

# Anna Robinson **Teacher** at Ideas Store, Tower Hamlets

## Case study 3

"It's a place where you can be whoever you are."



**Former I.T Trainer of the Year Anna Robinson knew she could teach. She just hadn't found a place she really wanted to do it.**

And not for want of trying. Anna, a native of Sydney, has worked in San Francisco, Vancouver and a range of other enviable world locations before settling for Tower Hamlets. Put simply, she says: "For the first time, I feel like I'm with like-minded people."

Anna's teaching method is to embed basic English and maths skills into a range of creative activities. A group of Bengali women created their own cook-book, a tale recounted by Anna with the relish of Mr Kipling. Embedding and reinforcing skills meant it didn't stop there. That same group desktop published the book, held a book launch and gave telephone interviews to local news journalists who reviewed it.

And the same holistic approach worked with one of Anna's other embedded learning courses,

Pathway to Childcare. The group made puppets, wrote a show, made the costumes. And then staged an exhibition at Bethnal Green's Museum of Childhood thanks to their tutor's inventive streak and a determination to showcase her students' work. "It's about demonstrating to these students that they really can achieve – these classes are so closely linked to their self-confidence and sense of worth within their communities.

"You have the opportunity to shape lives here. Yes, I was a good I.T trainer, but I never felt as if I was making a real difference to someone, giving them a skill they appreciated and needed. Of course we have a core curriculum – but here you have the flexibility to be whoever you like. There's masses of paperwork but you're not tied to a desk. You're working with a group of people to make their dreams of a better lifestyle a reality."