Mapping the case for a permacultural provision in the Faculty of Arts and Society: or, what is creative enterprise?

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This paper begins to map out a definition of creative enterprise that is specific to the Faculty of Arts and Society at Leeds Met. Our definition is produced both in relation to the definition of enterprise by Leeds Met's Institute for Enterprise (a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning that focuses on enterprise skills) and also by considering associated and interrelated uses of the term 'creative enterprise' beyond our University.

What is enterprise?

According to the Institute for Enterprise (IfE):

"At Leeds Metropolitan University, enterprise is recognised as an inclusive concept which provides both the context in which subject disciplines can be explored as well as an approach to learning (learning philosophy), which can be taken to the exploration and discovery of a discipline. In this respect, it can provide a challenging environment within which to explore a variety of teaching areas (such as a small business context) as well as providing a new and stimulating dimension to learning – that of being enterprising."

(Leeds Met Stage 2 CETL bid, 2004)

The IfE goes on to describe a particular kind of context or environment for enterprise that is 'challenging' and an approach that includes the following:

- skills of 'being enterprising'
- corporate perspective (as 'intrapreneurship')
- creation of new ventures, social programmes and the exploration of new opportunities (Price, 2003).

The only phrase in this description that may not sit well with the creative entrepreneur is the notion of a 'corporate' perspective. There is a perception within the creative industries that the 'corporate' is at odds with many of the ideological and philosophical aims of the creative or the artist. However, this definition from the IfE is appended by the term 'intrapreneurship' – perhaps this might be more palatable to the creative? According to organisational theorist Gifford Pinchot (1985) 'intrapreneuring' is the "courageous pursuit of new ideas in established organizations" (**www.pinchot.com**). This conception works from inside an organisation: building ideas from within pre-existing structures, philosophies and ethical considerations. Dr Pauline Kneale of Leeds

University, in her Enterprise in Higher Education Curriculum paper for the Higher Education Academy, also cites Pinchot: "intrapreneurs are 'dreamers who do', those who take hands-on responsibility for creating innovation of any kind within an organisation" (Kneale, 2007).

I continued to read the IfE's definitions, to see if there was any potential disjuncture between our in-Faculty, tacit conceptions of creative enterprise and the IfE's literature – particularly in relation to the use of terminology that may be perceived to be, or essentially is, at odds with Faculty philosophies. The IfE clearly states the need to "develop relevant Faculty interpretations of enterprise education" (Price, 2003). So what is ours? Perhaps we can get closer to a definition of creative enterprise as different, or as the IfE puts it, a "relevant Faculty interpretation", by looking harder at what enterprise actually is and thinking about existing Faculty provision. Which enterprise-type skills are we already including in our courses? Are our subject areas intrinsically enterprising? Do we already have an enterprise education provision of sorts?

How is enterprise manifested in the Faculty of Arts and Society?

Enterprise is embedded in many subject areas in our Faculty, in particular those areas that are practice-led. If we look at the specific skills that the IfE cites as central to, or defining of, enterprise we certainly have some great strengths in our existing Faculty provision. For example, the students' ability to assess their own strengths and weaknesses, create new ideas and assess them, communicate effectively, innovate in their subject areas and conduct research are deeply embedded in many of our assessment criteria. Other skills, such as team building and working with others, are essential in some subject areas and irrelevant in others. For example, many fine art practitioners will consider only an independent (solo) practice after graduation, whereas for most performance students creative activity is focused on ensemble work. However, some skills, such as the ability to manage finances, recognise intellectual property, write a plan (other than a research plan) and negotiate effectively, may well be lacking across our various cohorts and courses. Finally, notions such

as 'assessing customer interest' may need a process of intrapreneurial Faculty redefinition. This kind of language produces the same kind of discomfort as the 'corporate'. We need to acknowledge that some of the IfE's language does not sit well with the creative entrepreneur and a few of their ideas may need reframing for our purposes.

Does creative enterprise exist in other HEIs?

In order to reframe these ideas in a subject-specialist manner I looked for other institutions that use the term 'creative enterprise'. In this research I wanted to investigate two issues: first, the manner in which these other organisations define 'creative enterprise' as opposed to more generic notions of enterprise, and second, to discover if these definitions are concurrent with our emergent and embryonic discussions at Leeds Met. In 2005 PALATINE, the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Dance, Drama and Music, ran an event on creative enterprise. The documentation for this event (www.palatine.ac.uk) suggests that three ideas seem central and significant: creative self-reflexivity, being involved in context-specific learning and working with experienced mentors in the field. Creative Enterprise at Dartington College (a department in a well known specialist arts college) emphasises specialist business support through surgeries, seminars and mentoring. Facilitating specialist collaborations, partnerships, social enterprise and an acknowledgement of the difference of what they describe as 'creative businesses' are central to their provision. The course documentation from the University College for the Creative Arts postgraduate courses in Creative Enterprise talks about developing and facilitating organisations that have creativity and innovation at their core, as opposed to those that co-opt a notion of creativity to facilitate other, more 'corporate' aims.

At the London College of Communication (part of the University of the Arts), the Marketing School has recently renamed itself as the School of Creative Enterprise. This school also houses the Creative Industries Observatory and the Creative Industries Journal (first published March 2008: see www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journalissues.php?issn= 17510694&v=1&i=1). The Journal contains a clear statement of support for activities and organisations originating in "individual creativity, skill and talent" (www.lcc.arts.ac.uk/marketing_ school.htm); again it is the centrality of this 'creativity' that may provide the critical pivot that distinguishes creative from generic enterprise.

What is creative enterprise at Leeds Met?

The use by these organisations of the term 'creative enterprise' supports the idea of something different at the centre of this type of enterprise. This can be described as a kind of intellectual and philosophical pivot. Imagine a solar system of skills. There is a star in the middle that causes other bodies to orbit around it. In creative enterprise this star is creativity (and in other types of enterprise it may well be something else). It illuminates its satellites in particular ways and produces particular orbital patterns. This star by its nature illuminates particular parts of this solar system; there are also particular and very specific elements that are in the shade. Creative enterprise education needs to nurture those shady elements but in a way that is appropriate to the particular ecosystems of the planets and other satellites in this system – not only because different solar systems differ in their light and shade but also because there is a history, a geography and a biodiversity that have evolved as specific to our solar system. This is not, however, a case for genetic modification. We resist the appropriation and modification of existing 'business' materials. This is a permaculture: we are looking at the whole Faculty, observing how the parts relate and building on existing strengths. This development is an intrapreneurial act; the aim is to focus our efforts on the specific, identified and unique needs of our Faculty. Within the Faculty of Arts and Society, intrapreneuring could mean the way in which we work within the organisation of the University to create new projects, partnerships and curricula; it could also be the way in which we prepare our alumni to be courageous "dreamers who do" in postgraduate contexts and (self) employment. Some of this development may well look very similar (on paper) to provision provided in business schools but the language, the culture, the location and the participants would appear, to others, as absolutely alien.

References

Kneale, P. (2007) *Enterprise in the Higher Education Curriculum: Higher Education Academy Imaginative Curriculum Guide.* Lancaster: PALATINE. Available at: **www.palatine.ac.uk/files/1007.pdf** [Accessed June 2009]

Leeds Metropolitan University (2004) Stage 2 CETL bid.

Pinchot, G. (1985) *Intrapreneuring: why you don't have to leave the corporation to become an entrepreneur.* New York: Harper & Row.

Price, A. (2003) *Defining Enterprise Education.* DfES/Higher Education Academy Project report.

Useful websites

Creative Industries Journal:
www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journalissues.php?issn=17510694&v=1&i=1

PALATINE – the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Dance, Drama and Music:
www.palatine.ac.uk/

School of Creative Enterprise at University of the Arts London:
www.lcc.arts.ac.uk/marketing_school.htm
www.ucreative.ac.uk/

Dartington College of Arts:
www.dartington.ac.uk/

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