

Lawrence Lartey and Simon Das **Teachers** at DV8

Case study 1

"I've got mates working in the city earning 10 times as much as me. But they haven't got what I've got at the end of the day."



Lawrence Lartey – provenance Hertfordshire, Channel 4, Channel 5, KISS FM, the BBC.

Simon Das – provenance south London, i-D magazine, The Face, Arena, editor of Touch, Britain's first urban music magazine.

When two highly-successful working journalists decide to give something back to young students the result is electric.

Lawrence, 28, and Simon, 33, would be the first to admit they're not your usual basic skills teachers. They're both surprised at how they came to teaching. Their students are surprised when they meet for the first time. And everyone benefits.

Both are employed by DV8 Training – renowned for its remit of putting appropriate teachers into local communities. Both work part time, to maintain good media careers – but their commitment is tangible. That's why they themselves have chosen to go back into the classroom to study for their own professional teaching qualifications. And that's why, despite their world-class contacts in the UK's club and music scene, both were out on a Friday night theatre trip with their students instead, most of whom had never seen a live production before.

Simon and Lawrence are dealing with young adults, often disaffected, sometimes youth offenders, many with social issues. But the media skills course they run at City Learning Centre in Walthamstow also equates to four GCSEs – which can open the door to a wider world of opportunity most of them are keen to experience. Course members produce two issues of Fusion magazine a year, embedding English with the obvious

journalism, maths with advertising rate cards and layout techniques.

"We know we're walking a fine line, so it's really important we remain professional at all times," Lawrence explained. "Initially, it can be confusing for the students. We talk a bit like them. We look a bit like them. We dress a bit like them. But we also need to be firm so we always have to set boundaries. I never imagined myself teaching – but I got a phone call from DV8 saying someone had recommended me. I've been supported throughout – and the benefits are enormous. Without wanting to sound 'holier than thou' I can give something to these young people. And that's good for me too."

For Simon the benefits are the same, with some added professional extras. "For three days a week I edit a magazine – and my students are part of my core target audience," he added. "From a personal perspective, this gives me the chance to do something really meaningful, to make a difference to lives. And I'm working with my magazine's readers too, so it brings me closer to my audience. "I've got mates working in the city earning 10 times as much as me. But they haven't got what I've got at the end of the day."

**Change direction.
Teach adults.
Change lives.**