In last week’s parsha, Ki Tissa, G-d told Moses that Betzalel would be the lead craftsman for the project of building the mishkan. This week, in Vayakhel, Moses informs the people about Betzalel using almost the same language:

And Moses said to the Israelites: See, G-D has singled out by name Bezalel, son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah,  endowing him with a divine spirit of skill, ability, and knowledge in every kind of craft, and inspiring him to make designs for work in gold, silver, and copper, to cut stones for setting and to carve wood—to work in every kind of designer’s craft— **and to give directions**. (Revised JPS Translation, 2023)

The last word, וּלְהוֹרֹ֖תֹ, is not included in last week’s mention of Betzalel. JPS translates it as “to give directions” but it can also be translated as “the ability to teach.” Ibn Ezra, the 12th century Spanish Torah commentator, writes that “G-d put in his heart the ability to teach because there are many wise men who teach with great difficulty.” Moses is telling the people that Betzalel is the lead craftsman not only because he’s a skilled craftsman but also because he’s a skilled teacher, both necessary skills for this large, complex project.

The ability to teach can then be seen as a craft in itself, taking the raw material of knowledge and making it into something others can access and use. And the Torah doesn’t take for granted that this is a skill everyone has. Betzalel is endowed with it from G-d along with all the other crafts.

This idea refutes the saying “those who can’t do, teach.” Rather, those who can do, can’t always teach. I’m sure any teachers reading this will readily agree that teaching is an art form that not everyone is adept at. But I think it goes beyond the classroom. When I worked in tech, I met plenty of people who were very skilled at their job but couldn’t easily explain to others how to do what they did. And that’s not a bad thing, it just means they might not be the best people to manage or train others. And I think that’s the insight of the Torah here: to know ours and others’ strengths and weaknesses and to put them in the role that best fits those.