

The pro-EU minister trying to impress the young... by talking about ‘the Twitters’

SKETCH: In a bizarre speech, Nicky Morgan, the Education Secretary, tells young voters they must avoid Brexit – if they enjoy eBay and Interrailing

Nicky Morgan, the Conservative Secretary of State for Education Photo: Nick Ansell/PA, File

By Michael Deacon, Parliamentary Sketchwriter

5:16PM BST 29 Mar 2016

At a college in London, **Nicky Morgan**, 43, was attempting to impress the youth of today. I wish I could have been present when the Education Secretary was brainstorming this speech.

Still, I can imagine how it went.

“Right, team. This is a speech for the young. We need to talk to them in their own language – so let’s keep it hip and groovy. Now, what sorts of things do youngsters get up to these days?”

“Well, Secretary of State, we focus-grouped this, and it seems a great many of them enjoy surfing the internet.”

“Excellent. Include plenty of references to the information super-highway.”

“Certainly. Perhaps you could describe today’s young as ‘the generation of eBay’.”

“Ah yes, eBay. I believe that’s one of the most fashionable new internet sites.”

“It might also help to demonstrate knowledge of what they call ‘the social mediums’.”

“Oh, that’s easy. I’ve read all about The Twitters. Now, what else? Raves? Britpop? Who’s topping the hit parade?”

“From what we can gather, Secretary of State, compact discs have fallen somewhat out of favour. So we thought you might instead concentrate on a pastime that’s a little more trendy and with-it.”

“Very well. Such as?”

“Interrailing.”

Countdown to the EU Referendum

Voting opens on June 23

49 : **10** : **07** : **13**
Days Hrs Mins Secs

No, I know it sounds improbable. And yet the facts are these. The Education Secretary really did tell the young they should support the EU because they loved Interrailing. She really did tell them they were the generation “of eBay” (founded 1995, enormously popular with the middle-aged). And she really did promise to communicate with them via “the Twitters” and “the Facebooks”.

Mrs Morgan gazed out uncertainly at her audience. Her most striking features are her eyes, which are almost perfectly circular and rarely seem to blink. They make her look perpetually startled by whatever’s being said, even when the person saying it is her. In this case, it was understandable.

It wasn’t “hyperbole”, she declared, to say that leaving the EU would create “a lost generation” of jobless youths. “You only have to look at Greece, Spain and Portugal to see how easily that could be the case.”

Greece, Spain and Portugal, she somehow neglected to add, are all members of the EU.

Brexit, she went on, would “damage the ability of our young people to get on in life” – at a time “when people are rightly concerned about intergenerational unfairness”. Interesting to hear that Mrs Morgan shares these concerns. She must be furious with herself for voting to **scrap student maintenance grants**. Perhaps, like Iain Duncan Smith, she will resign from the Government over its refusal to **cut benefits for the richest pensioners**.

Still, her speech impressed at least one member of her audience. He was a teenage Tory who congratulated the Government on making “the right decision” not to let his fellow under-18s vote.

Fair enough, really. They’re all too busy playing their Gameboys on the Googles.

thetelegraphnews

© Copyright of Telegraph Media Group Limited 2016