterprise capability is most likely to develop where they are supported by effective assessment.

A study in Australia has shown that enterprise education has the greatest positive impact in those schools which use assessment to help develop students' enterprise capability:

> *When deeper understanding is developed about the relationship between enterprise education and students' learning, the school's work in enterprise education is more likely to achieve its full potential.*
> DEST, 2004

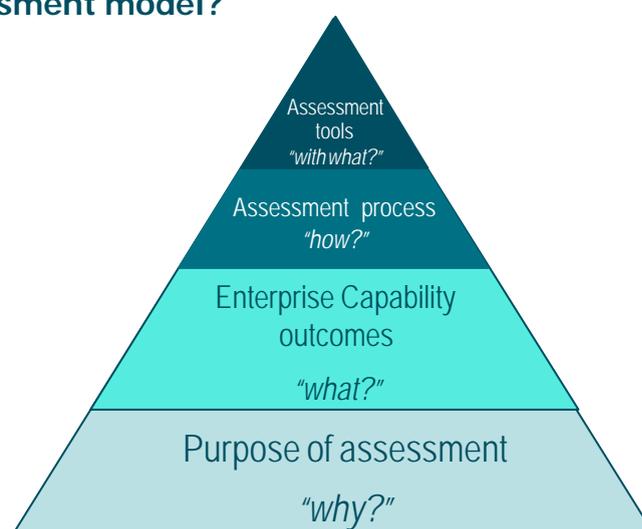### What are the key components of an enterprise capability assessment model?

Figure 1 Key components

Figure 1 illustrates the four key components of an enterprise capability assessment model. Our research has shown that schools need to consider the following four questions when designing their assessment model.

Why is the school assessing enterprise capability?

Schools need to start with a clear statement of purpose on why they are assessing students' enterprise capability. While the main emphasis should be on improving students' enterprise capability, schools may wish to specify other purposes as well.

> ■ **Schools need to consider whether the purpose is to:**
> ● enable students to improve their enterprise capability?
> ● help students recognise their enterprise capability?
> ● allow them to collect evidence for a CV or personal record?
> ● achieve a recognised qualification or certificate?
> ● enable the school to evaluate their enterprise education programme?

'It enables young people to recognise what they've learnt and be able to articulate that to someone else.'
(Assistant Head)

What specific outcomes is the school trying to assess?

The study found that schools were working towards a variety of different enterprise capability outcomes and often included other skills and attitiudes in addition to those listed in the DfES definition of enterprise capability. The most common learning outcomes were: problem-solving, risk management/risk taking, creativity, communication and presentation skills, team-work, decision-making, leadership, innovation, and a can-do attitude.

> ■ **Schools need to consider:**
> ● involving students in defining the outcomes
> ● distinguishing between different levels of performance to allow for progression and to distinguish between basic and more advanced capability
> ● raising awareness of the enterprise capability outcomes among teachers and students using, for example, posters or student planners
> ● translating the outcomes into language more familiar and intelligible to students.

'Schools need to be clearer about the learning outcomes expected from enterprise education and to have better systems in place to assess and monitor student progress'
Ofsted, 2005

How will the school assess enterprise capability?

Schools need to think about how the assessment process used will support the stated purposes and outcomes. It also needs to be tailored to fit in with the school's enterprise education programme.

> ■ **Schools need to decide whether the assessment process will:**
> ● involve students, their peers and their teachers?
> ● be seen as essential to the teaching and learning process of enterprise education or as a separate activity?
> ● be linked to a one-off enterprise day/activity or related to teaching across the curriculum?
> ● allow for student progression from basic to more advanced enterprise capability?
> ● focus on recording an outcome and/or to help students identify their strengths and set themselves targets for further improvement?

'Every kid is distinctive and different and if they are involved in enterprise activities then there needs to be some way of capturing what it is they have done and what they have learnt.'
(Enterprise Education Manager)

What tool(s) will the school use to assess enterprise capability?

Schools in the study were using or were developing a variety of assessment tools. These included mainly paper-based or online self-assessment sheets, portfolios or log-books. Some tools required students to record evidence of capability, while others required them to tick whether they had achieved a particular outcome. At this stage, very few schools had developed assessment tools for teacher and peer assessments.

> ■ Schools need to consider:
> - how the tool(s) will fit in with the chosen assessment process?
> - whether they need to develop their own tool(s) or use one(s) developed by other schools?
> - whether the assessment tool(s) will be on-line or paper-based?
> - how they will help teachers and students to use the tool(s) in the most effective way to support learning?

What are the key success factors for assessing enterprise capability?

The research study has identified ten success factors which seem to be key to a robust and effective assessment of enterprise capability. None of the schools visited had achieved all of these factors but several were working towards putting them in place. The main success factors were found to be:
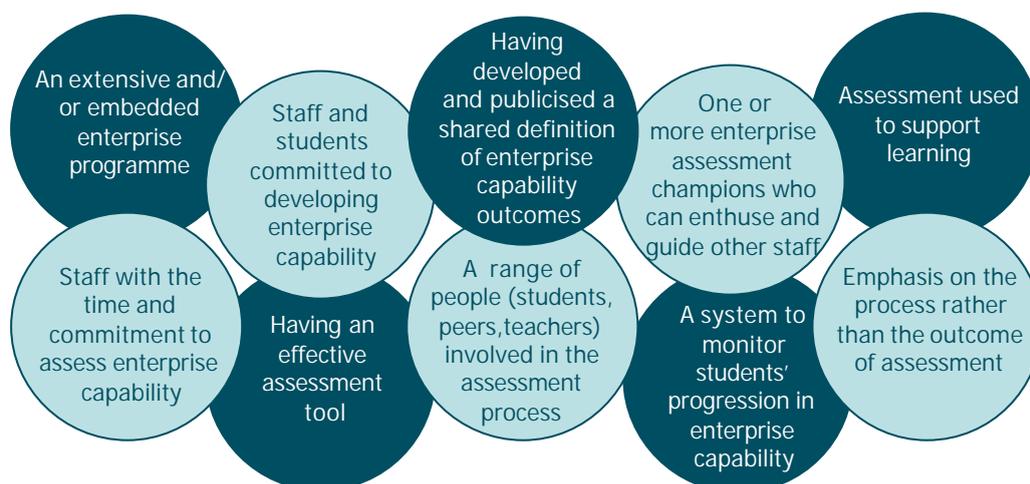
What research is this guidance document based on?

This guidance document presents the interim findings of a research study carried out by the NFER on behalf of the DfES. The research team contacted 55 secondary schools to find out whether they had adopted or were planning to adopt any approaches to assessing enterprise capability – 37 of these schools were visited for more detailed investigation. Most of these were Business and Enterprise specialist schools, but the sample also included six other types of schools and one special school. Interviews were conducted with 59 staff across the 37 schools.

Next steps in the research

The next stage of the study will involve visits to a selection of up to ten of the 37 schools. The visits will be used to explore students' and teachers' views of the assessment process and to develop case studies of good practice. These will be used to provide more detailed guidance to schools.

Contacts

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