

Genevieve Chavarria

MA (Hons) English Literature / 2008

IB Diploma Programme Coordinator and teacher at an international school

Please can you describe your role?

I ensure the smooth running of the Diploma Programme at an International School. I communicate with students, parents and teachers. I also teach English A Language and Literature to grades 11 and 12.

What experiences do you think have proved beneficial to your career journey?

I volunteered with St Machar School in Aberdeen for a few months. That helped me gain experience with children although I never wanted to become a teacher. After graduation I moved to Australia where I worked at a bookstore and also had an administrative assistant role. Later, I worked at a call center, as Room Bookings assistant for a university, and English tutor...In hindsight I think all the various jobs I did led me to teaching eventually.

What impact did the 2008 financial crash have on your career path?

I wasn't sure what I wanted to do as a career in the first place so the various jobs I did and the opportunities given to me, precisely because of lack of opportunities, led me to teaching. When I moved to Costa Rica in 2011 after obtaining my Masters in the UK, I did so without a job. When an international school asked me to become a teaching assistant for second grade I thought: I don't have a choice. I need a job. And now, nine years later I am still in the education sector.

What advice would you give to students thinking about employment in your field?

Don't be afraid of doing something that you didn't envision yourself doing. You can learn from every job experience. Have grit and give your best. Stay humble. I used to think that I was too good for some jobs - how wrong I was!

Is there any other advice you would like to give to current students moving from university to working life?

There is no right, one-path-fits-all map of life. Don't be scared to try working in a place you never thought you'd see yourself in. You never know where it might lead!