

Tables are turned as pupils teach their peers

EDI recently sponsored an innovative scheme to challenge conventional methods of teaching and learning. Reach for the Stars involved 58 Year 11 students at Sharnbrook Upper School in Bedfordshire and aimed to increase the number of A* stars achieved at GSCE.

EDI mentored the project in conjunction with the 21st Century Learning Alliance, which sponsors teachers to run small-scale research projects to pioneer new ways of working. Teams of students chose six challenges from a number of subject areas. The aim was to develop artefacts and support materials and deliver teaching sessions to their peers on their chosen topics. These included analysing gender patterns in GSCE results, developing a product to promote environmental sustainability and creating a mini episode of a TV crime drama.



Jenifer Moody, Director of Innovation, explains: “We’re committed to using technology to enhance the learning experience and therefore keen to support activities which help to move the sector forward and challenge accepted ways of thinking. The 21st Century Learning Alliance brings together industry, government and teachers to help to make 21st century learning a reality.”



Esther McQueen, Lead Practitioner for School Improvement at Sharnbrook Upper School, said: “Students have opted to take this course in their spare time and have really embraced the challenge of creating their own learning experiences.

“We trialled this successfully last year to increase the number of A*s in English and have now decided to broaden the focus. It is a dynamic

way of working and demands that we trust the students and their abilities to plan, organise and problem solve. Rather than take control, teachers have to be willing to act as facilitators in order for it to work effectively.”

As well as developing essential critical and independent leaning skills while on the course, pupils also had to manage the demands of coursework and mock exams. For more information on the 21st Century Learning Alliance visit www.21stcenturylearningalliance.com.



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