

Mathematics Education University Student

Damon Green

What are you studying and what would you like to do after graduation?

I'm in my third year of a Bachelor of Education degree at James Cook University (JCU). I'm studying secondary education with a major in mathematics and a minor in health and physical education. I'm hoping to teach at a few different schools when I graduate to gain more experience in different kinds of schools.

What did you study at school?

I took maths B in Year 11 and 12 and I did really well. I didn't study maths C or any science subjects but there's mathematics in accounting and economics and I took both of those subjects.

Why did you choose to undertake study to become a teacher of STEM?

The original reason I chose to become a teacher was because I wanted to do something that involved sport so I started off my degree with health and physical education as my major and mathematics as my minor. I chose mathematics as my minor because I was good at the subject. Last year, I decided to switch to a mathematics major. I'm starting to develop a passion for mathematics as well as my passion for sport so I'm happy with the switch I've made.

I feel good about becoming a mathematics teacher. I've been tutoring school students in mathematics for three years, since I finished school, and I'm learning a lot through that experience. The work that we are doing at university is starting to back that up a lot, I feel, particularly when we're doing our mathematics education subjects.

When did you decide to study mathematics at university and who influenced on your decision?

I think I had the most influence on my decision. I thought "I'm good at maths so I'll do that with my HPE". I achieved very strong results in my tertiary maths subjects since I've been here and a few of the mathematics and mathematics education lecturers suggested that I change my major to mathematics and take further mathematics subjects as part of my degree. It was ultimately my decision to make the change and I'm glad I did it.

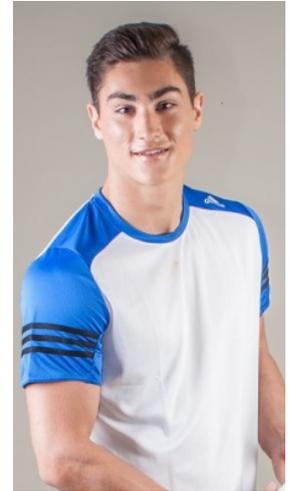
What do you like most about your course?

In mathematics education, we're a small group of education students within a larger group of students studying mathematics at university. We've worked together in mathematics over the past three years so we all know each other and we know how to work together on mathematics problems. In other degrees, you may not even know the person sitting next to you so I like that about my degree.

I like the school placements or teaching pracs a lot. I've been on three weeks' worth of prac teaching now over the three years. In my first school placement, I didn't do a whole lot of teaching there but it was in that prac that I thought, "I like this". In my second year placement, I taught more lessons and I really enjoyed that.

What advice would you give to someone interested in studying in this area?

I think it would be a really good thing to do. If you're good at maths, when you come here, you're going to build on your knowledge in those first couple of years, even though it might not be knowledge you're going to teach, exactly, all the time. But then once you get to your third and fourth years, you can start to learn more about the mathematics you will be teaching. You also learn different ways to teach mathematics which I think is interesting. I think when you're teaching maths in the classroom, people think it's boring but you can make it fun as well because there's a lot of maths in everyday stuff. So if you like sport, you can find the maths in sport. If you like dancing, you can incorporate maths into dance. I've taken kids out on the basketball court and got them moving



around in maths. There's a lot of different ways you can do maths rather than just standing up the front, saying, "this is this, this is this, write it down". It's about creating new ways to do mathematics with kids in schools. Yeah, I'm liking it, I can't see myself doing anything else.