

Confidence to explore new opportunities

Lucia Diez speaks of her experience with the Professional Speaking course.

Lucia Diez gained the Advanced Certificate in Professional Speaking with Distinction in August 2020. Emma Carpenter reached out to her to ask her about her experience of the programme, how she came to find out about it, what the benefits have been, and if she has any advice for others.

“When I arrived in Rotorua I joined the Rotorua Multicultural Council and was part of the first Women’s Wellbeing Programme for migrants. I found it so useful and enjoyed having time to practise my English so much that as soon as I heard about the Professional Speaking course, I decided to sign up and took my partner Juan with me.

“When I first arrived in New Zealand, I struggled to find a job in healthcare because my qualifications aren’t directly transferrable. So I worked in customer service and joined the course in the meantime.

“During the course, I got an interview with the Lakes District Health Board to work in the recently created Managed Isolation Facilities and I was offered a job as a wellbeing navigator.”

“It’s been almost a year since I’ve started working as part of this massive operation to protect the team of five million and the experience has definitely been rewarding. I talk with all the guests that come to stay at our MIFs in Rotorua and help them transition into the country; whether they are coming back after many years of living overseas or to see a sick relative, they all have a different story to share and I’m there to support them.

“I really enjoy that I get to work along with people from different organisations (New Zealand Defense Force, Lakes DHB, MBIE) daily and share my unique point of view as a migrant and healthcare professional.”

What had you been doing before the course?

“Back in Argentina, I studied Medicine and then specialised in paediatrics to become a children’s doctor. I used to work at the Children’s Hospital in Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, looking after my own patients.”

What was your experience of the course?

“I liked that the course was structured in a way we had to commit to speaking in front of an audience every class. That definitely gave me the confidence to take my English skills to the next level. I also enjoyed having a space to have professional conversations about more academic topics; since I didn’t have the opportunity to speak English in a work environment.”

What are some of the ways the course has benefitted you?

“The course gave me more confidence to speak to an audience; it taught me very useful strategies to catch their attention and interact during my speech to keep them interested in what I’m saying. It allowed me to make more structured presentations aimed to showcase a specific point of view or idea. I found it particularly useful that I got to have one on one conversations with the instructor who told me how to make my speech more clear based on my accent and my individual way of pronouncing some sounds. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to get such personalised mentoring.”

What is the most important aspect of the course, in your opinion?

“I think the social aspect of the course is really important because most of us weren’t exposed to having to speak in front of several people professionally. We built a group where we helped each other overcome the fear of standing in front of an audience. I believe my course mates were helpful constructive critics and, at the same time, my most enthusiastic supporters.”

What advice would you give to others considering the course?

“Go for it! This is a course that will teach you a set of skills that are transferable to any language and any professional setting. I would also advise them to speak up and own their mistakes because that’s the only way to learn a new language.”



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- Lucia Diez

We could not be more thrilled with this success story – if you have one you would like to share, please send it through to the Speech NZ National Office at info@speechnz.co.nz

We have more free Professional Speaking for Migrants courses coming up in 2021. Contact National Office for information. The next course starts in Rotorua on 10 June 2021.