

## Encouraging others to pursue ASB Diploma

Madilyn Coulson commends the diploma for laying the groundwork for her later studies.

*Madilyn Coulson is in her third and final year of a Bachelor of Arts degree with a double major in Employment Relations, Organisational studies and sociology. She completed her ASB diploma in teaching Speech and Drama in her final years of high school.*

*Emma Carpenter reached out to her to ask her about her experience with Speech NZ, how she came to get started, what impact it has had on her life, and if she has any advice for others.*

"I started going to drama lessons at Tall Poppies Group when I was 7 years old. I think it was the same year that I began my Speech NZ grade exams. I was 17 years old when I started my ASB diploma in teaching speech and drama and by that stage, I had completed up to my grade 7 exams. I completed my diploma whilst in my final 2 years of high school. I was privileged to be able to practice what I was learning by being employed as a speech and drama teacher at Tall Poppies. Through this role, I was able to prepare my own students for their grade 3 and 4 exams with Speech NZ."

"After finishing my diploma and high school, I moved up to Auckland to complete my university studies. I used my diploma and my experience with kids to get my part-time job. With this company, I have managed an after-school care site, written a drama curriculum and implemented it in the classroom, and directed an end of year show for the kids! It has assisted me in activity planning for my site and helped me to connect with our wider community through performance."

### What was your overall experience of the programme?

"I really enjoyed the programme. It challenged me to think critically and helped to prepare me for my university studies."

### What are some of the ways the programme has benefited you? What doors has it opened/what confidence has it given you, etc?

"It helped to build my confidence and opened my eyes to many different areas from Shakespeare to voice production, and teaching to the New Zealand influence on theatre and poetry. I am now more than capable of speaking in public and improvising when something doesn't go according to plan. I have a more critical lens of the arts and a brilliant appreciation for theatre."

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

"I would say that the most important part of the programme is the connection to Aotearoa. The curriculum allows you to study New Zealand poetry, plays, theatre companies, and much more. Looking at case studies of New Zealand artists and understanding the effects that their work has had makes the course highly relevant. It is interdisciplinary and provides knowledge in areas such as history, theatre, education, biology, social studies, and literature. It pushes you to think analytically about the performance arts and provides a wider context when watching a performance."

### What advice would you give to others considering the course?

"My advice to anyone looking to complete the ASB Diploma in Teaching Speech and Drama would be to challenge yourself, step outside of your comfort zone and explore things further. Learning about the social and historical context, understanding different choices made by artists and questioning things creates a brilliant impact when furthering your studies later on."

Also, teaching other people helps you to understand something more yourself, so don't be afraid to pull a family member aside and attempt to explain a concept to them. You will quickly see if there are any gaps in your knowledge so that you can confidently fill them."



"[The ASB Diploma] challenged me to think critically and helped to prepare me for my university studies."

- Madilyn Coulson

*We are so thrilled with this success story – congratulations on your achievements Madilyn!*

*If you have a success story you would like to share with us, or know of someone who does, please get in touch with the National office at 04 498 9660 or [info@speechnz.co.nz](mailto:info@speechnz.co.nz)*