

KIDS SEEKING REALITY TV FAME INSTEAD OF EXAM PASSES

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Fame hungry teenagers are planning to ditch education and live in dreamland. More than one in 10 (11 per cent) young people would drop out of education or training to be on TV, according to new research from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

And more than one in six (16 per cent) young people believe that they will actually become famous. However, the odds of being picked for a Big Brother style reality TV show and being successful afterwards are around one in 30 million – worse odds than winning the lottery jackpotⁱ.

Despite the odds being stacked against them, almost one in 10 (nine per cent) young people say that they think fame is a great way to earn money without skills or qualifications. An additional 11 per cent are sitting around 'waiting to be discovered'.

But, according to official statistics, leaving education or training without a minimum set of qualifications, such as 5 good GCSEs or the equivalent, will leave young people with a greater chance of unemployment and earning less than their peers who have these qualificationsⁱⁱ.

And, many young people admitted they would prefer to follow in the footsteps of respected public figures. Almost one in 20 (four per cent) young people would like to be Tony Blair and eight per cent would like to be J K Rowling – both of whom are educated to degree level. John Simpson, Stephen Hawking and David Attenborough also featured as celebrities that young people aspire to be.

Ruth Bullen from the Learning and Skills Council said that she hoped the findings would encourage young people to stay on in education or training:

“For many young people trying to be famous through reality television can be tempting, particularly if they are unsure as to the direction they want their lives to take.

“The truth is, however, that the majority will not achieve fame and so it is essential that they gain a minimum set of qualifications – such as five GCSEs at grades A*-C or the equivalents.

“If making money is the reason a young person want to become famous, then by staying on in education or training they can significantly increase their future earning power by gaining these essential qualifications.”

Top 10 reasons that young people want to be famous:

1. Money (56 per cent)
2. Success (56 per cent)
3. Wanting to prove people wrong (26 per cent)
4. Wanting everyone to know who I am (19 per cent)
5. Have always wanted to be famous (11 per cent)
6. It's an easy way of earning money without skills and qualifications (nine per cent)
7. Wanting to feel accepted (nine per cent)

8. Wanting to appear more attractive (seven per cent)
9. Think it's the only way to be successful (five per cent)
10. Not knowing what else to do (three per cent)

Top 10 people 16-19 year olds aspire to be

1. Richard Branson
2. J K Rowling
3. David Beckham
4. Freddy Flintoff
5. Tony Blair
6. David Attenborough
7. Frank Lampard
8. Stephen Hawking
9. Ms Dynamite
10. Alan Sugar

For more information about staying on in education, young people can visit www.getsetforlife.org.uk or contact their local Connexions centre. To apply for Education Maintenance Allowance, young people can call 080 810 16 2 19 or visit www.direct.gov.uk/ema

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Notes to editors:

This press release applies to England only.

The research was conducted online between 16th – 21st December 2005. YouGov interviewed a sample of 777 respondents aged between 16 and 19.

LSC

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world-class standards. Our vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.

Apprenticeships

- There are currently 255,500 young people aged 16-24 undertaking an Apprenticeship. They can choose from over 180 career paths in 80 different sectors of industry and commerce
- Apprenticeships provide 16-24 year-olds with a mixture of on and off-the-job training while they are being paid. For employers, Apprenticeships offer the opportunity to improve their businesses bottom line through the tailored, relevant training of highly motivated young people
- There are two levels of Apprenticeships:
 - 'Apprenticeships', equivalent to GCSE level, incorporate a National Vocational Qualification to Level 2; key skills and in some cases a technical certificate
 - 'Advanced Apprenticeships', equivalent to A-levels, incorporate a National Vocational Qualification to Level 3, key skills and a technical certificate

EMA

All 16-year-olds in England from a household with an annual income of up to £30,000 who stay on at college or school are eligible for the EMA. The scheme allows payments of £10, £20 or £30 a week in return for a commitment to study. Additional benefits of up to £500 over two years are also available for meeting certain targets.

For advice and information on how to apply for the EMA call 080 810 16219 or visit the web-site www.direct.gov.uk/ema for application packs. For people with speech and hearing difficulties who use textphone, please call 0800 056 5344.

Separate EMA and Apprenticeship schemes are operated by the administrations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

ⁱTo calculate the chance of being chosen for Big Brother: There are 45,500,000 people over the age of 18 in the UK according to the Office of National Statistics (Census data, 2004). There is an average of 12 contestants chosen from the population every year so to calculate the likelihood of being chosen $12/45,500,000 = 0.00000264$. Over six series (77 contestants), there have been ten contestants that are to some degree still 'famous' today according to Heat Magazine. This calculates as an approximate one in eight chance (0.13) so multiplying the two events together: $0.00000264 \times 0.13 = 0.00000034$, which is approximately one in 30 million. The odds of winning the National Lottery jackpot by matching 6 numbers is one in 13,983,816 (National Lottery Commission).

Big Brother contestants still 'famous'

Craig Phillips, Nick Bateman (series 1)
Jade Goody, Brian Dowling (series 2)
Kate Lawler (series 3)
Jon Tickle (series 4)
Nadia Aldama, Michelle Bass (series 5)
Anthony Hutton, Eugene Sully (series 6)

Big Brother contestants no longer famous

Series 1

Anna Nolan, Darren Ramsey, Mel Hill, Claire Strutton, Tom McDermott, Nichola Holt, Andy Davidson, Sada Walkington

Series 2

Helen Adams, Dean O'Loughlin, Elizabeth Woodcock, Paul Clarke, Josh Rafter, Amma Antunri, Paul Ferguson (Bubble), Narinder Kaur, Stuart Hosking, Penny Ellis

Series 3

Jonny Regan, Alex Sibley, Tim Culley, PJ Ellis, Adele Roberts, Sophie Pritchard, Spencer Smith, Lee Davey, Sandy Cumming, Lynne Moncrieff, Sunita Sharma

Series 4

Cameron Stout, Ray Shah, Scott Turner, Steph Coldicott, Nush Nowak, Lisa Jaynes, Gos (Herjender Gosal), Tania Do-Nascimento, Federico Martone, Sissy (Joanne Rooney), Justine Sellman, Anouska Golebiewski

Series 5

Daniel Bryan, Shell Jubin, Stuart Wilson, Michelle Bass, Victor Ebuwa, Ahmed Aghil, Becki Seddiki, Marco Sabba, Vanessa Nimmo, Emma Greenwood, Kitten Pinder

Series 6

Eugene Sully, Makosi Musambasi, Kinga Karolczak, Craig Coates, Derek Laud, Kemal Shahin, Orlaith McAllister, Science (Kieron Harvey), Venessa Layton-McIntosh, Maxwell Ward, Saskia Howard-Clarke, Roberto Conte, Sam Heuston, Lesley Sanderson, Mary O'Leary

ⁱⁱ 'Employment rate and gross weekly earnings by highest qualification.' Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics, spring 2003 – the latest figures available. People with a highest qualification of A-levels or equivalent earn 397.94 per week, on average (multiplied by 52 gives an average annual salary of 20,692.88). The gap between the average annual salaries of someone with FE (Level 3) qualifications and someone who leaves school without Level 2 qualifications is £3953.56. Assuming a person who leaves school after GCSEs will work until 65, £3953.56 multiplied by the number of working years (47 – 49, minus the two additional years someone who leaves education at 16 will work compared to someone who leaves at 18) equals a lifetime salary difference £185,817.32 on average. 51 per cent of people without Level 2 qualifications are unemployed, compared to 25 per cent with Level 2 (based on sample of Males aged 16 to 64, females aged 16 to 59. Full-time employees only based upon respondents self assessment. Respondents who did not report an hourly wage or who reported hourly pay greater than £100 are excluded).