

C.R.E.A.T.E. Initiative

(Creating Rural Enterprising Attitudes Through Education)

A. Preamble

The community and economic life of rural Australia is undergoing constant change. Many of the traditional employment opportunities have disappeared through globalisation, industry restructuring and the demographic and service decline of many small inland towns. However, improved communications, lifestyle preference changes and increased rural tourism demand have created new employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

By and large the education system continues to prepare young people to work for others and to encourage them to leave rural Australia in search for employment. This attitude was well expressed by Nebraskan Educationist, Ed Nelson when visiting Australia in 1999 –

“We, as parents and as teachers, must feel the guilt for some of the demise of the rural communities. Too many of us have been in the business of encouraging our children and our students to study hard so they can go and get good jobs. We have not worked hard enough to help them explore the possibilities of returning to their home communities some day, not in search of jobs, but in search of entrepreneurial opportunities through which they can offer jobs”.

(Dr Edwin Nelson, (Director, School/Community Revitalisation Program, Nebraska, USA)

The C.R.E.A.T.E. Initiative seeks to respond to this challenge.

B. C.R.E.A.T.E. Initiative Goals

C.R.E.A.T.E. has three broad goals, namely –

1. To demystify the concepts of ‘can – do’ and ‘being enterprising’ and their relevance regarding rural change.
2. To encourage rural students to focus on the assets, capabilities and opportunities of their rural communities, rather than dwelling on limitations, weaknesses and deficiencies.
3. To support rural students to respond to changing social, economic and employment circumstances by encouraging self-initiative and the consideration of self-employment as a career option for remaining in, or returning to rural Australia.

C. Curriculum Themes of C.R.E.A.T.E

I Appreciating rural change in Australia

II Knowing oneself and one’s strengths

III Discovering what it means to be an enterprising person, community and business

- enterprising individuals
- enterprising businesses
- enterprising communities

IV Exploring our community as a place of opportunity

- auditing the community
- appreciating its uniqueness, assets and “windows of opportunity”

V Testing and tasting the enterprise option

- idea generation and critical
- thinking social entrepreneurialism
- understanding the world of business
- testing entrepreneurial options.

D. C.R.E.A.T.E Tool Box

C.R.E.A.T.E. has developed a Tool Box to assist teachers facilitate the program and address objectives and curriculum themes. The contents of the Tool Box includes:

- Teacher Guides
- C.R.E.A.T.E. Resource Guide
- Personal Development Resources
- Rural Development Resources
- Business Development Resources
- r u MAD? Kit

'More must be done in schools to instil in young people a greater sense of optimism about the future, a conviction that the future is theirs to shape, and the faith in themselves needed to tackle this task. This surely, should be a fundamental task of education today. If children lack these qualities, everything else in education – whether it is providing basic literacy and numeracy, instilling a love of learning or developing vocational life skills – becomes devalued and harder to achieve...'

(Richard Eckersley)

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