

## *Craig Newell*

*(March 28, 1950 – March 27, 2008)*



Craig Newell, a well loved friend, participant in, and supporter of *Complicity* and its founding organization, Complexity Science and Educational Research (CSER), passed away on March 27th, 2008 due to esophageal and stomach cancer. Craig touched the lives of many people—students, colleagues, friends, family—and will certainly live on through the lives of all those he influenced.

His lifelong passion for mathematics and education, his engaging manner, excellence in teaching and thoughtful philosophical approach inspired his students to be able not only to do math but also love it. He also had a passion for sports where the teacher came out in him again as he coached generations of kids in track and field and cross country. A tribute to Craig, by

one of his former student, follows this article.

With more than twenty-eight years of teaching mathematics and other subjects in high school classrooms, and at an age where others retired to travel or pursue hobbies, Craig's love of education was such that he retired to pursue a Doctorate in Education at Simon Fraser University (SFU). The work of Brent Davis and Dennis Sumara, in particular, captured Craig's interest and encouraged his doctoral study applications of Complexity Theory to mathematics education. Doctoral study, however, did not preclude a travel adventure with kayaking and zip-lining in Costa Rica as learning experiences, for Craig, were not limited to the classroom but came in many wonderful forms.

Craig was attracted to the SFU doctoral program, in particular, because of his deep conviction regarding the interdisciplinary nature of learning. He was delighted that the

cohort studied together regardless of speciality and that they hosted the *Education With/Out Borders* conference at SFU in 2007 where he delivered a paper which drew on complexity science and educational research.”<sup>1</sup> Just two months prior to his death Craig presented what was to be his final public paper<sup>2</sup> and participated in the Plenary Panel of the 2008 Complexity Science and Education Research Conference in Athens, Georgia.<sup>3</sup>

### The Craig Newell Memorial Scholarship

As it pleased him greatly to share his passion for mathematics and education with others as a teacher/mentor/friend, a fund and scholarship has been established—*The Craig Newell Memorial Mathematics Education Scholarship*<sup>4</sup>—to continue his work and provide financial support for graduate students at Simon Fraser University who are pursuing, or intend to pursue a graduate degree in math education with a particular emphasis on using philosophical approaches to engage new ways of thinking that are of practical relevance for improving the teaching and learning of mathematics.<sup>2</sup>

The fund for this scholarship is now over \$18,000 just short of its goal of \$20,000 and any donations would be gratefully received. Those interested in enabling Craig’s lifelong work and interest in mathematics education to continue, may donate to *The Craig Newell Memorial Mathematics Education Fund*<sup>2</sup> at Simon Fraser University.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The abstract to this paper, entitled “*The class as a learning entity (complex adaptive system): An idea from complexity science and educational research*,” may be accessed here:

<http://journals.sfu.ca/sfuier/index.php/sfuier/article/view/31>.

<sup>2</sup> Craig spoke annually at the British Columbia Association of Math Teachers conference and often presented at other conferences in between.

<sup>3</sup> This paper, entitled “*The Use of Mathematical Tropes in Complexivist Accounts*” may be accessed here:

<http://www.complexityandeducation.ualberta.ca/conference.htm>

<sup>4</sup> For more information about the Craig Newell scholarship fund see:

[http://www.educ.sfu.ca/news/Newell\\_Scholarship.html](http://www.educ.sfu.ca/news/Newell_Scholarship.html)

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