

CarolAnn Fletcher

02 March 2014

**My TasTAFE story and dream from a student's point of view**

My journey with TasTAFE started in 2012 when I was accepted into the Certificate III in Aged Care & Certificate III in Home and Community Care course (<https://cis.tastafe.tas.edu.au/Course.aspx?ItmId=4432>) after finally becoming a permanent Australian resident. I had moved from the States to Tasmania in 2008 and had to wait until I was permanent resident to be able to go to school or work. Prior to moving to Tasmania, I had worked as part of a team to care for an elderly client who had dementia in her home and just loved the work of helping to care for her. So I was happy to find out that there was an aged care & home and community course offered at my local TasTAFE that I could apply to take and was absolutely thrilled to be accepted into the course soon after applying.

I really enjoyed the aged care course and very much appreciated how supportive my teachers and the staff were as I was taking the course. Unfortunately, as it turned out in the end age care was not for me except in terms of me being a support to elderly residents as community visitor volunteer as a hospice volunteer because I loved to talk to the residents and spend time with them.

My aged care teachers and their workforce leader were again very supportive of me even though the age care field was not the right one for me and tried to see what they could do to help redirect me.

The end result was that my aged care teacher suggested that I try to take the Community Services course that is offered at TasTAFE and also felt that learning more about communication skills would be beneficial for me.

So my teacher's suggestion of learning more about communication skills led me to seriously consider taking a step back and applying for the Certificate II in Skills for Work and Training course. Thankfully, I was accepted into the course and found it to be a very valuable course in helping me to understand Australian's work culture, to be better prepared for future prac work experience and how to communicate with others in more effective ways which were all very valuable, needed and useful things I needed to learn if I ever was going to be a productive worker in Tasmania, which I wanted to be.

Also while taking the Certificate II in Skills for Work and Training course, I got an opportunity to meet and interact with migrants from the TasTAFE adult migrant class who came to visit our class one day. This particular event turned out to be a life changing experience because sometime after the migrants visited our class and after I had explored several possible career paths, I decided that I wanted to become a TasTAFE teacher and gain the qualifications and experience to be either a Foundational TasTAFE/LINC teacher, community services teacher or an adult migrant English teacher. Soon after starting the Certificate II in Skills for Work and Training, I applied for Australian citizenship and passed the citizenship test. Then on Australia Day, the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2013, I publically gave my citizenship pledge in front of hundreds of people at the Central Coast Council Australia Day celebration at Anzac Park.

Then after I completed and passed the Certificate II in Skills for Work and Training

[https://www.tastafe.tas.edu.au/documentcentre/Documents/NW\\_Foundation\\_Flyer\\_Connect\\_Bur.pdf](https://www.tastafe.tas.edu.au/documentcentre/Documents/NW_Foundation_Flyer_Connect_Bur.pdf)), I applied and was accepted into the Vocational and Community Engagement/Mentoring course (<https://cis.tastafe.tas.edu.au/Course.aspx?ItmId=4425>) that was taught by my Skills for Work and Training teacher.

While taking the course, my teacher allowed me to help mentor two automotive students in literacy and maths. My teacher's support and belief that I could help these students and make a real difference in their lives was a wonderful encouragement to me.

Soon after I started mentoring the automotive students, I received a call from the Burnie adult migrant English teacher who asked me if I would like to volunteer for her class and help her with her students to which I happily said yes. I started working with her adult migrant class on Harmony Day 2013 and continued to work with her students throughout the year. About halfway through the year, the Burnie adult migrant teacher suggested that I call and talk to the Devonport adult migrant English teacher and coordinator and see if she would like me to work with her in order to observe and learn different teaching styles. So by August of 2013, I was working as adult migrant English volunteer in both the Devonport and Burnie TasTAFE campuses and gaining a lot of valuable experience as a potential teacher.

This is real practical work experience that I would have never had the opportunity to do in the States as in the States the emphasis is much more on theory than it is in the practical application of theory.

Also prior to completing and passing the mentoring course I was taking, I had been accepted into the Certificate III in Community Services Work Flexible delivery course (<https://cis.tastafe.tas.edu.au/Course.aspx?ItmId=4433>) which I had been looking forward to taking since I took the aged care course. The two teachers who ran the course at different times were both very supportive of me and the second teacher I had for this course helped me to set up my prac at the Burnie LINC as a literacy volunteer and tutor. The second teacher was also very supportive of me taking a Certificate IV Community Services Literacy and Numeracy Volunteer Tutor Skill Set (<https://cis.tastafe.tas.edu.au/Course.aspx?ItmId=4377>) that was offered through the Burnie LINC and TasTAFE that I wanted to take as part of my pathway to becoming a TasTAFE teacher.

After I was told by my Community Services teacher that I passed my Certificate III course, my LINC manager talked to me about what I needed to do to put my details on the LINC and TasTAFE employment register in order to help me be able to get the possibility of paid work which is an opportunity that I would have never had if I had not taken the Certificate III in Community Services course at TasTAFE.

The next course I plan to take at TasTAFE is the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment course (<https://cis.tastafe.tas.edu.au/Course.aspx?ItmId=4454>) which once I complete and pass will allow me to teach at TasTAFE in the future, which is a future I am very much looking forward to.

These courses I have taken at TasTAFE have also been thankfully affordable which I am very thankful for because if these courses would have been expensive, I would not have the opportunities that I have now to possibly secure paid work in the future as a TasTAFE VET Student Assistant or as a Participation Assistant tutor.

I could not be more grateful to each and every one of my TasTAFE teachers and very helpful and supportive TasTAFE staff for their support, help and belief in me.

I also could not be more grateful to both of the TasTAFE adult migrant English teachers for giving me the opportunity to be a volunteer and work with their students in order to help me start to learn how to link theory with practice in practical, relevant and meaningful ways to students as I gain my qualifications to become a TasTAFE/LINC teacher.

With TasTAFE my dream job of becoming a TasTAFE/LINC teacher who can then assist other students in realising and achieving their dreams is a reality that is now definitely within my reach. With the continued help of the TasTAFE teachers and staff, it is a dream that I am confident I will achieve and that I will thrive as a TasTAFE/LINC teacher.

