



# REAL LIFE

# Lessons

**W**E hear every day in the media how we need to be more enterprising and should consider working for ourselves.

At Glasgow Clyde College, students on Employability and Additional Support for Learning courses learn by working in real life situations, such as the work in running the café on the 8th floor cleverly named, “Eat on 8”, based at the Cardonald Campus.

Students are also involved in other enterprise activities such as running a craft business, making and selling items throughout the year, which included for example, a Winter Collection, selling seasonal goods – wreaths, garlands, mugs, hurricane lamps and decorated candles.

Student involvement in these activities improves their knowledge and understanding of how a business operates and what skills are required to ensure that the business thrives, while also fulfilling the outcomes required for SQA certification. The need to handle money, plan ahead with time constraints and which resources to utilise.

Social enterprise as a business model is not a new concept but it has only recently been recognised within further education as an innovative approach for widening access to learning and helping students with complex social needs. Social enterprise projects reinvest all profits from selling products and services back in to the business or local community projects. This allows social enterprise ventures to improve people’s life chances, support communities and help the environment. So when a social enterprise profits, society profits.

When utilised as a context for teaching, social enterprise develops ‘soft skills’,

## Social enterprise activities at Glasgow Clyde College are helping to widen access to learning for students

resiliency and prepares students for the employment market.

At Glasgow Clyde College, staff from the Faculty of Access & Continuing Learning recognised that the social enterprise model had an important role to play in supporting the delivery of a more integrated, engaging and effective learning experience for students. The faculty runs a social enterprise café, two social enterprise printing ventures and an average of 20 standalone enterprise projects each year. Students have raised thousands of pounds which is donated to charity and spent on ensuring the sustainability and a legacy of enterprise activity across the faculty.

Over the past two years, faculty staff have been incorporating the social enterprise business model into many of their learning programmes, giving students of different ages and backgrounds the opportunity to think creatively about the world of work.

These innovative programmes are directly linked to training and job creation. For many of these students the experience offers a route into work through building confidence and self-esteem. They give students the opportunity to gain practical experience in a supportive environment while also developing their skills for learning, life and work.

Using enterprise as a teaching tool, and developing entrepreneurial thinking, cultivates the essential skills employers require. Enterprise activity has the additional benefit of developing: critical and creative thinking, confidence to explore ideas, resiliency, relationship building, the confidence to make things happen, take risks and to evaluate. Students who have taken part in enterprise designed learning have better personal statements, CVs and perform better at interview.

Successful student-led funding bids have recently resulted in a nomination for Youthbank Project of the Year. Youthbank provided funding for a group of employability students to produce sensory blankets for children at East Park children’s home. The blankets can be used to facilitate learning for children with additional needs. This represents an outstanding achievement and of great value to any potential employer looking for motivated, confident young people to join their company.

The college has opportunities for organisations and companies to sponsor some of the enterprise activities undertaken by the students and it welcomes any enquiries.

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