A taste for teaching

For Rebecca Matthews, becoming a teacher was as a direct result of gaining work experience and experiencing the profession first-hand.

‘During my final year at the University of Hertfordshire, I was offered the opportunity to work in a St Albans school with an organisation to encourage pupils to learn languages. This experience helped me decide that I would like to become a languages teacher.’

Now studying for her post-graduate qualification in Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) teaching, she already has a job lined up for a full-time role at her second placement school. Here Rebecca will predominantly teach French and Spanish to pupils aged 11-18, alongside a few history classes because of her experience at Hertfordshire.

New experiences

One of the best memories that Rebecca has from her degree was her year abroad in France. ‘It was incredible! I learnt a lot about the language, culture and even about English. It gave me the opportunity to become really independent and learn about myself. Moreover, I had the opportunity to study other subjects. I studied Latin, Spanish, History but I also took choral classes, grammar classes and became very involved in the ERASMUS community.’

However, even before her year abroad, study at Hertfordshire had opened up a range of new experiences. ‘I came to Hertfordshire in 2011 straight after my A Levels because I had the opportunity to study “Humanities”. This meant that I could choose up to 4 subjects in my first year and even try something that I hadn’t learnt before. Friends chose philosophy, for example, which is something I had never thought of studying before. The University allowed me to continue my studies in French and History but also do modules in Literature which was very important to me.’

Looking to the future

Even though she’s still training, Rebecca’s enthusiasm for her new role shines through and she’s already planning ways to get involved in the school community. ‘I am helping to organise school trips and heading the Scheme of Work and planning for all Year 8 MFL lessons. I am hoping that these opportunities will help me to move up and become a head of department in a few years.’

She recommends embracing everything that education and learning has to offer – whether you want to go into teaching or not. ‘I taught French to beginners at Hertfordshire and I loved being able to share my knowledge on something that I loved. Take all of the opportunities that you can, especially the year abroad! Whether it is to learn a language or just experience a new lifestyle for a year, do it! It will be the best year of your education.’