

Hybrid:articles

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hybrid:arts

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a new species of training provider in the creative industries

culture art youth technology partnership learning communication people service

proposal to give mentors to over-16s

A bill published last month proposed that all young people in post-16 education and training should be given a mentor, either at school or in the workplace. The post-16 education and training bill also includes provision for a community leadership programme, which would help young people develop employment skills. Other plans include giving all young people leaving school the right to a "personal profile" of their achievements. This aims to be an effective way of achieving the young person's educational and training requirements after the age of 16, while the mentor would be responsible for giving "guidance and advice".

Barry Sheerman, Labour MP for Huddersfield and chair of the Education and Skills Select Committee, introduced the bill, saying: "We need a system that is geared towards the individual and protects and promotes those who are most susceptible to dropping out of the system at 16."

These plans build on existing government ideas. Prime Minister-in-waiting Gordon Brown spoke recently of the need for 14- to 16-year-olds at risk of dropping out to have "one-to-one mentoring" to prepare them for further learning and work.

The Education and Skills Select Committee has published a report on the Government's plans to introduce 14-19 diplomas. www.parliament.uk

creatives on the move

Hybrid:arts are proud to be included in the Digital Central project, Creatives on the Move. They have produced a map aimed at highlighting the range of innovative activity in the region and encouraging a more dynamic and integrated network of creative industries support in the West Midlands.

The map is available online at

www.creativesonthemove.co.uk

olympic corner

Legacy Trust UK is working with London 2012 to ensure that the Games leave a lasting mark on the world. The Trust was formed recently, with a remit to help create and support cultural, sporting and arts-based activities in the run up to 2012. Their aim is to focus on activities which have the potential to become part of the Cultural Olympiad, enabling existing organisations working in these fields to come together to form a powerful team. They aim to promote many more organisations, groups and individuals to become involved in creative expression celebrating the spirit of the Games and the values of the Cultural Olympiad. Post 2012, the Trust will work to ensure that funding continues and that there is a legacy that lives on celebrating friendship, solidarity and fair play. www.london2012.com

Talking Birds go to market

Talking Birds, a company of artists who specialise in acts of transformation, have an artists residency in Coventry Market as part of Architecture Week 2007. The market opened as the first indoor circular market in Europe in 1958. From 4th to 23rd June, the artists on the Talking Birds stall will be making pieces inspired by the building. The artists are: Nick Walker, writer, Derek Nisbet, composer/sound artist, Julia Negus, textile artist, Mark Hancock, film/digital media artist, Leroy Henry, artist and 'paper engineer' and Lyndsay Evans, performer. If you have a story to tell, or an opinion on the building, they'd love to hear it.

Please visit www.talkingbirds.co.uk

Binswood leavers

Binswood sixth form department in Leamington Spa sent eight of their students to us on a day release for two terms. The group, most of whom were taking a BTEC media course, attended the Spencer Yard site equipped with Apple G5 computers. The group all came with specific interests but having been exposed to professional software and the Hybrid:arts creative working ethos "work hard:play hard", they left with an altered perspective of how they could fit into the future media industry. They tried digital imaging, video production, stop motion animation, motion graphics / compositing, music technology, sound production and 3D design / animation. They also produced an electronic alphabet made of LED lights - otherwise known as electronic graffiti. We are very proud of the work they completed with us, and wish them the best of luck for the future.



Estelle Morris raises thought provoking points in Guardian

Estelle Morris, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, attacked some of the unquestioned, but tired, pillars of British Education this month, in particular the process of forcing children to change schools once they hit 11. "There is an argument that both academically and socially it can be a bit of a disaster. The evidence tells us that academic standards are likely to drop back when a child changes school, and we know that children need stability...It doesn't do a lot for children's emotional security. We insist on this enormous change even for those who have the most unstable of childhoods." She fears that the new 14-19 curriculum could unwittingly make things worse, and goes as far as to suggest 14-19 schools. "We could also abolish GCSEs - they're another permanent fixture we should question." And also, while we're at it, what about the long summer holidays?!..."Mention a shorter summer break and anyone would think you'd just suggested demolishing one of the tenets of the British education system. The fact that the six-week break originally came into being so that children could help with the harvest has been lost in the mists of time." Morris is leading the call to shake off the traditions that no longer work, and concentrate on finally getting vocational education right, once and for all. "The best of our academic education is as good as any other, but we'll never be the world-class education system to which we aspire until we match it with a high-quality vocational curriculum as well. From the lack of status and resources accorded to it by the architects of the tripartite system in the 1940s, through the continual changes in qualifications in the 1980s and 1990s, to the government response to the Tomlinson report, it seems we never quite get it right." As Morris rightly points out, time has moved on, and the knowledge and skills that underpin 21st century vocational courses can be as demanding and rigorous as any other. The message is clear: "We must stop thinking of vocational education as being only for the less able or the disaffected. If we see it that way, it will always be second best." The key will be to provide young people with a broad range of viable choices, supported by a solid structure. We need more of this gutsy spirit!

positive images campaign

To support the third year of the Positive Images Awards, recognising the organisations and individuals who help to counter negative stereotypes of young people, Young People Now magazine have commissioned research to monitor the tone of coverage of young people in the media. It found 23% of mentions were positive, 29% neutral or balanced and 48% negative. Despite a slow improvement on last year's figures, the findings nevertheless raise major concerns about the demonisation of today's youth across the media. One aim of the Positive Images campaign has been to increase the number of stories that quote young people - but here the picture is one of regression. Previous surveys have recorded that figure at 8% in 2004 and 13% in 2005 - this has slipped back to 11%, reinforcing the impression that the media is eager to speak about young people, but not to them. In total, the research recorded 304 items of coverage, of which 104 were broadcast, 90 broadsheet and 110 tabloid, where the three most popular topics about young people were knife crime, receiving 72 items of coverage, education with 48 items and gangs with 47. Close behind were social exclusion and violent crime. Youth minister Beverley Hughes said recently: "Many young people say they feel let down by the constant negative portrayals of young people both in the press and among older generations. Every time we fail to listen to young people we reaffirm these misconceptions when it is our duty to challenge them. The truth is that young people achieve more, are the most generous when it comes to giving up their time to do work for charities." The language of government also plays a major role in assuring a more balanced coverage of young people in the media. Too often press releases issued by the Home Office have announced measures to deal with "louts", "yobs" and "thugs". As the new Prime Minister, Gordon Brown has a chance to make language about young people more constructive, balanced and positive. Plus, the election of Harriet Harman as deputy Labour leader is good news also - as MP for Camberwell and Peckham, she understands the value of intervening to improve young lives. And as a woman, there is the potential for her to influence a less macho rhetoric amongst her colleagues.

work placements

The Hybrid:arts office has been blessed this month with not one, not two, but three dynamic students who have undertaken a spot of work experience with us. Praveen Gurnani from Aylesford School, Otis Nagle from Myton School and Ami Paneser from Campion School and Community College have all assisted Hybrid:arts in a variety of different ways, using their contrasting creative strengths to shine in the workplace. Praveen single handedly implemented an online database. His technical know how, creative thinking and passion for technology has been an asset to Hybrid:arts. Otis and Ami undertook some crucial research for our Indestructible project, employing their first class investigative skills and insider knowledge to search for appropriate artists from the London underground scene to work with young people on music training and performance. The excellent work that all 3 young men have completed with us has been invaluable and all of the staff at Hybrid are highly impressed. They are a credit to the community and have bright futures ahead.

motorvate are celebrated at awards

Congratulations to Motorvate UK who picked up the Investors In Young People award at the Coventry Evening Telegraph Business Awards. The award celebrates innovation and dedication to improving lives and opportunities for young people.

Motorvate are a training organisation specialising in structured motor vehicle educational courses.

www.motorvateuk.co.uk



think tank provides food for thought

Demos, a think tank dedicated to analysing social and political change and connecting this to innovation and learning in organisations, recently published a report that explored the role of digital technologies in education. "Their space - Education for a Digital Generation" draws on qualitative research with children and polling of parents to counter the myths obscuring the true value of digital media. The report found that digital technology had been completely normalised by today's children, and is now an integrated part of their daily lives. Yet schools largely ignore this aspect of children's lives, and as a result, they may be missing out on their most valuable resource: the experience, skills and interests of their own students. Lord Puttnam, Chair of the education innovation charity Futurelab, brought these issues to light in the Education Guardian on May 8th, warning that "we might be reaching the limits of what the current system can do without some radical change in culture." www.futurelab.org.uk

the future is brown

The future for young people looks decidedly brighter this month, in light of Gordon Brown's coming to office and the ensuing, almost immediate, cabinet shake up. This is set to have many positive repercussions in the youth sector. In the wake of the changes, the DfES is no more, replaced by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DCSF). This presents the clear signal that supporting young people is Brown's top priority as Prime Minister. Responsibility for both children and young people has now been made a cabinet-level position, ensuring the interests of the next generation are represented. In particular, more sustained efforts for teenage pregnancy training are to take a central role in education. Responsibility for this area will be included in the remit of the Department for Children, Schools and Families, taking over the role from the defunct Department for Education and Skills, which adopted the Teenage Pregnancy Unit from the Department of Health in 2003. According to young people themselves, the current state of sex education, and especially teenage pregnancy, is severely lacking. According to a recent report from the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP), more than half of teenagers do not know where their nearest sexual health clinic is. Over 21,000 young people were questioned on sex education and provision in their area, and results showed that only 55% of young people said they had been taught about teenage pregnancy at school. Many young women questioned said that although they knew about the impact a child would have on their lives, they knew little about a baby's development in the womb. But the picture needn't be so bleak. Here in Warwickshire, thanks to Amy Barnes, Respect Yourself Campaign Manager and the dedicated Respect Yourself Partnership team, the situation is most definitely one of action and innovation. Recent figures released from the National Teenage Pregnancy Unit show a drop in the number of under 18 conceptions in the county from 37.1 per 1000 in 2004 to 36.7 per 1000 in 2005. To reach the Government target of reducing the rate of under 18 conceptions by 50% by 2010, Warwickshire Respect Yourself Partnership is encouraging young people to resist the pressure to have sex too early, to take responsibility for their sexual health, and offering them access to free, confidential information and advice. Amy Barnes said: "These figures are excellent news for the partnership, and show that all our hard work is paying off, and that our holistic approach towards tackling high conception rates amongst under 18s is working. We look forward to seeing teenage pregnancy rates drop even further when figures are released for 2006." The holistic approach to reducing teenage pregnancy rates in the county includes: improving Sex and Relationships Education in schools; encouraging parents to speak to their children about sex; providing dedicated sexual health services and innovative and creative campaigns to give young people access to information and advice. Currently, the finishing touches are being made to Virtual Visits, which will inform young people of sexual health services available and where they can access them. It is this kind of inspirational partnership working that makes a real difference on the grass roots level, and should be celebrated and developed across the whole of the UK.

www.ukyp.org.uk



intrepid otis

Otis Nagle reports direct from the Hybrid:arts coal face

Young Enterprise Day, in Coventry, was a chance for companies to show off their work and talent to other companies and people. There were many companies such as Pixelearning, Young Enterprise, Coventry University showing what they do. I assisted Stella in showcasing work that I, along with some friends, had produced at Hybrid:arts. Our presentation generated great interest from all sorts of people, from business, dance to technology, and I was asked many questions about the company and what I did there. I found the experience very useful - I learned how to present work, improvise and talk to many different people about what I was presenting. I had to set up all the equipment and get it going on my own which I found very useful because it gave me some experience. I also think it was good because it gave a chance for companies to link with each other. Many people asked for contact details such as a Myspace address because they liked the work I was presenting, including the Kombat Breakers, so they could see more of my work. They all found the fact that the work presented was made by me and a few mates astonishing and most people who viewed the work were very impressed. Overall I enjoyed myself, met many new people and got a lot out of the experience.

www.myspace.com/rippa7002