

schoolzone *newsletter*

educational intelligence

message from the editor..

Hello! My name's Rachel, and, as Schoolzone's work experience student, I've been asked by our usual editor to write this month's editorial - probably because she can't think of anything to say for herself...!

When my school informed me that all sixth form students had to complete a week's compulsory work experience, I have to admit that I wasn't hugely excited - there is something slightly unappealing to all teenagers about the words, 'unpaid work'! But I have to say that after spending a week working at Schoolzone I was pleasantly surprised to say the least!

We had been given a few work experience briefings at school prior to our week (16th-20th June) which consisted of filling out various forms regarding the identity of our employer and their contact details, but we weren't really told what to expect or even what we had to achieve! So when I turned up for my first day at Schoolzone, I was more than a little unsure as to what to expect! Luckily for me, all the staff were really friendly and seemed happy to let me intrude for a week at one of their busiest times of year!

Fearing a week attached to the photocopier, I was relieved to learn that there had already been a whole sheet full of tasks drawn up for me to tackle, ranging from helping out with market research analysis to learning general office tasks such as answering phones and transferring calls - which sounds simple but was actually one of the more

daunting tasks I faced this week! Enthusiastically mentored by the Business Development Director, I spent my week working in both the research department and the sales and advertising department. I was even given the opportunity to sit in on a focus group, which took place online and on the telephone. Never having really heard of a focus group before, this gave me an interesting insight into one kind of market research approach, helping me understand more about what Schoolzone does.

I can now confidently say that I think work experience is a vital part of education and would strongly recommend it to everyone in secondary education. Having previously only worked in a coffee shop and a clothes shop, I was completely inexperienced in regular day-to-day tasks that most employers would expect all staff to have learnt. Without work experience, I would have been totally unprepared for the jump from secondary education to employment, and hadn't realised the contrast between the two.

I have gained a lot from my week at Schoolzone, from a basic understanding of company policy and general office training to more specific research tasks and data analysis. I was strongly encouraged by the enthusiasm of the staff at Schoolzone, and their patience and understanding towards their totally inexperienced work experience student! I have definitely gained valuable work experience from the past week, which I hope will prepare me for future employment after my A levels.

message from the usual editor..

A big thank you to Rachel for all her hard work; it's been a joy having her on board - though I'm not sure how representative her experience here is of 'real office life' (we place a very strong emphasis on cake eating!!!).

On the subject of 'Pupil Voice', I've had a few emails inquiring into the whereabouts of the pupil satisfaction survey which we promised to run last month. My apologies - we really have been working absolutely flat out on our research programme, but we're still hoping to run this before the summer holidays, so do keep an eye on our website, www.schoolzone.co.uk.

Last month's editorial about levels of teacher satisfaction prompted this response from one of our readers: "Since starting teaching three years ago I can safely say I love my job. The only frustration I can find is the

lack of progression. I come from a sales and marketing background and made the choice to move into teaching - a choice I never regret. However, I am finding that I am not being promoted, as the Science department posts are filled by inefficient managers who in industry would have been moved on many months ago! I feel that we need to move to performance-related pay and make it easier for schools to remove inefficient managers and promote those that do have the passion, drive and enthusiasm for the job!"

What do you think? Is performance-related pay a way of rewarding those teachers who really do make a difference and does it create progressive career opportunities? If you have comments about this, or any other issues in this Newsletter, please write to me at:

Melissa@schoolzone.co.uk.

News About ELC's

As you should already know this school year heralds the end of electronic learning credits.

The funding for your technology is changing. Schoolzone will carry on providing its evaluations and virtual tour service, as it will now be more vital than ever to have reliable information about the products and resources that are suitable for use in schools.

To find out more about this change and how it will affect you, please ask you ICT Coordinator.

free resources & opportunities

Add your own comments to the UK's best educational search engine

Make the best even better. Our webguide of 50,000 education websites is now open to registered users to add your own comments about each entry. Just follow the link in the results then click on the 'Add a Review' link at the top of the page.

Advertising Teaching Jobs or Seeking Employment?

See the Schoolzone site for **Schoolzone jobs**, which now provides an opportunity for schools to advertise all teaching jobs by registering with AllTeachingJobs.co.uk.

For just £40 per year plus VAT, schools can instantly add, edit and manage all school vacancies for an entire year.

Schoolzone jobs, also lists current jobs, delineated by region, subject or sector and offers a job alert service too.

For more information please contact Carmen Frowd, carmen@schoolzone.co.uk or call 01242 262906.

interact schoolzone interact

Schoolzone Interact currently has 2956 schools as registered users. The service allows full access to publishers' educational content on a 'try before you buy' basis. There is a 'new to Interact' section for those who would like an introduction to what is on offer and there is no commitment to buy at the end of the trial period.

To access this free digital content please go to: www.schoolzone.co.uk/community/interact/login.asp

Schoolzone has recently changed the criteria for inclusion into Interact which means a wealth of new resources will be available through the system over the autumn term. Keep your eyes peeled and take advantage of this great 'try before you buy' feature.

Interact feedback:

In a pre-launch Interact focus group teachers stated:

"This is a way to interface with bits of software that I am interested in and cut out the dross, I can find directly what I want."

Have you accessed the Schoolzone Virtual Tours yet?

Virtual Tours are interactive demonstrations of educational content together with independent teacher voiceovers. This month's example is a Music resource:

O-Generator - Sibelius Software Ltd

O-Generator claims that it is, 'the simplest way for students to understand the fundamentals of music and composition'. The basis of this bold claim is the clever circular interface that allows pupils to place samples on the beats (down to 16ths) of bars of music, altering pitch and position to build pieces of music from separate bars.

Check out the Virtual Tour area for further examples covering all subjects and key stages.

<http://www.schoolzone.co.uk/resources/evaluations/virtualtours.asp>



Don't forget ... to have your say

Last month we asked our website users the following question...



Do you prefer Internet resources to CD-ROM's?

Of the respondents, 97 voted YES and 54 said NO.

This month we ask:

Do you feel that your school provides a high quality work experience programme?

Please go to our homepage at www.schoolzone.co.uk to cast your vote or email your comments to the Editor at melissa@schoolzone.co.uk.

Each month the Schoolzone website brings you details of events of interest to the education community: www.schoolzone.co.uk/eventsandtraining/index.asp

For example:

TIMETABLE PLANNING

Date: 3rd October 2008

Time: 08:45-16:15

This one day course covers the planning process from the moment curricular aims are decided to the handing over of a costed and staffed timetable model to the timetabler for construction.

Full details here: <http://www.monitortimetabling.com/>

Email: <http://www.monitortimetabling.com/>

Telephone: 01625 524474

Further details on the website.