

Glasgow showcase for all that's best in world of education

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EDINBURGH may rejoice in the title of Festival City, but one of Scotland's fastest-growing and, arguably, most important festivals has made its home in Glasgow.

The Scottish Learning Festival is in its ninth year and will take place at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre on September 25 and 26.

A blend of know-how, conference and a massive showcase for all that is best in education, the festival is due to attract around 7,000 education professionals to a programme of flagship speakers and more than 180 workshops covering all aspects of education.

The festival is open to anyone with an interest in education and access is free.

The main theme this year is "Curriculum for Excellence", the new curriculum guidelines for children and young people aged from three to 18.

Part of the focus will be on innovation in the curriculum, centring on Glow, the world's first national education intranet, which will help deliver a curriculum fit for the 21st century.

Glow was recently given some high-profile acclaim by none other than Star Wars creator George Lucas, who sang its praises to the US House of Representatives, no less.

At next month's festival, the seminars have been designed to offer new thinking or develop

ideas for everyone involved in education from politicians to practitioners and, while there is understandably a strong Scottish flavour, some important international elements will feature.

More than 150 international visitors from as far afield as Egypt, New Zealand, Singapore, Zambia and Trinidad and Tobago will attend the festival to pick up on the latest developments in Scottish education. And there will be an international "village" looking at how schools can work with countries across the globe to help

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young people develop a knowledge and understanding of the world.

Speakers this year include Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary of Education and Lifelong Learning and Ellen Moir, executive director of the New Teacher Center at the University of California Santa Cruz.

New for 2008 is the Education Showcase area featuring hands-on demonstrations of teaching and learning activities, stories, performances and resource launches.

Teachers and pupils will be able to pit themselves against each

other in the latest educational computer games and learn more about games-based learning at the Consolarium Challenge.

Bernard McLeary, chief executive of Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS), said: "The Scottish Learning Festival is one of the biggest education events in Europe and our conference programme is unrivalled across the UK.

"We continually attract high profile, leading thinkers in education and related disciplines due to the calibre of the event and the reputation of Scottish education.

"This year is a key one for all educators with the publication of the experiences and outcomes for Curriculum for Excellence and we are expecting a record turnout.

"The festival provides the opportunity for teachers and practitioners to get up to date with the latest information and pick up on ideas for embedding it within their schools.

"Delegates will have the opportunity to hear from the Curriculum for Excellence team throughout the festival, find out about the latest information and support and discuss ideas for taking it forward in their own practice to meet the needs of learners in the 21st century.

"They can also find out how Glow, Scotland's national education intranet, provides the modern tools to aid the delivery of an innovative curriculum."

