

Published 20th October 2020

Expressive Arts Short Course builds students' self-belief through distance learning

ASDAN's Expressive Arts Short Course has developed the confidence and well-being of learners at Community Film, Art and Media. We spoke to Director of Engagement, Ray Hanks, about how the course has engaged students and met their learning needs during the lockdown.

Community Film, Art and Media in Bolton provides a range of creative courses with the aim of up-skilling post-16 learners. Their centre engages local communities from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds, particularly those from underrepresented BAME communities and young people with learning and physical disabilities.

"Coming on the back of the most extraordinary restrictions ever imposed in the country, our plans to engage our cohort of NEET (not in education, employment or training) individuals was a huge challenge" says Ray. "We needed to adapt our training to the audience and their needs, which have dramatically changed due to lockdown.

"Our training programme, Creative Opportunity, harnessed the brilliant ASDAN Expressive Arts Short Course, which caught the imagination of our students from the start. The course



Student explores expressive doodling

adapted well to a remote situation. We were able to deliver the entire course via Zoom Pro using the ASDAN student books."





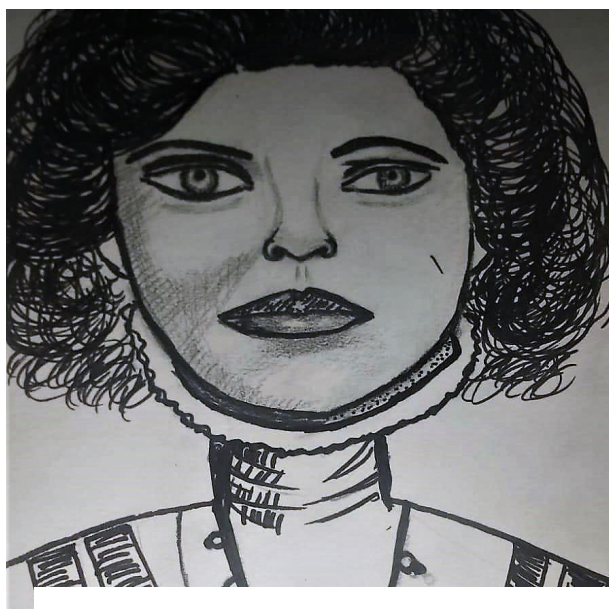
Developing self-belief

“Our students come from a community where confidence is often subdued” says Ray. “Many learners suffered in some way during lockdown and all learners lacked belief in their abilities when they came to the course. The students’ attention and hard work over a five week course spoke volumes about their enthusiasm for the Expressive Arts Short Course content – the structure provided was crucial to student success. We had a 100% success rate in graduation with all learners completing the course.”

Enhancing personal pride

ASDAN’s Expressive Arts Short Course promotes a healthier lifestyle and the positive impact of art on mental health. Ray shares activities that gave his learners a sense of personal pride.

“We focused on facial expression in Module 1: Explore, Section A, Chal-



Shading techniques learned while sketching a portrait of Emily Pankurst

lenge 5. By taking students through the challenge step by step, before they knew it, they’d drawn a face. The teacher gave tips on how to make the face happy, for example by moving the focal point of eyeballs and shape of the mouth. Everyone got such a kick out of realising that they could make all these different kinds of emotions. It was a lot of fun.” says Ray.

“Another excellent activity was the first challenge in Module 2: Experiment, Section A, Challenge 1 where the students drew using unusual items such as coffee and turmeric over a pencil outline. This gave more depth and colour to the drawing. Students then proudly shared their work with family and friends. When you can be that expressive in such an unusual way it really helps engage learners.”

“Through the Expressive Arts Short Course we were able to demonstrate the arts beyond drawing. The flexibility of the course enabled us to do things like invite an expert expressive dancer in to do an upper-body movement workshop. Some students hadn’t experienced this before.

“As the modules progressed, there was a real sense of personal pride when students exceeded their own expectations across the various art forms.”

Accrediting achievements

“Our plan was to demonstrate to students that they could achieve more than they thought, in a way that they would find both fun and rewarding,” says Ray. “The students were amazed at the results they achieved.

“We have an online celebration event planned. We’ve framed



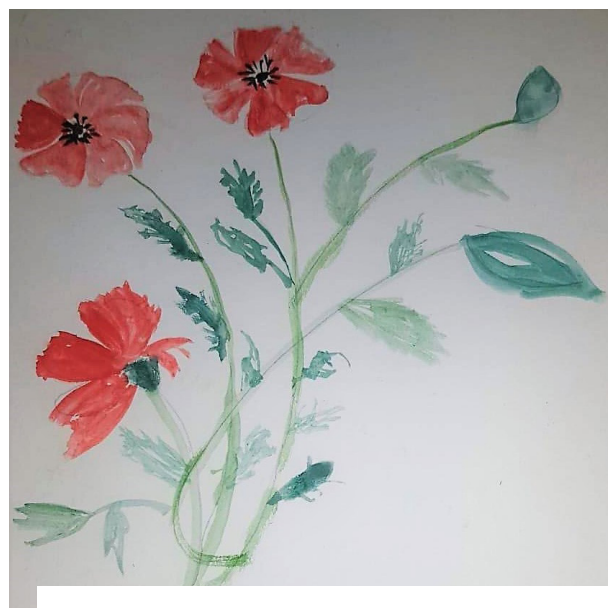


ASDAN certificates and we'll have these delivered to the students with goodie bags. Together, they can all eat the same cake and hold up their certificates.

“Through this course the students realised that the learning process was something they were good at. For this then to be recognised through ASDAN credits, was a huge outcome.

“Some students now have a good idea about what they want to do next, two of them are discussing going to university and one has already been offered a place. The students have found that they are now more confident in representing themselves having done the Expressive Arts Short Course, for example in an interview situation.”

“ASDAN's course has given students the ability to believe in themselves and to realise their own abilities. Overall, ASDAN provided the key to help our students thrive during lockdown.”



Experimenting with watercolour paint

Contact info@asdan.org.uk if you'd like to share your centre's success story. Visit www.asdan.org.uk to find out more about ASDAN's Expressive Arts Short Course.