
Subject: Moore, Andrew

Dear Ms. Jowell,

I write in response to the consultation on the Digital Curriculum.

I am an experienced teacher of English (21 years in the classroom) now a consultant teacher for curriculum use of ICT. I am also a Web author, with a teaching site at:

<http://www.shunsley.eril.net/armoore/>

The site is used by real students and parents, in very large numbers - over 100,000 page impressions a month - and I have created it over a few years in the little spare time a teaching job leaves. With like-minded friends, I helped set up the Association of Teacher Web sites at:

<http://www.byteachers.org.uk/>

The Association has a huge number of high quality resources and receives millions of page impressions from many thousands of visitors every month. In their "spare" time, a handful of teachers have already covered much of the UK curriculum - and this has cost the DfES nothing, other than the little time and scant resources that LEAs and schools have been able to give to these teachers.

I am quite enthusiastic at the thought of the BBC's publishing substantial new content - but my enthusiasm is tempered with a sense that teachers may be ignored in this discussion.

The attempt by some commercial companies (RM Plc and others) to prevent the BBC from publishing resources free to the end user (because it distorts the market) is repellent. Should these companies succeed, even temporarily, no teachers will thank them. And many will use our discretion, under local financial management, to buy things elsewhere. It will be a sad day if children (in the UK and beyond) cannot benefit from the broadcasting and distribution of new resources because education must defer to market forces.

Interestingly, the commercial providers mostly have to commission content from teachers writing freelance (I write for Learn.co.uk and ProQuest - many of my friends do likewise for these or other publishers), yet the same teachers do not receive so much kudos for resources we put free to the end user in the public domain. We may sometimes lack time to polish everything, but the content is sound and students recognize that when it comes to helping them over the hurdles of assessed work, they are well off with real teachers. (Every day ATW members receive many e-mails that confirm this.) More to the point, all of us would rather keep our writing activities in the public sector - perhaps receiving small grants to cover the cost of some of our time, and mostly remaining as active teachers.

My concern is that the BBC should not simply commission content from getting into bed with established publishers - once more teachers, who have a creative vision, see the public investment go from the Treasury to the commercial organization, which rarely can give such good value for money. It makes sense for the BBC, in producing content in-house, to work with curriculum experts, as well as academic writers. Leon Cych makes this case most powerfully in his article published in last week's (June 14) TES Online supplement. And this will keep talented and innovative users of Information and Learning Technologies in schools (mostly), rather than moving to private sector providers of content - which is where many of the missing teachers

have gone.

More pertinently, when it comes to using these resources and integrating them into teaching and learning activities, including digital education delivered in and out of school, then teachers are critical to the success of this venture. It is deeply patronizing (if not stupid) to give me and my colleagues resources prepared for me by someone else, but which have not been road-tested in real digital education. Teachers can do this. Publishers cannot. Indeed, the companies for which I do freelance work seem deeply ignorant of the National Grid for Learning - yet teachers are able to join up the content, and the pedagogy and classroom practice with the national and regional infrastructure and local or wide area networks that will make it all work.

A lot of this public debate smacks of arrogance - government talks to business, but overlooks the people who know, and who are crucial to the success of this investment. There are many teachers who want to see the Digital Curriculum succeed - and who are waiting to be asked to help. But the conversations are passing us by for now. Can you do anything to change this?

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Moore,

(I work for the East Riding LEA, but am writing in a private capacity as a teacher and parent.)