University of Birmingham

Mrs Helen Timmins (nee Blackmore)

Senior Teacher

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About

Helen Timmins is senior teacher for the Interactive Studies Unit within the department of Primary Care Clinical Sciences.

Using role play and simulation, Helen is involved in the teaching and assessment of clinical communication skills at both undergraduate and post graduate level.

She has also trained to assist in the teaching and assessment of clinical examination skills at undergraduate level having recently trained as an Associate Clinical Educator with Professor Jim Parle.

Helen strives to teach in an engaging and thought provoking manner and seeks to integrate clinical examination and communication skills teaching through simulation wherever possible.

Alongside her main teaching responsibilities (MBChB Clinical Communication Years 1 & 2) Helen recruits and trains all the role players/simulated patients for the Interactive Studies Unit team and regularly attends conferences (ASPiH, SPOTS) to further her understanding and knowledge of human simulation.

Qualifications

- B.A (hons) Drama, University of Northumbria 1997

Biography

Helen has had a special interest in the use of theatre as a learning tool from a young age. After graduating from University in 1997 she began her career working as a teacher/actor for Birmingham based Theatre in Education Company 'Language Alive!' As a core company member Helen was responsible for devising and delivering interactive Theatre in Education programmes for young people aged between 4 and 18. After four years Helen left Language Alive! to pursue a freelance career where she used her Applied Theatre skills and experience to secure a diverse range of work.

Her most notable freelance work includes 'Headspin' a teaching resource that uses drama to look at countering stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness (NZ Mental health Foundation), 'Ads Up' a sexual health awareness & breastfeeding campaign with young mums (Hi8us Media), 'Diversity Matters' Equality & Diversity Training for Birmingham City Council Employees (Dramatic Solutions Ltd) and 'The Experiment' an interactive six week drama around ethics and genetics for year nine pupils (Creative Partnerships).

Helen is a firm believer in the power of using drama as a learning method and it is this belief that led her to become a role player for the Interactive Studies Unit (ISU) working with medical and dental students. After four years of role playing she was keen to take up a more permanent role within the teaching team and applied for the post of senior teacher.

Helen is keen to further employ her applied theatre methodology to medical education and strives to find new and innovative ways to engage the health care professionals of the future.

Teaching

- **Medicine and Surgery MBChB** (/undergraduate/courses/med/medicine.aspx)
- **Medicine and Surgery MBChB Graduate Entry Course** (/undergraduate/courses/med/medicine-grad-entry.aspx)
- **Dental Surgery BDS** (/undergraduate/courses/med/dental-surgery.aspx)
- Physician Assistant Programme
- Pharmacy MPharm

Other activities

Helen is the Parent Support Coordinator for Halesowen and Stourbridge branch of the NCT (National Childbirth Trust). In her role she works to provide groups, events, activities and support to local parents. Her special interests lie in helping women to have homebirths and in helping mums overcome post natal depression.

Publications

Dr. O'Connor, P & Blackmore, H (2005). Headspin – A Mental Health Education Resource for Senior Students. Published by Mental Health Foundation New Zealand.

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