



Te Whatu Kairangi Award

Category:

Advancing approaches to, and the outcomes of, work-based learning

Craig Goodhue

Lecturer

School of Trades and Services
Unitec | Te Pūkenga

“Advancing approaches to work-based learning and achieving excellent outcomes for apprentices and employers is the driver of my practice.”

Craig’s primary responsibility as a teacher of Trades and Services, Unitec Te Pūkenga, is the delivery, assessment and care of apprentices who study the New Zealand Certificate in Plumbing Level Four. This programme is a managed apprenticeship with mixed-mode learning, both on the job and on campus. Apprentices are employed in the plumbing industry.

Craig says he feels tremendous pride watching apprentices mature and become trades professionals. Feedback from employers is also rewarding, frequently acknowledging the significant value that Craig has brought to their businesses. The development of the next generation of industry leaders and future business owners is a key driver of Craig’s values and approaches to the delivery of vocational education and training.

Craig acknowledges that his apprentices’ experiences reflect his own trades journey. When he introduces himself to the learners, he shares his own learning and comprehension difficulties and how he has taught himself to learn, listen to, and accept advice. He discusses the fear he had of asking questions and looking stupid and how this set him back on his learning journey.

Unlike full-time study, the time Craig spends with the apprentices is fleeting, so he endeavours to continue to build the relationship throughout their time as an apprentice and well beyond. Staying in contact with apprentices, graduates and employers helps Craig to deliver education and training which is grounded in current practice and legislation. He has maintained strong industry ties and spends part of his professional development on job sites observing the apprentices and updating his knowledge about current industry practices.

He fosters a positive, inclusive learning environment that values everyone’s voice. This dramatically impacts learners that feel undervalued or isolated in their work environment – marginalisation in the workplace due to cultural background is a risk for apprentices. Craig promotes an open forum where apprentices are encouraged to ask questions, present ideas and not be fearful of making mistakes.

Feedback from students in Unitec surveys consistently shows that they rate Craig’s courses highly (e.g., overall course rating for Sanitary Plumbing was 9.8 out of 10) and

they appreciate his efforts to present complex technical subjects in manageable chunks of learning:

“Well-presented, informative class which was easy to understand.”

“Excellent. Well designed for us to follow, walked away with a good, strong knowledge of foul water systems.”

Craig knows that his approach makes a positive impact. Knowledge and new skills are taken back into the industry where apprentices demonstrate better understanding to their employers and work colleagues and share better-informed ideas, which builds their confidence and sense of ownership.

“I feel the lecturers have a massive impact on the students learning & you have some of the best teaching, this course in particular.” (Apprentice feedback)

Providing assistance outside of Unitec has an ongoing positive impact through developing peer relationships with graduates. When requested, Craig makes a point of visiting the graduates' sites to offer technical advice and support to both them and the employer. It is impressive to see the progress graduates have made in the work environment.

“I want to say thank you very much for teaching us (Kembla group). I started the plumbing course from level 3, and I have met a few teachers. You were the best teacher I have ever met. You were really professional, and I felt your passion to teach. Finally, I was a little worried at the start of the class because I was the only Korean. But you made a good atmosphere in the class to balance the cultural differences.” (Email from a recent graduate)

Craig moved into the education sector because he wanted to give something back to his community and industry. He possesses skills developed through his life experiences, in work and sports coaching, many of which he realised were transferable to his new career as a teacher.

In sport, his coaching philosophy has always focused on bringing out the best in people and playing to each other's strengths; if you want to win, maximising the potential of those in the team is essential.

Since becoming a teacher in 2019, Craig has built upon his coaching techniques and adapted his philosophies to his current team. When tasked with mentoring new work colleagues, he starts by highlighting their strengths to build confidence. He then demonstrates leadership by modelling best teaching and facilitation practice, signposting the path to success. He frequently encourages his peers to observe his teaching, building a culture of reflective practice.

Craig says that coaching sport at a high level requires consistent upskilling to remain successful – in the education sector, it is just as critical although the stakes and impact are far higher.

Craig targets his professional development to ensure he continues to build his teaching skills. His last badge (internal professional development award) demonstrates how he applies Unitec's bi-cultural (Māori) values to his teaching pedagogies. Craig recently completed the New Zealand Certificate in Adult and Tertiary Teaching (level 5) remotely at Southern Institute of Technology and has now progressed to level 6.

“I have had the pleasure of working with Craig in several papers in his adult education papers at the Southern Institute of Technology. During this time, he has always worked hard to engage with the often complex and demanding topics, submitting quality work which has continued to improve over time. Craig has real passion for his practice – this has consistently come across in all of his work that I have seen. His dedication to his work is impressive!” (Professor, Southern Institute of Technology)

Craig feels it has been invaluable to be able to articulate his pedagogies and better understand the ‘why’. Undertaking these teaching qualifications has taken him on a journey from a trades professional to an academic practitioner, and he is embracing this dual identity.

It was a highlight of his career when he won the Unitec Excellence in Teaching Award in 2022.

“I want to take the opportunity to congratulate you on your performance. Your leadership in learning and teaching is exemplary. I have had the privilege to observe your practice first-hand. How you engage in professional discussion with peers and learners is objective and focused on improving learning, quality of education and training and your capacity to look for self- improvement while supporting your team to move forward to deliver excellent outcomes. I’m so impressed with all of this within the first three years of your teaching career! ... I see you as a jewel in the school’s crown. To have such a committed academic professional, highly skilled tradesperson and empathic human being in this school is a privilege. Thank you for all your efforts!” (Unitec Head of School)
