

**Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning
City and Islington College Response
October 2012**

In response to the invitation from the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning the submission from City and Islington College has adopted a case study approach as a means of identifying key factors around the teaching and learning of adults on vocational programmes. Key questions that shaped response from staff and curriculum teams are:

- How do you maintain contact with employers and maintain your current industry knowledge?
- What skills do your courses develop and how do they achieve this? What is special about them?
- How do students on your courses develop vocational and professional expertise?

Role of Leadership

The role of the senior management team, their sense of purpose and direction, vision and mission, are central to the culture, value and success of adult vocational education at the college: ensuring quality, enabling innovation and supporting change. Teaching and learning are at the heart of the college, underpinned by well-defined processes and procedures and reflected in:

- The longevity and breadth of educational experience of senior leaders; in particular the Deputy Principal: Curriculum and Quality.
- The composition of the Senior Management Team, weighted in favour of leaders of the curriculum rather than leaders/managers of functions.
- The parity of esteem given to the vocational curriculum alongside the academic curriculum.
- Teaching and learning is the first SMT agenda item each week: SMT receives and discusses papers on teaching and learning from a variety of middle managers and groups.
- The integrated structure of the line management for teaching, learning and students; the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality and Deputy Director Teaching and Learning with cross college responsibility for the Teaching and Learning Unit and Learner Support Group.
- The visibility of, and involvement in, quality assurance activities and teaching and learning initiatives of SMT and the Deputy Principal.
- Close and effective working relationship between, Teaching, Learning and Students and HR Learning and Development.

In 2002 a Teaching and Learning Unit was established by the then Head of Quality Development now Deputy Principal: Curriculum and Quality. The Unit has driven the journey towards becoming outstanding and now has many imitators in the FE sector. The innovative approach of the Unit to quality improvement ensures that strategy and process is embedded in the work practice of curriculum teams rather than held centrally within a large quality/auditing team. The latter is secured by the Deputy Director Curriculum membership along with the BTEC Quality Nominee, the HE Quality Manager, the Staff Development Manager, E Learning Manager and Quality Manager Teaching and Learning. The unit serves as a vehicle for sharing good practice between academic and vocational managers. The range of work covered by the Unit includes:

- A flexible and responsive annual programme of projects and activities designed to address quality improvement or development / innovation within teaching, learning and the student experience.
- New and aspiring managers sent on LSIS Leadership programme and coached.
- Grade 3 and 4 teachers receive coaching and mentoring.
- An ongoing programme of CPD which is defined by external drivers and internally identified need.
- All new teaching staff undertake modules in a bespoke programme called Teachers' Tool Kit. Examples of relevant modules are: embedding literacy and numeracy in the vocational curriculum, employability and language in the vocational curriculum and e-learning.
- Teachers on Level 4 plus programmes such as FDs have time remitted for scholarly activity enabling them to keep abreast of developments in their vocational specialisms.

[Mary Rimington – Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality]

Hair and Beauty

The Hair and Beauty qualifications delivered give students skills to enter the Hair and Beauty Industry after gaining their qualification. The curriculum constantly evolves and develops to meet current industry needs and student demand; it currently includes Nail Services, Spa Therapy, Specialised Make Up, Hairdressing - Combined Hair Types (to reflect the multi-cultural community we serve as a College), with top up qualifications in Threading, Lash Extensions, Indian Bridal Make Up and L4 Skin Blemish Removal. The curriculum offer has clear progression routes for learners embedded in the planning; short courses enable learners to gain the skills that the job market is looking for and full-time courses that enable student to progress to HE.

Staff are able to relate their teaching and training directly to the workplace. Lecturers and technicians have many years' experience working in the industry; running their own businesses, editing magazines, working for high profile clinics and salons or in TV and film. Their continued work in the industry means that employability skills currently in demand by employers are continuously pass and reinforce. A major element of our delivery is the embedding of employability skills.

CPD a requirement of the awarding body also ensures that staff continue to gain skills and knowledge that is relevant and current to the industry. All staff are excellent role models; they have taken the same learning route followed by our learners and maintain occupational standards. They are Industry Practitioners and trained teachers.

Hair and Beauty employers and companies regularly come into the College to train students and staff to keep skills and knowledge current. Two examples of the companies that visit the College each year to discuss employment requirements and give employment opportunities to the students are –“Clarins “and “Steiner”. The College is also approached for potential employees by local businesses and these vacancies are signposted to students.

The qualifications are structured to enable knowledge to be evidenced through practical activities and are assessed continuously (formative) until the learner is deemed competent in performing the skill. There is a continuous train, assess train model where feedback is essential part of the process. The combination of teaching and training makes learners more confident and competent and broadens their employment opportunities.

Although college based, the delivery is work based as learners have to practice and demonstrate competence by providing industry standard treatment to paying clients and by doing this a wide range of skills are developed and assessed including customer services, working with others, problem solving, dealing with difficult clients/situations.

[Helen Kent – Director, Centre for Health, Social & Child Care;
Alexis Gnanasegaram – Curriculum Manager for Hair & Beauty, and Workforce Development;
Saloua El-Khadiri – Beauty Therapist]

Advanced Apprenticeship in Veterinary Nursing

The Diploma in Veterinary Nursing has a practical element that is taught, practised and assessed within the workplace. Students on the course develop many skills; managing the needs of the patient, owner and other staff members. The course content builds students knowledge and understanding year on year in a very structured way. For instance, in their first year of study they will learn about muscles, in the second year they will learn about how muscles are affected by various diseases or illnesses and in the third year they will learn how to alter these affects by use of medicines and nursing techniques i.e. physiotherapy.

As a profession where change is constant, it is important to keep astride of new developments in medicines and equipment. Registered Veterinary Nurses are required to undertake and document Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to remain on the register and this is an excellent way to remain up to date.

The London Vet Show is an industry show that attracts many vets and vet nurses from London and further afield. City and Islington have a stand at this show. Presence at this show helps staff to harbour new contacts with employers and therefore opportunities for students in the future.

The course team are looking forward to the arrival of a manikin that allows students to practice cardiopulmonary resuscitation. It has 'working lungs' so students can hone their skills before trying them out on a real patient. The manikin is being purchased as a result of a successful bid from a RCVS Trust fund.

As a veterinary nurse with many years of practical experience, I find that having good understanding of the profession is important in engaging employers. Additionally it is important to recognise that these practices are (first and foremost) profit making businesses and that training staff may not be their immediate priority. Having the ability to fit college duties around daily work is essential.

[Dawn Platten – Lecturer in Animal Care & Veterinary Nursing]

Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing

The course team maintain contact with employers through professional organisations: ABDO, GOC, College of Optometrists, passed students network within the profession, attendance at professional and trade fares. In addition there is continuous feedback to and from employers (sponsors) of current students.

All staff are registered with GOC and have key professional specialist expertise within ophthalmic retailing or industry; the compulsory annual cycle of CPD (CET) ensures that staff have current industry knowledge. This is enhanced by staff attendance at manufacturers products launch events, symposia industry academies and training events. In addition speakers from the industry are regularly invited to talk to students and staff at the Centre (Master classes).

The courses develop students' in-depth underpinning knowledge of the structure and function of the eye, spectacles and contact lenses, combined with practical skills and communication. They achieved this by linking the theory and practical elements; meeting the needs of patients in practice in work-based learning in Ophthalmic retailing practices.

[Trevor Hunter – Deputy Director, Higher Apprenticeships]

FD Forensic Science

To maintain contact with employers and maintain my current industry knowledge I routinely meet with the Scientific Support Manager and head of Criminal Investigation Training for the British Transport Police as part of our collaborative partnership. This maintains a link with industry and develops my knowledge of the BTP Policies and procedures.

In personal time, I participate in training programmes for various law enforcement agencies, ensuring staff are taught in accordance with the framework outlined in the Sector Skills Councils framework. In return, the agencies educate me with the latest process and procedures.

For the past three years, I have been released from my work place on an 'Exchange of knowledge' secondment with Kent Police's Criminal Investigation Training College. As part of the secondment, I undergo practical assessments by the CSI trainers', which ensures my credibility as a practitioner.

Although the skills taught on the course are predominately of a scientific nature, learners develop a diverse range of skills and knowledge, including law and legislation, quality assurance systems, conflict management and resolution and interpersonal skills. What makes this course special is the close relationship between students and the employer, the hands on work based learning approach that enables students to progress in to employment other than just as a Crime Scene Investigator.

All of the module assessments are assessed in accordance with the sector skills councils, Skills for Justice, National Occupational Standards assessment framework. This lends credibility to the skills gained from the course, ensuring graduates are 'Fit for purpose' in industry.

The students work with British Transport Police on the Community Policing volunteers' scheme which enables the students to gain work placements within different departments of the BTP. Many of the students work voluntary for the victim support services and special constables. Considering many of our students live in other counties, they are special constable with other forces other than BTP.

The use of a 'Tactical body' (appearance, touch, fingerprints, surgical scars and tattoos) extends the student experience, introduces a realistic element and aids the learning of criminal investigations. In the crime scene, the main technological development has been with the expansion of digital photography equipment and this is reflected in the course.

The dedicated crime scene and forensic laboratory facilities have been utilised to train both the Metropolitan and British Transport Police. Our facilities are equipped with technical apparatus that may not be found in most FE establishments and certainly not within the police training facilities.

We continue to facilitate the BTP in our crime scene facilities and endeavour to deliver training in forensic photography with the London Fire Brigades Fire Investigation unit.

FD Photography

Regular visits, meetings, phone calls, newsletters and social media within Google+ circles maintain contact with employers and current industry knowledge is maintained by attending the Association of Photographers events both educational and professional, reading professional journals and websites, visits to photographer's studios and photo equipment suppliers. A close working relationship with Skillsets photo-imaging sector resulted in the FD Photography being the first to be recognised by Skillset.

Apart from the essential technical skills that are developed to the highest professional levels using professional standard equipment, students are taught all the business skills required to both set up and run a successful photography based enterprise whether freelance or within a large corporation. They are schooled in proper workflow management and all legal and ethical considerations within the context of the photo imaging sector. The majority of assignments throughout the course are written and delivered with support and input from practising professionals within the photo-imaging sector and reflect real industry scenarios.

Students' vocational and professional expertise is developed in a range of ways. Assignment submissions are accompanied by relevant job sheets, invoices and legal documents such as model releases and a license to use the images. An extensive work based learning programme with internships at places such as the Science Museum and the Wellcome Trust provide experience in a very demanding workplace environment. There are also a number of other work placements organised with individual practising photographers and other photo-imaging areas.

Moodle and social media sites are used extensively. Moodle forums are utilised as an area for formative feedback and assessment both by the tutors and students, and assignments are submitted and grades/feedback delivered electronically via Moodle. Tutorials are available via Skype with the benefit that students can interact visually with the tutor, they can present their material and explain and ask questions. This is particularly useful for students on work placement or working off-site.

[Terry Sims – Foundation Degree Photography Course Manager]

College Nurseries

The College Nurseries work in partnership with the College childcare placement officer to enable nursery placements for level 2 childcare students within their planned progression on to level 3 childcare courses.

Our Nursery placements help students to develop their practical skills and knowledge within Early Years Practices. They help students to be work ready and employable gaining valuable first hand real life work experience. The placement student works alongside qualified practitioners, they work with the team and become part of the team, being counted within the staff to child ratios if and when needed.

Our Students input is valued and recognised within weekly structured planning meetings they must attend as part of the placement. Students are able to understand the process around observation, assessment and planning as they are expected to contribute their views and ideas for next steps for

children. Students are given a voice and staff respect and acknowledge their views and ideas they work collaboratively.

Student 'A' says that being counted in the ratios has helped her within her confidence of working with children as a professional. She now knows how to plan for children's next steps rather than just coming from a text book and now has experience of working within a team.

"When applying for a job I am now able to let them know I have first-hand experiences of the work and now I am able to express myself by explaining how during my placement with the college nursery I have carried out a full range of duties working in partnership with the team The placement has helped me put knowledge gain in class into practice within a working environment. The placement has given me confidence as I feel the staff have supported and encouraged me to be professional".

[Debbie Evans – Head of College Nurseries]

FD Dance

Teachers on the Foundation Degree in Dance are also practicing professionals and work on a number of projects outside the framework of the Foundation Degree. The Course leader Rosie Lehan has been conducting research since 2005 into the area of Dance and Diversity with Beverley Glean the Artistic Director of IRIE! dance theatre, the strategic industry link for the Foundation Degree. Research has been independently funded by Arts Council England and NESTA. Together Beverley and Rosie also run Connectingvibes, an independent charity created to provide opportunities for young dancers, providing specifically on the Foundation Degree. The company has been invited to perform at the Grenada National Dance festival in June 2013. Jessica Wynn has recently completed a Professional Dancers Teaching Diploma (Distinction) Royal Academy of Dance

The course aims to help students find their individual pathways in dance in areas of performance, choreography, arts management and community dance. Students develop their creativity and learn independence through the organization of projects such as their Graduation Performance. They work on a site-specific project in selected locations across London collaborating with other Foundation degree students in Fashion and Textiles. They study the four dance techniques of Ballet, Contemporary, Caribbean and African equally, evolving innovative choreography that supports their diverse training

Students participate in a work placement, which is organized to give them experience in their area of interest. Examples of which include, working with Green Candle Dance Company in Mile End Hospital, with Ace Dance Company in Birmingham and Tavaziva in London. They regularly assist with IRIE! dance theatre events, thus experiencing a range of employment areas. Connectingvibes provides a wealth of performance experience.

Students are now developing on line portfolios to support their Professional Experience Module. They also integrate film and technology into performance events.

[Rosie Lehan – Dance Lecturer]

Workforce Development

The qualifications offered give learners skills to enter or to sustain jobs in the childcare, customer services and advice and guidance profession. The curriculum has expanded significantly in recent years. The semesterised course model enabled an increase in the number of learners at no staff costs and a flexible delivery model ensures that learners are able to attend and complete their course even if their employment/personal circumstances have changed.

The combination of teaching and training improves learners' confidence, competence and employment/promotion opportunities. The delivery follows a continuous train, assess train model where planning, feedback, reflective practice are an essential part of the process. There is internal verification of the assessment process that supports assessors through observations and feedback, verify assessment decisions and identify training needs. External verification regularly validates the quality of our assessment and verification processes.

Learners are able to progress onto other courses within the curriculum area and to other programmes, 50% of learners completing level 2 progressed to a level 3 programme. Approximately 37% of learners completing their qualifications progress to paid employment or sustain their employment.

There are excellent opportunities for students to develop practical skills during their work placement and to share their work experiences with others in the group; they were able to transfer their learning into their work life and learn from each other

A major element of the delivery is employability skills. Staff have all worked in the sector. They are able to relate their teaching and training directly to the workplace, to give examples and discuss strategies from their own work experience. Staff are excellent role models, Industry Practitioners and trained teachers/assessors; they have taken the same learning route followed by learners and maintain occupational standards. The awarding body's CPD requirement ensures that staff continue to gain skills and knowledge relevant and current to the industry.

Strong partnerships with employers such as local Nurseries and Schools support the development of their workforce. During this year we have delivered training and qualifications to approximately 60 child-minders from local boroughs and have tailored our courses to be delivered off site to accommodate employers and learners needs. Most recently, we delivered the Diploma in Youth Work to a group of employees from East Thames Housing Group, Level 3 Childcare to staff working at Ready Steady Go Nursery and Bright Stars Nursery and have started training a group of employees at New North Community School. Two employers attended our celebration of achievement evening and gave a presentation giving positive feedback about the skills and professionalism of the employees/placements we have trained, they also commended the support given to learners to help them achieve.

[Maureen Arnold – Tutor;

Alexis Gnanasegaram – Curriculum Manager for Hair & Beauty, and Workforce Development;

Helen Kent – Director, Centre for Health, Social & Child Care]

Work experience feedback report: Vera Ayi-Bonte [from Gillian Gibson]

My name is Vera Ayi-Bonte; this is a report on my work experience placement at Islington Council. I am a student from City and Islington College and part of my course is to gain work experience, this will be part of my course module and I will be assessed on what I learn from it. It has been great privilege for me to work with Islington Council. The department I worked in was Corporate

Resources. My placement manager was Mr. Alistair Smith, who is the Senior Research and Intelligence Analyst, a very nice person to work with. My placement was for nine weeks and during this time I learn a lot on how the council operate. My first was Friday 20 July 2012; I spent two days a week, which was normally Mondays and Fridays.

During my time at Islington Council, I undertook a number of tasks and worked with several services, including:

- 1 Reviewing web page content
- 2 Face-to-face recruitment of residents to the council's citizens panel
- 3 helping with a number of administrative tasks from sorting out mailing lists to assisting with publicity
- 4 Shadowing of colleagues in front line services such as libraries, children's centres and the business and employment team
- 5 Helping to promote the Islington Learning and Working services to parents in Holloway
- 6 Helping with the organisation of the council's apprentice's induction day and attending and helping out at the event.

The experience I have acquired from this work experience is immeasurable; I have gained more confidence to approach people, more enthusiastic, more aware of the work of the services provided by the council, more determination to continue my course, not only that but having discussion with my line manager, has given me more confidence to focus on what I really want to do. Follow my dreams, to work within the Children and Families Services.

Sadly, after two month my work experience have come to an end....This is an experience that will be with me forever not only that but, will help me with my future endeavors. ...I mostly benefitted from shadowing and working within the front line services, because I enjoy interacting with the public. I would like to add that if there is any more opportunity to continue with my work experience, please let me know, I will be delighted to continue.

Laura Hughes Access to Social Work student 2006

Laura Hughes was an Access to Social Work student at City and Islington College in 2006. She was a committed, hard-working and dedicated student. Given troubled personal circumstances at the time, she demonstrated tenacity and the will to succeed that inspired both her peers and tutors alike. She went on to gain a First in Social Work at Goldsmiths (an absolutely amazing and fantastic achievement); following which she went to work for Haringey Children's Services in the infamous 'Baby P' team (just post the breaking news of the tragedy).

Having achieved a First class honours degree, Laura could have moved on from Haringey and 'cherry-picked' a less stressful, less high profile role in a more 'sedate', non-newsworthy borough. It is testimony to her professionalism, compassion, enthusiasm for the social work profession, dedication to supporting people and sense of justice that she has chosen to remain not only working within the Haringey community but in the same 'under-the-spotlight' team. Her commitment to raising the profile of social work (child protection services in particular), serving the local community and in helping to restore public confidence to a borough whose reputation was shattered, is inspirational.

Laura once famously said that she learned more about social work at City and Islington than she had done at Goldsmiths!

Laura has remained absolutely resolute in her praise for the role of the F.E. Sector and in particular the merits of Access courses; and whenever she gets the opportunity extols their virtues. She has always talked particularly fondly about City and Islington College and the special place it holds for her. Her passion for education and its contribution towards social work practice excellence continues, as she is now an 'in-training' Social Work Practice Placement Supervisor, attending university on day release to gain her Practice Placement Supervisor qualification (a legal requirement in order to be able to supervise B.A. Social Work students on placement).

[Mel Brookstone – Lecturer]

Online CELTA

The Online course was developed by Cambridge ESOL and International House, where the first course was run in 2010. City & Islington College were interested in adopting a groundbreaking approach to teaching the CELTA course and after attending a meeting at International House in early 2011, decided to run a first online course at the college in January 2012. At the time we were one of only a handful of institutions offering the course in this format. At the moment there are 19 institutions in the UK- mostly FE colleges rather than private language schools- offering the online CELTA. We are now starting our second online CELTA course at City & Islington College with 8 trainees, who started in October 2012.

The online CELTA course is, strictly speaking, a blended learning course. The regular CELTA course has two strands, both of which represent around 50% of course time. One of these strands requires the trainees to be doing Teaching Practice and the other sees them in the role of student-studying methodology and teaching approaches. It is this latter strand that is done online; the Teaching Practice itself continues to be done with a live class.

The most significant advantage is that 50% of the course can be done in the trainee's own time. There are specific units to cover each week, but within that framework there is flexibility as to exactly when and where the trainee does the studying. Another advantage is that there is an increasing number of people who feel very comfortable with this medium of learning, and would be attracted to following this course of study rather than the traditional face-to-face model. At the very least, it offers an alternative model of study.

[Grant Glendinning – Director, Centre for Lifelong Learning]

Arsenal in the Community

The College has a history of partnership work with the Arsenal in the Community (AIRC) the community arm of Arsenal Football Club, initially around the development and co delivery of a Foundation Degree in Football and Community Sports Coaching with Arsenal FC which teaches the key elements of community sports coaching.

More recently in 2012 the partnership explored how best to support local youth unemployment. AIRC had a history of engaging with the unemployed people through its community coaches, who are teacher trained by the College and over many years has been able to respond to community need with a wide range of programmes and approaches that provide effective contributions to the challenges of growing up in the inner city including access to job opportunities.

It became apparent that many of the hard to reach young people engaged through the programme were not progressing beyond interview stage of the recruitment process when referred by AITC for job interviews. Pre interview training was developed to include sessions covering topics such as; time management, one to one interview rehearsals, group interviews and how to act at an interview.

City and Islington College as the regional Deloitte Employability Centre for London and the South East identified an opportunity to develop a bespoke training programme to support the client group in question. Eight bespoke work skills units were designed and formally recognised within the work skills qualification framework at level 2. Students completing the training receive an Arsenal Employability Award accredited by Pearson's.

Following the developments Arsenal in the Community became a sub-contractor of City & Islington College in 2012 and has engaged 52 students of which 37 completed the certificate. The course requires a 12 week (1 day per week) commitment.

One of the significant reasons why the programme has been successful is that the young people on the programme are not new to Arsenal in the Community; we have been able to build relations with the young people over several years. Adding a qualification to the programme was a vital element that gives the programme credibility, it is an added incentive for the participants to see the programme through and attend every session. For many participants this is the highest level qualification that they have been able to achieve.

Initial employment exit routes were provided by Emirates Stadium hospitality provider, Delaware North Companies and stadium cleaning operative Cleanevent. There are now further exit routes to widen the offer including Sodexo, Fine Food Company, Co-operative Stores and Barclays Apprenticeship Scheme.

[Teresa Esan - Director, Employability and Employer Engagement, Jack Ferguson - Arsenal in the Community]

Conclusion

The case studies have clear themes and similarities running through them that define successful vocational education and highlight what is special about this approach to teaching and learning. The key themes that emerge are:

- A culture of excellence and aspiration at all levels within the college
- A proactive Teaching and Learning Unit, established in 2002, which is proactive in driving quality and innovation and responsive to the constantly changing external landscape: educational, economic and political
- The close and mutually beneficial working relationship with employers
- A flexible and creative approach to curriculum design and programme delivery to meet the needs of students
- The value of an integrated approach to theory and practice; particularly where this relates to the work environment
- A flexible, formative and summative, assessment process
- current and relevant industry experience of staff gained through ongoing professional practice and obligatory CPD
- The use of technology to facilitate a flexible and responsive approach to learning

- Less obvious but equally important is staff integrity, their passion and enthusiasm for their particular vocation/profession, which validates learners educational choices and is aspirational

Overall and underpinning these factors is a clear line of sight, progressing learners into and within employment, up skilling and empowering them to enter and progress in the work place with the social and economic benefits that this brings to individuals and communities.

Tracey Gardiner

Deputy Director: Teaching and Learning

Mary Rimington

Deputy Principal: Curriculum and Quality

October 2012