

Drop Days

From September 2005, all students are entitled to have 5 days of Enterprise Learning during their school career. This entitlement is partly supported by the new enterprise learning allowances that schools will be receiving as part of their Standards Fund which school bursars should be aware of.

The focus of the entitlement is at Key Stage 4, but we have discovered that younger students benefit hugely from enterprise activities and we have thus developed a philosophy for delivering enterprise learning which, if adopted by your school, will guarantee meeting the DfES target with minimum effort and disruption for the school.

Several schools in Tower Hamlets have adopted a 'Drop Day' approach where all students come off timetable and undertake enterprise activities for a single day. Schools can have more than one drop day a year, but a single enterprise drop day for students starting at Year 7 and finishing at Year 11 will meet the DfES target.

If the drop days are scheduled in the latter part of the summer term we have found that this tends to be easier to manage, as there is less pressure on the academic timetable and the summer exams will have been completed.

Schools which have 'Enterprise Advisors' working with their school can enlist the support of the enterprise advisor in organising the day. Those without an enterprise advisor will need to have one person, probably a member of the senior management team, as overall organiser, but if the school adopts the strategy detailed below the amount of work involved by the school will be minimised.

In Tower Hamlets, we have worked with several 'delivery partners' who have taken responsibility for much of the organisation of their particular activities. For example, Young Enterprise (<http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/>) have a number of products which can be delivered as part of a drop day from students from Year 7 onwards. In Tower Hamlets we have used the 'Our Nation' activity which introduces students to a number of enterprise learning concepts such as teamworking, leadership, organisation, innovation and commitment. Another suitable Year 7 activity that teachers themselves can run is 'The Art Game' (Shane - link to the Art Game on our site).

Financial Literacy

Financial Literacy is a key skill which young people need to master to become successful citizens. In Tower Hamlets we have been working with NatWest, using their Face2Face with Finance offering which is a series of lessons designed to help young people understand the role of banks and financial institutions. (<http://www.natwestf2f.com/F2F/NatWest/default.htm>). The Basic Banking exercises can be used with students from Year 8 onwards and provide a days lessons of practical exercises in banking and finance. We have found that students at Year 8 need this information - many will already be working part time or have financial commitments such as a mobile phone. Face2Face with Finance can be delivered by NatWest staff using the NatWest commitment to have their staff working in their local communities and can also be delivered by teachers who NatWest will run a

'teach the teachers' session for. Older students can also benefit from the Face2Face materials, for example, we have also organised lessons for Year 11 students who are either thinking of leaving school and need advice about finance for the young worker and students who are staying on at school and therefore need advice on Education Maintenance Grants and university funding options.

As students progress through school we have found that many want an opportunity to apply their academic skills in real life examples. We have worked closely with businessdynamics (<http://www.businessdynamics.org.uk/gen/default.aspx>), who provide a range of programmes for older students. During the past two years businessdynamics have organised practical drop day activities for Year 9 and Year 10 students.

Planning a Drop Day:

1. Start planning early in the academic year. Appoint a person from the Senior Management Team to 'own' the day. Use your enterprise advisor if possible.
2. Set a date and let all faculty heads know. Put the date in the school timetable.
3. Contact delivery partners such as Young Enterprise, NatWest and businessdynamics. You will find that these organisations will typically help you with the organisation. While some of the offerings will be fee based and will therefore need to be budgeted for, others may be free or the delivery partner may be able to secure business funding on your behalf.
4. Arrange briefing(s) for senior staff on the drop day and content; get the delivery partners to present.
5. About a month before the drop day, ask the delivery partners to visit the school to brief the heads of year and teachers; this could be at a heads of year meeting with their tutors to make best use of time. Arrange for any special requests, e.g. the school hall may be required for plenary activities.
6. If teachers are involved directly in delivery, a date when the delivery partner can brief the staff will also be required. Our experience is that the materials tend to be of a high quality and make delivery relatively easy, especially for an experienced teacher.
7. Have a final planning meeting / telephone conversation with the delivery partners a week before the drop day to finalise arrangements and tidy up any loose ends. The delivery partner may want to deliver lesson plans / booklets / materials to the school before the drop day, organise this as required.
8. Let the catering staff at the school know of any additional adults attending the school on the drop day, e.g. business people may be invited by the delivery partners to present some of their materials.
9. On the day, be around to welcome the delivery partners and their guests at the beginning of the day. 'Pair off' the delivery partners / guests with tutors who will escort the guests to the classrooms or organise students to do the same.
10. Be around at the end of the day to say 'thank you' and record any lessons learnt ready for next year!