

NQT Marina Fox

When I graduated from my undergraduate degree, if someone had told me that in five years time, I would be teaching Modern Languages in a secondary school, I would have laughed and replied, 'No way - not me!'. Yet, here I am doing exactly that.

In 2000, I graduated from Glasgow University with a MA (Hons) degree in French and Hispanic Studies. I had no idea what I wanted to do - apart from something that involved the languages that I had studied. So, like numerous other Languages graduates I went down the dreaded call centre path. Even though I was using my languages, I found the job dull, mind numbing and unfulfilling. Surely after having spent 5 years studying there must be more to this, I thought. I decided then that I wanted to go abroad! I took my qualification in teaching English as a foreign language and set off for Spain where I worked in a Private English Academy teaching a variety of different age groups. However, when I eventually returned back to the UK, I somehow managed to find a job working for a multi-national company using my languages. It may have sounded very glamorous to others, however, in reality it was definitely not. The words - dull, boring and soul destroying come to mind. I was 25 at this stage and thought that I really should start to think seriously about what I really wanted to do...then, someone suggested Teacher Training. It made so much sense. I thought of what I enjoy and had enjoyed doing in the past, which was using my languages and teaching. So, put them together and what do you get? A Modern Languages teacher! And, here I am in my probation year finally feeling that I am doing something worthwhile and really enjoying my job, for the first time ever!

As a student on the Teacher Training course we were taught how to plan lessons, motivate young learners and stimulate them. At the time I remember I wished that there had been more guidance on behavioural issues and how to deal with discipline problems. However, I now feel that it is something that cannot be taught. The more you teach, the more you learn how to deal with different scenarios.

As a probationer I am given enormous support, especially within my own department. I meet with my mentor, who is my Head of Department, every one to two weeks to discuss any issues that I may have, such as curriculum issues, report writing, parents evenings, lesson planning and any problems that I may encounter. As a student teacher, we discussed these issues but not in great depth. It was a steep learning curve, as is my probation year right now. Also, the local authority provides special days exclusively for probationers on a variety of topics that may eventually enhance our quality of teaching. Some of the topics that have been covered are: Enterprise in education, the needs of autistic and dyslexic children, behaviour management and assertive discipline, to name a few.

Often, the media and society portray a negative image of young people and of course you have the odd child that can be problematic, however the majority of children are great. Therefore, I would encourage people who are thinking of starting a career in teaching to do it. Yes, it is hard work, but it is very rewarding and I have and still am thoroughly enjoying it.