

connect learning gazette

Issue Thirteen | November 2009

Learning is not attained by chance; it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.
Abigail Adams.

Welcome to the thirteenth edition of *Connect Learning Gazette* – learning and development resource dedicated to Union Learning Reps.

As always we value your feedback. If you do have any feedback and/or you come across any interesting information that you would like to pass on, please email kacie@connectuk.org.

What's New?

Government to invest £4.4bn in skills training

The government has announced that it will invest £4.4 billion in improving skills in the UK in an effort to boost the economic recovery of the country.

According to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, some £3.5 billion will be spent in 2010-11 on adult training, which represents an increase of almost three per cent on the preceding year.

Minister for further education, skills, apprenticeships and consumer affairs Kevin Brennan said improving skills represents an "investment in an individual" that can help people to progress in life.

He added that it could also improve the productivity of companies in the UK and increase the nation's economic growth in the future. "We need to invest in the right training, to encourage more employers and individuals to buy into skills and to ensure a more productive use of skills across the UK economy," he commented.



The Skills Investment Strategy 2010-11 is part of the Skills for Growth national skills strategy announced by the government. It is thought that the £3.5 billion direct investment in training places will help more than 3.4 million adult learners in the UK.

The Adult Learner Responsive budget will be over £1.75 billion in 2010-11 and this will provide support and work-focused training for about 75,000 people who cannot find jobs and who have been in receipt of benefits for six months or more.

To view the full article go to:

<http://www.learndirect.co.uk/newsfeatures/news/all/2009/november/19475828/>

The Geographical Distribution of UK Talent

A working paper from the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) looks at the spread of talent (also referred to as human capital) across the 100 largest cities in the UK (excluding London) and considers what the factors are in this distribution.

Economist Marc Cowling uses previous research, often American in origin, and analyses data from the 2001 Census and the Higher Education Statistical Agency's (HESA) Destination of Leavers Survey to find that talent is unequally distributed across cities. In fact, some cities were observed to have three times more highly educated workers than others.

In terms of explanations for the uneven distribution of talent, Cowling contends that talent is often attracted by cultural factors, the presence of universities, an entrepreneurial culture and the stock of graduate talent that already exists in a location. This can mean that it is difficult for those cities with low existing levels of talent to close the gap on more 'talented' cities.

Local policy makers may benefit from these findings, suggests the report, as they promote alternative methods of drawing firms and industries to cities. For instance, it may inspire them to create living and working environments that can attract and retain talent.

Full details here: <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/pdflibrary/wp24.pdf>

Beyond Leitch: Skills Policy for the Upturn

A report that discusses the impact of the recession on England's skills system has been published by the Centre for Innovation in Learning. This new think tank, which has been created by the Learning and Skills Network, considers whether current skills policies and the influence of the Leitch agenda are still appropriate in light of the changing circumstances.



The report observes a shift in emphasis from upskilling to reskilling as a result of rising levels of unemployment. There has also been an increased interest among policy makers in identifying the sectors of the economy which are likely to drive growth in the future. It is argued that this represents a move away from demand-led funding and a return towards an element of planning.

The report also questions whether skills policy is struggling to meet the competing goals of raising productivity and driving welfare-to-work.

A review of labour market programme evaluations and extensive interviews with providers are the basis of findings and recommendations that are set out in the report, such as:

- The recovery from the recession is expected to be slow, with an 'unemployment lag'.
- Young people with lower level qualifications are facing increasing barriers to employment; while those who are more highly qualified are being made unemployed, but find it easier to re-engage with the market.
- Funding needs to be less closely linked with qualification levels and should support individual employment and mobility.
- Newly emerging sectors do not always see themselves as fitting with traditional forms of training provision.
- There is apparently little connectivity between government departments responsible for employment and skills.
- Train to Gain should be more fully co-funded by the Government and employers. This would provide greater incentives to employers and help to redirect public money to support training in transferable skills, such as Skills for Life.
- Regional economic development strategies and local economic assessments can help policy makers find the optimal mix of level 2 and level 3 training provision for various sectors.

- Sector Skills Councils should have more of a pioneering role in establishing the form, as well as the content of training. They should be focussed on how training is appropriately delivered in their sector as well as concentrating on what the content of that training should be.

For full details visit: <https://crm.lsnlearning.org.uk/user/order.aspx?code=090165>
(Select 'download now' to access this publication).

Beyond Learning

1 third of adults don't use the internet

Over one-third of all adults (37 per cent) don't have regular access to the Internet; and just under a third (32 per cent) lack access to a computer. Digital participation is heavily dependent on class and income as 86 per cent of ABs have regular access to a computer or laptop, compared to 70 per cent of C2s and only 45 per cent of DEs. These are the headline findings from [NIACE's Annual Survey of Digital Participation](#).

To read more on the survey's findings go to: <http://www.niace.org.uk/news/over-one-in-three-adults-don%E2%80%99t-use-the-internet>.

A Christmas present with a difference: City Lit gift vouchers

Do you want to give a friend or a family member some inspiration this Christmas? Looking for a present that's a bit different?

City Lit gift vouchers are now available and can be used towards any of their 3,500 part-time courses. Whether it's exploring aromatherapy, counselling, pottery or singing, let a friend choose how to get the new year off to an exciting start.



To find out how to get some City Lit vouchers visit: <http://www.citylit.ac.uk/news/article/48>

Any Other Business

Goodbye Kirsi, Hello Anne

As you all probably know by now, Kirsi Kekki has moved on from Connect. I am sure you will all agree that she will be dearly missed.

The role of ULR Project Manager has now been taken over by Anne O'Connor. I know that she sent an email to ULRs on 12/11/09 to introduce herself. I am sure you all look forward to meeting her in the future. If you have anything you would like to discuss with Anne please email her at anne@connectuk.org or you can call her on 020 8971 6052.