

Heywood Foundation Public Policy Prize - "Education "

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Categories: Education

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ID: 432-11 - Category: Education

Open-book exams for 2021.

Open-book exams allow students to access and refer to class notes, text books or other approved material.

Crucially, an open-book exam focuses on a student's understanding of a subject, rather than an ability to simply remember rote learnt information. The teaching and exam preparation approach may have to be adapted to focus, for example, on understanding and application of knowledge rather than simple recall, but I believe careful exam question preparation and marking will deliver a more level playing field for students of mixed abilities.

Open-book exams will also allow students to develop and practice their critical and analytical thinking, rather than focusing on "cramming" . Given the wide variety and extent of students' particular home circumstances, this is a more flexible and adaptable approach to exam

preparation.

I believe open-book exams are a sensible, easily implemented and flexible solution to the current situation, and are certainly a better solution than exam cancellation.

ID: 140-11 - Category: Education

A national GCSE resit teaching programme created by education providers and employers

One of the most inspiring innovations to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic was the Oak National Academy platform of free online lessons and teaching resources produced by teachers for other teachers to use. Learning lessons from this model it would be possible to develop a national programme of learning for the tens of thousands of students who resit GCSE English and maths each year. While existing resources for school children can be useful, they are not always relevant for post-sixteen learners. Best practice from across the country could be crowd-sourced and used to develop a suite of resources that would sit alongside and/or could be used in full by any student or organisation. If lockdowns continue to occur materials would be readily available for anyone to use.

A key issue facing organisations delivering maths and English resit courses to students is a lack of motivation often driven by the perceived lack of relevance of these subjects and students' lack of confidence as a result of their own sense of having "failed". An approach we adopted within our further education organisation was to involve employers in the design and delivery of GCSE courses that demonstrated to students the relevance of what they were learning. This work enabled us to boost student motivation and engagement in these subjects while also enabling them to develop their employability skills. By engaging employers in this work, they were able to make a direct contribution to the education of young people in order to support their progression into employment. Using an online platform, the success of which has been demonstrated by Oak National, it would be possible to spread the impact of this work further. In the area of education, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented problems but also, through an increased and widespread familiarisation with online learning, opened up greater opportunities for collaboration and for making resources widely available to as many young people as possible. The solution outlined here would build on these lessons and would engage employers more fully with one of the sector's key challenges. In doing this it would address not only the

educational impact of the pandemic but would help to confront the broader economic challenges that young people will be facing in the years to come.

ID: 2000-11 - Category: Education

A Niche Fix to a Big Gap

I understand that a system such as Universal Credit (UC) will always have cases where individuals suffer due to the its scale. However, I do not believe I can be one of few such in this instance. The system essentially cripples those who were on monthly incomes at a time they are most vulnerable.

The system should enable those who have left work to prove this and then be granted a full payment in the next month as their final salary from previous employment.

I believe the more challenging issue is how to correct the, what is essentially an unnecessary overpayment, upon regaining employment. Mainly on the basis that there are many avenues for income and is not just restricted to receiving fixed income from an employer. However, in this instance it may be possible for UC credit to adjust the payment upon HMRC receiving notification of new employment issued by companies. Perhaps a token amount such as £200 is paid in this case to ensure the individual can afford basic necessities while not being awarded unnecessary funding. Then the system can assess the individuals circumstances based on their actual earned income when they are paid.

ID: 880-11 - Category: Education

Preparing a new generation for a truly Global Britain

CoVid-19 has reminded us all how inter-connected the world is. As we have all realised over recent years, globalisation produces challenges and difficulties as well as benefits. One of the prices to pay for the last thirty years of global economic growth has been the expansion of airline and transport networks that do not just allow goods to move quicker and more cheaply around the world; they allow pathogens to do so too.

Anyone who says they know what the world will look like once CoVid-19 has passed should be ignored. As the Chinese scholar Lao Tzu put it two and a half thousand years ago, 'those who have knowledge do not predict the future; those who predict the future do not have knowledge.'

One thing, however, is certain. We in the UK need to understand other parts of the world better. We need to do this to be aware of future challenges, disease-related or otherwise; we need to do this to be able to take better advantage of opportunities both at government level, and for the private sector. We need to do this make sure that our education system, and perhaps most importantly, those it produces remains world-class.

There are lots of ways that this can be achieved.

My proposal though is practical, achievable, measurable and modest. It is also essential.

Being globally competitive in the first instance means being globally aware. That is something we are conspicuously bad at in the UK today – unless we are looking in the familiar direction of the United States and Europe.

When it comes to Russia, the Middle East, North or sub-Saharan Africa – let alone South Asia, China and South East Asia, the next generation of students, teachers, civil servants, business leaders and politicians are singularly poorly prepared.

These are places, regions, entire continents that barely feature in the school curriculum. When they feature in public consciousness, in films for example, they appear as caricatures and pale imitations of reality.

My proposal is that we address the challenge of preparing for a genuinely Global Britain systematically.

At present, there are just a thousand students at universities in the UK taking courses in Chinese, Arabic, Farsi, Hindi, Urdu, Thai, Khmer, Korean, Japanese and Turkish – combined.

Although language learning is not the only way to learn about other cultures, supporting in depth, specialist knowledge of other peoples' histories, literatures and languages is a vitally important step in setting the direction for the country's future.

I therefore propose two inter-related programs.

The first is to provide full scholarships for students who do undergraduate degrees in an initially defined set of six languages: Chinese; Arabic; Farsi; Hindi; Turkish and Japanese.

These would be government-funded awards that pay tuition fees in full, provide for a maintenance grant and an allowance for travel to and study in a country where these skills can be further developed.

Funding 1,000 Heywood scholarships in this way would have a cost to government that is effectively negligible – at c£30m per year (compared to an annual budget of the British Council of £1.25bn).

These scholarships would be competitive and awarded using contextual data to enable high participation rates amongst low income households -and therefore additionally serve to promote social mobility, raise aspirations and provide avenues for bright, ambitious young people from deprived socio-economic areas.

The second element is the creation of a Heywood scholarship network that means that more opportunities are provided than support with fees alone.

While Heywood scholars will study at many universities in the UK (rather than at a standalone language school), a support network would provide logistical support for travel abroad; but perhaps more importantly, connects young scholars to enable them to get to know each other, learn from each other's experiences, and take advantage of networking opportunities.

Heywood Scholars would meet for a week, once a year, out of term time for courses on global government, international finance and contemporary international relations as a way of stimulating their education further still, enabling them to meet and build social networks with each other, and to help nurture talent

This additional week need not take place on-site, but could be hosted remotely – with prominent names from the private sector and from government giving talks, advice and providing insights alongside students presenting their own research and experiences.

Establishing a link to the civil service and to fast-stream entry would not only be a tribute to Sir Jeremy Heywood, but also demonstrate that government is actively trying to recruit those with valuable skills and encouraging them into public service after graduation.

Structuring this proposal is not complicated; it requires a set of trustees to oversee the scheme and select students using AI and data; a Director to co-ordinate students and set up and run the annual program; and an administrator and finance officer to oversee logistics.

My proposal is tangible; cheap; and effective. And it would bring benefits to the UK almost immediately, engaging a cohort that will be well placed to understand a rapidly changing world.

We cannot afford to be complacent in the UK and expect the world to come to us. Pioneering spirit is not easy to cultivate; but if Britain is to succeed in the 21st century, we should be doing everything we can to help, encourage and promote young talent.

This proposal does just that.

I think it is one that not only Sir Jeremy Heywood would have supported. It would also be one he would have been proud of.

ID: 1976-11 - Category: Education

Back to basics

[in reference to the increase in antisocial behaviour]

During the pandemic we have seen an increase in antisocial behaviour. We must go back to basics and insist on better behaviour in schools.

For too long children have had their school day curtailed by teachers needing to deal with poor behaviour.

Now that children are returning to school this will continue and worsen as some children from

chaotic backgrounds have not had the stabilising influence of school for a year and have not been able to access lessons.

Far from attempting to minimise school exclusions, they must be increased. Prolonged poor behaviour must not be tolerated. A greater understanding of disruptive pupils needs to be embraced.

To that end, current pupil referral units need to have a complete overhaul, becoming staffed with highly trained behavioural experts, gifted teachers, mental health practitioners, psychologists, mentors, those with skilled apprenticeship knowledge, sports teachers, etc. and being equipped with whatever resources are necessary.

Disadvantaged children must be given opportunities to thrive and achieve their full potential. One to one contact needs to be available if needed.

Attendance at these new centres will be non-negotiable. Absentees will be continually contacted and will attend. The aim of all the children and staff must be a return to mainstream schooling.

The advantages of such scheme would be many:

1. Mainstream school teachers currently stressed with having to deal with poor behaviour would be able to teach lessons unhindered by a disruptive minority.
2. Children in class seeing poor behaviour being dealt with will no longer emulate it in the certain knowledge of their being excluded.
3. Teacher stress and resulting absenteeism will reduce, saving supply teacher salaries.

4. School refuseniks and disadvantaged children will be in a safe, encouraging environment daily,

preventing approaches from criminal gangs.

5. The goodwill of volunteers and charities could be called upon to help in the new centres in the form of sports coaching etc.

6. Excluded children will be part of an encouraging environment providing them with opportunities to become their very best selves.

At present there is a great deal of government and nationwide hope for the future of disadvantaged children after a difficult year.

If strategies can be put in place to enable them to move forward we should see a great deal less antisocial behaviour, greater self esteem and a desire to change their lives for the better.

All children must be enabled to aim high.

ID: 1187-11 - Category: Education

Building Digital Education Networks to integrate online learning into post COVID-19 education

Online education has exposed numerous issues including serious inequalities in IT provision, the importance of schools in building friendships and communities, and schools previous underrecognized role in allowing parents to work and power our economy. As we begin to focus on a post-pandemic future there will be a renewed focus on returning schools to classroom-based education as quickly as possible. This is, after all, the default educational model and it's many benefits including the ability to support students, especially the most vulnerable, build communities and give parents the opportunity to work will remain vital. As teachers, students, and parents across the country can testify this is model which has not, and most likely could not, been replicated in a wholly digital environment. However, such a rush to return to normality would fail to utilise the many benefits of online education. The most important of which is flexibility of location. Lessons can be held by a teacher anywhere to students anywhere. The current educational model - which online education throughout the

pandemic has tried and in far too many cases failed - to replicate involves one teacher teaching one lesson to one class in one school at one time. While it is right to return schools to a primarily classroom-based model it would be a mistake to lose the additional flexibility. Instead, Government should encourage schools to set up Digital Education Networks (DENs). In an ideal world, students at every school would have access to in person tuition in every subject they may wish to study. However, this has never been true. In recent years studies of both primary and secondary education have repeatedly highlighted major issues in the provision of both Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) and Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects. These are subjects which will be vital in a Global Britain seeking to expand its technological sector and secure its position as a leading nation. These issues have centred on a lack of trained teachers and a lack of time allocated to those subjects in schools. This has led to widely ranging provision at all age levels and a vicious circle of low subject take up at GCSE and A-level, resulting in both low subject budgets in schools and a small pool of suitable graduates who can – in part due to their scarcity – demand higher wages than schools are able to pay. According to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages report from March 2019 “there are now fewer MFL graduates each year than there are MFL teacher training places.” This is clearly unsustainable. Instead, DENs will allow schools to establish support and resource sharing networks across the United Kingdom. Where one school alone cannot provide in person tuition, particularly in subjects with lower take up, then it could draw on the resources of the others in their network. Only a small number of pupils may wish to study mandarin in each school per year, thus making it unaffordable for a specialist teacher and so making mandarin unavailable. However, if only two pupils per year in a network of ten schools wished to study mandarin then that cohort would be able to form a joint online class with a specialist teacher. The cost of providing that staff member would then be shared by the network on a per-pupil basis. This has clear benefits to pupils through expanding the range of subjects they can study and expanding their social and educational networks across the country. It has clear benefits to schools through allowing greater flexibility in it’s hiring and teaching methods as well as a clear way to minimise the impact of budget pressures. It also has clear benefits to the wider country through providing better skilled citizens who have connections not just in their own local communities but also across the country. DEN classes would be integrated into the normal school timetable meaning that pupils would have the manifold benefits of a physical classrooms, with the geographic flexibility of a decentralised network. Indeed, those two mandarin students could study at computers in a supervised classroom with students being taught French, German, Italian, and physics taught by teachers physically located on the other side of the country. By using recording features, lessons could even be available in flexible time as well as flexible location in order to suit children who have been absent from school or operate poorly in the normal timetable such as some of those with Special Educational Needs. This would allow all students a fairer educational experience which works for them, not just on them. Given the

uneven balance of STEM and MFL teachers working in private schools Government could encourage their participation in DENs as an important part of demonstrating the charitable status of those schools. Networks could also include mixed classes between areas with differing social backgrounds (for example Cornwall and Brixton) to encourage the building of a UK wide network of friendships and support integration. This could build on the work already done by the Faith & Belief Forum's linking programme of interconnected schools and shared inter-community relationship building projects. Indeed, DENs could form partnerships with other schools across the world to build language skills and international relationships with only a fraction of the cost and other challenges of physical exchanges. A high skilled, technologically advanced, and united Global Britain could be built from every classroom in the country. Government could help the development of DENs by providing 1) a schools matching service to help schools across the country share resources effectively; 2) a certificate programme in digitally delivered education to allow teachers the skills to teach effectively online; 3) continued funding for laptops to be provided to school pupils as standard, this will provide additional flexibility in learning location and methods.

ID: 494-11 - Category: Education

Expand provision and participation in community based lifelong learning.

NB: (material for this article is drawn from the writers current research for a book)

Summary: Community learning needs to be expanded so that young people who have suffered disruption to their full-time education will have access to a much wider range of accessible, part time learning opportunities in the future. This will also help people who have lost jobs to develop skills and qualities to pursue future occupations. The solution is based upon using secondary schools to provide lifelong learning and community development opportunities. In the C20th some schools were designated community colleges: responsibilities that were conferred upon them to provide community education i.e. adult education, youth and community development work. Community education tutors (usually 2/3) developed such work in colleges. Many were successful in this role and they embodied the concept of lifelong learning. But most colleges ceased to provide community education by the end of the C20th. In the early part of the C21st, a new form of community college (extended schools) was introduced in some parts of England but were not continued beyond 2010 - although there are still some community schools in Scotland and extended schools in Northern Ireland.

There is good evidence of the effectiveness of community colleges and extended schools in increasing participation in learning and meeting the varied learning and social needs of their communities - as well as improving their compulsory education provision. Staff and governors need to be committed and trained for this extended role. They will also need to develop partnerships and work closely with other professionals so that the principles of community education can be put into practice. Headteachers and school staff will not be able to provide these additional services on their own.

The first principle is commitment to lifelong learning through a curriculum that reflects the learning and social needs of their communities. Many C20th colleges provided community education programmes that consisted of academic, vocational, health, leisure, recreational, language courses and other informal learning activities. Educational advice and guidance, open learning, special provision for people with learning difficulties, extensive adult basic education programmes were also important provisions. School pupils were able to access these activities, and, in return, adult students were able to access some post 16 academic and vocational courses. College youth tutors ran a wide variety of evening, weekend and holiday time activities such as sports, drama, holiday play schemes and outdoor activity clubs to complement the school extracurricular programmes. All these activities contributed greatly to the economy, health and well being of the local communities served by the college.

Another important principle is shared use of premises. Schools are an important educational resource, funded by public monies. They are open 5 days a week for 6-8 hours a day for 40 weeks of the year to deliver compulsory education. To optimise efficient use of resources they could and should be used more extensively. Successful community colleges and extended schools were used by local community groups, alongside secondary education and lifelong learning activities, especially in the evenings, weekends and holiday times. Links were made between the community and the school curriculum to mutual benefit, such as sports clubs supporting various school sports with coaching expertise and providing progression from school teams to local club teams. Similarly, community cultural groups such as drama and music worked closely with school drama and music. These links enhanced and enriched the learning experiences of all concerned, not least school pupils.

Community development is another principle. Many colleges/extended schools made big contributions to the development of their communities by supporting community groups, providing learning activities and guidance to individuals that helped them grow in confidence and in leadership and entrepreneurial abilities. Roles that contributed to the social, economic, political and cultural life of the community. For example, an Access to Higher Education student went on to gain a degree; was then elected county councillor and served her community with distinction for over 20 years. She initiated many improvements to community life, through her political work. Others went on to run successful businesses from their initial adult education courses such as cake decoration, flower arranging and reflexology. Many students in adult education activities such as badminton, archery, pottery, photography progressed to form community clubs, including sections for young people. This contributed to the social and cultural life of the community and its general well being. There are many more examples.

The extended schools of the early part of the C21st built upon community college principles and practice of being open to pupils, families and the wider community during and beyond the school day. Community activities were aimed particularly at vulnerable groups, in areas of deprivation where services were limited. Community cohesion was promoted by building links between schools and the wider community, thus contributing to neighbourhood renewal. Positive attitudes to learning were also promoted, including participation in lifelong learning. These schools were founded upon greater 'multi-professional' partnership working with other agencies such as health, social services and the voluntary sectors.

Conclusion: The challenges presented by the pandemic can be met by creating more community-based learning hubs, using the principles and good practices of previous community colleges and extended schools. The future challenges we face need a radical increase in lifelong learning provision and participation, as well as community support and renewal schemes. Everyone deserves ongoing access to lifelong learning for whatever the reason: the future success of the country depends on this.

The government should act as a good employer by providing ongoing continuous professional development and looking after the health and well-being of its work force. In return, our

citizens will be enabled to make greater and more efficient contributions to our economic, social and cultural recovery.

‘Levelling up’ needs to start by investing in community based lifelong learning.

ID: 480-11 - Category: Education

The Return of the Jedi

Covid-19 will significantly exacerbate the education gap between rich and poor students. In 2019, disadvantaged pupils in English schools lagged behind their more affluent peers by the equivalent of 18.1 months of learning by the time they finished their GCSEs. At primary school, this gap was 9.3 months. Several steps have been taken to address this such as setting up the National Tutoring Programme. We still need a better high-quality teaching intervention plan for at least a couple of years to bridge the attainment gap. This can be done making use of the pool of qualified teachers who are out of service and giving them tax credits to return to teaching. This is the Return of the Jedi. When normality returns in a post-vaccination world, disadvantaged pupils will require intensive face-to-face support. Students who struggled in a traditional classroom environment will have fared far worse trying to cope with online and remote learning techniques. There are research studies which suggest that in-person learning is, on average, more effective. Being in person with teachers and other students creates social pressures and benefits that helps motivate students to engage. This is particularly true for students with weaker academic backgrounds. The Government’s focus so far has been on vulnerable children. However, there is a wider group of children who are at risk of educational disadvantage during this lockdown: low-income families above the Universal Credit threshold and not receiving free school meals as well as young carers who have come under particular strain. We suggest that local authorities should be given the freedom to include more pupils in the ‘pupil premium’ bracket based on criteria such as above. All such children would be eligible for the Jedi treatment. The School Workforce Census published on 25 June 2020 states that there were 33,565 qualified teachers who are out of service. These are teachers who are taking a break from teaching and who may return to teaching in a later year as well as those who are leaving the profession. Furthermore, there were 5,979 qualified teachers who retired. There is a pool of nearly 40,000 qualified teachers which can be tapped for this cause. The Jedi should return. Even if 10% of this pool of qualified teachers enrol, we have a batch of 4,000 Jedis who can be deployed immediately. The enrolment should happen centrally – an interested Jedi would register their details with their teacher reference number and disclosure details, if available, would be checked or referenced. The aspiring Jedi would indicate preference for two

local authorities along with the subject(s) that they will teach. Mind the Gap is a face-to-face, individual or small-group, school-based programme and therefore convenience of commute for the Jedi must be borne in mind. Local authorities will assess the numbers of disadvantaged pupils (using the new, wider definition) in primary and secondary state schools in their areas. The schools will determine the groups – preferably not more than five pupils – in each subject area that needs support. Using the Jedi enrolment database, schools will select qualified teachers who are needed for Mind the Gap in their schools. There is a wide resource base present in our schools – textbooks, computers, practice workbooks – and we suggest making use of these. Mind the Gap can be run before, during and after school hours – its administration is best left in the hands of the school leadership team. Each learning session would be for an hour’s duration and the Jedi can do as many sessions in a day in that school as is practicable. Each Jedi will be given a timetable by the school before the start of the school term after mutual agreement. It is in the payment mechanism that we suggest a different solution. The pandemic has already burdened the exchequer and more cash handouts as proposed in the National Tutoring Programme (£1 billion) puts further strain. We recommend that the government give tax credits – instead of cash payments – to the Jedis who have returned to participate in the “Mind the Gap” programme. Each Jedi can earn up to £10,000 in tax credits a year by tutoring under this programme. The tax credit can be used to offset income tax and would be available for use anytime in the next ten years. It could also be used to offset other liabilities such as student loans which the government might decide. Such tax credit payments will be school-certified each term by at least two persons – one from the school leadership and the second from the relevant year or department. This will be done electronically at a website maintained by the Department of Education and then passed on to HMRC. We suggest a payment rate of £25 per hour for primary school lesson and £40 per hour at the secondary school level. The hourly rate is for lesson delivered at the school and excludes the time taken to commute and preparation for the lesson by the Jedi. Assuming Mind the Gap is delivered to 500,000 disadvantaged children in the country in groups of five pupils, this means 100,000 groups in action. Each school will determine how many Mind the Gap sessions in different subjects will be delivered. If 3 subjects are under the programme with 2 sessions per subject each week, this entails 600,000 weekly sessions across the country. At an average of £30 per session, running Mind the Gap for 30 weeks a year hands out tax credits of £540m to the Jedis annually. This cost is matched by the benefit to the economy as it narrows the attainment gap. UK spends an average of £5,500 per pupil each year in the state schools. For 500,000 disadvantaged students, the annual cost is £2,750 million. If Mind the Gap narrows the attainment gap by 2.5 months, the economy gains by £573m. Can the country put a value on the boldness, confidence and intelligence of its youth?

ID: 1781-11 - Category: Education

Year of Service scheme

Short summary

All school-leavers should be offered the opportunity to undertake a 'Year of Service'. Schemes would be offered in three broad categories: public sector, charitable sector, and overseas development assistance. The Government should establish an overarching body to set the criteria, monitor quality, and to allocate and administer participants, as well as to work with organisations and businesses in each sector to design individual schemes. Participants would receive a living allowance and potentially financial incentives for higher education or future employment opportunities. In relevant sectors, such as education and health, participants would be asked and incentivised to commit to be part of a civil contingency reserve.

Proposition

A 'Year of Service' would tackle three critical public policy challenges in the UK that have been exacerbated by the COVID crisis: providing opportunities and skills for young people, fostering national community spirit, and building civil resilience.

First and foremost, a 'Year of Service' would provide an enriching continuation of education whether as a bridge to tertiary study or full employment. It would act as a counterbalance to the UK's academically focused curriculum and provide much-needed workplace and life skills. Participants would receive some universal basic training as well as training specific to their scheme. Universities and employers would be expected to give credit to participants in future applications. This is likely to be especially welcome to the post-COVID generation of school-leavers who will be confronted with a challenging jobs market.

A universal 'Year of Service' scheme would provide all young people with the opportunity for a

shared experience, helping to counteract the UK's structural divides that are rooted in geography, culture or class. All schemes would be geared towards public service, albeit manifest in different ways, helping to engender community spirit and a sense of shared national endeavour.

A UK 'Year of Service' would echo similar schemes in other countries: The German Voluntary Service Year, or 'Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr' (FSJ), describes itself as 'primarily a practical aid activity in institutions serving the common good' including education, youth work, welfare, health, disability and elderly care, cultural and historical preservation, integration, civil and disaster protection, and environmental protection. Some former participants are also incentivised to form part of civil defence schemes such as auxiliary fire or paramedic services.

In the US, 75,000 young people participate in AmeriCorps each year, split across three primary programmes that each take a different approach to improving lives and fostering civic engagement. Participants aim to address community needs such as increasing academic achievement, youth mentoring, fighting poverty, sustaining national parks, and preparing for disasters. AmeriCorps currently receives c.\$1 billion of federal funding each year which is matched by private or state/local public funds, however a bipartisan group of lawmakers recently proposed a massive uplift of the scheme in response to COVID-19 that would see is increase to 750,000 participants over the next three years, as well as increase the stipends and educational grants offered as incentives.

Schemes in the US have been shown to deliver 12% higher incomes for participants, equivalent to an extra year of post-secondary education, and an unemployment uplift in the year after the scheme of 27%. Longitudinal evidence also shows participants volunteer, donate and contribute more to their communities throughout their lives.

In order to facilitate such a scheme in the UK, I propose that Government establishes an arms-length body to set the criteria, and work with host organisations to design individual schemes. This body would then monitor quality and allocate and administer participants. State

services such as schools and the NHS would be mandated to offer certain numbers of placements, but charities and certain private sector providers in critical sectors – such as social care and agriculture – would also be invited to design schemes. I propose that 10,000 placements are offered in year one, growing to 50,000 (or c.10% of cohort) by year five.

Participants would be remunerated at a base level – perhaps equivalent to the apprentice minimum wage – and the expectation would be that, where possible, (domestic) participants would continue to live with parents. Government should however develop a grant scheme to supplement living costs where appropriate, and should also explore an exchange programme so that participants might travel to different parts of the country (or world). Government should also consider offering other incentives such as lower university tuition fees for participants or grants to employers that hire participants.

Overseas programmes should be designed so as to be ODA eligible as a successor to the ICS schemes. The oversight body should invite interest from appropriate charities and Government should consider what posts could do to identify opportunities.

Participants would all be asked and incentivised to register as part of a ‘civil contingency reserve’ for a period of time – say fifteen years – following their participation. Government could then call upon them in moments of national crisis to support efforts such as test and trace or vaccine roll-out. Currently such efforts are ad hoc such as the London 2012 Olympics ‘gamesmakers’ or, more recently, the Sun newspaper’s ‘vaccine army’. Or else they are subcontracted to private service giants or the army.

A ‘Year of Service’ scheme would bring many benefits to individual participants including experience, employability and enrichment. There would also be considerable societal benefits including levelling opportunity, encouraging cohesion, increasing understanding of public and third sector institutions, and engendering a stronger sense of collective endeavour.

Such a scheme would also build long-term resilience for core services. Had it been established policy before the pandemic, current participants and the civil contingency reserve could have been drawn upon to offer support across the whole response effort, from rapidly manning test and trace and vaccination centres, to organising community schemes to tackle loneliness and isolation.

Implemented successfully, a 'Year of Service' policy speaks to several of Government's core objectives: improving skills and opportunities for young people, building back better from the COVID-19 crisis, shoring up our critical public services, and strengthening the Union.

ID: 1464-11 - Category: Education

Reviving Adult Education post-pandemic in the context of Lifelong Learning

Idea in brief: Given recent pandemic experience, a huge need has been revealed for home based activities which can occupy and enhance the mind. I see Britain's once vigorous but now etiolated Liberal Adult Education provision in dire need of revival for many social and cultural reasons. My belief is that a new body, loosely based on the successful existing educational charity, the u3a, would repay a hugely disproportionate dividend from even a small funding investment by government.

Personal Interest: From 1972 to 1993 I worked for the Extra-Mural Department of Manchester University, serving as Director 1986-93. This meant I had close involvement with the UK's Adult Education system and developed a strong commitment to improving its reach and function.

Britain's Adult Education System: After the 1870 Education Act and those which followed it, the notion of education as a fundamental right was permanently established but for millions of still uneducated adults there was a huge education deficit. In 1903 the Workers Education Association looked beyond literacy to more systematic study, sometimes with Higher Education in view. After the trauma of war, the 1919 Ministry of Reconstruction's Final Report on Adult Education turbo-charged adult education, based on the following principle: "Adult education is a permanent national necessity, an inseparable aspect of citizenship, and therefore should be

both universal and lifelong”; it “should be spread uniformly and systematically over the whole community”. The spread of university extra-mural departments all over the country fulfilled some of the above ambitions, complemented by the development of adult education via local education authority (LEA) provision: adult education centres and further education colleges. The Army Bureau of Current Affairs helped educate soldiers returning home from the war and the scene was set for further expansion of provision post-war. Millions annually attended adult courses on a huge range of vocational and liberal adult topics in EMD, WEA and LEA classes. Later in the 1960s the Open University provided high quality degree courses for adults prepared to study using distance learning technology. Within this system, liberal adult education was a major element, along with more vocational studies and, via LEA provision, skills-based handicrafts.

Liberal Adult Education Under Attack: Initially the idea of educating the minds of adults was essentially liberal: this was the way they could discover the magic of literature, art history, languages, foreign cultures and the sciences. Course fees were accessible by pensioners and the low paid and, despite a predominantly middle class audience, many found this provision not only fulfilling but frequently, for mature students, a gateway into higher education. However, as the debate over public expenditure evolved during the latter part of the century, the utility of liberal adult education was questioned: such courses rarely led to qualifications; did not contribute directly to improving the national economy (though in less visible ways, they did); and the majority of attendees could afford to pay more for them.

Decline: During the 1990s funding for Extra-Mural Departments disappeared. Some provision survived but fees were usually beyond the pockets of the low paid. LEA funding was reallocated gradually to vocationally directed provision and the plentiful LEA classes in most areas of the country faded away apart, again, from courses accessible only to those who could afford them. As one-time leader of the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education, Sir Alan Tuckett, explains Liberal Adult Education has been thrown out with the overall adult learning bathwater: ‘We are, alas, overwhelmingly obsessed with initial education – the clockwork model that starts with early years and ends with labour market entry – at the expense of learning throughout life. As a result, over the past 15 years we have lost two million places in publicly funded adult education.... If we had set out consciously to destroy adult learning opportunities we could not have done a better job.’

My Proposal: Revive Liberal Adult Education

a) That foundation principle of the 1919 Report is still more relevant than ever: "Adult education is a permanent national necessity, an inseparable aspect of citizenship, and therefore should be both universal and lifelong."

) With appalling statistics of functional illiteracy in the UK - an average of 1 in 8 - every possible opportunity for easy access, low cost study should be provided.

c) With an ageing population and the problem of loneliness for so many elderly people becoming acute, there is a real demand for the return of cheap well-constructed and taught adult education classes.

d) To attract late 50 / early 60 year olds, made redundant by COVID.

The University of the Third Age (u3a): Founded in 1982 as a national charity to provide learning as an absorbing and entertaining activity, the u3a is a UK-wide movement which brings together people who are no longer in full-time employment, to develop their interests and continue their learning in a friendly and informal environment. It now has over a thousand branches, with close to half a million members who on average pay £20 annually. u3a members draw on their knowledge and experience to teach and learn from each other but there are no qualifications to pass – it is just for pleasure. Learning is its own reward. At present there is an age limit of 55 for attendees but if this were adjusted downward there is no reason why a fully national adult education service should not be revived primarily to fill leisure time richly, both socially and productively, for the individual. Alan Tuckett correctly describes it as 'a candle in the gloom.'

Change Name? My suggestion is to base a new body to replace or run in harmony with the u3a with a government funded body called something like 'The Lifelong Learning Community': lower age limit of 21 or 25 utilising the enthusiasm of people to organise their own learning. Even a small investment of funding in such an expanded national organisation would pay a huge dividend in terms of well being and personal satisfaction not to mention raising the overall cultural level of society.

ID: 2173-11 - Category: Education

Research and Putting Together a Toe in the Water "Pitch"

So, if this is an opportunity, what would be the first thing to do? The first would be to check I am right: that there is no hidden reserve of high quality, syllabus linked computer games out there. The second would be to ask "why"? Why are there no educational computer games? Providers must have considered this. Was it the cost? The technical delivery? Yet surely, to take one example, to have 480,000 fifteen year olds studying An Inspector Calls at any one time, is a potential market?

Obviously, to receive support and funding, while very welcome, is only to start a small seed that might ultimately bear fruit. But it will take time and money. A lot of money - especially if we want to come close to the scale and professionalism of the game companies. So the small beginning would be to ask for funds to research and write a "pitch", a professionally produced and researched document, almost a business plan, outlining the need and suggesting the remedy, which could be taken to potential suppliers such as the BBC, Pearson, Longmans, Collins and other educational suppliers. Other organisations might help. BAFTA, for instance, runs courses for young game makers. Could they be enlisted? The prize money would be to hire technical support for writing the pitch; I would supply the educational data for free. Then to also, if possible, receive help from the Department of Education to open doors to such educational providers and examining bodies, would also be a huge advantage. There may be many other non-pecuniary advantages the profile of such a prize would give.

I am realistic. There is probably a very good reason why my school has no computer games on the shelf. But how wonderful it would be if, one day, a young child would run up to me and say "Hi, sir. I really enjoyed the Grammar game last night!"?

ID: 1970-11 - Category: Education

Expand free child care to 1yr+

Add 3 more year groups to the state education system: Nursery 1 (1-2yrs), Nursery 2 (2-3yrs), and Nursery 3 (3-4yrs). School hours (9-3:30) would be free, and school meals would be provided for those eligible. Parents would just pay for hours needed outside of the 9-3:30 day, with the hourly rate being proportional to their earnings to keep it fair. Not everyone would want to put their children into nursery this early, so this additional care should be non-mandatory, but available to all parents who want to benefit from it. Single parents would then be able to focus more time on their careers, to increase income to support their families

while also increasing tax income to the government to offset the cost of providing this free care. Children in low socio-economic households would also benefit from better nutrition and more one to one time. It would also result in many children starting to read and write earlier than they otherwise would have done. This would put children on a more level playing field by the time they reach primary school. By supporting parents who want or need to get back to work sooner, and supporting the children of those parents to give them the best possible start in life, this would have a double pronged approach to boosting the prospects of people from lower income families, while boosting the economy at the same time.

Alongside this, employers could also be incentivised through the tax system to provision private day care for the children of their staff and neighbouring businesses to minimise the increased burden on the state. Larger employers could rent out surplus office space within their buildings (as a result of the inevitable post-pandemic shift to increased home working) to child care providers, allowing those companies to incorporate creche facilities into their employee benefits packages. This would be win win for employers keen to encourage staff to come into the office at least some of the time, and for staff looking for convenient child care support to be able to work to their full potential. It would promote closer bonds between staff that make friends through their children and help to promote a positive family friendly culture. As flexible working will inevitably be on the rise post-lockdown, promoting this use of vacant office space would also help to encourage companies to not downsize to smaller locations, helping to bolster the commercial real estate sector

ID: 1896-11 - Category: Education

Recognition of the Right to Language for all children, particularly to support Deaf children

Language Deprivation is a cruel and harsh reality for many deaf children. In the UK, 4 babies are born deaf each day, with 90% of these born to hearing parents with little to no knowledge of sign languages (NDCS).

When deaf children are not able to fully access either signed or spoken language they are faced with many lasting effects. ‘Cognitive delays, mental health challenges, lower quality of life, higher trauma, and limited health literacy’ are just a few of these, with evidence suggesting ‘permanent brain changes’ when children are not able to access any language fully during their

critical early years (Hall, 2017).

With access to sign language from the start Deaf children can thrive. I. King Jordan once famously stated 'Deaf people can do anything hearing people can do, except hear', however, when children are not afforded the basic human right of language, they are not able to fulfil their individual potential.

The rights of deaf children to signed language are not explicitly stated, and many people, including hearing parents, are not ever made aware of these concerns. The UN Rights of the Child (Article 19) explicitly state many examples of neglect, yet language deprivation is not mentioned once. The vital significance of signed communication is thus continuing to go unknown by many officials, parents and schools, and Deaf children are falling behind.

The Rights of the Child are thorough, sound, and undoubtedly beneficial. This cannot be denied. They are lacking in one key area, however – the Right to Language. Therefore, I present two calls to action:

1- Broaden or develop the Rights of the Child to include the Right to Language.

2- Broaden the description of 'neglect' as present in the Rights of the Child Article 19 documentation to include, explicitly, language deprivation.

Taking these steps will help to ensure that no Deaf child is left behind.

It is not simply desirable to see these changes - it is necessary. In 2021, it is surely embarrassingly negligent to continually overlook Deaf children in this manner. Where their right to language is overlooked, as it currently is for all children with no explicit documentation on the matter, the basis for support on a local level is non-existent. Movement from the bottom up must occur; change, support, and awareness from within UN Nation States and pressure from these spaces ensuring that no Deaf children are left in a life of silence simply by fact of birth.

ID: 169-11 - Category: Education

Homeschool

There are many areas of the country where Received Pronunciation is not the norm which could be alienating. Perhaps the regional stations could pre-record a story in their local accent; an actor to read a story and subtitles to be shown.

This model could be used when needed because of a pandemic or very poor weather conditions.

ID: 1883-11 - Category: Education

Distance Learning: A Core Educational Provision Addressing Urgent Learning Gaps and the Ongoing Achievement Deficit.

Distance Learning (“DL”) should be funded across all our primary and secondary schools. Essentially, the staffing and funding of this should be carried out by treating DL as an additional subject to be delivered through existing structures. For example, schools should establish DL leads, funded in the same way as subject or department leads. School collaborations and trusts should establish a dedicated DL role to support their schools and deliver DL efficiently depending on identified needs.

OVERALL PROGRAMME

- Design catch-up lessons for needs perceived by headteachers and class teachers. This could be carried out face-to-face for groups. Individuals, on the other hand, could use either live or recorded materials, depending on the available resources.

- Proactively help address the educational attainment gap by allowing extra tuition to be provided within the local education system. Again, this could be provided in groups or

individually, depending the nature of the identified need.

- Flexibly allow DL during the school day, weekends or holidays, where appropriate for individual pupils.
- Organise flexibly at school collaboration, trust and local authority level. Depending on demand, lessons may be more efficiently provided at local authority level, as dictated by numbers.
- Leverage best practices, based on shared lockdown experience. An approach to pooling knowledge will need to be developed. Local champions will need reach out to frontline staff, but well-constructed national questionnaires and follow-up materials would establish a common basis for discussion.
- Leverage use of nationwide or local materials as appropriate.
- Utilise the increased availability of laptops effectively. Properly funded broadband access and computer facilities at schools should be available to children without good access at home. These would need to be staffed and available out of hours.
- Subject to availability, encourage pupils to take modules electively. Ultimately some non-core subjects, such as foreign languages, could be provided via the DL platform.

SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES AND REQUIREMENTS

- Target the more serious education gaps arising from lockdown, as observed by teachers at the pupil level.
- Additional DL staff will be needed as front-line staff will not have the stretch capacity. These can work at the school or local authority/academy level as necessary.
- Could utilise: recently retired teachers and TAs; tech savvy volunteers; recent graduates considering the new employment landscape.
- Individual schools to set up or expand on-site access to PCs to address technology shortages at home.

LONG TERM BENEFITS

- Once the short-term bulge in resources required post pandemic subsides, there should be a steady-state provision of DL. This will:
 - Help address the persistent attainment gap.
 - Facilitate pupils with certain special needs to achieve an appropriate blend of distance and face-to-face learning as appropriate.

- Allow children who have fallen behind for any reason (such as ill-health or family disruption) to catch up in a timely fashion.
- Allow parents to select home learning times that suit their work schedules.
- Provide a core competency in home learning as contingency planning for future emergencies.

ANCILLARY BENEFIT

- The systemic approach to the inclusion of DL in our schools could generate a significant business opportunity to develop exportable brands of on-line teaching materials.
- Given the prevalence of English as a first or second language the potential customer base is clearly huge. Moreover, many countries will need to deal with similar post-covid educational issues to those we are facing here in the UK.
- This external business opportunity might be exploited to generate private sector investment in the development and provision of materials and other resources for use in UK schools.

ID: 1834-11 - Category: Education

Providing extra and a smoother transition support for disabled graduates seeking work.

Since leaving university in 2012 and 2018 with a BA in Politics and MA International Relations, as of 2021 I remain unemployed. This is despite applying for 2000 jobs and attending 200 interviews. Like 14.1 million other people in the UK, I am registered as having a disability and have found finding getting into paid work almost impossible. For those living with various disability, the process graduating university, is often more challenging, than their non-disabled peers. As they had to complete the same assignments whilst dealing with extra complications and burdens. But throughout school and university, many disabled people have received extra support in order to better manage these issues. Upon graduating this support is withdrawn and disabled people are left alone for the first time. As Young Powell (2019) supports "But rather than getting help to navigate these challenges, many disabled students experience a sudden drop-off in support during the time between graduating and entering the workplace." When students graduate, they may receive a normal careers interview, but no practical support and how to discuss, their disability or any reasonable adjustments. It is the first time no transition plan is place for that disabled person and many do not make the leap into employment and the effort, put in is wasted. As we hopefully leave the COVID-19 pandemic behind us and begin to rebuild the UK's workforce, maybe it is to examine how we can better support disabled graduates, getting into the work. Firstly, we need to ensure that a disability is not a barrier to getting a job. "A survey of 2,000 disabled people found that 51% of applications from disabled people result in an interview, compared with 69% for non-disabled applicants." Independent (2017) We need ensure that as many people as possible can use their skills and demonstrate their full potential. How do we achieve this and is it possible? By engaging with disabled people earlier, whilst there still undertaking, their studies in entirely possible to ensure a smoother transition into the workplace and make the process less daunting and more achievable. Most Students undertake periods of work experience, either, whilst in year 10 or at college. Why cannot this also be offered to university students, during their studies. Many universities offer students, with disabilities some sort of academic support whilst at university. The idea would be, by working with the learning support services at the university. The student would contact an employer in their field of study and set up a meeting/interview at the university or at their home university. Following this a meeting/interview, would take place with the student, and their university support team to discuss how to ensure, the placement is a success. The work experience program would take place during, parts of the Easter and Summer Holidays and allow students, to be fully supported, by a PA from the university but gain valuable experience of a professional environment. For the employer, I believe that these work placements would be a useful opportunity to better understand both, the needs and skills of disabled people once they graduate. By giving them a PA during the process, ensures that people with more complex disabilities such as Cerebral Palsy or Autism, gain something out of it, but still have a safety net around them as well, which help build confidence. Post-graduation, there need more assistance to ensure that disabled graduates, have both the qualifications and enough experience to fill

roles, for example project manager at a district council. At present, it's risky for employers to offer such a job and justify a reasonable adjustment to a disabled candidate, when someone without a disability is also applying. A supported graduate scheme for disabled people, may offer a better transition from university into work. The aim of these schemes would allow disabled graduates time to reduce their support and gain vital experience, in their chosen field without the pressure of going for a job alone for the first time. The scheme would last 6-12 months and be in the Graduates chosen field. By the end, the of scheme a jobseeker would have built up enough experience to be successful in future job interviews. Businesses also have a responsibility, to normalise disability and reduce some of the barriers people face into getting into work. One good thing to come out of the lockdown, is its proven possible for people to work effectively from home. This offers a unique opportunity for employers as it removes barriers of adapting workplaces for disabled people. So, in some cases, where a reasonable cannot be physically made a person can connect into the office via zoom and be supported from home. In general, more support for disabled workers would make the office more accessible. Some examples of this could be a business hiring several PA's, which disabled staff could utilise, for help with note taking at a meeting or on a phone call. Ensuring that better training is offered surrounding equipment such as Dragon dictate and reading equipment to assist a blind employee. Such equipment should be made more accessible to the workplace. Disabled people are just as capable and equally skilled as those without disabilities, however, often face insurmountable difficulties when entering the workplace. This change would have a positive impact on society as well. Firstly, it will unlock a vast bank of presentable untapped skills and afford dignity to thousands of disabled people. At present the government spend £10-£20,000 per disabled student for no reward the money is simply wasted, the talents and effort of the students are not utilised to their fullest. Finally, the change would have a impact on welfare spending, as although, in the short term, the government, may need to spend more, to support the graduate into work. Long term though it is a net gain, as this person will be a long-term contributor to the economy and therefore not seeking benefits such as Universal credit and ESA. So, it will cut costs. By £12000 a year.

ID: 1372-11 - Category: Education

Harness computer games to further education

There is a challenge in encouraging children to engage with on-line learning whilst they are easily attracted to on-line games.

Use the technology and the structure of the games to facilitate learning.

An example might be to include in the "football team management" game the need to

understand fractions, percentages and probabilities in choosing player purchases as a means to progress through the competency levels.

Teachers could be asked for suggestions for such components and independent educational auditors could provide reviews to parents on the degree to which a particular game fulfills this goal.

Anecdotal -

This idea came to me when I was training in a comprehensive and a pupil was too tired to do the classwork. He explained that he'd been playing football late at night - meaning the simulation game.

If he'd had to tackle some simple maths to progress he'd be highly motivated.

Later, teaching A level maths in a sixth form college, I found a student playing simulation pool or billiards on the computer and realised that the problems solved by the game were similar (but far more advanced) to what we were teaching and we had nothing like the quality of visual presentation. Apparently professional snooker players claimed you could learn aspects of ballistics including spin etc that would allow you to improve in the real game.

I approached the games developers and they said we could have the obsolescent software as it stood, no support, and do what we liked with it in education. I had a friend who lectured in IT at the University and asked him if they could modify the software for teaching purposes. His suggestion was to make it a 3rd year project, for which they'd probably need funding for a research assistant to supervise it. The principal of the college I worked at was happy for us teachers to provide input. We had already done similar work for the Science Museum for their on-line educational material.

I was set up to present the idea to a government funding agency to get the money for the research assistant and some recompense to the teachers. They thought it was a "goer" and wanted to set up a company to develop and market it. I would run it, they would provide an accountant etc. They would assist until it started making money.

I explained we only wanted the funding to get it done and then we'd give it to all the institutions teaching A level mechanics. Their response was that if it was free no-one would

value it.

I estimated the investment costs to develop and market it commercially and divided that by an estimate

of the number of establishments needing such a tool. Thinking further how difficult it was to get money from the maths department for such a purchase I decided it wasn't a good proposition.

I was encouraged to go to a presentation at Southampton University by a software company that had taken these ideas even further and could simulate seriously complicated mechanical systems. In the after talk discussion I rattled on to the presenter about the opportunities for A Level mechanics. He was quite tolerant and agreed but explained that they were overwhelmed with commercial applications, some of which were in computer games !

ID: 2029-11 - Category: Education

From Pandemic to Academic

The problem of rapidly increasing unemployment for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds and with reduced opportunities due to a lack of academic qualifications, is one of the key consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic. "From Pandemic to Academic," would offer those who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic, access a short, intense Bridging Module which, if passed, would provide them with the opportunity to apply for degree courses. The 12-week module would be taught by university tutors and offered onsite on university campuses. Participants would have access to university resources during the module, including libraries and 1:1 tutorials with their university tutor. The content of the module would be shaped around the lived-experiences of participants which would then be used to develop critical thinking and academic writing skills. The module would be taught at the equivalent of Level 4 so that students would have a clear understanding of academic expectations and gain insight into the potentially transformational impact of education. The fact that it would be taught in universities would mean that participants who had never considered Higher Education as an option, would be able to visualise themselves as students. The course would consist of lectures, discussions and academic writing activities. The course would be academically assessed on completion of 2 written assignments. Passing the course would be perceived as non-traditional access to higher education and allow participants to apply for degree courses. This would help to breakdown the "ivory-towered," image of higher education institutions and to develop self-belief and self-esteem in the students involved. If students did not choose to apply for university after the course, they would still have gained an academic level qualification which could be added to

their CV., enhancing employment opportunities. The groups on this module would need to be small (maximum 10 participants) to ensure that individual support can be provided and a positive relationships built between participants. . Intelligence and education are not synonymous , yet these two concepts are often confused in UK society and this creates barriers to social mobility. The newly unemployed often lose a sense of identity and self-worth but they have time to study and learn something new. "From Pandemic to Academic," would provide them with the opportunity to capitalise on the free time that they are currently experiencing and potentially re-shape their future. (This project has been developed successfully on a very small scale with those who have experienced homelessness and addiction).

ID: 2202-11 - Category: Education

Solutions to increase employment opportunities for the younger generation post-covid.

This issue is extremely complex so can't be solved by just one approach; therefore, I suggest that several ideas and proposals are needed to meet the overall solution. The aim is to encourage employers to employ more young people, by creating new opportunities and upskilling candidates, improving their future career prospects and employment chances in this unpredictable market.

My first proposal is to create a National Youth Taskforce. The basis of this idea is that there would be a nationwide scheme for matching 16–21-year-olds into voluntary work placements. This would be government funded. Placements could be offered in different employment sectors; e.g., education, healthcare, business and agriculture. Companies or services such as the NHS would offer unpaid work placements targeted at 16-21yr olds which would offer them invaluable work experience, training and provide references for future employment. This could be run via a centralised website, where you can apply for the voluntary work and view all the opportunities available in your area. This scheme could be advertised in schools, colleges and social media. A placement offered to everyone in the 16-21 age range to gain experience in a sector they are interested in. It could be particularly beneficial to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those who have never previously been employed.

In parallel, my second suggestion would be to implement free to access web-based training scheme, aimed at 16-21 yr olds. This could include offering nationally recognised qualifications, branded as a vocational qualification toolkit. For example, offering: First Aid courses, lifeguard qualifications (NPLQ), sports coaching, refereeing, and TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language) courses. These extra qualifications would be helping all young people (no matter their background) to develop/enhance their CVs with skills and training which will make them more

employable, and allow them to compete more effectively with older, more experienced job seekers. This scheme could build on the learning of Oak National Academy which was created during Covid. It offered free, high-quality educational lessons and resources throughout 2020/21 lockdown. There are nearly 10,000 free video lessons, resources and activities, covering most subjects, from Reception to Year 11. This demonstrates that large scale educational resources can be created and made accessible to all.

My third option is for Government to actively invest in youth job creation in emerging /future employment sectors, such as renewable energy, AI + technology, health and social care, recycling and waste management. The rate of these sectors expansion will be influenced by the UK's target of net zero emission by 2050. This target follows the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan to create and support 250,000 jobs whilst helping to eradicate our contribution to climate change. However, it's critical that these newly emerging sector jobs are accessible to the youth. This could be achieved by encouraging apprenticeships, perhaps creating government-subsidised 'ring-fenced roles' exclusively for '1st time employees', similar to the '1st time buyers' concept, to help them get on the employment ladder. This idea may be seen as controversial, as it may be seen as discriminatory by some, but could act as a safety net and prevent long term unemployment growing in the younger generations.

A final comment, is that the challenge of youth unemployment is not just a UK issue and other solutions could be found outside the UK – looking at how other countries manage this, and adapting and implementing any successful schemes here in the UK. This was explored by The Economist, in an article 'How to make a social safety net for the post-covid world'. It suggests "Governments need to find mechanisms that cushion people more effectively against income shocks and joblessness without discouraging work, or crushing economic dynamism". The article used the example of Denmark, which spends large sums –1.9% of GDP in 2018- on retraining and on advising the jobless. This high level of Government expenditure could be effective, as Danish youth unemployment fell to 10.5 % in 2018, well below the EU average of 15.2 %. The Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment states that these lower levels of youth unemployment are related to "an active labour market policy which has been developed over the past decades. It is based upon early intervention and a widespread use of mandatory activation (participation in skills and vocational retraining), especially for young people. In addition, interventions are in place that target young people who are inactive on the labour market but who are not yet registered as unemployed." It would be good to explore this further, as well as, looking globally for other effective solutions.

To conclude, in my view, the Covid crisis has increased the urgency to provide the UK's youth with adequate opportunities to gain vital skills, work experience and access to employers. By

targeting 16-21yr olds, in or out of full-time education, with free training, volunteering placements and new emerging sector job roles, this will help qualify and motivate our youth and create a domino effect of more and better employment opportunities, helping to reduce record youth unemployment levels, exacerbated by this pandemic.

ID: 2015-11 - Category: Education

Ignite English in the classroom

The teaching of English at secondary school has a content problem: students think they speak it well enough on arrival and, nowadays, don't bother reading it much because there is always a screen around. Writing by hand is a drag. If we teachers don't beef up our offer then some demagogue is going to take us all giggling to hell. We need to rethink the substance: what is going to separate our students (65% of whom will work in jobs which don't exist yet) from the robots currently gobbling up manual jobs and already snapping at office work? English must use its pre-eminence in the curriculum to take the lead in fostering human-centric, non-cognitive skills to suit the innovation-economy and instil a love of lifelong learning. This century will see workers reskilled and upskilled several times but they need pre-skilling at school not skewered with off-the-peg PowerPoints and dry assessments designed to satisfy data managers, senior managers and school inspectors. First, we teachers, who should be trying to spot their students' spark, must retain our own against the deskilling effect of being told what to deliver in the classroom, teaching to the next assessment and recommending reductionist revision materials from Pearson and co, designed to strong-arm our students through to the ultimate goal, GCSE. In the face of such joyless pressures, most schools are unable to provide meaningful Continuing Professional Development for us teachers because that directed time is now monopolised by data-tracking of underperforming exam candidates, safeguarding updates and behaviour management systems. There is no time for reflective discussion of our subject-specific pedagogy which we can only get at teacher training college unless, as is now the norm, it is somehow to be absorbed on the job with some twilight tuition (more PowerPoints!). What are we English teachers educating children to become? Units of economic activity, filled with facts, ticked off with high-stakes summative testing or (here's hoping) creative, resilient beings who can adapt to the massive change already rolling in? Just as the Silicon Valley bosses discourage their own children from early-life tech, just as Chinese yuppies are eschewing the arid Communist educational offer in favour of Steiner and Montessori, just as the Forest School movement offers an alternative to toxic childhood in the UK, so the mainstream needs to think outside the bog standard maintained sector box. Only then will we English teachers stop sending so many students off who see no further point in our subject, turned off forever and offered up to the snake-oil persuaders and the fake news merchants. Oracy is vital in this cause but it cannot be inspired by technology. Flat screens make flat lessons. Discussion, debate and effective

presentation have to be taught, much more creatively, in English classrooms where students must consciously develop their talk – and their listening – especially post-COVID which has spawned such anxiety and diffidence. We need to facilitate oracy, not with our own talk from the front but by creatively pushing students to speak and listen to each other. Phil Beadle, the super-teacher who sees literacy as ‘the road to human progress’, declares oracy to be ‘the most fundamental and important skill’ while former English teacher Geoff Barton, now representing 20,000 school leaders, describes the ‘intangible richness of the way speaking and listening underpins and enables learning in the classrooms of great teachers. It’s not something we see often enough.’ Because, in our schools, we all know oracy remains stifled and undervalued by both students and staff. Of course there is class discussion but we are encouraged to manage it through questioning which only engages the hands-up minority (probably those same students who did the worksheets spewed out in the first lockdown) and allows others to rest up, attracting no attention (or learning) towards themselves, just like the overwhelming number of online lurkers in this last lockdown. Even if we are allowed to engender aerosolic discussion again, it may still be no more than gossipy larking because even the most obliging students do not truly care about this stuff: in the end, they know speaking and listening will bring them no marks at GCSE although they still have to submit some oracy evidence – the ultimate lip service. Interpersonal skills which will sharpen the remaining human edge (presenting, collaborating, reasoning, critically thinking, persuading, negotiating, and empathising), these need to be what we ignite. Curiosity about communication styles and the words they employ can be set alight with explicit teaching of vocabulary (especially to reluctant readers) and playfulness with language can be planted with everything from etymology to palindromes, through anagrams, jargon-busting and cliché-spotting all the way to Victorian word-games and that ear-ringed playwright. If our wordy students can be led to enjoy manipulating language, they are much less likely to be manipulated. And in their own writing our students must be given the chance for an audience beyond exercise books which are insufficiently reflected upon before being thrown away. Here technology can provide personalised support according to need, building writing skills and technical accuracy. But then they must be allowed to flex their words (preferably in much longer form without unwriterly time constraints) and see their impact far and wide through creative publishing and social media. As readers they must be guided through the brilliant YA fiction now available – and yet not often advertised in schools effectively. In addition to the classic diet, they need to be tipped much more into this contemporary literature and poetry which reflects their experience to build empathy, diversity and cultural awareness. Students who say they don’t read must be found the right book by skilful and well-informed librarians who are valued as central to the school. English classrooms and the spaces around them have to become creative cauldrons bubbling with a very different teaching magic. We must reward our students with a reformed approach towards a progressive GCSE so students are ready for and excited about going on with their more effectively communicated lives.

ID: 491-11 - Category: Education

How to build a register of 'qualified' volunteers to help tutor with homeschooling.

As identified in section 1, there is a great opportunity to capitalise on the willingness of individuals to help the community. This would be achieved by utilising the vast pool of knowledge and experience held by recently retired teachers to help tutor children in home-schooling, whilst they are in isolation at home, when their schools are closed.

However, the missing aspect of utilising this resource is a system whereby the willingness of an individual to help is captured, and how the skills that they are offering can be matched to the need for home tutoring for a particular child.

The solution to providing the above is a relatively simple solution to build. Using the internet to provide a platform (website), it would be possible for volunteers to register their willingness to provide support to children and for parents to 'search' for an individual that is willing to provide support for that child.

The platform would allow a volunteer to register their experience, specific areas (subjects) that they are able to provide support for and the number of hours support that they are willing to provide. Parents would be able to search and match suitably qualified tutors, for their children.

On going, retiring teachers could be encouraged to register on the site and details on how to do this could be included as part of the retirement packs that may be provided to teachers or even included as part of any 'retirement training' should it exist for teachers. However, a campaign to launch the scheme would be needed by the Government, similar to the campaign to recruit retired nurses, so that the scheme can gain some impetus.

As well as providing the capability to register one's willingness to volunteer, it would be possible to store supporting materials on the same platform, such as teaching materials, so that tutors could plan and deliver education, in the same way that they might have done in their careers. The platform could also incorporate the means of delivering such lessons using such applications as 'Microsoft Teams' or 'Zoom'. Of course this would need to be subject to the agreement of those companies, but they might be willing to provide those services 'free of charge' for such a worthwhile objective.

The solution proposed has the beauty of being scalable. It can be provided merely on an informal basis where it is merely a 'meeting forum' to bring Ex-Teachers and parents together. It

can be expanded to provide supporting materials that can be shared across the platform or it can have a more formal structure where there is a degree of external management and control.

Whatever level of formality is built into the system, the IT awareness that would be needed by volunteers is likely to be a skill that they already possess from their teaching careers, whilst a by product of the pandemic has meant that parents (and even grand parents) are now much better educated in IT matters.

Of course, volunteering does not need to be constrained to retired teachers. There is scope for university language students to provide support to GCSE and A-Level students, having the added advantage of tutors supporting their peers. There is even scope to build such volunteering into the courses of university language students or even as part of teacher training courses.

There is probably one major objection to the above solution, which involves the matter of the safeguarding of children. Any person teaching or providing classroom assistance in school must pass an 'Enhanced DBS check'. Whilst there is no legal obligation for a private tutor to undergo a DBS check, there have been calls for this to be made a legal requirement of a private tutor.

Although it may be possible to launch the above solution on an 'informal basis' and address the matter of 'safeguarding children' by including a 'No liability statement', it is felt that some degree of protection should be built into the site by only allowing tutors to register if they provide or apply for an enhanced DBS check, if they do not possess such a certificate. The tutor's details would not be 'visible' to parents on the site until their DBS approval had been confirmed or that their DBS application had been approved.

Certainly, if the solution was adopted by the government or by any commercial organisation, then DBS approval would be insisted upon. However, it would not be a major issue to build in an application and approval process as part of the process of registering as a volunteer.

A barrier to the success of the scheme might be the availability of laptops for those children where such support is most needed i.e. for children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Whilst not part of this submission, it is felt that there is a further untapped opportunity where there a large number of old laptops in the community that are gathering dust but which could be refurbished and distributed at relatively low costs. Similarly, businesses frequently upgrade their laptops and could be encouraged to donate old laptops to such a charity.

There are, of course, commercial spin off's that might result from the launch of such a platform. Such a platform would be a prime site to sell advertising space, particularly for companies

involved in the supply of educational material. Care would need to be taken to ensure that the presence of advertising does not degrade the usage of the site but is mentioned as it does begin to address the issue of 'funding' for such a site.

To conclude, the suggestion contained here does not need to be utilised only during pandemic times. It could also be used alongside the delivery of normal education, in 'normal' times. It would help to emphasise the message that it is good to give back to the community, not just during pandemics but at all times.

ID: 175-11 - Category: Education

Widening of the HMRC R&D tax credit mechanism to encompass creative development

All creative development involves risk. Whether in video game development, a play script, a new rap artist. Yet this is not the sort of risk that banks, VCs or the City are prepared to invest in as it is 'unproven', 'risky', with uncertain outcomes.

Investment is generally made by the creators themselves, small companies, by trusts and grants. For many it is a hand-to-mouth existence. Even for relatively successful tv or film production companies, the risk they carry as they develop new projects or tv formats pitching them to large rights-grabbing platforms can take them to the brink of closure.

However we already have a system which works exceptionally well to support technology innovation, that could easily be extended to support innovation across the creative sector. HMRC R&D Tax Credits rebate or credit any business up to 33% of the spend on innovation involving the development of unique technology solutions for their business - whether they are successful or not. The Tax Credit system covers research, materials, development, overheads etc that relate to that technological research and innovation.

It has been successfully applied by countless companies to a wide range of projects in all sectors. It is a recognised system with a support infrastructure of accountants funded by retaining a percentage of successful R&D Tax Credit applications.

To extend this system to cover creative idea development for games developers and other screen based industries, to support idea development in our dance houses or theatres, to enable designers to innovate within their consultancies without having to continually rely on a 'work for hire' model could drive a tsunami of innovation that positively impact Britain and the world.

We already have the top two creative schools as voted by their global peers in the University of the Art London and the Royal College of Art. By unlocking a wider ability within the creative economy to explore new models, new ideas it allows the creative sector to continue to lead the world post pandemic.

This model would have the additional benefit of helping creators to own and retain more of their Intellectual Property - a driver of growth and value within this sector. And would encourage greater investment in idea development from third party investors - particularly if the R&D Tax Credit could be mirrored in their accounts.

The other benefit of this proposal is that by extending a mechanism that is already in place would be relatively easy and cost effective. It is light touch yet would be seen as supporting an enormous sector of the economy who has been badly affected by the pandemic.

ID: 1888-11 - Category: Education

The UK education system and how it is failing students and society

Whether it's transport, medicine or leisure, the modern world would be almost unrecognisable to a Victorian. However, there is one exception- education. If a Victorian were to walk into a modern classroom they would notice very little change. How is it that the key cog in society that prepares the next generation for adulthood and determines whether a country will prosper or falter has gone unchanged for a century? Instead we have a high-pressure environment that forces teens into depression, fails to provide the skills required for working life and enough key workers and reinforces inequality. This failure to innovate education is one of the country's

greatest issues, yet it could be easily fixed. One of the greatest problems facing the UK is obesity. According to the UN ¼ of British adults are obese (with many more being deemed overweight) and obesity levels in the UK have more than trebled in the last 30 years and more than half the population could be obese by 2050. One of the contributing factors is a reduction in sport participation. It's a school's responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of its pupils, including their physical health. Therefore, I suggest that sport should feature far more prominently in education. Teenagers should be doing at least 10 hours of sport a week. Not only does it make them happier and healthier but it's been scientifically proven to enhance their education. Furthermore, more needs to be done to encourage younger children to start sports early and not to drop them in their teens as this is the root cause of the fall in participation. Arguably the greatest issue facing children is their deteriorating mental health. The proportion of children experiencing a mental disorder has increased from one in nine in 2017 to one in six in July 2020. That is ridiculously high. Whilst increased sport participation would do a lot to reduce these numbers it wouldn't eradicate mental health issues. The pressures placed on children by school contribute massively to these issues. For instance, A level students often exceed the legal working hours. It is therefore no wonder we have a mental health crisis. What the government needs to do is reduce time wasted studying old plays and instead focus on ensuring every child leaves school with the skills required to live in the adult world. For example, every child should leave school with a full understanding of sexual health, taxes, voting, survival skills, etc. Without these key life skills many children make mistakes that have serious repercussions such as teenage pregnancy or falling into debt. These issues have a knock on effect all across society and reinforce poverty and inequality. Therefore, the introduction of a life skills subject would be invaluable. It would lead to more rounded children who are better equipped to succeed in the adult world. Furthermore, the requirement for children to learn Shakespeare and Pythagoras when it provides no benefit for them outside of better grades is archaic and a serious waste of money and time. Very few adults outside of engineering or architecture have ever used Pythagoras. Why not reform the whole curriculum so that it's better geared to producing useful workers, rather than textbook worshippers. This would go a long way towards fixing the UK's productivity puzzle which leads to lower wages and longer working hours. If this problem was rectified people would be happier and richer. Examples of potential reforms include focusing on: reading and professional writing skills, not memorising Shakespeare, making Stem subjects appropriate for engineers and doctors (they should be optional for those not wishing to go into STEM work), climate change and where Solihull is, not the rock cycle. Furthermore, art, music and DT should be optional for pupils who have no interest but for those that are should be encouraged to continue the subjects all the way through their education rather than dropping them at GCSE because they are tedious and excessively difficult. These measures would lead to a diversification of the curriculum and far better participation, as work would be more meaningful and engaging. It would also lead to more creativity and innovation which would

benefit the country massively as both the economy and culture would flourish. Unfortunately, schools reinforce inequality due to massive variations in the quality of education, leading to some of the country's brightest students languishing in poverty ridden schools with few passionate teachers. However, there are some very easy fixes. The government should run one exam board, remove higher and lower papers to stop the capping of talented students and no class should go untaught (especially those taking exams). However, the most necessary reform is the improvement in the quality of teaching. For instance, in Finland almost every teacher has a Master's degree and they are expected to provide high quality teaching because they are paid a fair wage for the amount of work they do and their importance in preparing the next generation. Therefore, the government must raise teacher's salaries in order to attract the best candidates. However, teachers should be closely monitored, with those failing to meet standards being sacked. This shouldn't be done by analysing league tables but by asking children whether their education has been enriched and tracking progression. Moreover, teachers teaching less able students should be especially commended for improving students, even if they don't achieve top grades. The government should set high standards for everyone and should refuse to allow pupil to be left behind. If these reforms were implemented, not only would inequality be reduced but every pupil would benefit and society would be provided with capable workers who are able to work in more challenging and financially rewarding sectors. Whilst the current education system is in a dire state, this could be easily be rectified with a few simple tweaks. They would benefit society massively and provide a platform to rebound from lockdown and rebuild the economy as a centre for innovation at the forefront of technology and science, rather than a backwater.

ID: 1756-11 - Category: Education

Converting Student Activism into Student Action

Summary:

Young people want to push forward the fight against climate change, but are struggling to achieve change. The government should help them achieve change and learn about the practical difficulties of doing so by creating a competition for universities to achieve net-zero status, with students at the fastest universities rewarded with debt-forgiveness.

Policy:

Climate change has risen to become one of the big political issues of the day, especially for young people whose futures will most be affected by the consequences of a warming planet.

Pupils in schools and students in universities have walked out of their studies to protest against climate change and demand action, and there is growing frustration among young people in Britain. Young people should be given more encouragement and support to bring about the changes they wish to see with regard to the movement of the UK economy to net zero status and to better understand the practical challenges of doing so.

A simple way to help achieve this is to run a competition for students to make their universities net zero as soon as possible.

Universities conduct and publish the research showcasing the threat of climate change and are home for more than 2 million students a year in the UK, yet they are not yet net zero themselves. They are therefore an obvious location to start the shift to net zero.

To encourage such a change and show that the government is serious about tackling climate change, the government should run a nationwide competition to challenge students to make their universities net zero as quickly and effectively as possible (ideal in Scope 1,2 and 3 emissions, but at the very least in both Scope 1 and 2 emissions).

To incentivise such a transition and to show how the intelligent use of financial markets and demand pressures can help achieve social and environmental change, the government should offer to cancel all student debt of British undergraduate students enrolled at the time the first university achieves net zero status.

The second and third universities to achieve the goal should have half of the student debt of British undergraduate students enrolled at the time cancelled, and students at any university that achieved net zero within 12 months would have £10,000 of debt forgiven to incentivise rapid change at all universities.

By way of example, if the first university to achieve net zero status had 5,000 UK undergraduate students enrolled at the time, the full 3 years of student debt of those students would be written off by the government.

Such a scheme would create a bold and powerful project to effect change in the country and show the challenges and opportunities of transitioning to a low carbon economy.

It would also show that fighting climate change can be profitable; students could get upwards of £50,000 of debt written off. Since most student debt is written off eventually anyway, the cost to government would not be that large, yet the impact on the drive for net-zero could be significant.

Bold action is required to fight the global threat of climate change, and young people who are passionate about the issue need to be given more support to empower them to drive the change to a low carbon economy as well as an insight into the practical challenges of achieving such change.

This proposal would offer clear financial incentives for students to drive change and help showcase the way forward for the country at large. Perhaps most interestingly of all, even students who were climate change sceptics would be incentivised to push their university to net

zero to benefit from debt forgiveness.

The fight against climate change has focused too much on moral calls and not enough on engaging people's self interest. This proposal would help to show the value of engaging that self-interest to drive change.

As the saying goes, 'there is only one green issue everyone agrees on; the more Greenbacks in their pockets, the better'.

ID: 1518-11 - Category: Education

Introduce finance into mainstream education

Currently Maths GCSE, as I understand it, does not include basic finance (e.g mortgages, credit cards, loans etc), however it does include subjects that most people are unlikely to need (e.g quadratic equations).

My proposal is that we split Maths into two subjects so we have

1) "basic" maths which would be mandatory and includes the basic elements of the current maths curriculum, removes the more "exotic" material which is only really needed if you wanted to progress in maths, science, engineering..., but now includes material relating to (personal) finance

2) "additional" maths which would be optional and would contain the more "exotic" material required for those who want to progress in maths, science, engineering. This could now contain more of this type of material than currently in the maths curriculum.

This split is perhaps similar to that currently in English where English language is mandatory and English literature is optional.

The above would provide all children with a level of education in finance.

The “basic” maths would be more relevant to the children taking it perhaps making them more engaged with that subject.

The “additional” maths should be able to provide more education in the slightly more “exotic” areas of maths which would make those pupils better prepared for the maths in the related subjects. And as only pupils wanting this subject would take it, there might be an improved level of engagement in those lessons.

ID: 968-11 - Category: Education

21st Century Conscription

A Caring Conscription - as in National Service. Give young adults a start in life with plenty of choice to ensure that they are all contributing to society. Give them responsibilities that they can be proud of.

After school or University, unemployment should not be an option. If young adults haven't something tangible to move on to, they should be enlisted for National Service and learn key skills.

For the 21st Century, Conscription should provide them with a choice.

The NHS could gain a whole workforce to train up. As could our social services.

We should include the option of our Army, Navy and Air Force. We can look to English Heritage, the National Trust and Farming to have more people conserve, preserve and plant trees.

We could even revamp the BBC and turn it into a world-class youth-focussed media covering local journalism and helping provide resources to local newspapers. Change it to a training organisation that feeds talent into the commercial world. It can become the University of drama, film-making, journalism and online skills.

I am seeing young adults as an asset to society that should not be wasted on the dole. Instead, they can learn from their time in National Service and contribute to society. Just like others going to University, it should be a rewarding experience for them and a benefit to Britain.

Let's take time to think through our needs and join some dots!

ID: 196-11 - Category: Education

Teaching teachers to teach children how to learn and increase confidence together.

You will have to recognise that no country has had to deal this problem before, and that there is very little value in depending on past practice that has left millions of our youngsters, more millions in other countries, utterly unable to help themselves. Provide me with support and a video studio and I can make a series of short programmes explaining to all those millions how to learn for life. US Professor Shaughnessy, once titled his interview with me: 'A prophet ignored in his own a land', having discovered, from the Upton Sinclair award above, that my approach has been taught to student mathematics teachers in the University of Mercer in Georgia for the nearly twenty years, and they are now proving amongst the longest tenured school teachers in the United States. "You remember what you've been telling us," the eleven-year-old told me one day, or rather whispered, after asking to speak to me alone. A little nervously, I agreed that he could. "about reading aloud; then asking ourselves, 'What does this mean?'" I admitted that I did. "Well," his voice now trembled, as he was imparting the secret of World Peace, as, indeed, it might be, "I've discovered, it works with other subjects!" * "You taught me how to learn for just one year, but I honestly think it was the most influential and formative teaching experience I ever had. You were the first - and possibly only, actually - teacher to make me feel like it was totally fine not to understand something, and in fact to treat it more as your failing than mine if I didn't. I remember one time I was trying to explain (completely unselfconsciously) something mathematical I didn't understand, and you were trying to explain it to me - and eventually you said 'It's extraordinary. It's like there's a glass wall between us and I can see you but can't get through to you.' What was really extraordinary, though, was that because of the ethos you'd

built in class, your kind, thoughtful, un-patronising manner, it didn't even occur to me to take offence. Usually inclined to beat myself up for 'not getting' things, my level of trust in you was such that I just treated it as interesting, rather than something to worry about. I wish more teachers were like you. Josie. * Towards the end of my final year, the classroom door opened during a lesson, and two tall young men stood there. The darker of the two wore black, with a gold chain at the neck. The taller, dressed less dramatically, was a blond colossus. I had known them as boys. "Come back in twenty minutes, lads", I told them, and they left. They were back in twenty minutes and I invited them to address the class: starting with their names. "Right" began the dark one. "My name is William Anastasiadis. I'll spell that for you: "A-N-A-S-T-A-S-I-A-D-I-S!" The class sat as if petrified. "And this," he turned to point at me, "is the best teacher we ever had." His silent companion nodded solemnly. Then they left. * "Keep writing to us, Mr H. The life, the strength, the harshness, the hope and the fear all comes through." Antonella. * "Your words always provoke thought to the point where one could almost reach for painkillers. You are far too clever. You really do have superhuman intelligence." Julie * "Throughout my life I was always the new kid, the bad kid, or in some cases, the dumb kid. But in a few people's eyes, I was just a kid that needed a bit of extra support. Your efforts and kind nature had a great impact on me at a young age and, while I never did become any good at mathematics, it is deeply appreciated." Romain. * When I returned some weeks later to collect my precious bottle of Phlogiston from the classroom cupboard, I found that some of the juniors, judged by their writing, had left their reward on the patch of exposed plaster beside my old classroom door. Mr Hannaford Walking Dictionary of Kindness. * 'Paulo Freire wrote: "Education will not change the world; it will change the people who will change the world". We teachers have the power to change the world because we change lives. The wonderful experience you had is exceptional because only a few have the privilege. You decided to change your life from soldier to teacher. Among all possibilities you chose the most difficult and also the one that would allow you to help change the world in a real way. Why did you choose to be a teacher? Did you choose it or were you chosen? I began my journey through in the field of education at the age of 17 and I have always heard "we must train critical and reflective, supportive, intelligent citizens" but you were the only one who told me HOW to do it and also from the discipline that has always meant discrimination and individualism. It is extraordinary! How many students have you had? How many lives have you changed? You have taught them to think and live together, to be better people and better citizens and this implies that they did not only improve themselves but also their closer contexts. You taught them to be better human beings through conscious, deliberate and individual evolution. You did not just change your students' lives; you have continued changing lives because you cared about writing and spreading your ideas. Only this year there are 130 new teachers who know how maths must be worked to train better citizens because of YOU, even if they have never heard or seen you, you taught them how to change the world. Each of those 130 people will teach hundreds of children

throughout their lives; do you realise the multiplier effect? You have no idea how much we all owe you. Professor V.A.Q. Batallanos, U. Malaga, Espagne.

ID: 87-11 - Category: Education

A possible way forwards for the curriculum in schools?

Examine each subject and look at what is really needed - for example Mathematics. It is deemed a gold standard qualification and a measure of ability - it is SO dependent upon the quality of the classroom teacher - too many students have been completely turned off the subject and fail because of poor maths teaching - I have seen it too many times as a Secondary Headteacher. So decide that not everyone needs Maths as a qualification and make it an optional subject. However, make Arithmetic compulsory for all - so we can all calculate roughly how much flooring we might need or whether a special offer is indeed that. Make it practical and fun. Be brave and allow some youngsters to leave school at 14 - support them with day release courses to raise their skill levels. That might keep more teachers in the classroom because dealing with the disaffected is an increasing problem and impacts upon those students in the same class who really want to learn. Offer equivalence for practical qualifications or courses - for example Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme - bronze is worth 2 GCSE, Silver is 3 and Gold is 5. Offer the D of E now - as something for students to start during this current lockdown. Get 16 year olds involved in Community Service - again accredit. Value the courses that enable young people to develop - to work as a team, to care for others, to understand that with rights come responsibilities. Give them information but teach them how to use it - to question what they are reading - apply it to new situations - we won't find the real thinkers we need for the future if we continue to force every child to be shaped by the past!

ID: 1376-11 - Category: Education

A shift in education

So, how do we protect ourselves from those who rely on for such a large part of our lives? Paradoxical, isn't it? Well, as a pupil myself I propose a simple yet effective change in the school curriculum. Allow me to explain: I am coming towards the end of my time at school, and writing this has made me realise the fact that I have never seriously been taught about the caution that we should exercise when using any media. That's insane! Most schools in the United Kingdom operate PSHE schemes of some degree. I appreciate that for schools in different circumstances this may vary, but to my understanding it is written in law that schools have to provide some form of education regarding the wider world. There is an opportunity flashing at us right here and this is our opportunity to fight back against the bureaucracy. Here's what I propose; The UK government should team up with organisations who specialise in fact checking, ensuring free

speech and other critical parts of the media. This 'task force' as you like would work together to produce a PSHE media education scheme. This could be a 4 hour course comprised of 4 30-minute modules which look to tackle the 4 key areas of media awareness: Module 1 - what is media manipulation and how it affects you more than you realise Module 2 - censorship, facts and mass communication Module 3 - how you can look out for media manipulation Module 4 - how you can report media manipulation (big issue here, I'll come onto it!) So, what would each module contain? Well, the general principle is that the first 10-15 minutes would be a video produced by the government and the last 15-20 minutes would be a discussion, exercise, or whatever medium of teaching feels appropriate. Module 1 - this is the most important module. Students need to be made aware of the threat they face when using any form of media online. I don't want to spend ages diving into stats, but it's clear that a large proportion of children in the United Kingdom use social media on a daily basis. The government could create an animated film talking about the media and the caution that young people should exercise. There are great stories here that teachers could use; one that springs to mind the story of Edward Bernays and his bacon company. I won't use my word count on this story, but it's a great read and says a lot about media and its potential. Module 2 - this module I think would prove to be the most interesting. I think a lot of people jump on the 'freedom of speech' boat at any opportunity they can find. I would love to see a programme put together showing examples of mass censorship in the past or even the present (cough cough, American leaders, cough cough, Indian farmers). It worries me immensely that the media can terminate accounts as quickly as they can create them. I think this would worry a lot of young people too, losing all of their materialistic likes and followers in a heartbeat at the will of one person. Facts too! Politicians often aim their campaigns at winning the younger generations, but whether they are on the left or right, they are human and are prone to the odd lie. Reading this you probably think I'm defending the old American president but 20,000+ lies later, it's understandable. I think this would prove to be a great debate amongst younger people. Is it ethical to censor for the greater good? Module 3 - this module proves to be worth the most in educational value and is the whole point of the programme. Children need to be aware of when they're being manipulated. Again, this is as simple as knowing which websites to trust, how to verify true information, etc. These are all teachable skills. These are necessary skills. Module 4 - this module is the most important to me. Recently, it has become a common occurrence for footballers to be subject to racism via social media. Now, how is this linked to media control? Well, if the media truly took this problem seriously, they would make it 'high-risk, low-reward' to be racist online. I think this will eventually happen. Creating an account on social media should be a rigorous process where there are serious consequences for poor behaviour. Now, whether this change happens or not is up to the media, but what we can do is educate. Children need to be taught that they can't hide behind social media accounts and that there will always be serious consequences. This will help root out racism in our society as well. Two birds with one stone! Ok, to summarise. The UK

government needs to take this issue seriously, and this pandemic has certainly made me take it more seriously. A simple 4 hour PSHE course could be introduced which would provide educational benefit not just about media, but about many other walks of life too. It should be professional, politically neutral and engaging. The government would need to work with educators (as they are with the A Levels currently) to find out what would be best. I was about to hit submit. But I need to add this: Writing this has me ask myself a bigger question. We need to ask ourselves as citizens of the UK, does the government actually favour media manipulation. Even if this is a great idea, maybe it wouldn't make it to the desk of a senior politician because it would be at their detriment for society to realise the power they have through media. Makes me wonder. Want to end with a quote from Tacitus which sums up this thought, "if you would know who controls you, see who you may not criticise." It's funny because this also affects my chances of winning this competition, the power of the person reading this.

ID: 2283-11 - Category: Education

Creating a re-skilling scheme will help Britain build back faster and better (UK Skills Programme).

The pandemic has reinforced that a 'job for life' may not be a possibility and we need to be flexible to adapt to the changing landscape - there is an opportunity for workers to train in skills for new jobs. As millions of people across the UK are on furlough, or have been made redundant, creating a tailored job re-skilling scheme would be a solution to tap into the resource pool of individuals that are at home and struggling to find work and support them - a UK Skills Programme.

The UK Skills Programme would require the government to find as many of the pool of people affected by unemployment and create a central register of this pool. The government can use information from local councils and utility companies to find the businesses that have been shut down and those employees affected from unemployment, to create this central register of people who are eligible to be re-trained. Using this data, the UK Skills Programme would set up a training scheme for those who are unemployed or on furlough, to learn new skills in growth industries, such as in robotics, and technology (data science, AI) as an example. This opportunity presents a potential for having a large pool of people eligible and ready for retraining at the same time.

This skills programme could be set up as a new unit as part of the Department of Work and Pensions under 'Retraining/Reskilling Unit' focused on promoting Britain post-Brexit and ensuring that the talent and pool of resources is fully used to the benefit of the whole country.

A central online forum can be set up where profiles of the retained pool of talent are advertised and make it easier for companies to know that these people are retrained and seeking employment. To finance this scheme, the government can use state funds, instead of paying employers to subsidise their employees' salaries on the furlough scheme. The most cost-efficient model for the scheme will have to be researched.

The programme would be run by industry/business leaders who can work with companies to design the courses. The government can pay universities and colleges to run the courses. The training would be a mix of online training and physical in-person training (when the situation allows it in), and the training would be split into different specialist streams to segment those according to their qualifications and aptitude. In order to apply to the scheme, individuals would have to take an aptitude and interest test to work out how best their skills can be used, and is not based on any prior academic background or university degrees. Individuals would be paid a universal amount to retrain and help them get jobs. The government would give the necessary subsidies to them, like an apprenticeship until an individual is ready to find a new job. For those who have a specific interest in continuing working in a job sector or industry or have prior experience working in it, there will be an option to gain an enhanced skill training in that sector, so that they can improve their skills and qualifications.

This skills scheme would be like employment schemes introduced in Singapore, providing skills support to the employees that have been hard hit by the pandemic. Benefits for trainees would include a monthly training allowance for the duration of the programme (up to 6,8 and 12 weeks, depending on the nature of the workstream/skill set), flexibility to leave the programme should trainees gain employment before the end of the programme and a fully paid course fee with the materials provided for them. This scheme would be eligible for all British residents who have the rights to work in the UK, over 16 and are seeking employment. Benefits for companies to incentivise them to hire trainees from the UK Skills Programme would include for ages 40 and below can receive 20% salary support for 6 months. Employers who hire trainees age 40 and

over can receive 40% salary support for 6 months, as an example.

Upon completion of the programme, individuals will achieve a government accredited certification which is nationally recognised by employers: 'UK Skills Programme Diploma'. In order to ensure that individuals complete the course, there will be stop gaps put in place, such as requiring a short test/presentation reviews on the module, which has to be completed in order to progress further in the course and training sessions.

Mass-training has the potential opportunity for individuals to have a skills refresh, undergo enhanced training and support Britain's 'build back better' initiative. In the same way that the COVID-19 vaccine movement was rolled out at an increased speed, academia, government and the business sector should collaborate and work together to come up with the best plan to structure this scheme, that is designed to fulfil jobs in a centralised system. When creating the scheme, the government should talk to employers, individuals and research the growing and emerging industries (fintech, robotics, Artificial Intelligence) to see what skills are needed and where the gaps in resource are, to appropriately design training to fill these gaps.

The scheme aims to expand job, traineeship, and skills training opportunities to support workers in Britain affected by the economic impact of COVID-19. This idea can be a better way of getting the economy back on its feet faster and reducing the social and economic impact of job redundancy by utilising the resource pool of millions of people across the UK who are available and looking for jobs.

As the Prime Minister said in his speech on the anniversary of the first national lockdown "education is the biggest priority for the country." The chance to learn and gain new skills could open doors to opportunities, for those who have been affected by job losses and economic hardship. The future depends on education and retraining a workforce that has the right skills to enable Britain to be a business hub and trading partner in a post-pandemic world.

ID: 1801-11 - Category: Education

Reforming Higher Education

Summary:

A two-part proposal for the overhaul of higher education. The first part seeks to create highly prestigious 1-year undergraduate courses to improve the quality and relevance of undergraduate education while reducing the time and cost of a degree. The second part is a new way to fund degrees in key sectors in which the UK needs more trained people, such as engineering and nursing, by offering to write-off a percentage of student debt for each year a graduate works in that key sector.

Policy:

Efforts to date, from creating distance learning courses to private universities offering shorter courses, have failed to overhaul the behemoth that is the higher education sector.

Undergraduates, especially those in the 'soft' subjects such as humanities and social sciences, still spend three years on their course, often receiving only 10 teaching hours a week, learning things that are often largely irrelevant for the world of work.

The UK government has raised fees up to £10,000 per year, yet it has made little difference to the quality or variety of education on offer.

The problem remains that a degree is not valuable for what you learn on the course, but for the status of the university you attended and how the course you were on is perceived. So, a 2.1 from LSE is always likely to have more cachet than any degree from Nottingham Trent university,

for example, however good Nottingham's course.

Therefore, overhauling higher education is all about status, so I propose government works with a pilot university to create an incredibly tough, one-year course, which only the very top students in the country would be able to attend. Anyone who didn't meet the requirements of the course at any stage would be kicked off it, so people would know if you graduated you were an impressive individual.

The course itself would combine a conventional academic degree alongside a whole host of employability skills, such as coding, report writing, and presentations, developed in partnership with leading employers to ensure it was highly relevant.

Because the course would be so well-designed and so tough, graduating would be a huge status symbol and demonstration of utility in the workplace, far more than a conventional degree. Therefore, and to further entice people onto the course, graduate employers would agree to guarantee a job to anyone who graduated.

So, you would have a phenomenally high-status degree, with a guaranteed job, all of which can be completed in one year; military academies such as Sandhurst have been doing this for decades, so it is eminently achievable.

And students would also leave with lower debt, and instead of spending another two years at university earning nothing, would have an extra two years of salaried employment.

Assuming a standard 3-year graduate leaves with debts of around £100,000, the one-year student would only have debt of £50,000 (it would be more expensive on a per year basis as it is

more prestigious), but would have earned £70,000 in the two years after they graduated, making them £120,000 better off overall.

The launch of such a degree could quickly shift student demand away from traditional 3-year degrees, creating demand for a rapid roll-out of single year degrees in the same mould.

As the course would be high-status, it could be delivered by any institution, creating real competition in the higher education sector and forcing universities to respond quickly. It could therefore rapidly change the nature of undergraduate education, all by realising that the value of a degree is not what you learn, but the prestige that comes with it.

The second part of the proposal is to help fix key sectoral skill shortages in the UK, such as engineering and nursing, by establishing a new funding model where students borrow to fund their course as usual, but for every year they work in the sector they were trained in, some of the debt is written off.

It's better than funding degrees outright, since in that case students could complete the free course and then leave their role soon after, wasting taxpayer resources.

With my proposed model, any student who did not go on to work in the role they were trained for would become liable to pay back the cost of their course to the state. However, unlike most such systems where an equal amount of debt is written off each year, this system would be exponential, with most of the debt paid off in the last two years.

For example, an engineering student gets a student loan for their course of £100,000 to cover all three years, with a contract that states if they work as an engineer for a decade the debt will

be written off. In the first year, £3,000 is written off, by year 3 £10,000 is written off, by year 6 £25,000, year 8 £50,000, year 9 £75,000, and the final £25,000 is written off in the tenth year.

This creates a strong incentive for people to stay in their role to pay off their debt, and to do so for a full decade as most of the debt is paid off in the final 2 years. Students can still opt out of the scheme and pay off their loan as any other student does, maintaining choice, but it creates a strong incentive to work in the role.

By keeping people for a decade, they are likely to have moved up the ranks and be looking at starting a family, so are therefore more likely to continue to work in the sector for another decade due to their desire for job security and the cost of re-training for another sector.

To ensure legal compliance, any parental leave, maternity or paternity, would be acceptable within the scheme, but the individual would still have to return to work to pay off any remaining debt.

ID: 1551-11 - Category: Education

Provision of high quality teaching online as a means for addressing educational and social inequalities.

A good education enables a young person to acquire all the basic knowledge and skills they need for life, along with self-confidence, self-efficacy and the capability to contribute to society. There are many facets to this and classroom teaching is only one aspect, yet in a system that places the highest value on outcomes from public exams, classroom-based teaching is the pre-eminent component. In an ideal world this aspect of education at least would be a level playing field, but of course it is not. No two schools are the same, with variations in culture of staff and pupils, resources - and the quality of teaching. The schools that have gained the better reputations are better able to recruit the better teachers who themselves have built better reputations. The pupils of the better schools have an advantage, and those schools are often in wealthier neighbourhoods where children enjoy yet further advantage. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to widespread adoption of one intervention that could make a major contribution to addressing inequalities in educational opportunity: online teaching. If all children were to have

on-demand access to quality-assured pre-recorded teaching materials this surely would be a major step forward. On-demand online teaching of good quality could be deployed to:

- assist schools that are struggling with provision, who have staff shortages or where poor teaching practice has been identified;
- enhance the educational experience of children who miss a lot of school due to illness;
- augment home-schooling;
- be an asset to any child who finds access to online teaching materials helpful;
- supplement the schooling of children who arrive in the UK from other countries, as members of migrant families or as refugees, providing a valuable 'back-catalogue' that would make it easier for them to catch up and integrate into our education system.

Most online teaching during the pandemic has been ad hoc, with schools asking their teachers to do what they can, with variable degrees of success, some of which is determined by variable IT support. So much more is possible, as has already been demonstrated by the Oak National Academy www.thenational.academy. To make the most of this opportunity several issues have to be addressed:

- a means for determining what constitutes the best teaching practice and how to identify those best placed to provide it;
- how best to organise production, including where there should be competitive teaching platforms or competition to be part of one offering;
- whether there should be just be one set of materials for each subject in each year group, or a diversity of material to meet diverse needs, and if so which diverse needs (something that of course isn't available at the moment);
- how best to integrate online teaching with existing teaching practice, so it supplements and augments current teaching rather than undermines it;
- how to ensure on-demand online teaching strengthens the teaching profession.

It may be useful to consider the recent history of the medical profession, a profession that has had to cope with an incredible amount of change over the past fifty years, due to rapid technological change. In their case a Royal College structure has provided oversight of developments, with a focus on optimising quality of care through peer-review and a system of higher examinations. A similar structure is needed by the teaching profession, with each subject working within a College structure to develop best practice. Teachers currently work single-handedly most of the time. For online teaching to develop to achieve its full potential, a national effort would be needed that promotes team-working, collaboration and sharing, within schools and between schools. Recognition and rewards will be needed to incentivize this cultural shift in the profession. For example, funding provided so that creators of material would receive payment each time their material is used. This flow of money would stimulate entrepreneurial teachers and others to form creative teams, bringing in resources that would enhance the quality of what is produced: more engaging, more popular, more successful, more effective. Online teaching resources should not be used as a substitute for teachers in classrooms. What they should be used for is to underpin the educational experience of children who might otherwise no have access to good teaching – and augment what is currently available. It could release some teacher time to provide enhance the supported pupils receive as individual learners. Some teachers might be able to move to become more tutor or coach

than teacher, with other perhaps switching to do expand the offer of extra-curricular activities available: a major source of inequality between schools. As well as helping to address educational inequalities online teaching resources should, in any case, be developed and used to address some other issues: • when a school cannot offer a full range of subjects; • when a school cannot provide teaching, for example when a teacher is ill, involved in an accident, on compassionate leave, or suspended; • when children are unable to attend school, for example due to poor weather, illness, parental choice or – dread to think – further pandemics; There are adults who would like to prepare themselves for public exams, or address deficits in learning that are holding them back. On-demand online learning would be great for this. One group to benefit would be prisoners, many of whom excluded from mainstream society due to poor educational attainment. COVID 19 has exposed the fragility of depending on physical delivery of education. It has also forced schools to make embrace online teaching. This is one clear example where we can ‘Build Back Better’: it is a fantastic opportunity to address one aspect of inequalities in educational provision, but also a welcome a catalyst for innovation, with the potential for many improvements in the way that teaching is delivered.

ID: 801-11 - Category: Education

Hold elections on a Saturday

Low turnout among younger voters is a problem. In 2019, the age group with the highest turnout was those over 65: the turnout of every other age group was substantially lower.

This causes a number of problems. In particular, it encourages all parties to develop policy which is disproportionately aimed at older voters, who are more likely to be property owners, to derive income from pension wealth rather than labour, and who might have less interest in long term issues such as the environment. It skews the democratic process and chills the development of long term policies in areas such as housing and energy.

One obvious structural barrier to under 65s voting is the fact that we hold elections on Thursdays, when most under 65s are at work. Removing this barrier, by holding elections on a Saturday, would increase turnout of working age voters without making it harder for those over 65 to vote.

In my research I came across a few different suggestions as to why Thursday is our traditional election day: it's the day before pay day so people are less likely to be drunk or hungover; it's not a day when many people go to church, meaning vicars can't exercise undue influence; it gives the new inhabitant of Number 10 a few days to move in ready to start work on Monday. None of these reasons is convincing. It's simply a tradition- and one which is causing harm.

Moving elections to a Saturday is a simple way to increase turnout, to encourage parties to focus policy fairly across all age groups and ultimately to help combat inter-generational unfairness and short-termism in our politics.

(Please note that I first mooted this idea as a called to Matt Chorley's Times Radio show. I haven't nicked someone else's idea from that show!)

ID: 2267-11 - Category: Education

How can public policy react to a digital divide exposed by the coronavirus pandemic?

Tackling the emerging discrimination resulting from the digital divide, an issue exacerbated by COVID-19, is paramount to reducing social inequalities impacting a variety of socioeconomic groups. The regeneration and modernisation of public libraries could facilitate universal internet provision, endorse and further the trend of working from home and promote community engagement.

Public library use has steadily been falling year by year, polling by Statista (2020) shows that since 2005 there has been at least a 20% drop in respondents who had visited a public library. Coates (2018) attributed this decline in library use to poor stocks that are badly organised, short unpredictable opening hours and buildings being poorly maintained and lacking decoration. Furthermore, Coates (2018) highlights that libraries are digitally outdated compared to alternatives, with Amazon dwarfing their capability of offering multiple means of accessing texts and even going as far as providing book recommendations. Separate from the libraries, however, this decline in use can be attributed to funding cuts to libraries as a consequence of austerity measures. Despite the criticisms and the under utilisation of libraries, public support

for libraries remains overwhelming, a poll commissioned by Money Saving Expert (2015) found that 90% of respondents felt their local library service should be protected.

Libraries are becoming somewhat outdated seeing as the incentive to fund them is steadily decreasing. Modernising libraries could solve two significant issues caused and/or accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Modernising them would provide incentives to continue funding them to preserve them and would also solve the digital divide created by the pandemic, which is putting those without technology and internet access at a disadvantage. Modernising them would entail changing their overall structure. In other words, existing libraries would be divided into two different sections; the first section would be the traditional library meant for reading books and studying in a quiet environment whereas the second section would be meant for free access to the internet and technology. Furthermore, it can provide students with an alternative study space where they can socialise.

This proposal would provide significant benefits to disadvantaged young people. The first section detailed the fact that even before covid there was a large gap in the attainment of disadvantaged young people compared to their peers. A 2017 study found that there is a gap of half a grade in every GCSE subject taken (Education Policy Institute, 2017:np). The Sutton Trust (Lally and Bermingham, 2020) also found that 15% of teachers reported that they believed that not all their students had access to a device at home on which to do online work. Seeing as a multitude of online learning and revision resources are available freely, providing a device and internet connection will benefit those who cannot afford paper textbooks. The quiet working environment will also benefit low-income students by providing a quiet space to work, which many are likely to have lacked during the lockdowns. More details can be found above, but by situating these rejuvenated libraries within residential communities and targeting the places with the largest gaps in attainment, we can avoid people being excluded due to travel costs as most will be able to walk from their home to a library.

A policy agenda tackling the growing divisions resulting from the digital divide would also benefit the UK adult population. The Office for National Statistics' 2019 report on the digital divide promulgated that only 51% of households with annual earnings of £6000-£10,000 had home internet access. Comparatively, 99% of households with an income of more than £40,001

could use the internet at home. Such digital exclusion exacerbates difficulties for individuals already living in poverty. Job applications, budgeting, accessing health and social services, and applying for Universal Credit are all made more challenging as services are continuously shifting to the digital sphere. Community internet provisions are imperative in reintegrating the digitally excluded members into society. Locating internet hubs within communal spaces not only encourages social interaction amongst communities but also enables those without home access to vital online services. However, providing internet access as a policy in isolation may not be sufficient. The Lloyds Bank Consumer Digital Index report 2019 further affirms that 22% of the population lack basic digital skills. Although the primary aim of our proposal is universal internet access, integration of computer/internet training may be integral in increasing the inclusivity of digital services.

Furthermore, digital inclusion is a critical social justice issue that is not widely attributed to its effects on ethnic minorities in the UK. However, the most recent data in 2019 from the ONS represent disparities in internet usage for different ethnicities. It found that disparities had narrowed for minority groups and were less significant than income (ONS, 2019). Elahi (2020) argues that this does negate ethnicity as a factor, it is vital to consider intersectionality as ethnicity and socio-economic factors work together to create digital exclusion. Gypsy and Traveller communities (no reference to this group in ONS 2019 dataset) face digital exclusion and are both an ethnic minority and affected by socio-economic factors. In the 2011 consensus, Gypsies and Travellers experienced the lowest employment rates, highest levels of economic inactivity (Comarty, 2019). Factors such as low literacy rates and environmentally daunting classroom environments could make it more difficult for members from these communities to benefit from digital technology (Scadding and Sweeney, 2018). In 2018-2019, pupils from the White Gypsy and Roma ethnic group had the lowest GCSE attainment (ONS, 2020). Libraries could be a great alternative by providing a comfortable environment and providing digital services that support low literacy levels.

ID: 2050-11 - Category: Education

OCCUPATION FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS

Loss of confidence in the adequacy of the education supplied during prolonged lockdowns, together with social isolation, has led to confusion among school leavers about what the next step should be.

SOLUTION:

The introduction of Universal National Service to suit a wide variety of circumstance could equally be described as UNIVERSAL SOCIAL SERVICE which will be designed to fill the gap between basic secondary schooling and the next stage of life. The Service would provide a minimum of two different assignments during one year, with the option of a second year. A wide choice of assignments including apprenticeships will be designed for all young people in the age range of 15-20 years. This New Universal National Service will echo the successful National Service that was designed for young men in the armed services after the Second World War.

Examples of socially useful occupations including apprenticeships would include any of the Armed Services, The Police, The Fire Brigade, Refuse Disposal, Safety Inspectorates, Care Homes for young and old, and work on the land.

All these services would be of benefit to the community where labour is in short supply.

Training should include basic remedial skills where required. Tutoring should be included in the choice of National Service.

Universal Social Service will bring young persons from every kind of background together in a common endeavour.

This identified employment of young people will be valued by both the individual and society.

REWARDS

A basic living wage (means-tested) - the hourly rate would be paid the same, regardless of occupation. Less tangible benefits would include a passport to self-fulfilment. The requirement of useful work for everyone narrows the worsening gap between privilege and deprivation. Society will benefit from improved mutual understanding and unpopular tasks will be shared around more evenly.

ID: 1959-11 - Category: Education

Introduce a minimum competence requirement for entry to public office

Summary: Require public officials, starting with Government Ministers, to demonstrate effective decision-making Competencies at the level defined in the Civil Service's published Framework prior to taking up office. Ministers lacking graduate level education in a logic-based subject such

as maths, science or engineering are likely to require a period of training to reach this level of competence.

Rationale:

I am happy to report that the Civil Service have already done the underpinning legwork here in developing their excellent competency framework. Particularly pertinent to the above challenge is the 'Setting direction: Making effective decisions' section which tells us that

'People who are effective are likely to:

- Navigate and balance a range of political, national and international pressures
- Involve the right stakeholders and partners in making recommendations or decisions early on and continue to engage them
- Identify and evaluate risks and options and develop strategies to manage and mitigate
- Make unpopular decisions and defend them at the highest level when required'.

The document goes on to specify some features of 'People who are less effective' which resonates remarkably with particular failings evidenced amongst English politicians during the Covid crisis:

- Struggle to provide clarity of thinking when faced with complex and ambiguous data, constantly call for more information rather than make decisions
- Provide recommendations or decisions without full and proper consultation
- Provide advice without full evaluation of risk, scenarios and options
- Constantly change decisions based on new opinions, information or challenge.

The scientific method is defined as 'making conjectures (hypotheses), deriving predictions from

them as logical consequences, and then carrying out experiments or empirical observations based on those predictions'. Whilst no one expects all public servants to be competent scientists, an understanding of the principles of logic and risk assessment are intrinsic to the high-level decision making required by those in leadership. Yet they may have absolutely no training in such principles in any part of their education- indeed, no education at all is required to enter public office. Many professions have developed workplace-based competency assessment as a core entry requirement in recent years, in recognition of the critical remit undertaken in that profession and, consequently, the critical impact of substandard practice. Requiring a minimum benchmark means practitioners with sub-optimal competencies are excluded from entry and this protects the public. These competencies need to be demonstrable live 'in practice', not just from a written test- i.e. similar to a driving test.

For example, in the Royal College of GP's curriculum, competence in decision making is defined via 'word pictures' to allow assessors to identify and evidence emerging/evident competencies. By the final year of training the doctor must be able to demonstrate overall competence in each field while working with real patients. This is assessed by a highly trained (PGCE level) GP 'trainer' in the workplace, based on observation of genuine consultations in joint surgeries and/or videoed consultations, and case discussions (cross-reference with written records and other tools such as audit and multi-source feedback). It is further benchmarked by the College in a live simulated surgery where each patient's care is assessed by an independent examiner against specific thresholds of competence, alongside written assessments. Below are examples of decision-making competencies that would be equally relevant to MPs, and arguably should be 'excellent' in Government Ministers:

-Excellent- No longer relies on rules or protocols but is able to use and justify discretionary judgement in situations of uncertainty or complexity

-Competent- Thinks flexibly around problems, generating functional solutions and taking ownership; keeps an open mind and is able to adjust and revise decisions in the light of relevant new information -Not yet sufficiently competent- Makes decisions by applying rules, plans or protocols.

Further relevant competencies can be found within the 'managing medical complexity' part of curriculum as shown below- the word 'patient' has been changed to 'public' to demonstrate

relevance to Government ministers:

#Excellent- Anticipates and employs a variety of strategies for managing uncertainty; uses the public perception of risk to enhance the management plan

#Competent- Is able to manage uncertainty, including that experienced by the public; communicates risk effectively and involves public in its management to the appropriate degree.

For public officials, it would seem feasible that new entrants could be asked to pass a 'simulated' assessment of their decision making which could include formats such as:

- Chairing a simulated meeting which includes decision making on complex and conflicting statistical data (with appropriate statisticians/experts in the room to advise)
- A written prioritisation scenario- which could be based on a disease outbreak, for example!

Such an entry assessment could then be coupled with a probationary period, during which key competencies would need to be demonstrated 'on the job', for example during:

- Interaction with the public (in MP surgeries)
- Interaction with colleagues
- Written communications e.g. with the press
- Management of risk scenarios.

It is my assertion that had such an assessment been undertaken on the Covid Cabinet prior to their appointment, many would not have been in post. A more suitably skilled cohort could have avoided much of the weak decision making- and deaths- that ensued. Can we really afford to put people's lives at risk by entrusting these crucial decisions to individuals selected on basis of popularity, without reference to competence? Covid has shone a light on a critical gap to

address and the tools are readily available - all that is required is the political will.

ID: 1943-11 - Category: Education

Addressing the crisis of creativity in the public sector

The late Sir Jeremy saw his role to “challenge lazy thinking and find solutions”. In an attempt to avoid “lazy thinking” as we combat the crisis of creativity, this response might feel unsatisfactory. I’m afraid a whole lot more work is needed to develop the ideas I give.

To get this right, we need to go through a robust process: (i) be clear on the problem we want to solve, (ii) explore the evidence and (iii) ground ideas in the lived experience of the people affected.

I propose three ideas: (A) ‘Red team locums’, (B) Embrace rosters and (C) Stimulate the ‘ideas market’. These ideas are not final. I can’t preach ‘learning from failure’ and not have testing built-in.

(i) Let’s start by articulating the problem in three questions:

(A) How might we integrate more input, stimulus and challenge into public servants’ daily lives?

(B) In these times of crisis, how might we make time to hear and involve a range of perspectives?

(C) How might we build higher esteem for the art of learning from failure?

(ii) As we explore the evidence, let’s discover where we have expertise:

(A) On stimulus and challenge, the UK public sector has a head start. Our very way of doing things is built around challenge: from governance boards to private offices, from service standards to spending teams. We also have world-leading schemes to disrupt homogeneous thought. Schemes like the Care Leavers internships are genuinely groundbreaking. Local government has fantastic expertise in user-centred service design.

(B) The UK public sector has deep expertise in making time amidst a crisis. Organisations like the military, MoD, police and Border Force regularly go into - and importantly, come out of - 'Command & Control' (C2). These organisations have learnt lessons, often writing them down. [E.g. A concept note commissioned by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 2017 introduced the concept of 'Edge C2' for crisis response in complex environments].

(C) On embedding cultures of 'learning from failure' we must look at advanced state-sponsored R&D functions like the US's DARPA, as well as to entrepreneurial mindsets in the private sector, where it is normal to proudly show off having a failure 'under your belt'.

I suggest we trial three approaches:

(A) 'Red team locums':

Status quo: We know that private offices (and central secretariat functions) are a critical touchpoint in decision making. 'Always on', these are places which are forever challenging the business on behalf of the ministers or senior people they serve.

Status quo: There is an established practice of people covering short periods of absence in private offices. Some call this a 'locum'.

Status quo: We have an Annual Leave surplus after Covid-19. Burnout is rife. People need time off.

Idea: What if we created a team of 10-or-so expert locums who were trained at being excellent private secretaries, meeting the needs of the people they support. Then the magic: those expert locums are selected from a truly diverse set of backgrounds: a care leaver, a technologist, an academic, a local government delivery expert etc.

Design: This team needs to be a hyper-stylish place to work. It needs to be private offices' first point of call when they need to cover staff absences.

Delivery: The team must do the job they are covering, but will be measured on their ability to challenge the business on their area of expertise. They will be an in-built 'red team'.

(B) Embrace rosters

Status quo: MoD, police and others know that crisis response (C2) has its risks. They design-in spaces - or split their commands - so that they have the ability to take a step back, reflect, be strategic and inclusive.

Idea: Can we accept that more areas of the public sector must be in a permanent 'always on'

(C2) state? What if policy teams, and the Senior Civil Service (SCS) were run like operational teams with rosters and clear delineation between response and strategy?

Design: If we rostered the SCS, for example, we would force them to be better at handing over their business (improving audit trails!). We would create spaces for them to 'take a step back' from the day job - to take those valuable moments to receive outside inspiration.

(C) Stimulating the public sector 'ideas market'

Idea: Create the conditions for 'ideas' to become the principal currency of the public sector.

Status quo: There is one dominant currency in the public sector: career progression. Whether it's so you can earn more money to care for loved ones or so you can have more influence to better serve the public, what really matters is promotion. Promotion is a function of grade and how you navigate application criteria.

Status quo: Innovation and failure are in vogue. The public are more understanding than ever about the idea of testing and learning. The 'U-turn' is becoming ever rarer as a political critique.

Status quo: It has never been easier to build the systems that underpin new markets, e.g. blockchain and micro energy trading.

Idea: What if we created the conditions for public servants to compete on the quality of their ideas? What if we found ways we could manipulate the market to provoke behaviours?

- What if we allowed teams to 'carry over' budgets from one financial year to the next if they were conducting a trial?
- What if we didn't allow promotion to the SCS unless an individual had published (only to parliament if 'sensitive') a case study of their biggest failure and what they learnt?
- What if we trialled pay structures where promotion is-not-equal-to uplift of salary? Instead salary uplifts come from evidencing you have learnt from a failure. Or we build a formula that attributes 'credit' for successful projects to those who had historically worked on those projects.

Every one of these ideas is an experiment. The thing that will end up 'solving' my problem will not look anything like these ideas. But we won't get there without bravely trying out some new things.

ID: 1900-11 - Category: Education

How to reverse the UK teacher retention crisis - a personal research and development budget

Teacher retention has been an ongoing crisis in the UK, with around 1/3 of teachers leaving the profession within five years of qualification. The negative consequences of this are manifold: a loss of talent to a profession that needs a motivated and incentivised workforce; a waste of resources devoted to training; disruption to pupil learning arising from unnecessary staff turnover; and demoralisation for those remaining in the profession.

While issues such as pay and working hours are highly complex, with implications for public finances, there are other responses that relate to re-enforcing teachers' ownership of their professional journey and identity.

This proposal argues for an English-wide scheme (which could also be adopted by devolved authorities) for free access for teachers into a broad range of libraries, museums, galleries, learned societies, cultural institutions and subject-based associations. Each teacher would have

an annual credit of up to £250 (in effect a personal research budget) to utilise for individual access to these institutions and the services that they provide, including membership fees, resources, and attendance to ad hoc events. The participating institutions would admit the teacher for free, on presentation of an individual photo card and supporting ID. The institution would then be reimbursed by the government on a charge-back basis for the costs incurred. The benefit would be non-taxable, the credit would not be transferable and would not roll-over to the following year.

The anticipated benefits would be as follows: (i) teachers would be able to gain access to specific knowledge and professional learning that would connect them pedagogically and philosophically with research developments across a range of disciplines; (ii) it would also be a countervailing effect against teacher perceptions of limitations to their professional independence which can sometimes arise from the prevalence of data-driven targets; (iii) it would enhance teacher professional status by crediting the individual with the capacity to map out their own professional learning; (iv) it would benefit the participating institutions (all of which have been closed during the COVID-19 crisis) by incentivising visitor footfall and by opening up a source of revenue; (v) it would enhance subject-knowledge for the individual teacher, with expected benefits for pupil learning and attainment.

While one intervention alone will not solve the retention crisis, the distinctive nature of this proposal is its emphasis on personal professional agency, and the individual stewardship of a resource. Enhancing professional autonomy and ownership can be expected to yield benefits for individual performance and outcomes for pupils, while also developing and enhancing connections between schools and research/cultural institutions. While the scheme would entail cost, this should be considered against the waste of talent and loss of investment when teachers leave the profession.

ID: 860-11 - Category: Education

A scheme for National Youth Service

Some years ago I visited Cuba and at that time all young people at age 16 years were required to do military service, two years for boys, one year for girls. After that they pursued higher education or employment. I propose a scheme whereby young people aged between 16 and 18 years are required to complete a year of community service before moving on to further

training or career. One of the differences between teenagers from affluent homes to those from less advantaged backgrounds is the former often on completing education have a "gap year" when they seek experience, often abroad, to widen their life experience before settling into further study. The National Youth Service would require all young people to experience something on an equal footing. It would provide a measure of discipline and self discipline, and would mix people from all backgrounds together, something which I hope would encourage understanding and tolerance of others at an age when young minds are open. For some it would give them experience outside of their geographic and cultural environment, and perhaps give them role models outside of their usual daily experience. I also hope it would encourage more of them to envisage a career in the NHS or similar organisation so that we fill the vacant posts with local people rather than recruiting them from less developed countries where their skills are needed in the country that trained them.

My proposal for the year would see it divided into four parts of three months. The first part would follow a syllabus looking at physical and mental health. It would include a visit of at least a week to an outward bound centre. There would be some classroom sessions examining diet, cooking, physical education and psychological preparation for adulthood., this could be undertaken at a local further education college. The second part would be a period devoted to improving the level of educational achievement, and for this private schools could be encouraged to input tutoring. A third part would be spent within the NHS, care or charity sector, learning the rewards of making a contribution to the health of the community. The final part might be an "internship" within public or private sector giving each young person an opportunity to experience the world of work but maybe not what they previously envisioned, and could include science and engineering, agriculture, or even the arts. That would require all parts of our society to make a contribution to the development of our young people, and perhaps discover or develop talents that our society needs, as well as those our economy needs. At the end of the year the young person would receive a certificate and I rather hope there would be a "passing out parade" at which family and friends could celebrate their achievement.

I would expect there to be some flexibility in the scheme but overall would hope that young people of all physical and mental abilities could be offered a version of the scheme adapted to their needs. By offering this opportunity at age 16 years I hope it would mean the young people had enough maturity to make the most of it but before they lost aspiration. For those already keen to follow a particular path in work or career it would give them a period of broader experience, whereas those who at sixteen still felt a bit young to commit to a certain path it's a chance to envisage a different future.

Some of this idea comes from the experiences in my own life which I felt influenced my choices, and some from hearing men from a previous generation talking about doing National Military Service in Britain after the second world war, where a good many discovered talents and had their eyes opened in a way that had not been possible in civilian life. I'm aware that there have been voluntary schemes which covered some aspects of this, eg Duke of Edinburgh Awards, Scouting Movement, Boys and Girls Brigades, St John Ambulance, various services Cadet schemes but my proposal of a National Scheme would ensure it includes everybody.

ID: 668-11 - Category: Education

Supplementary Schools

A feature of our post-Covid times will be the educational inequalities that will be present, particularly affecting our hard-pressed neighbourhoods. I propose that we use a tried and trusted model of delivery to address this. For a long time, BAME communities have operated Supplementary Schools to support migrant children achieve educational attainment.

The government should set up a programme of Supplementary Schools, starting in the next academic year, to address inequalities that exist and support educational attainment. This should operate in all areas, but priority should be given to our most deprived neighbourhoods. This could help our school children to overcome any educational gaps created by Co-vid.

For over 20 years, I worked in inner-London managing community projects and programmes and, during that time, I saw many Supplementary Schools operating in our poorest neighbourhoods which were, generally, successful. Initially, many Supplementary Schools were set up to improve literacy and numeracy but, over time, became more focused on cultural issues and were often characterised by charismatic leadership and motivated children.

Supplementary Schools should be part of local schools and under the leadership of the headteacher. Not only, will they operate then on the same premises each Saturday during term time, utilising these community buildings, but also be at the heart of the school. Supplementary Schools would be sure then to meet good governance standards but also achieve the priorities set by the local school and the curriculum. For example, the exam years of 11 and 13 may be considered a national priority because of Co-vid, but also the 'transition years' of six and seven might also be a priority. However, head teachers should be empowered to decide the priorities for their area.

Supplementary Schools should be led by qualified teachers but also be open to new teacher graduates. Both should be paid the standard rate for this teaching work. This will ensure

children get taught to the highest teaching professional standards and recent teacher graduates will get valuable experience.

The Supplementary School curriculum should be built around literacy and numeracy, but also include an element of play or creative skills so we can be confident that mental well-being of our children is maintained.

A programme of Supplementary Schools would create an investment environment where, in the future, the outcome will be a better qualified and more effective workforce. The government, as stewards of the economy, would see a return on their investment.

ENDS

ID: 533-11 - Category: Education

Building a world class learning resource for British schoolchildren

There is an opportunity to enable and facilitate a reservoir of online learning content for schoolchildren that will, over time, cover the needs of all age groups across the full spectrum of subjects. Competition between contributors will drive up the quality of materials to build a world class resource that will improve the efficacy and efficiency of the UK education sector.

How could this work?

- Organisations such as Exam Boards and Ofsted would act only as facilitators, the private sector and individuals collectively will deliver actual content;
- Organisations such as the Exam Boards would be tasked with producing detailed syllabi for each subject and each year group, and to break these down into lesson sized sub-syllabi;
- Contributors would submit content to the relevant Exam Board for approval and inclusion in a

master list of approved content. It could be expected that there would be a choice of content for most lessons;

- Content could be hosted on YouTube, Vimeo, iPlayer or any other platform that was accessible to all; a syllabus might be met by drawing on content from a mixture of platforms and contributors;

- Contributors might be individual teachers, schools, school trusts or TV production companies. Material from the BBC could be integrated. Contributors might simply wish to promote a particular school or trust, they might earn revenue from advertising on a platform such as YouTube. It could be expected that private schools would be keen to promote themselves by being major contributors.

- Competition between contributors could be expected to drive up quality, so that individual 'lessons' could be far more engaging, diverse and authoritative than material that an individual teacher could produce for traditional classroom based teaching;

- Teachers would be free to draw on this content as they saw fit. It would allow pupils to go over lessons a second time, or even to view alternative lessons on a particular topic;

- Content could be viewed on mobile phones as well as computers and tablets, significantly widening access. A survey by Childwise in early 2020 recorded that mobile phone ownership was 'almost universal' by the time pupils were in secondary school; charities and schools could work together to fill the remaining gap;

- The overall approach is in step with the lives of modern children and the way they want to

learn; • Ofsted could provide overall quality control on syllabi, sub-syllabi and approved content;

- Over time, content could include self-assessment questionnaires which would be designed to be available to teachers to monitor pupils' progress and achievement;

- Similarly content could evolve to recognise that different pupils learn in different ways, with some finding it easier to absorb material with a problem based lesson approach which schools find difficult to deliver at present;

- Finally the role of teachers might evolve to allow them more time to support individual pupils, particularly those needing more individual attention. This can only help level up the education system in the years ahead.

ID: 3011-11 - Category: Education

Starter for Ten: Inspiring Britain's workers with hope and optimism whilst retooling business for a better future

The pandemic has created many problems and much hardship indiscriminately across our nation, presenting challenges to both people and business previously never imagined. These challenges can and will be overcome and with a little creative thinking may prove a springboard to a better and more successful future.

Covid's effect on employment has been dramatic, from people's fears of losing jobs to that becoming a reality, many excellent people out of work through no fault of their own, these people along with many others need a little help in seeing new possibilities/opportunities and a reason not to lose hope in the future.

Similarly, many companies will have had their business model/markets changed beyond all recognition and are in need of a little help to reflect, refocus and adjust to the new environment.

To provide this little bit of help I present to you Starter for Ten.

Starter for Ten is a 10-week introduction to a company of your choosing:

- Applicants will choose what company they wish to work in (within x distance of their home address)
 - Applicant will apply by writing no more than one paragraph stating as best they can why they should be working for that company
 - All applications will be scored by the companies HR with the upper quartile being entered into a lottery draw for the Introducee positions
 - All applications will be blind except for a generation identifier (young (18-26) middle (27-40) seasoned (41+)) and their personal sales pitch
- the current unemployment metrics would be used to determine the ratio of young, middle and seasoned, i.e., a company offering 10 Introductions might get 5 young, 2 middle and 3 seasoned.
- I have a hypothesis that the combination of the skills, knowledge and attitude of the 3 groups together will work surprisingly well and lead to non-typical, creative and out-of-the-box thinking.

Due to the pandemic most businesses day to day operations will be facing major challenges and issues, at best just an upheaval at worst the need for total transformation but this could also be the perfect opportunity to try out bold and new ideas never before tried.

Enter the Introducees; an opportunity for business to utilize their novel views, opinions and suggestions, Introducees will be asked to observe/review/reflect on the companies' products/practices/purpose. Often change is hard, a mature and previously successful business may be struggling to adapt to the changed environment, the Introducees will bring diverse and non-typical thinking that can be used to look at and question how and why things are done, think viewing from above, below, back to front and inside out, think McKinsey & Company on magic mushrooms.

The Introducees differ dramatically from a traditional apprentice mainly because of the vast array of resources they bring, many years of skills and experience, knowledge of current application processes, baggage free thinking and an abundance of enthusiasm because don't forget, they chose to want to work for this company.

The 10-week program will commence with a 1-week induction (therapy/motivation, do's/don'ts, company expectations). It will end with, if the Introducee has made a good impression, the offer of a job or maybe a place at the front of the queue for when something next becomes available. A process of feedback will be given from the company and/or fellow Introducees, it will be exclusively only positive feedback and only where appropriate but this whole idea is about zero negativity and empowering people to look ahead.

The introduction would not be paid employment (although if the company chose to that would be up to them) but if on Universal Credit they would continue to receive this and in addition the employer would cover travel expenses.

Although this idea is primarily focused on the unemployed with the crazy times we're currently living in it would be fair to expect people across all walks of life to have reflected and taken stock of their lives, reassessing their situation and if they find they have an itch that they need to scratch, and their employer (working at reduced capacity) was agreeable to 10 weeks unpaid leave it would be meanspirited to exclude them from this adventure, besides this can only add more talent to the pool of resources that is the Introduces.

Whilst the main aim of this programme is to help employees and employers another consequence of the pandemic is the collapse of the traditional recruitment model demonstrated by the 1000's of applications for the same handful of minimum wage jobs (the time required to sift through the applicants is far too great for optimum results), now is the perfect opportunity to try a different approach. Much like a 2nd hand BMW/Mercedes is now so good, reliable and efficient they could comfortably meet the needs of any customer: due to trends in business and frequency of changing jobs today's workforce are really well trained, experienced and versatile and they would meet the requirements of many different positions. Given the opportunity, a little training and encouragement many people would thrive and excel and what better place for them to do this than at a company they really want to work for? All companies have a need to refine their recruitment process maybe to save money, tick a few diversity boxes or improve their hiring success. The pandemic is the opportunity to try out a new way of doing things.

PROS CONS

Bringing hope and excitement to the nation Haven't thought of one yet

Helping business readjust to the new normal

Major rethink of the HR process

Monetarily virtually cost free

This is a much-condensed synopsis of my idea, there are many other attributes that just seem to fit into place so perfectly with this WIN WIN proposition and I would be most grateful the chance to explain this once in a lifetime opportunity further.

ID: 3062-11 - Category: Education

Lurning Stix

Abstract

The Covid pandemic of 2020/21 has laid bare, the deficiencies in the education system. Our current system is heavily dependent upon the physical interface between teachers and pupils and is, therefore, very labour intensive as well as being expensive. The deficiencies in the

system, when pupils were required to stay at home, were brought into sharp focus as there was no established back-up system. Whilst new technology provided some relief, it soon became evident that it would not be sufficient to keep things in order. Building on this experience, it is proposed that, using established new technology, we could revolutionise education to make it fit-for-purpose in the twenty first century. Systems would be developed to support existing teaching methods which would provide alternatives ways of rolling out learning material in a form which would be adaptable and extendable for many years to come.

Introduction

Our current methods of teaching are expensive and labour intensive. The shortcomings of our reliance on the physical interface between teacher and pupil has been brought into sharp focus as a result of the schools being shut down for significant periods during the Covid-19 pandemic. History has (or should have) taught us that where labour-intensive industries are concerned that, sooner or later, new ways will be found to improve efficiency. Mining, shipbuilding, the docks and construction industries have all demonstrated what happens when an industry fails to move with the times. Due to its place in society, education has resisted change resulting in its teacher/pupil ration remaining largely unchanged for a century. Recent 'advances' can only be described as tinkering with the system without acknowledging that fundamental change is long overdue. Despite the advances in new technology and the curriculum, teaching remains largely as it was a hundred years ago.

New technology has given us the opportunity to provide information almost instantly. Only fifty years ago, Encyclopedia Britannica cost over £500 but now all of that information, and much more, is available on Wikipedia for free if you have access to the internet. But this is only available in a passive format – you have to go and search it out in order to benefit from it. However, on YouTube, we can find a video explaining how to change the oil filter on our cars and, on television, we watch a program telling us all about the Battle of Hastings. Some advances have been made with such initiatives as the BBC's 'Bitesize' but this is, at present, quite limited as well as inefficient and relies on a reliable internet connection.

Whilst enormous progress has been made during the lockdown, it has lacked structure and has been patchy when those without computers or broadband are considered. The proposal which follows seeks to address all of these issues and bring about a revolution in the field of education which will rival the creation of the Open University.

Proposal

What would be the objective of such an undertaking? We propose:

“The development of a new, cost-effective, parallel system of learning which would be freely available to all irrespective of their background or level of affluence, using currently available technology as a base for further development as time goes by.”

Whilst its main purpose is to address the problems caused by the pandemic shut-down of schools, we see the new system providing:

- A backup for use in time of school shut-down
- A basic system for home schooling
- A cost-effective support system where conventional teaching has failed to achieve desired outcomes
- An addition resource for those who desire to progress more quickly than that allowed in school

This can be achieved relatively quickly by building on that which is already available using memory sticks, or flash drives as they are also called, with educational material embedded on them thus making them independent of an internet connection. The government already has a program to provide computers to all pupils so having one should not be a problem. Obviously this is fundamental.

The 'stix' would contain information in a similar form to that taught in schools and already featured on 'Bitesize' but would also have repeatable tests built in to confirm whether the lesson has been absorbed. Material could be presented in more than one form involving a teacher or without, just using text or voice-over. Absorption is improved by repetition in differing formats. The amount of data storage on memory sticks is increasing exponentially so, whilst initial developments might be restricted to simple tutorials, later versions could include video. The trick is not to move too quickly - Rome wasn't built in a day.

Structure

The data contained on the sticks would aim to mimic the conventional lessons given by teachers in their classrooms. You can see examples in 'Bitesize' but first steps would not need to include video – that could come later. The initial lessons would be simple text based explanations with worked examples showing how things work. They would be supported by tests to confirm whether the lesson has been understood.

It could be useful to include guidance notes within each stick for parents. Whilst advice could be given on timing, it would be up to each pupil to work at their own pace.

Content

The main priority is to address the backlog in English and maths. If you can't read then it's difficult to study other subjects as your intake is limited. If you can't add and subtract, or know your tables, then maths will be difficult.

Concentrating first on primary education, the core subjects of the national syllabus would follow: history; geography; biology; chemistry and physics followed by modern languages. Later developments, when secondary education is added would include: social sciences; religion; Latin and Greek. Practical subjects such as carpentry and metalwork could be added when video

is part of the system.

There is, at present, a growing pool of content but this would need to be extended. The obvious place to look for new content is to enrol retired teachers to provide it. They have experience and are conversant with the requirements of the national curriculum which has to form the basis of the system. A call would be made for volunteers and a pool appointed on agreed conditions and with a system of remuneration based on results. The development of subjects could run in parallel but would focus, initially, on one year and then progress year by year.

The basic lessons could be backed up with educational games as the UK already has a massive investment in the gaming industry.

Development

It is arguable whether to target the group most affected by the pandemic shut-down of schools or start at the bottom and work up. It would probably be best to start with the group which had the most suitable material available or target the group with the most to lose overall. This would be years six and seven as they need the basic skills to enable them to move on to secondary education.

At this stage it would be useful to introduce targets, so initial coverage could concentrate on:

1. Year 7 maths and English followed by year 6
2. Years 4 and 5 maths and English
3. Years 2 and 3 maths and English
4. Year 1 basics
5. Years 6 and 7 core subjects
6. Etc....

Priority 1 should be complete within six months and the first four within a year.

Organisation

We have already mentioned the use of retired teachers for the provision of content but the project will require inputs from others and a small body to control the processes. Considering the history of botched government initiatives, especially concerning IT projects, it would not be advisable to leave the project in the hands of the Department for Education but to bring in a wide range of commercial interests under the control of a small group.

Based on the experience of the two world wars where Churchill was Minister for Munitions and Beaverbrook for Aircraft Production, we would propose the appointment of a high profile individual to lead the project. Our opinion (and it is no more than that) is that Professor Brian Cox would be the ideal candidate. He would need a small team to provide direction but all development work would be handled by existing commercial entities who would be invited to participate on a pro bono or non-profit basis. The intention would be to mimic the fast-track procedure and timescale employed to develop the Covid vaccines.

Roles, which would develop would include:

- The Department for Education for funding
- Microsoft for the software
- A manufacturer for the flash drives
- Currys/PC World for warehousing
- Amazon for distribution and Royal Mail for collection
- Schools to arrange for distribution and administration

It is envisaged that the stix would be made available through a number of routes. Obviously Currys/PC World could make them available on a commercial basis and this might be the preferred route for the private schools. They could also preload modules onto Chrome Books which are sold by them. For the state sector there needs to be a robust system for distribution and recovery which does not involve cost to the beneficiary. It is envisaged that schools would arrange to control the distribution of the stix using Amazon and, after use, they would be recovered using Royal Mail. To aid this, return envelopes would be distributed with the stix. Schools would keep tabs on who has what and the progress of students.

Once established, the system could be gradually rolled out across the world by incorporating others into the fold:

- The British Council for liaison with the Commonwealth
- YouTube for demonstration of use
- The Gates Trust for international adaptation
- The Heywood Foundation to advise the steering group
- Books2 Africa for advice on use in developing countries

The purpose of this would be to build on the UK's reputation for providing the foundation for state education in many countries, especially those using the English Language as their mother tongue.

Conclusion

Comus: A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634 by John Milton

Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud

Turn forth her silver lining on the night?

I did not err; there does a sable cloud

Turn forth her silver lining on the night,

And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.

Or as we say - "Every cloud has a silver lining."

The Covid pandemic has cast a cloud over our education system and demonstrated its frailty. But this presents us with the opportunity to make use of the new tools that are available to us now; to update our systems and make them more appropriate to the current day, and more robust as we move into the future.

ID: 3066-11 - Category: Education

There are lots of devices in the UK which are not currently in use, which could be redistributed to students in need of a suitable device for remote learning.

As a long-term solution, we propose a partnership between Freegle, MyGreenPod, ComputerAid and Citrix, to operate in the following way:

- Freegle as collection points for donated hardware, and to promote the message to its ~2.8m members
- MyGreenPod (sustainability supplement of The Guardian) to promote and market the message
- ComputerAid to deal with the remote wiping, rebuilding and onward distribution to schools
- Creation of a DfE funded “Citrix schools platform” managed by a Systems Integrator which schools can buy into and base their own Google Classroom or Microsoft Teams environment on (more details below). This would have the following advantages:
 - o More hardware could be brought back into service as lower spec devices can be used
 - o Schools and students don’t have to worry about anti-virus or malware on the devices
 - o Management overhead is taken by the Systems Integrator – this is especially important for Primary Schools which are generally not set up with their own IT infrastructure due to their size, unless they are part of academy chains
 - o Kids in deprived areas don’t have the worry of expensive devices which could attract the wrong attention
 - o Less Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE) goes into landfill

3. Proposed “Citrix schools’ platform”.

The proposed “Citrix schools’ platform” will be a fully managed, centralised digital learning platform built using Citrix Workspace technologies in collaboration with selected partners and vendor solutions. The platform will be cloud-delivered from sustainable datacentres which eliminate any need for on-premises hardware, reducing management complexity and overhead. The platform also benefits from cloud elasticity and cloud presence which ensure excellent levels of service delivery with the ability to scale on demand.

Students and staff will have simple, secure and reliable access to digital learning materials from any device, from any location using the Citrix Workspace App. Low-powered, low-maintenance endpoint devices can be provided for a relatively low cost and students are no longer constrained to a traditional endpoint device in a classroom, giving the pupil the freedom to learn wherever they feel comfortable, using a device that they prefer. Regardless of the device

used, the student is guaranteed a seamless, secure and consistent user experience.

The platform also supports the full range of IT peripherals – from headsets to printers – so learning is guaranteed to be a hassle-free experience and by reducing the cost of the endpoint device, in combination with using High Definition Experience (HDX)X technologies to optimise network connectivity, the platform directly addresses digital poverty concerns.

The platform will provide staff and students with single sign-on, and secure access using Time Based One Time Password (TOTP) Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) to all learning resources. This includes all learning material, applications and collaboration tool entitlements, including popular Virtual Learning Environments (VLE), teaching software and collaboration tools.

Data and applications will be centralised in the datacentre, protected using state of the art security controls. The platform provides identity- and context-aware, zero trust access as well as additional security functions for all applications accessed through Citrix Workspace. This includes powerful Data Governance functionality such as Watermarking, Cut-Copy-Paste protection and Enabling/Disabling Printing as well as App Protection functionality including Anti-Keylogging and Anti-Screen Capture along with secure internet access protection such as Malware protection, Sandbox, Firewall, CASB, DLP, SWG and SSL Inspection. This level of security is essential when protecting both student and institution.

The platform will deliver all the capabilities of the secure digital workspace, while also enhancing the student experience by guiding work and providing time-saving workflows. Workspace intelligent features give students and staff a single unified experience to all apps and data no matter where they reside, while incorporating machine-learning micro-apps and workflows to guide and enhance productivity, and offering universal search to quickly find data no matter where it's stored. Analytics and automated intelligence make it possible to customise the experience for individual users using a personalised intelligent feed. The platform's intelligent feed ensures students and staff see only what they need, and from here they can review reports, submit coursework, approve submissions and access files all with a single click, designed to address specific common problems and use cases quickly and easily, adding to increased user productivity. All of this is on the same single, streamlined screen. The platform can also push event-driven micro-apps and notify users of something that requires their attention (for example approval of a report, or new course available for registration).

With both of these solutions we believe that we could offer a streamlined digital solution which takes the IT overhead out of the hands of schools, giving them the benefit of cloud technologies whilst allowing them to concentrate on their core competence of being places of education. The

recycling of devices will allow for an ongoing solution to a problem which has been growing but which was brought into sharp focus by Covid. Thankyou for reviewing our proposal.

ID: 2191-11 - Category: Education

Survey the landscape, scale up existing programmes, start new initiatives, appoint a leader, set goals

The problem identified is the lack of British citizens who speak Chinese - referred to here as such, putting aside distinctions between Putonghua, Cantonese, Taiwanese Mandarin, etc. No solution can credibly be proposed without a brief description of the current state of Chinese language education in the UK.

The last comprehensive report specific to Chinese, commissioned by the British Council, was published in 2014 as the UK government began its “golden era” policies. No such survey has been conducted since. The survey concluded with three key recommendations. First, to “adopt a strategic and collaborative approach to the development of Chinese and ensure that investment and resources are focused on achieving shared aims. Establish a coordinating group to guide and develop the strategy.” Second, to “provide an increasing number of teacher training places for teachers of Chinese, with incentives to schools and other providers if necessary.” Third, to “develop a body of expertise and shared professional understanding in the teaching of Chinese language and culture in a UK context”

Since then, the British Council’s annual ‘Language Trends’ survey has not consistently contained analysis of Chinese learning. Besides, it only relates to teaching at primary and secondary schools. The 2020 iteration of this survey states that Chinese was taught “in less than 3% of the schools in our sample,” whilst the number of pupils that took a Chinese GCSE decreased from 2018 to 2019. The Council’s ‘Languages for the Future’ report is another useful resource, which contains much more Chinese-specific information. However, its most recent iteration was in 2017. Furthermore, this report lacks data, admitting, for example, that “it is difficult to find reliable data on how many students” learn Chinese at university.

The 2014 report’s recommendations have mainly been carried out via a secondary-school

Chinese teaching initiative, the Mandarin Excellence Programme. This is a partnership between the DfE, the British Council, and the UCL Institute of Education, whose Confucius Institute for Schools delivers the programme. The MEP produces an independently evaluated annual report, according to which 5000 pupils are “on track to fluency.” This represents the MEP hitting the target it set in 2016. The MEP is hoping to double this number by 2023. That would be excellent. The MEP is clearly part of the solution to the problem of a dearth of Mandarin speakers; it should be scaled up.

The MEP’s annual reports highlight the main barrier to Chinese teaching: the lack of teachers. This demands further government intervention beyond any scaling up of the MEP. Such intervention would also enable more independence from the China International Chinese Language Education Foundation (CICLEF), a PRC agency that runs the Confucius Institutes upon which much Chinese teaching, including the MEP, relies. Language teaching is key, however, it must be and is inevitably accompanied by historical and cultural education. Regarding the role of CICLEF in this aspect of ‘China literacy’, credible concerns have been raised worldwide by serious commentators. It is essential, therefore, that the MEP’s expansion be balanced with efforts to reduce the UK’s overall dependence on CICLEF. The government should consider working further with Taiwan and the British Chinese community (see below) in order to build up teaching capacity.

More independent teaching capacity would empower the government more effectively to introduce additional initiatives. These should bring together business, academia, and the Civil Service, enabling a “strategic and collaborative approach to the development of Chinese”, in line with the 2014 report. Regarding business, the government might offer China-facing enterprises grants for employees or apprentices to learn Chinese. Regarding the Civil Service, it might broaden language programmes for civil servants. Were new or expanded programmes to contain additional elements of historic, economic or political teaching, this could provide the benefit of supporting a more coordinated and consistent ‘approach to China’ across government departments, in line with the UK’s strategic aims. Regarding academia, the government might offer learning grants and resources to university and think-tank academics whose work already relates to China, or could benefit from being made to. In order to conduct these initiatives, the government might appoint a ‘China education tsar’ who would be expressly responsible for their coordination, transparency and success.

In this scenario, the government should also take into account the situation of UK citizens of Chinese descent. According to the 2011 Census, there are well over 400,000 people of Chinese ancestry living in the UK. This community accounted for most of the UK's 140,000 or so Chinese speakers. Research suggests that there is considerable demand from British citizens of Chinese descent - often younger people encouraged by parents - for Chinese language teaching. The British Chinese community is, unsurprisingly, a key source of Chinese language teachers. Finally, and critically, in the past year or so, UK citizens of Chinese descent have faced growing racist abuse, including despicable physical assaults in public. The holistic approach to China education advocated here calls for the British government to build trust with the British Chinese community, to work with it and civil society organisations to combat Sinophobia through education, including language teaching, and to incentivise members of the community to become language teachers in order to respond both to the community's own and society's general demand for the provision of Chinese language teaching.

The Covid-19 crisis has put China in the spotlight. There is a burgeoning interest in the culture and the country, whose rise presents an array of risks and opportunities for Britain and its citizens. There has long been a consensus that we need more Chinese teachers, more Chinese speakers, and more engagement with the British Chinese community. This consensus has never been broader. Now is the time for an ambitious, government-backed programme of China education, focussed on language teaching. Such a programme would support the UK's long-term strategic aims. It would provide substantial benefits to British business, British academics and researchers, the Civil Service and government, the British Chinese community, and society at large.

ID: 2179-11 - Category: Education

Incentivise volunteering with community assets through the establishment of community funds

The pandemic has seen a significant increase in volunteering initiatives, most noticeably the NHS volunteering campaign that was launched during the first lockdown and more recently volunteering in support of the vaccination programme.

There is a huge opportunity to sustain this beyond the pandemic by keeping millions of volunteers active through a scheme to create engaging volunteering opportunities. This would benefit volunteers, for whom volunteering is a fulfilling activity, and the organisations they volunteer with, who can access varied resource by means of volunteers without significant outlay, alike.

Fostering volunteering over the longer term could also help develop a greater sense of community in our society. The pandemic has already started this process, as people have been forced to stay local and have relied on support from community assets including local advice charities, food banks and support networks. We should boost this now through incentivising volunteering with community assets. A greater sense of community is valuable not only to individuals engaging directly with community assets but to society at large: a strong sense of community enriches society.

This scheme can be achieved in combination with a change to council tax policy. Community assets should be rewarded for creating meaningful volunteering opportunities out of ring-fenced community funds established by local authorities using council tax.

Against this backdrop, my proposal is as follows:

(A) A portion of council tax generated by a local authority should be contributed to a new “community fund”. This would not be dependent on council tax increasing, but if council tax does need to be increased, then part of the increase could be ear-marked to establish the community fund, and this may help with the messaging of the increase to the public.

(B) The community fund should be used by the local authority to provide funding to organisations designated as “community assets” by the local authority. These organisations would include locally-focussed charities such as food banks and advice centres. Local authorities

could also decide to designate other kinds of organisations as community assets, for example local sports clubs and community centres.

(C) Community assets would be eligible to receive payments from the community fund by reference to the number of volunteer hours they mobilise. Funding from the community fund would therefore be linked to a community asset's efforts to boost volunteering. To ensure a fair distribution of funding and a meaningful incentive to increase volunteering opportunities: (1) A community asset's entitlement could be calculated by reference to the number of volunteer hours mobilised in excess of, for example, 80% of the volunteer hours mobilised by the community asset in the preceding year. This would ensure that community assets starting from a lower base are able to access meaningful funding compared with organisations that already mobilise a large number of volunteer hours. (2) Maximum entitlements could be capped.

If managed well, the community fund should be an effective tool to boost community-based volunteering. Community assets would be required to self-assess eligibility for payments, with audits carried out by the local authority to check accurate reporting. Further safeguards exist for community assets which are charities, as these are subject to supervision by the Charities Commission and required to use any funding received in furtherance of their charitable objects.

The proposal has two significant incidental benefits:

(1) Incentivising community assets to mobilise volunteers may in the long term prove a highly efficient use of local authority funding, as volunteers are a low cost resource and, if used effectively, can reduce the need to pay staff salaries or external provider fees.

(2) It rewards volunteers for volunteering with community assets, as their actions will generate funding for the organisations they have chosen to support. Additionally, in the case of council tax payers who are volunteers, they will in effect be channelling a portion of their own council

tax contributions to these organisations, thereby converting this tax into donations to their chosen community assets.

ID: 1950-11 - Category: Education

Understanding exam grades: contextualising the unlevel playing field.

The unfairness of our current exams system has been highlighted and exacerbated by Covid-19 pandemic. The GCSE and A'level results fiasco in 2020 led to anger and concern and the Government has announced that in 2021 grades will be awarded on the basis of teacher assessment, which has raised further concerns about grade inflation and a widening of the gap between disadvantaged students and those in better resourced settings. Sammy Wright, the Social Mobility Commissioner for Schools and Higher Education, put it succinctly in January 2021: "As such, qualifications for 2021 can never be an objective measure of performance in the way we are used to, no matter how much we might wish it."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/2021-exams-a-bigger-disaster-than-last-year>

This is a proposal to design a system for representing students' overall grades and taking into account their personal circumstances and the circumstances of their school. This will enable managers, HE and FE admissions officers and others responsible for making decisions about students' next steps, to make a fairer assessment of those students than simply their grades. This system could be extended to include students' grades at other points where they change organisations, for example, at transition from primary to secondary or after GCSEs when they may be moving to a college or different school or applying for an apprenticeship or a job.

This is similar to the information that Oxford University collects to contextualise applicants A'level grades.

(<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/decisions/contextual-dat>a#) While that is admirable, it is not a national system that is urgently needed.

The limitations of exams in assessing children have been well documented and it is clear that using the same test for all children does lead to inconsistencies and does not provide us with an objective measure of what each child can and could do. An alternative to exams is teacher

assessments but there are significant issues around bias and moderation.

As an example, let us start with Matt who is one of five children living in a 3-bedroomed social housing flat. His dad has a disability and his mum works as a cleaner in a hospital. He goes to his local comprehensive which has 64.5% (The data used in these example are from real schools but the names of the schools are not included. The data is from the governments database for 2018/19

https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/?_ga=2.157336634.1889990133.1613985343-514386259.1613985343) of children on Free School Meals (FSM). During the period between lockdowns when schools were open, he had to spend 18 days at home isolating because of contacts with positive cases. He shares a bedroom with his brother and they have an old laptop and one Chromebook for the whole family. They have basic internet connectivity and cannot afford to upgrade. Matt's school offered three live lessons a day – maths, English and science – but he cannot always access these. He goes to school once a week to collect worksheets and resources. Matt is studying for three A-levels and is predicted AAB. In Matt's school, the average A'level result is D.

Archie lives in a four-bedroomed privately owned house with his brother, mum and dad. Both his parents are in full time employment and have worked from home during lockdowns. He goes to a private school, with no children on FSMs. He did not have to isolate at home during the period between lockdowns. When schools were only open to key workers' children and vulnerable children, he accessed live lessons for the whole of the school day. Archie is studying for four A-levels and is predicted A*A*AA. The average A-level result in Archie's school is an A.

Imagine you are a university admissions officer or responsible for choosing apprenticeships for a law firm. How are you going to think about these children when the details you receive are simply Matt AAB and Archie A*A*AA?

And then there are many different possibilities in between – Sheila lives in a social housing and shares a bedroom with her brother. She has her own laptop and plenty of data. She attends a

school with 47.1% of children on FSMs. She's predicted AAB. The average A-level result at her school is a C.

Or Gilly, who lives at home with her sister and parents with space and technology. Her school is a grammar school and she had two periods of isolation at home during lockdown. She's predicted ABB. Her school has 6.3% on FSM and the average A-level result is an A.

If we create a table that includes this information as a way of contextualising the outcomes of exams which rather than assuming a level playing field between all school and home situations, will enable those making decisions about these students' futures to understand their achievements in context. So for our four example students, their data could be represented below:

Student Name Type of School % FSM Average A-level result Home environment (1 = very under resourced, 2= average, 3= well resourced) Exceptional circumstances Predicted results

Matt comprehensive 64.5% D 1 20% of school missed due to isolating AAB

Archie private 0% A 3 N/A A*A*AA

Sheila comprehensive 47.1% C 2 N/A AAB

Gilly grammar 6.3% A 3 20% of school missed due to isolating ABB

The measure for the home environment and exceptional circumstances would have to be generated within a school and could easily be incorporated into, for example, a UCAS form. All the other data is existing data held by schools and the government This kind of representation could also be used for GCSE results and admissions to Sixth Form Colleges and Further

Education as well as to the end of KS2 results when children leave primary schools.

The aim is not to produce an index – as that would involve reducing the complex data too much to enable significant judgements. However, by simply presenting that extra information alongside the bare details of the exam grades, admissions tutors and others making decisions can do this on the basis of information that is more deeply rooted in the student’s context.

ID: 1795-11 - Category: Education

The University Students and Primary School Mentorship programme - overcoming educational inequalities and mental health

The University and Primary School Mentorship programme would approach two different groups - primary school children and university students - who have both experienced a challenge surrounding the changes to their education during the pandemic. This issue provides a great opportunity to link two groups that have experienced very specific problems within the pandemic, but two demographics that would gain from working together. It would work by partnering local primary schools and universities and pairing up one university student to a pupil specifically in need, that has been recognised by their school as having a particular disadvantage, whether due to their financial circumstances (being on FSM), having parents who are key workers, falling behind academically, or experiencing social isolation in class. The child would be paired with a university student who has volunteered to sign up to this exciting new opportunity. University students will likely be interested in this opportunity, especially given the levels of social isolation they have experienced during the pandemic. This would also be a great thing for careers departments in universities across the UK to encourage via their respective channels, as volunteering is a great thing to have on one’s CV, and their commitment to this during a pandemic would also build a sense of collective purpose amongst university students. We have seen that communal aid and the pooling of resources has become even more essential during the pandemic, and projects such as this one ought to be rolled out at a national level in order to build links between those impacted negatively by the pandemic. This policy would be a mutually beneficial and participatory solution that utilises an opportunity for an intersectional solution to a practical problem. We know that collaborative work in the community is an essential grassroots tool, and by connecting university students with school children in this way, we could have an innovative solution for both parties. For school children, the opportunity to have someone to talk to for advice, guidance and assistance with either homework, classwork or simply for a space to chat with a positive role model. Currently, state schools do not have the funding to fill gaps and hire private tutors and extra staff, so by making this initiative a voluntary

program, this is a sustainable solution that is beneficial for both parties. This scheme would not require training, as a voluntary program whereby university students can choose which area they would like to sign up to assist with from the following options for primary school pupils - Maths, English, Science, Spelling and Grammar, General Mentoring and Coaching. They would then be paired with a child on the basis of that child's recognised support needs by their school, and they would do a 6 week programme of weekly mentoring with. This would follow with a Monitoring and Evaluation session with both student and child doing a survey, and if it is recognised there is still a need for continued support they would continue for another 6 weeks. Keeping the tutor and weekly time slot the same would be essential in giving the school child a clear and dependable routine where they can build a positive and genuine relationship with their mentor. As a former tutor for primary school children, teaching assistant and volunteer with International Citizen Service, I understand just how rewarding that working with children to address societal issues can be. The potential that young people have in having a positive influence on a child's development and wellbeing cannot be underestimated. In the UK, 28% of school children are classed as 'disadvantaged' and this sees them leave school on average 18 months behind. COVID has widened this gap by a drastic 75%, equating to them being 2.5 years behind. This scheme therefore, would be especially beneficial for those children who are unable to afford private tutoring. The scheme would also provide an opportunity for children of key workers to gain extra support and have someone to talk to, as many of these children might well be experiencing shared anxieties around the pandemic, and the impact this might have on their mental health has not been fully considered. Furthermore, as a university student myself, I understand just how difficult it has been to remain positive during the pandemic, with disrupted learning and the pressures to continue to excel academically. In a survey conducted by The Recovery Clinic, 76.8% of participating students across the UK admitted to dealing with anxiety and worries, and 74.6% responded that they had felt stressed or overwhelmed. I would argue that this opportunity would give university students something to look forward to but would also not be too much to take on - an hour of volunteering or community work weekly is completely doable and is something many students would have already been committed to prior to the pandemic. Having a purpose and commitments outside of academia is essential to keeping a positive mental wellbeing, and lockdown has made this more difficult. Therefore, the University and Primary School Mentorship programme would be an incredible solution to the respective needs of both of these groups.

ID: 1006-11 - Category: Education

Open Learning Library

Education for many is hindered by three critical constraints that I believe can be resolved through the use of a novel platform based on modern technology practices from the fourth

industrial revolution.

The Three Constraints:

1. Great teachers and their lesson plans are monopolized by few institutions restricting the number of students who have access to the best learning techniques.
2. New teachers require years of practice to develop new lesson plans wasting countless hours reproducing the same information with every new cohort of teachers.
3. Teachers are forced to create lesson plans for a variety of students and therefore struggle to tailor their lessons around unique student learning styles leaving some students, who require more nuanced approaches, behind.

To resolve these three critical educational constraints and generate a disruptive boom in educational outcomes I propose the government pioneer the creation of a digital Open Learning Library where teachers could share, modify, and leverage lesson plans from other teachers who demonstrate the best outcomes. Students on the other hand could find lessons that are best suited to their learning styles for any subject.

To do this I propose the government treat lesson plans the same way a programmer treats code in an Open Source project. In what I'm calling an Open Learning Library - for free or a modest fee - anyone can create their own lesson or access and adapt a gifted teachers' version of a lesson plan to suit their learning needs and style based on the outcomes of other students who succeeded in leveraging a particular teaching method.

This democratisation of learning material would dramatically reduce the amount of time a teacher takes to prepare for lessons by providing greater access to the best lessons - freeing up valuable time for individual coaching and tailoring lessons around their class's needs - instead of designing lesson plans from scratch. It would also encourage a race to the top educational

standards by transparently giving teachers and students more visibility into how different lessons teaching the same subject impacted the scores of students who learned using a particular method over another.

ID: 1374-11 - Category: Education

Helpless babies with babies

Problem Statement

The COVID-19 pandemic has struck hard in most family's especially those from slums and very low-income families. With most of them working in the informal sector, the hard economic times have rendered most informal jobs to shut down therefore worsening the situation. The education sector that used to occupy the school-going adolescents and youths and ease the parents of the burden of basic commodities like food is closed and therefore putting even more pressure on the households. Due to this pressure, most of the school-going girls cannot afford most basic commodities such as food and sanitary towels which would otherwise be provided in school by the county government aid. It is for this reason and many others that they opt to sell sex in order to get food and contribute towards caring for their families. Because of this, the teenage pregnancy rates have gone 10 fold in the slums of coastal Kenya compared to the national prevalence prior to the pandemic. The pregnancy does not halt the sex work from taking place, many opt to secure abortions through crude and uncouth means that could be fatal and deadly; while those who opt to carry on with the pregnancy continue with the sex work even in pregnancy and after birth in order to get basic commodities for her baby and herself. Well, there's nothing we could do to stop the pregnancy, but we could do something to empower these young mothers to get the basic commodities such as clothing, soap and milk for their babies instead of having to sell sex to survive. With mothers as young as twelve years old, the only help she knows is her guardian who also lives from hand to mouth; and has to bear the burden of another extra mouth to feed; the girl only sees a single avenue for survival, Sex work.

Solution

A seed grant to empower the girls to invest in small scale money-generating business of worth

\$100 will have a great impact to the young vulnerable mothers. The businesses will occupy the girls as well as provide dimes for their day to day needs including a 250ml packet of milk costing \$0.2 per day for the baby. In order to ensure the capital is put into good use, we will tag on it a minimal interest rate of 10 % (subject to discussion) for the loans given to start the businesses. We will then put them through a financial management mentorship programme on how to run the business and plough back profits and save. This will not only empower the girls but also enable them to yearn to transform their lives and if possible return back to school. The money ploughed back will then be used to reach more girls and enable transformation through economic empowerment.

ID: 2087-11 - Category: Education

The use of university students to support tutoring of socially deprived children

I've outlined (in my answer to 1b) the acute impact of the loss of 1-to-1 teaching hours on children in socially deprived areas, who do not have the wealth, the physical environment or the family members to support their education through this difficult time. These families also lack the financial ability to make up this loss of teaching hours themselves, without the financial resources or social capital to access private tutoring. There is also a limited window to fix this before the educational impact on these children cannot be undone. The number of teaching hours required to enable these children to catch-up is huge, and the existing teaching and tutoring capacity in the public and private sectors to undertake this work is insufficient. Even if the work could be contracted out to firms, it would be more costly than my proposed approach below and would require an army of tutors to undertake this work. Fortunately however, there is a large number of university students who, by definition of being accepted onto university courses, have achieved a high degree of academic excellence already. Therefore, my proposed solution is to initiate a scheme to support university students to provide 1-1 tutoring to the most effected children whose learning has been impacted the most by this pandemic. The response is proposed to focus on those children from socially deprived areas, using the commonly recognised measure of whether a child receives free school meals as a proxy indicator of whether they should be eligible for this free tutoring programme and whether they fall within the groups that should be targeted. Traditional tutoring remains in place and can be accessed, as it is now, by those who can afford it. There are additional benefits to this proposal. University students have also been impacted by this pandemic and will find themselves entering a job market impacted by Covid with a heavy debt burden which can delay individuals' ability to achieve aims in life which many take for granted, such as paying for weddings or purchasing their first home. I would not expect students to provide tutoring services for free but would expect tutoring would be flexible enough to fit around existing university commitments. While a specific tutoring 'curriculum' could be provided, students would be expected to be sufficiently

proficient in the relevant subject matter to respond to individual children's needs. Should sufficient university students not be available, it should be possible to provide Group based tutoring although the potential benefit to children could decrease. While directly paying students for any tutoring they undertake is one possibility, an alternative measure of financing this would be by forgiving elements of student debt or by paying part of their university fees – potentially through the student loan mechanism. This would enable students, who will be entering the highly competitive post-Covid labour market, to do so with a lesser debt burden, freeing them up to contribute more spending in the post-Covid economy. An assessment could also be made on whether such payments should be taxable or whether the Treasury would be willing to forgive the tax on these payments to make the scheme more attractive. It's possible that these student tutors may also get a taste for teaching. While application for teaching training has rocketed at the current time, there is no guarantee that this will be maintained and that the difficulties recruiting teachers, particularly for STEM subjects, will not return. These tutoring assignments would also provide examples of work opportunities that the university student generation could utilise when entering the job market. They may be further benefits as well, which would assist social mobility. Should students from wealthier families tutor students, a benefit would be the possibility of students from socially deprived areas being granted access to social networks that these children previously would have no access to. This may provide future opportunities for social mobility to improve outcomes for children in this generation. By providing an early glimpse into what the world of work may expect of them, children may find it less difficult to 'fit in' to industries which predominantly recruit from other environs. Such a scheme would likely need either central or regional co-ordination – perhaps at a Council level – but could be promoted nationally, and through schools and universities themselves. I realise this proposal would require additional work to assess its viability but I firmly believe there are multiple potential benefits to this proposal which are worthy of further consideration.

ID: 1797-11 - Category: Education

On The Creation Of An Online Site To Give Access To Books/ Articles For Free

In relation to poorer young people not having an easy access to books and reading material to assist their education, I would like to see the creation of an online library of articles and PDF files that anybody in any part of the country can access without any charge. There are hundreds (if not thousands) of such reading materials available already on sites like Jstor but which are often difficult to sift through as they are targeted to higher-level academics. Not only that, but most students below 18 have little to no awareness of such sites existing at all. However, a specially designed website where access to appropriate and stimulating literature could be provided to those aged between 14-18 (for instance) would give students a great opportunity to advance their learning.

Not only would such a site be a great resource of free educational material, but there could be an incentives mechanism established on the site to further encourage students to learn. From a competitive leader board based on the hours of reading each student completes to monthly prizes for those most engaged with the site, such incentives would help motivate young people across the country to self-study and learn new things independently. Teachers could also set reading homework tasks alongside any other school work.

Over time, as the site expands its user base, courses and learning modules could be provided to assess the extent to which students have retained a strong grasp over what they have learned. As these assessments would be specially designed with high expertise, a small charge could be asked for in order to help keep up the maintenance of the site. Companies like Seneca Learning have already adopted elements of this in their work. Alternatively, if the site is modelled as a social enterprise, funding could be secured by philanthropists or external charities.

Regardless of if the expansion of the site is modelled entirely as a social enterprise or if it incorporates elements of monetisation, educational inequality would significantly be reduced across the country as access to the basic resource of academic information would be provided to all students for free. I believe that under the right management and with appropriate backing, an online site providing access to specific pieces of educational content for free (e.g. online PDFs/ articles) would be one step in the right direction to tackling inequality in our country. It would help young people have access to content that was relevant to what they are currently doing in lesson.

ID: 1733-11 - Category: Education

Innovative teaching methods for effective student knowledge dissemination in education sector post COVID-19

1. Imparting education through online using virtual platform, non-existent of quality audiovisual content in dissemination of Knowledge, lack of internet to empower e-learning in rural areas were key concerns. COVID lockdown lead to closure of Schools, disrupted lesson plans, broke teacher child – parent interaction, lowered students Knowledge, increased failure in exams,

impacted teacher's revenue. Crisis enabled me develop AVC- audiovisual course which serves as a cornerstone of many blended online courses as it offers effective educational tools, helps to reduce cognitive load, increases student engagement, enables active learning experience.

2. During Covid 19 students felt boredom while teaching few dry chemistry topics. AVC audiovisual content developed may be used in all blended courses/flipped learning courses .Using content specific technologies Role of innovative teaching methodology required.The main challenge arises in building a story board, using multi disciplinary sciences like Physics, biology etc Using introductory Defense Mechanism in Millipede Benzaldehyde is introduced. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crQXa8_1xzE Ethanol is introduced by explaining real life example hangover experience caused due to alcohol consumption <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9sG4COMkzY>. Boron is introduced by a farmer raising tomato crop story <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zagWiMzWlgg>, skydiving experience explains alkyl halides, popularizes science. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6fgcx6TdMo> 3. Creating curiosity among students is key concern.

Question Based Study What, Why, How is used. Pictorial representations of turbine motor shown to aid in understanding thermodynamics. In kinetic theory invisible atoms are visualized using small balls with animated movement, simulated highlights depicts collisions. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0uxOH4Bm2M> In solid liquid equilibrium, water is represented as the Space filling 3D model to provide exact positioning of 3 atoms in water H₂O. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COzZ6OS-SqU> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef3f3AWXMmk> - In Photoelectric Effect electrons are shown as red balls, in depth inner atomic view explains concept.

4. Clearing basic to advanced level concepts to students is challenging, requires scientific approach. Experimental audiovisuals designed using scientific methodology. In Rutherford's experiment, to explain how alpha rays deviate at 120 & 180 degrees, in depth animation with positively charged alpha particles shown as balls, undergoes repulsion aids in conclusion atoms has condensed atomic nucleus <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWlfz1JSe70> In-depth animation on Oil Drop experiment visualizes oil drop in ball form, explains how droplet becomes negative on x ray exposure, clings to droplet bringing conceptual clarity <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdLvJujDrAl>. Werner Heisenberg's Uncertainty principle, leading to quantum model of atom is hardly understood by students.To glorify Heisenberg's idea innovative thought experiment was designed to explain Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, instills scientific temper, stimulate Out of Box Thinking leading to inventions. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxjW1GutYZg>. Several ball stick models were used to explain organic chemistry mechanisms <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCjsM-IM4Zs>.

Inorganic topics like yellow flame test of Sodium is explained depicting the electronic transition. Existence of sand in silica SiO_2 is explained 3 dimensionally
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NuATSEUyFx0>

5. Relating two variables like pressure and volume and proving Boyle's law of inverse proportionality Pressure-volume is a difficult proposition using data. Two variables like pressure and volume related using experimental data, compiled in graph mode using Boyle's Isotherm
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GINEYcyzxK8>. Space filled ball structures used to explain relation between rate of reaction & reactant concentration.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2ke4dbg6nY>

6. Difficulty in student understanding arises when topics like Frequency of wave, SN_2 mechanism Walden Inversion in alkyl halides. Frequency is explained using Man sitting inside a boat in still pond analogy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zroD3-KaioQ>, Walden inversion mechanism explained using Turning of Umbrella
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-Znfdsnjb4>, Limiting reagent explained using sandwich analogy. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCas6IXZLM8> . To give real live experience original background sounds like water splash, wind were used.

7. Inability of Student in solving numerical is key concern. Problems related to conversion of centimeter length to meter. Problem solving approaches? To ease Dimensional Analysis numerical animated video is used <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXXSIDF2DRE>.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErAd1oumVKI> Live problem videos using whiteboard, Wacom, Screen recording software are used.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07AAMDA76nQ>

8. After topic explanation in class room, many students could understand the concept but are failing in application part. For example: How could we explain breathing process in humans using chemical equilibrium? Breathing video explains chemical equilibrium application
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-65LBCpIHXw> Movie watching video explains Tyndall Effect phenomenon. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDFTAESIK0> Sailor signaling in sea, Holmes signal are Phosphine gas applications. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeJI9IVf0eI>

9. How to relate explained topics to engage students in a class room online? Frequency of Wave Live experiment video in class depicts effective student engagement & conceptualization
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4N7pYmPZACg> 10.

Shared chemistry knowledge through YouTube channel with 44.4K viewership, 507 subscribers,

Quora with 175 followers, answered 112 questions, have 313k viewership, posted LinkedIn videos helped science popularization.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/desam-sudhakar-reddy-557a934b/detail/recent-activity/shares/> , AVs helped students build strong foundations in Chemistry, enabled innovative Teaching methodologies to educator, finally instilled research aptitude among scientists. Against all odds, the desire or passion to teach & share my knowledge in the field of chemistry, has rekindled & aided me to develop good quality videos and I believe that it would have a huge impact on learning process of students & as well aid in enhancing teaching methodologies. Contributed to Education and Environment by publishing different articles. Received “Excellent Scholar Award”, “Best Video Award” & nominated for “Best Innovative Learning Tools “at International Education Awards IEA 2020, adjudged as Challenge Winner for Digi EduHack 2020 – Global Event. AVC Impact - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJXOEeKWehA> ; Awards <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xaq6Lr1LXc> ; Impact <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrcd1smPr88> ; YouTube Channel : Chemistry by Sudhakar, AVC : <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCN9QmNjdY55NqHIQJXm1uZg>, AVC WEBSITE : <https://www.avceducate.com>, Quora link: <https://www.quora.com/profile/Desam-Sudhakar>

Published international articles sharing valuable insights contributing to education and environment. 11. Equity in delivering Education – Societal Approach: Teaching Chemistry to students since 20 years. In 10 years developed 900 audiovisuals, covering 38 chapters, prepared Story 1000 Boards, typed 35000 slides, 45 hour Voice over’s recorded, dedicated research in teaching methodologies – Probably no man on earth would had ever contributed to Audiovisual Development in chemistry discipline/any discipline, Contributed 2 decades to education sector. Easy access to Education: Videos of 6- 8 minute duration, with less than 10mb size is easily transferable, accessed by all rural students/faculty deprived of proper internet facilities 12. Wise use of technology: AVC audiovisual content is highly sustainable as it can incorporated in all blended courses/flipped learning courses. Superlative audiovisuals can effectively disseminate knowledge with latest futuristic AR/ VR technology in designing practical’s, Artificial Intelligence/Game based education projects, which promotes better student engagement

ID: 1644-11 - Category: Education

Great ideas come from anywhere - how to capitalise and innovate!

Research councils focus and restrict their funding to those at higher education establishments. Whilst this currently makes sense for basic/fundamental research, why is this exclusive to this group of organisations? It is understandable that higher education institutions need funds, but there should be opportunities for the rest of society to access more funds to innovate and work on societal challenges too. Especially as so many businesses, charities and individuals are innovating and delivering valuable solutions to many of the challenges that research councils

pose.

The best ideas will come from opening these challenges up to not just academics, but experts, innovators and anyone with valuable ideas from all over. There are many ways to easily engage and increase diversity and innovation in the UK. All of these begin with opening up opportunities to more people, rather than attempting to create more innovation in the same way it's always been done and expecting a different outcome. We should look to countries such as the US, whose university and research funding models and cultures have proven to create world changing innovation!

In so many cases organisations, charities and individuals or groups and communities in society are already providing novel, creative and impactful solutions to many of society's problems. We are missing opportunities to capitalise and accelerate such impactful activities, when we could so easily propel them if they were only given more opportunities and access to resources and support.

There should be more funds available for anyone in society with an idea to apply, whether idea-only competitions such as this, or actually funding individuals to lead the projects they suggest. This is especially true as more and more talented former university researchers move to industry where pay and benefits are often higher and the opportunity to work on real-world problems and create impact is often greater (due to larger resources and the constant need for industry to innovate so their competitors don't overtake). Such individuals should be encouraged to start UK businesses, or where they wish to, lead projects in their spare time, or at the very least be able to apply for innovative grant funding ideas without having to work at a university.

The UK government needs to adapt and innovate to meet the rest of the world - education is being disrupted with online and self-directed learning - how will we fund these talented individuals who don't come from universities. We need to be providing opportunities to tap into and enable experts in these spaces to be able to innovate - this is what will make the UK a

global leader and progress against its industrial and other challenge areas much faster. The current methods exclude such talent, industry and charities leaving them providing their knowledge and expertise elsewhere.

For example, those working as software engineers in big tech companies in the UK should be able to apply for funds and grants looking for innovative solutions to problems that require software engineers. Someone working as a community engagement manager at a charity would have excellent ideas and knowledge for how to improve collaboration in society. A patient suffering from a disease will have amazing ideas for how to improve treatment programmes and the diagnosis pathway. We need to be bringing groups together and increasing diversity of ideas.

If the government wants to innovate then the first step is to realise the old traditional methods and processes are often the very methods that stifle innovation. They need to be forward thinking and to do this they need to be opening opportunities up beyond the usual organisations, encouraging cross sector, cross disciplinary and diverse groups to collaborate.

This is particularly true with technology, where so many are turning to online education and building their own tools, and especially as “no code” platforms increase and will allow non-technical organisations such as civil service and charities to utilise technical solutions.

I propose the often suggested moonshot or scientific/innovation challenge funding be delivered through new inclusive and innovate funding council that anyone can apply to and that anyone can be awarded funds to build and lead such projects. The same level of due diligence, review, detail and project planning should be required; a project management office should also support the delivery of such projects. It's time we became a more modern, inclusive society.

All government and research council funded projects related to real world impact should be

required to have an advisory board comprised of relevant industry, academia and end users, and more citizen engagement should be a requirement of such projects. This way, we have greater assurance that solutions will be of real value to those who they are meant to help, and even just the opportunity to input and be heard will be of huge value to society.

Technology should be capitalised on (whilst ensuring everyone has access to technology and training to be able to use this - can use volunteers to deliver training en masse) - e.g. apps can be used to allow residents to vote online, suggest ideas, report issues, propose solutions etc. with their local and national government. If we want an engaged society, then we have to provide more convenient and accessible methods for people to engage. An app with even just opinion voting and reporting issues would be much more efficient than the current systems - old websites with multiple report forms and no ability to see what other members of the community are struggling with. These also focus solely on reporting issues, whereas councils would do much better to provide platforms for community members to provide solution ideas as-well and even funding for those already working on improvements or those with clear plans and ability to carry out such solutions.

Further, such technology should be used to allow the government to make more data-driven decisions, utilising insights and feedback from a cross-section of society to deliver change that is maximally impactful.

ID: 1601-11 - Category: Education

Healing the Division

While the global divisions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic are great, so are the opportunities for connection. As working from home became necessary for many across the globe, people have become more comfortable with online meetings and learning. These online meetings make creating new connections across the globe, allowing people to meet without the need for travel. As technology makes long-distance connections easier, people will be able to share and understand other cultures better.

In addition to the connections formed through business, the pandemic could provide a platform to connect people who may never have met in ordinary circumstances. A scheme could be set up similar to more traditional penpals, but using technology to allow instant

exchange of ideas and culture. This scheme could be aimed at children aged 10-16, forming connections between children around the world. The scheme would introduce children to people from cultures they would never typically interact with, showing the leaders of tomorrow that there is more that unites us than divides us. The scheme could also give the children a project, such as creating a business plan or developing an idea that would benefit the environment. This project would teach children to collaborate and overcome problems, such as the difficulty of working online, and navigating language barriers.

The scheme could be run while the pandemic is ongoing, due to it being online, but could still be run online after the pandemic is over, perhaps with a prize allowing the team with the best project to meet in person to develop their ideas further.

This scheme will not be an instant fix to the divisions created by the pandemic, but would allow younger generations to develop a life-long appreciation for the challenges and triumphs of different cultures; as these young people enter the world of business and government this knowledge and understanding would be brought with them. Through cultural exchange, global unity is fostered at an individual scale, which will inevitably follow to the wider world.

ID: 1595-11 - Category: Education

Planetary guardianship: a vocational approach to social commitment and action for the environment

Covid has accelerated a change that was already happening. Jobs are vanishing: from our high streets, from our factories and distribution centres. Artificial intelligence, together with an increase in mechanisation and robotics is, and will be, transforming the world of work. Many of the jobs that are being replaced are ones that those with less academic qualifications may have taken up. At the same time, we are facing increasing challenges to our environment. The challenges are stark: increasing unemployment; perceived inequalities of opportunity for our people; and an environment that is clearly under stress. All this against a background of a rapidly changing climate leading to increasing numbers of severe weather events.

I propose the creation of an entirely new strand to our educational and civic life: planetary guardianship. Every school in the country would include a programme of practical environmental education: many already are. But this would feed into a strategic programme of educational and vocational initiatives that would encompass not only local, grass-roots involvement in local projects but also rigorous academic research. That research would provide the data to steer and inspire local activities to ensure that the whole initiative remained 'joined up'.

Our young are scared of climate change, but they are also leading the way. Many are inspired by Greta Thunberg and 'get it' in ways that their parents don't. And they are the very cohort that risks completing their education only to find that the jobs they might have been drawn to in a previous time no longer exist.

So, this is my proposal, starting where it has already seeded: with the very young:

1. For every kindergarten and primary school in the country to 'care' and be responsible for, something in their local environment. It could be a nature strip, a patch of scrub, or an individual tree. What each project would be could be sponsored by the succeeding levels of Guardianship. But whatever it is, and wherever it is, it must contain the essential element of Guardianship: more than caring for, more than 'knowing stuff about...' It must contain threads of care, responsibility and accountability, and be seen as, and linking with, other such projects by other schools.

2 Secondary schools would include Planetary Guardianship on the core curriculum. It would comprise a whole range of allied skills, crafts and knowledge. Practical work would include aspects of best practice horticulture, agriculture, meteorology and sustainable practices. Strands could be incorporated into civics, law, psychology and sociology: topics already on the curriculum. Environmental projects would be chosen in co-operation with local networks and societies and be of lasting and demonstrable benefit: community fruit orchards; managed scrublands; soft fruits propagated in biology classes, grown on, and planted wherever edible verges and patches would be of benefit to people and wildlife.

3 Universities would provide resources for advanced learning, testing ideas through rigorous research. Without good data it is hard to make good decisions. They would provide the key links with other Planetary Guardians in other countries, who would be working in different climates and environments.

4 In every community there would be a team of Guardians, responsible for co-ordinating projects and for continuous, visible reporting to, and communicating with, people. I don't mean reporting to committees but chatting with, and engaging, all who pass by. Planetary Guardians should be recognised as something special: people whose lives and work are dedicated to making the environment better for all of us. They would also co-ordinate ad hoc local schemes and initiatives, and make sure that these too are incorporated into an overarching strategy.

5 The political dimension. This is a huge initiative, but practical. It addresses issues that are concerning politicians now: how to prevent civic unrest from unemployed and disaffected constituents; how to engage young people who want to take action right here and now rather than wait for others to 'do something'; how to be seen to be taking action on environmental matters. If politicians wish to be seen as 'doing' something, then creating a workforce with pride, purpose and environmental relevance isn't a bad place to start. There will be mutterings of 'we can't afford it'. Yes we can. Many of the jobs previously done by people will increasingly be done at the local level by machines. That will increase. The savings will be considerable. If we re-direct money spent on unpleasant and soulless jobs capable of being mechanised to others involving care for living things there can only be gains: in self-esteem, in civic pride, in environmental knowledge and sustainability.

Summary

My proposal for the post-covid world brings together three challenges: weaknesses in our current educational provision for the less academic; growing unemployment due to increasing use of AI and mechanisation, and on-going concerns for our immediate environment in the UK and for climate change. We human beings are social animals; we don't like to be locked-down away from others; we need to feel valued and to know there is a purpose to our daily lives. Covid has shown us that there are opportunities to be had for making a difference if only we can conceive of them: ways of being together in the world, with each other, doing jobs that are recognised as fulfilling a need. As mechanisation increases we shall need jobs that put us back in touch with the natural world that we are an integral part of, but have chosen to ignore or under-value. If we can initiate an entirely new branch of national focused endeavour, valued, rewarded and respected at every level, we could be well on the way to addressing some of the

key challenges that covid has presented us with. The opportunity for Planetary Guardianship to address these challenges in a long term, sustained initiative, is one that we cannot afford to miss.

ID: 1216-11 - Category: Education

Measure Children and Young People's Wellbeing in schools and colleges termly from KS2 upwards

The shift to use of online technologies in education makes it very easy to ask subjective wellbeing questions of pupils from key stage 2 upwards on at least a termly basis. The questions are well established and can be benchmarked. The technology exists to be able to do this and is used effectively in South Australia, United Arab Emirates and the Netherlands as well as in some academy chains and independent schools in the UK.

This data would allow us to understand where issues & strengths exist, who for, where and potentially why and how they interact. It can help us to understand how long impacts last or whether people adapt (they often do). We will be able to see the wider non-academic impact of schools that has become apparent in the pandemic and value this properly. We will be able to pick up and address the effects of loneliness, lack of physical activity, mental health, parental economic circumstances and academic attainment together; all of which we know effect our future resilience. We know from longitudinal studies that the impact individual teachers on both wellbeing at 32 and later educational attainment can be identified from as young as ages 8 and 10; we would not have to wait a generation to see and act on these findings effectively.

Requiring this data from all schools termly from KS2 upwards and linking anonymously to the National Pupil Database would be an investment in the future wellbeing of the nation. The data needs to be available to all who have an interest in the wellbeing of our young people - families, communities, civil society, multiple public sector organisations and employers. Seeing the value add in wellbeing terms will help communities have agency in improving life chances quite likely, but not at all certain, to have been impacted by the pandemic.

ID: 553-11 - Category: Education

Making education available to the masses easily and at a fair level.

I feel that it could be so easily (and economically) made fair across the board and accessible for the majority of people. If a TV channel was assigned for each year group, and daily lessons televised in the same format and timetable as would be used in school, you would only technically require one set of teachers. Lessons could be recorded in an actual classroom to give a feeling of normality and access to the usual equipment etc for demonstrations. One set of worksheets and timetables could be emailed (or posted to those without access) to all children and then each school could just have their own teachers available for questions if required either through online chat or a call. They wouldn't all be under pressure to be sending out separate workloads from each individual school, freeing up a lot of time and expense (and avoiding a lot of stress) and they would have time for admin, supporting students with questions, marking work etc. As the government's TV broadcaster of choice is the BBC it could also be easily accessible on iPlayer for those who need a recap or miss any time with sickness or medical appointments. Everyone would receive the same education, from the same teacher, at the same time. They could even make sure that every pupil in the country was benefitting from the best level of teaching available, as they could choose the best teachers and only need one per subject. If anything, some pupils would be getting a better level of education than they do at their own school. I know some don't have access to the internet (although I see there are schemes available to help with that now) but I don't know of many without a TV, and those with more than one child who do have internet access could use iPlayer for multiple children if that was a possibility. I see they have started putting a couple of hours a day of 'educational programmes' on, but this really doesn't take the place of actual lessons as such, and I'll be honest, I tried watching a couple of random 'Bitesize' shows and I couldn't get on with it as an adult, let alone expect my kids to stare at that orange background and mind numbing subjects. But if this is possible then I don't see any reason why it isn't doable to go that step further and introduce a full 'school day' on there instead. I do really think that it could be a good way to get everyone on the same train, ease the pressure on both schools and parents, and I feel it could be pretty easily executed (definitely easier than what the schools and parents are currently struggling through!). It could even be an opportunity long term after the pandemic for those with physical access issues, for homeschooling support, for those with issues such as disability, bullying, hospitalisation, even children who have been suspended etc. Maybe areas with limited school spaces or new developments where enough class space isn't available yet. Or even future pandemics or similar (never say never, at least hopefully we'll learn from this time around and get it right if we have another!) Please excuse the grammar and bullet point-rambling feel to my answer, I have a baby asleep on my arm, a small boy chatting in my ear and bouncing on my shoulder, and I'm definitely glad my kids aren't old enough to need me to remember anything I did in secondary school in the current circumstances!

ID: 1456-11 - Category: Education

The depression that's left behind

The COVID-19 pandemic occurred at a time when most of the school's or university sessions were about to end, this led to the shifting of the medium of studies to online. To which the teachers and students were new and never had an experience in the past.

Online studies have sure shot advantages, but midst the pandemic it only caused more problems, some students were not able to study that effectively, some procrastinated while studying, and some who had been affected by the virus were left behind in the curriculum. These factors not only affected their grades but also disturbed their mental peace. After seeing bad grades, most of the students try to find their mistakes, and after not being able to find one, they tend to compare themselves with others, and then comes self-doubt. Self-doubt is one of the contributing factors of growing depression among students.

The factor of not being able to interact with others also led to the extensive use of social media, due to which student starts feeling insecure with their life, they start comparing themselves with the positive side of other people live and negativity starts growing among them that finally leads to depression. Not only students but adults also are struck by depression few people have lost their jobs, few have jobs but are underpaid, and few are still not able to recover from the loss of losing their loved ones.

The world requires a platform where people can get counseling from Psychologists for depression and anxiety disorders. People need someone who can hear what they are feeling, someone who can listen to them, guide them and even give them medical treatment for the worst-case scenario.

Most people think that Psychologists is someone that you visit only if you get mad, but they fail to understand that depression is something if not cured in its initial stage, may lead to serious mental issues in the future. People often dealing with depression tends to become suicidal which is not only a crime but also a sin in eyes of God.

ID: 1336-11 - Category: Education

How to tackle the issue of continuity of children's education and their mental health

In answer to the problem of disruption to the continuity of children's education and their mental health I propose the following ideas:

- 1) Repurpose high street retail spaces that are no longer in use into outdoor spaces that could include specific areas for educational purposes and
- 2) Incentivise and reward physical activity to promote wellbeing and to tackle the obesity crisis.

One of the by-products of the COVID19 crisis is that consumers have changed the way they shop and, as a result, a significant number of major retailers went bankrupt (Debenhams, Top Shop etc) during the pandemic. So, there is going to be a lot of unused retail space because their new owners are just going to use online selling platforms. My idea stems from the German "Waldkindergarten" (forest kindergarten) concept where pre-school children are taught outdoors whatever the weather.

However, rather than identify green-field sites for these projects, you could redevelop swathes of inner-City areas into green spaces and equip them with some useful features that children of all ages could access. Some sheltered areas would be provided in the form of eco-pods that had charging points and were WiFi enabled.

There could also be catering trucks providing wholesome food in the parks too which would help the beleaguered hospitality industry and encourage people to support their local suppliers again. Children who are entitled to free school meals could present a QR code on their phones or a card at these trucks and get a nutritious hot meal. And of course, all members of society could benefit from the sites outside of school hours (ie: evenings and weekends.)

In most cases, the transport infrastructure would already be in place so everyone could easily access these zones. In doing this, no child should have to go without education or decent food and, in the year when the UK is hosting COP26, it would also boost our green credentials amongst the global community.

One of the observations I made from looking at photos of the victims of the COVID19 pandemic was that a large proportion of them were overweight/obese. This is an entirely preventable, social problem and one which, if tackled, could save the NHS a lot of money further down the line by reducing the number of people suffering from heart disease and some forms of cancer.

From an early age, we know that children respond well to being rewarded for doing something that they are told to do and/or for doing something well. Why don't you task someone to create an App that tracks activity (like Strava for example) and then reward children when they have reached certain milestones.

The reward should not be cash per se but should have some monetary value. Eg: they would receive a voucher which could be redeemed for reduced leisure centre/gym membership or perhaps some equipment to use at home. This would give the child a sense of achievement and also boost the gym sector economy which has been hit badly due to closures throughout the pandemic.

It is also widely acknowledged that there is a link between physical activity and a greater sense of wellbeing. So, if we can encourage more young people to be active then it follows that fewer of them will be depressed. Or at least, if they are still depressed, hopefully, it will be less often/less severely as a result of taking exercise.

ID: 3027-11 - Category: Education

The Subject Guides Books for the Children across Primary Schools

During the second lockdown the Government provided extra funding and schemas for the

schools to get more IT devices for their students. However, this temporarily support did not solved the issue of inequality and accessing the learning for many poor or disadvantaged children and families nor inequality issues across the country.

Therefore, I would like to suggest quite simple solution which will include all the primary children and may be beneficial to future education across the country. My suggestion for the Government is to introduce the Guide Books for main subjects, for all the children across the Primary schools.

To have Guide Books for main Subjects may solve many of the issues highlighted by Covid-19 and challenges of home-schooling showed in parents survey by BBC:

- Not always clear expectations from the school and way how these were communicated
- Differences and gaps in expectations varied by different schools and teachers
- Learning and home schooling based on and depended on technology devices
- Cost for students and their families for this kind study: price of a computer, a laptop or tablet, + Software such as Microsoft office and Antivirus subscription fees, + Internet data, + printers, ink & paper....
- IT skills necessary for using apps, Teams, Zooms – challenges for parents / not realistic expectations for young children to navigate themselves and use these independently.

The Guide Books I suggest should be:

- Age and stage appropriate designed, so each child could navigate by the book himself. These books should have pictures, examples, print etc. according to the age/stage, based on National Curriculum. From my personal experience I want point at importance of holding a book, feeling it, turning the pages, looking at the pictures, reading and finally, learning themselves for the children.
- The books should follow the National Curriculum for each stage and follow each year study programme across the subjects: English; Maths; Science, one guide book for each subject.
- These books should help to parents as ‘wizards’ to get clear orientation through their child’s learning in particular subject, stage and tips how to support their child learning.
- These Guide Books should be personal, belong to each child. Children should get their books at the beginning of the term in September in the school, take them home and use them. The books can be used many ways: by the teachers, parents and children during the school year.
- These books can be first resource in cases of emergency such as long absence or lockdowns

for the teachers, children and parents to refer to.

- Finally, such Guide Books should help to overcome various inequalities, rise and keep good standard across the country in meeting the National Curriculum expectations.

Proposed structure of the Guide Books across the Primary School:

Three books for Reception age:

My Phonics Guide

My Maths Guide

My learning about the World Guide

Four books for Year One programme of study:

My English (Phonics) Guide

My Maths Guide

My Science Guide

My Discovery (Foundation subjects) Guide

Further, for Year Two to Four programme of study, Four books:

My English Guide

My Maths Guide

My Science Guide

My Discovery Guide

Drawing ideas about the 'Subject Guides' how many chapters, pages :

Ø Each book to be child friendly, age appropriate, self- navigating

Ø Clear structure, chapters based on school year with 39 weeks. Each book should have up to 40 chapters, each chapter laid on two pages. Each guide book around 80 pages.

Ø Around 30 to 33 chapters should content the learning across the subject covering National Curriculum and study programme for the year.

Ø Other chapters can have additional activities and tips how to embed and extend child's learning.

Ø Each chapter should have a few hints, tips and links for the parents, suggesting how to support their child's learning and make the learning fun.

Ø Tips for parents to support their children practical, life skills: applying Maths as cooking or doing small tasks at home in the garden, during weekends or holidays.

Ø Advices for the parents how to set up and resource home learning station for their child etc.

Other suggestions:

Personally, I think that Nursery children and Secondary School students may benefit from similar guides in future.

For example, the Nursery Age Guide should content key topics, pictures with words, numbers and Maths activities, examples and links and tips for the parents how to support their children across different ages: under 2s, 2-3s and 3-5s.

The Reception aged children should be provided with starting pack with: Set of flash cards for Phonics & Maths and Set of mark making tools.

ID: 1568-11 - Category: Education

Incentive to commit

Medical students University fees could be reduced or paid fully providing they agree to practice in a shortage area for a minimum number of years, say 7 to 10. If they leave before that time they would have to pay the fees back, or at least a proportion of them. This would help ease the shortage in rural areas and also contribute to the levelling up agenda.

ID: 1373-11 - Category: Education

National Civilian Service or UK Future Task Force

What's the problem?

- Youth unemployment
- Skills deficit
- Lack of resilience in Public Services & National Infrastructure

Solution?

A national programme to engage young people 16 – 25 in a new "National Effort" to build back better across public services and national infrastructure. In return participants will benefit from

real world training, building skills and experience across a range of roles from trades/engineering & scientific to clerical sectors.

What are the key objectives?

Create a new intermediate level workforce between full-time education and full-time work, aimed at giving young people new skills and a practical introduction to the world of work. Giving future employers a much more job-ready workforce pool from which to choose.

At the same time this 2-year programme would create a huge task force to help deliver improvements to services and infrastructure nationwide.

How will it work?

Volunteers: will be given 13 weeks of residential “basic training” covering the objectives of the programme and the various benefits to all participants. Each volunteer would have to choose from a list of streams to follow upon completion of their basic training. Each stream would be formally sponsored and supported by public and private sector organisations who would ensure the volunteers get the relevant training and experience with a view to hiring them on completion of the 2 years. Volunteers would receive a guaranteed income throughout the scheme.

Sponsors: will sign up to the scheme to have co-funded volunteers available to help them deliver various sanctioned projects in return for formal on-the-job training. Involvement in the scheme would provide sponsors with priority access to government funded and sanctioned projects. How will it be funded? DWP would provide standard UC to each volunteer and this would be supplemented by the sponsors to the full pay of 3 times standard UC rates. This approach means that the costs for each volunteer is net neutral as they would probably be

receiving UC if they had not volunteered.

Operation & administration costs would be funded by central government but would be cross charged to the various programmes & projects delivered through the scheme. All central and local government departments would be encouraged to participate in the scheme as they should benefit from the pre-trained workforce pool following completion of the 2 years service.

Desired outcomes

250K+ young people each year graduating from the scheme with enhanced skills and experience leading to greatly improved career prospects.

1,000's of public & private sector organisations supporting the scheme each year benefiting from access to the talent pool for project delivery and ultimately hiring decisions.

Employers would see an increasing pool of more mature, skilled and experienced young people to hire and the volunteers would have a wider base of knowledge and a sense of public service and increased self-esteem when entering the job market following 2 years national service through the scheme.

Project selection

In support of the Government's "Levelling-Up" agenda, many of the projects selected for full/partial delivery via the scheme would be submitted by local councils with the support of

residents. The management of the master project list would be centralised, but the delivery of each project would be managed locally. The project list for the scheme would be an evolving list of priorities and progress would be reviewed and published to ensure continued public support for the scheme as a whole.

ID: 941-11 - Category: Education

A national system of regulated professional internships to provide high quality work experience

In many cases applicants for university courses and later for jobs are asked to provide evidence of relevant experience in the form of internships or other types of work experience. However, these internships are notoriously hard to come by and it can often be lottery - ie who you know, or who your parents know. In the case of Covid 19 almost all of these internships have disappeared overnight.

For example, applicants to study medicine are expected to have amassed an impressive record of relevant experience, such as volunteering or helping out in medically related environments. However, these can be incredibly difficult to find, especially if you don't happen to have family members who are in the medical profession. It's not a coincidence that many doctors come from families in which one or more family members is a doctor. Add a pandemic to the mix and most of these work experience opportunities have dried up.

Many businesses meanwhile use 'unpaid' internships as a way to assess how a person performs in the workplace. Employers will frequently only offer a job on the back of a successful internship. With companies delaying hiring new graduates because of the pandemic this avenue into the world of work is no longer available.

But what if we could set up a national registry of high quality paid internships that could be applied for by anyone on a fair and equal basis. By seeking to set up a gold-standard system of internships covering a whole range of professions and jobs we could offer young people (from high school students and undergraduates to new graduates) and from all walks of life, accessible and rewarding work experience in a multitude of different fields. This would give students or

graduates the opportunity to experience different types of work and see if it is something they feel is right for them. It would also give them the opportunity to have a rewarding experience and at the same time make a useful contribution. Students could have the opportunity to build up a 'file' of experiences from high school through university and beyond. These internships should be properly scrutinized to make sure they provide a high quality experience for which the intern is paid fairly for their time. It would end the unfairness of the internship lottery where you can lose out if you don't have 'connections.' Unregulated internships should be banned. There should no longer be any exploitation of interns. Instead companies or institutions should be encouraged to sign up to this new scheme as a way to attract the very best and to 'give back' to young people from all backgrounds and ethnicities.

If the government were to back this scheme they could give private business a financial incentive to support this new body, perhaps in the form of a tax break or a subsidy. Businesses should be encouraged to join the system as a way to find the best young employees and also to be rewarded perhaps in the form of a 'rating' or index for the quality of internship and/or mentorship they provide. Interns could be encouraged to give feedback on their internship experience.

In the event of an unusual situation such as the pandemic, this internship registry could be used in two different ways. Firstly, it could provide an element of 'work experience' to replace parts of a school or university course which has had to be cut. Excellence could be rewarded with a positive evaluation. Secondly, in the case of the National Health Service for example or the care sector, young interns could be offered the opportunity to help pick up some of the extra workload - for example being trained to administer vaccinations, helping out in care homes, helping with work-place testing, filling in for colleagues who are isolating or a multitude of other jobs.

We should regard this extraordinary time as an opportunity to transform young people's lives by giving them all the chance to find their dream career and at the same time be given back their sense of self-esteem. Society should value the next generation - they are the people who having lived through this experience will be the ones to help society deal with it better next time. Instead of forcing them to sit out the pandemic at home we should give them the chance

to make a contribution and at the same time give them hope for their futures once Covid has passed.

ID: 556-11 - Category: Education

Providing a multi lane education system

The answer to our current ONE LANE education system, is to think outside of the limited box we have set for our children.

EARLY INTERVENTION

Every teacher will recognise the pupils who might not fit the system and require extra care and attention. The first year of secondary school is enough of an indicator to future performance. By the time behavioural problems become serious enough to warrant exclusion from school, it's already too late. We need to notice the child who will not conform to the One Lane system and build an alternative programme. If they don't fit the system, the system needs to offer something more suited to their needs.

ALTERNATIVE PATHS

If formal education and academic qualifications are not achieved, we should find a way to take a child on a different path and improve their life chances in another way.

A 14 year old boy with disruptive behaviour and no engagement will eventually be excluded from school. If that same boy had been taken in a different direction, involved in an apprenticeship he is interested in, he could be on his way to learning a skill, a trade and future employment.

This needs to start at the end of the second year of secondary school. Not viewed as a failure of the child or the system, just not a good fit for either. If school doesn't suit 100 teenage boys, 100% will either be kicked out or leave with nothing of value for their futures. There is another way. If 100 teenage boys were placed in apprenticeship schemes, combining classroom education with practical experience, it is possible that 70% of them will stick with it and go on to play their part in society.

That might seem like 30% of boys still lacking life chances and exposed to criminality but it's still 100% offered something other than exposure to detrimental forces on the street and an absolute failure to acknowledge any glimmer of potential.

The effect on society can not be discounted. The excluded students of today are the poor, disadvantaged, mentally ill, disenfranchised, angry population of tomorrow. Some will already be in the pipeline to prison or premature death. More than any other demographic, the risk this presents if disregarded until the damage has already been done.

ENGAGING BUSINESS LEADERS

A sponsorship programme from business leaders could establish a generation of trained, skilled workers ready to join the work force of the future.

Girls and boys who fail to engage with formal education, given the right guidance and opportunities, could be the carers, mechanics, plumbers, musicians, retailers, chefs of the future. We don't have to wait for young people to fail, we can catch them before they fall and set them on an alternative path.

ID: 2037-11 - Category: Education

Building a bank of babysitters!

A number of strategies could help parents to access childcare to enable them to participate in job selection processes. These could include:

Offering grants to nurseries and crèches to enable them to offer short term, drop in care.

Following the incredible volunteer response during the pandemic, building and using a bank of volunteers to offer short term home childcare. It might be worth considering using pairs of volunteers, which would give volunteering a social aspect and feeling part of a team, as well as fulfilling the task more effectively.

Many retirees could find it an attractive and worthwhile opportunity , giving a sense of purpose.

Some training would be essential, particularly with regard to safeguarding and DBS checks would have to be carried out.

The scheme would have to be coordinated, perhaps by local authorities and would need to be publicised, so that people knew it was available. It would also have to be monitored, looking at take up, user feedback and job finding success, to evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme.

ID: 258-11 - Category: Education

Using retired teachers to bridge the gaps.

Retired teachers from all disciplines could be asked to help in their local school. Use the Teachers Pension Agency to match teacher with school. Secondary teachers in English, Mathematics and Science should give very small group tuition (two or three per group) in their own subject. All other teachers should help with English skills in small group sessions; focussing on writing or reading a text together. Some diagnostic work would need to be done initially; preferably by the class teacher.

The school timetable would need to have a thirty minute flexible slot for this tuition to take place. It is no use having a lesson after school as the students are unlikely to be willing. It could take place during a registration or form period; especially if that were timetabled later in the day. This form period might be able to be rolled through the day for different year groups in order to take maximum use of the retired teachers. Perhaps either side and through the lunch period. To help hard pressed timetablers, model examples could be given for the most common school day arrangements.

The government should reimburse to schools the cost of DBS checks.

I am sure retired teachers would be happy to volunteer but they need to be asked individually by the Secretary of State for Education via the TPA. I would suggest that there is a fixed term of one year. Take advantage of retired teachers having less opportunity to travel and the possibility of their being vaccinated.

ID: 2263-11 - Category: Education

Covid-19 lockdown has created a big problem with education

This problem was recognized in the 1960s by the new labour government and the Open University was set up under Harold Wilson's prime ministership. What we now need is to create a similar organization and the current pandemic has forced us some way in the direction of achieving this. Television programmes like the BBC's 'Bitesize' show a possible way forward but they do not go far enough. If terrestrial television is used to create new channels which are dedicated to learning then some of the discrepancy between classes could be addressed.

Let's create a new 'University of the Air' for children of all ages.

ID: 2231-11 - Category: Education

Fighting untruth with critical thinking

The apparent misinformation that has bubbled up during the pandemic must be tackled from various angles, whereby the government must make a country-wide decision to integrate critical thinking into the national curriculum from primary-age. Increased censorship of media platforms is not necessarily the answer. Solutions lie in taking responsibility in education to better teach the growing generations how to spot fake news and misinformation, making them more responsible individuals. Multi-platform information literacy and critical thinking could easily become a core, cross-disciplinary component of the national curriculum that is not only cost-effective but critical. Countries, such as Finland, have already begun to act on this idea; raising their children with cross-subject critical thinking skills. Looking into our classrooms, we could, for example, demonstrate the ease of lying with statistics through maths lessons. This would have the two-fold effect of teaching students key concepts in maths, alongside the integration of engaging real-world examples. In art, it could be shown how an image's meaning is manipulated, as seen in bad journalism. In history, notable propaganda campaigns could be explored to show students how the power of persuasion and language can mislead and deceive. In computer science, we could demonstrate how to spot and avoid scammers. Obviously, these skills are more required than ever with COVID-19 and subsequent internet-use. The scheme would not require great financial investment, but its effects would be prominent. Critical thinking workshops would have to be delivered to teachers by professionals, such that they can be correctly trained on how to weave small exercises into every class. It would not be enough to simply give one-off workshops to primary and secondary age children, rather, little examples woven in their regular study would instil positive change. The long-term goal extends far

beyond the pandemic and into the future of fast information. The education policy would render more active and responsible citizens who are able to fact-check, evaluate and interpret any secondary sources. We must assist children of the UK to be better, more efficient, and less-easily led thinkers. Thus, we are not banning freedom of speech, but encouraging people who earnestly seek the truth. It would be dangerous and irresponsible for the UK to ignore the consequences of fake news. Without proper training, we are walking blindly into the future, whereby many of us - and our children - are poorly equipped to use critical thinking against those who capitalise on ignorance, especially online.

ID: 1973-11 - Category: Education

Require all schools to maintain a digitised curriculum for each year group

This obviously will take time to fully set up, but once in place it shouldn't take too much effort to maintain it. Many teachers will already have digitised a lot of their classes over the last year, so it shouldn't be a case of starting from scratch anyway.

Ofsted would also be able to access this digitised content to assess quality as part of desk top reviews.

The digitised content should include videos of teachers presenting the lesson, clips of other supporting content, links, curriculum text, exercises and answers (protected by password), and mock exam questions associated with each topic where relevant for certain year groups. Exam boards should work with schools to create these.

If there is a future pandemic or a localised situation, such as natural disaster, flooding, snow disruption, terrorist attack etc, that prevents children attending school for a period of time, the teachers would then be able to just continue teaching remotely immediately.

It would also provide students with a perfect resource for exam study or for catching up on missed lessons as a result of illness.

In terms of intellectual property rights, the content created should be considered as owned by the institution wherever a teacher has created the content, or by the exam board wherever materials have been produced by AQA, OCR, etc.

Teachers / boards should be rewarded at a national level wherever they are judged to have produced outstanding content. These prizes should be substantial to encourage as many teachers as possible to really focus on producing quality content.

A means of sharing this content between schools should also be considered to ensure the best teaching is shared across the country to improve the quality of education children are receiving

ID: 1775-11 - Category: Education

Giftng State Pension Benefits Proposal

I appreciate that it may be considered that my suggestion falls outside of the remit, but please bear with me.

My suggestion would financially benefit the Education, and Health Sectors, as well as having broader scope to develop.

I assume that there is no current mechanism whereby someone can effectively opt-out of receiving their State Pension entitlement.

Although not necessarily a significant proportion of those attaining the age at which they are entitled to receive State pension benefits, surely some simply don't need it. I'm sure plenty of

people who don't need it simply gift it as they see appropriate. This is fine, and it gives any individual ultimate control over what they do with it.

Something that I feel would be of benefit, is the ability to redirect State Pension entitlement. In the six months leading up to benefit qualifying age, communication could be sent, with the following options:

- Receive benefit
- Direct benefit a charitable NHS Trust (along the lines of the Captain Tom body)
- Direct benefit to a charitable Education Trust
- Don't receive benefit

I suspect that most people choosing to forgo their entitlement would avoid the fourth option, as this would clearly leave the money with the State. However, at least this would provide that option.

People would need to have the right to change their mind at annual intervals, and in time, should have the choice as to whether they wished to take a proportion of benefit, and in what proportion the NHS or Education may benefit. However, simplest is best initially.

My feeling is that any money going to Education or the NHS should be local to the address of whoever is effectively making the gift. In time, people should have the option to specify the region/city/town/village that they wished to benefit. However, I say again that simplest is best initially.

You will understand that someone who may have retired to the South West, may have been educated etc in the North East, and so would prefer that an area closer to their heart benefit.

I daresay that system issues could hinder the implementation of what I am suggesting. The private sector can make an utter mess of IT implementation, and sadly the State is probably worse. However, surely the benefits that this could reap would outweigh any implementation issues.

I also feel that this proposal could give a great sense of empowerment, and, for those in the fortunate position to decline receipt of their benefits, a feeling of really making a direct positive difference.

There must be no State reliance on what people chose to do from one year to the next. This must absolutely be additional money. In reality, I suspect that only a small proportion would elect not to receive the State pension benefits that they've spent a working lifetime earning. However, even .5% of the State pension bill would equate to significant additional funding for causes closest to most people's hearts.

I believe that the State Pension bill in 2019 was c£950bn. .5% would therefore be c£50m, and that doesn't take into account any potential Gift Aid aspect. Although £50m is a minor sum in the overall scheme of education and health spending, that may be a blessing of sorts. It shouldn't be considered big enough for any State reliance, and therefore erode underlying State funding.

It may be naive of me to think that what I'm suggesting could be swiftly implemented, but then what is there really to stop it? I don't know if anything along these lines has previously been

suggested, or what were perceived to be the reasons not to do it.

I hope that my suggestion is of interest.

ID: 1682-11 - Category: Education

Exams to benefit all pupils

In the light of the huge problems surrounding exams this year, I would like to propose that we move to a modular system of examining pupils. I have thought for many years that we could use a system similar to that of examining the playing of musical instruments, swimming, dancing or gymnastics, where students take an exam at a particular level when they are ready. The huge problem with exams is that it produces failures and fosters a failing attitude in many students. While these exams could be failed and should be rigorous, and marked or moderated independently, the presumption would be that a student would take them when they have a realistic expectation of achieving a good pass. The tests/exams would test a bite sized portion of the curriculum. The students would then almost always leave with a sense of achievement at that particular level. The exams could be offered far more often than once a year. I would suggest at the end of each term. They would only be about an hour long and could therefore be fairly easily timetabled. There would be levels that would coincide with, for example, a level 4 sat in maths and would therefore have a meaning, but the achievement need not be reached at any particular age. At the end of secondary school there would be a level equivalent to a grade C GCSE (I'm not familiar with the new numbered system). Some students would have achieved much higher levels by then. Those who had not reached this level would know which modules they still needed to work for and this should be made possible post 16 for those who might be slower to mature. It would also mean that students with learning difficulties could still have some certificates of achievement to boost their confidence and prove them capable of some types of employment. This would obviously have implications for the timetabling of lessons. I think teachers could work with this. Secondary teachers are used to having sets in different subjects and in primary schools such timetabling has been used for example with the Ruth Miskin literacy scheme very successfully. There would also be the advantage that teachers would not need to cater for such large differentiation in individual lessons, which is hard work in itself. It would need to be introduced slowly, perhaps maths first, to give teachers time to work with it. I also think that this would work better if we reorganised the school year into 6 half terms of about 6 weeks based around December 25th. Christmas Day would always be in a holiday, but Good Friday could be a religious observance day for those who attend church, just as Eid is for Muslim pupils. Easter Monday would mean a day less holiday elsewhere, but that is

not insurmountable. It would be much easier to deliver a module or indeed the current curriculum, if the half terms were even, instead of some being more than 8 weeks and others barely 5.

ID: 1535-11 - Category: Education

Need for more social care for school age children and training those made unemployed

The current pandemic has highlighted the issue of schools being the main hub for social care for children. I will outline the problem with this and then outline how the pandemic has presented three opportunities we can capitalise on to fix this issue. I believe the solution could help other groups along side children as well.

As community services have been cut schools have increasingly become the hub for child social care. We have seen in the pandemic how school closures have affected children and in particular disadvantaged students. We, as a country, are already aware of the impact of a lack of social care for older citizens; however, the pandemic has highlighted the issue for other groups in society as well. As a teacher, I strongly believe that schools have a large role to play in social care for children but that we are failing our students if we are the only ones providing it.

Firstly, schools are only open for 180 days a year, meaning that the issues that have been felt during schools closures were already happening 185 days a year. When a school is the main place for support for children than support is only given for half the year. Additionally, children only start attending school at the age of four. Even then, issues can be missed or support can not be given if children have poor attendance or are school refusers (more likely for disadvantaged students). Identifying issues can be harder in secondary schools, where older children are more worried about bringing issues in to school for multiple reasons and where teachers only see a child for an hour at a time or for 30mins a day as a form tutor. It can therefore take time to gain the trust of a child or collect a whole picture. This is especially difficult in schools that have a high turnover in staff or a lot of supply teachers (more likely in disadvantaged areas).

Secondly, schools are predominately focused on the child. In order to help and support children, then the whole family needs to be worked with and supported. Although schools can

call parents in, they do not see them regularly and some parents can distrust schools due their own experiences. This is the current procedure in place with groups and agencies working around a child but in practice this happens for few children and only for children who need the most help, due to a lack of services and these most often being privately run. This is a system of treating the problem instead of preventing it. If we could do this more regularly it would mean intervention and help could be given sooner.

Lastly, teachers are not trained social workers. Although we receive safeguarding training and have a duty of care to identify issues, we are not qualified to treat them. We are trained to teach and impart knowledge not support families. As a teacher, I have been asked by parents for advice and help and have found myself completely unable to help. I am not trained and I am not a parent, even if I was it doesn't mean I would be in the best place to give advice.

However, there are three opportunities this pandemic has bought about that can be capitalised on to solve this. I believe that we should establish community centres staffed by volunteers and qualified social workers that can become community hubs for support and help. Above all, they could help more than just children but others in the community as well. These centres could offer help and advice, run classes and education and be there to support when schools are closed in holidays.

The first opportunity here is the push for people to retrain after other industries going out of business. The government retraining website would have suggested social care for many people and we should encourage people to retrain in this area. However, people won't be able to retrain without support. A bursary should be provided so that people can afford to train in social care. If not people will not be able to as they will need to prioritise finding another job straight away to support their families. In Denmark, the government supports people who are unemployed for a number of months so that they can take the time to gain the qualifications and experience they need to get the job they want. If we are seriously about "levelling up" we need to give people the support and time they need to do so.

The second opportunity is the sense of community and the volunteers that have come forward. People have seen the benefits of volunteering and felt the rewards that come with it; many will want to continue. This community centres will need volunteers to help run them so that they qualified social workers can focus on outreach work and supporting. Adding to this, volunteering and giving back is proven to benefit mental health. This will help to bring communities together and keep the spirit from the pandemic alive.

Lastly, high streets and town centres up and down the country now have empty units. These empty units could be used to house the centres. In a similar way to charity shops who don't have to pay business rates. Having these community unit on high streets, will draw people back to them and bring a centre back to towns. When the economy does open up, it will mean people will come back to high streets and are more likely to shop and frequent others services in town centres.

ID: 1480-11 - Category: Education

Towards more appropriate nurse training.

Project-2000 removed large numbers of student nurses from the wards as ward-based training was replaced by classroom-based training. The proposal is to amend nurse-training as follows. Revert to all nurses training on the wards as nurse-apprentices (this was essentially the situation prior to Project-2000). During this time they would be paid as apprentices - not taking on large loans etc as at present. After this they would graduate with a national diploma in Nursing studies which would qualify for either continuing as a ward nurse, with training and on-going study to enable those who so wish to develop skills and management expertise; or enable application for specialty training - which could be in any specialty eg midwifery, paediatrics, community nursing etc. This latter would have a university basis and nurses would graduate with BSc as at present. Credit would be obtained for the diploma element such that the academic component would only take 18-24 months. The benefits of this is that many more nurses could train and earn money as do other apprentices; ward staffing levels would increase; nurses could choose to proceed to more academic studies and do so at a time when they know where their careers might go. The costs of the extra training would be much lower than that currently applicable. Nurses who realised that nursing was not their vocation they would not have engendered unnecessary expense. This is a system that is well-recognised in industry and so precedent is established. It is argued that earning on the job, no university fees or loans and a more practical training will enable more recruitment and facilitate more nurses on the wards.

ID: 1466-11 - Category: Education

Create a Publicly Accessible Website to Store and Sort Everything

The government should start by asking every school across the country to digitally send in their newly made resources, organised into the year group and subject they were made for. These would then have to be assessed to check their quality and to sort them further into the individual topics of the curricula. These documents could then be uploaded in their respective categories to a publicly accessible website in a well organised, yet easy to navigate fashion. Different schools will have been working on different topics during the times they were shut so, hopefully, there will be enough breadth to cover the entire curricula for every year. If there are gaps, however, new documents should be made to fill them.

The government may be apprehensive to cover the entirety of schooling, from primary school up to A-levels and other similar qualifications. If they are worried of the costs, it would be understandable to reduce the scope of the project to certain key years. For example, it could cover post-16 education only, as this is not covered on the BBC Bitesize website in very much depth at all. Plus, the less user-friendly format that would arise from using material from so many different sources would be better suited to the increased capabilities of independent learning in the desired audience. Yet, one must bear in mind that this is the cheapest cost such a project will ever be, considering that the most expensive part (making the resources) has already been done! Hence it certainly could be a reasonable undertaking to cover every stage of education.

By the end of these endeavours, a website with teaching aids spanning every year group, subject, and topic on the curricula would be created. The documents would include a wide range of different media types: from video and written explanations to practice questions and model examples. This would allow for maximum versatility to help every student learn in the way that suits them best!

ID: 1346-11 - Category: Education

Student loans

It is reported by the Universities Minister that only 50% of student loans are paid back/being paid back. The threshold for paying the loan back is earning £20,000 or more a year.

This statistic shows that getting a degree does not mean you get paid more.

Minimum wage for 25 year olds £18,500 and 21 year olds £17,400.

How many students are getting degrees and then never working?

The British tax payer is funding Universities as business and not centres of education.

Students doing degrees should be doing degrees for jobs that are available.

Too many school pupils go to university because they don't know what job they want, they are pushed into this idea that a degree is a must. A degree should only be for those that are capable.

There should be fewer universities, less courses and qualifications to attend a degree course harder to ensure the right calibre of student.

Or

student loans should be paid back no matter how much the earn student ends up earning or even on benefits. It should be a tiered pay back system. If you take out a student loan and end up on benefits, do very few hours a week at work or you are a low paid job you should still pay back something towards your degree.

Or

Anyone who starts a degree course will be on a different tax code to anyone that hasn't been to

university when they start working. This doesn't catch anyone who doesn't pay tax, the low paid, on minimal hours or on benefits.

A study needs to be carried out to find out what all these students with their degrees, paid by the British tax payer, are actually doing. You don't need a degree to work in a basic job, so why do we pay for them to do degrees when they don't use them.

I have known people that do 1 year and drop out, tax payer paid this. Students that never work after they have their degrees. Students that go to uni for the experience, one of those things you must do in your life as well as taking a gap year!

I don't mind if the tax payer pays for students to go through uni but it must be the right people on these courses. I have known people with degrees that went to work and then their work place paid for their degree because these people had proved themselves at work and this is a great way to get a degree. I've known 16 year olds that get a job, decide what they want to do, go to college at 17 or 18 years to get a qualification, which allows them to go to university, 1 became a primary school teacher another a paramedic.

The biggest challenge is to ensure people getting degrees are doing courses where there are jobs available. You can't study maths at degree level and then go into a job requiring English so why study maths when there are no jobs where you can use your maths?

ID: 1154-11 - Category: Education

Using AI tools to improve delivery of education

This proposal suggests a way of improving the delivery of education in the classroom and hence reduce some of the inequality that exists in our education system. The idea is to run a pilot that would test the potential for using AI algorithms to deliver high quality personalised learning material. The pilot would tease out and address the issues from making such a major change to the delivery of learning.

Severe inequalities exist within our education system that disadvantage children from poorer backgrounds. These difficulties have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. In particular children from poorer backgrounds have experienced greater difficulties in accessing online learning. Nevertheless the experience of using online learning as a temporary replacement for classroom teaching will have given us some initial insight into the issues that arise from broader use of online learning and how it might be better used in the future.

A major constraint on traditional classroom teaching is that it is difficult to personalise material in a way that suits each student best and allows them to work at their own pace. Modern AI algorithms excel at personalising messaging and material in a way that produces optimal responses. This suggests that there ought to be real benefit from first designing excellent quality learning material and then using machine learning to identify individual learning preferences in order to personalise delivery to particular needs. The aim is to ensure that each child receives lessons and material delivered by the best teachers in the country (or the world) in the style they find most helpful.

The software could be designed to provide a continual objective assessment of pupil's attainment and progress. So that assessment of performance could be based less on exams and more on the extent to which pupils have successfully moved through material. There does not have to be a limit on progress which would hopefully offer more stimulation for the brighter student who could find themselves being taught by engaging experts. Physics taught by Richard Feynmann...

Other benefits from this approach would include increased resilience in the education system to help mitigate the impact of future pandemics or other types of major disruption. In addition moving to a system that allows students to proceed at their own pace could allow for mixed ability classes with the advantages in social cohesion that might offer.

The introduction of this type of capability will necessitate major change in the way that education is delivered and would therefore present major implementation challenges. In particular moving in this direction would mean a significant change in role for classroom teachers. Teachers would have to continually keep track of the different places each student has reached in their learning. There is no doubt that maintaining such a level of individual attention for each student will be challenging. In practice though it might mean that teachers are able to offer more support to those that need it while the more able students can work ahead at their own pace. To continue the important social aspects of classroom education teachers will have to judge the balance between individual learning time and time spent on collaborative learning

activities. Teachers will need to regard themselves as key deliverers and developers of the software. For successful implementation, and ongoing maintenance, it will be critically important that teachers (and pupils) play an active role in providing feedback and helping to design future change.

My proposal is to develop a pilot that would help test the extent to which AI driven learning products can improve the quality of classroom teaching and reduce the current inequalities of delivery. The pilot would require a partnership with the AI industry as there would be no point in taking this idea forward without a top-quality product to support it. I imagine that there would be a lot of interest within the AI industry in partnering with government to produce an exemplar product and to test it in a live environment. Hopefully this project would provide helpful stimulus to ideas within our AI and software industries. The pilot would need to be very carefully designed in order to identify and rapidly address key issues as they emerge. Proactive engagement with educational experts and the teaching profession will be essential so that this pilot is seen as a helpful investment in producing higher quality education across the board. It will be vital that teachers do not see such a development as a threat to jobs and instead see it as a tool that will allow them to offer a richer and more effective learning experience.

Ideally the pilot would include a range of schools. But it is important that it include poorly performing schools where the benefits might be most pronounced and the feedback from the pilot most useful. Schools that participate in the pilot will need to be convinced that their pupils will not be disadvantaged are likely to require substantial additional support to ensure that happens. This suggests that it is very likely that the pilot would produce Hawthorne effects. (But if that means that the quality of education has improved in some poorly performing schools that might not be the worst thing...)

ID: 1066-11 - Category: Education

Disabled Sport in Main Stream Curriculum

This proposal addresses the need for disabled sport to be brought into the mainstream curriculum, which requires a policy change. - The Covid-19 pandemic has singled out disabled children as being unable to access physical exercise. - School aged children with a disability, in mainstream education, are frequently unable to access physical education. Sometimes an idea is so simple and straightforward that it makes you think 'how come this hasn't happened before?' This is such a case as I make realistic and concrete suggestions for measures that would achieve huge benefits for children with a disability. Context The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted many challenges for us as a country. However, one challenge that has been a problem long before the pandemic, and exacerbated more because of Covid, is the need for

physical exercise. We need exercise, not only for our health but also for our mental wellbeing. Sadly one group in society is being denied this. Disabled people, now more than ever are falling behind in society. What I propose is that we aim to change this situation by starting from the very beginning, in schools. During my time as a university student, I saw first-hand how disabled school children are missing out on what the government class as a priority in primary/secondary curriculum for physical education. Example: A child with Cerebral Palsy. This child reached Year 4 without ever being allowed to join in with a PE lesson with the rest of their peers. Instead, the child was expected to do more of the three main core subjects or to have physio. This is not an isolated case. Many disabled children don't get the opportunity to join in with PE and have to do extra core subjects or physio instead. This was also my experience during my school years. Although physio is important for a disabled child's health, it cannot be considered the same or a replacement for physical exercise and the benefits gained from this. The benefits encourage their mental wellbeing and their confidence as part of society by being included in an activity with their peers. Disabled children should be treated equally with the rest of society. Back in March 2020, when the UK was put into lockdown, the need and importance for children to take part in physical exercise, was even more of a necessity. School aged children's learning moved online with home schooling being the "new" norm. With this "new" norm came PE lessons with Joe Wicks, which attracted both adults and children of all ages. There was no alternative for online PE lessons that catered for children or adults with a disability. This seems particularly unfair as most of this group were, and still are, classed as "clinically extremely vulnerable" by the UK Government. The children in this group had to shield in their homes and were unable to go for their one hour of daily exercise. Disabled children were denied a chance to engage in physical exercise. This denial also has a negative impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of those children; as yet again they are missing out on something their peers are getting the chance to do. Some argue that disabled children would not be aware that they are missing out. However, with online lessons being discussed over the TV and media platforms, it is hard for these children to not realize that these lessons are not aimed at them. Most disabled children are fully aware of their environment and are also able to access various forms of media. The Proposal I propose that we bring disabled sport into the mainstream school curriculum. I speak from both a disabled student's point of view and as a Sport, Coaching and Physical Education Degree Graduate. More and more disabled children are being encouraged to go into mainstream schools, yet this means a greater number are missing out on physical education. Currently, with the way the PE curriculum is set out, disabled children have to adapt to an able-bodied world. By bringing disabled sport into the curriculum, it would mean that able-bodied children could learn to adapt to their disabled peers. Not only would this make the school environment equal, it would mean that the able-bodied children would get the opportunity to learn and understand what disabled life is like, whilst having fun at the same time. From personal experience, I can tell you that introducing able-bodied children to disabled

sport at a young age gives them a better understanding of disability as they grow up. It would also appear this makes able-bodied children more accepting and respectful to those who are a little different to them. To bring disabled sport into PE lessons would be straightforward and even easy. It is just a case of adapting what they already do. - Volleyball can become sitting volleyball, with the children using a lighter ball until they get more comfortable with the game. - Boccia is a form of sitting bowls that allows ALL children to take part. - Goalball was developed for players with a visual impairment and can be played by all children sitting and wearing blindfolds. The only equipment needed is a ball with a bell in it. These sports encourage children to learn about strategies and contribute to their fine and gross motor skills. Conclusion I could present many other examples to show that disability sport would benefit all ages and abilities, in terms of physical and mental health, strategic thinking, flexibility, creativity, teamwork and empathy. As the government is aware, obesity is on the rise from a young age and this could contribute to a reduction in these figures. In light of the Government's latest public survey for the National Strategy for Disabled People. This policy change becomes even more important! In turn, disability sport would also lead to a more equal and tolerant society.

ID: 896-11 - Category: Education

Fixing the bias of this contest

This contest is bias against those with poor writing and communication skills, particularly favouring privately educated young people and able individuals.

Inclusive applications include options to submit in non-written formats, by video or voicenote, incorporating a true diverse and inclusive set of voices.

Let's not forget that the most disadvantaged in this country are the least likely to be able to write a concise and fluent answer to some of our most complex issues. But they are probably the most likely to have lived experiences and fresh ideas - particularly as central government is not a diverse population.

This contest is an opportunity to incorporate some truly diverse voices in an inclusive way. Companies like Squarecircle Agency and Evenbreak both have experts in diverse and inclusive

practices and should have been used in creating a contest such as this.

A flat, essay submission is not an inclusive practice.

ID: 890-11 - Category: Education

Lords Reform - smaller, more representative and more expert scrutiny

The House of Lords has almost 800 members, the second largest in the world, none of whom are elected. The chamber is non representative, archaic and expensive. My proposal is reduce the size, with 50% elected by proportional representation, and 50% are recognised experts selected by national bodies. The exact numbers can be adjusted, but I suggest a chamber of 200. 100 are selected by political parties, with the number of seats each party can appoint is allocated based on share of the vote at the General Election, probably with a minimum share of the vote needed to qualify, say 2% (this will also provide a test bed for PR for the House of Commons). This way politicians can still select Lords, and there is no additional electoral cost - we could implement this today at no cost, using existing data. The other 100 seats are experts in their fields, appointed by national bodies to provide expert scrutiny for proposed laws. The experts are selected by their peers, and are the most knowledgeable in the country about their area of expertise. The areas the experts cover would be similar to government departments, and appointed by their national body - e.g. Education (perhaps appointed by Headteachers Union or OFSTED), Health (appointed by say Royal Society of Medicine), Policing (appointed by Association of Chief Constables), Defence, Welfare, Business, Sport and so on, and also cover things like disability and equality. I suggest they have a tenure of 5 years, appointed out of phase with the General Election, and the experts would be apolitical/cross benchers. The list of experts could be reviewed every 5 years by the Lords to ensure it was balanced and representative of current issues. Both the political appointees and the experts can serve more than one term, to maintain experience in how the Lords works, and there would be natural turnover and reinvigoration/refreshment as expertise or political relevance diminishes. As the Lords are now elected and more representative, they would also be empowered to provide more scrutiny and rebuttal to the House of Commons. The members could be salaried as their role is now more of a job, instead of paid daily expenses. There will still be a significant cost saving, and the quality and reputation would be much improved

ID: 570-11 - Category: Education

School Leavers Career Dividend - A Future Beyond Covid-19

Problem:

The pandemic has had a considerable impact on young people across society. None more so than those preparing to take exams and ready themselves for leaving school. It is an uncertain time and a daunting prospect as they look towards their future, particularly one that lies in a rapidly changing UK, which now looks to reposition its place in the world. But we risk a lost generation as the economic impact of Covid-19 tightens its grip and shrinks our economy. Opportunities for our young people will grow scarce at a time when we need them to drive forward our ambitions for an outward looking and successful global Britain. While this is the problem, there is an opportunity to reset the state's relationship with young people. Rather than let them stand back as casual observers or onlookers, we need to find new and innovative ways to harness their talents, and enable them to be the change; not simply affected by it. We can demonstrate how serious we are about the future of our nation by proving we are serious about giving our young people opportunities to shape and build it.

Proposal:

Accelerated moves to remote and other new ways of working in our brilliant Civil Service opens up new and exciting opportunities to give young people the chance to spend a paid gap year working in government - on projects or as part of other priority change initiatives. This would enable school leavers to spend a year learning new skills and prepare for the next step in their career journeys. As a senior project manager, I would welcome the chance to bring young people into my procurement project at the Ministry of Justice and give them real-life project delivery and commercial experience. Few young people come out of school with the slightest idea about public procurement, yet, so much of our taxpayer money is spent on contracts worth millions and billions of pounds. As well as benefitting the project, the opportunity could give a young person the best possible start in their career. I wouldn't feel particularly great about my chances if I were a school leaver this year, so the opportunity to be part of the change that we deliver as civil servants every day would go some way to giving a large number of young people some hope, and would help the Civil Service open up a wealth of untapped talent and potential from across the country.

How:

We already have the systems and support in place thanks to our apprenticeship and fast stream programmes. But this proposal is different from these programmes because work has changed with the pandemic. We have the technology to enable young people from any part of the country to switch on their laptops and join team meetings, training and workshops, while collaborating on documents and engaging with stakeholders. The opportunity that remote working presents in this context minimises typical costs and overheads associated with recruitment and development programmes. It also helps us reach out to a more diverse pool of young people who naturally associate the Civil Service with being London based, which also reflects the government's objective of spreading opportunities around the country. The young people could be supported by 'Remote Working Coaches' who help them settle into their new roles and flourish. And we can launch a national campaign via schools, social media platforms and local careers offices as part of our recruitment drive. The MoJ currently runs a successful schools outreach programme, which could be replicated across other departments to promote this proposal.

Practical next steps:

1. Organise a kick-off meeting with key stakeholders, including IPA.
2. Design a pilot with a small number of government departments via their project delivery functions e.g. MoJ Project Delivery Function.
3. Recruit school leavers to the pilot (50 - 100) to join project teams
4. Run pilot for 3 months and evaluate.
5. If successful, launch the 'School Leavers Career Dividend'.

Benefits and other opportunities:

1. Gives many young people the skills and experiences to prepare them for the next step in their careers.
2. Helps build a more diverse Civil Service with new perspectives and innovations.

3. Develop partnerships with private sector organisations through encouraging similar programmes as part of awarding government public sector contracts.
4. Demonstrates our commitment to help our young people in the aftermath of the pandemic.
5. Most importantly - gives young people the chance to be the change that will drive forward our ambitions for the future.

We have a chance to do things differently and I believe this proposal is different. I also believe we can make it happen with the systems, processes, infrastructure, learning and development resources, and the desire of many civil servants who want to give young people a chance in life. The pandemic has shown that our diverse country's greatest asset is its people, but let's not forget our young people.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my proposal.

ID: 464-11 - Category: Education

Work in Retirement App

With increasing life expectancy many of those who may have retired at 60 have a significant period of active life ahead of them. They do not think of themselves as retired but at a stage of life where they have more time to develop interests, perhaps further their education and give of their time in a beneficial manner for the greater good of the community.

It can be surprisingly difficult to achieve the latter as identifying suitable opportunities is not always easy and there appears to be no obvious and easily navigable pathway.

Certain Apps currently exist such as "Countdown to Retirement" but there is no "Work in Retirement" App tailored to linking the retired with the new workplace entrant. The great advantage of Apps is their directness and ease of navigation. They aim to provide immediate solutions to an initial enquiry with the detail dealt with at "stage 2" The importance of reducing bureaucracy and form filling at the initial "stage 1" is of crucial importance.

ID: 265-11 - Category: Education

How a proper National Curriculum can make online schooling work

The Spring and Summer saw schools moved online. This worked moderately well for some, and very badly for others. Unpublished analysis of Renaissance Learning cross-school testing is reported to show that primary pupils typically made about half the average progress in English, and no progress in Maths. Poorer children were most likely to do badly: many went backwards in Maths.

Expecting every one of 440,000 teachers in England alone to devise and deliver 5 hours of online classes a day is self-evidently absurd. This is not their expertise. (I speak as someone who had to record my university lectures. It is not easy). Many resorted to just sending home worksheets: an ineffective way for pupils to learn.

Until we have delivered a vaccine, academic year 2020-21 was always at risk. We needed a plan. Here is one.

- 1) Make the National Curriculum mandatory (academies are currently exempt).
- 2) Not just the overall content, but the daily timetable, and what is covered in each lesson. Every school would then have the same timetable. This is what they do in France.
- 3) Expand the fantastic Oak Academy to cover all subjects. We would then have top class teachers teaching online.
- 4) Supply the OA work plans to schools, so they can use them in school if they wish.
- 5) Any individual child required to self-isolate can then follow the Oak Academy material. Hybrid lessons, whereby a child at home tries to follow a live lesson in class, work particularly badly, and would be abolished.
- 6) If the whole school is out, the pupils would follow the Oak lessons online. The teacher's role

would then be to mark assignments, and to ring children and explain things they have got wrong in the assignments. And to chivvy those who are not working.

7) A teacher might spend an hour a day looking over an Oak supplied summary of the material to be covered that day, 2 hours marking, and 4 hours a day on 30 calls averaging 8 minutes a piece. Every child would be rung every day, helping to concentrate minds. A 7 hour day is a reasonable expectation for any teacher.

8) This is known in the trade as “flipped learning” – the whole class material is delivered online, and individual support is given one on one. This is how Coursera and other MOOCs work. There is no reason it would not work here.

9) As well as delivering more effective teaching, this would reduce the burdens on teachers, while ensuring that they are all asked to do the job they love – explaining things to pupils.

Since the online and in person lessons would be aligned, pupils would be able to re-integrate themselves back into school more easily. Of course, it would not solve every problem. Some pupils hate schoolwork, or have no place to work at home, or no broadband. But it would have solved a lot of them.

We would also make these lessons available, for free, to any UK adult who wants to study for a GCSE or A level in their spare time. Lessons may be useful to recent immigrants who want to learn or improve their English.

We could also make these lessons available internationally, to anyone who wants to learn. This would increase Britain's reputation, and soft power. Insofar as more people then took GCSEs and A levels, it would also increase UK exports.

ID: 191-11 - Category: Education

Public data law and advertising standards

I would approach the problem from two angles.

Firstly, I would hold social media platforms account for the spread of information using the same regulations applied to TV broadcasting advertising. If a TV channel is found to broadcast an advert with false claims, they can be penalised. Social media platforms could face similar penalties for publishing false adverts and misinformation.

Secondly, I would introduce personal data usage tax to demonetize targeted advertising to UK IP addresses. It would enforce any revenue generated from targeted advertising that uses someone's personal data to be shared between the host of the data and the person whose data it is. For example, assume even split for ease of explanation, if revenue was generated through targeted advertising using my personal data, 33% would be shared with the owner of the data (me), 33% to government through tax and 33% kept by the host (social media platform). This would empower people to own their personal data while generating a high taxation income for the government. It would also disincentivise the abuse of personal data that we are currently experiencing today.

ID: 3007-11 - Category: Education

THE NEED TO READ - READING : The Full Story

Evidence from the OECD (2002) found that reading enjoyment is more important for children's educational success than their family's socio-economical status and that reading for pleasure is more important for children's cognitive development than their parents' level of education.

The challenge of making sure that every child has the keys to unlock the pleasures of reading has become more complex across this last year of lockdowns. It is by no means insurmountable but, for some children, and particularly for those young learners who find reading a complex and difficult skill to master, it requires a flexible and personalised approach.

The solution lies, as is so often the case, in having the right people in the right place at the right time.

Three key components need to be in place:

1. Qualified Volunteers Needed

There are many recently retired reading recovery teachers, Early Years teachers and senior managers who understand the importance of ensuring all children learn to read fluently by the end of Y1 and who have the training and expertise to mentor those who are having difficulties. Those willing to work voluntarily, for several hours a week after school across a 10-12 week

period, would submit their details to a register. This would work in a similar way to the recent pandemic scheme in which retired doctors and nurses volunteered to help with the vaccination roll-out.

2. Schools Know Best

State primary schools would compile a register of those pupils in Reception and Y1 (and possibly in some instances Y2) who are slipping behind/experiencing difficulties in acquiring early reading skills and who would benefit from extra tuition outside the school day. It is important that this starts as soon as possible, ideally in the summer term running into the holiday, as this type of tuition is most effective across an intensive 10-12 week period. Detailed planning in consultation with the class teacher would ensure tuition is tailored to the needs of each child and designed to consolidate any particular skills not yet acquired. Learning to read combines intricate skills in phonetic knowledge, knowledge of grammatical structure and understanding of meaning and different children need different tuition support in one or more of these skills.

3. Matching Mentor to Child

Volunteer teachers on the register would be matched to a child/family in their area and would then liaise directly with the school to co-ordinate a tuition programme after school hours with their allocated pupils. The programme would ideally include 3 weekly sessions with the child in their home after school as well as an agreed number of timeslots each week to give online support to the parents/carers so that they are given the tools to work with their children on the days that the mentor isn't with them.

Children who struggle initially with reading benefit from daily sessions, so the idea would be to provide this through a combination of teacher mentor and parent/carer. Across the 10-12 week period of mentoring, the teacher would be also up-skilling the parent to support their child's reading progress so that, by the end of the tuition programme, the parent is able to continue this support. At the end of the 10-12 weeks, the teacher mentor would re-assess their child's reading ability, complete the programme and ensure the parent/carer had the tools to continue support and to enjoy regular reading sessions with their child.

For so many reasons we need to read and it is the right of every child, pandemic or not, to learn at an early age to love reading – it will stay with them for life if they learn in the right way.

ID: 3015-11 - Category: Education

The Covid 19 pandemic has shown us that for society to thrive, education has to be at

the forefront. This has become especially apparent for homeschooling parents with engagement on education at an all time high.

There is an opportunity to fix an inequality within our education system.

Despite dyslexia being one of society's most common disabilities, government offers no funding to support hiring dyslexia specialists within educational settings. Additionally, parents have no access to free screening or assessment, meaning that many dyslexic children receive no additional support.

During the pandemic there has become a Government focus on providing additional funding for children from the most deprived backgrounds. Whilst this is laudable, this funding focuses purely on economic circumstance and not on those needing academic support.

A simple fix would consist of three legislative changes.

1. All children to have access to free dyslexia screening and assessment.
2. Funding to enable early intervention from specialist teachers.
3. Every education setting to be required to employ a dyslexia specialist.

Dyslexia affects one person in five, and it impacts every aspect of a person's life. If a young person feels their educational gap is widening from their peers, they can become disenfranchised from education and often the wider community. Life opportunities become narrower and can lead to young people taking the wrong path. Currently up to 80% of young males within prison are either diagnosed as dyslexic or display dyslexic traits, whilst 60% of young incarcerated males display reading skills akin to a 5-year-old.

At present, there is no mandated training given to new teachers about dyslexia, the support structures needed or the challenges faced by a dyslexic student.

Why does this matter?

For a young dyslexic person with no support their chances of success in life are reduced. Dyslexia doesn't just affect literacy skills, but also many other areas: organisation skills; the ability to retain information; friendship building; self-esteem; the ability to apply for jobs or financial support; college and university applications; mortgage and rent contracts - the list is endless. Early intervention from a specialist enables a young person to develop coping skills which in turn allows them to move forward both in education and the wider world.

What does society gain?

If we fail to tap into these young peoples' potential then we lose a generation of extraordinary thinkers. Many of our most creative talents are dyslexic – they see the world through a unique lens. Maggie Aderin-Pocock, Jim Carrey, Keira Knightly, Jamie Oliver and Steven Spielberg are just a few of the talented dyslexic individuals who have enabled our society to grow.

In interviews with well known dyslexics, they often talk about how hard formal education was for them and their struggle to fit in. If these exceptional people found it tough, how difficult is it for the average young person who is dyslexic? Dyslexia affects all ability ranges, it is life long – you do not grow out of it and it cannot be “cured”. We can only find ways to overcome and navigate the difficulties associated with dyslexia.

From the first moment you learn to read to completing a job application, the problem doesn't lessen. The world can become an impossible place to navigate – with jobs becoming scarce and employers looking to graduates to fill them.

Despite this seemingly bleak picture, a simple change would make an enormous difference to our society.

Simple tools and strategies can enable a young person to see their potential and the positive attributes dyslexia can bring. All it takes is access to a free dyslexia assessment and a qualified, well trained specialist teacher.

If it was a legal requirement for all education settings to employ a specialist teacher and funding made available for support, then these young people would receive the education they deserve and the life chances that education brings.

It is common for children to compare themselves to their peers. Dyslexic students have a greater likelihood of developing low self esteem and self worth.

THE PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

What happens if parents are concerned about their child's abilities? Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, parents, who have been homeschooling may have noticed gaps in their child's understanding, that they struggle to read the work set or write confidently. They notice spelling mistakes and sometimes the words misspelt in different ways throughout the same piece of work. The child shows reluctance to complete tasks set by the school or gets frustrated and

upset when asked to complete the work given. Or they may have had their suspicions about their child being dyslexic for some while.

The first place a parent would ask for assistance is likely to be their school and/or class teacher. Currently there are no guidelines as to the level of knowledge or expertise a class teacher must have in regards to dyslexia. The class teacher passes on their concerns to the Special Educational Needs coordinator. As with class teachers, there is no legal requirement for the coordinator to have any specialist knowledge of dyslexia. The parent hits a brick wall. Hopefully the school or educational setting may implement some support strategies or suggest some catch up programmes, but there is no additional funding for specific dyslexic programmes. The parent may then seek additional support.

Before any specific help can be given, a Dyslexia diagnosis is necessary. But these are not available on the NHS, or through a school. Currently a dyslexic assessment will privately cost a parent between £500 and £700. As a parent of a child with dyslexia myself, the assessment we paid for has been key in helping us seek appropriate support from the school, whilst helping us understand home strategies to best support our son. We (as parents) know that had we not had the funds to pay for an assessment, it would have adversely affected the support he would be able to access.

I believe the 3 legislative changes would have a profound effect on the life opportunities of a large section of our population.

ID: 3057-11 - Category: Education

Introduction of communications and conflict skills to secondary school Sex and Relationship Education curriculum.

The current guidance for Sex and Relationship Education (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships_Education__Relationships_and_Sex_Education__RSE__and_Health_Education.pdf) at secondary school level requires that schools provide education on the different types of relationships (families, online, caring) and sexual relationships in particular. Schools must define a 'safe' relationship, and educate students about what an unhealthy relationship looks like. However, the current guidance includes no mention of education in basic communication and conflict resolution skills.

It would be such a simple thing to introduce a small element of communication and conflict skills training into the school curriculum for teenagers, to equip them to communicate more

constructively in relationships, and this is the basis of my proposal. I am suggesting that basic training in these skills be added to the curriculum. It would only need to be very basic – the skills needed to equip people to ‘fight fair’ are very simple. Examples include:

- when arguing, only talk about the specific issue in hand.; don’t use phrases like “you never” or “you always”; focus on the present and be specific;
- use “I” statements rather than “you” statements, to minimise the impression of blame;
- be aware of your own feelings;
- hear what someone is really saying and pay attention to the feelings being expressed;
- communicate your needs clearly.

These are skills that could be understood and adopted by teenagers and older children, and that would stand them in good stead for life; not just in terms of having more healthy relationships, but also in managing any day-to-day conflict in all aspects of life.

Training in these skills could be easily added to the existing Sex and Relationships curriculum. It would not require delivery by an expert, but could be easily taught by a teacher. It would not require a great deal of additional time. I would envisage that the training materials could perhaps be developed by an organisation such as Relate UK in consultation with the Department for Education and teachers.

My thinking around this proposal, which responds to the challenge of relationship breakdown highlighted by the pandemic, was triggered in part by a documentary I saw on Channel 4 about love during lockdown which featured a couple who had divorced after suffering a miscarriage. They decided to move back in together during lockdown for the sake of their young son, and living together again forced them to really talk about what had happened and how they had felt. They realised that after the miscarriage they had misunderstood and made wrong assumptions about what the other was thinking and feeling due to not communicating, which had led to their separation. After spending the months of lockdown together and really talking constructively about what had happened for the first time, their perspectives changed, and they resumed their relationship and decided to remarry. On that occasion, the catalyst was simply being forced to communicate that helped their relationship, and it reinforced to me how transformative basic skills in communication can be, and started me thinking about the idea for this proposal.

I am not putting forward a detailed, fully-formed proposal, as I am not an expert in this area. What I am putting forward is the principle of a need to teach young people basic communication and conflict resolution skills, which I believe would in the long-term be of great benefit, not just to individuals but to society, and a change that might be brought about at comparatively low cost.

Alphabet and Facebook are "fair game"; but the private sector needs help from the government...

THE PROBLEM

Everybody knows that there is an imbalance of power and wealth on the internet, skewed massively in favour of the giant internet monopolies; in particular Alphabet and Facebook who dominate, respectively, "search" and "social-networking", and between them, the digital advertising market.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated by many years the digitisation of our world because people have been compelled to avoid physical contact. British internet users now spend on average more than 4hrs a day on the internet and much of this time is either on the applications of Alphabet and Facebook - which include Google, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp - or accessed through these applications.

Because of the "network effect" - whereby in both search and social-networking the greater the number of users the more attractive the platform - Alphabet and Facebook are effectively "natural monopolies", and yet they are not governed or taxed as such. Whereas they should have more regulation and more taxation than the average "normal" business in a competitive industry, they have far less.

Attempts to regulate and tax them are proving futile, due to a lack of international cooperation amongst lawmakers and regulators and also the vast sums Alphabet and Facebook spend on political lobbying. The idea of "breaking them up" is not suitable because barriers to entry would still be too high for new entrants; and anyway, to really break them up you'd have to break up the internet itself.

However, Alphabet and Facebook are not invulnerable and neither should they be allowed to

transcend government; rather, the strength of Alphabet and Facebook - the network effect - is also their vulnerability.

AN AUDACIOUS AND ORIGINAL IDEA FOR FIXING THE PROBLEM

In order to take them on, Alphabet and Facebook must be played at their own game; the "network" should be recaptured from them, and the best way to recapture the network is by financially incentivising the users to switch.

However, returning their individual digital advertising values to the users would not provide a great enough incentive, and instead, the users should be incentivised to switch to a National Search and Social Network ("NSSN") with the lure of free lottery tickets for massive prizes funded by the collected revenues from digital advertising.

Users would receive an equal number of free lottery tickets if they make the NSSN their principal search engine and social-network. Initial prizes should be funded to encourage the switch, however the NSSN will very quickly go viral and then the prizes will be self-funding with the huge revenues from digital advertising.

In 2020 Alphabet and Facebook captured about 80% of the £15bln spent on digital advertising in the UK. Assuming over time the NSSN was able to capture £10bln of revenues and that 10% was used for costs and regulated profits for the operator(s), £9bln would be left. Perhaps half of this, £4.5bln, could be distributed to the government as much needed tax revenues and the other half could be distributed to the users in the form of lottery prizes.

This would amount to a staggering 12 lotteries a day of £1mln! Surely enough to incentivise

users to keep using the NSSN?

The regulatory role-model for the NSSN would be the National Lottery, and this is no coincidence, after all the lottery is also based on a network effect; as more people buy lottery tickets, more are inclined to buy tickets because the prize becomes bigger. Currently, without an NSSN, and with Alphabet and Facebook controlling the networks, rather than the users winning the “prize” (vast advertising revenues), the prize is continually won by the platforms. An NSSN would flip the balance in favour of the users and away from the platforms - as befits “natural monopolies”.

The government should launch a public tender - such as it did for the National Lottery in 1994 - and invite different syndicates to form and pitch to create the NSSN, or perhaps a few NSSNs which could coexist. There are many companies which might naturally want to make-up syndicates, across the tmt sectors and also further afield. Perhaps Alphabet or Facebook themselves might pitch?

A thorough investigation would be carried out first - perhaps by the Department of Business - establishing the parameters for the tender and rules for the NSSN. For example: costs and profit margins for the operator(s); data privacy rules; algorithm criteria to protect the general public and especially the young; data storage restrictions so that energy is not needlessly wasted; protection for content publishers; surveillance against nefarious content.

The new Digital Markets Unit which is planned could be the regulator which oversees the NSSN. As it is with the National Lottery, every few years the operator(s) would be reviewed and the NSSN would be up for tender again to ensure ultimate accountability.

The personal data of the users would never be owned by the operators, but would be held in trust by the operators for the users. Algorithms would be totally transparent.

Set-up costs and initial prizes to encourage users to switch could be financed by the issuance of bonds. This would help publicize the NSSN, and would be paid back easily once the NSSN went viral.

Crucially, all sides of the media would support and promote the creation of the NSSN. After all, Alphabet and Facebook have, unfairly, not been paying publishers for content they have been monetising on a huge scale. The general public would get behind this campaign to "reclaim the network".

The NSSN would be open to anyone from anywhere in the world, and in time there would be a domino effect of NSSNs in different countries connected to each other.

CONCLUSION

An NSSN would be transformational for the economy in terms of redistributing wealth in a way which would also massively free up competition and broaden and increase investment and innovation.

An NSSN would provide an enormous fillip to government finances when we need it the most to help pay for the financial costs of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ID: 499-11 - Category: Education

Volunteering gets rewards

THE SOLUTION

Volunteering, with weekly 'rewards' could be the answer. Teenagers who have left school but are without work, could act as 'buddies' to younger children in schools, helping with homework, even accompanying them home to relieve the school run, as long as police checks were in place for the safety of their charges. Others could harness unused energy, for example, by acting as sports mentors to their younger colleagues who so often need someone to emulate. This would relieve busy parents and teachers, and confer self worth on those trusted to take responsibility for others. Government-donated 'gig' tickets, one a week, for example, could reward these volunteering teens. Such assistance would bring schools to local prominence via the press, and foster school-place uptake, so would work to the benefit of children, the community and schools.

One or two days a week, the healthy, vaccinated, 65-75 year olds could easily assist in hospitals, manning a reception desk, a shop inside a hospital, performing clerical duties to ease the load of administrators. They could help sterilise equipment; perhaps tour the wards to chat to patients on a bespoke basis. They could also volunteer to assist with literacy in primary and junior schools. A big box of groceries delivered once a week as a reward would offer the diversion of needing to cook, leading to a better diet and the mental benefits of knowing they are being useful. Press coverage would encourage others to volunteer and make friends in the process of helping out. Not every retired person wants to join clubs, and volunteer work with rewards may be preferred by many.

The fit redundant could volunteer in many areas of life; working one day in a library; giving CAB-derived advice; practical assistance to apprentices and so on. A group of redundant people from different backgrounds could find themselves bonding, and acquire the social and actual skills to enable them to train for future employment. Vegetable packing and grading would enable someone unemployed eventually to work in a supermarket, for example. Rewards could be as for the elderly; food is always welcome if one has no job. Being gifted food at one's front door also spares the unemployed the humiliation of having to go to food banks

All the solutions suggested above could cost the government very little in return for boosting self-esteem, confidence, job opportunities and teamwork. It is evident that the contribution of

the three groups mentioned would be of economic benefit to the country. The problem of underused citizens is huge, and these solutions are not dramatic, but could work very well if scrutinised and 'tweaked' by government ministers for future implementation.

ID: 416-11 - Category: Education

We cancel the summer holidays and rearrange the school calendar.

Everyone needs to pull together in the pandemic and make sacrifices, and that includes teachers. If they have a contractual benefit of so many weeks of holiday, give it to them now or in the next couple of months. Forget the pressure to provide full education now, except for the vulnerable and children of key workers. Schools could go back full steam as the pandemic becomes under control. This is my plan:

Term 1 starts after Easter on Tuesday April 6 and runs for 8 weeks to May 28. One week holiday (May 31-June 4) includes the bank holiday. (Long weekend in the middle with the May 3 bank holiday)

Term 2: (6 weeks): June 7 - July 16. One week holiday (July 19-23)

Term 3: (5 weeks): July 26 - August 27. One week holiday (August 30 - September 3) includes the bank holiday

Regular school calendar for 2021-22 starts on September 6.

Parents not to be prosecuted if they take children out of school during the special summer sessions, but told forcefully they are the ones damaging their children's education in that case.

Concerted effort during these terms could bring children back to where they should be.

ID: 1798-11 - Category: Education

A Rule Conversion to Level the Rugby Playing Field

Summary:

A two-part policy to improve the safety of professional rugby players and the safety of rugby playing pupils in schools. The first proposal, inspired by Paralympic team sports, is to create

weight categories for rugby players with associated points for each category, with only a certain number of points allowed on the pitch at one time, pushing players to become smaller and reducing collision intensity. The second part is to apply the same process in school rugby, so that players are put in teams based on their size as opposed to their age, enhancing pupil safety and overcoming birth-date inequality in school, and subsequently professional, sporting success.

Policy:

Rugby players are huge. Even the backs, who were traditionally very lean and flight of foot, nowadays look more like the forwards of old.

And Rugby players are fast.

Simple physics tells you that such a situation leads to more forceful collisions, which the human body struggles to cope with.

Having bigger and stronger players hitting each other at faster and faster speeds is a recipe for injury, and the growing concerns over the long-term impact of head-injuries highlight the risks.

Players currently have no incentive to be smaller, and every incentive to be bigger, so a regulation is required to solve the problem.

I propose the government mandates the RFU to introduce a points system for rugby teams, whereby the weight of each player puts them into a particular category with an associated

number of points, and there are a maximum number of points allowed on the field at any one time.

A similar system exists for the Paralympics, where teams are made up of players with different levels of disability, and it works well. It also adds an interesting extra tactic into the sports regarding how to manage the team; to go for a lot of middle-point players or one or two high point players and the rest low point players.

A similar system could be used for rugby but based more on the boxing weighting system; each weight category would have points associated with it and players would weigh-in before games and be allocated points, and the team would have a maximum number of points allowed on the field.

Teams could still have one or two enormous players, like a Jonah Lomu of old, but they would then also have to have some featherweights in their side as well.

Rugby players would therefore generally become lighter and leaner, reducing the intensity of collisions and focusing on the skills of footwork and tactics, not simply brute force.

A wider range of players would then be eligible to play, not just giants, and the risk of injury would reduce, while still keeping the fundamental elements of the rugby game intact, maximising viewing enjoyment for fans.

A similar process should also be introduced for school rugby, eradicating the current age-group rugby process and instead basing it on a weighting measure.

The difference in size of teenagers due to when their growth spurt happens makes age a ridiculous and dangerous grouping measure for school rugby. Far better to use the weight system, so pupils are matched based on their size and strength, not just their age.

Not only would this improve pupil safety, but it is also highly likely to lead to an increase in the number and quality of professional rugby players and, if applied to sports more widely, to the total number of all professional sports persons.

Malcolm Gladwell and others have shown how high the percentage of professional sportspeople born in the six months from September to February is, because younger pupils fall behind in physical stature at key stages in their development, and so are lost to the professional game.

If size, not age, determined who pupils played against, many more would have the chance to become professional sportspersons, strengthening the UK's performance domestically and on the global stage.

Such a policy might also help in the arguments about trans players involvement in sports; instead of basing competition purely on gender or sex, it could also be based on size, weight and strength, helping to level the playing field.

ID: 1770-11 - Category: Education

An online 'catch-up' service, accessible to all, to address gaps in learning during the pandemic.

As a teacher myself, one of the concerning side-effects of lockdown has been the closure of schools. Delivery of a full curriculum has been compromised for many children and young people, particularly those who did not have easy access to technology or a quiet space to work

in their home.

My idea would be to set up a 'catch-up' service to be available to those who feel they need extra help to catch up with their education, as a result of gaps in learning during the pandemic. The service would be free at the point of delivery or for a nominal amount of money and it would be government funded.

Pupils could book an online session with a specialist teacher through an app or website for one or several sessions (potentially 30 minutes for primary age children; 45 minutes for Key Stage 3 and 1 hour for Key Stages 4 and 5). There may have to be a limit of say five sessions per half-term to allow fair access to the service but that would clearly be dependent upon the number of teachers available and demand for lessons.

A bank of teachers would need to be organised and they would be paid by the government, rather than parents of the pupils, to enable accessibility to all for the service. It also enables teachers to top up their income if they wish to take part in the enterprise.

An initial canvassing of teachers to assess willingness to contribute to the scheme would be necessary as healthy numbers would be crucial to the success of the scheme.

It is a real worry that so many pupils will have missed out some of the necessary building blocks during the Covid pandemic and this will inevitably hamper their future education and prospects. It is important to address this now and in view of the already considerable pressures teachers face on a daily basis within schools, this should be provided by an outside agency.

The crucial thing is that it is accessible to all, unlike a tutoring service, and would be a government initiative to plug the learning gaps caused by the lockdowns.

ID: 1248-11 - Category: Education

Transform University education

The time has come to reform University and College education for at least some courses. The current system is:

- Costly- for universities and students
- It is inefficient of time- courses start late Sept and can finish end May. est 28 weeks

- Lecturers are often not trained teachers and focus on research
- There is no 'agreement' for the service (eg contact time, marking assignments, help) provided to students
- Contact time can be as little as 10 hours per week
- Student loan interest is charged at 5.6% at a time when interest on savings is often as little as .1%
- Accommodation costs are charged for 11 months even though the university terms are cover c8 months

The impact of Covid has forced educational establishments of all types to provide their education in a different way. Many courses are being provided remotely. It has forced education professionals to become more skilled technically and for educational establishments to develop their technical and pupil support systems. I suggest that an Open University style format could be suitable for courses with no or little practical content and where specialist equipment is not required. They would be a combination of online learning with on campus sessions of say 2-4 weeks, 2-6 times a year.

This could:-

- Lower overheads for the university and costs for students
- Reduce the elapsed time of courses
- Be more available to remote UK and overseas students
- Be more available to people with life limiting conditions or when recovering from illness • Encourage universities to share their prepared online materials
- Create a new industry for exceptional online educational materials • Be adapted for employers to offer courses to employees
- Replace 'day release'

- Be completed over different timescales, to suit the student
- Enable students to take paid work alongside the course

One of the benefits of the current system is that young people gain new experiences from living away from home and mingling with other students. Consideration should be given to how the benefits of this can be achieved in other ways.

There could be:

- Virtual clubs and associations
- Subject group forums/chat rooms
- Optional residential sessions with a combination of work and recreational activity.
- Opportunities to volunteer, maybe as a group eg in schools, hospitals, charities, sports organisations, armed forces. Maybe this or something similar should be obligatory

It might be that 6th form students would benefit from a similar approach for some of their time at school. It seems appropriate that this blended learning should remain school based for monitoring, mentoring and the social aspects of school.

Issues:

- Unions. Resistance to change
- Resistant to change in profession, especially the ancient universities
- Residential degree status v Remote degree status
- Development costs

- Re use and utilisation of University buildings and grounds

ID: 1083-11 - Category: Education

Maximising the digital opportunities presented by the pandemic for education providers and learners.

There is no replacement for face to face education provision and those without the right technology or connectivity can be excluded from online provision. Addressing digital exclusion has been a key issue for the Government and benevolent organisations identifying the lack of access to technology or internet provision. However there are other problems including:

- Remote learning faces challenges in connecting students or engaging those who prefer face to face or are generally apathetic towards learning.
- Office workers to date have reported most of the issues with fatigue from online meetings. Schools factor in breaks for students but the way and engagement can also deliver physical and psychological problems.
- Online meetings are challenging to identify or mitigate safeguarding issues within educational establishments. There is an opportunity around online and digital education delivery. Digital technology allows teaching to continue despite building closures (e.g. bad weather), allowing teachers to monitor assignment, homework, improving students digital skills, saving time for teachers (e.g. parents evening) and allowing students to draw fully upon additional resources (e.g. videos, webinars, etc). In the case of fixing the problem, much of this is occurring now and is within existing commitments (roll out of superfast broadband and getting young people laptops/tablets) and policy. However, this needs to be prioritised. There is a range of evidence around households that lack digital access and internet provision and this can be consolidated. Building upon the current digital delivery in education, there is the opportunity for students catch up or even develop new employable skills. It is telling how out of date the Government's EdTech strategy is, following rapid technology adoption across all levels of education and current developments requiring catch-up (e.g. safety and procurement). With regards to capitalising upon the situation, there are two large opportunities: 1. Digital Education Centres – The provision of online education which operates in parallel and complementary to mainstream education is potentially highly effective in providing additionality to students' learning. The digital education centre concept will see digital technologies and delivery promoted, mainstreamed and have a focus (physically and virtually). Education technology should not be left to ad-hoc situations. Supporting schools to adopt more technology and supporting extra-curricular studies, revision sessions and perhaps more importantly helping students catch-up. There are also logistical opportunities that a digital education centre could address. For example when students are unwell or returning after being unwell there is the potential for a digital education centre to group (or strengthen existing groups) to support resourcing for digital schooling. 2. Strengthening adult education through digital - Where once people did an evening class to

upskills or reskill opportunities. The landscape in adult education is not always the same and this is particularly the case for STEM skills and foreign languages. There are some weaknesses in digital delivery but many teachers report that those motivated to learn embracing technology. This also provides opportunities for combined authorities with devolved delivery of adult education and the utilisation of buildings which may be defunct or empty due to the economic disruption. For example, an adult education provider could offer its space for practical components (e.g. engineering or arts) whilst the majority of the delivery would be online. Strengthening it further could see a digital provision focus upon skill priorities in the local area (e.g. engineering or programming), unlocking economies of scale.

ID: 703-11 - Category: Education

National School exams being cancelled during a pandemic

Offer another mode of examination that can be taken at any moment during a students period of study. How, using a viva system, whereby the student is interviewed by a panel of examiners through a secure online system. The examiners explore the extent of a students understanding using verbal communication rather than written evidence. At the end of the period of assessment the panel grade the candidate who after a period of validation receives their grade electronically. Prospective universities are also allowed access to the recorded assessment to aid their assessment of the prospective student, prior to an unconditional offer being made.

ID: 648-11 - Category: Education

Paternity benefits.

Equalising paternity benefits with maternity - and upping them both - seems like a good place to start to encourage culture of equality at work & home, whereby fathers' role in their children's lives is equal to the mothers' from the start, employers too would have to 'acknowledge' this as basic and therefore begin to take out of the system glass-ceilings, pay gaps etc as any notions of 'becoming pregnant during a contract' can no longer be deemed solely within the realm of women. It's inclusive, recognises the realities of modern family life, kids & dads seeing more of each other, more invested in each others day to day lives from the start, and enables women to take a lateral step away from any insistence that only they know how to do it, the whole 'it's quicker if I change the nappy cos he's so crap at it' thing. Give men a chance to prove that they can, and to share the responsibility of having children on a fundamental level. If men knew they'd be taking say 6 months/a year off work to have a child, they'd be as invested in the decision as women have to be.

ID: 3038-11 - Category: Education

We are just beginning to appreciate fully the impact of the pandemic on the education of disadvantaged children. For children with special educational needs, limited knowledge of English, English as an additional language, social, emotional and mental health needs and for those in receipt of Pupil Premium, the disruption of their school lives has had the effect of widening the already wide attainment gap between them and their more privileged peers.

Even before the pandemic, that attainment gap was described by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation as ‘stubbornly large’ (<https://www.jrf.org.uk/data/education-england>)

The Government has recognised the impact of the pandemic through its Catch up programme (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-education-recovery-package-for-children-and-young-people>) This programme, which includes individual tutoring, focuses on the academic loss that children have experienced.

Important as academic catch up is, for disadvantaged children, the loss has gone much beyond the academic. For disadvantaged students, schools offer an extension of experience which is not on offer at home. Such experiences include visits to museums, parks and sporting activities, as well as opportunities for musical, artistic and residential experiences. Not only are horizons widened by such experiences, but such opportunities enable social interactions in non-classroom settings, something that was lost during the pandemic, where children were linked to school only via their laptops and others were entirely isolated. England’s ‘catch-up czar’, Sir Kevan Collins, has pointed out that children need to be physically, socially and emotionally ready to learn “before you start cramming in knowledge”.

The problem, therefore, is, how can we respond to the wider losses experienced by disadvantaged children, those losses of wider experiences, interactions with others and broader cultural experiences that they missed during remote learning? What community-based opportunities could fill these ‘experience gaps’ that many disadvantaged children now have?

A co-operative solution – The Hi-Five Project

Summary

If we are successful, the prize money will be invested in Year 7 students attending the Cressex Community School in High Wycombe. The focus will be the development of that ‘cultural capital’ that many students have missed out on during the pandemic. This small-scale Pathfinder project would harness community resources to the benefit of disadvantaged students; it could become a template for similar projects in other schools serving similar communities. It would complement existing state-led initiatives and would enhance the purely academic catchup programmes already in place by: extending students’ range of experiences; increasing the range of students’ social contacts (much diminished during the pandemic); and so also promoting mental wellbeing. Uniquely, it includes the school’s partners in the Cressex

Co-operative Learning Trust, among which are the independent Wycombe Abbey School, Bucks New University and, Henley Sixth Form College. It would bring together a wide range of students, in shared and cooperative experiences. The project would offer the guarantee of a range of high value non-classroom experiences, including performance of music/theatre, an Outward Bound-type experience and a museum visit. Further details are given below.

The setting

Cressex is a secondary modern school in a wholly selective Local Authority area. Its population is notably urban, very different from the remainder of Buckinghamshire, the second most affluent of 152 English Councils. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation show that Cressex students come from wards experiencing high levels of income deprivation, low levels of skill and training and low levels of adult skills.

Key characteristics of the student body are: well below average prior attainment; above average entitlement to Pupil Premium; well above average proportion with Special Educational Needs (with and without EHC plans); and well above average proportion with English as an Additional Language.

A very high proportion (86%) are of minority ethnic heritage, by far the largest group being Pakistani (Mirpuri), roughly 65% of the school population. Some students in each year group are recent arrivals to the UK. Many of these speak limited English when they join and need intensive support to access the curriculum.

Many students also face challenges arising from domestic, community and social issues. The school has a consistently high level of involvement with Children's Social Services and other support services including CAMHS and The Police. High Wycombe and the local community have at times been a focus of Prevent activity.

Here is the school website:

<https://www.cressex.org/>

The Offer

Supported by the Heywood prize, the school would offer this 'Guarantee' to all Year 7 students. Through the 'Hi Five Project', students would have a choice of 5 enrichment activities from a 'menu, in their first year at the school. These options would include:

- a) A theatre workshop
- b) A music workshop
- c) A dance workshop
- d) Local museum visit
- e) National museum visit
- f) Residential experience
- g) Science based visit/experience
- h) Sporting/team building experience

The in-school experience would be enhanced by:

- a) Artist in Residence programme
- b) Musician in Residence programme

What makes this project innovative?

Cressex belongs to a group of schools who subscribe to co-operative values in education, based on the principles established by the Rochdale Pioneers in 1844:

- Openness, Honesty, Social Responsibility, Caring for Others
- Self-help, self-responsibility, Democracy, Equality, Equity, Solidarity

The Cressex Cooperative Learning Trust was established in 2010, principally to broaden the curricular opportunities available to Cressex students. It includes a unique group of partners. Wycombe Abbey School, a local independent girls' school, has been a loyal, long-term partner. Staff and girls from the school have worked alongside Cressex students on various projects. Bucks New University offers experiences to students that encourage participation in Higher Education. Many Cressex students go on to attend Henley College.

The Hi-Five project would involve students from all partners. This invitational approach will bring together very diverse students and will encourage social interaction, as students work alongside each other or share experiences of music, art or sport.

The Trust also includes a Community member, a County Councillor. Through him the school has accessed funds from the local Council; this new project would lend itself well to individual aspects being sponsored. Assessing impact

Evaluation would be conducted through:

- Feedback from participants and providers
- 'Before and after' attitude surveys
- Case studies
- Analysis of behavioural, attendance and academic progress data held by the school

We would share what we have learned through the network of Cooperative schools and through the educational press.

ID: 1793-11 - Category: Education

Currently, supply teaching in England and Wales is unsustainable.

Experienced supply teachers are leaving the profession to work in better paid employment, such as stacking shelves in supermarkets. However, there is a solution and it is closer to hand than you might think. Around 25 years ago, most supply teachers in the UK were employed through local authority (LA) supply pools. On the whole, the supply pools did not work well. They did not help teachers find work or schools find teachers. The pools just handled paying teacher's wages and sorted out contributions to the Teacher's Pension. Around this time,

private supply agencies began to appear in the market. They offered school's the service of a single phone call to the supply agency: who would then locate a teacher for the school. To begin with, working for a supply agency paid a similar wage to working through the LA supply pool. However, over time, supply teacher wages from the agencies have fallen, whilst the charges to schools have generally increased: increasing profits to the agencies. Indeed, many supply teachers, who have been around long enough, report that the rates being offered today are either similar or identical to the rates offered 25 years ago, when the agencies first appeared. Worst still, many schools, with ever tightening budgets, are asking for teaching assistants (TA) only. Agencies in some areas are now only offering work to supply teachers at teaching assistant rates, which are often only just above the National Minimum Wage. On top of this, many agencies have now out-sourced their payroll to umbrella companies, which the supply teachers have to pay for. Being paid through an umbrella company means the supply teacher also has to pay the employers National Insurance and pension contributions. Also, supply agencies charge schools thousands of pounds in 'finders fees' if they wish to employ supply teachers long term. These factors: no pay rise in 25 years; being employed as a TA (not as a teacher) and being paid through umbrella companies, means that experienced teachers who, for a multitude of reasons, find themselves teaching on supply, are leaving the profession due to the poor rates of pay offered by these agencies. There is, however, another way of supplying teachers to schools. Since 2006, the Northern Ireland Substitute Teacher Register (NISTR) has been supplying cover teachers via a completely computerised system. Run from Belfast City Hall, NISTR combines a database of all teachers in Northern Ireland with a software package leased from one of the commercial supply agencies. Instead of schools calling an agency, they have direct access to the database and the ability to book whichever teacher they need. This could be one of the teachers who work regularly at the school, one who is geographically close or one with the specialism required: but the decision is made by the school, not the agency. Because it is run by Belfast City Hall, all of the teachers are paid in line with their full-time colleagues (in England, they receive on average only 60% of their full-time wage) and contributions are paid to their Teachers Pension (teachers through private agencies are excluded from this). This system has been fully tested and has been running for 15 years in Northern Ireland. In 2018, it was also proven that NISTR could be easily duplicated. The Isle Of Man, due to its location, had struggled for years to get adequate supply cover through private agencies. The Manx government engaged a software company to create a computerised system based on NISTR and created Education Supply. This has now been running successfully for 3 years, paying supply teachers on the island their full wage and contributing to their Teacher's Pension. To make supply teaching sustainable in England and Wales and to stop the drain of experienced teachers leaving the profession, I suggest introducing the NISTR model of computerised supply engagement to England and Wales. This could be either a national supply service or established autonomously in each local authority. Local authorities have already been approached about re-establishing

supply pools, but their reservations have always been a lack of manpower and finance. . A national service would be better for supply teachers, as many teachers work regularly across a number of LAs. It makes no difference to a computerised system whether it is placing 1,000 or 100,000 supply teachers, the choice between a national or an LA based service would be purely political. If needs be, a not for profit company could be formed to run the computerised booking system for the LA: so long as the LA processes the pay, then the teacher will still have access to the Teacher's Pension Scheme. The supply provision in England and Wales is currently very fragmented. This has been highlighted by Covid and the furlough scheme. Though almost 100% of supply teachers, according to information provided by HMRC, qualify for furlough, only 40% received any furlough in Lockdown 1 and this has dropped to 35% in Lockdown 3. Furthermore, most teachers are signed with multiple agencies and are rarely furloughed by all of their agencies: many have also not been furloughed by their main agency. In Northern Ireland, as NISTR is a public body, it does not qualify for the furlough scheme. However, the Northern Ireland administration calculated a 'furlough-like' compensation which all supply teacher in NISTR received. The same happened in Scotland, where the majority of supply teachers are still employed through LA supply pools. Thank you for considering my proposal today. For too long, teachers in England and Wales have been looking on enviously at the schemes in Northern Ireland and Scotland and wondering why they cannot have something similar. I am not suggesting introducing an untested system from abroad but a home-grown system which has been proven to work over 15 years: a system which could possibly stem the flow of experienced teachers leaving the profession and make supply provision in England and Wales more sustainable in the years to come.

ID: 1246-11 - Category: Education

Electric cars and education help reduce the test backlog and promote the green agenda.

Summary: Take measures to reduce the backlog of young people awaiting driving tests. Capitalise on opportunities to increase the proportion of electric vehicles on UK roads, thereby reducing emissions. I have learned much from my experience as an approved driving instructor (ADI) with the following points of particular relevance here: 1. It is somewhat quicker, with fewer lessons, to achieve a good standard of driving in an electric car as opposed to a geared car but... 2. ...young people seek a full driving licence, whereas tuition on an electric car leads to an automatic licence. 3. Some schools are reluctant to allow students to do driving lessons during school time, even in 'study periods'. 4. Young learners tend to develop a loyalty to the car, both brand and model, they learned to drive in. 5. Very few ADIs instruct in an electric car. 6. The government ban, as part of its green agenda, on the sales of petrol, diesel and hybrid cars by 2030 is slowly gathering pace but may result in a rush to buy many of the worst vehicles just

before the ban occurs! Some actions that could help reduce the back log are: A: Encourage learners to choose electric cars, reducing by perhaps 10% the numbers of lessons needed. This could be achieved by: Removing the barrier to a full driving licence to those who train on an electric car – if not removed altogether, then have a ‘staged licence’ that allows straightforward qualification to a full licence at a later date. Giving priority for electric cars in the queue to book Driving Tests. Heavily promoting electric car benefits to younger people – greener, cheaper to run, easier to drive; they are the future! Encouraging manufacturers of appropriate (small, city car) electric vehicles to target young people with advertising, and pricing structures. B. Encourage schools to allow pupils to do driving tuition in study periods – enabling more driving lessons to take place. This could be achieved by: Convincing schools that learning to drive is a life-skill and that allowing students to take a proper driving lesson in study periods is part of their learning. Encouraging more schools to invite appropriate driving experts (ADIs?) into school to ‘set the scene’ for economical, green, safe driving. Place driving safely more firmly on the life-skills curriculum. C. Increasing the availability of electric cars for driving instruction. This could be achieved by: Incentivising ADIs to use electric cars by, for instance, increasing the subsidy on such vehicles when purchased for instructional use. Some actions to assist the proper implementation of banning ‘polluting’ vehicles: The increased use of electric cars for driving instruction will increase their appeal among young drivers who go on to influence parental choices of a first car. The greater number of electric cars on UK roads will help with, hopefully, a reduction in prices, and gradually build a second-hand stock for the future ‘new drivers’. Education of a new generation of road users will help promote the green agenda.

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National Key Worker Reserve

All school leavers or graduates serve for one year in The NKWR. During this time they receive training with pay in a key sector of society; Nursing, Social Care, Police, Test and Tracking etc. Following this period of training and service the NKW Reservist serves in the NKWR for a few weeks a year (for updating of skills), again with pay. This ends when they reach age 40. In the event of a local, e.g. Flooding or national emergencies such as a pandemic the NKW Reservists are mobilised to their trained for roles to increase the capacity of their specific key sector.