

James Clarke

“Five years ago I walked into what was then the old campus of Worthing College based in Durrington. Straight out of high school, I had never really had a strong focus on what I wanted to do. I had considered teaching and maybe because of this, I imagined going to university; but it all seemed a million years in the future. Who knew how quickly two years would fly by!

Having received a D in Science at GCSE I knew that, despite it not being my favourite subject, I would have to redo this at college. I received a lot of support from staff at my enrolment interview and their advice helped me see the importance of making it one of my options alongside Drama, Geography and Psychology.

Something I will add is that at high school, I needed extra time and support during exams or essays. I now know this was because of my dyslexia which was picked up at college. They recognised that I needed that additional support and time and the learning support team were fantastic at putting this in place for me.

After my first year, we had moved to the new site in Broadwater, which is a much brighter and more exciting place to learn, especially as the drama department now had its own block with a theatre, dance hall and study space. Despite not being a fan of Science, I went from a D to a B overall for my Science GCSE. This along with being able to make a change to my choices meant

I went into second year taking Geography and Drama A Level and BTEC Performing Arts. Still thinking about going to university or staying another year, I met Rachel Maddix (Head of Performing Arts) who inspired and motivated me to apply to go to university to study drama. I had always had a very clear passion and joy for theatre and drama as a subject. I thought about applying locally but again was pushed and challenged to leave my comfort zone and reach further. In the end I applied to a well-known drama School in London, thinking I would never have a chance of getting a place.

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Despite what I assumed, not only did I get an interview but I also got the place that I never thought possible, and it's fair to say, that I wouldn't have even applied had it not been for the staff at Worthing College.

I'm writing this now as I begin to enter my final five months at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama where I have been studying Drama, Applied Theatre and Education BA for the past three years.

Throughout my degree I've had the chance to travel across the UK doing drama on so many projects from children's theatre, LGBT issues and rights, theatre for young people with autism to working in schools with young people who have been excluded. Now I'm exploring the possibility of going back into education with teaching but also looking at how drama and theatre can help young people who are suffering from mental health problems.

As I say though, all this started with my time at Worthing College and if I could give any piece of advice, its take every opportunity you are given. I didn't just turn up to college, do lessons and go home again. I became President of the student union and a student ambassador, took part in drama performances and even got the chance to go to Ohio, America on an exchange trip.

Looking back, it was all those opportunities and the support I got from teachers that helped me make that jump and got me where I am now.

As Rachel Maddix said to me, 'just do it'. They were the best words of wisdom I received and I will pass them on to anyone reading this now. Take those opportunities and just do it. You might be surprised by what happens when you go beyond what you think you are capable of.”

