

TRAINING WHILE
TEACHING ADDS UP
WELL FOR FFION.

Case study Ffion Pennant



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Considering she is about to begin teaching Mathematics to secondary school students in Dolgellau, it is strange to think that Ffion Pennant from Gwynedd wasn't keen at all on the subject for much of her school days.

But that all changed in her sixth form college where she was influenced greatly by her Mathematics teacher, who had so much passion for the subject that he instilled it into all of his students.

"That is probably where I began thinking about the possibility of teaching as a career – seeing his love for a subject and how he was going to so much effort to transfer that knowledge to his students - and the pleasure that gave him. I thought this is great – and my mind was made up – Maths was my future!"

Ffion went on to study at Aberystwyth University and during her third year applied to do a PGCE course in order to achieve her aspiration to become a teacher. During her final year, however, she suffered from bouts of anxiety, and in order to improve her mental health, decided to take a break from her studies.

"I decided to focus my energy elsewhere and took on a role with Wales Young Farmers as Welsh language development officer, covering all of Wales and working with an organisation that I had been involved with from an early age. During this time I was fortunate to have been allowed to complete my studies through distance learning and graduate at Aberystwyth University with a 2:1 in Mathematics."

The dream of standing in front of a classroom was still alive for Ffion, but she was wary about returning to full-time education because of her previous health issues.

"Having worked for a year on a 9-5 basis I was keen to continue in a similar vein as the routine worked well for me. So when I saw the new Open University courses and the opportunities they offered to work while training – well, it was as if they had been created just for me!"

"I was fortunate to have been able to secure a post at my old school – Ysgol Bro Idris, which is now a 3-16 school - and I cannot wait to start sharing my passion with the next generation of budding mathematicians there."

Ffion also has other goals to meet as she hopes to contribute to supporting the Welsh Government target of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050, and a new curriculum to deliver to pupils.

"We are living in such exciting times – yes there are challenges, but there is so much you can influence as a teacher. In my subject area, maths, it is limited how much I can change in terms of the course content itself, but the new curriculum gives me greater freedom in how it can be delivered and to make it so much more relevant to the learners' everyday lives – preparing them for life after school."

"I am keen also to develop the subject specific vocabulary in Welsh, to ensure it is more accessible. There is no reason to switch to studying through the medium of English and I intend taking my students with me throughout the school journey."

"These new flexible Welsh Government routes into teaching, offered by the Open University, are absolutely ideal – I can't wait to get started and influencing future generations."

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