



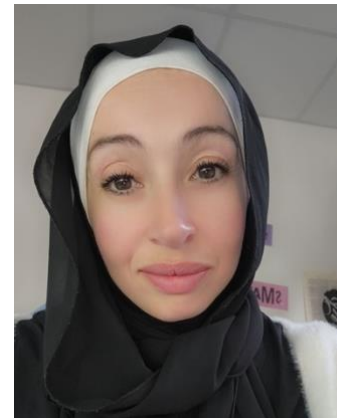
The important career parents should not overlook

By Hissen Marouff, Assistant Principal

If you were to ask my parents today whether they are proud of my career choice, there's no doubt they would say yes.

If you had asked them 20 years ago, their answer would have been much less enthusiastic. Why? Because I grew up as a second generation immigrant in a Middle Eastern household.

Like many others from my background, my parents wanted me to pursue one of the typical jobs they associated with success. Medicine, law and science were their top picks. Instead, I chose to become a teacher – and I am certain I made the right decision.



These days, I work as an assistant principal at a private Islamic school in Perth. Over the last 15 years, I have had an incredibly rewarding career. A career that my parents never expected me to have, but are proud of today.

I've played a vital role in helping thousands of kids achieve their dreams. I've been given numerous opportunities for growth and promotion, and I've shaped the minds of students who have gone on to be leading doctors, engineers and teachers themselves.

I know my parents had good intentions when they questioned my decision to become a teacher. At first, they were unsure whether teaching would provide me with a great career and the opportunities that they never had. But now they are excited and proud.

It's a noble desire to want the best for your kids, but what is considered a successful and fulfilling career is evolving. Young people today are also driven by individual meaning and purpose. We're being encouraged to evaluate a career based on a whole picture - one that includes the professional rewards, as well as the personal.

I won't tell you that being a teacher is easy. We are highly educated professionals with a diverse range of skills that we have to adapt for every student. The job requires dedication, hard work and

lifelong learning. But part of what makes it so rewarding is that you can see your hard work pay off in your community. Everywhere I go, I see the kids that I taught, playing a part in making a better world.

When I walk down the street, they call out “Miss Marouff! Is that you!?”. These are adults with their own lives, own careers, and own families and still, they remember the impact of my teaching.

Now, my mother and father have also come to understand the impact of my work. They have seen me grow personally and professionally, and they appreciate the honour this position has brought to our family. They now see teaching as a profession worthy of the same status given to the others on their list of top choices.

Yet, when I speak with the families of my current students, there are so many jobs that never make it onto those lists. Every year, I watch as our high school kids pick their final year courses, and are nudged towards the careers that their parents expect for them.

Often, a career in teaching isn’t part of their consideration. To those students and their parents I say this: do not discount the incredible opportunity a teaching career provides. It’s an inspiring job that gives you a lifetime of rewards. You get to change the future of every generation that comes after you – making it one of the most important jobs you can do.

Who wouldn’t want to be a part of that? My own children certainly do—my daughter has just completed her first year of teaching, and my son is set to begin his teaching degree next year. I couldn't be more proud of their choices, and I encourage other parents to open their minds to what a career in teaching can offer.

For more information on a career in teaching, visit: www.bethatteacher.gov.au/english

About the author

Hissen Marouff is an assistant principal for Upper Secondary Year 10 – 12 at a private Islamic school in Perth, Western Australia. Drawing from her Australian upbringing with Lebanese migrant parents, she shares her perspectives on the changes in success and career choices among generations.