Now there's a brand new subject that's about to be taught in schools. It's called work studies. It's added to the curriculum and it means the kids are going to have to start learning about entrepreneurship, creative thinking, risk-taking and how to handle criticism from a future boss. It's basically, Sarah, a brand new study which is helping kids prepare themselves for the shock of getting into the workplace because let's face it, it's a very different environment to anything that most kids have been used to up until that point.

It's completely different to school. You're not mollycoddled at all. You know at school it's all about being all-inclusive, everyone's under the same rules and there's rules and you just follow them. In the workplace there's not just rules are there? There's those unwritten rules and you need to learn how to sort of manipulate, manoeuvre your way through a workplace I think.
IAN ‘DICKO’ DICKSON: Plus you're working alongside a lot of people who're older than you. They've got different life experiences and different buttons that you can push and tolerance levels. And a whole agenda based around a company plan.

SARAH MORICE: Yes.

IAN ‘DICKO’ DICKSON: So that you have to fit into. But it got us wondering, 13-13-32. What one piece of advice would you give with the benefit of all of your experience? What one piece of advice would you give to a young Aussie about to enter the workforce? What would you say, Sarah?

SARAH MORICE: I would always say that no job is above you or below you. So when you got into a workplace if they ask you to do the menial task, be it the coffee, be it answering the phone, be whatever it is, you do it. And even if you've been promoted several times but there's a shortage one day, in the mail room or something like that, you go back and you do it. You're never above a job.

IAN ‘DICKO’ DICKSON: I agree and that's what I say to my kids all the time. There is nothing more attractive than - to an employer than a can-do attitude.

SARAH MORICE: Yeah.

IAN ‘DICKO’ DICKSON: It is just unbelievably intoxicating. If you're running a company and you've got a young 'un and he says I can do that, let me do that, I'll do that, I'll stay behind, I'll
do what I have to do. It's fabulous. Rob Randall is the CEO of the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. He joins us now. G'day, Rob.

ROB RANDALL: Good morning, how're you both?

IAN ‘DICKO’ DICKSON: Good. Are you as excited about this new study as we are - this new subject I guess?

ROB RANDALL: I think it's got a great deal of potential and the feedback that we're getting during consultation because that's what it is. It's a draft curriculum, out for consultation but the feedback we're getting is very positive. People see some opportunities to add to the English/maths/science/history which is important in a curriculum but adding something like work studies to complement those things and give young people a good understanding of work and a good focus just as you've been talking about it, about how they might best project themselves, best prepare themselves for work and life after school.

SARAH MORICE: I notice one of the things you'll be teaching them is teaching each child to have a brand. What exactly does that mean?

ROB RANDALL: Well, the notion, the picking up a brand is an example of that. But the notion of saying to young people focus on your strengths and your areas for development. Think about how you could market yourself. Both of you were just talking about young people having a go and getting in there and having a go at things. But we would equally sort of say young people should know
where they are strong at things and in the complement is where they can further develop it. And knowing their strengths, they can build upon those and they can offer those up at a certain time. So we've used the notion of brand because that's because how do you market yourself and we think there is an important element of young people being able to say well look, now I've got something to offer this company, not and again that orientation's the correct thing to help make a difference, to this workplace, to my work colleagues. So it's about understanding their strengths and then following through on those.

IAN 'DICKO' DICKSON : What about these I guess the interesting concept of teaching our young Australians how to handle criticism from a boss. I mean I guess that's in some ways a little bit of a backhanded stab at the fact that you can't say no to kids these days.

ROB RANDALL: Oh, look I think it's probably a generalisation, I think there are many young people who are doing very well because they take on the feedback from coll... you know from coaches, from teachers and others. But what we are saying and that is another example, under a section called Gaining and Keeping Work, and we're sort of saying well, there are some realities of work and life, there are work cultures, there are appropriate behaviours. And what we want young people to do as well as understand the difference between feedback and criticism is to actually understand the context they're working in.
How they communicate with their mates out of school is not necessarily how they would best communicate in a work setting. So that's a particular example. We think many young people do well in it but the curriculum suggests it's worth focusing on that and helping young people understand that context is important. And how you talk to mum and dad, how you talk to your brother and sister, how you talk to your boss if you like, or your work colleagues, shouldn't always be the same.

IAN ‘DICKO’ DICKSON: Rob, what about this idea of teaching creative thinking and entrepreneurial mindset? How do we teach that to kids?

ROB RANDALL: Well, there's a challenge in there about how we develop young people. I mean creativity is one that is just not in this area, it's in mathematics, it's in science, it's in English, so it's one that we want to focus. We have...

IAN ‘DICKO’ DICKSON: Well, in business it's just problem-solving.

ROB RANDALL: Well, it's problem-solving but it's also looking for opportunities, it's looking for how you can take an idea that you've got and then actually see it in someone else's situation. It's about how you can if you like translate things from a particular st... your point about problem-solving, the art of problem-solving is you've learned some things in a particular context, can you pick them up and transfer them across into a different context.
And again, the teaching there is for young people to see those things, to workshop through. This curriculum has a focus on applied learning and work exposure so what we're trying to do is to say some of the things you're learning in maths and English and science, if you put them into a work context, you can pick them and translate them. Your study of literature and English, your study of reading and writing, in English or mathematics can be picked up and applied, not necessarily in the way you've learnt it or it's been taught, but it's about ident... putting some of those examples through this curriculum in front of young people and helping them if you like build the bridge from the things they know into new and different settings. And that's a key part of problem-solving.

SARAH MORICE:

Alright, Rob. Thank you so much for your time there. I think it's definitely a good move. Rob Randall there. He's the CEO of the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. I hope there's a specific subject, Dicko, which tells people that at 17 and 18, you do not know everything and you do not know best.

* * END * *

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