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DUNDEE AND ANGUS
COLLEGE

Dorota Przeworowska

A D&A Spotlight Interview

From ESOL to Early Years: Dorota's Incredible Journey of Determination, Learning and Leadership.

Meet Dorota Przeworowska, a Nursery Team Leader whose journey from Dundee and Angus College's ESOL classes to leadership in early years embodies the transformative power of education and determination.

When you were younger, what did you dream of doing as a job?

"I was 18 when I realised, I would like to work in the care sector. When I finished High school, I applied to study social work. Throughout my studies and placements, I realised that I would like to work with children. I studied part-time, mainly weekends because I also had a full-time job as an administrative officer at a GP practice. There were not many opportunities for me to get a childcare job at the time, so I continued working whilst I was studying. In 2007 after I had my second child I moved to Scotland, in the first year I dedicated my time to being a full-time mum, looking after my 4-month-old daughter and 4-year-old son. My goal though, was to get into childcare; however, I didn't speak English, so my short-term aim was to learn English to be able to communicate."

Can you share a bit about yourself and what you were up to when you first joined D&A?

"When I joined college in 2009, it was Angus college at that time, my focus was to learn English, so I started my journey by enrolling in the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) class."

I was about to turn 30 years old at the time and I was at the beginning of my journey, again.

I knew I needed to learn English if I want to stay in Scotland long term, not only for myself but also to be able to support my family."

Thinking about your time at D&A, what are some standout moments or experiences that you still carry with you?

"Learning to speak a different language was never easy for me, but since I joined the college, I know

that I can. The confidence that other people have given me, especially the lecturers, it was very motivating, and I really believed that I could and did. I would like to mention, Linda Archibald, she was the greatest support at the beginning of my journey, when I was not only learning English but also thinking about my next steps. She was not only the English tutor, but also a mentor who listened to me and guided me. I must say that studying here in Scotland was completely new to me, everything was new. I could mention all the knowledge and skills I gained through the years of studying as this helped me to pursue my career in childcare, however the moments I will always remember and carry with me is the support and encouragement from others. Thinking of this, I always try to share and give the same back to others."

A few months after I started college, my daughter joined Helping Hands Nursery, which was an ideal situation for me and my family. Having such fantastic childcare for my child, helped me to make my decision to continue studying. After a year of studying English, I applied for the NC childcare and then a year after that for the HNC, hoping this would help me to start my career in childcare."

How did your experiences at D&A lay the pathway for your career? Are there any classes or staff that set you on your path?

"As I mentioned before, Linda was the person who was a great mentor to me in my early steps into the College. Steph the nursery manager and the nursery team were also a great inspiration to me, their knowledge and passion gave me motivation to be as best as I could be to get there too. Gillian Groves was my course leader and lecturer through my NC, HNC and PDA and I will always remember her as a person who wanted all the students to do well. I could list so many lecturers over my 4.5 years of studying, their support, encouragement, and their passion definitely set me well on the path to pursue my career in childcare."

What were the first steps you took after finishing your course, and how did your time here shape your career choices?

“Once I completed my HNC in 2012 I applied for a job in private sector, and I have worked continuously since. My first role was an Early Years Practitioner, and I always knew I would like to do more and to progress into a leadership role.”

Where has your career taken you since those early days?

“As I mentioned before, I started working in 2012 and within a year, I decided to apply for the PDA Childhood Practice and started studying again. In 2013 I was offered a Deputy manager role within a new setting. In 2016, I was then offered the opportunity to be the manager of a new nursery that was opening in Dundee. It was such a stressful but exciting time. I felt that I could apply all of the learning and skills I had gained over the years of studying.

In 2018 I joined a bigger setting and worked there until January 2023. Any professional working within the childcare sector is required to be registered with SSSC (Scottish Social Services Council), and one of the requirements to be registered as a manager is to have or work towards the BA childhood practice. I had previously completed the PDA level 8 and SVQ level 4 which gave me enough credits to jump into level 9, so in 2021 I went to university. In June 2023, I completed the BA childhood practice.

Helping Hands Nursery was always the setting I followed on social media. Not only because my daughter had attended it, but because it is a fantastic setting where staff are providing a great childcare experience for children. When I saw that they were looking for a team leader, I didn't think twice, I applied straight away and here I am. I am now an Early Years Team leader of Helping Hands Nursery, and it has been a year since I joined this fantastic setting and I am so happy to be back at college, as a staff member this time.”

Looking at your journey so far, what are some moments or accomplishments that make you particularly proud?

“Each stage of my journey has made me proud but specifically the completion of PDA. Studying in a different language was not easy and when I was working towards my PDA, I was at the stage when academic writing was a challenge. I didn't give up

and I am so glad as it gave me the knowledge and confidence to become a more confident leader. I am passionate about working with children and I am so proud to be back at college, the place where it all started.”

If you could share a piece of advice with current students based on your experiences, what would it be?

“Believe in yourself and do not give up. If you experience any dip, stick in, and ask for help! The lecturers want you all to do well.

Someone once said to me, ‘There are no problems, only solutions’, and it is true. I try to keep this in mind when I am stuck, and it always works.

What are your hopes for the future?

“I would like to continue to be successful in leading Helping Hands Nursery, offering high standards childcare to children and their families. The childcare sector is very fragile at the moment with nurseries being short staffed, so I would like to inspire and encourage others to join the childcare sector. It is such a rewarding job! I would like to get into lecturing in the future to share my experiences and knowledge with people who would like to work with children. I really hope that through my passion and love for childcare, I can inspire others and make a difference.



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