

Chapter 1 Teachers and the Teaching Profession

Learning Objectives

- After studying this chapter, you will have knowledge and skills to:
- 1.1 Explain who teaches in the United States and why.
 - 1.2 Summarize ways to prepare to teach.
 - 1.3 Determine if teaching is a profession.
 - 1.4 Identify characteristics of teacher professionalism.
 - 1.5 Describe the characteristics of effective teachers.

Dear Reader

No African tribe is considered to have warriors more fearsome than the Masai. Even with this reputation, the traditional greeting between Masai warriors is *Kassarian ingera*, which means "And how are the children?"

This traditional tribal greeting acknowledges the high value the Masai place on their children's well-being. Even warriors with no children of their own give the traditional answer, "All the children are well," meaning that peace and safety prevail; that the priority of protecting the young, the powerless, is in place; and that Masai society has not forgotten its proper function and responsibility, its reason for being. "All the children are well" means that life is good.

When teachers hear the word *multitasking*, most teachers just grin, knowing that they are, and always have been, expert multitaskers. It's nothing new, it's not something they have to practice—it is simply how teachers do their work day in and day out. The hundreds of decisions that teachers make each day; the ever-changing scenarios that confront them hour to hour, minute to minute; and the faces of the students they serve, 20 to 120 at a time, create multiple roles that teachers fill simultaneously—all for the well-being of the children and adolescents in their care.

If we greeted each other with the Masai's daily question, "And how are the children?" how might it affect our awareness of children's welfare in the United States? If we asked this question of each other a dozen times a day, would it begin to make a difference in the reality of how children are thought of and cared for in the United States?

If everyone among us, teacher and nonteacher, parent and nonparent, comes to feel a shared sense of responsibility for the daily care and protection of all the children in our community, in our town, in our state, and in our country, we might truly be able to answer without hesitation, "The children are well. Yes, all the children are well."

1.1 Who Teaches in the United States and Why?

1.1 Explain who teaches in the United States and why.

Teaching is the largest profession in the United States, with about 3.5 million teachers in both public and private schools (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2016). Examine Figure 1.1 to see gender, race, and age statistics of these teachers. Most teachers are white and female. It is interesting to note, although probably not surprising, that 58% of high school teachers, 72% of middle school teachers, and 89% of elementary teachers are women (Ingersoll, Merrill, and Stuckey, 2014). There is considerable need for more diversity and gender balance in the teaching force. Do we want to discourage white women from becoming teachers? Absolutely not. Is there a need for more male teachers and teachers from minority population groups? Absolutely yes.

Deciding to Teach

You are considering the most challenging and exhilarating career—one that is absolutely necessary for the preservation and enhancement of our way of life in the United States. Think about this: Teachers make every other profession possible. Most people join the teaching profession purposefully; some consider it a “calling.” Entering the teaching profession requires a commitment beyond that required by many other careers. Brenda Beyal discovered her calling to teach while preparing for a different career. Watch Video Example 1.1: Brenda’s Interview, and listen as Brenda expresses her reason for deciding to teach.

Video Example 1.1: Brenda’s Interview

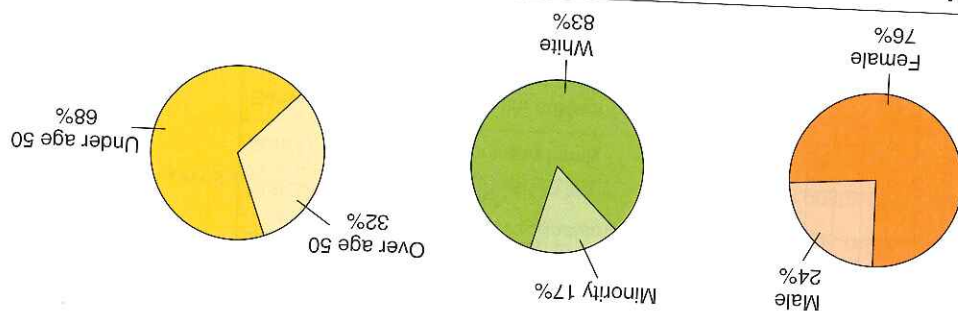


Figure 1.1 U.S. teachers

Based on: Ingersoll, R., Merrill, L., & Stuckey, D. (2014). Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania. updated April 2014. CPRE Report (#RR-80).

Currently, the United States is in the midst of a teacher shortage, not necessarily at all levels and in all fields, but the shortage is real for math, science, special education, and teachers equipped to teach children for whom English is not their first language. Schools of education report far fewer teacher candidates enrolling in programs (Gardner, 2016). You are needed!

Helping you first make the decision to teach and then find your teaching identity is at the heart of this text. Exploring why other people choose to teach may help you clarify your own thoughts and desires. Although there are, of course, many personal reasons, let's consider some that are widely stated in research studies. As you read, reflect on your own reasons for thinking about teaching as a career.

DESIRE TO WORK WITH CHILDREN AND/OR ADOLESCENTS. Because 6 to 7 hours of a teacher's day are spent in direct contact with students, enjoying their company is a must. Getting to know the students we teach allows us to become familiar with their emotional and social needs as well as their cognitive needs. You may hear teachers talk about teaching the **whole child**. This simply means attending to all of a child's developmental stages and needs, along with teaching the child's grade-level and subject-area content. When we view the whole child, we realize the depth of our responsibilities as classroom teachers.

BELIEF IN IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION TO SOCIETY. Education is widely viewed as the great equalizer. This means that differences in opportunity and privilege diminish as children reach their potential through quality education. In other words, the achievement gap narrows with the increased educational success of the students, who historically underachieve. An **achievement gap** is a disparity among students, as some excel while others languish with respect to learning and academic success. Through teaching, you will make a difference in the lives of individuals and thereby benefit society as a whole.

MOTIVATED BY VARIETY. No two days as a classroom teacher are the same. Teaching is a service profession involving human beings, so surprises abound! Even the same basic lesson plan used years in a row is never the same because children and adolescents in a classroom setting vary by the year, semester, week, day, and, yes, within the same school day. If you enjoy ever-changing challenges and delights, you may be motivated by variety to join the teaching profession.

IMPACT OF TEACHERS AND/OR FAMILY. Can you name the last five vice presidents of the United States? How about the current Miss America? Who represents your home district in the state legislature? Who was your fifth-grade teacher? Who taught your favorite class when you were a freshman in high school? The last two questions are the easiest, aren't they? That's because teachers influence us. They are uniquely positioned to shape students' thoughts and interests during the formative years of childhood and adolescence.

Most of us who consider being teachers grew up in families that valued education and respected teachers. If there are teachers in your family who are energetic and enthusiastic about their careers, they may influence you to follow in their footsteps. Many teachers cite the influence of family as a factor in the decision to teach.

INTEREST IN A PARTICULAR SUBJECT. An intense interest in a subject area is important if you are going to teach that subject all day. Middle school is a happy compromise for people who have both a strong desire to work with students and a passion for a specific subject. Most middle school teachers teach one or possibly two subjects all day to students whose development is challenging and intriguing.

OTHER FREQUENTLY CHOSEN REASONS. A joke that's been around for a long time goes like this: "What are the three best things about teaching?" Answer: "June, July, August." Here's another: "What's the best time to be a teacher?" Answer: "Friday at 4."

Within our ranks we smile at these harmless jokes. But the *schedule and hours of teachers* attract some to the field. Those who have not taught, or don't understand the pressure of having 15 or 25 or even 100 students dependent on them for at least part of each day, may view the schedule of a teacher as excessively punctuated with days off. However, time away from school is well deserved, even if it is used to catch up on teaching-related tasks. The change of pace is refreshing, allowing opportunities for revitalization. Aside from summer vacation and days off, other aspects of scheduling make teaching a desirable choice for many. During the school year, most teachers do not have students after about 3:30 or 4:00 in the afternoon. To people who work 8-to-5 jobs, 4:00 seems like a luxury. However, most teachers spend additional time either at school or at home planning for the next day and completing necessary administrative tasks. The teaching schedule allows for this kind of flexibility. A teacher's schedule is also ideal for families with school-age children. Having a daily routine similar to that of other family members has definite benefits.

The world will always need teachers. The prospect of *job security* is attractive to many who choose to teach. Those who are competent are generally assured positions, even in difficult economic times. It's unlikely that a career in teaching is chosen because of salary, although some districts and states are making progress in raising teachers' pay to be competitive with other fields that require a bachelor's degree. Table 1.1 ranks states based on mean average salary. Keep in mind that salary amounts alone do not reflect many of the financial benefits that accompany a teaching position. In addition to an annual salary, you will also likely receive healthcare benefits at a reduced rate, along with a pension or retirement plan and possibly more. These "extras" often amount to an additional 30 to 40% of your salary. This aspect of job security is important.

Teaching offers many *opportunities for self-growth*. Teachers experience growth, both personally and professionally, in many ways: through relationships, reading, attending conferences, and the wide variety of professional development opportunities available. Few careers are as exciting or as rewarding on a daily basis, including the satisfaction of having a positive impact on the future of children. Teaching is not a stagnant career; rather, it continually presents new experiences, all of which offer opportunities for self-growth.

In almost all states and school districts, teachers are paid for both longevity in the profession and levels of education completed. A beginning teacher with a master's degree will likely receive a higher salary than a beginning teacher with a bachelor's degree. Two teachers with bachelor's degrees will be paid differently if one has 3 years of teaching experience and the other has 15 years in the classroom. In many cases, a teacher with 3 years of experience may contribute to outstanding verifiable improvement in student achievement, whereas a more experienced teacher may have little to show with regard to influencing measurable student learning, makes no difference in compensation. Is this fair? No. Have we found ways to measure student growth and pay teachers accordingly? Some ideas exist. School systems have tried for decades to pay teachers merit pay to the satisfaction of those affected, but without the kind of success that perpetuates merit pay in education, with education leaders at district, state, and federal levels proposing plans for paying teachers based on a variety of variables, including student success on standardized tests. However, most systems go back to teacher level of education and longevity as the determinants of pay because of the lack of measures that take inevitable student variability into account when considering test scores. We take a closer look at the pros and cons of merit pay in Chapter 12.

When considering salary, investigate the cost of living where you want to live. For example, teachers who teach in suburbs outside New York City may make more than \$100,000 a year. An examination of the cost of living in such places as Westchester County, New York, shows that \$100,000 there is equivalent to a much lower salary in

Table 1.1 Teacher mean average salaries by state (2015-16)

Rank Based on Mean Average Salary	State	Mean Average Salary
1	New York	\$79,152
2	California	\$77,179
3	Massachusetts	\$76,981
4	District of Columbia	\$76,810
5	Connecticut	\$72,013
6	New Jersey	\$69,330
7	Alaska	\$67,443
8	Maryland	\$66,456
9	Rhode Island	\$66,197
10	New Hampshire	\$65,616
11	Pennsylvania	\$65,151
12	Michigan	\$62,028
13	Illinois	\$61,342
14	Oregon	\$60,359
15	Delaware	\$59,960
16	Vermont	\$58,901
17	Wyoming	\$58,140
18	Hawaii	\$57,431
19	Nevada	\$56,943
20	Minnesota	\$56,913
21	Ohio	\$56,441
22	Iowa	\$54,416
23	Georgia	\$54,190
24	Wisconsin	\$54,115
25	Washington	\$53,378
26	Kentucky	\$52,134
27	Texas	\$51,890
28	Virginia	\$51,834
29	Nebraska	\$51,386
30	Montana	\$51,034
31	Indiana	\$50,715
32	Maine	\$50,498
33	North Dakota	\$50,472
34	Louisiana	\$49,745
35	Florida	\$49,199
36	South Carolina	\$48,796
37	Alabama	\$48,518
38	Arkansas	\$48,218
39	Tennessee	\$48,217
40	Missouri	\$47,957
41	North Carolina	\$47,941
42	Kansas	\$47,755
43	Arizona	\$47,218
44	New Mexico	\$47,163
45	Utah	\$46,887
46	Colorado	\$46,155
47	Idaho	\$46,122
48	West Virginia	\$45,622
49	Oklahoma	\$45,276
50	Mississippi	\$42,744
51	South Dakota	\$42,025

Based on: National Education Association. (2017). Rankings and Estimates. Copyright 2017 by the National Education Association. All Rights Reserved. Retrieved May 26, 2017, from http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/2017_Rankings_and_Estimates_Report-FINAL-SECURED.pdf

Teaching in Focus

Throughout this text, you will read **Teaching in Focus** segments. These real-teacher scenarios help illustrate concepts you are learning. Some up questions, while others are stand-alone features. Read them carefully to better understand teachers' work in today's classrooms.

Brandi Wade, kindergarten, Summit Primary, Ohio, in her own words. . . .

It may not so much be that you choose teaching, but that teaching chooses you. It will be in your heart and on your mind constantly. Although it's never easy for more than 5 minutes at a time, teaching is the most important profession you can pursue. I am truly blessed to be a kindergarten teacher. I get to teach a different lesson, meet a different challenge, and see life from different perspectives every day in my classroom.



Sara Davis Powell

Laugh with the children, laugh at yourself, and never hold a grudge. Don't be afraid to say "I'm sorry" to a child when you have done something unprofessional or hurtful. If children do hurtful things, just hug them a little more tightly and make them feel safe. Children learn best when they feel safe and loved no matter what. I don't teach to be remembered, although it's nice to think that you'll never be completely forgotten. I teach so that I can remember their personalities and how they grow. I remember the times we struggled with learning and succeeded, as well as those times when we fell short of our goals. I remember the laughter and the tears we shared. Some people say, "Leave school at school." The best teachers I know often lose sleep thinking about and worrying about their students. It's worth every toss and turn!

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Point of Reflection 1.1

You discovered your top reasons for considering the teaching profession through *Where Do I Stand?* Are there other reasons we haven't discussed that perhaps resonate with you? If so, what are they?

Check Your Understanding 1.1



1.2 How Do We Prepare to Teach?

1.2 Summarize ways to prepare to teach.

You may have heard it said of someone, "He's just a natural-born teacher." There's some truth in this statement. Teaching comes more naturally to some than to others. With varying degrees of natural talent and inclination for teaching, we all have much to do to prepare to effectively make the teaching and learning connection. Our nature-given attributes must be enhanced by the knowledge and skills gained through studying content, learning about theory and methods of teaching, being mentored, reading, observing, practicing, and reflecting.

Each state has its own preparation requirements for those who teach in public school classrooms. Most states require a prospective teacher to pass a test before they grant certification or licensure. The most widely used tests are part of the *Praxis Series* published by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). The state issues a teaching certificate or license when a teacher candidate is determined to be sufficiently qualified. Let's examine two broad paths to initial teacher preparation: traditional and alternative.

Traditional Paths to Teacher Preparation

The traditional paths to initial teacher preparation come through a university department of education. National and state organizations carefully scrutinize university programs and evaluate how teacher candidates are prepared. About two thirds of states require university teacher education programs to be accredited (authorized to prepare teachers) through the *Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)*. All three initial teacher preparation paths—bachelor's degree, fifth-year program, and master's degree—include one or two semesters of *student teaching*, also called *clinical internship*. During this extended fieldwork, teacher candidates teach lessons and, for a designated time frame, take over all classroom duties. A classroom teacher serves as the *cooperating teacher* (host and mentor) while a university instructor supervises the experience.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE. A 4-year undergraduate teacher preparation program consists of a combination of general education courses, education major courses, and field experiences. Most early childhood and elementary teacher preparation programs result in a degree with a major in education. Many programs in middle-level education result in a degree with a major in education and two subject-area concentrations (15 to 24 hours each). To teach in high school, most programs require a major in a content area and a minor, or the equivalent of a minor, in education coursework.

FIFTH-YEAR PROGRAM. Some universities offer a fifth-year teacher preparation program. Teacher candidates complete a major other than education and stay for a fifth year for more education coursework plus student teaching. For instance, a teacher candidate interested in science may major in biology and then stay a fifth year to become a certified, or licensed, teacher. Some of these programs include a master of arts in teaching degree rather than an extended bachelor's degree.

MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING. People who have a bachelor's degree in an area other than teacher education may pursue teacher preparation through a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree. Most early childhood and elementary MAT programs consist of all teacher education courses and fieldwork, whereas middle-level MAT programs typically require 18 to 24 hours of subject-area coursework in addition to education courses. High school MAT programs generally require a degree in a content area or the accumulation of enough content hours to be considered a concentration.

Alternative Paths to Teacher Preparation

In the 1980s, alternative certification began as a way to address projected teacher shortages. Since those first efforts, various models evolved for recruiting, training,

and certifying people who already had at least a bachelor's degree and wanted to become teachers.

Since 1983, the number of teachers entering the classroom through alternative programs offering alternative certification/licensure, with some estimates stating as many as a third of new teachers are using alternative routes to the classroom. A who decide that teaching is for them after having other careers are likely to enter profession through alternative paths. In fact, 70% of those seeking certification through alternative routes are over 30 years old, most with noneducation-related careers. Alternative routes attract more men and minorities to the profession than the national average (as shown in Figure 1.1). Men account for 30% and minorities account for 30% of teachers who prepare in alternative ways (Teacher-Certification.com, 2016).

Many alternative programs grow out of specific needs and are developed and designated through partnerships among state departments of education, school districts and university teacher education programs. Their structures vary widely, and they tend to be controversial. Some people doubt that teacher preparation is as effective outside the realm of university-based programs.

Perhaps the most widely known alternative path to the classroom is through nonprofit organization **Teach for America (TFA)**. Teach for America began in 1990 to address the United States through a period of teacher shortages in schools primarily populated by children living in poverty. The organization has grown rapidly, with or without teacher shortage, and recruits individuals who are college seniors, recent graduates, professionals who agree to teach in high-needs rural or urban schools for at least 2 years and become life-long leaders in the effort to end educational inequity. Teach for America teachers may receive student loan forbearance. Over the past 25 years, TFA has prepared about 50,000 college graduates to enter classrooms across the country. In the 2015-2016 school year, almost 9,000 TFA corps members taught in public schools, both traditional public schools and public charter schools (Teach for America, 2016).

In recent years, Teach for America has become quite controversial. Among the issues are charges that the organization does not adequately prepare new teachers and that districts can hire TFA teachers and replace them on a regular basis with new recruits, ultimately saving money. Some fear that TFA teachers are not only filling hard-to-staff schools but are also in many cases displacing veteran teachers. As with many education initiatives, Teach for America has both advocates and critics.

Getting to Know Schools, Teachers, and Students

Regardless of the route you take to become a teacher, the more experiences you have in schools with teachers and students, the better prepared you will be to have a classroom of your own. The more experiences you have, the more certain your decision will be concerning whether teaching is for you. Experience in classrooms will also lead to more informed decision making about your teaching identity.

Most preparation programs require field experiences throughout. Perhaps you will begin with observations in one course and then work with individual students in small groups in another, and then teach whole-group lessons before and during student teaching/clinical practice. These experiences may hold many surprises for you. Having a 5-year-old nephew you enjoy seeing several times a year is very different from working all day with 20 5 year olds in a kindergarten classroom. Your memories of senior advanced placement literature that inspired you to want to teach high school English may be a romantic picture of students paying rapt attention as the sonnets Elizabeth Barrett Browning are discussed. However, this may be a far cry from an active freshman English class. If you fit the profile of most teachers and are a white female from suburbia, chances are that classrooms in urban America will expand your view of what it's like to be a teacher. Although you can read about differences in settings and

students in this and other books and be somewhat informed, seeing for yourself brings

reality into view.

There are other ways to gain insights into the classroom. Finding opportunities to have conversations with teachers is an excellent way to learn more about the realities of the classroom. Volunteering at schools, places of worship, and community organizations will present opportunities both to get to know kids and to observe adults interacting with them. Being a summer camp counselor, tutoring in an after-school program, and coaching in community recreation leagues all provide valuable experiences. This text provides opportunities to get to know eight real teachers in four real schools teaching nine real students.

Meet the Focus Teachers

"You just had to be there!" we often exclaim when words aren't enough. Learning about teachers, students, and schools is one of those situations when photos or video clips can help convey what a thousand words cannot. Is it as good as being there? No, but it helps. Our eight focus teachers are introduced here, our eight focus students are introduced in Chapter 2, and their four schools are introduced in Chapter 3. Let's meet the eight teachers now.

Focus Teachers

Brandi Wade

Kindergarten teacher

Summit Primary School, Summit Station, Ohio

Teaching experience: Grades 5-6 (2 years)

Preschool and K (14 years)

Brandi says she has found her place in life. From her family to her friends to her teaching career, everything fits for this exuberant kindergarten teacher. One look around her classroom and one brief conversation are enough to know that 5- and 6-year-olds who spend time in Brandi's care are fortunate children. Brandi believes in active involvement of children. She finds ways to teach the Ohio kindergarten curriculum standards through a wealth of movement, music, hands-on experiences, and play. Each year she spends whatever time is necessary to help her 15 to 25 kindergarten students per class form positive

Renee Ayers

Second-grade teacher

Summit Primary School, Summit Station, Ohio

Teaching experience: Reading teacher (2 years)

First grade (3 years)

Second grade (4 years)

Renee exudes enthusiasm for life. From the soccer field to the energy she puts into teaching second grade, Renee's personality shines through. She says summers as a camp counselor influenced her teaching philosophy of infusing active learning and fun into instruction. Renee is a reflective teacher who spends time in her classroom diagnosing student needs. She states that her biggest challenge is to design learning experiences for each child that take into

habits so the necessary routines of the classroom take care of themselves. She knows that classroom management and learning go hand in hand. "My heart is where the children are" is a phrase Brandi says and lives. She believes that children must feel comfortable and loved in their



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environment before they can learn and thrive. She laughs and cries with her students, allows herself to be vulnerable to their needs, and provides a warm, developmentally appropriate setting in which children learn and grow. Brandi and her husband have two sons, a Jack Russell terrier, and two turtles. Brandi enjoys swimming, camping, reading mysteries, and going to movies.



Sara Davis Powell

account what the child already knows and is able to do. Renee believes strongly in individualizing assignments even when her instruction is geared toward the whole class. The children in her classroom are learning to be reflective, too. She saves samples of work from the beginning of the school year and periodically shows the samples to the students so they can compare and recognize their own progress. This is a simple process that is gratifying for the children.

At the end of the school year a very shy little boy said, "Mrs. Ayers, can you go to third grade with us?" The children pull at her heartstrings. All the effort is worth it.

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(continued)

in both Spanish and English. But language is not the only reason students are engaged. Angelica says her goal is to make every day enjoyable, memorable, and meaningful for all her students. She admits that it can be difficult to continually search for interactive, hands-on activities for teaching history, but the effort is worth it.

With a master's degree in school counseling, Angelica sees herself teaching several more years and then becoming a guidance counselor. She has aspirations to pursue a doctoral degree and plans to be part of the education profession for a long time.

Something that is particularly enjoyable for Angelica is the fact that she married a high school history teacher who teaches at a nearby school. Angelica remarks that their conversations are filled with empathy because they each understand the other's dilemmas and can listen attentively and make helpful suggestions when challenges arise.

We follow these 8 teachers through interviews, room tours, and lesson clips in **Teaching in Focus** features throughout the text.

Point of Reflection 1.2

Why did you choose the path to teaching that will prepare you for the classroom? Did you consider other options?

Check Your Understanding 1.2



1.3 Is Teaching a Profession?

1.3 Determine if teaching is a profession.

This text repeatedly refers to teaching as the *teaching profession*. Whether a particular job or career qualifies as a **profession** depends, in large measure, on who is making the determination. We hear references to the plumbing profession, the culinary profession, and the cosmetology profession, but there are established guidelines for determining if a career or job is universally considered a profession. These characteristics of a profession will likely not affect common usage of the word, but examining teaching with regard to them helps spotlight aspects of what we do that may need to be strengthened.

Characteristics of a Profession

For decades authors have delineated the characteristics of a "full" profession. For equally as long, educators and others have debated whether teaching is indeed a profession. This debate is healthy because, as we consider the characteristics of a profession and measure teaching by them, we see what teaching is and is not, what teachers have evolved into, and what teachers may still need to become. A summary of a full profession's characteristics, from both a historical perspective and a modern one, is presented in Figure 1.2. Let's look briefly at these 10 characteristics and think about whether each applies to teaching. (The next few paragraphs show these 10 numbered characteristics in parentheses.)

Considering that in the United States children ages 5 through 16 are required to receive a formal education, and that most do this through public schools, a dedicated teaching workforce can collectively deliver this *essential service* (1). Members of this teaching workforce agree that teaching requires *unique knowledge and skills* (2), whether acquired through traditional or alternative paths. On-the-job *training, ongoing study, and development* (2) are encouraged, but not necessarily required, although most teachers

Figure 1.2 Characteristics of a full profession

1. Provides an essential service no other group can provide.
2. Requires unique knowledge and skills acquired through extensive initial and ongoing study/training.
3. Involves intellectual work in the performance of duties.
4. Individual practitioners committed to service and continual competence.
5. Identifies performance standards that guide practice.
6. Self-governance in admitting, policing, and excluding members.
7. Members allow for a considerable amount of autonomy and decision-making authority.
8. Accepts individual responsibility for actions and decisions.
9. Enjoys prestige, public trust.
10. Grants higher-than-average financial rewards.

Based on: *Foundations of American Education* by L. D. Webb, A. Metha, and K. F. Jordan (2017). New York, NY: Pearson.

must renew their teaching certification/license every 5 years or so by completing graduate coursework or by participating in other forms of professional development.

Teaching definitely involves intellectual work (3). Teachers pass along intellectual concepts and skills, which is the very heart of what teachers do. To enter and remain in a teaching career requires a commitment to service (4) and, hopefully, continual competence (4) as guided and measured by performance standards (5). The word "hopefully" is included because teachers rarely police their own ranks (6) to the point of excluding someone who does not live up to accepted teacher standards. If policing occurs, it is generally accomplished by administrators.

When the classroom door closes, teachers have considerable autonomy (7), sometimes approaching isolation. However, public school teachers must accept any student placed in their classrooms and must teach a set curriculum over which they have little or no control. Even with certain constraints, we teachers are decision makers (7), and we must accept individual responsibility (8) for the decisions we make.

A great level of trust (9) is placed in teachers. After all, for 7 to 10 hours a day, families allow teachers to have almost exclusive control over their children. In most communities, teachers enjoy a degree of positional prestige (9), but they are rarely granted higher-than-average financial rewards (10).

As you can see, not all 10 characteristics of a full profession apply to teaching. We still have few mechanisms for policing our own ranks (6), and the financial rewards of teaching are not higher than average (10). Teachers should continue to work together to perpetuate each of the eight characteristics we exemplify while exploring ways to incorporate the other two. Many associations and organizations are helping teaching to be a profession by allowing teachers through collaborative efforts to set common goals, speak with a collective voice, and build research-based foundations to support what we do and how we do it.

Professional Associations

National and regional professional associations provide leadership and support for teachers. Some serve the general teacher population; others are specific to a grade span or subject area. Most associations solicit members, hold annual conferences, publish materials, provide information, and advocate for those who teach and those who learn. Participating in professional organizations is a positive step toward growing as a professional.

The National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) are the largest professional education associations in the United States, with a total of more than 5 million members, including teachers, administrators, professors, counselors, and other educators. Both organizations are unions and represent their members in collective bargaining, or negotiating with employers and states to gain additional benefits for their members. Large nonunion professional organizations such

Table 1.2 Professional organizations

as ASCD Learn Teach Lead, Kappa Delta Pi (KDP), and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) serve a wide spectrum of educators. Most national organizations have regional and state affiliate associations. These more local groups provide easily accessible face-to-face opportunities for interaction among members.

Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards address what teachers should know and be able to do and provide the framework for teacher performance standards. The original standards were written in 1992 specifically for beginning teachers. In 2011 the Consortium revised the standards to apply to all teachers.

Each subject area has a professional organization that provides guidelines for what to teach, sponsors annual conferences, publishes relevant books and journals, represents subject areas in educational and political arenas, and both encourages and disseminates research on teaching and learning. Table 1.2 lists some of the professional associations available to teachers to assist with their professionalism. Visiting their websites will give you valuable insight into just how important these and other professional organizations are and can be.

Teacher Unions	
AFT	American Federation of Teachers
NEA	National Education Association
Subject-area organizations	
AAHPERD	American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
ACTFL	American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
IRA	International Reading Association
MTNA	Music Teachers National Association
NAEA	National Art Education Association
NBEA	National Business Education Association
NCSS	National Council for the Social Studies
NCTE	National Council of Teachers of English
NCTM	National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
NSTA	National Science Teachers Association
RIF	Reading Is Fundamental
Level-specific organizations	
ACEI	Association for Childhood Education International
AMLE	Association for Middle Level Education
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
Need-specific organizations	
CEC	Council for Exceptional Children
INTASC	Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium
NABE	National Association for Bilingual Education
NAGC	National Association for Gifted Children
NAME	National Association for Multicultural Education
SCA	Speech Communication Association
TESOL	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
General associations	
ASCD	ASCD Learn Teach Lead
KDP	Kappa Delta Pi
PDK	Phi Delta Kappa

Point of Reflection 1.3

Do you think teaching is a profession now that you know more about what qualifies as a profession? What is one idea that might help elevate teaching even more in terms of professionalism?

Check Your Understanding 1.3



1.4 What Is Teacher Professionalism?

1.4 Identify characteristics of teacher professionalism.

Professionalism is a way of being. It involves attitudes and actions that convey respect, uphold high standards, demonstrate commitment to those we serve, and fulfill responsibilities. Teacher professionalism demands that we put students first, strive for excellence, and commit to growth.

Put Students First

Student welfare and learning must be paramount. Ask yourself, as a Masai might, "And how are the children? Are they all well?" Putting students first requires that we become advocates for their welfare.

ADVOCATE FOR STUDENTS. To advocate for students is to support and defend them, always putting their needs first. Advocacy guides our efforts and decisions directly toward our goal—improving students' learning, which, ultimately, improves students' lives. How do we become advocates for our students? Here are some components of advocacy to consider:

- Understand that advocacy takes multiple forms with individuals, groups, or causes, in both large endeavors and small actions.
- In all conversations, with educators and noneducators alike, keep the focus on what is best for students.
- Take an informed stance on issues that affect children. Actively promote that stance to have widespread impact.
- Support families in every way possible.

MAKE WISE DECISIONS. Teachers continually make decisions. Some of the decisions are made on autopilot, especially those that have to do with routines in the classroom. The quality of other decisions often rests on common sense and maturity—characteristics that are enhanced by preparation and experience. It's important to remember that our decisions have consequences and require thoughtful consideration to make sure we are advocating for your students and maintaining a classroom climate that is conducive to learning.

DETERMINE CLASSROOM CLIMATE. Our classrooms can be respectful environments that promote learning, or not. The sobering words of Haim Ginott (1993, p. 15), a respected teacher and psychologist, should occupy a prominent position in both your classroom and your consciousness.

I've come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, a child humanized or de-humanized.

Strive for Excellence

In everything involved with teaching—knowledge of content, teaching skills, and relationships and interactions with students, colleagues, administrators, and families—we must strive for excellence. Will we always achieve it? Of course not. But in our striving, we will achieve as much excellence as we can in all we do.

FACILITATE LEARNING. Making the teaching and learning connection is the primary role of a teacher. Learning is why students are in school, and teaching is how we guide and facilitate learning. We should measure our effectiveness as teachers in large measure by how much and how thoroughly students learn.

The responsibilities involved in facilitating learning may be categorized in a number of valid ways. Perhaps none is more important than evaluating each of our actions in terms of its contribution to academic rigor and developmental appropriateness. **Academic rigor** refers both to teaching meaningful content and to having high expectations for student learning. **Developmental appropriateness** means that our teaching addresses students' physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and character development. Academic rigor without developmental appropriateness will result in frustration for teachers and foster discouragement and defeatism in students. Developmental appropriateness without academic rigor will accomplish little in terms of student learning. Neither concept is mutually exclusive. In fact, they shouldn't be exclusive at all, but rather should interact in supportive ways and balance one another as they guide our decision making.

DEVELOP POSITIVE DISPOSITIONS. Dispositions are composed of your attitudes, values, and beliefs. They powerfully influence our teaching approaches and actions. Dispositions that are favorable to effective teaching include, among many others:

- I believe all students can learn.
- I value student diversity.
- I respect individual students and their families.
- I am enthusiastic about the subjects I teach.
- I value other teachers as colleagues and partners in teaching and learning.
- I believe families are important in making the teaching and learning connection.

Commit to Growth

Teacher effectiveness is enhanced when a lifelong learning orientation is in place. A commitment to continual growth provides a powerful model for students.

BE A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER. We grow when we reflect on our teaching practices. As discussed earlier in this chapter, **reflection** with regard to teaching is thinking about what we do, how we do it, and the consequences of our actions or inactions, all with the goal of being better teachers. To be **reflective practitioners** means that we deliberately think about our practice—that is, what we do as teachers. We do this with the purpose of analysis and improvement. Sounds pretty automatic and unavoidable, doesn't it? But it's not. A teacher can repeatedly go through the motions of planning, teaching, and assessing throughout a career yet seldom engage in reflection that results in improved practice.

John Dewey (1933), one of the great American educators, described reflection using words such as *active*, *persistent*, and *careful*. So how do we become reflective practitioners who actively, persistently, and carefully think about how we teach? Here are some concepts to consider:

- Reflective practice requires conscious effort.
- Self-knowledge is vital and can be aided by thoughtfully completing the *Points of Reflection* throughout this text.

- Reading about and researching aspects of teaching will ground our practice and provide subject matter on which to reflect.
- Talking with other educators will both inform and strengthen what we do and how we do it.
- Being deliberate—doing what we do for a reason—will result in better decisions based on reflection.

Video Example 1.2 shows a brief portion of a new teacher “boot camp” with teachers watching clips of classrooms, recording what they observe, and then reflecting on student and teacher actions and reactions. The new teachers, with the help of veteran educators, share and learn together in very purposeful ways.

Video Example 1.2: Purposeful Reflection



BUILD 21ST-CENTURY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS. Teachers committed to continual growth are determined to increase their knowledge and skills to keep up with current research and thought concerning teaching practices. During the first decade of this century some major forces both inside of, and external to, the education community recognized and espoused the need for knowledge and skills that reflect the realities of the 21st-century world. Perhaps the most influential source of information about teacher and learner characteristics for the new century is the *Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21)*.

In 2016, 20 states officially and voluntarily aligned with the *Partnership for 21st Century Skills*: Arizona, California, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. The *Partnership for 21st-Century Skills* is a national organization that advocates for student acquisition of 21st-century knowledge and skills. To help the United States compete in a global economy, P21 and its member states provide tools and resources that stress critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation. In doing so, P21 has emerged as the leading advocacy organization for infusing 21st-century skills into education. To strengthen its focus, P21 brings business and education leaders together with policymakers to define and implement a vision for 21st-century education (*Partnership for 21st Century Skills*, 2016).

The *Partnership for 21st Century Skills* outlines characteristics of teachers that help them teach students in ways that lead to success, including:

- Critical thinker
- Problem solver
- Innovator

- Effective communicator
 - Effective collaborator
 - Self-directed learner
 - Information and media literate
 - Globally aware
 - Civically engaged
 - Health conscious
 - Financially and economically literate
- These characteristics are developed and improved throughout the career of a professional teacher. A commitment to continual growth requires it.

SocialMedia

Yes, you read it correctly . . . the ME is emphasized because your use of social media both inside and outside the classroom is, in large measure, up to you. Few schools dictate the use of social media as an instructional tool, yet many schools discourage, or even prohibit, the use of some "tech" devices if they are in the hands of students. So this is a personal issue, largely within your control. What will you do with your decision-making power?

In the not-too-distant past, textbooks contained pages of instructions on how to utilize computers, word processing, and the Internet in the classroom. Most of today's teachers, and practically all of today's students, take these features of technology for granted and assume their use. So let's move on. The astonishing and rapidly growing quantity and quality of technology-enabled devices make comment on them almost obsolete before a book can be published. However, widespread use of technology-enabled devices such as *instructional tools* occurs at a much slower pace. Sharing innovations in teaching and learning tools has value, even if the particular piece of technology is several years old.

Social media is part of everyday life for most of us, so why not employ it in the classroom? Throughout this text you will read teaching strategies that include iPads, wikis, digital photography, blogs, Twitter, Skype, and handheld devices in features titled *SocialMedia*. In addition, these features will offer suggestions on how you can teach students to use social media wisely and safely.

In this chapter we look at **webinars**, the name given to web-based seminars. The effectiveness of a webinar is interactive possibilities, with participants receiving and giving information in a discussion format. Many school districts state departments of education offer professional development through webinars. Is this kind of conferencing as effective as face-to-face interactions? Probably not, but webinars are both cost- and time-efficient.

- One of the most inclusive sites for webinars, both the schedule of what's ahead and an amazing archive of recorded webinars, is provided by ASCD Learn Teach Lead. The site is completely free and available to anyone. Take a few minutes to explore it.
- Edtechteacher offers free webinars to help teachers incorporate technology in the classroom. Anyone can register these informative, interactive sessions by simply going to the site and participating.

Try a webinar! Occasionally there are glitches in getting everyone on board, but webinar technology is constantly improving. The learning is well worth the effort.

This text will continue to refer to a career in teaching as the *teaching profession* and to teachers as *professionals*. A commitment to continual growth includes consistent reflection and building of 21st-century knowledge and skills. Keep your growth mindset front and center as we next examine what means to be an effective teacher.

Point of Reflection 1.4

Does the commitment to continual growth overwhelm you or excite you? Explain the reason for your answer.

Check Your Understanding 1.4



1.5 What Are the Characteristics of Effective Teachers?

1.5 Describe the characteristics of effective teachers.

The search for a neatly packaged description of an effective teacher dates back for centuries, even millennia. The best we can come up with are lists of characteristics based on observation and available data, along with narrative anecdotal descriptions. There's a lot to be learned from considering a number of perspectives. But the bottom line is that effective teachers contribute to student learning.

Standards for teachers describe expectations for what they should know and be able to do to ensure learners reach their learning goals. All teacher education standards address teacher effectiveness. School-level organizations such as the **Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE)** and the **Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)** prescribe standards for new teachers. The 10 standards of the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) describe what effective teachers should know and be able to do regardless of the level they teach. An overview of these standards is seen in Figure 1.3. The INTASC Standards are divided into four general categories to help us understand them. The full document detailing the standards is a valuable tool for conceptualizing the effective teacher.

An important factor to understand when it comes to the characteristics of effective teachers and teaching is that much of what makes teachers effective comes through experience in the classroom. This is not to say that new teachers can't be effective. Of course they can! But think about this: Teaching is a profession that expects a brand-new teacher to do the same job as an experienced veteran. Don't count on someone saying, "Hey, it's okay if only half your kids learn about half of what you attempt to teach. After all, you're new." Some of the characteristics of effectiveness take time to develop. In other words, it takes time to be able to automatically make the wisest decisions and to draw on experience to supplement formal training. Teachers can be effective using very different approaches. You can probably name two teachers in your own experience who were effective but who had different traits. Effective teachers, regardless of whom or what they teach, share many common characteristics. Teacher professionalism is a thread that binds them all. Teachers of students with special needs; teachers who specialize in art, music, or physical education; teachers who teach all or most subjects to one group of students; and teachers who teach the same content area each day to several groups of students—all have specific preparation requirements and position responsibilities.

The federal government, through the Department of Education, the president, and the legislature, helps shape this nation's concept of teacher and school quality. In 2016, the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**, originating in 1964, was reauthorized as the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**. This was the first official update since 2001, when ESEA was reauthorized as the **No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)**, an update that included accountability measures that were well-intentioned but ultimately proved unwieldy and, in the opinion of many educators, unfair. The more recent **Every Student Succeeds Act** is addressed in more detail in Chapter 12.

The people who are with teachers at least 7 hours a day, 180 days a year are students. The following list of attributes is used by many students to gauge teaching and learning effectiveness. They want teachers who:

1. Care about them as a group and as individuals.
2. Teach in interesting and varied ways.
3. Do their best to help everyone learn.

4. Act in fair and consistent ways in terms of classroom management.
5. Display passion about what they teach.
6. Listen to them and help them express their voices.
7. Show interest in their activities and relevant social trends.
8. Demonstrate respect for everyone.
9. Develop relationships with them.
10. Enjoy teaching and have a sense of humor.

Figure 1.3 INTASC standards

The Learner and Learning

Standard #1: Learner Development.
The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

Standard #2: Learning Differences.
The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

Standard #3: Learning Environments.
The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Content

Standard #4: Content Knowledge.
The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

Standard #5: Application of Content.
The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

Instructional Practice

Standard #6: Assessment.
The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.

Standard #7: Planning for Instruction.
The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

Standard #8: Instructional Strategies.
The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

Professional Responsibility

Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice.
The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

Standard #10: Leadership and Collaboration.
The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

Throughout this text you will read editorial opinions that have been published in newspapers, both print and online, that express opinions of people who may be staff writers for the papers or guest columnists. In most cases these pieces are logically constructed and easy to understand. They are written by people who feel strongly, even passionately, about an issue. At the end of each *The Opinion Page* feature are prompts or questions to help you think through your own opinions. As you respond, you are doing what good teachers do—reflecting on issues and ideas and then recording your own thoughts with the purpose of professional growth.

When a lone gunman broke into the school and murdered 26 students and staff at Sandy Hook Elementary School, the people of the United States were stunned. Discussions of school safety, gun control, and how to approach mental health were renewed that day in December 2012. In the midst of national debate, one incontrovertible truth was evident—teachers and administrators care for students. Read this chapter's *The Opinion Page* feature and respond to the items that follow it.

The Opinion Page

This Opinion Editorial appeared in the *CantonRep*, the online newspaper of Canton, Ohio, on December 26, 2012.

What Is a Teacher Really Worth?

by Charita Goshay, staff writer and regular opinion contributor for the *CantonRep*.

In recent months, teachers, first responders and other public employees have been whipping boys for people who think they enjoy too much compensation for their services. So what, exactly, is the dollar value of a teacher who saves the lives of 15 first-graders? How about one who sacrifices her life in an effort to save them? Which part of the faculty handbook advises a teacher on how to deal properly with unmitigated madness?

For those people who actually know a teacher, the heroism and sacrifice demonstrated by the educators in Newtown, Conn., are the least surprising aspects of the tragedy. Teachers don't just teach. The good ones inspire, challenge and change the lives of their students every day. They open up worlds of knowledge and introduce children to possibilities they otherwise wouldn't know existed. They go into their own pockets to level the playing field. They worry about "their kids," particularly those who they know have turbulent lives, even years after they move on.

Our culture has become such that we don't even blink or flinch at the news that someone will earn \$10 million a year for throwing a ball or running a corporation into the ground. But a teacher gets flayed for failing test scores, even when the reasons are multifaceted and complicated. These days, a lesson plan isn't enough. Teachers frequently must also be psychiatrists, substitute parents and bouncers. They're caught between uncooperative and irresponsible parents, ever more complicated school policies, a cynical taxpayer public that demands to know why schools aren't doing better, and kids who are expected to miraculously

rise above the chaos and instability in which they live. Even children from affluent and stable, supportive homes can have struggles that they bring with them to school. Because of all of this, no one in his or her right mind would become a teacher simply for a paycheck and a pension.

Being a public servant is a calling, one as compelling and clear as entering the clergy or becoming a physician. If teachers were compensated based on what they contribute to society, we couldn't afford them. The annual minimum salary for a National Hockey League rookie is \$525,000. For baseball, it's \$390,000. In the NBA it's \$473,604. The average elementary-school teacher makes \$40,283 a year, what many major-sport athletes make in a month.

Despite this bargain, we still find reasons to complain about teachers, ignoring the irony that if it were not for teachers, we'd be unable to express ourselves very well. Who has time to decipher someone else's cave-drawing rant? Not me. As we saw in Connecticut and as is demonstrated virtually every day, a teacher's dedication is immeasurable.

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This Opinion Page piece covers a lot of ground with respect to teachers' dedication to the well-being of students. She also writes about the relative absurdity of salary discrepancies between teachers and professional athletes. Write a well-developed paragraph in response to each of the following questions.

1. Why, in Ms. Goshay's opinion, would our country not be able to pay teachers enough for what they do? Do you agree? Explain.
2. What is your response to the multiple roles teachers have in the lives of students? Have you considered how all-encompassing teaching can be? Does this knowledge overwhelm you? Excite you?

Effective Teachers are 100 % Present

Emily Dickinson wrote, "Forever is composed of nows." Each moment with your students is important. The productivity of both the "nows," and the sum of the "nows" that comprise forever, depends on focus and the will to capture every opportunity for teaching and learning with our presence. Education doesn't just occur within our lesson plans. Spontaneity in our ability to use everyday happenings, as well as spectacular events and tragic misfortunes, presents teachable moments we will recognize only if our mind and heart are focused on our students as whole people.

The classroom can be a very distracting place simply because it's filled with human beings. Not only will students become distracted at times, but so will teachers. In addition, our lives outside the classroom are sometimes complex, in both positive and negative ways. Leaving personal concerns and plans at the schoolhouse door will help us be 100% present for students.

This certainly doesn't mean teachers must sacrifice their personal lives for the profession. The key to longevity and success in teaching is finding balance. Happy, thriving adults make the best teachers. In this *Teaching in Focus* segment, we learn more about how Traci Peters finds and maintains balance. In her video, she discusses how she plans for instruction.

Teaching in Focus

Traci Peters teaches seventh-grade math at Cario Middle School in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina. By all accounts she's an excellent teacher—just ask her principal, her colleagues, and, most importantly, her students. Outside school, Traci enjoys a very happy home life with husband Dwayne and young son Robert. The seventh-graders in Traci's classes know all about these two very important people in her life, and that's the way Traci wants it. Although math is the subject she has chosen to teach, she is conscious of the fact that her responsibilities go well beyond fractions and equations. She views each student as an individual with relationships and often complex growing-up issues. Traci reveals herself to them, and they, in turn, feel comfortable enough to share with her.

In a prominent place in the classroom Traci has a "Mrs. Peters" bulletin board on which she displays, among other things, family photos (from her childhood to the present), her

Application Exercise 1.1: Traci's Interview



Sara Davis Powell



Traci attends her students' basketball games, concerts, spelling bees, Odyssey of the Mind competitions—the typical year-long parade of events. She views this as a tangible way to show her students she is interested in them, their growth, and their lives. Watch Traci's interview to get to know her better.

Traci needs to stay home to care for him, she tells her students. Well, she lets her students know. If her son Robert is sick and she lives aspects of her life, she replies, "Yes." When she's not feeling as freely share with students the not-so-positive aspects of her life, she lets her students know. If her son Robert is sick and she needs to stay home to care for him, she tells her students. Traci attends her students' basketball games, concerts, spelling bees, Odyssey of the Mind competitions—the typical year-long parade of events. She views this as a tangible way to show her students she is interested in them, their growth, and their lives. Watch Traci's interview to get to know her better.

Effective Teachers make a Difference

"From the moment students enter a school, the most important factor in their success is not the color of the skin or the income of their parents, it's the person standing at the front of the classroom." This powerful statement was made in a speech to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in 2009 by President Barack Obama. Sobering, isn't it? Our former president of the United States is stating what recent research corroborates. Teachers make the most difference when it comes to student learning. Our effectiveness, or lack of it, matters.

The most important person in the teaching and learning cycle when it comes to both student academic and personal growth is the classroom teacher. Although other factors discussed in the text significantly influence student learning, none do so as much as the teacher. An effective teacher can help students overcome some of the negative circumstances in their lives and positively impact student learning. When the outside influences on student learning result in achievement gaps, student learning can dramatically improve when provided quality teachers.

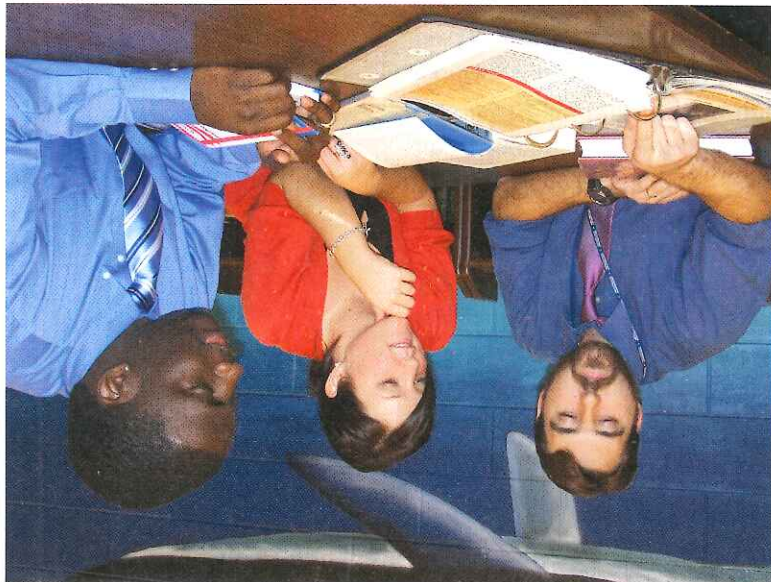
Teaching is Hard Work

We've considered who teaches and why, teacher preparation, whether teaching is a profession, teacher professionalism, and characteristics of effective teachers. Most of the information is positive and encouraging. However, leaving the initial picture of teaching as a rosy, always exhilarating career, is not honest. Teaching is hard work—but not *just* hard work.

Teachers face circumstances daily that are beyond their control and affect what they can and cannot accomplish. This is true in many professions, but few have the ability to tug at our heart-strings and keep us awake at night as we plan and worry, try new approaches and worry, build relationships and, you guessed it, worry. Our concern for the welfare of our students can be overwhelming unless we find ways to balance our personal lives and our professional lives. Much of this text is designed to help you learn to do this. The more you know, the greater your ability will be to put aspects of your life into perspective.

Carol Ann Tomlinson (2016) believes that societal, political, economic, and structural pressures on teachers have rarely been greater. Over the years she has observed teachers who are effective year after year and through the ever-changing landscapes of teaching. One primary characteristic of these

consistently resilient teachers is what she calls *energy renewal*, resulting from the ability to keep life in perspective. Tomlinson says that energy renewal comes from working hard, becoming involved with students on multiple levels, and bringing joy to the classrooms, while also understanding the need to separate periodically from the profession to define ourselves in fun and personal ways. Doing so will keep us from being consumed by the challenges of teaching and keep the inevitable satisfactions and pleasures in the foreground.



Sara Davis Powell

Effective teachers purposefully and collaboratively plan for instruction.

Point of Reflection 1.5

How do you typically face adversity? When some of the initial excitement of teaching is met with realities of student hardships or frustrating circumstances beyond your control, will you be resilient?



Check Your Understanding 1.5

Concluding Thoughts

Throughout this text you are urged to ask repeatedly, as the Masai do, "And how are the children? Are they all well?" However, when you are a novice teacher, your primary question may often be "How am I doing?" With time, your focus will increasingly shift to the growth and progress of the children and adolescents you serve. Learning to be a teacher . . . teaching so others learn . . . learning to be a better teacher—this life-affirming cycle can be yours. Think of the cycle as a wheel that gathers momentum and takes you on a profound journey. You have begun to grow toward the profession. As a teacher, you'll grow within the profession. After reading the Chapter in Review, interact with Traci Peters and her middle school team as they face a dilemma in this chapter's Developing Professional Competence.

Chapter in Review

Who teaches in the United States and why?

- Teaching is the largest profession in the United States.
- Most teachers are white women, leading to a need for more men and people of color in teaching.
- The most common reasons for choosing to teach include the desire to work with children and/or adolescents, the importance of education to society, the trait of being motivated by variety, interest in a particular subject, and the impact of teachers and/or family.
- Teachers' beginning salaries and mean average salaries vary by district, by state, and by specialty area based on many variables.

How do we prepare to teach?

- States issue a certificate or license to teach in public schools based on their own criteria.
- The traditional path to becoming a teacher is through a university-based teacher preparation program.
- Alternative paths to teacher preparation provide timely, but somewhat controversial, routes to teacher certification.
- There are many ways to get to know teachers, students, and schools, including field experiences through teacher preparation programs, volunteer opportunities, watching movies about teachers, and participating online through this and other texts.

Is teaching a profession?

- A profession is an occupation that includes extensive training before entering, a code of ethics, and service as the primary product.
- Teaching meets most of the criteria generally agreed on for a full profession.
- Numerous professional organizations support teachers and teaching.
- Teachers can and should make contributions to the knowledge base of the teaching profession.

What is teacher professionalism?

- Teacher professionalism entails putting students first and striving for excellence.
- Teacher professionalism requires a commitment to continual growth.
- Teacher professionalism requires purposeful reflection.
- Teacher professionalism requires building of 21st century knowledge and skills.
- The Partnership for 21st Century Skills challenges states, communities, schools, and teachers to prepare students for the future.

What are the characteristics of effective teachers?

- Effective teachers may have very different styles of teaching.
- The one consistent characteristic of effective teachers is student learning.
- There are established guidelines for teacher effectiveness through the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium and other professional organizations.
- Both individuals and organizations have opinions about what makes a teacher effective. There is much to learn from the differing viewpoints.
- Teaching is hard work and requires balance and perspective to be effective over time.

Developing Professional Competence

Thoughtfully reading this scenario and responding to the items that follow it will help you prepare for licensure exams.



Sara Davis Powell

You met seventh-grade teacher Traci Peters earlier in this chapter. She is the math teacher on her four-person interdisciplinary

team at Cario Middle School. In March, one of her teammates, Melanie Richardson, announced that her husband was being deployed overseas and that, without his help with their five children, she was going to have to move to another state where her parents live. Melanie teaches English-language arts and has been on Traci's team, the Dolphins, for 3 years. This is a big blow to Traci and her two other teammates. Melanie will leave Cario in mid-April. The Dolphin team teachers are very easy to work with and have enjoyed a collegial relationship with Melanie.

Carol Bartlett, principal of Cario, understands the importance of finding the right person to fill the position, but she is told by the superintendent that a teacher from another school will be placed in Melanie's classroom for the remainder of the school year. Carol knows the teacher the district personnel office plans to place on the Dolphin team, Leo Merchant's reputation is that of a veteran teacher who does not collaborate, sits behind his desk during class, and consistently finds ways to undermine

administrators. The principal suspects Leo's position was purposefully eliminated at the other school and the district just needs to find a place for him. Carol is certain the Dolphin teachers will not be pleased with the district's choice.

Now it's time for you to respond to two short essay items involving the scenario. In your responses, be sure to address all the dilemmas and questions posed in each item. These items are followed by three multiple-choice questions.

1. Traci and her teammates understand that Leo will be a temporary member of their team, or at least that's their hope. They have been assured by the school district that they will be able to interview candidates for the English-language arts position and that a new teacher can be in place by August. This helps them get through the remainder of the school year. As they look to the future, what are three qualities you would recommend they look for as they, along with the principal, choose a new teacher for their team?
2. Teacher evaluation is problematic for a variety of reasons. The seventh-grade team at Carto is about to experience some of the consequences of a system that not only fails to discriminate between effective and ineffective teachers but also allows ineffective teachers to remain in the classroom. How would meaningful ongoing teacher evaluation help fix the system? How would you recommend the results of the evaluation be used?

Application Exercise 1.2 Developing Professional Competence

3. Which of the following attributes of a full profession does this scenario directly violate?
 - a. A full profession enjoys prestige and public trust.
 - b. A full profession admits, polices, and excludes members.
 - c. A full profession provides an essential service no other group can provide.
 - d. A full profession involves intellectual work in the performance of duties.
4. Which of the following statements applies *least* to this situation?
 - a. The three teachers on the Dolphin team will likely have to expend extra effort to keep their students from being affected by what they anticipate will be sub-standard teacher performance.
 - b. The three teachers are likely most concerned about ITASC Standard 10: "The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being."
 - c. The three teachers will continue to instill academic rigor while making their classrooms developmentally appropriate.
 - d. Leo has a master's degree in education, so the rumors about him are very likely exaggerated.
5. As they have always done, the Dolphin teachers take individual responsibility for the success of their team of students. Which of the following would *not* be evidence of this?
 - a. They use opportunities to say positive things about their students in the community.

- b. They don't get involved in decisions that affect their students because they believe that designated experts know best.
- c. They invite families to come to school to discuss areas of concern for their children.
- d. They consistently talk about and act on what they believe to be best for their students.

Application Exercise 1.3: Developing Professional Competence

Flash Cards 1.1

Shared Writing 1.1 Challenges