

Aulden's Blog

Hello! For those that do not know me I am Aulden Dunipace, founder and CEO of The Learning Partnership.

I founded TLP in 2005 and in 16 years I have worked with over half a million young people, delivered over £2 million in sponsorship into UK schools, set up 5 international education programmes, worked with 15 education ministers and enjoyed partnerships with over 1000 secondary schools. **I did not expect 2020 to be the year that broke me....**

...In fact, January and February 2020 started off as the best 2 months in our history with more SME's agreeing to sponsor the schools STEM inspiration programme than ever before.

At the start of 2020 TLP was to support 700 secondary schools through the model rocket car challenge. 100,000 learners would have been eyes wide open and inspired by the careers available to them.

We had built the hover craft and robotics challenges, launched 2 primary school STEM programmes and had over 400 companies lined up to fund these programmes in UK schools.

We had moved into new larger offices and hired more staff to support schools. We had begun redeveloping our STEM products to be Bio-compostable and fully sustainable to enable the experiences to educate in global sustainability as well as STEM.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES!

A year into the pandemic and the team has gone, the office and warehouse have gone, my farm has gone to clear the debts left by the total trading collapse of the company caused by Covid.

Our turnover this last year has been 5% of what it was in the year before Covid. There has been no support, no grants, no quarter given by landlords, councils or government, just the offer of more debt!

So, is this the end of the story for The Learning Partnership and its work in education?

Is Covid to be end of all the collaborative design we have done with schools and employers over the last 15 years?

How can do we pick up the pieces and start all over again?

The simple answer is that I cannot go on as before.....

.....in the same way that I hope that all of you can not simply go back to teaching, developing, and engaging young people the way we all did before Covid.

If the last year has taught us anything, it is that if the world was changing around us before Covid, it will look like an entirely different place after it.

The anxiety that this is creating amongst the young people we all work with is enormous, but this anxiety was already present before Covid. Climate change, Ai, Machine Learning, Block chain were all creating a different world that our young people were growing up in, and experiencing first hand.

Covid has simply added to and accelerated this, shining a spotlight on the changes within society and the effect these changes will have on our roles as educators, parents, and employers.

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How will these changes impact upon the opportunities available for our young people?

- **Yes** the social contract that existed in the world - of good grades lead to university lead to life long career has gone, but we all know this was evaporating anyway.
- **Yes** the link between what we teach in school and what employers really need in their new recruits is out of step, but this was already happening pre-covid.
- **No** I am not going to try and pick up the pre-Covid pieces of TLP and rebuild, the world has moved on.

BUT - With your help and support I want us all to move on with it. I want my effort to focus on helping young people find themselves, their place in this new world, and to help them develop the skills, pathways and goals that fit with the world of work in the 21st century.

My invitation to you as their teachers, parents, mentors, and future employers is to help me.

I believe that in the world we now live, all that really matters is a young person's confidence in who they are, what their strengths and potentials are, and where these fit into the world they will enter when they leave school.

This might be going to university, it might be joining an apprenticeship scheme, or taking on a distance learning course in block chain whilst working at Amazon or joining the movement to fight climate change.

Whatever path a young person will follow when they leave school, you can bet it will not be the only path they tread.

It is my belief that every young person you work with is unique, has incredible skills and talents, and can be successful and happy in life during and after school if they can learn about themselves and the incredible opportunities that are still out there for them, that match them as unique talented human beings.

The challenge we all face is that government policy does not support the radical change that is required to support our young people achieve their potential in the 21st century. In the same way that government policy will not take the radical decisions required to reverse climate change, very probably until it is too late!

We must all take ownership and responsibility for these things. We must lead where government will eventually follow.

So my commitment to you as teacher, parent, employer and school leaders is this.

I will continue my work to support you, I will bring to your attention in these news letters the very latest materials and resources that I find to support your young people learning about who they are, developing their confidence and resilience, building their wider life skills and capabilities and providing ways to match them and this new found understanding of place and purpose with opportunities around you that fit their unique make up.

I will continue to bring innovative ways of developing skills and talents in your young people to your attention. I will continue to try and facilitate partnership opportunities between employers, parents and educators to make this journey as smooth as possible.

In return I would ask you that you do something for me please.

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1. Read these letters I send you. They will all have the same subject line "Aulden's Inspiration Blog" and I will only send them when I have something of value to share.
2. Respond to invitations to partner - I will continue to recruit employers to sponsor products and programmes for your young people, and when I have local sponsors, I will let you know as individual schools, but help me by stepping outside the constraints provided by government and dare to do different.
3. Share with your networks – if I bring to your attention products or experiences that you think would work for your young people, share it with your parents and colleagues so that between us all we can ensure that all young people get access to these materials and pathways.
4. If your invited to get involved as a school or employer and help, please get involved and help.
5. Share this newsletter with fellow teachers, parents, and employers. I have gathered 30000 of you into my network over the years but there are many more of you still out there and you can join the newsletter inside the Blog.
6. Tell me about stuff you find inspirational, and think should be shared and I will share it for you.

For now, I wish you a very warm and sunny summer term. Let us use this new beginning as a chance to support our young people in the way they really need. Let us help them discover the positive pathways that lie ahead of them and help them build the skills and behaviours that will support them achieving their goals in the world they are growing into, not the world that we have lived through as they are vastly different places.

Finally, be brave, be radical and be strong and collectively we can help our young people fashion themselves and their world into a place we can all be proud living in as we grow old.

Yours faithfully

Aulden