

Tharuka Udawatta

Country: Sri Lanka

Course: Diploma of Children's Services

Institute: TAFE NSW - Western Sydney Institute, Nepean College



Tharuka Udawatta travelled from her native Sri Lanka to study the Diploma of Children's Services at TAFE NSW - Western Sydney Institute, Nepean College.

It was the exceptional reputation of TAFE NSW as a quality education provider and the Diploma-to-Degree (D2D) university pathway opportunities that TAFE NSW provides which attracted Tharuka to Nepean College, which has its own childcare centre.

The Professional Experience component of the course provides students with practical experience working with pre-school children and opportunities to apply classroom learning in real and simulated workplaces.

Having completed her diploma, she is now studying a degree in Children's Services at the Penrith Campus of the University of Western Sydney.

"I'm enrolled in the Bachelor of Early Childhood studies at the University of Western Sydney and, because of my TAFE NSW studies, I only have one year to complete the bachelor program," Tharuka said. "I would like to eventually become a primary school teacher."

As she continues her studies and completes her university qualifications, Tharuka works part-time at the childcare centre at Nepean College.

"I did work experience in this centre as part of my diploma studies," Tharuka said. "After I finished my work experience, the director of the childcare centre offered me part-time work for two days a week. I'm still working at the centre and really love it." Tharuka reflects on her time spent studying at TAFE NSW Nepean College positively.

"The support of the teachers really helped me. Teachers spent time after class to make sure that assessment tasks were understood and explained definitions to me," Tharuka said. "There was a lot of pressure in the beginning but, with the help and assistance of the teachers, I gained confidence throughout the semester. I even moved during my course to be closer to the college."

Tharuka offers positive words of advice to others thinking of following her lead. "Take the challenge! It's not easy in the beginning, but you won't regret it in the future. Don't give up. Face any obstacles that you may encounter. You'll benefit from all the facilities that TAFE NSW offers. I have made lifelong friends. The experience will make you a stronger person and you will learn from it."