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Viewpoint

Recognising the inspirational teaching of Claire Craig

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Abstract

Sally is Senior Lecturer in Innovation and Professional Development and is the lead in rolling out the internal Higher Education Academy Recognition Scheme within Sheffield Hallam University. She is an active member of the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) Conference Committee and is undertaking her SEDA Senior Fellowship and Senior Fellowship of the HEA. She has undertaken research in the field of professional development and gained her PhD in Education Research from Lancaster University in 2010. In this viewpoint, Sally shares her thoughts about the teaching achievements of one of our colleagues, Claire Craig.

Claire is an inspirational teacher, committed professional with an international reputation, dedicated researcher, prolific author and patented inventor. She is also Sheffield Hallam University's first female National Teaching Fellow (NTF) and the first NTF from the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing. Claire's impact on her students is profound, the following statement from the student-informed Inspirational Teaching Awards summarises this:

Claire Craig has been inspirational, she has unfortunately given just two lectures on the course so far (I would nominate her to give more apart from I know she already works so hard in other areas) but each time, all students left her lecture completely enthusiastic and convinced that her topic was the career specialty [dementia] for them (the sign of a good lecturer!) We found her to be so refreshing and interesting, she relates theory to her everyday practice and makes her topic real to the students she teaches. Claire encourages me to think outside the box and makes me realise there are still amazingly good people left in the world who really want to make a difference to the quality of care people receive from health professionals.

Her teaching approach is defined by the successful collaboration between student and tutor, which has delivered outstanding results on taught programmes within the Faculty, in practice learning environments and on invitation-only events in Europe and North America. This has included work for the Scottish and Polish Governments on active ageing and dementia care.

Claire places great emphasis on the variability of students' learning needs based on the conviction that everyone can succeed. To this end, she has developed creative and innovative ways to engage students. These have ranged from initiatives in online role play and the use of games in learning through to the creation of real world learning opportunities in the UK and in Europe which have enabled students to navigate the tensions between theory and practice. In a recent initiative funded by a European Lifelong Learning Grant, students worked in a large multi-national company, which is a new and emerging area of practice for occupational therapy. Claire then wrote a set of international guidelines aimed at educationalists in Europe interested in developing similar initiatives.

Claire seeks to act as a role model to students so that they are able to recognise the importance of research within their practice. She holds a research post in [Lab4Living](#), an interdisciplinary collaboration between health and social care research and design, and is one of only a handful of lecturers at the university who has been able to work across two faculties. Of this, she has said, 'I want to demonstrate to students the opportunities that trans-disciplinary work offers and to be a role model for entrepreneurship and pioneering practice.'

Her achievements in teaching and research have been recognised externally:

- 2012 Fellow of the College of Occupational Therapists
- 2012 Nominated for Inspirational Teaching Award
- 2011 National Teaching Fellowship
- 2011 Inspirational Teaching Award
- 2010 Higher Education Academy Health Sciences and Practice Subject Centre Award for Teaching and Learning
- 2010 ROMPA Quality of Life Award
- 2010 Innovations Award: College of Occupational Therapists