Project-based learning and employer engagement - University Technical College (UTC) - Reading

Institution Information

- UTC Reading

- University Technical College

- For students aged between 14 and 19 offering specialisms in computer science and engineering

- UTC Reading - Home

Practices Identified

- UTC Reading uses a Co-Teach methodology (where teachers work with industry partners) to deliver their project-based learning (PBL)

- Works with industry partners with businesses mentoring students, offering enrichment activities, career talks and work experience

- Some employers work with teachers to develop project-based learning

Practice Description

UTC Reading is designed with a Business Relations Manager directly responsible for liaising with local businesses to secure their involvement, then linking them to relevant academic staff members to take forward the relationship. The relationship between the UTC and industry partners then manifests in a variety of ways with businesses mentoring students, offering enrichment activities, career talks and work experience. Some employers also work with teachers to develop project-based learning (PBL) which forms an integral part of core curriculum subjects and current industry practice.

One strand of engagement called "Co-Teach" includes industry and teaching staff working together to identify learning topics and project briefs. Students then work on projects with the industry partners supporting the development of the work, and industry partners then visit at the end of the project to judge the presentations and select winning teams. In this way, students are supported to develop the technical skills needed within their specialism, and to understand the relevance of these skills in the workplace.

Feedback from students, staff and employers have highlighted that PBL and employer input result in young people developing their technical and employability skills (including presentation skills; confidence; communication skills) and an understanding of real-life projects and how the world of work operates. For more information on UTC Reading you can read our full report here: utc_report_-_phase_2_final_gQ4zReM.pdf (edge.co.uk)