Ethos

Good Stories. Good People. Good Business.

Cars

Are zero emission cars really as clean as they sound? Two experts explore the true meaning of the term, and look to the future of electric cars.

Carrier bags

It's two years since the plastic bag charge was introduced in the UK. We explore the implications of single use carrier bags, and the best alternative.

Cost of clothes

What is the true cost of the clothes we wear? With the rise of the conscious consumer, how long will it be before fast fashion falls out of fashion?
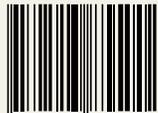
The Studio

Words: Shaun McInerney

Based in the heart of Liverpool's creative and digital hub, the Baltic Triangle, sits The Studio school, where the next generation of coders, gamers and digital creatives are hard at work. Shaun McInerney, The Studio's headteacher talks about teaching tomorrow's entrepreneurs, and the importance of saying thank you…

The Studio is a secondary school for 14-19-year olds, based at the heart of the Baltic Creative campus in Liverpool. It aims to fill the gap between what young people need to succeed and what the current education system provides. It's also a launchpad for students' careers in emerging areas of the digital economy. Based in a 19th century former cotton warehouse, with exposed timber and brick, it looks and feels more like a tech start up than a secondary school; and for its students and workers, this is part of the appeal.

The Studio is set up to create future talent for the tech and creative sector, so it's natural for us to absorb the socially progressive and dynamic culture of this sector into the school. We want to empower our students to make a positive impact on the world through an innovative use of digital technology. To do this our students need to be self-aware, to have agency, to advocate for themselves and others and to want to make a difference in the world. Over the last five years our students have brought this to life and we have been elected as one of 15 Ashoka Changemaker schools in the UK to further this work.

I love the meritocratic nature of the tech sector – it doesn't matter which school you've been to or university you went to; if you have a great skills base and can communicate well, you have a great chance of success. More than two thirds of our students go to university and continue studying our specialist subjects – computing, digital arts, business; the other one third are well placed to be employed, start their own business or win competitive degree apprenticeships. Many would prefer to earn and learn and this route is ideal. They leave us with products they have published and a story to tell of their skills development; how they have taught themselves high level technical or creative skills, and the frustrations of managing a team. They use SCRUM to organise their workflow and many track their projects with Trello or Slack. So, they already have a head start in an interview situation against other 18-year olds.

I think we stand out as being innovative in the current educational climate because most schools are responding to a very narrow range of priorities that are driving the system. The challenge for us is to make sure our students do at least as well academically as they would elsewhere and, alongside that, equip them with skills to be sector ready. Our students thrive in this professional environment because they feel they can unleash their creativity and passion for technology. I tell them that if they can turn their hobby into a livelihood that they can win the game of life; and some of them are already starting to do that!

Every issue we talk to a co-working space, incubator, network or membership organisation about what they do, and who they do it with. If you're doing something interesting, tell us: lucy@ethospaper.com.
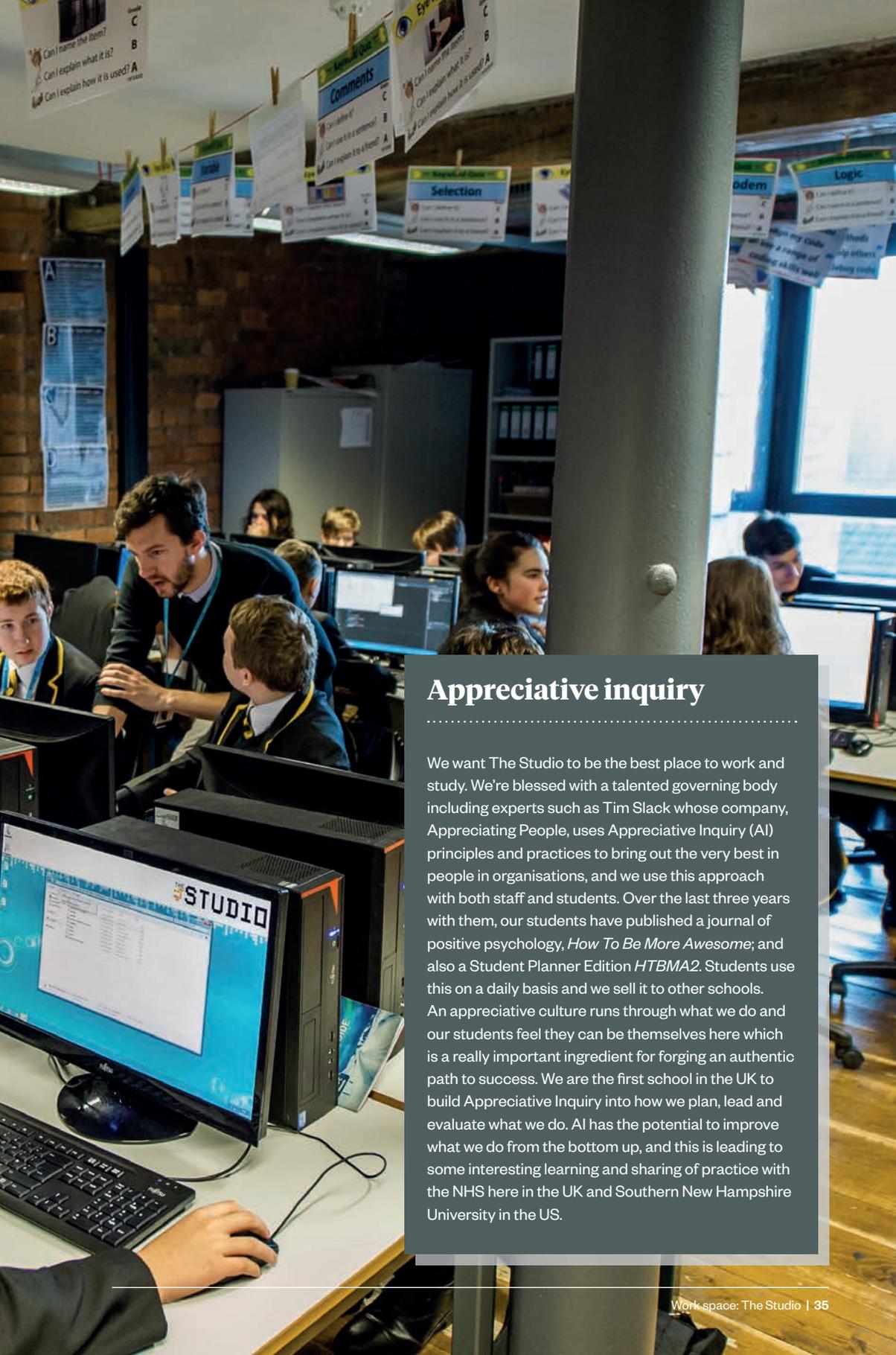
Appreciative inquiry

We want The Studio to be the best place to work and study. We're blessed with a talented governing body including experts such as Tim Slack whose company, Appreciating People, uses Appreciative Inquiry (AI) principles and practices to bring out the very best in people in organisations, and we use this approach with both staff and students. Over the last three years with them, our students have published a journal of positive psychology, *How To Be More Awesome*; and also a Student Planner Edition *HTBMA2*. Students use this on a daily basis and we sell it to other schools. An appreciative culture runs through what we do and our students feel they can be themselves here which is a really important ingredient for forging an authentic path to success. We are the first school in the UK to build Appreciative Inquiry into how we plan, lead and evaluate what we do. AI has the potential to improve what we do from the bottom up, and this is leading to some interesting learning and sharing of practice with the NHS here in the UK and Southern New Hampshire University in the US.

The Studio DEN

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When The Studio opened in September 2013, we went out to attract early-adopting young- sters (and parents) who wanted to be digital entrepreneurs. We looked at the destinations our students aspired to and worked backwards from there. What resulted is an 'industry ready' curriculum that prepares our students for careers in digital technology and the creative sector alongside a set of GCSEs, A Levels and BTECs that fit into pathways of coding, entrepreneurship and creativity. There is no GCSE robotics or A level in artificial intelligence and curating your own exhibition is, surprisingly, not yet rewarded in art and design. So, we have a project-based learning curriculum that allows our students to develop projects and hone these skills.

We want to bring this model to the world so have set up the Studio DEN (studioden.uk) this year with some funding from the Edge Foundation. The DEN is a digital entrepreneurship network for students aged 11-19 from across the UK. We know this approach works because our partners tell us that our students are well prepared.

This programme is led by Enda Carey, a youthful veteran of the digital publishing scene in Liverpool who is a great role model for our students. Enda has been shaping The Studio as a governor since its inception and now is on staff as our Sector Skills Champion. Enda's mission is to release ten commercially-viable titles – which could be games, comics, or 3D artifacts – from The Studio over the next two years.

Thanks!

Michael Van De Velden was in Year 13 when he was given a project-based learning challenge of designing a new student reward system for The Studio. What resulted is an impressive fully functional web app called Thanks! (gothank.me) This puts students at the heart of the reward process by allowing them to thank their teachers and peers; and it produces invaluable analytics on who is thanking who, for what, allowing motivation to build from the inside out. It has added to the culture of appreciation at The Studio and now Michael is working on an enterprise-ready version to improve organisational culture.

Digital leadership on a global scale

Adam Galloway epitomises what The Studio was set up to do. Having studied at The Studio since Year 10, in September this year Adam was recognised in LA as one of the Internet Society's *25 Under 25* young global digital leaders. This was the pinnacle of a series of achievements over the last four years. In 2015, when only 15, he invited and hosted Richard Stallman from MIT to deliver a talk about the Free Software Movement to the tech community of Liverpool.

An O2 'Think Big' award followed, funding Adam to organise an #iwill digital social innovation conference for young people at The Studio. Adam's passion for data freedom came from a social network he created called Hive, which aims to give owners control over their data. This is now a social movement and has given Adam a platform to attend the House of Lords to advocate for young people's voice in internet policy. In his spare time, when not completing his scripting and programming qualification at The Studio, Adam is the MD of Launchcode, which has just upgraded its office space close to the school.