

Press Release



For Immediate Release

Young offenders reformed through ICT

Decisions, responsibility, honesty and reformation.

Young offenders in Sheffield examine their behavior using ICT with some very positive results.

Sheffield West City Learning Centre is working with their local Youth Offending Service to offer young offenders personalized learning and the chance to stay out of prison in two innovative schemes.

In the first scheme, individuals retell their crimes, such as vandalism and street altercations, from the point of view of the victim. Using Kar2ouche storyboarding software they are able to choose different 3D characters to represent the parties involved; themselves, the victim, their parents etc. These characters are placed onto suitable backgrounds, then relevant props are added to complete the scenes.

Supported throughout by a member of the Youth Offending team and a volunteer representing the victim of their crime these retellings can be challenged to ensure that the young offender is being honest with themselves and to help the young person examine the choices they made and talk about how they might do things differently next time.

The success of the Kar2ouche scheme led to the development of a second project using MissionMaker game authoring software. This scheme is 10 weeks in duration and involves a group of young people in Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes (ISSP's) meaning that they are obliged to attend these sessions. Their crimes include much more serious offences such as mugging and knife crime. The ISSP is a final chance before prison.

However, as Angie Farrant of the Youth Offending Service and project lead told me 'The young people whilst obliged to attend, are under no obligation to engage once they get here.'

This is why CLC Manager Alex Jones suggested MissionMaker as he could see its potential to captivate students and effectively engage this audience. So far he has been proved right. The students, many of whom have not been in education for a while, tend to settle within 5 to 10 minutes and work well.

During the sessions, students are shown a particular aspect of a game and taught how to use MissionMaker to create this. So far they have created 3D worlds, added game rules, characters and speech.

In the course of making a game, participants use and develop skills such as listening, cooperation, literacy, thinking and problem solving, discussion and clear speech.

Really MissionMaker and game making is the vehicle that facilitates the focus and concentration required to develop these skills and allow the Youth Offending Team to intervene constructively with these young people.

The young people themselves get a huge sense of achievement as they end up with games that they have produced that they can pass onto their friends to play.

The initial 10 week scheme is being run by one of Immersive's accredited trainers, Marianna Cole. Marianna's experience as a deputy head teacher, ICT consultant and life coach in a pupil referral unit make her ideal for this pilot. But as she told me her job is to train the YOS team so that future sessions will be self supporting.

Angie Farrant is a police officer, a youth offending service officer and an ex biology teacher. She retires in 18 months and would like to ensure that schemes such as this continue so that many more young people benefit from them.

The Kar2ouche storyboarding tool, with 56 different content titles, is used in around 7000 UK schools. The more recently released MissionMaker game authoring tool is used in around 500 schools.

Company Information

Immersive Education, founded in 1999 as a result of collaboration between Oxford University and Intel, is an award-winning specialist educational software publisher, based in Oxford, UK.

Our tools: encourage creative learning, adapt to individual teaching styles, allow for individual learning preferences and inspire innovation and creativity in the classroom.

We believe pupils learn best when education is fun - our products are enjoyable to use and encourage learning through exploration.

The 3D graphical quality of our products is unrivalled. All Immersive Education products have won major awards, including BETT Awards in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

www.immersiveeducation.com

Contacts:

For further details please contact:

Sarah Barnett

Head of Marketing, Immersive Education

01865 886 330

sarahb@imed.co.uk

www.immersiveeducation.com

Alex Jones

Manager

Sheffield West CLC

Does not work Mondays

0114 285 5586

alex@nwsclc.net

Marianna Cole

07989 320 704

Marianna.cole@ntlworld.com

Angie Farrant can be contacted via Alex Jones at Sheffield West CLC.