

Regional Access to HE Awards 2010

1. Joint winner of the Access to HE Student Achievement Award

Winner - Miguel Matias-Ruiz

Nominated by – Elaine Hutchinson, Course Leader from City of Sunderland College

Miguel came to the college to do a level 2 OCN Pre Access Course and went onto achieve the Access to Higher Education Diploma.

Throughout this period of learning he has demonstrated exceptional focus and determination and achieved the highest results in the face of considerable obstacles. Miguel's first language is not English and he relocated here after marrying an English citizen who he met when she was on holiday in Spain. He works full time as a waiter, in the evenings and also has a family. Throughout both courses Miguel's commitment has been excellent. He has made hospital appointments for his youngest disabled child outside the course hours and has displayed a mature and conscientious approach to his studies. He has also supported other students when they have needed help. He is extraordinary.

Miguel is currently studying on a Cert. Ed. course which will allow him to teach Spanish in future. He is an outstanding student and currently undertaking a placement at Park View Secondary School in Chester-le-Street. Miguel truly has a vision for his future and has demonstrated his determination to achieve.

2. Joint winner of the Access to HE Student Achievement Award

Winner – Tracy Lamont

Nominated by – Elaine Allcock, Course Leader from Darlington College

Tracy came onto the Access to HE Diploma determined to move her life forward and to benefit her young family. Along the way she has faced many obstacles and personal trauma but this never impacted on her dedication and commitment to the course; she always maintained her focus and this has driven her to succeed; she was indeed a model student.

Tracy is a natural academic and absorbs information easily. She was extremely focused and worked very hard on assessments and set herself a high standard. She also gave time and help to others who found the topics harder and was often seen in the resource centre explaining concepts to peers. Tracy has a maturity beyond her years and has built sound friendships with all members of the group; she is a natural communicator and a fantastic leveller.

Tracy is now undertaking a foundation to medicine degree at Durham University.

3. Winner of the Access to HE Student Champion – in recognition of her achievement on the course and on-going commitment to helping others to succeed.

Winner – Michelle Jacobs

Nominated by – Anne Clark, Course Leader from Redcar and Cleveland College

Having successfully achieved a high standard on the OCN Pre Access Course, Michelle progressed to the Access to Higher Education Diploma in Social Science and Humanities. She came as a 21 year old single mother of a little boy.

In November her son became ill, but Michelle continued her studies working from home with support from the college staff. Despite this difficult start Michelle achieved very high standards in her work and then began to support and motivate other students who were finding the course challenging. She even put on revision sessions before assignments to help other students; this was collaborative learning at its best.

Michelle is now studying for her B.Sc. Psychology Honours Degree at Teesside University where she has impressed her tutors with her performance. Having won Access Student of the year at Redcar and Cleveland College – she serves as an ambassador for the College and OCN.

She has returned to Redcar and Cleveland as a college mentor supporting Access students at risk of withdrawing. This has had an impressive impact on retention rates. Michelle is now well on the way to becoming an Educational Psychologist. She is a fantastic ambassador for Access to HE as she encompasses the philosophy of widening participation for all to reach their full potential, which Michelle is doing.

4. Joint winner of the Innovation in Access to HE Award

Winner – Peter Chleboun, Course Leader for Access to HE Diploma in Engineering at Newcastle College

Nominated by – David Cooke from Newcastle College (not attending Forum)

Peter is truly committed to an alternative route for students wishing to progress to Higher Education. His curriculum planning is focused and innovative and through this he became involved in the QAA grading consultation process early on. He made significant contributions to the development of the national model, particularly in relation to numerical marking, and has been bold in his efforts to 'test the system' in order to get the best possible assessment experience for students; he is now in the process of developing on-line testing models. Peter has also been extremely helpful to the OCN Access Team in helping to develop grading guidance documentation for providers in the region.

Peter has established excellent working relationships with local universities and he is not scared to promote the need for academic excellence and to stretch and challenge students to achieve in areas they might not have felt possible before.

5. Joint winners of the Innovation in Access to HE Award

Winners – The Access to HE Course Team from Redcar and Cleveland College (Course Leader is Angela Ince)

Nominated by - Angela Shaw, Education Advisor from Redcar and Cleveland College

The team at Redcar and Cleveland College felt the standard BKSB initial assessment used in college was giving limited information regarding levels of English skills, so the team devised an alternative assessment including formal and creative writing – a simple but powerful tool in identifying what learners can do and what needs to be developed. This was particularly important for learners whose first language was not English so that the college could respond constructively to promote Equality and Diversity and provide focused and targeted individual support from the outset. The Access Diploma gives opportunities and a second chance for many learners and innovation in initial assessment and the development and support for English skills underpins the achievement of all major subjects and effective progression. This has improved learner experience and widened participation. The excellent resources and increasing use of e-technologies including e-portfolios and Inspirations software for mind-maps also reflect the expertise of this team and the commitment to doing things differently when this makes it better whilst maintaining best practice from traditional methods, academic specialist expertise and years of valuable experience.

6. Winner of the City of Sunderland College 'ITQ Award for Embracing Technology'

Winner – Jennie Lawson, Access to HE Manager OCN North East Region

Nominated by – Carol Baker - Assessor, Business Solutions, City of Sunderland College

Quote from Carol Baker,

“Jennie's success in the "ITQ Award for Embracing Technology" was due to her meticulous planning and vision, which she demonstrated by efficiently combining resources to disseminate information and to collate contributions from colleagues, learners and professionals. She did this by using the interactive whiteboard to deliver her presentation, organise problem solving activities and capturing participants' contributions, which she emailed to them for review.”