

Those That Can Do, Teach.

And Those That can Teach, Should.

In my final year of high school, a fellow student announced that she wanted to be a teacher. And *our* teacher tried to talk her out of it.

Ten years have passed, and funnily enough, I am now a science teacher. As I start my second year in the classroom, I'm pausing to reflect on the career that almost didn't happen.

To people who don't know me well, my becoming a science teacher was a bizarre career move. Why would I waste a

tertiary education in a technical field like physics or chemistry, only to end up back at school? "Just be an engineer instead. You'll earn more."

I left school with a love of science, and an exit grade that was high enough to admit me into most university courses. I was encouraged to choose the hardest one to get into, at the most prestigious university available to me. And when I did so, I got the impression most adults we knew were relieved. It was, on paper, a good move. But after finishing the degree,

I began to miss the diversity of science as a multidisciplinary subject. I didn't want to be a specialist. I was a keen generalist at heart.

But there was something wrong with teaching, at least in my mind. It is hard to pinpoint exactly what it was or where it came from. I think it was very much to do with the message I had been hearing and believing for years – those that can't do, teach.



In my experience, many of those that can do, *can't* teach. In my early twenties, I worked in a corporate job for all of five minutes, and I still remember “learning” how to edit photos from a colleague who didn't check for understanding and who rushed through steps without letting me write anything down. “We don't have time for that. Just remember it.” After a few experiences like this, I took stock of what was important to me, and started searching for a career that would reflect those things.

Tutoring was an eye-opener. Even when I was working long days in the corporate sphere, I couldn't give tutoring up. I just loved it. I actually left my corporate job to run a tutoring business for a while. We helped hundreds of students and employed sixty tutors at peak.

Unfortunately these efforts also saw me drowning in admin, which took me out of the tutoring role I enjoyed so much.

I then spent my mid-twenties back at university studying education, tutoring on the side, and championing the broader skill that is teaching. Every industry needs people who can teach, because in every industry people need to learn things.

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And now, I'm a teacher. My time spent outside the classroom has only made me better in it. But it is a shame that it took me so long to get back to school. I am disappointed that the wider perception of teaching got in the way of me doing what I really enjoy. Sadly, today's school leavers aren't faring any better, because teaching is still not considered prestigious, and teachers don't get paid very much.

And if teachers are discouraging their own students from the profession, we have a serious problem.

I want my students to value the skill of teaching, even if they don't choose teaching as a career. Students who leave school knowing what it is like to have a

good teacher are more likely to recreate those experiences for others down the track.

I would also like my students to entertain the idea of a career in education in the same sentence as, “I could be a doctor, lawyer, engineer...”.

And so I tell them:

Those that can do, teach.
And those that can teach, should. 



Sarah Durack

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Sarah started classroom teaching in 2019 after working as a private tutor for ten years. Her work in education to date has culminated in Sponge – an online tutoring training program for new and experienced tutors working all over the world.

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