

THE STUDENT JOURNEY SELECT COMMITTEE

Hearing 5

Tuesday 28th June 2011

Witness Guide for Members

Below are suggested themes and questions. They have been provided in advance to the witnesses to allow them to prepare for the types of issues that Members may be interested to explore. All Members are welcome to ask these questions or pose additional ones to the witnesses via the Committee Chairman.

Themes and Questions

Richard Lavender, Young Chamber Coordinator, Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce.

- Please outline the roles and responsibilities that your post involves, and please provide an account of the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce.
I am a Director of Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and work as a Consultant responsible for Young Chamber in the Ashford, Canterbury, Maidstone and West Kent Chamber area. Kent Invicta is the largest and most pro-active Chamber in Kent. Representing over 1200 businesses. We have been the sole provider of Young Chamber throughout Kent, and have a close relationship with the National Young Chamber organisation.
- To what extent, in your view, do students' academic qualifications demonstrate students' employability?
I am saddened to say that the word EMPLOYABILITY is not considered by the Education Department in many schools. Where it is taken seriously it has proved to be very successful. School/College Academic Business Studies differs considerably from practical business studies required in today's labour market, in my view.
- How far do learning and skills providers in Kent meet local labour market needs and the expectations of growth industries in Kent?
It is strange to reflect that most students are expected to leave the County for employment when leaving full time education. My view is we should be looking at the needs of the Business in Kent and retaining our youth for the future.

There is a need for Local Authorities, businesses and business organisations together with Educators to regularly sit down and discuss future developments and potentials more openly with each other, thus providing educators with a forecast of future needs. Developers, Engineers and Retail are expected to make use of a "one type" model.

- To what extent, in your view, does the business world play a part in preparing young people for work?

Sadly, very little, I have worked over the years on several projects to encourage businesses to become involved in the future of their employees education, together with the necessary curriculum needs, but it appears when we do get into dialogue with both parties they move at totally different speeds and progress breaks down, with businesses considering they are used as a tick box and no further contributions are wanted by educators from them. It is felt by businesses that educators do not really want us interfering with their well used models. However there is evidence that K College really do want to enter into dialogue with business and this is very good news.

- What contribution can the Young Chamber of Commerce make to enhance the employability of young people in Kent? Are there challenges in this process?

Young Chamber has been very successful in the past when it was partly Government funded, but since funding has been stopped schools have been reluctant to commit resources.

Young Chamber offers a variety of services supplied by local businesses on a volunteer basis through the Chamber Young Coordinator, who is paid by the Chamber from funds raised in the schools that have joined the project.

Students get a clear understanding what is required of them from the business world together with the necessary employability skills needed in today's modern businesses.

From the menu of services schools have an opportunity to select as many or as few as they feel necessary to fit into their business curriculum.

These can include:-

- ***CV writing, with actual employers providing input to current needs.***
- ***Interview techniques again with local employer input.***
- ***1st Day at Work and Behaviour in the Workplace presented by local employers.***
- ***We can set up a Business Board of Directors at the School Young Chamber for students to understand the hierarchy of business and from this board process various projects through the student members. These can as diverse as buying a cow for the school farm at Homewood, to opening a shop at Towers School and running a complete business empire of many projects as found at Invicta Grammar School for Girls***

- **Assist in arranging Careers Days and Enterprise Weeks with local businesses responding to the challenge of student presentations.**
 - **Our greatest asset is a 24/7 Young Chamber Interactive website whereby all school students can log and get mentoring, personal experiences and look into a wide range of careers presented by actual businesses. There is also a facility to whereby progress can be recorded and downloaded to be submitted as part of a curriculum exam. Although this is a private individual student web site, the lead teacher can monitor all accounts for irregularities.**
- Please discuss the effectiveness of current partnerships between local employers, educators and other organisations in preparing young people for the world of work.
I feel that we are just beginning to get the message across regarding the importance of these partnerships, especially between business and education. However there are many organisations offering a wide range of services and I feel that these are fragmented, have become very commercialised with some providers having lost contact with the reality of the workplace. This is not a general statement, but has been noted in certain cases.
 - What initiatives – if any – should be implemented both by learning and skills providers and by business to enhance the employability of young people in Kent?
Firstly, I feel that business must be in the forefront of any new initiative and the business must be united under one banner. Businesses need to be consulted on requirements, and the constant method changes that take place in day to day business. Lastly a provider needs to deliver a consistent level of information and accessibility to the business world. This in my view can and should be delivered by an organisation such as the British Chamber of Commerce. I have mentioned many times the introduction of an “Employability Passport”, whereby the initiative is with individual students as well as educators to gain access to employers and businesses to prepare themselves for future employment.
 - In your opinion, to what extent does local information, advice and guidance enable young people in Kent to make informed choices about their future education and employment?
Local information and reality to the local business needs is essential when students are making subject choices for future careers, and I feel that there has been a confusing mixture of information which in my opinion does not cater for the whole range of student abilities or aspirations. Before options are taken a greater access to structured careers must be available to students. To many times you see a

number of handouts in the schools on professional subjects, but very little on careers in more diverse areas of work.

My experience tells me that students are not aware that there are eight different careers within the construction industry for example and it is not all about digging holes in the ground. The same goes for retail, the behind the scenes activities are a mystery to the majority.

Lastly who gives advice on students who wish to become self employed. This sometimes is the only route to full employment. The Chamber offers Business Start up advice sponsored by Local Authorities, but have we considered this as an option in the curriculum at schools.

- **Please inform the Select Committee of any policy changes at national level that have relevance in this review and that can impact on the educational and employment opportunities and choices of young people in Kent. I feel that the Wolf report is a step in the right direction, but will it ever be delivered.**

With the introduction of more Academy's will this diminish the influence of County Council and Local Authority influence in education, whereby losing the ability to bring focused and constructive up to date careers advice to students.

- **Are there any other issues, with relevance to the review, which you would like to raise with the Committee?**

I would just wish to say that I have appreciated the opportunity to express my point of view on behalf of the business community and especially as a deliverer of Young Chamber in Kent.

The business community has a lot to offer and is ready and willing to support any initiatives that bring together Education and Business for the benefit of the student, i.e. our future employees.

As my parting shot I would like to see a more professional approach to student work experience whereby we can align the student more closely with his chosen future career and not making tea and photocopying in an alien environment.

Thank You

**Richard Lavender
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce.
Young Chamber Coordinator.**



YOUNG
CHAMBER

Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce Education and Business Working Together

Can we, the Chamber of Commerce, supply your Education Business needs as a "One stop Shop".

Every School needs to give students a good all round business knowledge and although the academic side of this needs to be carried out by the school, the practical and everyday aspects of business can be supplied by business organisations.

The Chamber of Commerce is a business membership organisation that can give your school a direct link to the business world and bring the business world directly into your school.

Each school has different needs, and the Chamber, via our Schools Business Programme can provide a tailored solution. From interview techniques to running your own business projects within the school, the Chamber can provide many services to suit your needs.

The local Chamber is available to you through out your membership during office hours, however the Young Chamber Interactive web site is available to your students 24/7 and every student is a member, This web site was developed with the National Diploma in mind and has direct links back to your local Chamber of Commerce

A full time Young Chamber coordinator, (a businessperson), can be available to attend your school/college to meet with students every two weeks. This visit would normally coincide with the young Chamber board meetings to discuss, help, and advise on a number of business needs.

We regularly survey our business membership to monitor the continual changes in employment needs, and these changes are fed back into our business education system. Education and business are working together to give our future employees the head start they need in a competitive business world.

To enable us to offer the appropriate service to your school/college Annex A gives a full breakdown of costs associated with the relevant service

We are happy to discuss our business programme to suit your needs, thus giving you the opportunity of using an "Education Business One Stop Shop"

Your local Chamber of Commerce is business membership led and can deliver the business need to suit your school.

Talk to us before you commit the coming year's business budget to costly "one off" events. Your local business needs to get involved.

Call, Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce

Tel 01233 503838 and request someone to come and talk to you regarding our "One Stop Business" package, without obligation.

Your Local Young Chamber Coordinator is :-



Richard M Lavender Tel 01233 535803 or 01233720251 Mob 07864 807535
Email [Richard@kentinvictachamber.co.uk]

Young Chamber Costs through your local Chamber per annum commencing Jan 2011

Chamber Deliverables

Subject	Costs
Registration Licence Fee & Administration, (minimum requirement for YC)	
Visit YC in school/college and set up YC Interactive web site for all students.	
Interview Techniques :- Discussion on how to enjoy and get the best out of your interview. This will include students interviewing business members followed by students being interviewed by the business members. Ends with wash up and how the students felt.	
CV Writing :- What is a CV and how should it be constructed. Practical lessons on writing a fictitious CV, followed by their own CV and discussions on how it went.	
1st Day At Work :- What is your first day at work like? what to expect?, what should be avoided? what should you know? This discussion will be supported by a young member of business with a senior business person.	
Behaviour in the Workplace :- What sort of behaviour is expected from you at the work place? What should I be looking out for, pit falls, practical jokes, the new boy/girl.	
Careers Day :- A day where businesses come into the school/college and give an insight into a large number of careers that are available. This is normally held in two formats whichever the school/college prefers. Option 1, tables are laid out in the hall or large classroom and students are free to walk around and visit whatever stand that feel would interest them Option 2, a number of classrooms are made available for businesses to give 30 minute presentations throughout the day. Student's pre book to presentations they wish to attend. This last option normally proves the best option.	
Business Hierarchy :- We help you set up a Board of Directors to take the responsibility of the various offices required to run a business. This gives students a responsible role in running a company within the school. The Young Chamber Coordinator will sit on the board and advise on the protocol necessary for its success. This has been the most rewarding aspect for many schools. This will include, Agenda's, Minutes and Action Plans	
Direct Business Access:- Through the Young Chamber Interactive website you can email your local Chamber of Commerce and we will arrange a specific business interface for you.	
Enterprise Week:- All schools have an Enterprise week, we will assist you with making this a success by having businessman or entrepreneur to open the week and then a number of businesses to visit during the week to assist and comment on the student's week's progress. We will then arrange a judging panel on the final day.	
School Business Projects:- We will assist students thinking, in setting up business projects within the school under the Young Chamber banner. This will include submitting business cases together with cash flow forecasts and developing the projects to a conclusion.	
Total Costing	

Should you require all the above we can offer you a complete Young Chamber Package which will include your Licence Fee and fortnightly visits to your Board Meetings plus £50.00 worth of Young Chamber merchandise for :-

£