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Theme IV: Gender and Contemporary Media Chapter 24

She who can, teaches

Margaret Lloyd

Australia

The following are real statements from real women taken from two surveys (2001, 2008). While they were all pre-service teachers training to teach specialist secondary IT or computer science subjects, some were straight from school while others were mature-age or career-change students. Some were questioning whether they should follow careers in the IT industry or should they continue into IT teaching. This is a poetic transcription of their voices.

I grew up with computers.

From an early age I loved playing.

My father bought me a Commodore 64 when I was 13; a truant, bullied, fat and craving a friend.

I'm from a family with two girls; we got our first computer when I was in Year 2.

Having two older brothers and a dad who loves gadgets, I have never been intimidated by tools or technical instructions.

I was Miss Fix-It in the office... my boss took me under his wing and later on his sheets. But I knew I had more to offer.

I was the unofficial tech support in high school; it was not uncommon to see me carrying laptops and a projector with extension cords over my shoulder.

I'M STUDYING TO BE AN IT TEACHER...

Good for you! Why?

They roll their eyes

Then ask "primary" or "kindy"; Art and Craft or History...

Oh, secondary and IT

Oh, surely not.

Don't do it

You're wasting your time.

But I am/you are a girl

Rubbish

A cop-out!

Useless drivel!

Gender is a negligible factor.

It's a societal perception that only boys can be real computer nerds.

I'm confused by the question.

DO YOU STILL WANT TO BE AN IT TEACHER?

No

Teaching is a lesser job than working in IT.

Now I have know that my real passion is creating and working behind the scenes with directors, and animation crews, working on the technicalities of computers and doing something meaningful and exciting.

Teachers aren't valued.

Why would a person who is good at IT want to teach?

To me, it is a waste of skills.

Yes

I get more enjoyment from teaching others how to do awesome stuff with computers than just doing it myself (although that is fun too).

I find more satisfaction in listening to a student finally grasping an important point in class than scrambling up a corporate ladder to find success.

A 9 to 5 IT job, where you see a few people in the office, occasionally have a social meeting with them doesn't seem to be as important, or rewarding.

IT teaching just makes sense.

Maybe

This is something I'm still debating.

Sometimes I think I'm playing it really safe by teaching, as it is easier, and less scary than the unpredictable world (and the unknown world) of what IT companies want from me, or expect of my skills.

The network technicians found out I had a degree in IT and asked me why I was wasting my time with an Education degree when I could be making good money in IT. Now, I'm not so sure.

THE LAST WORD

The World Wide Web is new but such old news! People discussing the web like it was just invented, teachers complaining of having to use the Internet in classrooms or email to communicate when other professions have just moved with the times.

I wonder whether access is really an issue anymore, rather is society reluctant to let go of past generations' gender bias and move on.

Are our own limitations holding us back from a future of opportunity?

I've always hated that saying which says "those who can do, those who can't teach" because if you can't do something there's no way you can teach it. I like to rephrase it to say "Those who can do, those who understand teach."

Maybe teaching is a special thing that not everyone can do.