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*Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.*

**Paulo Freire**

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Welcome to the sixteenth edition of *Connect Sector 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.ashford@prospect.org.uk](mailto:kacie.ashford@prospect.org.uk).

## What's New?

### **2010 Review: The Integration of Employment and Skills**

The 2010 Review: The Integration of Employment and Skills - launched by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) on Tuesday 16 February 2010 - will consider the progress that is being made in integrating employment and skills systems in Great Britain and provide advice on how further integration can be achieved.

The review's remit includes the whole of the publicly-funded employment and skills system in England, Scotland and Wales, including higher education, and covers job seekers, those entering the labour market and those who have been in employment for many years, but have not had the opportunity to develop their skills or to progress within the workplace.

Alastair Thomson, Principal Policy and Advocacy Officer at NIACE, said:

"This morning's news that 1.64 million people are now claiming Jobseekers Allowance brings into stark focus the importance of this review if the UK is to rank amongst the top countries with respect to skills, productivity and jobs by 2020."

For more visit: <http://www.niace.org.uk/news/employment-and-skills-systems-reviewed>

### **PCS Sixth Annual Competition**

The PCS (Public & Commercial Services union) 6th annual short story competition is now open to members of all trade unions across the UK. Entry is free, there are three categories in this year's competition; Natural World/Wildlife, A Workplace Fiction and an Open Theme - your choice of subject.

Winning stories and commended entries are published in an anthology and all other entries will be considered for later publication. The closing date for this year's competition is 30 August 2010.

PCS hopes that as many people as possible across the country will help to promote this initiative. You will be helping your people to explore their creative potential as well as supporting a worthwhile cause. Words Magazine not only helps budding short story writers to get their work published; any money it makes goes to their chosen charity (see <http://www.wordsmag.com/charity.htm> for details).

Posters to advertise the competition can be ordered via email from [shaun.peare@courtfunds.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:shaun.peare@courtfunds.gsi.gov.uk) and guidelines and entry forms are available on the WORDS website <http://www.wordsmag.com/tradeunion.htm> or send a SAE to PCS-WORDS Competition, PO Box 13574, London W9 3FX asking for the forms.

Anthologies of winning stories and commended entries from past competitions are available at the Words Magazine website (<http://www.wordsmag.com>).

### **Skills for the Transition to a Low Carbon Economy**

A key recommendation of a report from the Aldersgate Group is that all major environmental policies should be accompanied by a corresponding skills strategy.

The organisation consists of a coalition of businesses, environmental groups and individuals who are committed to high environmental standards for future economic growth. The report calls for accelerated industrial intervention by government in the UK in order to fill the gap in skills required to make a transition to a low carbon economy. It is suggested that future skills strategies should be developed in line with environmental legislation. Other recommendations for government action in the report are:



- Providing investment to develop core technical skills in targeted sectors
- Making the skills delivery system fit for purpose so that all sectors of the economy can develop skills in generic issues such as resource efficiency, energy efficiency and dematerialisation of products
- Driving demand for environmental skills through funding programmes that help to alter long-term business practices
- Reforming the government's communication strategy by re-defining what is meant by a 'green job' and engaging with the workforce on the implications of the shift to low carbon.

To view the Aldersgate report "Mind the Gap" go to: <http://www.aldersgategroup.org.uk/reports/>.

### **BT Online Employee Learning Week**

Everyone in BT is being offered a unique chance to improve their store of knowledge, with the launch of an online Employee Learning Week.

Set to start Monday 1 March, the online programme will look at a range of skills designed to help people take their personal development a step further - and that are useful both in and outside the workplace.



Phil Stonelake, of the BT Global Services learning and development team, said: "Day one of Employee Learning Week will look at ways to add power to your words and tone, while day two will focus on improving your emotional intelligence - that is, the ability to understand and manage both your own emotions and those of the people around you.

“Days three and four will help you identify the learning style that is most appropriate to you, and also look at self-directed learning. It will offer advice, too, on refining your personal development plan.”

The last day will focus on the benefits of - and the difference between - coaching and mentoring.

Phil added that BT's commitment to workforce development is stronger than ever.

“Organisations that recognise the benefits of workforce learning are more powerful and perform better - and therefore are more likely to achieve their goals,” he said.

“The Employee Learning Week is a unique opportunity for people to join and participate at your own pace - so I hope as many as possible will put a note in their diary to remind themselves to take part.

For more information, email [phil.stonelake@bt.com](mailto:phil.stonelake@bt.com) or [angie.cartwright@bt.com](mailto:angie.cartwright@bt.com).

### **European e-Skills week**

e-skills UK is pleased to support European e-Skills Week taking place during the first week of March 2010.



#### *What is European e-Skills Week?*

European e-Skills Week highlights the growing demand for skilled ICT users and ICT professionals to drive a competitive and innovative Europe. The campaign seeks to inform students, professionals and small businesses about the vast range of opportunities that ICT-related jobs present.

Throughout Europe in the days leading up to e-Skills Week, public authorities, ICT companies, schools, further and higher education institutions and students will engage in hundreds of activities, training events, competitions and much more. The awareness campaign will culminate in a dedicated European e-Skills Week from 1 to 5 March 2010.

For more information on this, please go to:

<http://www.e-skills.com/cgi-bin/go.pl/newscentre/news/news.html?uid=1054>

## **Beyond Learning**

### **Getting 100,000 British businesses online**

BT, e-skills UK, Enterprise UK, Google, the IoD and PayPal launch initiative to help small businesses create a free professional website and find relevant training and support.

Google and partners including BT, Enterprise UK, e-skills UK, PayPal and the Institute of Directors today announced an ambitious joint initiative to get 100,000 businesses online with a free website by the end of 2010. Despite operating in one of the most advanced e-commerce markets in the world with over 40 million people now online, as many as 1.5 million businesses in the UK do not have a website. Many businesses are not yet online either because they see it as too costly, too complicated or not necessary - often all three.

Central to Getting British Business Online (GBBO) is a new 'wizard' tool that businesses can use to create their first website in around 15 minutes. Businesses will be given a free .co.uk web address and can choose a website from a variety of templates to suit their business needs. New websites will be included in Google's search index and added as a business listing in Google maps. Businesses will also be shown the tools with which to promote their new websites.

BT will offer businesses free advice and phone support to help them create an effective online presence, and in the next couple of months PayPal will enable businesses with a GBBO-powered

website to turn their site into an ecommerce platform in just a few clicks. This means they can begin selling to customers and accepting payments quickly and securely via the web.

Additionally, e-skills UK has developed an IT qualification that will allow businesses to develop the skills and confidence necessary to get online. Using the Google suite of tools, the ITQ for Doing Business Online will help businesses to build their own website and get the most from it, helping them to be more competitive. Several major Awarding Organisations, including City & Guilds and OCR, are backing the initiative and their training centres across the UK will be delivering the course to small businesses.

Businesses can sign-up for a free website at [www.gbbo.co.uk](http://www.gbbo.co.uk).

### **Nap 'boosts' brain learning power**

A nap during the day improves the brain's ability to absorb new information, US scientists claim.

Volunteers who slept for 90 minutes during the day did better at cognitive tests than those who were kept awake. Results of the University of California at Berkeley study involving 39 healthy adults were presented at a conference.



A UK-based sleep expert said it was hard to separate the pure "memory boosting" effects of sleep from those of simply being less tired. The wealth of study into the science of sleep in recent years has so far failed to come up with conclusive evidence as to the value of a quick "siesta" during the day.

The latest study suggests that the brain may need sleep to process short-term memories, creating "space" for new facts to be learned. In their experiment, 39 healthy adults were given a hard learning task in the morning - with broadly similar results, before half of them were sent for their siesta. When the tests were repeated, the nappers outperformed those who had carried on without sleep.

Checks on brain electrical activity suggested that this process might be happening in a sleep phase between deep sleep, and dreaming sleep, called stage 2 non-rapid eye movement sleep, when fact-based memories are moved from "temporary storage" in the brain's hippocampus to another area called the pre-frontal cortex.

For the full article go to: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/8524549.stm>.

## **Any Other Business**

### **New look, new ideas**

As you probably will have noticed the colour scheme and logo for the Gazette has changed to match Prospect's colours. What we want to know is, do you have any ideas for the Gazette that you would like to suggest?

For example – perhaps you would like a “word of the month” section, or a random but interesting fact section? What would you like to see in the Gazette? If any of you have any ideas you would like to put forward please email [kacie.ashford@prospect.org.uk](mailto:kacie.ashford@prospect.org.uk).