



Inquiry into whether entrepreneurship education should be a compulsory subject in secondary school

Recommendation

The Education and Science Committee makes the following recommendations

- 1 that the Government make it compulsory for secondary schools to offer entrepreneurship education as a topic within social studies for years 9–10, but that it be voluntary whether students in years 11–13 take these classes as a discreet subject
 - 2 that the Government ensure that entrepreneurship education is part of the social studies curriculum, that the current subject of business studies is merged into the new subject of entrepreneurship education, and that teachers have access to outside mentors so that they have support to assist with the delivery of the programme if required.
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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to summarise our consideration of our inquiry into whether entrepreneurship education should be a compulsory subject in secondary school.

We have defined an entrepreneur as “one who undertakes innovations, finance, and business acumen in an effort to transform innovations into economic, social, environmental, and cultural benefits”.

Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. What makes entrepreneurship education distinctive is its focus on realisation of opportunity, compared with management education which focuses on the best way to operate existing hierarchies. Both approaches share an interest in achieving profit in some form. For non-profit organisations or Government, entrepreneurship can take the form of increased services or decreased cost, or increased responsiveness to the customer, citizen, or client.

The benefit of entrepreneurship education is that it helps decrease the chances of failure by stressing a consistent and proven set of practices. The idea of professionalising the process of entrepreneurship is the common theme in the theory of entrepreneurship education.

We heard evidence from the Ministry of Education, the Young Enterprise Trust, and Creative HQ. We also received advice from the Ministry of Youth Development.

Compulsory subjects in secondary school

The New Zealand Curriculum is a clear statement of what is deemed important in education. We were advised that the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) gives schools the direction for teaching and learning. It is a framework, rather than a detailed plan, and schools develop their own curricula and teaching programmes from it.

Every school must teach a curriculum that includes the NZC's vision, principles, and key competencies.

The NZC's principles embody beliefs about what is important and desirable in school curricula nationally and locally. They should underpin all school decision-making. These principles put students at the centre of teaching and learning, asserting that they should experience a curriculum that engages and challenges them, is forward-looking and inclusive, and affirms New Zealand's unique identity.

Although similar, the principles and the values have different functions. The principles relate to how a curriculum is formalised in a school; they are particularly relevant to the processes of planning, prioritising, and review. The values are part of the every day curriculum—encouraged, modelled, and explored.

One of the eight principles in the NZC is “future focus”. The curriculum encourages students to look to the future by exploring such significant future-focused issues as sustainability, citizenship, enterprise, and globalisation.

We are of the view that that it should be compulsory for secondary schools to offer entrepreneurship education as a topic within social studies for years 9–10, but that it be voluntary whether students in years 11–13 take these classes as a discreet subject.

Entrepreneurship education should be available at all levels of secondary education. It should have a broad base such as life skills and basic money management in years 9–10, becoming more specialised in years 11–13 according to the student needs of the school.

How individual schools focus on the topic may be influenced by the community which the school services.

How values and principles are implemented into learning areas

We were advised that the New Zealand Curriculum identifies values to be encouraged, modelled, and explored by students; five key competencies that students will develop over time and in a range of settings; and learning areas that describe what they will come to know and do. Schools need to consider how each of these aspects of the curriculum will be promoted and developed in teaching and learning.

The values, competencies, knowledge, and skills that students will need for addressing real-life situations are rarely confined to one part of the curriculum. The learning area statements describe the essential nature of each learning area, how it can contribute to a young person's education, and how it is structured.

None of the strands in the required learning areas are optional, but in some learning areas particular strands may be emphasised at different times or in different years. Schools should have a clear rationale for doing this and should ensure that each strand receives due emphasis over the longer term. For example, everyone has the opportunity to learn a second language in years 7–10, but no one is required to learn a second language.

We were advised that entrepreneurship threads through all the subjects taken at school and that this may be one of the indicators that teachers are looking for as they evaluate individual pieces of work.

We have not seen this in practice and doubt that it is successful in its current format.

How entrepreneurship education is taught in secondary schools

We were advised that entrepreneurship education is not part of secondary education currently. What is a part of education is “education for enterprise”. The Ministry of Education defines education for enterprise as “...a teaching and learning process directed towards developing in young people those skills, competencies, understandings, and attributes which equip them to be innovative, and to identify, create, initiate, and successfully manage personal, community, business, and work opportunities, including working for themselves”. Enterprise is the key concept for Business Studies, if a school offers that subject.

Education for Enterprise enhances what, and how, young people learn, to enable them to participate and contribute locally and globally and meet the demands of a rapidly changing world environment. Education for Enterprise is an approach as well as a context for teaching and learning. It involves acquiring knowledge across the eight curriculum learning areas and key competencies of the NZC, and promotes effective teaching practice. Education for Enterprise can play a central role in achieving the direction set out in the NZC and to prepare students to meet future challenges by using modern learning approaches.

In practice, this is about how teaching is done across the curriculum and how students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning. Education for Enterprise is not a discrete subject but provides learning experiences that encourage young people to be active participants in their learning.

We are of the view that by adding a separate subject of entrepreneurship education this will encourage it being weaved through other subjects.

Learning area

We were advised that part of the social sciences learning area is the Economic World, where students learn about the ways in which people participate in economic activities and about the consumption, production, and distribution of goods and services. Students

develop an understanding of their role in the economy and of how economic decisions affect individuals and communities.

Learning based on levels 1–5 social studies achievement objectives establishes a foundation for the separate social science disciplines (Economics, History, Geography, and Social Studies) offered in the senior secondary school. At levels 6–8, students are able to specialise in one or more of these, depending on the choices offered by their schools. One of the outcomes for learning at level 5 of social studies (which could occur during years 8–12 of schooling) is gaining skills, knowledge, and experience relating to understanding how people seek and have sought economic growth through business, enterprise, and innovation.

We are of the view that entrepreneurship education should be part of the social sciences curriculum and that the current subject of business studies should be merged into the new subject of entrepreneurship education. Teachers should have access to outside mentors so that they have support to assist with the delivery of the programme if required.

Other avenues for entrepreneurship education

We heard that the major source of extra-curricula enterprise education in secondary schools is through the programmes and activities sponsored by The Lion Foundation Young Enterprise Scheme (YES). In 2010 more than 3,200 students have set up more than 600 businesses under this scheme and we were advised that it is the only programme of its type to operate in New Zealand schools.

It is a learning experience for young people, teachers, and business people in which senior secondary school students form a company; become directors; and develop products and services, which they market and sell. YES is school-based and teaches skills in budgeting, planning, interpersonal relations, decision-making, reporting, communications, risk management, and teamwork.

This model is a good reference for how entrepreneurship education can be taught and could be used as a guide as to how business specific endeavours can be implemented in secondary schools.

Appendix

Committee procedure

The committee met on 6 and 7 July 2010 to consider the inquiry. Evidence was heard from the Ministry of Education, Youth Enterprise Trust, and Creative HQ and advice was received from the Ministry of Youth Development.

Committee members

Portia Allen (Chairperson)

Nadia Ali

Callum Bell

Michael Hawley

Camilla Holmes

Kelsey Illing

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Christopher Kennedy

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