

Tamar 0:00

Okay, so my name is Tamar I'm... I'm the second year of an MA Applied Imagination in the Creative Industry and I'm doing the part-time course. Um... I came to UAL to CSM to the specific course. I was looking for something new to do with my life. I was a fashion designers, so I come from a creative background. And before that I was a software engineer and project manager. So I had also some technical and managerial background. So, I wanted to do something maybe to integrate between them, using some creative aspects, something new and exciting. And London ....definitely London.

Tamara 0:54

I think London is amazing. Just walking down the streets. Like even coming here, I could take a bus for 15 minutes but I decided to walk and cross the river. And when the weather is beautiful, everything is so beautiful. People really need to appreciate that. And just, you know, lift their head up and see the skyline and appreciate, now everything is in bloom, it is so amazing. And for me, I was really exposed to all the non-profit organisation, the charities. And, where I come from, it's not considered to be a very distinguished and exciting business or area to study... to work sorry... and now I feel very excited about it, to see and to learn more, because I think it's something that maybe I will feel that I also helping the world and also fulfilling something for myself.

Academic Support 1:55

So, where have you come from? And did you come alone?

Tamara 1:59

So, I come from Israel from Tel Aviv, and I come ... I came with my family and my husband and two children. I have a daughter and she's 13 and a son at 10 years old...and a dog.

Academic Support 2:18

So tell me about that. What's it like uprooting a lot of people and establishing yourself here? What were the fears? What happened? Yeah.

Tamara 2:28

Um, so it's it's quite complicated. But we were relocated before, so moving to a new country with the language and everything was quite all right from our side. But yeah, there's a lot of responsibility for that. You need to make sure and be very certain of what you're doing. But also, I think, it's very inspiring for my children, as well, to see that their mother is perusing a new career keeps studying even in a quite older age, and tries new things. And I feel it is more beneficial than actually disturbing the whole family group.

Academic Support 3:16

And what did you think it was going to be like? And was it like?

Tamara 3:20

So it's actually two things because it's one with London and the family and everything and one with the course itself. So, with the family, you know, to make sure that the children find good schools, they were happy. And for myself, it was very

new. I decided I'd like to open like a new start for myself. I had like a fashion label in Israel and I decided to close everything to study something new. Um, I didn't know exactly what to expect, going to a new MA and starting something new. It's ...it's not completely reveal what you're actually going to study, I think. You can understand a little bit from other student alumni tells their stories, but you can't really understand what is going to be and how it's going to affect your life. I was very excited for new adventure and didn't know what exactly to expect.

Academic Support 4:20

Tell me about the first few weeks.

Tamara 4:23

First few weeks were quite shocking, just you know, coming first time to the class ...where am I going to sit?, I'm going to sit next to the teacher.. I want to sit next to other students. I want to see if I can find also some new friends and at least colleagues and classmates and maybe around my age, maybe kind of similar background. And so yeah, the first minutes are very stressful. I used to live in New York, I worked as a project manager, I did training to English, I thought I was very fluent. And here I was shocked. The academic part is so different. And the British is so different from the American. So, yeah, and to read a lot, and it took me a while. I still struggle with that. But, I see that every time I read article and book and mostly like textbook and so but... it's really inspiring and engage me to read more and practice it more because it really, I feel like my language was not academic enough and not creative enough in new genre of creative academic kind of way. And yes, I had to learn a lot, mostly in reading and the way to approach other students, how to approach the teacher to be more in a friendly.., many things that they I need to concern about.

Academic Support 5:55

And what advice would you give to somebody? Anything you can offer? Or is it something that you just have to learn for yourself?

Tamara 6:02

I think everybody will have different experience, because it all depends on what stage this person in his life. For me, using the part-time course, I was hoping to have more hours of studying of school, of coming to, and interacting with, the university itself. So, I found the Academic Support, the whole workshop and tutor and all this stuff very intriguing, very interesting. I learned a lot. It was not part of like the curriculum of the courses. But I think it really echoed everything that we studied. And it gave me a lot of tools and the way to understand reading and inspiration and research, a lot of things. So, I really recommend student to approach this, like right from the start, do a lot of reading ....a lot of reading.

Academic Support 6:57

Were there moments when you were really struggling? And if so where did you get your support?

Tamara 7:06

So, we have 10 students, and we have a Whatsapp group. And we support each other a lot ....some that live outside London, as well. And, all busy and come from

different background but we're all very supportive to one another. So like, oh, I don't know, I didn't do anything.. what do you think? And everybody will make you feel that you're okay, it's fine, we'll help you ... very relaxed. The tutors themselves are quite accessible. Like, I can email them. And I tell them, listen, I need some support, is there anyone? Yeah, just come in. They were very supportive, as well.

Academic Support 7:46

And how do you juggle the various parts of your life and the expectations on you and you on yourself?

Tamara 7:55

I just do. I chose the part-time because I knew I won't be able to manage a full-time. And also, for me, I wanted everything, everything to be very slowly and gradually and full time is a bit too much for me. I need to do it gradually. Yeah, I try to find interesting courses during the day because I feel I'm more available during the day. And sometimes I study at night. And I work on my project, I do a lot of reflection. I try to mix it all. Yeah.

Academic Support 8:32

Can you talk about the importance of reflection as a designer?

Tamara 8:37

The reflection is important as a designer and also in my personal life. The whole part of learning how to, you know, listen to yourself and reflect. And it's very important. And it's something that I didn't pay much attention before going to school. I feel it really changed my life, it really transformed the way that I look at things, as a designer and as a person. The whole um..creative thinking. It is very reflective, ....you go one step and then you go back two steps... it's very... it's like a dance...it's like a game, it's very... And when you reflect on everything, it can take you also very low. Sometimes when you feel ah... I can't believe I just did that...I did so stupid or pretentious, or... that's not me. And you have to be very sincere about yourself, very clear and very.. you know, just take off all the cover... you know all the layers that you put on yourself. Be as honest as you can and work through that because that really works the best.

Academic Support 9:53

So, how do you reflect? How do you do it literally ? is it writing, is it thinking is it drawing? What's your method?

Tamara 10:02

Um, I tried to use a lot of methods, recently ...actually connecting to what you said about support ... I was very into learning a little bit about mindfulness. And I was advised just to check if there's some classes for that and there were. And I went to a course which was amazing. So, I felt a lot of support from that side. And I use it also as a reflective tool, just practising mindfulness, doing meditation and so on ... in something that I really just started here, so it's very, it was very helpful. I try to write more notes and even to force myself maybe sometime to draw on because I think it's very good when I do that. But I have to say that I don't practice that enough.

Tamara 10:50

Em...there's a lots of studying by myself, as part of also been being reflective and everything... just sit by yourself and study on your own time. And that for me was a little bit difficult. Because I, I wanted to have like a more ... other peer, and so on. So that's why I started going to a Academic Support to have some peer reflection and also to talk to other about studying and so on. But, when I study from home, sometimes I find it difficult to focus, I start putting the laundry and cooking and stuff. So, I just go to the library, you can just go to quiet area or to a more relaxed area. And I feel I do a lot of my studying there. And the library is amazing. There is so much resource for everything. The librarians are so nice, really very helpful and supportive.

Academic Support 11:49

Let's move on and talk about assessment, criticism, feedback, marking criteria, those ideas of judgement.

Academic Support 11:58

Yeah, so actually, I had my first assessment the other day. And yeah, it was all very new to me. And I had to read it a lot to understand what are the criteria? And how do I present myself, in a way that I can explain my thoughts, my ideas, my project, but also follow the criteria. So, I had to rework on my presentation, to reflect it more. But I think, for the next stages, it will be easier because now I understand the whole process for me to follow. Some of their criterias I don't understand why it needed but some of them are really making sense.

Academic Support 12:45

So what's the importance of criticism? And how do you deal with criticism that perhaps you don't agree with or don't understand?

Tamara 12:53

Yeah, that's, that's a very good question. Em..., yes, so you have to understand it's part of growing, the growth process. And a lot of you know... reading a little bit about growth mindset... it is something that's very helpful to understand. Learning how to learn from your mistakes and take criticism, as part of your growing and part of your studying process. And everything is very, very important. Don't be so arrogant to think that you've don't earn this criticism because everybody does. And then yeah, just learn from it. Be humble.

Academic Support 13:38

Do you think you've changed much since you've been here?

Tamara 13:41

Yes, very much. I think, for me also, its part of the project, I see that I have a new idea. I start researching, and I'm getting very excited and I see movies and I read books and I go and meet people in the exhibition and everything. And then in one point, I'm like oh, that's so boring no, no way... I'm not going to do that. And I switch to something else. So, this is something that I need to learn and maintain. And I think being honest with yourself and being very genuine, it's something that help you find your actual subject that really stick ...because everything is so new, and interesting and exciting. And there's so many things to research and explore and inspiring... it's like, unlimited....it's really amazing.

Academic Support 14:33  
What's the next step?

Tamara 14:35

Yeah, for me it's definitely too early to say. Yeah, it's too early but I'm very open to things. So, I'm really excited about that. Sometimes I think maybe I want to continue studying, maybe to do like a PhD or so ...sometimes I think, maybe I want to open a small business ..em... related to my project ...sometime I think... 'not at all, I'm going to go back to fashion' ...it's so amazing. I have so many ideas. So, yes, sometimes it's a little bit scary to be in this kind of place. Yeah, you have to think you're positive on it. Because I feel that it's ... it's a good thing to be here... it's evolving. It's a good step for you, to be open to be... Sometimes you feel oh, it's too open, it's still wide, I have to narrow it down. Gradually, slowly reflect.

Academic Support 15:32  
I wish you all the best.

Tamara 15:34

Thank you so much. Same for you.

Academic Support 15:36

Thank you so much for coming and talking. It's so great to hear your story.

Tamara 15:40

Thank you for having me.