

Lecturer/Professional Development Officer with the Adult Migrant English Program at TAFE – Claire, (Age 31 – 50)

Q1: What is your current job/career?

Lecturer/Professional Development Officer with the Adult Migrant English Program at Central TAFE

Q2: Why did you choose your job/career? - did you have a plan? - what resources if any did you use?

Teaching was actually not something I chose, I couldn't decide what else to do with my BA so I completed a Diploma in Secondary Education at the age of 27. But the interesting path that led me to this point was quite varied. I had many interesting jobs starting with Hospitality - waitressing, barrista, cocktail bar person, supervisor, and trainer. Hospitality kept me her willing victim from the age of 17 to until only about 3 years ago when I finally sent my long kiss goodnight. I'm still in contact with the restaurant I worked for; we had a great working relationship and a great friendship too. The other career mistress I courted was retail; I worked in many shops for years, starting at the fresh age of sixteen in a dance wear shop in Subiaco Markets! I eventually rose to be assistant manager of a fashion department with Aherns and also Just Jeans. When I left retail to travel the world I didn't expect to be working in a Casino when I got back to Perth. I enjoyed the exciting and unique experience of being a croupier at Burswood for 2 years, during which time I acquired the nickname of 'Speedy' and 'Killer' because of my ability to win consistently - a very interesting job indeed. But the fast-lane was a little hectic for me and after flirting with hospitality and retail again briefly I finally settled on up-skilling myself so that I might actually use THAT English degree finally. My plan was to teach ESL and travel to Japan, but a baby changed my direction somewhat and after working for a private International English College I eventually found my way to TAFE. It was actually the mother of one of my many hospitality trainees that encouraged me to take this path, and we are now colleagues at the same campus. I have discovered a wonderful department of compassionate, positive and sharing people at the AMEP. We teach immigrants and refugees. Our students are so very grateful and delightful; it's such a rewarding job in many ways. I feel privileged to be part of this team.

Q3: How would you like your job/career to develop and what do you need to do to make the change?

I'm really happy in my new role as PD officer, it's very varied and multi-tasking in nature; I see myself perhaps branching out more in this field, and not necessarily returning to face-to-face teaching. My plan is to gain more experience in this role, complete some acting Management roles and see what opportunities develop. I may need to study some more, and that's ok, I'm prepared to re-skill again! Perhaps some business studies might be good, or management. I'm a great believer in giving 150% and the rest will fall into place. Every job I've had they've begged me not to leave and welcomed me back with open arms. As far as TAFE goes, I'm not going anywhere, I'm very happy here.

Q4: When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a dancer or an actress - fervently and passionately and I did pursue both of these in my younger days until I was talked into completing an English Degree. There were three things I swore I'd never do when I was at school: Work in an office, Teach and be a Checkout chic. My father is a trainer, my brother is a teacher, no surprises I ended up in that field also.

Q5: What challenges do you need to overcome to "get the life you love"?

One of the big challenges in my life has been letting go of the thought that perhaps Nicole Kidman took my spot on the world Media stage - we're the same age, the same height and we're both Australian! But seriously I have been involved in thespian projects and I have only recently stopped dancing. Now I'm so very happy to have had the opportunity to help other people live more fulfilled lives, to be humbled by the struggles and suffering of so many is a magical thing. When people ask me how long I've been a teacher I laugh because they have no idea how many other industries I've been a part of - teaching for me is quite new, relatively speaking. In fact I think all that other work experience has given me the ability to relate to people from all walks of life - some of my students work in factories, some are cleaners, some are dishwashers. I can say I've done all of these things and I understand the reality of hard work. I wake up each day looking forward to going to work, that is a gift. I'm secure in the knowledge I'm living the life I love.