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Research your chosen educational initiative in entrepreneurship and critically analyse how it encourages an entrepreneurial mindset and creative thinking. Consider any other skills that can also be developed through participation in this initiative.

There has been a dramatic increase in Government initiatives and education programs, designed to encourage the development of entrepreneurial skills (Penaluna et al., 2012). It has been recognized that these skills are important for job retention and innovation and are drivers of economic prosperity (Acs et al., 2018). The curriculum for Wales proposes four new purposes; one of them being that the new curriculum will support every child in becoming “enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work” (Welsh Government, 2020). Young Enterprise Wales is an initiative, made up of enterprise programmes and workshops, that works directly with young people, alongside teachers and influencers, to provide them with work experience and to develop entrepreneurial skills (Howes, 2022). To have an entrepreneurial mindset, one must be able to identify opportunities, and to be resourceful and risk-taking enough to explore the possibilities of any opportunities that may arise (Carvalho and Daniel, 2019). Studies show that successful entrepreneurs are moderate risk-takers because it's crucial for decision-making processes (Angel et al, 2018). Entrepreneurial education empowers young people with knowledge and opportunity to thrive in the uncertain nature of today's environment (Aja-Okorie and Onele, 2013). Meanwhile, creativity is viewed as an invaluable component in recognizing opportunities, innovation and idea making (Saptono et al., 2019). Thus, creativity and entrepreneurship are indisputably linked.

Young Enterprise (YE) offer a range of enterprise programmes for young people to their careers education and develop transferable skills that they need for the future. This initiative engaged with around 40% of secondary schools within the most deprived areas in England in Wales during the 2017/2018 academic year (Young Enterprise, 2018). Research shows that deprived areas and communities have low levels of enterprise, so the link between entrepreneurship and deprivation becomes evident. This highlights the importance of having initiatives like YE, as it encourages entrepreneurial attitudes, increasing the prospect of having successful entrepreneurs in deprived areas, which increases employment opportunities (Thompson, Jones-Evans, and Kwong, 2012). The Young Enterprise 'Theory of Change' recognizes that there is a skills gap among young people and concludes that work experience opportunities are crucial to develop entrepreneurial skills and mindsets (Young Enterprise, 2021). Others agree that work experience is vital as it can “help pupils to be better in the context of their own lives and employment” (Wilson, 2013). The aims of the 'Theory of Change' are to help young people to succeed, make informed decisions, and to take on challenges which in turn will increase social mobility and generate a younger generation of positive contributors (Young Enterprise, 2021).

The initiative has a range of workshops and challenges to suit children of all different ages. The 'Fiver Challenge' is one of Young Enterprise's challenges best suited to younger children, around 8 years and older. The challenge is, in groups, research and create a business plan with a £5 pledge, within four weeks. This is an exceptional introduction to enterprise and enhances a variety of skills such as creativity, problem-solving, and teamwork and builds on their self-belief. 92% of teachers who have participated in the 'Fiver Challenge' agree that the initiative encouraged pupils to think creatively by having to generate ideas (Young Enterprise, 2018). Pupils get to highlight

their creativity in this process by deciding on a business idea, creating business names and importantly, by producing ways of best spending a limited £5. The range of exploration, evaluation, collaboration, and experimentation involved in such a challenge enriches the creative skills of those involved. Creative ideation is facilitated by interacting with different people who are motivated by the same topic (Argote and Levine, 2017). This suggests that creativity should flourish amongst the groups in the 'Fiver Challenge' as they share the same goal and must work together and collaborate to create a business plan that they all are passionate about. By working collaboratively in a group, the more people involved, the more ideas should be obtained as there will be a mixture of people with diverse opinions and perspectives (Markman, 2016). Pupils can demonstrate creative thinking at this point in the process as they will need to eliminate poorer ideas, develop better ideas, and consider any potential risks. Collaborative working increases creativity but it also develops teamworking skills further; research finds that learners who are socially interactive are more engaged (vacca et al., 2011; Hurst et al., 2013).

Young Enterprise also runs the 'Company Programme' which gives young people (13-19) the opportunity to run a company under the guidance of a business volunteer. This allows the students to gain practical business experience as they must make business decisions, manage company finances, and sell to the public (Young Enterprise, 2022). Experiential learning is effective in developing transferable skills which are considered essential for success (Chan, 2023). The young people involved in this initiative have the freedom to take control of their own business which in turn, empowers them. Students who feel empowered are more inspired to experiment and think creatively to find new ways of solving task problems (Shalley, Hitt and Zhou, 2015). Furthermore, the experiential learning that pupils will experience will allow for entrepreneurial spirit to thrive, which is essential for this education to be effective (Othman et al., 2015). This 'spirit' only occurs when people are given practical approach activities, where they are encouraged to interact with each other to solve real-world issues (Bell and Bell, 2016; Bandera, Collins and Passerini, 2018). This entrepreneurial spirit contributes to a person's entrepreneurial mindset as it is a way of thinking that "actively seeks out change ... it embraces critical questioning, innovation, service and continuous improvement" (Smith, 2013). It is evident that an initiative like 'Company Programme' provides hands-on experiences which are invaluable and encourage types of innovative learning that spark creativity. If the students can experience the pitfalls of running a business, then they can learn to take accountability and learn from any mistakes. Interdisciplinary learning bridges the gap between knowing how to do something and doing something-participating in projects like this expose's learners to context specific experiences and puts what they have learnt into practice (Zhou, 2021).

'Team Programme' is a journey for young people with mild to moderate learning difficulties to take to help develop confidence and life skills through working to set up and run an enterprise with the aim to help them with the transition from education to employment (Young Enterprise, 2019). A lot of children with learning difficulties can struggle with change and new beginnings and so it is vital that they can be best prepared for life after school. Research shows that the best way to do this is to acknowledge their

fears and to give reassurance by pulling up on experiences they have had already to show they are capable of different things (Greenwood, 2020). By engaging these children with the programme, they can improve their knowledge and skills, making them more suitable for employment (Young Enterprise, 2019). This is important because it positively raises the profile of those with additional learning needs within the community, providing future pathways and engages learners in a way that can improve their confidence and self-esteem. By developing their entrepreneurial mindsets, they can build on self-confidence and foster a desire to achieve (Riyanti and Sandroto, 2017). A report found that the young people involved in the 'Team Programme' have responded well, engaged enthusiastically, and have improved their attitudes to employment and their character traits (Young Enterprise, 2019). The Welsh Government (2012) set out that entrepreneurial education should use a combination of approaches to be successful, meaning that the needs of those with additional learning needs should be considered and that the delivery of this style of education can be adapted to suit the learners needs. Within this, it was stated that learners should be encouraged to be independent and that the activities involved should engage them with real-life issues. The work of Young Enterprise does this successfully, involving all learners, adapting the activities to suit the needs of different learners and preparing them for life after school.

Young Enterprise creates an environment where entrepreneurship can prosper and where learners can try innovative ideas. Through this, there are many ways in which participants can develop and highlight their creativity skills. One way the problem-based learning environment is beneficial is by how creativity and critical thinking skills can be developed. The "learning-by-doing" approach of entrepreneurship education emphasizes knowledge application, and so students are expected to be creative and think creatively when solving problems (Boge, 2012). To think critically and creatively, one must explore new possibilities and find solutions whilst focusing on logical rational processes of evaluating what already exists. This suggests that problem solving is a creative process as one needs to provide alternative solutions and analyse the best options (Setyaningtyas and Radia, 2019). Creative problem solving involves breaking assumptions, questioning why, innovation and thinking outside the box (Knox, 2015). The Young enterprise initiative encourages all these processes, by building on key skills for life and work such as planning, communication, and collaboration. Another way of demonstrating creative thinking is through innovation. According to Khan (2018), innovation is an outcome, a process, and a mindset. This suggests that innovation is more than just implementing one clever idea, there is a lot that contributes towards being innovative and entrepreneurial. Understanding and implementing these processes enables innovation and allows for better ideas to succeed.

Creativity is arguably an essential skill in entrepreneurship (Meintjes, 2015) and setting activities around real-world problems/scenarios, like business, can successfully develop the creativity and entrepreneurship skills of school-aged pupils (Ng et al., 2021; Sen et al., 2021). "Creativity" and "innovation" are interchangeable terms with similar meanings. Innovation refers to the implementation of creative ideas whereas creativity encompasses different thinking processes (Tang, 2019). Allowing learners to be

innovative allows them to apply their creativity to situations that prepare them for future endeavors and inspires entrepreneurial thinking. The work of Young Enterprise has been mirrored by others, particularly in South Wales through the work of Young Business Dragons competitions (Young Dragons, 2020; Peregrine, 2017). These competitions test young people's entrepreneurial skills through group-based challenges to invent products and businesses. Young Business Dragons has associations with the Welsh Baccalaureate that are offered to all pupils in schools and to those in further education. The aim of the Welsh Baccalaureate is to provide learners with the opportunity to develop wider skills and knowledge which align with the four purposes of the curriculum (Welsh Government, 2019). The fact that there are multiple initiatives that are similar in their approaches reflects that challenges like these are effective in instilling entrepreneurial skills in young people.

In conclusion, it is evident that the Young Enterprise initiative is successful in encouraging entrepreneurial mindsets and creative thinking. Children are introduced to ideas about work whilst developing life skills along the way. Experiential learning is clearly important when implementing entrepreneurial education because it puts knowledge into practice. The core aims of the initiative align with the Welsh government's purpose to support young people in becoming "enterprising, creative contributors" who are prepared for life and work (Welsh Government, 2020). The results of the work done by Young Enterprise highlight their success in supporting young people and challenging their creative thinking skills which have undoubtedly contributed to their entrepreneurial mindsets. Children who participate in these challenges and workshops will have invaluable experiences and will be able to add the skills that they have learnt to their future CVs and build on their skills to become successful entrepreneurs. Creativity remains subjective; however, it is undeniable that the challenges set by Young Enterprise force participants to think creatively by coming up with business plans, carrying out research, solving problems, and working against timescales. It is necessary that initiatives like this continue as the need for entrepreneurial mindsets is crucial to be able to cope with the ever-changing world.

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