

Meaningful Learning Experiences

Strategic Commitment	✓	Part of a regional, ESF-funded 'Careers Local' programme
Curriculum Provision	✓	Focusing on a specific aspect of the A-level specification
Employer Partnerships	✓	Involving a local, long-established SME employer
Reflective Young People		
Informed Career Choices	✓	Presenting an option about careers in Software

Masterclass with business analyst helps year 13 programmers learn about client requirements

Bramcote College, part of the White Hills Federation in Nottingham, had chosen six curriculum topics to create exemplar projects as part of a strategic plan to enrich subject learning in partnership with local employers. The head of ICT was working with a small but technically competent group of year 13 students and set an objective, '*... to enable them to think of the client requirements and how important they are before developing their project*'.

Breeze IT is a small company that has been successfully creating bespoke software solutions for a wide range of clients around the country. The original proposal to arrange a Skype briefing session evolved into an on-site masterclass with the company's senior business analyst. Being at the company's premises also gave students a chance to see the work environment and meet other staff, ranging from the most recent recruit, who started as an apprentice, and the MD, who started the company 20 years ago.

The technical abilities of the student (particularly one who was already working for a larger web development company) meant that much of the discussion and many of the questions focused on programming and hardware. But feedback indicated that students had not only learned about the importance of knowing each client's needs, but they had been highly motivated by the visit too.

Benefits for the Students

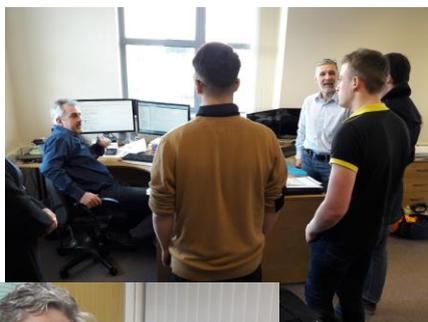
- *'You understand everything when you've seen it hands-on. You need to have the personal experience, rather than just someone telling you'*
- *'It's given me an insight on how to meet the client's needs ... and an assurance on how to step forward'*
- *'... people who've done it are ultimately going to know more about day-to-day working with the subject, whereas teachers know how to get you through the exams ...'*
- *'I think it definitely has encouraged me to really seek the path that I want to go to and make sure I get there'*

Benefits for the School

- The project is one of a series involving a range of curriculum subjects that will support subsequent staff development activity
- *'When we got back to College they wanted to know where their teacher was. They all rushed off to tell her all about it. She said they were full of it'*
- *'Just wanted to say thanks for giving the tour Scott, the students said that they had a brilliant time. Had a lot of positives to say about it'*

Benefits for the Employer

- Breeze is well-established and successful – but has a small team of specialists. Providing input for the school therefore needed to make limited demand on their time
- The business analyst who spent time with the students explained the company's emphasis on client relationships, but openly admitted that he learned from the students too
- Breeze has found apprenticeships work well, so was able to raise awareness with the head of CEIAG for the school federation about their interest in this pathway



The school's year 13 Computer Science students had little problem with technical skills. But a masterclass session with a business analyst at bespoke software specialist Breeze explained the importance of understanding client needs – a key requirement in the A-level spec.