Before You Begin Reading

Learning is an active process. Your current beliefs, motivations, and goals will shape what you learn as you interact with this text. Before you read, complete the following chart. What are your core convictions about teaching right now? For example, do you believe teachers make all the difference in learning? Next, record your goals as an educator. Why have you selected teaching? What do you hope to accomplish? Learning is a process not only of adding to our knowledge stores, but of also modifying or discarding notions when necessary. Revise your work as you continue learning about your profession.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>My Core Convictions about Teaching and Learning</th>
<th>My Goals as a Teacher</th>
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Children play school, spend many years as students in classrooms, and encounter countless media images of teachers. As a result, by the time we reach adulthood, it is tempting to believe that we know all there is to know about teaching. However, our earlier experiences with teaching may not provide accurate information that helps us to teach well. What is teaching? How is it different from other things people do? How does one teach well? The following six propositions help to distinguish teaching from other activities, combat common misconceptions about teaching, and guide us on the journey of learning to teach well.

1. Teaching looks easy . . . from the outside.
2. Every teacher is part of a system.
3. Teaching is goal driven.
4. Teaching is more than telling.
5. There is agreement on what teachers need to know and be able to do.
6. Teachers can be effective and yet not just alike.

Teaching Looks Easy . . . from the Outside

The prevailing perception is that teaching is simple. The movies suggest that nearly anyone can teach, and earning a teaching credential somehow doesn’t sound as daunting as the sleepless nights of a medical school residency. Also, current accountability demands wrongly imply that raising student achievement should be a straightforward matter (Amrein & Berliner, 2002, 2003; Cochran-Smith, 2003; Rose, 2004). In reality, the relationships among factors like teaching, learning, and testing are often very complicated. “Success at learning requires a combination of circumstances well beyond the actions of a teacher” (Fenstermacher & Richardson, 2005, p. 191). Not until we examine the myriad of factors that influence student learning, and not until we step in front of a classroom ourselves, might we realize how difficult teaching can be. Perhaps it is for this reason that some student teachers and interns become temporarily disillusioned when they begin their field experiences (Goldstein, 2005).
Teaching is difficult partly because classrooms are complex (Douglas, 2009; Doyle, 1986). First, teachers are required to serve in several roles. They need to serve as advocate (Kaplan, 2003), instructor, observer, evaluator, coach, activities director, supply master, tech support, and confidante, for instance. In their varied roles, teachers make many decisions about different kinds of issues. Teachers make hundreds of decisions per day (Danielson, 1996). They need to think about students’ safety, their learning, and their other needs simultaneously, all while they also consider their own personal and professional issues.

Exercise 2 in Opportunities to Practice at the close of this chapter presents a number of recently offered metaphors for the many roles of teachers. Take a look, and think about your own vision related to these roles.

Second, the number and rapidity of events make classrooms complex. Many things happen at once, they happen quickly, and they tend to overlap. Classroom teachers must make quick judgments without time to reflect or weigh the consequences of their actions. Third, although classrooms have common elements, every learning situation is different. Individual learners’ experiences and needs affect the nature of the class. Students start the year in different places academically and socially, have different interests and preferences, and go home to different circumstances. The physical, sociocultural, and historical setting of the class varies as well. Consequently, as teachers and their students spend time together, they build a shared and unique history. Perhaps you have noticed this yourself if you and your classmates have laughed at an inside joke, one that only the people in your particular class could appreciate.

A fourth way in which classrooms are complex is that, because people affect each other, the act of teaching is inherently uncertain (Helsing, 2007). It is difficult for even an experienced teacher to predict with certainty how a class will respond to a lesson. Classrooms are also unpredictable because as teachers we may pursue goals that are unclear, our base of authority may be in question, and we are usually unsure of the outcomes of our efforts, especially long-range outcomes (Jackson, 1986). Although the desire to touch the future is a strong draw for many teachers (Eisner, 2006), we are often left uncertain about the effects of our efforts. What happens to students after they leave us? What did they learn? Did they learn because of us or in spite of us? The Teaching Tip gives a quick strategy to discover what students learn from day to day.

Finally, teaching is complex because it reaches into time both before and after face-to-face interaction with students. It requires preparation, and it requires reflection and revision. As a result, many teachers feel like their work is never finished (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2006). Because classrooms are complex, it takes years to master the craft of teaching (Berliner, 2004; Cuban, 2010). Both careful study and reflective experience are necessary.

**Teaching Tip**

**Exit Cards**

Use exit cards to quickly discover some things about what your students learn during your lessons. At the close of a lesson, period, or day, distribute index cards or slips of paper and ask students to respond to one or two brief prompts such as, “List one thing you learned today,” “Solve for x,” or “What question do you still have after today’s lesson?” Students leave the cards in a container by the door as their ticket out. Study the cards quickly and start the next lesson by addressing the exit card results.

Good teaching is neither obvious nor simplistic.
Do you remember the television commercial that hawks deodorant by warning “never let them see you sweat”? That commercial seems to capture the first aspect of teaching: Teaching looks easy . . . from the outside. Though public attention on teaching and on student performance is high, few people witness the day-to-day conditions under which teachers are expected to encourage learning and to manage the complexity of the classroom without a drop of perspiration. Further, classroom complexity is compounded because classrooms exist as part of a larger system.

Every Teacher Is Part of a System

No teacher is an island. Closing the classroom door does not seal away outside influences. Instead, a teacher serves at the center of a set of nested circles of influence, as shown in Figure 1.1. Imagine an archery target. You, the teacher, are in the bull’s-eye, and the outermost ring contains society in the broadest sense. What happens in your society and in the world affects your classroom daily. Let’s explore a couple societal expectations and influences that affect teachers and students—the demands of the where and the when of teaching and learning today.

Teachers and the Law

As a teacher, you are expected to act in ways that are consistent with the rules and goals of the place you live: your society. In addition to the rules that guide our actions as citizens, laws govern many aspects of your behavior and professional practice as a teacher. Many laws affecting teachers are summarized in Figure 1.2.
1. **Public schools must not promote worship.** Schools may teach about religion if the intent is not to worship. If a public school allows some groups to meet there, it must provide equal access and allow religious-based groups (such as religious clubs) to meet there as well. The groups cannot be school sponsored (Alexander & Alexander, 2005).

Students cannot be required to salute the flag if their religious convictions or matters of conscience (in some states) prohibit it (Fischer, Schimmel, & Kelly, 1999).

2. **Academic freedom has limits.** Education is a marketplace of ideas (Alexander & Alexander, 2005). Teachers are permitted to address controversial topics and use controversial methods if they are educationally defensible, appropriate for the students, and are not disruptive. School boards have authority to set curriculum and methods.

3. **Teachers' private activities must not impair their teaching effectiveness.** Although teachers hold the same rights as other citizens, their conduct is held to a higher standard. When teachers' private lives weaken their classroom effectiveness, it is possible that they may be dismissed. Sexual relationships with students are cause for dismissal (Fischer et al., 1999).

4. **Students have rights to due process.** Teachers' and schools' rules and procedures must be fair and reasonable, and justice must be administered evenhandedly. Due process is important for such issues as search and seizure, suspension, and expulsion (McCarthy, Cambron-McCabe, & Thomas, 1998). Families of students with disabilities have additional due process procedures related to special education services (Fischer et al., 1999).

5. **Teachers must not use academic penalties to punish behavior.** Students' academic grades cannot be lowered as a result of disciplinary infractions. Students must be allowed to make up work that accumulates during suspensions or other disciplinary periods (McCarthy et al., 1998).

6. **Corporal punishment must not be misused.** Fewer than half the states allow corporal—or physical—punishment (Underwood & Webb, 2006). In states where it is allowed, corporal punishment must be delivered while the teacher is not in a state of anger, it must fit the crime and the student's age and condition, and it must not lead to permanent injury or run the risk of such (McCarthy et al., 1998). Disciplinary actions that serve to humiliate a child may be illegal too.

7. **Teachers must protect children's safety.** Teachers must act in place of the parents (Alexander & Alexander, 2005), providing prudent, reasonable supervision to protect children from harm. They can be held negligent if they do not do so.

Teachers and schools can protect children's safety by establishing and enforcing rules pertaining to safety and by providing prudent, reasonable care in their supervision (Fischer et al., 1999).

8. **Teachers must not slander or libel their students.** Teachers must say and write only things about students that they know objectively to be true. Even confidential files must not contain statements that demean a student's character, background, or home life. Statements should be based on relevant observable behavior (Fischer et al., 1999). Teachers must share information only with personnel who have a right to such information.

9. **Teachers must copy instructional materials in accordance with copyright laws.** The reproduction without the author's permission of copyrighted instructional materials, including print sources, visual images, videotapes, and computer software, is restricted to conditions of fair use. Examples of fair use are a single copy of a book chapter for a teacher's own use, or a copy of a poem. Teachers may not make copies to replace collected works, nor may they make copies of consumable materials. Teachers may not make copies of computer software, and they are greatly restricted in their use of videotape in the classroom (Fischer et al., 1999; McCarthy et al., 1998). Teachers should consider materials found on the World Wide Web to be copyright protected, unless the materials state that they are public domain (Underwood & Webb, 2006).

10. **Teachers must report suspected child abuse.** All states require teachers to report suspected physical or sexual abuse, and no state requires certainty, only reasonable cause to believe that abuse is present (Fischer et al., 1999). If the state requires teachers to report suspected abuse to an agency, then a teacher's report to a principal or district does not satisfy the agency requirement; the teacher must also report to the agency (Underwood & Webb, 2006).

11. **teachers need to know the law.** Ignorance is no excuse.

12. **Teachers should be aware of emerging legal issues.** One is educational malpractice, which can be either instructional (wherein students fail to learn) or professional (wherein school personnel misdiagnose, provide improper placements, or misadvise students) (Underwood & Webb, 2006).

The most sweeping example of legislative action on classroom practice is the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. A reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, NCLB was motivated by persistent disparities in student achievement—achievement gaps—between the performance of U.S. students overall and subgroups of the population such as minority students, students with disabilities, and students whose families face poverty. The act sought to improve student achievement and increase school accountability for that achievement. Its major requirements include:

- Development by all states of student content standards
- Annual assessment of students in grades 3 through 8 (and once in high school) to determine proficiency in mathematics and reading in line with content standards
- Measurement of all school districts for adequate yearly progress (AYP) and continuous improvement based on this AYP benchmark
- Meeting of AYP for each of nine student subgroups (based on factors such as ethnicity, physical disability, and poverty)
- Requirement for all schools to have highly qualified teachers

NCLB has changed our classrooms dramatically, and its effects are hotly debated. Some benefits include (Center on Education Policy, 2006):

- Concerted efforts to align content standards (goals), instruction, and assessment
- Better use of student assessment data to plan instruction and meet student needs
- Increased student achievement on state tests, including the achievement for students with disabilities (Aarons, 2009)

Some analyses (e.g., Lee, 2006), however, do not support a lessening of achievement differences. The National Assessment of Education Progress, or NAEP, assesses student progress across the fifty states. Study scores yourself at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/. There you will see that, for 17-year-olds, reading and mathematics scores have not varied much; 2008 scores are just one or two points higher than 1973 scores (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009a). And approximately one-third of the nation’s schools failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in 2008–2009 (Center on Educational Policy, 2010).

Critics of NCLB condemn its assumptions (Rose, 2004), and many point to deleterious practices and effects associated with NCLB such as the following:

- The narrowing of the school curriculum, namely, to reading/language arts and mathematics (Berliner, 2009; Beveridge, 2010).
- A restriction of recess time, despite its cognitive, social, and health benefits (Pellegrini & Bohn, 2005).
- A lack of attention to students whose performance is perceived as less crucial for attaining targeted percentages of students deemed proficient. Such groups may include high-achieving students (Fordham Institute, 2008) and students whose performance is so low that they are unlikely to meet proficiency requirements, even with academic interventions (Booher-Jennings, 2006).
- “Gaming” practices wherein personnel focus on meeting achievement targets rather than on fostering student learning (Booher-Jennings, 2006; Rose, 2004).
- Lower teacher morale (Roller, n.d.), particularly in schools deemed high poverty (Byrd-Blake, Afolayan, Hunt, Fabunmi, Pryor, & Leander, 2010).

Current plans for the reauthorization of NCLB, among other things, attempt to address concerns such as sanctions-based growth models, equity gaps, the narrowed curriculum, and limits of current achievement tests (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Through NCLB and other laws and expectations, society influences classrooms deeply.

Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century
The when of teaching—the historical context—also shapes classrooms. Current events change us. Imagine for a moment how different life is for Americans since the horrific
events of September 11, 2001, or of the school-based acts of violence such as the 1999 Columbine shootings or the appalling 2007 shootings at Virginia Tech. Though rare, these events have shaped policies and procedures in schools, and they have affected the outlooks of many students and their families. We are a different people now.

Trends, too, matter. Your century—the 21st century—is one of globalization, regional economies, and connectivity. We have shifted from an industry-based society to an information-based one. Some telling examples of technology usage include such bits as:

- Americans have access to a trillion Web pages.
- Americans have 2 million televisions . . . in our bathrooms.
- During one month of his 2008 presidential campaign, Barack Obama earned $55 million . . . all on social network services.
- The social networking, microblogging service Twitter provided a key mechanism for mass protests in the disputed 2009 Iranian elections (Economist, 2009). Social media played perhaps even a larger role in the Egyptian unrest of 2011.

Indeed we live technology-soaked lives. Nearly three-quarters of people in the United States have access to the Internet at home (Internet World Statistics, 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). According to the Economist (2009), 93 percent of U.S. adults own cell phones, and the average teen sends 2,272 text messages per month. Not to be outdone, the average preschooler spends approximately fifty minutes on a home computer each day (Vandewater, Rideout, Wartella, Huang, Lee, & Shim, 2007). Today’s students are thus often considered digital natives (Prensky 2001, 2005/2006) who have grown up wired.

The influence of technology in our society is indeed fierce and pervasive, and some foresee that the rate of change fueled by technology will continue to increase and result in an unpredictable future. Such a future requires that our students possess a broad range of flexible skills. For example, a national organization, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009, p. 5) states, “People in the 21st century live in a technology and media-suffused environment, marked by various characteristics, including: 1) access to an abundance of information, 2) rapid changes in technology tools, and 3) the ability to collaborate and make individual contributions on an unprecedented scale. To be effective in the 21st century, citizens and workers must be able to exhibit a range of functional and critical thinking skills related to information, media and technology.” See 21st Century Teaching and Learning Tip for more on 21st century outcomes.

21st Century Teaching and Learning Tip

21ST CENTURY LEARNING OUTCOMES

Some organizations have specified standards for 21st century learners. For one set, visit www.p21.org for the Partnership for 21st Century Learning’s ideas about essential skills for the 21st century. Familiarize yourself with the framework, exploring the four major student outcomes:

1. Core subjects (such as mathematics) and 21st century themes (such as global awareness and health literacy)
2. Learning and innovation skills
3. Information, media, and technology skills
4. Life and career skills

According to the American Association of School Librarians’ (2007, p. 3) Standards for the 21st Century Learner, “Learners use skills, resources, and tools to:

1. Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge.
2. Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge.
3. Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society.
4. Pursue personal and aesthetic growth.”

Visit these standards at the Association’s Web site (ala.org)
Do schools have the technology tools to meet 21st century challenges? According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2010a):

- Approximately 100 percent of public schools have at least one computer with Internet access. In approximately one-third of the schools, that access is wireless.
- Nearly all (97%) schools have at least one instructional computer located in classrooms. The ratio of students to instructional computers with Internet access has dropped to 3.1 to 1.
- In most schools (93%), there is access to digital cameras or interactive whiteboards (73%).
- Public schools provide handheld devices infrequently to teachers (15%) and students (4%).

One-to-one laptop programs, where every student uses a laptop computer regularly, show potential for many positive outcomes (Holcomb, 2009). Some critics do, though, remain skeptical about expenses and effects of 1:1 computing (Cuban, 2006). Students are increasingly drawn to online instruction, which offers flexible scheduling and connects them with learners from all over the world. Even in 2005, 37 percent of U.S. school districts had students enrolled in technology-based distance education courses (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). Clearly, the 21st century and its ubiquitous technology affect who we teach, what we teach, and how we teach today, with more change in sight.

Local Influences on Teaching Today

By moving toward the center of the target in Figure 1.1, you travel through rings that represent increasingly local and specific settings. The settings found in these rings often have narrower and more explicitly defined purposes and expectations. For example, states develop content standards across the curriculum, and these standards influence state and local textbook adoptions, professional development activities for teachers, and learning opportunities for students. Community conditions, traditions, and events provide more local influences.

People, too, offer a variety of local influences. One integral group of people is the family. Effective teachers respond to the values and dreams of the families they serve and make use of the resources offered by families and their communities (Gonzalez, Andrade, Civil, & Moll, 2001; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). In fact, research consistently links effective family involvement programs with increased student achievement and other positive outcomes (e.g., Jeynes, 2005; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). Others who affect new teachers include their colleagues, administrators, and the experienced educators—mentors—who supervise their growth and represent the interests and values of the profession.

Circles of Influence: Opportunities and Challenges

The relationships among circles of influence (Figure 1.1) are dynamic and often riddled with tension and dilemma. Throughout history, the interactions among rings have frequently been emotionally, culturally, and politically charged. Which influences should receive priority? How do we as teachers manage demands and priorities from different sources and levels, especially when they compete? What are the opportunities and constraints offered by the many sources of influence? Questions such as these require us to consider—and reconsider—carefully the role of schooling in our society.

Sources of influence in the various rings offer many opportunities: The United States is a wealthy nation and has an estimated literacy rate of 99 percent (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010). We are leaders in fields such as technology and medical innovations. These are potentially positive sources of influence. However, sources of influence also offer constraints. Although the United States is a wealthy nation, we find huge disparities in wealth and opportunities to learn. Berliner (2006) indicates that students who face poverty face more severe health issues, lower academic achievement, and diminished life chances. Kozol’s work (1991, 2000, 2005) painfully documents the experiences of students who
experience institutionalized racism in unsafe and woefully understocked urban schools. Students in many urban and less affluent suburban schools, Kozol reports, can expect funding rates half those of nearby affluent schools. Less-than-fully-qualified teachers still disproportionately inhabit high-poverty, high-minority schools (Akiba, LeTendre, & Scribner, 2010; National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2009). Reports (e.g., Fordham Foundation, 2006) suggest that current reform efforts have done little to raise achievement for the students who need us most. Paige and Witty (2010), in that vein, argue that the Black-white achievement gap is the greatest civil rights issue of our time.

As another example of disparity, despite the prevalence of technology in our society at large, some of our students view each other across a digital divide. White students are more likely to use the Internet at home than are African-Americans or Latinos, and families with higher incomes and educational attainments are also more likely to use technology (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Latino immigrants are the least likely to have computer access (Fairlie, London, Rosner, & Pastor, 2006). The same divide exists for students who have physical disabilities.

Digital disparities are found in public schools as well. For example, a Florida study shows that students who attend low-socioeconomic schools have significantly less access to digital resources in every regard (Hohlfeld, Ritzhaupt, Barron, & Kemker, 2008). As a side note, technology and achievement gaps based on wealth and demographic factors occur across the globe, not just in the United States; try the search term “global digital divide.” Still, even though the United States is a country rich with opportunities, patterns of inequity exist, and those patterns affect what happens in classrooms and in the lives of our students—in and out of school.

It may appear that the general direction of influence for the rings or sources of influence is inward: Each of the concentric layers present daunting circumstances as well opportunities that press teachers to act in certain ways and to accomplish certain ends. Fortunately, the schools and the people who work within them can push back. They can act to lessen inequities in order to improve life and learning. For instance, in a growing set of schools studied by Reeves (2003), 90% percent or more of the students are from ethnic minorities, 90 percent or more are eligible for free or reduced lunch, and 90 percent or more achieve high academic standards. Clearly poverty need not be linked to low academic achievement; committed, caring, ardent individuals make a measurable difference daily. In the case of the digital divide, schools often also serve as an equalizing factor by providing access to technology that may not be available in students’ homes (DeBell & Chapman, 2006).
Our students themselves also offer huge potential for shaping life within the classroom. A large body of literature on democratic classrooms and education for democratic purposes urges us to mold classrooms that reflect each student as a caring member of the class and society (e.g., Allen, 1999; Banks, 2009; Bomer & Bomer, 2001; Education Commission of the States, 2000; Fuhrman & Lazerson, 2005; Rush, 2006). In democratic classrooms, students learn to care for each other and participate in decision making as they take responsibility for their behavior and learning. Democratic practices are especially important in diverse classrooms because they equalize status differences that may arise given student differences. See Inclusive and Responsive Teaching Tip for some ideas for encouraging democratic processes.

Students’ influence can extend beyond the classroom walls. For instance, Oakes and Rogers (2006) vigorously describe California students who learn power and reshape their woefully lacking public high schools by organizing and by working effectively with adult school leaders and community members. A similarly impressive effort is Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE; voyceproject.org), where students conducted action research and created a report of recommendations to lower the nation’s high school dropout rates (VOYCE, 2008). As students examine local conditions, challenge existing practices, and participate in social action or service learning projects (e.g., Allen, 2003; Darling-Hammond, French, & Garcia-Lopez, 2002), they shape their communities and their world.

In sum, as a teacher you are expected to teach not only toward your own ideals and aims but also toward the goals of the nested groups—rings on the target—to which you belong. A major theme of this text is that your teaching must start with the students; you must be inclusive of and responsive to your students and their families. You also have the responsibility to consider your outward influences as well. No doubt you will have opportunities to witness and manage tensions that result from the competing goals found in different rings. Part of your job will be to negotiate at least temporary solutions for the dilemmas found in competing goals. Take a few minutes to consider the goals and expectations of the circles of influence that envelop you. What influence do you hope to have in each of the rings? Try jotting your notes on Figure 1.1.

### Teaching Is Goal Driven

Why are you here? Look back at your chart from the beginning of this chapter. Many teachers select education as a profession because of the desire to help “light the candle” or watch the “lightbulbs click on” as they help students learn. Others hope to help students realize the power of an education to improve life. If so, you are not alone; teaching is driven by the...
goal of student improvement. Students should come to know more; to know more deeply; or to have enhanced skills, abilities, or attitudes because of their time with you. Although certainly teachers are affected by their learners, and effective teachers all continue to grow over time, instructor improvement is not the universal goal of teaching. The goal of teaching is change for the learner. What changes are expected? Who creates the change? Which methods are used? The answers to these questions vary, but always we expect that learners will leave the setting different from when they entered it. Teachers strive for positive differences in learners’ lives.

Teaching becomes complicated by the fact that teachers usually pursue many—and sometimes conflicting—goals. For instance, although a teacher may strive to help learners become more independent, she also needs to encourage order, and she may do so by praising conformity (“I like the way that Sung is sitting so nicely!”). Learners also pursue their own agendas. In a recent survey, fully one-third of the grade 3–12 respondents agreed with the statement, “I only do enough work to do as well as I need to get by in school” (MetLife, 2010). Here’s another example of a student agenda, this one from my son Alex. When his first-grade teacher stepped into the hall for a brief conversation, Alex immediately seized the moment and leapt onto his chair. Fists and face raised to the sky, he screamed “Let’s party!” In the face of many—sometimes competing—agendas, effective teachers are driven by the urgent goal of fostering change for the learners.

Do teachers in fact make a difference for learners? Research indicates that enhanced teacher preparation is associated with improved student learning (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2000; Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002, 2003), and research reported by Berliner (2004) finds that expert teachers have greater student achievement gains. Further, reviews of the literature (e.g., Bumgardner, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2003) present compelling evidence that individual teachers do, indeed, have a powerful effect on student learning. In a first-grade study, the teacher was five times more predictive of students’ mathematics achievement than was family socioeconomic status (Croninger, Rice, Rathbun, & Nishio, 2007).

Teaching is goal driven: Effective teachers set high expectations for students and then warmly demand that students meet those expectations (Kleinfeld, 1975). Warm demanders build authentic relationships with their diverse students and then insist that they achieve (Bondy & Ross, 2008; Irvine & Fraser, 1998; Ross, Bondy, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2008). Overall, you—the teacher—are the single most influential in-school contributor to student learning.

Teaching Is More than Telling

Part of the perception that teaching is easy stems from the mistaken notion that teaching and telling are the same thing: If a teacher says it, students will know it. Hear, if you will, that common though misguided teacher lament: “Come on, Class! We went over this!” Certainly a good lecture can be a powerful learning tool, but knowledge does not travel directly from the mouth of the teacher to the mind of the learner. Knowledge is constructed as learners filter and operate on new information using their own perspectives and experiences. Teachers need to help students connect new information to the known and to their own lives. Factors such as teachers’ experience and expectations affect student learning, and so do many factors such as students’ culture, physical characteristics, preferences, and prior experiences.

Because classrooms are interactive and dynamic, “teaching as telling” does not capitalize on the learners’ goals or on the power of their experiences. It also does not draw directly from current theories on how children learn. Figure 1.3 summarizes current views on how people learn.

One trend that emerges from these views on how people learn is that learning seems not to be a simple matter of reception. Instead, it appears to be about active engagement, about questioning, and about facing misunderstandings and building better understandings by organizing information in meaningful ways (Bransford, 2000; Gagnon & Collay, 2001; Marlowe & Page, 1998, National Research Council, 2000). Teaching as purely telling also...
**Behaviorist Approaches**
- Hold that learning occurs continuously and can be intentional or unintentional.
- Focus on observable behaviors and shaping them through rewards and punishments, or consequences.
- Reinforcers include grades, praise, and tangible items. Punishment can take the form of time-outs, detentions, and names on the board for misbehavior.
- Theorists include Skinner (1971), and, more recently, Bandura.

**Information Processing Approaches**
- Focus on how information is selectively perceived, stored in memory, and retrieved.
- Liken the brain to a computer, a system with limited capacity that processes information according to logic and rules. Information is received through the senses and then is perceived by the mind. It enters short-term memory either from the process of sensation or from long-term memory. Concepts are stored through schemata (systems of linked concepts).
- Teachers should be systematic in their instruction to enhance learning. Some important activities are gaining students’ attention, accessing background knowledge, focusing on organization of ideas, providing feedback, and supplying meaningful practice.
- Theorists include Gagne (1985) and Miller (Miller, 1956; Miller, Galanter, & Pribram, 1960).

**Constructivist Approaches**
- Focus on processes by which students build knowledge rather than receive it.
- Hold that we continually check new information against our mental rules in order to internalize and act on information.
- Purport that learning is social, and “disequilibration,” or cognitively unsettling experiences, cause learners to reorganize cognition at higher levels.
- Students should confront their current thinking by actively testing and refining their ideas. Heterogeneous groups provide opportunities for students to challenge and support each other’s thinking.
- Theorists and researchers include Bruner (1986), Driver (1989a, 1989b), Piaget (1952), and Vygotsky (1978).

**Multiple Intelligence Theory**
- Challenges the notion that intelligence is a single construct and suggests instead that people can be smart in many different ways.
- Holds that intelligences are many and currently include (1) logical or mathematical, (2) linguistic, (3) musical, (4) spatial, (5) bodily or kinesthetic, (6) interpersonal, (7) intrapersonal, and (8) naturalist intelligences.
- Urges schools and teachers to broaden the kinds of experiences offered to children.
- Practitioners find the theory powerful for questioning the assumption that a certain level of performance in one area is necessarily associated with a similar level of performance in another area.

**Brain-Based Research**
- Draws from neuroscience and suggests that the brain functions holistically, processing many kinds of information (such as emotions and facts) at once.
- Holds that the search for meaning and pattern making is innate.
- School experiences should be directly guided by how the brain functions by providing numerous complex and concrete experiences that are rich in sensory stimulation and embedded within human contexts.
- Some writers (Bruer, 1997), including proponents (Jensen, 2000), caution against making large inferential leaps to classroom contexts. Research is new and limited.
- Popular proponents include Caine and Caine (1994; Caine, Caine, McClintic, & Klimek, 2005) and Jensen (2005).
short-circuits learning by ignoring the large variety of strategies that teachers can use to help encourage growth. Skilled teachers have rich repertoires of instructional strategies. For example, research identifies teaching practices such as helping students to identify similarities and differences and to generate and test hypotheses as supporting student achievement (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollack, 2001).

Teachers can also foster learning by encouraging students to learn via texts, by themselves via experiences, and from each other through discussion and inquiry (Finkel, 2000).

Teaching is more than telling, too, because it involves listening (Mosher, 2001; Schultz, 2003). When people learn, they try to figure things out, to make sense of new information. One effective way to help learners understand things is to listen to their musings and questions. Listening is an important strategy that teachers can employ to slow down the presentation of new information, to give learners an opportunity to sort things out, and to help learners discover what they think. Finally, because teaching is interactional, listening is an informal assessment strategy; it gives us information about

**Teaching Tip**

**ACTIVE LISTENING**

Try some of these ways to encourage active listening in your classroom—for you and the students.

- Use and teach listening behaviors such as SLANT: Sit up, Lean forward, Ask questions, Nod, Track the speaker.
- Use and teach active listening strategies such as paraphrasing: “So what I hear you saying is . . .”
- Wait a bit after asking a question, and again before responding. Teach students to do the same.
- Call on multiple students to comment on any one question. Require students to link their comments to the previous student’s comments.
- Have students toss a ball made of something soft to each other as they comment. Only the person holding the ball speaks.
- If a student’s comments go unheard, don’t repeat the student’s comments for those who were not listening. Instead say, “I know your peers want to hear that. Wait just a second until . . . Okay, try again.”
the learners’ reasoning that can be used to guide our instructional decisions. The Teaching Tip gives suggestions to help you—and your students—practice active listening. The fact that teaching is more than telling is reflected in the agreement on what teachers need to know and be able to do.

**There Is Agreement on What Teachers Need to Know and Be able To Do**

Despite the perception that most people who have attended school understand teaching, and although some individuals may appear to be “born teachers,” there is a body of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that teachers can acquire. National and state panels codify the domains that teachers consider in their work. One of the most influential boards that has considered what it means to be an excellent teacher is the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS; see http://NBPTS.org). The NBPTS sets forth five propositions of effective practice, and these domains are assessed as experienced teachers pursue National Board certification. Domains of competence are assessed also for prospective and beginning teachers. Danielson’s (1996) framework for teaching, for instance, explores domains of practice for new teachers and forms the basis for the content assessed by the Praxis examination Educational Testing Service (ETS). The ETS has further explored the domains of practice by surveying practicing teachers and administrators (Tannenbaum & Rosenfeld, 1997). Many states also publish their own standards for the teaching profession. Figure 1.4

**Figure 1.4** Domains of teacher expertise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject-Matter Knowledge</th>
<th>Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Understanding human learning and the many factors (e.g., culture and context) that affect it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Holding rich, organized understanding of the content and how it is used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using specialized knowledge to help students build accurate and deep understandings of the content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assessing and using students’ background knowledge and incorporating it into instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Setting and communicating clear learning goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Creating and selecting learning experiences appropriate for students and goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Creating and selecting a rich variety of resources to enrich learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Committing to students and their ability to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Providing instruction aligned with communicated goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Building connections with previous learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Making content understandable for all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teaching for meaning, critical thinking, problem solving, and creative thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Monitoring student responses and adjusting instruction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Creating or selecting assessment strategies consistent with learning goals and student needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Measuring learning for groups and individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using multiple measures to assess growth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Management and Discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Creating safe climates that promote fairness, autonomy, and respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Setting norms for social interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Establishing and maintaining standards of student behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using routines, procedures, and time effectively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Modeling traits of an educated person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reflecting on goals and practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Building professional relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Working with families, communities, and the profession</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
synthesizes general conclusions about excellent teaching, drawn from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2002), the Praxis domains (Educational Testing Service, 2002), and various state standards for teaching.

In general, effective teachers

- Create productive and humane learning environments.
- Understand their subject matter, human development, diversity, and learning.
- Use their knowledge to plan meaningful instruction.
- Teach in ways that help students learn deeply.
- Assess students’ growth carefully and use results to modify their instruction.
- Engage in their profession by working with families, communities, and other educators to reflect on and improve teaching and learning.

Large bodies of research examine schooling practices, both to capture the experiences of teachers and learners and to determine promising teaching practices. Decades of research have provided some insights into how students and teachers make sense of the schooling experience, and this research provides many directions for practice (e.g., Berliner, 1984; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; Reynolds, 1992; Richardson, 2001; Stronge, 2002). This text distills past research and my own stance in urging you to become a successful teacher, an inclusive and responsive teacher. Figure 1.5 summarizes the vision of inclusive and responsive teaching developed throughout this text.

---

**Figure 1.5**

**Inclusive and responsive teaching.**

Inclusive and responsive teachers . . .

1. **Pursue understanding and continuous learning**
   - Recognize their own biases and the limits of their knowledge
   - Gather, analyze, and use data to replace assumptions and ignorance
   - Focus learning efforts on self, students, families, and the profession

2. **Display attitudes and build relationships of acceptance, trust, support, and high expectations**
   - Incorporate unfolding knowledge of students and families
   - View differences as normal
   - Build authentic relationships of warmth and trust
   - Set and communicate high expectations, pushing students to succeed
   - Do what it takes to support student success

3. **Use inclusive and responsive instructional and assessment approaches**
   - Incorporate unfolding understanding of students
   - Use a full range of resources to meet student needs
   - Use recognized approaches and strategies for meeting student needs
   - Include student choice and meaning-based approaches

4. **Use inclusive and responsive management approaches**
   - Maximize learning through a task-focused, structured environment
   - Focus on community building and authentic relationships
   - Employ democratic practices
   - Work toward self control
The questionnaire in Figure 1.6 presents an entry-level self-assessment that you can use to consider your current knowledge and skills. Mark areas that may figure prominently in a plan for your professional growth. If you like, formulate questions to capture these areas and record goals on your chart from the beginning of the chapter. You may also wish to flip ahead to chapters that will address your questions.

Teachers Can Be Effective and Yet Not Just Alike

Although there are documented domains of teaching expertise, few prescriptions hold in every circumstance. Teaching is uncertain and interactional. Part of teaching well is using a combination of one’s own talents, insights, skills, and professional judgments to encourage students’ learning and development.

Cicero’s sentiment underscores the personal and giving nature of teaching: What better or greater gift can we offer the republic than to teach and to instruct our young?

—Cicero
### Figure 1.7  Characteristics of effective teachers I have known.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Attributes</th>
<th>Professional Skills, Attributes, and Abilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher One:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Two:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 1.8  Personal characteristics that I bring to learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Personal Attributes</th>
<th>My Professional Skills and Abilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parting Words

Common misconceptions hold that teachers work toward a single set of unquestioned goals, usually by standing in front of a calm classroom and talking. Instead, this chapter suggests that teaching is a far more complicated act. It argues that teachers must encourage learner growth of many kinds while weighing often-competing demands and carefully considering their learners and the local context. Despite the complexity of teaching, we find some agreement in the literature about the kinds of things teachers should know and be able to do, and we know that there are many ways to practice the craft of teaching well. One place to start is by forming an educational philosophy, a personal stance toward teaching, as is encouraged in Chapter 2.

Between here and Chapter 2 you will find two end-of-chapter features. “Opportunities to Practice” asks you to apply what you know and to connect chapter ideas with your own thoughts and practice. “Web Sites” provides an opportunity for you to join a larger community conversation about teaching.

Opportunities to Practice

1. You know that good readers check their own comprehension. Without looking back through the text, jot down a list of important words from Chapter 1. Now compare your work with mine. Figure 1.9 is a word cloud of the text from Chapter 1. Compare your important words list with the cloud. Any surprises?

2. Teachers and researchers alike use metaphor as a tool to examine the nuances and varied roles of teaching. An Internet search using the linked terms “teacher as” and “metaphor” yielded the following recent analogies for what it means to teach. Place a checkmark near the ones that compel you. Use them to think about your own metaphors for teaching. You may elect to conduct your own Web search related to the metaphors that make you curious.

   Teacher as . . .
   ✔ Cultural broker
   ✔ Consciousness of the collective
   ✔ Container of anxiety
   ✔ DJ
   ✔ Executive
   ✔ Shaman
   ✔ Facilitator and authority
   ✔ Hero
   ✔ Leader
   ✔ Learner
   ✔ Rain dancer
   ✔ Archetype of spirit

3. Connect the work you did in Figures 1.1 and 1.6. In what ways have various sources of influence affected your perceived abilities as a teacher thus far? How might they influence your growth as a teacher in the future? Discuss the questionnaire in Figure 1.6 with a relatively new teacher.
and with an experienced one. You may wish to compare the value they place on the content of each question.

4. Visit MyLabSchool and select two contrasting lesson videos, perhaps two at different grade levels. As you view them, complete the chart below to consider how propositions of teaching play out in classroom interactions.

5. Go to one of the Web sites listed at the close of Chapter 1. First, find sources that influence what happens in classrooms. Add them to your work in Figure 1.1. Second, connect what you read on the Web sites with one or more of the six propositions of teaching. Talk with an experienced colleague about recent history related to that issue.

6. Interview a nonteacher about her views on effective teaching. Consider speaking with a parent, a student, or a professional who works outside of education and has little contact with students or schools. What do good teachers do? What do students wish teachers knew? How closely do your interviewee’s insights match the propositions from the chapter?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lesson 1</th>
<th>Lesson 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What are the contextual features that seem to shape the lesson? (example: age of student, geographic region, physical resources) (Teachers are part of a system.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>What does the teacher appear to be trying to help the students learn? How is she or he communicating high expectations and holding students to them? (Teaching is goal-driven.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>What strategies (other than “teaching as telling”) does the teacher use to help the students learn? (Teaching is more than telling.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>What is one individual—perhaps contrasting—strength that each teacher displays? (Teachers can be effective and yet not just alike.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using Wordle to Create Word Clouds

I created the nature of teaching word cloud with a free Web 2.0 application called Wordle (www.wordle.net). You and your students will no doubt find many uses for this easy-to-use, appealing application. Be sure to talk with your students about how design elements such as size, font, and color affect overall meaning.

Web Sites

http://www.ednews.org/
Education News. This site includes daily news related to education, updates on education law and policy, links to college and university newspapers, and links to education organizations.

http://www.ed.gov
The U.S. Department of Education. Provides information on legislative and policy issues such as the No Child Left Behind Act. The site has resources for students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

http://thegateway.org/
The Gateway to 21st Century Skills. This site is a consortium-run digital library that provides access to Internet-based instructional materials. Browse or search the catalog, or click on a term in the word cloud.

http://www.globalschoolnet.org/
Global SchoolNet is the original virtual meeting place for those interested in education to collaborate. Its goal is to improve 21st century learning through Web-based collaboration. Check the Projects Registry to find projects and partners.

http://www.servicelearning.org/
National Service-Learning Clearinghouse. A project of Learn and Serve America, the Clearinghouse includes national listservs and many service learning opportunities for students kindergarten through grade 12.

www.stateline.org
A public service funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, Stateline.org publishes news and policy information every week day. Choose a state or choose a topic, such as “education” or “technology.”

Although states are responsible for adopting their own academic content standards, professional organizations and other groups are influential in developing and recommending subject-area standards. A current state-led move seeks to develop a set of common core standards in mathematics and English language arts. States have the option of adopting these standards, and, at press time, most have. View the standards and learn more about the Common Core State Standards Initiative at http://www.corestandards.org/. Also view subject-based professional organizations and their recommendations by visiting the sites in the following chart.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Related Web Sites and Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>National Standards for Arts Education, developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Association</td>
<td><a href="http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/">http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/</a> ARTSEDGE: National Arts and Education Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Arts</td>
<td>Standards for the English Language Arts</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncte.org">http://www.ncte.org</a> National Council of Teachers of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>National Standards in Foreign Language Project</td>
<td><a href="http://www.actfl.org">http://www.actfl.org</a> American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aahperd.org">http://www.aahperd.org</a> American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Related Web Sites and Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History and Social Science</td>
<td>Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for the Social Studies</td>
<td><a href="http://www.socialstudies.org">http://www.socialstudies.org</a> National Council for the Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>National Educational Technology Standards for Students</td>
<td><a href="http://www.iste.org">http://www.iste.org</a> International Society for Technology in Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** For a concise history and summary of national standards across the curriculum, visit the Mid-continent Region Education and Learning site (http://www.mcrel.org/). Click on the “Compendium of Standards & Benchmarks” quick link.