

**Case Study: Kustom Made at the CETTIL Conference**

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**The context:**

Within Thornbeck College (part of Tyne and Wear Autistic Society – TAWAS) there is a wide range of learning experiences on offer as part of the living and work programme for learners with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC). All learners are encouraged to access all areas of the social enterprise before choosing their preferred pathway as part of their extended initial assessment.

**The challenge:**

To share best practice concerning Kustom Made at the CETT *for* Inclusive Learning (CETTIL) conference in March 2009.

Kustom Made is the card making business for the social enterprise. Bespoke wedding invitations and all other occasion greeting cards are made and then sold in the society shop; orders can also be made via telephone and e-mail.

To replicate the learning environment within Thornbeck College and set it out to enable others to see how effective the work system is and how the system supports the learners to understand exactly what is expected of them.

The purpose of our workshops was to provide information and support to other organisations and to offer ideas for structuring their learning environments to utilise all learning opportunities through the embedding of practical work skills.

Learners attended to demonstrate how effectively the work system is and produced some of the bespoke wedding invitations that are on sale in the society shop.

**What we did:**

Tutors and learners attended conference workshops to share our practice from Thornbeck College to other providers and organisations. The group replicated the work system and set it out into a real working environment.

- Explained the Learning for Living and Work programme and how we have implemented it at Thornbeck College through a social enterprise business.
- Discussed how all functional skills have been embedded into each practical activity to enable the learner to achieve their full potential.
- Practical activities such as typical office duties and producing products to sell are developed.
- Learners demonstrated the work system and informed others of how it supports them to complete their individual given workloads.
- Learners worked through and made wedding invitations as the presentations were taken place to give a full picture of how well it works.

**The outcomes:**

Throughout the workshop there were opportunities for attendees to ask questions to both staff and learners for more information on the Kustom Made social enterprise.

- Provided information on why the social enterprise is there.
- The benefits the enterprise brings for both the learners and the society together to widen opportunities within the geographical area.
- Created opportunities for potential customers and work experience within other organisations.
- Informed others of how this structured learning environment increases learner independence to prepare them for real work experience.

**The impact:**

The conference feedback was very positive. The workshops allowed others to experience and learn from the practice we provide for our learners. As a result of this sharing of ideas and good practice Thornbeck College has built more links with other providers for work experience and potential marketing links to raise the profile of the social enterprise business and develop the links for Kustom Made.

	<p><b>For further information contact:</b></p> <p>Tracy Devlin FE Tutor</p> <p>0191 5488206</p> <p><a href="mailto:Tracy.devlin@tawas.org.uk">Tracy.devlin@tawas.org.uk</a></p>
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