

Ealing student wins major national sociology award

Wednesday, 2 July 2014

A letter written by sixth-former in Ealing, West London, to her cousin has won a major national sociology prize.

Amy MacKenzie, a student at St Benedict's School, won the British Sociological Association Sixth Form Competition for her entry on the theme of 'Changing society – what is the role of the sociologist?'.

Amy was presented with her prize, an iPad 2 for herself and £250 for her school, at the school assembly on Wednesday 2 July.

"I was very surprised but excited to have won," Amy said. "Sociology is my favourite subject so I am overjoyed to have done so well."

This is the second time the competition has been run, and entries were received from sixth-forms across the country. It is organised by the British Sociological Association's Teaching Group, and sponsored by Polity Press.

The entrants, aged 16-19, were set the task of answering the question about sociology's role in a changing society in a 2,000-word written piece or a 10-minute podcast or YouTube clip.

Amy's work took a novel approach – putting herself 11 years into the future, she writes a letter to her 18-year-old cousin explaining what she thinks she as a sociologist has done to improve the life chances of his generation.

The judges, Professor Garry Crawford, Pam Law and Dave Morton, were unanimous in their decision and praised Amy for her range of sources.

Pam Law said: "Amy uses a range of sources in a highly integrated fashion, going beyond mere regurgitation of the usual textbook material, to present her key ideas in a lively and highly readable format.

"It is a thought-provoking and excellent piece of work which we think deserves this year's prize. It was a pleasure to read and Amy should be congratulated warmly on her considerable achievement."

BSA Chief Executive, Judith Mudd said: "Congratulations to Amy, who is a worthy winner of our second competition with an entertaining and informative piece.

"We were very pleased with the imaginative entries we received from across the country - one entrant even sent a very entertaining rap video. It shows that sixth-formers realise the importance of sociology today. Many of them will go on to study sociology at university and benefit from its insights and rigorous research methods in their careers."

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