

Developing enterprise culture in a northern educational authority in the UK: involving trainee teachers in learning-orientated evaluation

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Developing Enterprise Culture in a Northern Educational Authority in the UK:

Involving trainee teachers in learning-orientated evaluation

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Abstract

In this paper we discuss our use of innovative methods -at least in the context of regeneration evaluation - to help evaluate an enterprise project in northern England, paying particular attention to the involvement of trainee teachers. We discuss the methods used and critically appraise the methods and methodology, present some emerging findings from the trainee teachers strand and conclude by discussing the place of what might be termed 'learning-orientated evaluation' in relation to the currently dominant output-focussed evaluation paradigm.

Introduction: Rotherham Ready - an authority-wide Enterprise Education initiative

The aim of the Rotherham Ready initiative is to create a culture of enterprise in Rotherhamⁱ Schools and Colleges which will impact on pupils at all key stages for pupils aged 4-19 and provide a pathway into entrepreneurial opportunities post 16. The programme is funded by Yorkshire Forwardⁱⁱ who are investing £1.4m in the project between April 2005 and March 2009, with the overall target of Rotherham becoming the first town or city in the UK to offer Enterprise Education opportunities to all pupils. The initiative is managed by a partnershipⁱⁱⁱ led by Rotherham local authority (LA). The initiative involves partners offering a range of Enterprise opportunities to schools and colleges, as well as funding other developments aimed at creating a culture of enterprise including:

- Establishing an Enterprise Champion in every school and college in Rotherham
- Creating a 'ladder of opportunity' to enable Enterprise Education to be developed from the age of 5-19
- Establishment of a Young Person's Enterprise Chamber
- Adopting national accreditation standards in all schools and colleges (using the Warwick University Enterprise Award)

In addition to these specific aspects of the initiative, there is - as elsewhere - a myriad of activity in Enterprise in the locality (notably an Enterprise Pathfinder^{iv} in one part of Rotherham and the establishment of Rotherham Youth Enterprise to help support young entrepreneurs). Rotherham Ready aims to provide a unifying framework for all of this activity.

Sheffield Hallam University's Centre for Education Research and Social Inclusion was appointed in November 2005 to provide a short-term evaluation of the project, concluding in December 2006. The evaluation has two over-arching purposes: first, as part of a suite of 3 evaluations of Yorkshire Forward initiatives, to trial innovative evaluation methods and second to provide evaluative support for the initiative. In this paper, we illustrate our methodological approach - what we term learning-orientated evaluation - by focusing on one strand of our evaluation, to help answer the two research questions laid out below.

- 1. What contribution can a learning-orientated methodology make to understanding of enterprise culture in schools, particularly with reference to the involvement of trainee teachers?**
- 2. What are the drawbacks and benefits of using a learning-orientated methodology to evaluate an important policy initiative?**

Context

In policy terms, Enterprise Education in the UK is perhaps more important than at any point since the late 1980s. In England, it has received a high priority since the Treasury^v-sponsored Davies Review into Enterprise and the Economy in Education reported in 2002 (Davies, 2002). This has led to specific Standards funding in Key Stage 4^{vi} being directed towards Enterprise Education in schools, and to the establishment of Enterprise Pathfinders. More recently, Ofsted^{vii} has published two reviews of Enterprise Education in Key Stage 4 (Ofsted, 2004; Ofsted, 2005). There is also a move towards directing this activity into Key Stage 3 and below. In Scotland, too, there has been a review of Enterprise Education (Stephen et al, 2002) with related policy changes.

However, the nature of Enterprise Education is contested, essentially with regard to the purpose of such education. What might be termed (drawing on the work relating to New Zealand of Lewis and Massey, 2003:198-199) the *narrow view* envisages Enterprise Education to be concerned with developing skills, knowledge and attitudes associated with becoming an entrepreneur, whereas the *broader view* includes skills, knowledge and attitudes associated with becoming 'enterprising'. One can read Hytti and O'Gorman (2004:13), drawing on Gibb (1999) as adding a third dimension to this typology: learning about enterprise (or entrepreneurship). Hytti and O'Gorman reviewed Enterprise Education in four European countries (Austria, Finland, Ireland and the UK) and found that the strongest learning occurred where a broad view of Enterprise is taken. In recent times, much of the focus from European Union bodies has been on the 'narrow' approach. Publications emanating from the European Commission Enterprise and Industry group, such as the 2004 report on promoting entrepreneurial attitudes and skills through education (EC, 2004a) illustrate this view. However, the broader view appears to be more apparent in the education communities examined by Hytti and O'Gorman, in common with Scotland and England (see below), and influenced by the established developments in Enterprise Education in Australia (see, for example, Conning, 2002).

A number of papers highlight the potential for Enterprise, broadly conceived, to link with other parts of the curriculum. Learning and Teaching Scotland (2002) has suggested that Enterprise Education may contribute towards key learning in effective citizenship. Looking at the potential for Enterprise Education to contribute towards the citizenship agenda in Scottish schools, Deuchar (2004) investigated the extent to which Enterprise Education can lead to important gains in educational attainment, growth and development for future citizens. Deuchar notes that citizenship education is important to develop pupil's knowledge of political, cultural and social aspects of life, re-iterating the view that Enterprise Education is more than simply 'how to start your own business', but instead concentrating on pupils' understanding of contemporary issues to help them become modern citizens who value diversity, and others opinions but who can also critically evaluate these views. Pupils now associate enterprise, argues Deuchar, with working in the community, team work, charity, and creativity, making pupils more socially aware and therefore - potentially - more active citizens. There is however a perceived issue - uncovered by research in Hungary and the UK - with merging enterprise and citizenship education, as to whether teachers will find it conflicting to teach pupils to become competitive but also civic minded (Fulop et al, 2001).

The Davies Review (2002: 17-18) took possibly the broadest view of Enterprise Education, describing it as being education towards developing Enterprise *knowledge and understanding* of concepts such as innovation and risk; *skills* such as decision-making and leadership; *attitudes* such as self-reliance and open-

mindedness and *qualities* such as adaptability, self-confidence and creativeness. Davies argued that Enterprise Education with this focus, in combination with education focussed on financial literacy and economic and business understanding, would lead to improved employability. Ofsted (2004) added that such education is best undertaken in an enterprising learning environment in which students are encouraged to take the initiative; and an enterprise process which is akin to project working. This very broad conception is perhaps becoming generally accepted in the English education community (for example, it is used in guidance to teachers produced by Teachernet (2006), Ofsted (2004; 2005) and QCA^{viii}, 2006) partly because it allows great flexibility and opportunity for diversity in provision of such education. There is a clear move forward in schools' understanding and acceptance of Enterprise Education in this broad sense, compared with, for example, the findings of Ireland (1993) who studied the views of head teachers and reported that those who had not participated in an enterprise initiative held the ideas that enterprise was concerned 'largely with profit making' in contrast those who had been involved who had a much broader and more nuanced view.

There has been little consensus on the most appropriate methodological approach for evaluating the impact of Enterprise Education, whether narrowly or more broadly defined. Much of the debate has surrounded the narrow view, serving to further 'complicate the debate surrounding whether or not entrepreneurship can be taught' (Henry et al, 2005). McMullan et al (2001: 38) argue that the best way to evaluate enterprise training schemes is to directly relate 'programme outcomes to objectives', which they claim should be narrowly conceived as 'primarily economic'. In contrast Wyckham (1989) states that most entrepreneurship programmes are evaluated in three principal ways, firstly through the knowledge and skills of the students (i.e. through examinations), secondly by teachers/evaluators being assessed through student evaluation surveys and thirdly tracking of the employment and income status of the graduate participants.

Westhead et al (2001) has expressed concerns that wholly subjective approaches to evaluation are unhelpful. This issue of using recipients' opinions for evaluation is also questioned by Greene (2005: 7), reviewing a series of Prince's Trust Youth Entrepreneurship programme evaluations, who noted that the problem with using so called 'happy sheets... is that the contentment of recipients is not often a primary objective of the particular program'. A further criticism levelled against some evaluations is their concentration on the short term. Jack and Anderson (1998) propose an advanced longitudinal model for examining the impact of particular elements of entrepreneurship education and training courses over time. This model was found to be useful as it takes into account the need to track progress of participants after the completion of training. Their study emphasizes that the widely used subjective approach of asking participants for their opinions, has numerous limitations, such as the bias of opinions, the possible lack of representation of the target population and giving primacy to views rather than behaviour. In the same vein, Storey (2003) argues there are six basic types of evaluation, which are divided further into monitoring exercises (steps 1-3) and evaluations (steps 4-6). Monitoring exercises focus on participation rates and recipients views, whereas the evaluation steps are concerned with more complex attempts to economically appraise and quantify the contribution of specific programmes. Using this model to analyse Prince's Trust evaluation, Greene (2005) found that simpler, more monitoring-based methods of evaluation tended to produce more favourable results regarding Enterprise programmes' performance than did the more sophisticated evaluations. The fact that these simpler monitoring based methods tend to be less expensive - and are associated with more favourable outcomes - could lead to 'pressure in some quarters to favour such an approach' (Greene, 2005: 29), which could clearly have

potential implications for the evaluation of public policies to promote enterprise more widely. Our approach, however, focussing on short term evaluation to develop learning, takes a sharply differing view of how evaluation can help develop initiatives involving Enterprise Education, as we discuss in the next section.

The evaluation methodology

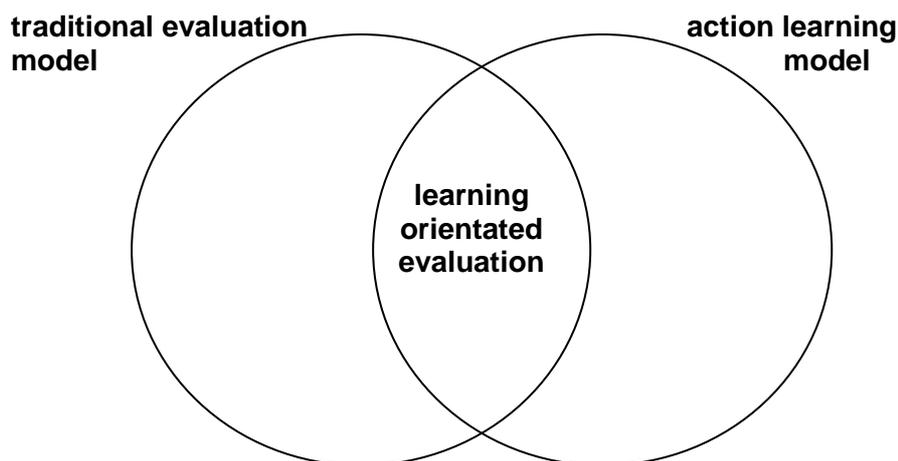
For Rotherham Ready, a four year programme that was only fully on track in Easter 2006^{ix}, an evaluation that finishes in December 2006 must necessarily have a different approach and focus from a traditional impact evaluation model, particularly given the priorities of Yorkshire Forward. For the evaluation to be useful to both Yorkshire Forward and the Rotherham Ready partnership, it needed to have two key focuses. First, it needed to aim to provide **formative** evaluation to enable the project partnership and Yorkshire Forward to learn from early implementation of activity and structures. Second it needed to provide a suggested **framework** for answering some of the key longer term evaluation questions in the future.

To enable us to do this, we have developed what we term a **learning-orientated evaluation** methodology. In this methodology, we combine an action learning approach, with elements taken from more traditional evaluation models. This is an approach we have developed over a number of years of working on educational evaluation and research projects with a regeneration agenda (e.g. Holland et al, 2003; Coldwell et al, 2004; Coldwell et al 2005). This approach involves two elements:

- a) Attempting to understand *processes and outcomes* of the policy initiative (in this case, Rotherham Ready)
- b) Facilitating *learning* by those involved in the policy initiative

It can be illustrated by a simple diagram (see Figure 1 below):

Figure 1: The Learning-orientated evaluation methodology



This type of evaluation thus aims to combine an approach which focuses on outcomes and process of the **initiative** being evaluated alongside a focus on developing learning through the actual **evaluation process** itself. Neither of these two elements is new, of course. Action Learning is a well-established technique involving 'real people resolving and taking action on real problems in real time and

learning while doing so' (Marquardt, 2004: 28), the key underlying features of which are learning "by doing"; dealing with problems occurring within participants' own working environment (to ensure personal relevance); and collaboration and reflection. In our model (see Table 2) Strands 1, 2 and 4 all fit this model to some extent. Many traditional evaluation models also have an emphasis on learning, particularly participatory models of evaluation, and those that focus on the third of Easterby-Smith's (1986) objectives of evaluation: proving; improving and learning. But, clearly, the point of evaluation is to assess outcomes and processes, rather than enabling those involved to learn through the actual process. The key differences between our model and other evaluation approaches is this combination of learning through action, and learning from the outcomes of the activity. This model has a number of characteristics, as well as advantages and disadvantages, when compared with traditional evaluation and action learning approaches, as outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Characteristics of learning-orientated evaluation compared with traditional models

	Traditional models of policy evaluation	Learning-orientated evaluation	Action learning
Focus	Focus on outcomes principally and process secondarily	Focus on outcomes, process and learning equally	focus on learning
Techniques	Priority given to large scale, quantitative techniques	A range of techniques used	small-scale techniques used
Role of participants	Participants are primarily subjects of evaluation	Participants are both subjects of and partners in evaluation	participant is the learner
Outcomes	Outcomes are aimed at informing project managers	Evaluation aims to develop learning for participants, project managers and evaluators	learning for participant
Next stages	Further evaluation activity requires further external evaluation	Further evaluation activity can be undertaken by participants	Further learning activity can be undertaken by participants
Key strengths	If conducted correctly, can provide valid outcome evaluation about the policy initiative on a large scale	If conducted correctly, can lead to learning at all levels of the partnership, helping the initiative develop	If conducted correctly, can lead to learning for the participant
Key weaknesses	Typically provides broad-brush outcomes, without feeding into the development of the initiative	Typically leads to smaller scale outcome evaluation, that may not be generalisable to the whole initiative	Typically only leads to learning at the level of individual or small group
Most suitable for...	Longer term, end point evaluation	Shorter term, early evaluation	Individual or group learning

We have used this kind of approach in a number of ways previously. Two examples:

- in our evaluation of Pathways to Success (Coldwell et al, 2004), we worked alongside project managers on designing and conducting the

evaluation, working with them on writing a research paper to develop their research skills (Holland et al, 2003). In conjunction with this aspect of the work, we also used more traditional, rigorous outcome/ process focussed approaches including use of school case studies and quantitative data.

- In an evaluation of Transition Advisers Project in South Yorkshire (Coldwell et al, 2005), we worked with the transition advisers themselves to develop evaluation products for their schools (Trickey, 2005), and helped develop their evaluative skills through workshops and supported tutorials.

Our evaluation involves five strands (see Table 2 below), each of which includes both an element of *outcome and process* evaluation, in addition to *learning* as described earlier.

Table 2: The 5-strand Rotherham Ready Evaluation Model

	Strand	Description
1	School evaluation development clusters	Working with teachers - to design our evaluation strategies in three clusters of schools and colleges to develop schools' own evaluation tools and techniques to: investigate employer links; young people's attitudes to enterprise and enterprise behaviour and skills; and enterprising teachers.
2	Engaging trainee teachers	Working with trainee teachers to gather data on the provision and impact of entrepreneurial and enterprise activities in the schools they work in, with a comparison of Rotherham schools' developments with other schools.
3	Re-analysis of enterprise data: auditing enterprise activity	A two phase strand, involving a series of individual interviews with partners followed by two workshops reflecting on and planning for the future using outcomes from the first phase.
4	Partnership Effectiveness Evaluation	Working with the partnership team to gather a range of data, to help understand the extent of activity across the borough, and identify gaps in data gathering.
5	Telephone study of delivery models	A two stage telephone interview survey of 20 schools (a scoping interview, and a follow up) conducted with school representatives focussing on their experience of the quality of delivery of enterprise activity.

In the remainder of the paper, we focus on some of the key findings and issues emerging from the first stages of using this approach in involving trainee teachers in evaluation, and conclude by considering the merits of such an approach for future evaluative work.

Involving trainee teachers: design, findings and issues emerging

This strand of activity was designed to use trainee teachers on the Business Education programme to gather data on the provision and impact of entrepreneurial and enterprise activities in schools. At the time of putting the bid together, the research team were informed that this included roughly half of the secondary schools in Rotherham. This would give a snapshot of issues faced in a number of Rotherham schools and would also enable comparison of Rotherham schools' developments with other schools in the region and beyond. It had been suggested that trainees

investigate the elements of enterprise and entrepreneurship in their schools to build a model of the core categories of skills and knowledges associated with these concepts.

The major risk for this element of work was thought initially to be the quality of output from the trainee teachers, who are not trained researchers. This, it was hoped, would be overcome by close involvement of tutors and a clearly worked out framework for their involvement and the structure of their outputs.

The trainees managed to gather evidence using a range of tools including:

- Comments on Enterprise Education in their schools posted on the Blackboard virtual learning environment (VLE) site. 20 comments (generally quite detailed, running to several paragraphs, with some ongoing debates) were posted.
- Data gathered using an enterprise audit tool.
- A small number of in-depth assignments.

In addition, a group interview took place with four trainees, including the three who had been placed in Rotherham schools, and trainees were asked to complete a simple open questionnaire, asking about their experiences of Enterprise Education and their involvement in it.

In this paper, we cannot give the full range of findings produced from an analysis of these sources. We restrict ourselves here to presenting some of the key themes emerging from the trainee teacher responses on the Blackboard VLE and the enterprise audit tool.

1. Key findings

Enterprise Education seemed to be truly embraced and valued in some schools, whilst in others there was a reluctance to become meaningfully involved and a relatively low status assigned to it. How the school conceived Enterprise Education was reflected in the scale and quality of its provision. A common theme noted by virtually every school was that resources (both financial and human) were scarce. Many schools reported that a single person had sole responsibility for Enterprise Education co-ordination across the whole curriculum.

For some schools, their main and sometimes only emphasis is on delivering Enterprise Education exclusively to Business studies students. Most other schools took a more holistic view and tried to involve the whole school (at least for some of its provision) in Enterprise activities, typically through Enterprise days. One school was seen by the trainees to do this particularly successfully through their Enterprise Challenge Week and their Enterprise and Business Zone Christmas programme, where students set up stalls to sell products to fellow students. Although a minority of schools provided Enterprise activities across all year groups, broadly speaking most schools tended to concentrate the bulk of their provision on certain year groups. Interestingly the year groups where schools decided to concentrate most of resources was not consistent throughout. For example one school focused their Enterprise activities primarily at 13 year olds who were described as being 'heavily equipped' for Enterprise. However, the trainee noted that this school did not follow this up to the same extent in later years. This compares to other schools that were seen to focus Enterprise activities on 15 and 16 year olds, as might be expected given the resource available to schools for this age range. For instance one school's sole provision of Enterprise was centred upon 16 year old students being able to

choose one 'full year' and two 'half year' Enterprise related courses from an expanded curriculum in order to "enhance students' Enterprise capability".

Business studies departments/members of staff were often, understandably, the drivers of Enterprise; however this was not always the case. One school had a dedicated Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) -the Head of Art - who championed and co-ordinated Enterprise. A number of schools also involved Young Enterprise^x in their provision. However, it cannot be underestimated just how crucial the involvement of the whole school is for Enterprise to be a success. This was a significant observation noted by a trainee teacher from a school whose Enterprise provision was very successful, but was very reliant on a considerable amount of teacher's time and 'support' from the 'whole school'. There were a number of examples given by the trainee teachers which brought this into sharp focus. One school which had Enterprise ingrained into their school culture and had motivated staff, had a number of examples of staff willing to become involved. In contrast in another school where Enterprise was poorly embraced and offered - according to the trainee - only a 'narrow and restrictive programme', staff's unwillingness to get involved and assist students (even though they often displayed 'eagerness to be involved with enterprising ideas') was evident. For example, the trainee teacher noted that a group of 16 year old boys wanted to organise a charity disco, which was granted initial permission but a 'lack of support and encouragement' from staff meant the 'initiative eventually fizzled out'.

Enterprise is not always conceptualised solely in terms of enhancing students' enterprise skills but also, for example, as a way of giving students the opportunity to be exposed to and interact with other members in their local community. Many schools linked Enterprise work to making money for local good causes and charities. For example, one of the Rotherham schools concentrated their Business Enterprise provision on raising money for local charities, taking the opportunity to enhance their community relations. Enterprise was not usually seen as a 'stand alone' topic, and the term was sometimes used interchangeably with Careers and Citizenship. The boundaries seemed relatively flexible and there often appeared to be overlaps to other subjects such as Citizenship and Careers. However, this was not always explicitly acknowledged. This relationship can be seen elsewhere in our analysis, and is an emerging theme throughout the evaluation.

2. Predictors of success in the delivery of Enterprise Activities

Despite being a popular choice with schools, one off Enterprise days tended to be quite varied in their quality according to our trainees. There were a number of instances where there did not seem to be sufficient **interaction** for students, which sometimes led to de-motivation. A number of trainee teachers echoed the comments by one who described their Enterprise day as not being 'the success it could have been', because students were not engaged sufficiently and instead the day tended to be dominated by the students being 'at'. It appeared that the more successful Enterprise schemes managed to encompass a substantial amount of 'hands on' activity into their Enterprise provision. Other innovative schemes offered incentives for participation outside the curriculum such as donated prizes from local companies, trophies and a car washing scheme in which students were able to keep half of any monies they earned. Students having some **form of ownership** seemed to be a key predictor of success.

Enterprise activities that enabled students to become so consumed in their **highly engaging** activity that they did not associate it with being 'taught' were also widely successful. This was evident in the comments from one trainee teacher who

suggested that their Enterprise group had become successful because the students had a real sense of 'ownership' which was reflected in their motivation and enthusiasm levels. Students were problem solving, communicating, risk assessing and team working and therefore becoming more 'enterprising' without even 'realising they were doing so'. To some extent, the successful embedding of Enterprise Education appeared to be strongly related to the **enthusiasm, drive and commitment of the Enterprise coordinator**. For example, at one college, their Enterprise Diploma is running 'extremely efficiently' it was suggested that its success was mainly attributable to 'excellent staff who exceeded expectations'.

Involvement with business and providers such as Young Enterprise was seen to be related to successful Enterprise Learning. For example, one of the Rotherham schools seemed to have made good use of the opportunities provided by Rotherham Ready, building links with local businesses, and putting in place Enterprise programmes for all year groups. Standards of achievement appeared to have risen with the introduction of enterprise learning, and it was felt that knowledge, skills and understanding were being extended. However, trainees were critical of this activity when it was not seen to link clearly to learning or was not well planned, as noted above, and where visitors to schools did not relate well to pupils.

From the discussions with the trainees, their tutors and a close examination of their assignments and evaluation activity, it is possible to pick out some key issues for future involvement of trainee teachers in evaluation and research activity, as indicated below:

The role of the trainee teacher: Trainee teachers have a particular place in schools. They are able to access a wide range of teaching staff across the school, and gain a range of information inaccessible to more experienced teachers, given their low status within school. However, they are less likely to be able to access the higher levels of the hierarchy. This gives them the opportunity to gather a range of data at the level of activity, as can be seen from the data used to produce this report. However they are less likely to be able to access strategic data, limiting their usefulness in this regard.

Managing the process: We earlier noted that initially it was hoped that close monitoring and supervision would help overcome some of the problems with using untrained researchers to gather data. For a variety of reasons, monitoring was not as close as was needed. Commitment by tutors to the process of evaluation is essential, and unfortunately in this case this was not as evident as might be wished. This meant that support and guidance were not as good as might be hoped. There was opportunity to feed back through a variety of forums, and this helped to embed the learning of the trainees, however the specific questioning used needs review.

Skills in evaluation and research: Trainee teachers are no more or less likely to have evaluation and research skills than their qualified colleagues; therefore if they are to gather and interpret data effectively, they need to be given the skills to do this. There is evidence, particularly from investigations into trainee teachers' involvement in action research that if they are given the opportunity to reflect on and develop research skills, it can enhance their skills as reflective practitioners, as well as researchers. In this case, the trainees were given some support in this regard, but not as much as would be ideal. This is evident from the lack of critical reflection on the quality of their evidence. In future, more effort in providing basic evaluation and research skills for students is important.

Benefits for trainees It is worth noting, finally, that this kind of opportunity for trainees can help them in their development as teachers and in their career prospects: a key issue for learning-orientated evaluation. We have already noted that the opportunity to engage in evaluation helps develop trainees as reflective practitioners. All trainees we spoke to said that Enterprise Education and their work in particular had been discussed at interviews for teaching posts, and several had used it to help gain a teaching post. There is evidence of trainee development in the conceptualisation of teaching.

Wood (1996) sees this as a hierarchy:

- teaching as imparting knowledge
- preparing teachers to use knowledge
- providing opportunities to see the existence of different perspectives
- preparing to be reflective

Davies and Brant (2006) argue that it is more appropriate to conceptualise different ways of thinking about teaching as a menu rather than as a hierarchy: our view is that by engaging in enterprise audits across the school while on placements trainees have met and had to engage with different perspectives - particularly in respect to the way in which teachers of different subjects embrace the notion of *enterprise*:

Developing as a teacher involves becoming more adept at recognising the circumstances in which it is better to think about our teaching. (Davies and Brant, 2006: 183)

It is clear that trainee teachers are expected by their future employing schools to have their own views on how Enterprise Education could be developed across the school curriculum as well as in those who specifically study economics or business studies. However, previous studies on the development of subjects e.g. Goodson (1985) have found that teachers of Business, Economics and Enterprise sometimes consider the Enterprise element as distinctive from the other two areas. Davies and Brant (2006: 206) conclude that Economics has a stronger claim to developing citizenship education and financial literacy, Enterprise has a strong claim to developing aspects of employability and Business Studies occupies a place between the two.

Teachers in England follow a career developmental path, through the Career Development Profile, Induction, Senior Teachers, Advanced Skills Teacher and Excellent Teachers with each stage of development defined by meeting standards (TDA, 2006). There is a clear emphasis on developing an understanding of not only the different ways of teaching Enterprise Education and the differences in how individuals learn. We argue that involvement in a cross curriculum area such as Enterprise in initial training will provide a sound foundation for future professional development.

Conclusion

For this project, it is too early to make major claims for the benefits of a learning-orientated approach. However, based on the findings and issues presented in this paper, it is possible to draw out some of the most important issues when considering such an approach.

In all the strands, it is clear that this kind of approach allows for flexibility, enabling the evaluation to be developed to take into account problems with the initial design. This approach develops skills and action learning for all those involved in undertaking the evaluation. In our work, teachers involved in the groups will be left - it is hoped - with a legacy of evaluation skills and - additionally - the trainee teachers can make a contribution to the development of an enterprise culture while in training through small-scale whole school investigations. This supports the implementation of the Key Action 1 of the European Commission Entrepreneurship Action Plan - fostering entrepreneurial mindsets through school education (EC 2004b). The CBI (2005) warns that changing enterprise culture requires a long term approach and that the enterprise should not be seen as separate academic subject or a particular form of Business Studies. The fact that trainee teachers are enquiring about enterprise activity on placements is likely to help them, and their schools in clarifying their conception of enterprise (Hytti and O'Gorman (2004).

A further benefit, in the context of evaluation for RDAs, is the potential of this approach to contribute towards the 'what works (in what context)' agenda - seen as important to 'evidence-based' policy making. This is an area that has been poorly served by traditional evaluations focused on economic impact.

Finally, this kind of approach means that the evaluation activity can additionally uncover findings that would not be available to an external evaluation team. Trainee teachers on placements are able to work intensively in a school in a way their tutors cannot; and school evaluation groups can engage teaching staff in evaluation activity because of the support and commitment of the 'champions'.

However, there are clearly some issues to take into account with this kind of approach. First of all, it requires a skilled, open, flexible evaluation team, who are confident and knowledgeable enough to ensure that the learning that takes place is optimised. This is illustrated particularly in the trainee teacher strand, where the indications were that the support and guidance given to trainees was not enough to ensure they have become skilled evaluators, and the other strands will require careful management if they are to be successful. This is linked to some of the issues raised in relation to research involved with trainee teachers in other investigations, particularly relating to action research. For example, Smith and Sela (2005) praise the potential of action research for being a 'reflective tool' that can contribute to the empowerment and professional development of inexperienced teachers, whilst recognising the vulnerability and limited resources at pre-service teachers' disposal to concentrate on research. They acknowledge that novice teachers are in a transitional period from students to teachers and have to contend with a 'multiplicity of roles: student, teacher and researcher', as did our group. Consequently, they emphasise the requirement of the 'teacher educator to support, guide and help them' on what they describe as a 'rocky, yet important and fulfilling road' (Smith and Sela: 298). Chant et al' (2004: 37) echo the findings of Smith and Sela - and our own work - in noting that the support and guidance offered to trainees as required was the 'key component of their success' and being able to overcome their initial misgivings.

There are also issues relating to conducting this kind of evaluation for RDAs. RDAs (set up 1999) in their early years had limited engagement with the education system. This has changed, particularly in the last 2-3 years, with Yorkshire Forward supporting initiatives such as Rotherham Ready and STEM (encouraging take up of science, technology, engineering and maths). Schools and education are now seen as vital to long term economic success. The increasing emphasis can be seen in enterprise education forming part of the Northern Way initiative.

However, RDA monitoring and evaluation systems are not well suited to this type of intervention. RDAs are strongly influenced by the achievement output targets (reported to the UK government's Department for Trade and Industry [DTI]). The emphasis from central government is on evidencing net economic impacts (see recent DTI publication on RDA evaluation frameworks) in terms of short term improvements in GDP, employment and productivity. There has been some improvement in recent years with the acknowledgement from the DTI of RDAs' role in delivering 'strategic added value' - not just outputs. But, it remains an issue for RDAs justifying investment in projects that may not have economic impacts for decades. Hence, the environment in which they work pushes RDAs towards a 'traditional' evaluation approach focused on evidencing economic impact, not learning. Therefore, increasing RDA involvement in enterprise education could undermine movement towards a learning-orientated approach.

A learning-orientated evaluative approach also requires commitment from those involved, particularly initiative managers and those who are asked to undertake evaluation work and can be time-consuming and intense, which can be problematic in education institutions where staff are under increasing pressure from other quarters. Finally, learning-orientated evaluation is usually small-scale and cannot provide the impact or process evaluation needed at the level of the whole initiative. For Rotherham Ready, we overcame this by including two more traditional evaluation strands, a review of documentary and other sources, and a randomised telephone survey. As we have noted throughout, learning-orientated evaluation necessarily involves these more traditional techniques.

Let us be clear once more: the elements of an evaluation that adopt a learning focus cannot on their own provide a robust evaluation of the impact and even the process of a particular policy initiative. This is why we reinforce the message that these methods should be used in combination with more traditional evaluation methods. But too often standard impact and process evaluations provide little that can help those owning the initiative develop their understanding of how to move forward. In this paper, we hope to have made a small contribution to the efforts made to ensure evaluations can have a real impact on learning for all of those involved.

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ⁱ Rotherham is a borough in Northern England, located in the South Yorkshire sub-region. With a population of 250 000, it suffered from the decline of its steel and coal industries, losing around 50 000 jobs in the 70s and 80s, and has more recently developed a focus on enterprise and entrepreneurship - for example, it was the Yorkshire regional winner of the Enterprising Britain 2006 competition, being "recognised for its success in creating an all-inclusive strategy for enterprise. Rotherham has successfully encouraged and supported people to develop their business ideas and stimulated an entrepreneurial culture in the Borough" (SBS, 2006).

ⁱⁱ Yorkshire Forward is the Regional Development Agency (RDA) for the Yorkshire and Humber region in the North of England. RDAs in England are charged with promoting sustainable economic development in the English regions.

ⁱⁱⁱ The core partnership consists of representatives of the LA, Yorkshire Forward and partners who are also providers of Enterprise learning opportunities from Rotherham Chamber of Commerce, Rotherham Youth Enterprise, Young Enterprise Yorkshire and Humber, The Music Factory and Centre for Enterprise and Industry at Warwick University.

^{iv} Enterprise Pathfinders were small-scale, government funded pilot projects which aimed "to test strategies for embedding an enterprising approach to teaching and learning within the school culture." (CEI, 2006). They ran until September 2005.

^v The Treasury is the UK government Finance Ministry.

^{vi} Compulsory education in England is organised in to Key Stages - Key Stage (KS) 1 (ages 5-7); KS2 (7-11); KS3 (11-14) and KS4 (14-16).

^{vii} Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, the body charged with inspecting educational institutions in England.

^{viii} QCA - the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority - is charged with specifying the curriculum and associated awards that schools are able to deliver in maintained English schools.

^{ix} The project was intended to start in September 2005, but teething problems meant that a rescue plan was implemented to get the project back on track by Easter 2006, at which point the launch event was held.

^x Young Enterprise is a charitable trust offering Enterprise activities in schools. It is the most well-known and one of the largest providers of such activities in the UK.