



# ICONET

## Case Study

### Personal development through Enterprise



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**THE UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD  
ICONET PROJECT  
CASE STUDY REPORT**

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ENTERPRISE**

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## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ENTERPRISE

### Summary

The *Personal Development through Enterprise* initiative focuses on developing informal competencies alongside formal Enterprise education, specifically 21<sup>st</sup> century skills including:

- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communication and Collaboration
- Information, Media and Technology Skills
- Life and career skills

The initiative addresses 21<sup>st</sup> century skills as outlined by The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org>, specifically:

### LEARNING AND INNOVATION SKILLS

Learning and innovation skills increasingly are being recognized as the skills that separate students who are prepared for increasingly complex life and work environments in the 21st century, and those who are not. A focus on creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration is essential to prepare students for the future.

#### Creativity and Innovation

##### *Think Creatively*

- Use a wide range of idea creation techniques (such as brainstorming)
- Create new and worthwhile ideas (both incremental and radical concepts)
- Elaborate, refine, analyze and evaluate their own ideas in order to improve and maximize creative efforts

### *Work Creatively with Others*

- Develop, implement and communicate new ideas to others effectively
- Be open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives; incorporate group input and feedback into the work
- Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work and understand the real world limits to adopting new ideas
- View failure as an opportunity to learn; understand that creativity and innovation is a long-term, cyclical process of small successes and frequent mistakes

### *Implement Innovations*

- Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution to the field in which the innovation will occur

## **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving**

### *Reason Effectively*

- Use various types of reasoning (inductive, deductive, etc.) as appropriate to the situation

### *Use Systems Thinking*

- Analyze how parts of a whole interact with each other to produce overall outcomes in complex systems

### *Make Judgments and Decisions*

- Effectively analyze and evaluate evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs
- Analyze and evaluate major alternative points of view
- Synthesize and make connections between information and arguments
- Interpret information and draw conclusions based on the best analysis
- Reflect critically on learning experiences and processes

### *Solve Problems*

- Solve different kinds of non-familiar problems in both conventional and innovative ways
- Identify and ask significant questions that clarify various points of view and lead to better solutions

## **Communication and Collaboration**

### *Communicate Clearly*

- Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and nonverbal

communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts

- Listen effectively to decipher meaning, including knowledge, values, attitudes and intentions
- Use communication for a range of purposes (e.g. to inform, instruct, motivate and persuade)
- Utilize multiple media and technologies, and know how to judge their effectiveness a priori as well as assess their impact
- Communicate effectively in diverse environments (including multi-lingual)

#### *Collaborate with Others*

- Demonstrate ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams
- Exercise flexibility and willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal
- Assume shared responsibility for collaborative work, and value the individual contributions made by each team member

### **Information, Media and Technology Skills**

People in the 21st century live in a technology and media-suffused environment, marked by various characteristics, including: 1) access to an abundance of information, 2) rapid changes in technology tools, and 3) the ability to collaborate and make individual contributions on an unprecedented scale. To be effective in the 21st century, citizens and workers must be able to exhibit a range of functional and critical thinking skills related to information, media and technology.

### **Information Literacy**

#### *Access and Evaluate Information*

- Access information efficiently (time) and effectively (sources)
- Evaluate information critically and competently

#### *Use and Manage Information*

- Use information accurately and creatively for the issue or problem at hand
- Manage the flow of information from a wide variety of sources

Apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of information

### **Media Literacy**

#### *Analyze Media*

- Understand both how and why media messages are constructed, and for what purposes
- Examine how individuals interpret messages differently, how values and

points of view are included or excluded, and how media can influence beliefs and behaviors

- Apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of media

#### *Create Media Products*

- Understand and utilize the most appropriate media creation tools, characteristics and conventions
- Understand and effectively utilize the most appropriate expressions and interpretations in diverse, multi-cultural environments

#### **ICT Literacy**

##### *Apply Technology Effectively*

- Use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information
- Use digital technologies (computers, PDAs, media players, GPS, etc.), communication/networking tools and social networks appropriately to access, manage, integrate, evaluate and create information to successfully function in a knowledge economy

Apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of information technologies

#### **LIFE AND CAREER SKILLS**

Today's life and work environments require far more than thinking skills and content knowledge. The ability to navigate the complex life and work environments in the globally competitive information age requires students to pay rigorous attention to developing adequate life and career skills.

#### **Flexibility and adaptability**

##### *Adapt to Change*

- Adapt to varied roles, jobs responsibilities, schedules and context
- Work effectively in a climate of ambiguity and changing priorities

##### *Be Flexible*

- Incorporate feedback effectively
- Deal positively with praise, setbacks and criticism
- Understand, negotiate and balance diverse views and beliefs to reach

workable solutions, particularly in multi-cultural environments

### **Initiative and self-direction**

#### *Manage Goals and Time*

- Set goals with tangible and intangible success criteria
- Balance tactical (short-term) and strategic (long-term) goals
- Utilize time and manage workload efficiently

#### *Work Independently*

- Monitor, define, prioritize and complete tasks without direct oversight

#### *Be Self-directed Learners*

- Go beyond basic mastery of skills and/or curriculum to explore and expand one's own learning and opportunities to gain expertise
- Demonstrate initiative to advance skill levels towards a professional level
- Demonstrate commitment to learning as a lifelong process
- Reflect critically on past experiences in order to inform future progress

### **Social and cross-cultural skills**

#### *Interact Effectively with Others*

- Know when it is appropriate to listen and when to speak
- Conduct themselves in a respectable, professional manner

#### *Work Effectively in Diverse Teams*

- Respect cultural differences and work effectively with people from a range of social and cultural backgrounds
- Respond open-mindedly to different ideas and values
- Leverage social and cultural differences to create new ideas and increase both innovation and quality of work

### **Productivity and accountability**

#### *Manage Projects*

- Set and meet goals, even in the face of obstacles and competing pressure
- Prioritize, plan and manage work to achieve the intended result

#### *Produce Results*

- Demonstrate additional attributes associated with producing high quality

products including the abilities to:

- Work positively and ethically
- Manage time and projects effectively
- Multi-task
- Participate actively, as well as be reliable and punctual
- Present oneself professionally and with proper etiquette
- Collaborate and cooperate effectively with teams
- Respect and appreciate team diversity
- Be accountable for results

### **Leadership and responsibility**

#### *Guide and Lead Others*

- Use interpersonal and problem-solving skills to influence and guide others toward a goal
- Leverage strengths of others to accomplish a common goal
- Inspire others to reach their very best via example and selflessness
- Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior in using influence and power

#### *Be Responsible to Others*

Act responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind

### **Situation**

**(What was the setting in which this project occurred? A tagline for your project or work. Describe the user group and the work context)**

The University of Salford is a Widening Participation university, with a student body largely made up of 'first generation' students – that is, students who are the first in their family to enter higher education. For many of our students, studying for a degree is particularly challenging. Students often fail to see the bigger picture in terms of the acquisition of invaluable life-skills, preferring instead to take an assessment-driven approach where formal learning is prized (i.e. what needs to be remembered/prepared in order to pass a module) at the expense of informal learning and skills development. However, in terms of pedagogy and public policy it is increasingly acknowledged that informal skills are equally as important (if not more so) than formally learnt curricula through the course of one's life, where participation in a rapidly changing, networked society demands significant informal competencies which lie outside of mainstream curricula.

Finding ways of developing learners' informal competencies alongside subject specific knowledge within mainstream curricula is therefore crucial. The *Personal*

*Development through Enterprise* initiative focuses on developing informal competencies alongside Enterprise within the curriculum, through nurturing reflective practice on learning that goes on outside the classroom, alongside a core suite of 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies which are recognised as being essential attributes for the successful lifelong learner. Ultimately we want to equip our learners with the skills to self-direct their learning for life, through a process of meta-learning, critical reflection, and the ability to recognise their informal skills and how these enable them to become lifelong learners.

## **Task / Problem**

**(Describe what you are trying to achieve, e.g. a problem you have encountered in your work and you wanted to solve)**

*Personal Development through Enterprise* focuses on the development of innovative learning activities and teaching and mentoring methodologies as to foster the development of informal competencies and reflective skills alongside formal Enterprise curricula.

Over many years teaching in the classroom, the tutor had noticed how students appreciated being asked about what they do OUTSIDE the classroom – that is, their interests and activities in their spare time. Many of these activities have real value, and yet the students don't think of their informal learning as being valuable as it is not being assessed. The aim was to recognise what people do outside the classroom, getting the students thinking about how the skills developed through their off-campus interests can be used across different contexts – valuing their informal learning alongside formal, and integrate the two.

Alongside this was the problem of the student's perception of Enterprise in the curriculum. While entrepreneurial skills (and even more so, INTRAPRENEURIAL) are commonly seen as being essential skills in the workplace (the ability to lead, make decisions, and drive change from within), many students are resistant to the idea of Enterprise teaching as they see it as something which is only relevant to those who want to start their own business. This is a common misconception, but one which needs to be addressed and the skills required for Entrepreneurship are required in nearly all walks of life.

In order to engage the learners, encouraging them to reflect on their informal learning and how this leads to a set of behaviours which are transferrable across contexts – including organisational – we wanted to address the perceived lack of relevance of informal skill sets through active pedagogy and experiential learning rooted firmly in the real lives of our students, in order for them to realise their potential in the wider world as lifelong learners.

## **Actions/ Solution**

**(How did you address the issue? What was done to solve the 'problem?')**

We wanted to make the classroom more dynamic, giving learners control in terms of how the sessions were run – and even what content they covered. There was a strong emphasis placed on peer mentoring.

The class were split into groups and each week a different group would lead the session. Suggested (and covered) topics were:

- Organising
- Leadership
- Working across cultures
- Assertion and negotiation
- Using broadcast materials for presenting
- Business ethics

Each group was only given a brief outline of the topic/goals for the session and they had to create the lesson themselves, sourcing information and using examples from their everyday lives and first-hand experiences.

They were asked to design classroom sessions which were fun and interactive – some of the things they came up with included games, debates, role-playing and even a song competition!

There was an emphasis on imaginative uses of technology to support their sessions and learning, e.g. wikis, videos, audio, visual aids and props. They were encouraged to use idea creation techniques such as brainstorming (both within groups for session planning and in the sessions they actually led). The students developed skills in using and managing information, particularly in the sense of synthesising their informal learning into what they commonly thought of as ‘learning’ (which tended to be formal). They communicated ideas to others using multiple forms of media and technology (which involved them developing a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of media), and reflected critically on their learning which helped them to develop the ability to self-direct their learning.

As in the case of Cristina Costa’s Cartoon Planet project (one of the other ICONET studies), the curriculum criteria were based on three broad aspects of teaching and learning:

- an interactive approach;
- a focus on informal learning and skills;
- attractive, diverse strategies for class engagement.

A learning development journal was kept by each student in order to stimulate individual, peer and group reflection, and this gave them a structure within which to translate their informal competences – gained within, but also (and more importantly) outside the classroom - into a ‘CV-ready’ format, enabling them to recognise the links between their informal learning and how this can be reported in a more formalised manner.

## **Results**

**(What were the outcomes of the actions you took? What happened? What contributed to the outcomes?)**

As in the case of Cartoon Planet, the outcomes envisaged were:

- I. To stimulate guided reflection about the learners' strengths and skills through different peer and group activities.
- II. To utilise Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to empower students to communicate their skills and competences in an interactive and personally meaningful way.

However, in this case one of the most empowering aspects of the project was that students were given a brief which was wide open in terms of the way that they used ICT – obviously this is much easier to do when the students are older, as in this case. Through giving the students the opportunity to develop the content and design their own sessions (the main instructions being to base everything on their experiences OUTSIDE of the university and to use whatever ICT they wanted in innovative ways), the students became highly engaged and started to realise that the concepts, knowledge and transferrable skills which are covered in Enterprise teaching are in fact everyday skills which they have been practicing throughout their lives without actually realising it!

Issues around leadership and roles were viewed through the lens of friends and family, then teased out and viewed through the lens of the workplace. Issues around presenting using broadcast materials and business ethics were viewed through the lens of file sharing on the internet (of which many students have firsthand experience).

Each group delivered a final presentation outlining ideas for a business which drew on their informal learning (i.e. hobbies outside of university) but informed by concepts covered in class, and they came up with some fantastic ideas based on their informal skills which they wouldn't ordinarily bring into the classroom environment. By leading workshop sessions themselves they developed real confidence in their ability to stand up and express their ideas, and did so in an engaging and imaginative way.

The personal development journals were particularly effective not only for the recognition of competences, but for the identification of problematic areas (some students reflected on their difficulties with time-keeping and organisation which they had not picked up on before, purely because they hadn't needed to direct their own learning and be responsible to a team to such a great extent). They developed valuable skills in reflecting on their own learning, both inside and outside the classroom, and how they influence one another.

## Reflections

**(Lessons you've learnt and conclusions drawn. What was successful, what could be improved? What was the critical element of the design behind success?)**

Feedback from the students indicated that they found their self-directed workshops to be of real value, although at first they were nervous about taking responsibility for their learning in this way. They also expressed surprise that so many of the skills they brought into the workshops were skills that they had developed outside of the classroom. Through being encouraged to work independently in groups, using a diverse range of media, they were able to develop a range of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills – particularly in terms of collaboration and creativity - based on their informal learning.

Something which worked particularly well was their final presentations, where they were asked to work in their groups and develop an idea for a business and present it *without* using Powerpoint. This meant that they came up with innovative ways to 'sell' their idea, such as panel games and role-playing. One group was made up of boating hobbyists and 2 environmental campaigners (all activities which they were involved in outside of the university), and so they came up with an idea to run water-taxis between Manchester City Centre and a new MediaCity development, cleaning up the waterways in the process. One month later there was an announcement in the local news that a water-taxi business is going ahead in the area – nearly identical to their idea! For them, to be able to bring in their informal learning and present it in a business-like way gave them a real sense of worth, and a genuine appreciation that they had been able to use their informal learning in a formal setting.

The personal development journals worked really well as they helped the learners to reflect and develop meta-skills needed for lifelong learning. Also, the PDJ gave the learners a method for the translation of informal competences into a more formal framework, which is especially useful when it comes to CV-writing.

Overall, the emphasis placed on their extra-curricula activities and 'accidental' learning allowed them to see themselves differently, recognising that they have valuable skills which haven't been acquired formally and therefore valuing what goes on outside the classroom much more than they did before. In this sense, it was transformative.

Unfortunately, due to issues beyond our control related to the module delivery, all Personal Development Journals had to be completed by hand. In the future the PDJ will be online, taking the format of a blog, and it is hoped that this will encourage more group-based reflection through an online learning community.

Another complication is that of group work – resentments can build in members who do not all contribute equally. However, problems were rare and when they did occur, due to the self-reflective nature of the module students began to see that those who did the work gained the most and so those that didn't contribute were the ones who missed out in the end.

In summary, the elements which really helped to engage the learners were:

- Facilitated independence in terms of group work
- Regular mentoring from the tutor (face-2-face)
- An environment where they felt free to take risks
- Socially-oriented learning
- Opportunities for creativity across a range of media
- An emphasis on peer interaction and collaboration
- A sense of fun and play

### **Expenses, Resources**

**(How much was the cost per person? How many people/staff were involved? Which materials and equipment were used?)**

There was 1 member of staff involved (12 weeks of workshops). Rooms and facilities were provided by the university. Equipment used included computers, OHPs, speakers, flip-charts and pens. Students provided their own props and competition prizes.

### **Support**

(Email address/ telephone number of a person who will give more information about the project)

Helen Keegan: [h.keegan@salford.ac.uk](mailto:h.keegan@salford.ac.uk)

### **Tags**

Informal learning, flexible learning, reflection, ICT, personal development, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, creativity, collaboration



## APPENDIX

### Personal Development Journal

The Personal Development Journal is a 'reflective diary', which should be completed on a weekly basis to record individual and group experiences, and their contribution to your skills development. This should be a critical review, recording both positive and negative events, in a systematic way.

You could, for example, include comment on the following:

- Impact of supporting studies programme
- Independent activities
- Progress of project to date
- Changes in the original plan
- Difficulties encountered
- Solutions employed
- Reflections on the group processes
- Development and progress of your own skills

Please remember that the contents of your personal development journal will be confidential between yourself and your tutors.

The pages that follow are designed to allow you to identify those skills you think you have developed during your studies and those where weaknesses are apparent. Some examples are given below:

#### **Communication**

- Make a presentation to a group of people
- Extract information from sources and summarise the information
- Produce written material eg. Essay or report
- Negotiating within the group.
- Persuading and influencing others.

#### **Information Technology**

- Produced documents using IT which included text and graphics
- Used IT to search for information e.g. on the internet, databases

#### **Numeracy**

- Collected numerical data e.g. from published data
- Describe findings from the numerical data using charts, graphs etc.

### **Working with Others**

- Plan with a group and set deadlines for tasks to be achieved
- Organise your own activities to enable you to meet your responsibilities
- Negotiating within the group.
- Project management skills
- Creative problem solving
- Responding to others

### **Managing Own Learning**

- Strategising- Set personal targets and plan action to be taken to meet targets
- Reflect on own strengths and weaknesses in setting targets and planning
- Identify evidence, which shows targets have been met
- Time management

Based on the work of Allan Gibb the available lists usually include behaviours (which can be observed), attributes (which are deemed to be part of the personality) and skills (which can be developed).

Once the weekly reflective logs have been completed these need to be summarised in terms of your personal skills, behaviours and attributes map which demonstrates how you developed self-confidence, self-belief and motivation through the work you have undertaken. It will afford you the opportunity to provide evidence of the hard work you have undertaken and the creativity, autonomy and a high locus of control. It will also enable you to provide evidence of your commitment and determination in completing the module.

Completion of the maps will provide you with evidence for your future employment. It will provide you with examples that you can use in an interview situation.

**Weekly Reflective Log (10%)**

DATE	ACTIVITY UNDERTAKEN (Team & Individual)	KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING ENHANCED	SKILLS DEVELOPED	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT ATTRIBUTES (Evidenced by thoughts and reflection on the experience, lessons learned and action required)

(Add as many cells as required – aim for 1 per week)

## PERSONAL ENTERPRISE BEHAVIOUR, SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES MAP

(10%)

According to Allan Gibb (2004) there is ‘no absolute list of behaviours’ that can be described as entrepreneurial (intrapreneurial) and comments that the available lists usually include behaviours (which can be observed), attributes (which are deemed to be part of the personality) and skills (which can be developed). The table below provides you with the opportunity to reflect on your growth in knowledge skills and personal attributes that start the process of Personal Development Planning that you will be able to draw on as evidence for future employment.

### SKILL CODES

S1	Solving Problems Creatively
S2	Persuading/ Influencing Others (Selling)
S3	Flexibly Responding (Strategising)
S4	Negotiating a Deal Successfully
S5	Presenting/Proposing Confidently
S6	Managing Interdependence successfully (Time/Project Management)

Skills Code	Behaviours	Personal Development Attribute Evidenced by:
S2 S4	Seeking/Grasping Opportunities	You were able to demonstrate <b>self-confidence, self-belief</b> and <b>motivation</b> to achieve by:

Skills Code	Behaviours	Personal Development Attribute Evidenced by:
S2 S6	Taking Initiatives Acting Independently	You were able to demonstrate <b>hard work</b> through:
S5	Fixing/Making Things Happen Bring Networks Together Effectively	You were able to demonstrate <b>creativity, autonomy, and a high locus of control</b> through:

Skills Code	Behaviours	Personal Development Attribute Evidenced by:
S6	Ability to Take Reasoned Risks Dealing with Uncertainty	You were able to demonstrate a <b>commitment</b> to the task by:
S1 S3	Goal Perseverance Strategic Thinking Decision Taking	You have evidenced <b>determination</b> through: