

# Adult learning matters

'Everyone who works with adults knows that learning can change their lives. Recent research has confirmed that this is not a matter of a few isolated examples, and that taking part in organised learning can help people exercise more control over their lives, contribute to their communities more effectively, and develop the confidence and skills that help us survive and thrive in tough times.

These are important messages, and we need to make much more of them if we are to build the sustainable learning society that so many of us would like to see. That means placing well-being at the centre of our educational goals, and rather than focusing narrowly on one specific set of skills or type of qualification, we should value a broad and generous range of adult learning.'

**Professor John Field,**  
Inquiry into the Future for  
Lifelong Learning  
Commissioner and Director,  
Division of Academic  
Innovation and Continuing  
Education, University of Stirling

# City Lit is a flagship of adult learning in London and the UK

'City Lit helps thousands of adults each year enhance or transform their lives. With substantial government funding, supplemented by significant income from individuals paying course fees, we deliver outstanding value for money - supporting wider economic, health, cultural and social agendas.

We continue to offer an exceptionally diverse range of courses, meeting the needs of a wide spectrum of learners, including the disengaged and disadvantaged, those seeking new or enhanced professional skills, employers and individuals with an insatiable appetite or curiosity for learning.'

**Peter Davies CB, CBE**  
Principal, City Lit

## **Our vision**

To be the best provider of adult lifelong learning in London.

## **Our mission**

To enhance the lives of adults and develop the employers' workforce by providing inspiring lifelong learning opportunities.

# First steps: getting back into learning

City Lit's award winning work with homeless people, many of whom are also ex-offenders or ex-drug/alcohol users, has made an immense difference to the life and work prospects of those involved - many finding paid or voluntary work or moving on to higher level courses at City Lit, other colleges or university. The success of this project work has also enabled us to deliver mainstream funded, qualification-based programmes for those who wish to work in this very challenging sector.

Our long tradition of working with families in local communities, has successfully engaged adults excluded from education and not yet ready to take that 'first step' back into learning by attending a college. Our ability to offer both activity-based learning opportunities in their communities (e.g. music or jewellery) and vocational training (e.g. child care, English and maths), allows learners to engage in subjects and an environment they feel comfortable with before progressing.

Many move into mainstream courses in the college. Not only do they tell us that it fundamentally changes their lives, but the Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning shows that parents involved in almost any form of learning will take a more active interest in their children's education.



# Frank Harris

## Course to support homeless and vulnerable adults

"I was involved in criminal activity and drugs for 30 years. But four years ago I decided it was time to turn my life around and to start putting something back into society. I was too proud to ask for help, so I needed someone to come forward and offer me a helping hand.

I was encouraged to sign up at City Lit to study for my GCSE's, but then I got the learning bug and I joined the Move programme, to train to support vulnerable adults, and gained a City & Guilds Level 2 VRQ qualification.

This course changed my life in ways I could have never imagined. Everywhere is now hope and options. I now work at St Mungo's, London's largest charity for homeless people. I am proud to now be the one offering my helping hand to others.

My life will continue to change because I now know the pleasures of learning. If I continue to learn then I continue to grow as a person."

## Block modification course for people who stammer

"I was made redundant when the investment company I was working for got hit by the credit crunch. I knew that I would have to start going to interviews, but having a stammer, I found this prospect very stressful.

I decided to take a speech therapy course at City Lit. I was very nervous - I had never had group speech therapy before. The tutor told me to be open about my speech difficulties – a challenge for someone who had been (unsuccessfully) trying to conceal their stammer for so long! Once I got the hang of not trying to hide it, the less I focussed on it, the less I stammered.

Following the course I got an interview at a large investment bank. I found myself announcing to the interviewer that I had a stammer, and I even requested extra time to answer questions. The response was very positive, and being up front about my stammer created talking points. I was subsequently offered a job."

Jeff Hammill



# Specialist provision

## Speech therapy

Our world renowned *speech therapy* area, recognised by a Queen's Anniversary Prize in 2007, delivers cutting edge work with people who stammer or who have aphasia and/or other speech or language difficulties as a result of a stroke or head injury. Students tell us their courses completely revolutionise their lives, making them more confident and able to manage their speech difficulties.

## Deaf education

We provide opportunities for *D/deaf* learners to improve life and employment opportunities through our highly regarded

specialist courses in English, maths, computing and British Sign Language (BSL). Our comprehensive vocational and academic programme, from basic to degree level, helps to train and develop those working in and entering the sector, including BSL and English interpreters, BSL teachers, lipreading teachers, note takers and communication support workers. Our lipreading programme, one of the most comprehensive available in the UK, is enabling people with acquired hearing loss to better interact at work and socially.

## Courses for people with learning difficulties

We teach and support people with *learning difficulties* through a programme focused on arts, independence and vocational skills. Our person-centred approach enables students to take more control of their lives and to express their ideas through a wide range of media. Progression is tailored to suit the learner, with some learning basic communication, while others progress to mainstream courses or develop skills to enable them to keep their jobs.

# Vocational courses: a licence to practise

A major challenge for the current adult education system is the government focus on 'fullness' of qualifications when setting priorities for funding. This means that many qualifications, while matching both sector requirements and the needs of learners - offering in effect a 'licence to practise' - are not considered a priority for funding, as they do not meet the 'fullness' criteria - equivalent to 5 GCSEs or 2 A Levels. City Lit has a large

number of such courses and evidence to show that participants, many of whom are unemployed or in low paid jobs, go on to gain employment or progress in their current work. Examples include accredited courses in holistic massage, reflexology, and aromatherapy, attracting a high percentage of people on benefits and with pass rates of 90-100% and most students going on to work in the profession. Other

examples include our accredited counselling courses, qualifying people to work as a counsellor and our diplomas in ceramics, jewellery or drama - where over 70% of students progress to employment or are signed by an agent.



# Shanice Cartey

## Fitness instructor training

"I am 31 years old and a single mother of four. After leaving home at 16, following my turbulent upbringing, I needed to be in a position to support my own children. I wanted to pursue a career that would fit around them and give me enjoyment.

I attended City Lit to gain an OCR exercise to music qualification and the journey of taking control of my life began there. I then started aerobic classes and gained qualifications in pilates and fitness instruction. I now had the taste for self improvement and realised that I could "*reach the moon*" if I tried hard enough, so I decided to become a personal trainer.

So, I am now at university studying sports and community leadership, with the aim of working with all age groups, gender and ethnicities - bringing sports to the people who need it most. I am thankful for the wonderful impact that education has had on my life, and I will never give up. This has been a truly enriching experience that has helped me to recognise my own potential."

## Introduction to acting

"I developed a love of acting at school, but was encouraged to get 'proper' qualifications, so ended up with a degree in biology and working in various disciplines over the next 20 years.

But then I spent a year in Jamaica, and had time to reflect. I decided that after years of thinking about acting, I wanted to find out what training for it would be like. I enrolled on an introductory acting course at City Lit. On the course I gained friends, hobbies, new professions and a new perspective.

I now pursue acting professionally and teach at City Lit. I have also started directing. City Lit continues to help me develop my skill through teaching as well as learning."

David Monteith



# Enabling career change and development

It can be daunting or even impossible to take up full-time education to change career whilst working. More and more people use part-time courses to experiment with alternative career ideas or to pursue a passion, which later develops into a new direction for work or helps them establish a portfolio career.

Examples are plentiful from city workers taking up jewellery, drama or counselling to marketing

professionals pursuing their passion for art. More often than not, part-time courses also facilitate a profound change in an individual's work-life balance.

Personal development courses, in almost any subject, give individuals very tangible skills to support their professional lives, with students often citing increased confidence, self-esteem, appreciation of diversity and development of

team building skills. Gaining these real skills, whilst pursuing an interest or passion, can be much more successful than a short sharp burst of dedicated 'management training'.

With the frequent cry from employers that soft skills are missing in their employees, this presents a convincing economic, as well as social and personal, argument for the value of lifelong learning.

# Supporting health and well-being

For many, adult courses are an essential element of maintaining or regaining their physical and mental well-being. Older learners, people with disabilities or people recovering from illness, find physical courses, such as dance or yoga, essential to their physical agility. Any course, however, can help support health and well-being through mental stimulation. A Belfast university study of 3,000 people involved in physical and cognitive

exercise work found the training took a decade off the cognitive age of the volunteers. As the population ages, it is vital that we maintain our brains as much as our bodies – and learning activity has a vital role to play in supporting the long term mental health of older learners.



## Rob Ryder

### Diploma in practitioner counselling

"I came to City Lit from a humble background with little exposure to formal education. I had collected course guides for years before building up courage to take a deep breath and enrol. I feared that I would get lost or left behind by the other students.

I soon found my confidence on the course, as my tutor picked up on my individual needs, and I flourished in the environment.

Despite this new found confidence, I had a sudden set back; I suffered a heart attack and was diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. I felt vulnerable on the health front, but completion of the course was so important to me that I just had to continue – and with help from the tutors and fellow students, I did.

My world has now changed radically. I am more confident, self-assured and a better informed individual."

# Rob Peart

## An introduction to existential philosophy

"I always had an interest in philosophy and wanted to find out more. I'm keen to explore things outside of work as I find it feeds back into my professional practice as a graphic designer.

As you can imagine, existential philosophy seemed like a daunting subject at first, but my tutor did well to push away my apprehension. I loved the class debates. Some people got a bit carried away once in a while, but it added to the fun of it!

I was surprised how much I learned from the other students – it was great to be placed in a room with people from very different backgrounds who were all encouraged to pitch in. It was a very rich learning experience."



# Supporting the lifelong learning culture

The recent report from the Inquiry into Lifelong Learning had a vision 'of a society in which learning plays its full role in personal growth and emancipation, prosperity, solidarity and local and global responsibility'. Hundreds of people vying to enrol on the first day of opening for enrolments at City Lit and the real anguish when their first

choice of course is full, tells us how much people value their adult education course. For some, such as older learners, it can be one of the most important elements of their life. Their reasons for attending are many and varied, but the sheer joy of learning, the opportunity to meet people, fulfil a desire or expand their horizons through

learning, is often expressed. We applaud and encourage this insatiable appetite for learning and want to ensure it remains a key part of living in a developed and civilised society.

# Developing a skilled workforce

## Transferable skills

Many students come to City Lit to help them develop vital skills for work. In virtually every curriculum area we offer short, mainly non-accredited courses helping students to build transferable skills – whether its contributing assertively at meetings; creating business plans; starting your own business or dealing with difficult people, to name but a few. These short one-day and weekend courses provide the flexibility that many need to refresh and update their skills.

## Supporting businesses

Our growing and successful portfolio of dedicated courses aimed at public and private sector employers, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), has seen us work with around 160 employers each year. They range from deaf awareness for Transport for London employees, team building using arts and performance for media companies, bespoke language training for bankers, dedicated management subjects such as employment

law for local SMEs, and public relations for public sector organisations. These courses are only possible because of City Lit's reputation for expertise and quality. Feedback from employers about the value to the business and individuals has been excellent.



# Christine McInnes

## Start your own business

"I started my own gilding business restoring antiques with gold, with no support and no notion of what business was. I had great clients - they loved me, they loved my work, but I wasn't making good money.

The course at City Lit was an intense lesson in how not to run a business! I'd been making some pretty classic mistakes: undercharging, not valuing my time properly and turning clients into friends.

As well as realising my mistakes, I also discovered how skilled I was as an artist. When you work for yourself for years nobody ever says 'well done' but I got so much encouragement from my tutor. That was wonderful.

I loved the course. It gave me new insights about what I needed to change, and confidence in what I was doing right, and has helped me enormously."

# General social benefit

We know that the disadvantaged or excluded often benefit socially from learning. Homeless learners comment that coming to City Lit helps them to integrate back into society and realise that they are treated no differently to other learners. Equally, many adults tell us that the rich diversity of

students on courses at City Lit can be very motivating and help their understanding of wider social issues: for some it is the only occasion when they mix with such different groups of people, helping to foster and promote social inclusion and an ethos of mutual understanding and tolerance. Having students with very

different needs on a course – whether because of their background or a particular disability, helps foster greater understanding of difference, the barriers some people face and helps promote a more inclusive way of thinking.

# Impact on cultural capital

London is a cultural capital of the world with world-class museums, theatres and art galleries, as well as a wealth of culture-based industries. With outstanding provision in visual and performing arts, humanities and languages, City Lit makes a major contribution to London's cultural capital.

In performing and visual arts we provide opportunities from beginner level to highly respected programmes for practising professionals. With partnerships with many museums e.g. the British Museum and Tate Modern; theatres/performing arts venues e.g. Royal Opera House, British Film Institute

and other organisations e.g. BBC symphony orchestra, we run themed courses, allowing people to better appreciate and understand the many cultural activities available. Our students also regularly exhibit at prestigious venues and often win awards in recognition of the outstanding quality of their work.

# Enabling factors

City Lit enjoys the benefit of a new, purpose-built building in Covent Garden with excellent and accessible facilities, including general classrooms, large dedicated studios and workshops, computer suites and a comprehensive learning support centre.

As a Beacon college, we are generally at the forefront of development associated with non-accredited adult learning, with Ofsted assessing all these areas as outstanding or good.

The new building was designed with disability access as a key requirement and this has resulted in a very marked increase in use by disabled learners. Equally, equality of outcome remains a key objective and we have effective and comprehensive systems in place to advise and support learners.

Key to our success is the expertise and dedication of all staff and we invest considerable resources in staff development in all

areas from teaching qualifications, other professional qualifications to customer focussed training.

We actively seek learner feedback and engagement with our work, including the involvement of course reviewers and a student panel, ensuring we learn and develop too.



# Facts and figures

## Students numbers

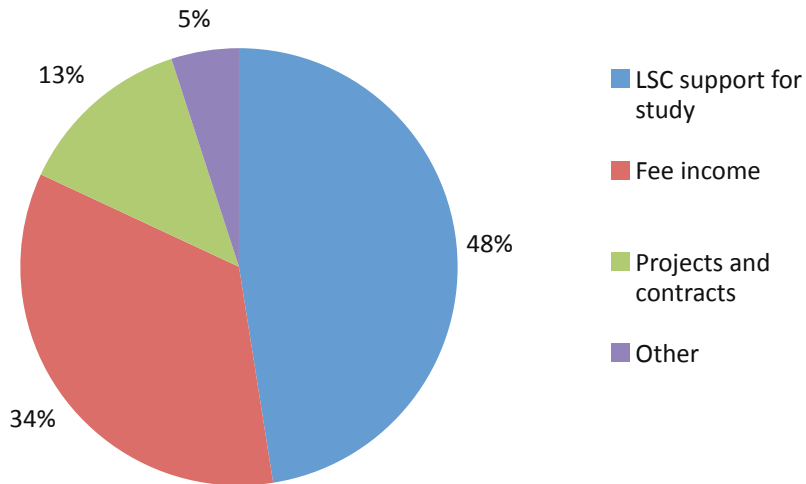
Type of learner	Learner numbers
Foundation learning	390
Learning difficulties and/or disabilities	635
Accredited courses including skills for life	2,103
Non funded – non accredited courses	12,895
Government funded non accredited	16,335

## Students by age

Age band	Number	%
Not given	82	0.3%
16 - 18	243	0.9%
19 - 21	552	2.0%
22 - 25	2185	7.9%
26 - 29	4055	14.6%
30 - 39	8243	29.7%
40 - 49	5235	18.9%
50 - 59	3139	11.3%
60 - 69	2657	9.6%
70 - 79	1112	4.0%
80 - 89	214	0.8%
90+	7	0.0%

## Funding learning breakdown

LSC support for study	£7,648K
Fee income	£5,535K
Projects and contracts	£2,085K
Other	£793K



# city lit

The centre for adult learning

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