Snib Musonda, MEd. Management of Special Education in Developing Countries 2010

Current role

The University of Zambia. Lecturer.

Career experiences

I was selected on merit as a Staff Development Fellow after graduating with a distinction at the undergraduate level from the University of Zambia. I then went on to further my studies at the University of Birmingham having won a full scholarship from the Beit Trust.

What is the best thing about what you are doing now?

The fact that I am able to share the knowledge and skills I have acquired through my studies with students pursuing their bachelors in the field of special education. Being able to support others feels so great!

Why did you originally apply to Birmingham?

A whole lot of things attracted me to University of Birmingham; the infrastructure, the city, the people, the calibre of lecturers but more so the fact that I will be able to lead my learning and challenge what I know. I like challenges!

What were the best bits about your time here as a student?

The quality of teaching and learning. It was the best part of my learning process. I enjoyed the teaching/learning process especially when we students were in charge of the whole process. It felt great to be able to see that my thinking was actually being affected by the whole process and sharing experiences with students from diverse backgrounds. I also liked the abundant support and resources offered to students, especially us international students.

How did you grow as a person by coming to University

My life has never been and will never be the same again. I learnt how to think outside the box; how to be critical in my thinking; how to challenge what is perceived to be the norm and also how to express myself and my opinions while respecting other people views. I learnt that I have the right to express myself just like other people do.

What did you think of the learning experience within the University?

All modules were very valuable to me but what I found more practical and versatile was the 'Personal and Professional Skills in Educational Management'. This module was very valuable because the skills I learnt can be applied in any setting not just in the education sector, for instance, assertiveness. I will also be able to transfer some of these skills to children and persons with disabilities.

Did you find the degree programme at Birmingham challenging or easy?

The programme was challenging to me when I initially started. I had problems with the aspect of not having to write exams. I come from an exam oriented education system and I also performed better in exams unlike written assignments. However, the support services put in place to help people like me enabled me to do well in my modules. Our school and the international student office put in place academic writing sessions to help me and other students improve our writing skills especially that English was our second or even third language. At the end of the programme, my academic writing skills had improved greatly which was reflected in the quality of my assignments.

Did you find the University or your degree helpful to you in getting your first job?

Although I already had a job when I was coming to the university, I was not sure if that was really what I wanted to do. I utilised the services of the Careers centre and the information I was given helped me to decide what my career path should be. The people at the centre also helped to clarify a few concerns I had concerning my career choice.

Advice for current students

To all those doing my programme now, choose the modules you have interest in but do not leave out the personal and professional skills module. You will be able to utilise the skills learnt in other aspects of your life and career. It can be a busy and interesting programme but do not forget to have fun and explore the city too! Do not shy away from consulting the wonderful lecturers in any matter. I benefitted from them even on personal issues. Above all, use your critical thinking abilities and challenge what you already know!!!!

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