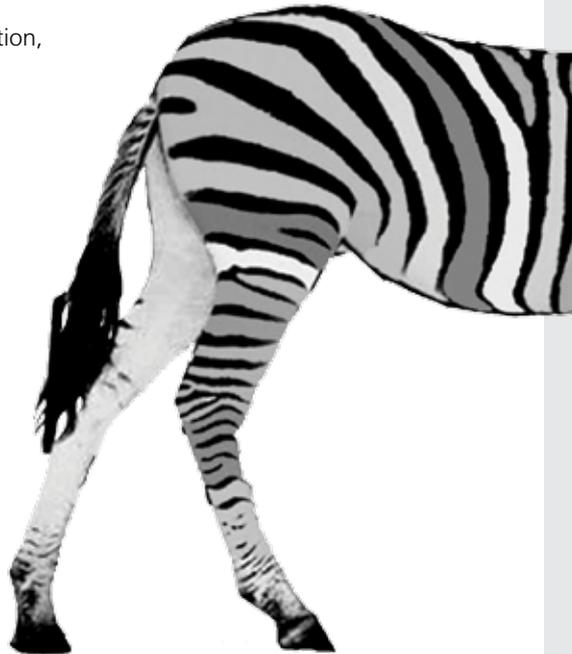


# Entrepreneurs are made, not born.

With the right skills and the right attitude, people with ambition and ideas can go far. And paths to success are as individual as the entrepreneurs who make the journey. Fashion, illustration, arts and crafts and digital media share the same creative DNA but speak different languages and develop different models of enterprise.

That's why at the University College for the Creative Arts we believe that **entrepreneurship can be taught**, should be taught to creatives in their own language and by experts in their own industry.



We know that **creative arts graduates are more likely to start up a business** than any other type of graduate within five years of graduation, but are less likely to be assisted by mainstream business support.

We wanted to ignite this natural entrepreneurial spark to ensure that more creative businesses **thrive rather than just survive**.

So we developed **Entrepreneurship Training for Creatives** (ETC), an eight-week accredited intensive training programme for creative professionals seeking to set up their own business. The programme was delivered to professionals from all over England and by successful entrepreneurs who know what makes for success in each of the industries we supported. We gave each student a robust framework to test, critically reflect and develop their business in a creative context.

**Now we have more creative businesses doing the business.**

We think that's a great result. And that's not all. Because the programme is accredited by BTEC, its staying power can benefit the creative entrepreneurs of the future.



# Brave new world

The importance of enterprise to the UK economy means that the national drive to support entrepreneurship is strong and becoming stronger:

- > There has been massive growth in interest in the business-led, government-backed Enterprise Week, a campaign to support under 25s to set up their own business.
- > The high profile *Make Your Mark* campaign lobbies for education to nurture enterprise talent across different subject areas.
- > The Government's *Creative Economy* programme's Education and Skills Working Group recommends that business and entrepreneurial skills are a priority and delivery should be contextualised to the industry.

ETC's aims are synergistic with this national drive and in step with national thinking about what entrepreneurship is. A recent report suggests that entrepreneurship education is "dominated by a tired, old-fashioned business-oriented conceptualisation of entrepreneurship" rather than a "world-life" view. It advocates provision that extends across disciplines, economy and society. This is exactly what ETC set out to provide.

And one of ETC's strengths is its unique position: business support organisations provide business skills, arts organisations can help creatives set up a business, but until now, no single project focused on both these aspects plus entrepreneurship and what it means to the individual.

**And we went one step further.**

We sought to provide the training at just the right time for the individual, when it could be of most benefit to them. Undergraduates are not always ready for entrepreneurship: they can be distracted by a myriad of concerns, not least completing their course. Our individuals were graduates, already working, focusing on their creative goals and how exactly they wanted to make a living. Our participants were ready to be entrepreneurs.



# ETC worked because:

## **It's sustainable:**

Many short-term courses are successful but disappear. Lessons are not carried forward. Victories are not celebrated. Energy and effort dissipates. ETC was designed as a BTEC qualification. The programme content, media and organisation have staying power. No one has to start from the beginning to reproduce its success. It is there to be used again.

## **It's practical:**

Our entrepreneurs learned the practice of business – IPR, marketing, finance, networking, planning – and then went out into the big bad world and practised their new skills on their own business. Action learning speaks louder than words.

## **It's designed to work:**

ETC recognised the importance of core entrepreneurial skills but within an industry framework. It was conceived and designed by specialists in course design and entrepreneurship from within the creative industries. It focused on four disciplines that reflect the University College's specialities:

- > **Digital Media**
- > **Illustration**
- > **Arts and Crafts**
- > **Fashion and Textiles**

Course facilitators and specialists were recruited from each of the industries, so that our entrepreneurs all learned the same core skills but through the eyes of their own discipline. The format of the course – an initial residential weekend followed by seven masterclasses at fortnightly intervals – allowed our entrepreneurs the space and time to reflect on their work, as well as the opportunity to bond as peers.

### It's targeted:

We wanted to help the right people at the right time. The right time for many of our entrepreneurs was a few years in to the world of work. There is evidence that provision to support creative business start-up in a post-education setting provides better focus and a better platform for coherent and longer-term goal setting. And we recruited to the programme people who had a very clear idea of how they wanted to develop and the skills they needed to do so. But we also supported people who were not quite ready for entrepreneurship through advice and guidance, signposting them to other opportunities. We turned no-one away.

### It's about people:

ETC allowed the natural networking talents of creative entrepreneurs to flourish. The initial residential weekend allowed participants to get to know each other and each others' work. Those further along the path to entrepreneurship supported those further behind. Some participants bought the services of others. Some collaborated on joint projects. Others became their peers' mentors. ETC gave our participants the strong infrastructure needed to support strong networks.



# Supporting ambition

Because ETC is a national project, our entrepreneurs came from all over England. Some were our own home-grown University College graduates, some had graduated elsewhere. They had different experiences of work and different creative goals, but they had one thing in common. They were all seeking to set up profitable enterprises that would be a vehicle for their creative practice. Some had already started on the journey. And our industry-specific focus meant that we could support those from the craft end of the creative spectrum to those from the more hi-tech specialist end.

It was very clear to us what they wanted:

**'I need to think like a business, rather than just me and my idea...'**

**'I'm starting a business now and I want to learn new skills that I would have otherwise learned though years of working for other people...'**

**'My company is in its infancy but I want to expand by building our own facility and embracing new technologies... '**

'I need to get out of

We helped 98 professionals on the road to starting or expanding their own creative business. We whetted the entrepreneurial appetite for 57 people with industry-specific one-day masterclasses. And we helped a further 60 professionals with information, advice and guidance about being entrepreneurs – or not, as it is not a path suitable for everyone.

Did our entrepreneurs get what they wanted? We think so. But you don't have to believe us.

my comfort zone...'

Turn the page to find out what five of our entrepreneurs told us about their experiences of the programme...





# Aidan

## The noise of art

Aidan McCarthy, an alumnus of the University College in Farnham, is a director of **Noise London**, an Emmy-nominated audio post production company that has worked on high-profile documentaries such as Simon Schama's *The Power of Art* and David Attenborough's *Are We Changing the Planet?*

"After graduating from the University College I spent three years working for a sound company, but my friends and I wanted to manage our work life the way we wanted to, to make it powerful and meaningful in our lives. Financially and creatively it made sense."

Noise London had been operating for two years before Aidan discovered ETC.

"The company was really taking off but I was so immersed in work I hadn't stepped back to take a look at the long term. ETC came just at the right time," he says.

Aidan took part in the Digital Media ETC programme. He says "One of the things that ETC focussed on was creating a realistic, doable business plan for the short, medium and long term. We worked hard on this – pinning down what we were about, what we wanted to achieve and how we would achieve it. A year on, our plan is still a living document which is our roadmap to our future."

*"I've always been fascinated by the power of sound. Our work is all about moving people emotionally and subliminally through what they hear when they are watching images. There are two aspects to sound work: doing a good job so that the audience don't notice. If the sound is wrong they'll leave the story. And through layering and editing we add extra levels to what's going on. In creating sound dynamics and atmospheres we take the audience to deeper, different places."*

And Aidan felt that ETC gave him more than just a plan. "The chance to take time out, to focus on the business in a strategic sense, was invaluable. And during that first residential weekend the group really gelled, so much so that we became more than just individuals undertaking the same programme. In systematically presenting our ideas to each other, communicating and having that support structure on a weekly basis, we became a creative think-tank."

It's important to Aidan and his colleagues to grow their own talent. "We're looking to expand staff numbers as well as develop technically and creatively. We want to do this responsibly. ETC has given me the tools and the confidence to enable us to do that," he says.

Since completing the course Aidan has become a Creative Ambassador for the *Make Your Mark* campaign.

**What I learned:**

- > The true financial value of our work
- > Hard business skills
- > You need structure and a roadmap to be truly successful
- > To be more confident in myself and our decisions

[www.noiselondon.com](http://www.noiselondon.com)





# Yoko

## Art and synchronicity

Yoko Jarvis is a fashion and toy designer who graduated from Central St Martins with a degree in Fashion Print. "It didn't cross my mind that I could be an entrepreneur when I graduated. I'd worked before I studied fashion, so I was used to the outside world. It can get too comfortable. But my mindset changed utterly by chance, when retailers started showing interest in a range of Japanese-inspired soft toys I called Japanimals that I had made just for fun. I suddenly realised that I could run with this opportunity, I could take responsibility for myself and that it was up to me to take it as far as I could. But I needed skills."

ETC stepped in. Yoko attended the Fashion and Textiles programme. "It came just at the right time," says Yoko. "Our first session was about networking. This was a new concept for me, but once I started thinking about how to network, I created opportunities even within my own circle of friends. Until you think about it, you don't realise what talents and connections your own friends have and what talents and connections you have yourself. I put what I'd learned into practice and after just the first ETC session a photographer put together a portfolio for me, free of charge. Once you start talking about what you do, people step forward to help. And you can help them. That's networking."

*“My work has always had a childlike quality to it. I’m inspired by my Japanese cultural heritage which has an innate innocence. I’m intrigued by quirks and playfulness, and my work reflects this. I find the process of making new from old fascinating, and working with vintage Japanese textiles enables me to create something innovative that has its roots in the past.”*

Yoko was led through the stages of putting together her business plan. “I asked some serious questions of myself: what I wanted to produce and how I wanted to work. I know now that I want to get the brand out there, work on a mass-produced line plus a high-end market. I feel that I now have the skills and I’m on the brink of something big. People want what I want to deliver. I just have to make it happen”.

ETC changed everything for Yoko. “It wasn’t a routine programme. That’s the surprise. The facilitators were inspiring and nurturing. They’ve been our mentors,” she says. The group developed organically, helping each other, learning from each other. “We’re still in contact” she says.

Yoko is developing a child-friendly line of Japanimals for mass manufacture. “A successful line will give me the space and freedom to develop new things,” she says.

**What I learned:**

- > What networking is and how to do it
- > How to price my work and value my time
- > I’m more confident in negotiating





# Pam

## Art and freedom

Pam Glew is an artist whose career has varied from art lecturer, theatre designer to costume fitter, and her experience of the theatrical and love of film has driven her to create strong cinematographic female images that display in galleries in Brighton, Manchester, Leeds, London and Hollywood. She says "For many years I sold craft-oriented pieces. They were fairly commercial but had little message. Message is important to me. But I felt I'd been fiddling around for long enough. I had to either start making a proper living from art, or give it up. ETC happened just at the crunch point."

What drives Pam's entrepreneurial side is her love of freedom. "I'm not good at being told what to do. I don't fit easily into a 9 to 5. If I'm my own boss, it's all down to me. ETC helped me crystallise my thoughts about myself as an entrepreneur, and reveal and address the skills that I needed to learn," she says.

Pam took part in the Visual Arts and Crafts ETC programme. "It was such a positive experience to remove myself from my normal existence and talk about what I do and listen to others' journeys. Having that focus one day a week, talking to experts and working on my business plan has given me confidence to realise that yes, I can make a living and a business of being an artist."

*"I've always loved experimenting with media and technique, exploring how materials work. Recently I've become fascinated by fear culture and conspiracy theories, and I feel angry and concerned enough about the world to make work that has a message, rather than create just a pretty thing that matches the curtains. My fear culture work sells better and for higher prices than my other works. I guess it's because I've found my voice."*

The act of clarifying where she planned to go and how she would get there challenged Pam. "Being an artist seems such an abstract idea, almost a fantasy, so writing about it in business terms seemed crazy. But conceiving of and having that strong direction was a brilliant outcome." And the hard business skills taught on the programme made Pam realise how she had to change her habits. "I didn't realise how much I was spending on materials. It was shocking putting together my profit and loss account and understanding cash flow. I realised that I can't keep working on small, cheaper items, but to focus on the large pieces, and market them to high end London galleries," she says.

"It's imperative that I make this business sustainable," Pam says, "and I feel that ETC has helped me clarify my own direction, and given me a raft of hard skills that will enable me to make good business decisions. And good decisions means that my art will be out there, being recognised and being bought."

**What I learned:**

- > It's ok to enjoy the financial side of things
- > The true value of my work
- > How to be better with money
- > Which markets to focus on

[www.pamglew.co.uk](http://www.pamglew.co.uk)





# Arps

## The science of art

Arps Patel had been a freelance graphic designer since he was sixteen, and studied visual communication at the University College in Farnham. He says “I’ve always had an independent nature and my entrepreneurial side is driven by the knowledge that I want to wake up in the morning and do what I love doing in conditions that I set. At University, my colleagues and I talked in the pub about setting up a business together, but weren’t really ready for it until we’d been working in the industry. We realised that it was possible to do this ourselves, and do it our way.”

After working for a year to gain experience, Arps and his colleagues set up **Preface Studios**, a creative cross-media communications agency that helps businesses –from small start-ups to blue chip - connect and engage with their audiences. “In the early days it was challenging: we were cobbling a plan together, attracting clients, but with what we know now we would have done things differently.”

Arps attended the Digital Media programme and was led through the business of understanding business. “What was interesting was how our roles evolved while I was on ETC. As a creative, I found it an engaging challenge using and developing skills that are considered non-creative – business, marketing, finance. I’d always thought I wasn’t good at these things, but that’s only because I hadn’t any experience of them. I found that I took on, and

*“My creative work is very urban, gritty and quite graphic, influenced by music, particularly Hip Hop. There’s a fine line between what is just pretty and what can be informative. Design is the science of art. It’s our job to communicate clearly through a format that is aesthetically pleasing, to have expertise over a wide range of creative styles. I love this challenge.”*

enjoyed, the business side of Preface. And we’re in the rare position where the client account manager really understands design and its processes,” he says.

ETC helped Arps put together a comprehensive business plan that the team review regularly. “Our original plan was on the right lines but there were aspects we hadn’t considered. And we turned our pricing policy on its head - we were drastically undervaluing ourselves when we started out. It’s all about confidence; as soon as you believe in yourself you hold out for the price that you are worth,” he says.

As with most ETC graduates, Arps found the networking aspect motivating. “My ETC colleagues were all from industries relevant to me, and at different stages of business development. We learned from each other. And we started doing business with each other. Most importantly, we walked away from the course not as competitors, but as friends.”

**What I learned:**

- > How to value our work
- > That I enjoy the business side of things
- > Networking is vital
- > Being an entrepreneur is exhilarating, exciting, rewarding and scary.

[www.prefacestudios.com](http://www.prefacestudios.com)





# Megan

## Art on the page

Megan Davidson is an illustrator who combines traditional and new techniques to produce colourful, playful and positive designs. She studied Fine Art and Fashion Design and taught technical drawing while still at university. "After I graduated I really needed space and freedom so I took a year out. I didn't draw at all during this time. But I came back to it with a fresh mind and revisited my style. At the same time Martin Dawber who writes *The Big Book of Fashion Illustration* became interested in my work, and I felt the time was right to become a professional illustrator, to build up a reputation and a range of clients. But I had no idea how to go about it".

Megan joined the ETC Illustration programme and opted to undertake the BTEC qualification. "I needed that discipline, something concrete to aim for," she says. "Before the course I knew almost nothing about business – not just about the skills you need, but the attitude and knowledge. I was particularly shocked about what I discovered about copyright. I've really worked on how I actually source so that I don't fall into that trap. I've adjusted my processes because of it."

Megan believes that the course was perfect for her from beginning to end, and happened at the right time. "My knowledge about the hard facts and skills of business has grown, and I feel far more confident

*“I’ve always drawn and painted, and my passion is drawing people and lifestyle. I love the adrenalin of the extreme sports and my work reflects the youth and beauty of this culture. Nature is another of my inspirations – especially the seaside. I began doing fine art, but found this too conceptual and I’ve now found my style. I’ve developed a blend of traditional illustration skills with digital media and I’m really happy with what I’m doing.”*

about my work and its value. I’ve learned about markets that I would never have considered before or even knew existed,” she says.

Megan was pleased with how the group bonded. “Many of us are still in contact – in fact, we’ve formed ourselves into a network and have a website. Although we’re all illustrators, we have very different styles so we don’t compete. We’ve fallen into roles naturally, and one of us acts as a mentor for the group. This collaborative, supportive outcome has been a pleasant surprise for me.”

Megan’s next step is to get her work out there. “I’ve realised that I take far too long to complete a drawing. I want it to be absolutely perfect. But that’s not viable. I’m not in a dream world now. I’ve become more realistic and know that I have to attack those markets that will be most profitable. To make the business work I need exposure for my work, so now I’m working on marketing and also widening my range,” she says.

**What I learned:**

- > It’s motivating being part of a group
- > Everything about business!
- > About different markets for my work

[www.candyreef.com](http://www.candyreef.com) [www.rabbitstew.co.uk](http://www.rabbitstew.co.uk)



# What difference did it make?

We believe that ETC made a huge difference to the individuals who undertook the programme, and has helped to enrich the creative and cultural eco-system in which they operate. We know that creatives operate in a myriad of ways: as individuals, collaboratives and as private sector organisations, and ETC gave participants room to bond, to become mentors to each other and to develop in the fluid way that creative relationships happen.

## **ETC helped individuals by**

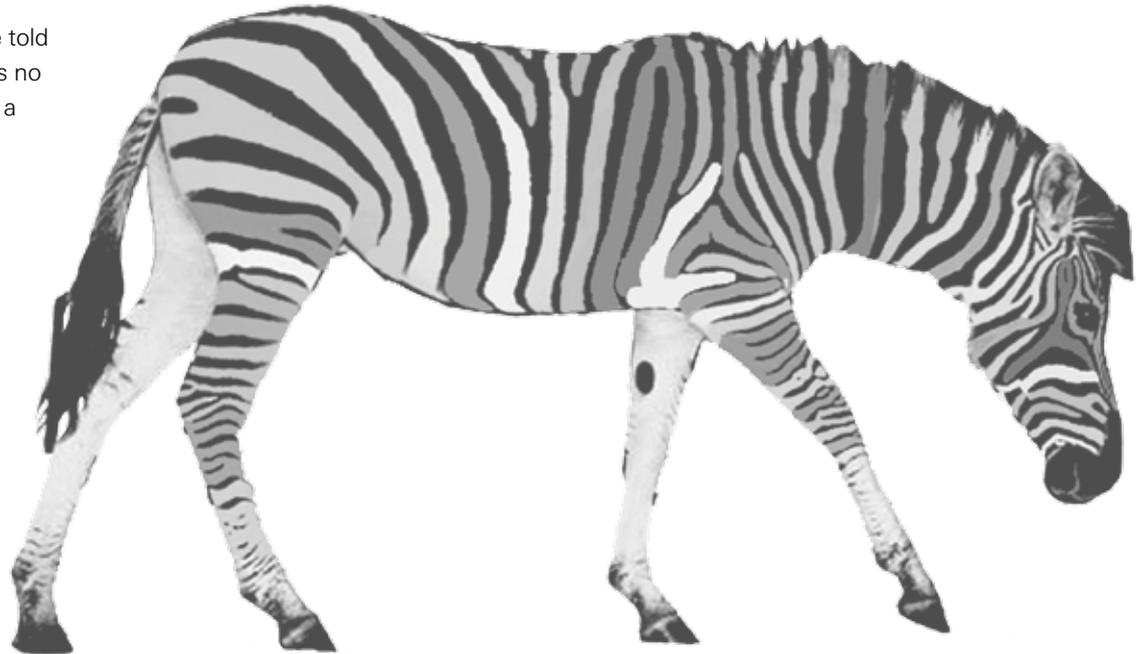
- > More and better skills and knowledge using their own language
- > Opportunities to collaborate
- > Opportunities for work
- > The confidence to be an entrepreneur

## **ETC helped the creative economy by**

- > Making existing businesses more viable through better business practice
- > Supporting the launch of new businesses
- > Supporting the birth of networks
- > Increasing the skills capacity of the industry

The beauty of ETC is that it's transferable. The hard work has been done. The programme's content and strategies can be used time and time again, at any time. And this is important. What our participants have told us is that ETC came along at just the right time for them. But there is no one right time that fits everybody. So we believe that ETC should be a rolling programme. Entrepreneurs are becoming ready all the time and should be able to jump on when the time is right for them.

Only then can we ensure that we catch every creative with an entrepreneurial spark, and support them into business.



# What have we learned?

ETC isn't just a programme that has helped individuals on their entrepreneurial path. We think that it's contributed to our knowledge base about what kind of training works, why it works and who it works for. We believe that ETC has:

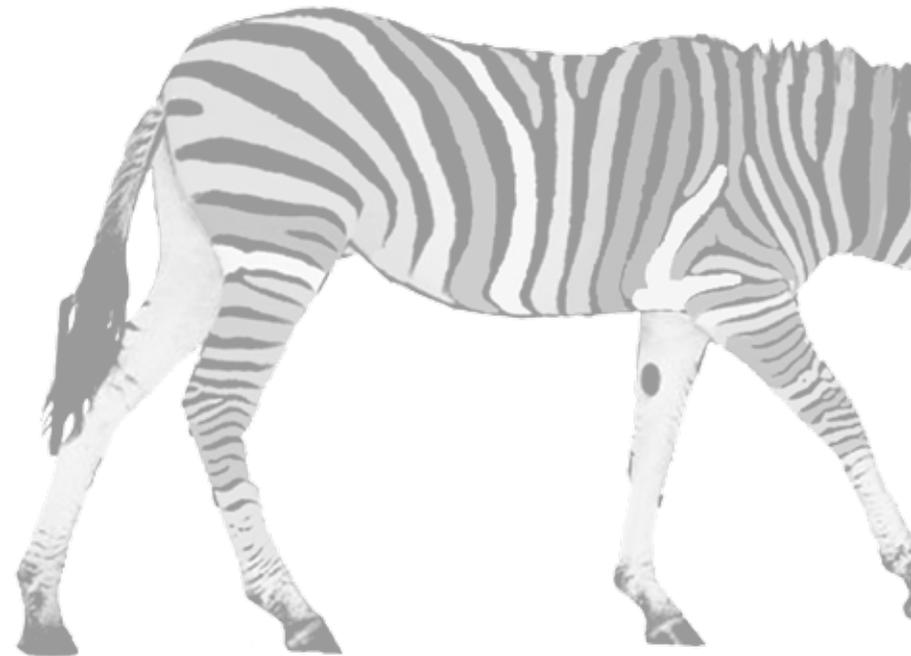
> **Reinforced** that training must be relevant to the industry. For it to work, participants and facilitators must speak the same language. Facilitators must have relevant industry backgrounds to be credible and to truly understand what works in that industry.

> **Underlined** that training must echo the realities of how the creative eco-system operates: freelancers and small businesses within the creative industries work fluidly, bouncing creativity around through networks. Working in groups of their own kind, creatives were able to mentor each other, support each other and do business with each other.

> **Tested** the model of delivery. ETC was delivered from four regional centres to participants from all over England by creatives working in four different subsets of the creative industries. Each programme had a facilitator and a number of specialists. Programmes were, in the main, delivered not in Higher Education venues but in the real world.

> **Contributed** to the evidence base for ways to strengthen the creative economy. This is important for strategies such as the South East England Development Agency-led Regional Economic Strategy, which supports the development of the creative industries through specialised training programmes and the creation of a South East Framework for the Creative Industries.

**ETC is a well-designed, well-delivered programme that works.**  
**And it's ready to roll again.**



# The final word

**What did the project achieve?** In 20 months the team at the University College's Knowledge Transfer Office wrote, developed and delivered a programme of five specialist entrepreneurship centred business start-up courses, seven specialist one-day Masterclasses and one-to-one advice and guidance to 215 creative businesses. The scheme utilised European Social Funding through HE ESF.

As a consequence 106 creative businesses enrolled on the BTEC accredited Entrepreneurship Training for Creatives programmes. The programmes were designed to 'fast track' creative ideas into creative businesses and to support the development of new creative businesses just when they needed it. The creatives who did the course undertook a targeted specialist programme which included a residential weekend and seven Masterclass days. They were taught by current creative entrepreneurs who shared relevant and up to date knowledge about starting out and making a success within the creative industries. At the end

of the course the creatives presented the business and personal plans that the course had helped them develop. Having a plan is vital. This ensures that the business has focus and that business owners can refer to their aims and objectives to ensure that they 'stay on track' and allows business development to be monitored. Without focus it is possible to lose sight of where their business is going and become lost.

The course participants were encouraged to form networks and to share expertise where applicable. This has helped build support networks and has allowed small businesses to take on larger projects where they have hired in other creative experts and specialists and 'shared the wealth'! This 'satellite' model allows businesses to be more flexible, more dynamic and able to target the right expertise when it is needed. It really works! It is clear that support which is targeted and specialist and uses specific specialist knowledge is particularly relevant when supporting

businesses in the creative industries. It is also essential that support is provided by sector specialist creative practitioners who have real experience which is relevant and contemporary. This empathetic approach is particularly important to creative industries where individuals can feel isolated by generic business support which has little understanding of the drivers of these creative businesses. Creative businesses really are different! This was central to the success of the ETC project.

**But can we do this again?** One of the drawbacks of government funded projects is that once the funding disappears so does the programme, as well as all the knowledge learnt. Through the ETC programme we developed a BTEC professional accredited programme at NVQ4 (degree level) which fits into the University College's professional development programme and also allows other organisations to use the BTEC units in the future.

**So, what about the future?** The Government's 'Business Support Simplification Programme' has been designed to offer a smaller number of programmes in an attempt to make it easier for businesses to identify appropriate support. It is possible that as a result of this strategy future innovative support programmes will not be supported. Might the future of this type of support be within the higher education establishments looking to offer support to graduates to ensure a market advantage?

The creative industries need specialist support to help develop the skills-based 'knowledge economy' of the future. ETC offers support to specialist sectors where targeted support really helps develop more focused entrepreneurs who can build the organised and successful businesses which will underpin the UK economy.

**Dr Martin Bouette**  
Entrepreneurship Manager, Knowledge Transfer Office  
University College for the Creative Arts at  
Canterbury, Epsom, Farnham, Maidstone and Rochester