



## Student 'A' Level Revision Conference Another Successful Psychology Student Conference

Following on from last year's successful A Level Student conference, the VESA Development group for Psychology decided to run it again this year. The conference took place on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April. Approximately 150 students attended from schools across Leicester and Leicestershire.

Once again, Leicester University hosted the event, allowing students to have the additional benefit of experiencing a day on a University campus. Aimhigher sponsored the conference and provided student delegates with information and advice regarding finances etc for life at University.

Students participated in a range of workshops, including Synopsity,

Behaviour, Relationships, Sleeping and Dreaming. Exams skills in general also featured heavily throughout the programme, to stand the students in good stead for all their exams. All of these workshops were led by teachers who are part of the development group. [Members can download conference presentations and supporting materials from the VESA Moodle for Psychology.]

This year, the co-ordination of the event was undertaken by Ed O'Grady and colleagues from Beauchamp College, Oadby. They worked extremely hard to make it a success and refresh the memories of students preparing to take their exams this summer. For many, this event

triggered their revision process by answering that all important question "Where do I start?"

Certainly, the staff involved in running the event found it highly worthwhile and are currently considering the possibility of running further revision conferences in the next academic year for Year 12 and 13. Feedback from students who attended the day was extremely positive.

In the meantime, the Psychology User group will be having a staff conference at the University of Leicester Halls of Residence on **21<sup>st</sup> June 2007**.

If you would like to attend or receive further information, details can be obtained by contacting Brian Sanderson or Jacqui Harley at VESA or by looking on the VESA Website. [[www.vesa.org.uk](http://www.vesa.org.uk)]

## Leicester City Partnership Pre-16 Collaborative Programme

The Leicester City Partnership programmes looks set to expand yet again in 2007-8 with over 400 potential students having already completed their application forms. The programme, offered across the City, aims to offer Key Stage 4 students a wider range of curriculum opportunities. There have been extensive increases in the range of courses offered and the number of students involved over the past 5 years. In addition, there are also opportunities offered on the Wednesday afternoon 9 week block "Tasters" and the Future Pathways programme, which provides Friday afternoon tasters in Year 10 and one day work experience or college placements in Year 11.

Interviews for places on the vocational courses will now have taken place. Next year we continue to work with our Training Provider

partners, which include, Carter and Carter, Stride, Heart of England Training, In2Sport, Chill Enterprises and Mere Lane Equestrian Centre. The recognition of vocational courses in the school "league tables" has given significant currency to the achievement of vocational qualifications. These opportunities have enhanced the Key Stage 4 curriculum, motivated students, given them an opportunity to experience learning in a different environment, increased progression into the Post-16 sector and contributed to additional achievement in the City. The VESA team is working closely with staff delivering the programmes and their managers to ensure that students have a quality experience and achieve the planned qualification.

As we have so many students in the Year 10 programme this academic year we have had to divide the

**Annual Year 10 Awards Ceremony** into two dates.

- For students on Leicester College courses the event will be held on the **12<sup>th</sup> June 2007**.
- For students on Training Provider courses the event will be held on the **19<sup>th</sup> June 2007**.

At these events, we celebrate the achievement of the current Year 10 students and all students will be given a certificate. There will also be prizes for the best and most improved student in each group.

We are hoping that all school staff and providers involved in the programme will be able to attend to support their students.

For further information contact Viv Laxton/ Graham Conway /Brian Sanderson at the VESA office.

VESA would like to thank on behalf of students, schools and colleges in Leicester + shire all the companies listed below for their continuing commitment, service and support for work experience. Organisations awarded the 'Certificates of Appreciation' in the first-round of breakfast 'Thank You' events included:

Abberdale House • A B Butt • B H S Ltd • Baby Gear • Barratt Automotive / Roger Kyle Leicester Ltd • Boots The Chemist Catherine Infant School • Champneys Springs Health Farm • Comet • Dorothy Perkins Retail Ltd • D S Auto Services • Digital Link Evans • F E Downes Ltd • Fenwick Ltd • G Palmer & Son (Nurserymen) Ltd • Genetics Department • Gorse Hill City Farm • Halo HSBC Commercial Services & Sales Centre • Iceland Frozen Foods plc • Indy Hair • J C K Joinery • J C Sports • Lester Motorcycles The Lakhani Group • M & A Contracts Ltd • Maplins Electronics • Margaret's Hairdressing • Merrydale Infant School Nationwide Building Society • Nippers Nursery • Oliveti Construction Ltd • Parks Services • Philip James Ltd Ragdale Hall - Health Hydro • Redgate Farm Animal Sanctuary • Ribins & Day of Leicester • Sandcliffe of Nottingham Scott Bailye Hairdressing • Sheehan's Music Services Ltd • Sikh Community Centre • Sugar's International Fitness Centre • T 2 Takeover Radio • Tesco Stores Limited • Top Girl • Toys R Us • The Islamic Establishment Al-Atfaal • Two Jay Services Uppingham Dental Practice • Waitrose Supermarkets • White House Day Nursery • Wilkinsons • Woodside Animal Centre (RSPCA)



SUMMER TERM 2007

## WORK EXPERIENCE - WEXA 'THANK YOU' TO LOCAL EMPLOYERS

VESA's work experience placement service, WEXA, places some 8,500 + students each year on Work Experience. A vast number of local businesses and organisations show their commitment to this important educational entitlement by providing students with placements. From sole traders to multi-national companies and from voluntary organisations to public sector services, we see a wide range of employers supporting their local community in this way.

On **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March**, WEXA held the first of a number of planned 'thank you' breakfast events where Jo Sykes, the Manager of WEXA, presented a 'Certificate of Appreciation' to a number of invited employers in recognition of their commitment and service in support of Work Experience in Leicester and Leicestershire. (The event was funded through the Leicestershire Education Business Company.)

With work experience set to form a compulsory component of the Diploma system as it evolves over the next 5 years, the challenge is to extend this level of employer commitment and support to an ever-wider range of local organisations. VESA will be working hard with LEBC, Connexions and its other key partners to address this "employer engagement challenge".



A selection of local employers with their certificates

Representatives from Boots the Chemist, Comet, Digital Link, HSBC Commercial Services & Sales Centre, J C K Joinery, Philip James Ltd, Takeover Radio, and Wilkinsons showing their WEXA Certificates of Appreciation for valuable contributions to Work Experience.

The full list of those awarded certificates at this first "thank you" event is provided on the back page of this newsletter

## Dates for your Diary

### VESA Conferences Academic year 2007/08

VESA 13-19  
Curriculum Conference  
**29<sup>th</sup> November 2007**  
Beaumanor Hall

East Midlands 14-19  
Curriculum Conference  
**31<sup>st</sup> January & 1<sup>st</sup> February 2008**  
Stoke Rochford

Work Related  
Learning Conference  
**21<sup>st</sup> February 2008**  
Beaumanor Hall

Alternative Curriculum  
Conference  
**22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008**  
Beaumanor Hall

VESA 13-19  
Curriculum Conference  
**5<sup>th</sup> June 2008**  
Beaumanor Hall

Leicestershire Personal  
Development Programme  
Consortium Residential  
**12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> June 2008**  
Launde Abbey

Leicester City + Leicestershire  
Aimhigher Conference  
**19<sup>th</sup> June 2008**  
Beaumanor Hall

13 - 19 Education Support Agency

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# The Skills Agenda - Not just a tale of Diplomas!

Skills, however defined or configured, feature ever more prominently in the thinking of the DfES. Demands for a more skilled workforce come from many quarters - from industry, led by the CBI, from Higher Education and reinforced of late by Government reports (most recently Leitch and the 2020 Vision, Gilbert Review). Raising the profile of skills to build a sound foundation for more highly skilled school and college leavers is seen as a growing challenge, leading to increased achievement and participation.

Current 14-19 developments and the Education & Skills Implementation Plan highlight "getting the basics right" as one of several fundamental drivers. Skills, in this context do not refer to occupational or work associated skills, but to generic "functional" skills and a range of "softer" skills and associated qualities. Using the current terminology, **Functional Skills**, (derived from Key Skills) comprise Mathematics, English and ICT. Other skills (sometimes referred to as softer or wider skills) are grouped under the heading of **Personal, Learning & Thinking Skills** (PLTS) and are equally essential for success in adult life. Colleagues familiar with the current OFSTED framework will recognise close links between the six PLTS and the Every Child Matters themes written large in the SEF.

## Personal Learning & Thinking Skills

The six strands of PLTS are:-

Team workers

Self-managers

Independent enquirers

Reflective learners

Creative thinkers

Effective participators

## So how does this all affect me?

All schools and colleges should begin to evolve their own skills strategies to run across the curriculum and impact on all learners. At the moment, it might be argued that there are two broad groupings; first, those actively involved in Diploma planning and, second, those not yet actively engaged. Whichever grouping you fall into, addressing the skill needs of all your learners is increasingly important.

## Grouping 1

For those entirely involved in Diploma planning, Diplomas are becoming a main lever for curriculum change - anyone seeking to pass through the Gateway should have thought through the whys and wherefores of Functional Skills, PLTS and the Extended Project, as these are all part of the **Generic Learning** component of all Diploma lines of learning. There is a danger that the focus on Diploma Gateway applications and the associated planning for delivery from 2008 (through to 2013) focuses just on the Principal Learning. It is important, therefore, for Diploma planners to develop and integrate *skills strategies* into their Diploma thinking from the outset.

## Grouping 2

Those not actively pursuing Diplomas (for a 2008 or 2009 start) may be lulled into the belief that Functional Skills and PLTS are primarily a Diploma "thing" and can be put off for a while. However, it is crucial to recognise that much that comes under the Diploma banner of Generic Learning is part of the post 2010 curriculum entitlement of all learners.

**Functional Skills become a compulsory part of GCSEs in Maths, English and ICT from September 2010.**

The recent Secondary Curriculum Review (see via the QCA website) set out the key roles to be played by Functional Skills, PLTS and Personal Development in current curriculum planning.

## What is VESA doing to help?

During the coming term and during 2007-8 and beyond, VESA, will be working closely with National Strategy colleagues from Leicester City and Leicestershire LAs to offer support, addressing the key elements of the skills agenda as it affects schools, colleges and partnerships. Listed below is a range of support events related to the skills theme:

### Summer Term 2007 Support

#### 12<sup>th</sup> June

Adult Basic Skills CPD (Numeracy/Literacy)

#### 14<sup>th</sup> June

Skills Managers' Network

#### 25<sup>th</sup> June

KS4 Deputies and Senior Managers' Network

#### 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> June

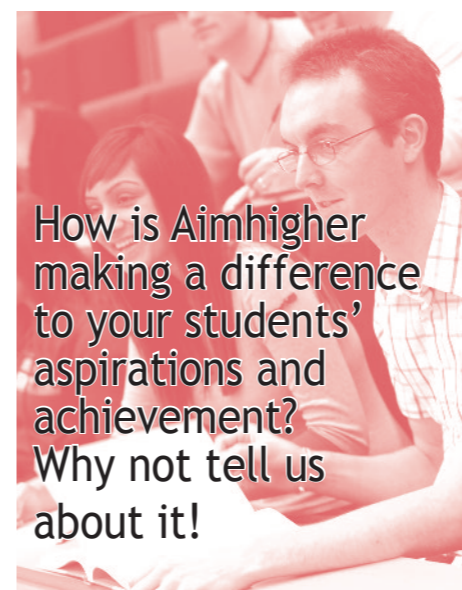
Functional Skills National Training Programme (for Diploma and Functional Skills pilot centres)

### 2007-8 Academic year Support

- KS4 Deputies' and Senior Managers' Network
- Functional Skills Managers' Network and associated CPD
- Adult Basic Skills CPD (Numeracy/Literacy) CPD
- PLTS Development Forum and associated CPD

*(Look out for the 2007-08 VESA Calendar of Events which will be published later this year)*

**If you would like additional information or would like to explore how VESA can help or advise your centre, please contact Stuart King or Megan Jones at the VESA office.**



How is Aimhigher making a difference to your students' aspirations and achievement? Why not tell us about it!

Help us to showcase how Aimhigher funding and initiatives are making a difference in your organisation and to your students by contacting Emma Taylor, Aimhigher Communications Co-ordinator, at VESA. Just tell us which activities or students you would like to "shout about" and Emma can do the rest.

Contact her on 0116 270 7942 or email: [emma.taylor@vesa.org.uk](mailto:emma.taylor@vesa.org.uk)

## POST 16 'LIAISE' IN LEICESTER CITY

The collaborative Post 16 LIAISE group in Leicester City is currently in the process of planning how it can support careers information and advice programmes in City schools in 2007/08.

The group comprises Gateway, Regent and Wyggeston & Queen Elizabeth 1st 6<sup>th</sup> Form Colleges; Leicester and South Leicestershire FE Colleges and LANTERN [representing apprenticeships and work based learning providers]. The group is supported by Connexions Leicester shire and the Leicester Secondary EIP with co-ordination provided by VESA. LIAISE has now been in existence for 2 years and continues to improve and update the content of its offer to Leicester City schools. However, the principles underpinning LIAISE remain consistent - that is, to contribute to the provision of impartial

## Aimhigher...

leicester city + leicestershire

### Local students' performance is on the up!

Aimhigher students in Leicester City and Leicestershire are exceeding expectations and making good progress according to the latest research. Two recent reports assessing the impact of Aimhigher activities and the attainment of Aimhigher pupils has found that:

- A greater number are achieving more A-C's than expected in both the City and the County
- The Aimhigher cohort is attaining and progressing far better than would be expected from the Index of Multiple Deprivation scores of their areas of residence
- Level 2 attainment in the 10% most deprived wards is much higher than expected from their deprivation scores
- In the academic years between 2001/02 and 2005/06 the 10% most deprived areas in Leicester witnessed a **40.4%** increase in successful applicants to full-time higher education courses

"The most significant development has been that the percentage of Aimhigher learners who continue with their education to achieve Level 2 as well as Level 3 qualifications, greatly exceeded the total percentages of students achieving Levels 2 and 3 for both Leicester City and Leicestershire." (Recent Aimhigher Report)

For more information contact Neil Stock, Aimhigher Co-ordinator, at the VESA office.

information and advice on future options for Leicester City students.

One significant development for 2007/08 is to encourage City schools to plan well in advance when thinking about how they wish to engage the Post-16 sector in supporting careers information and advice programmes for their students. Meetings are currently being organised between LIAISE group representatives and staff in schools to consider which components of the LIAISE "entitlement" they wish to access in the next academic year. Examples of this entitlement include:

- INSET for staff on post-16 options in Leicester City.
- Assembly inputs for whole year groups.
- Support for parents and careers events/evenings.

The group is also prepared to offer other inputs (dependent on the extent of the commitment and other demands on LIAISE staff time). This could include sessions for small groups of students on topics related to Post 16 choice. Examples include

- Completing the LeCAP [common application process]
- Preparing for post-16 interviews
- Financial support.

If you have not yet arranged an appointment for LIAISE representatives to visit your school and would like to organise a meeting to discuss your support needs for 2007/08, please contact Jacqui Harley at the VESA office.

If you would like to discuss LIAISE issues generally, please contact Tim Farthing at VESA or Rhiannon Lloyd Jones at Regent College (who chairs the LIAISE group) and can be contacted on 0116 255 4629.