

The Teacher as a Decision Maker



THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES INFORMATION THAT WILL HELP YOU TO

1. Describe the basic teaching functions and the key characteristics of effective teachers.
2. Recognize the professional teaching standards and understand the purposes they serve.
3. Formulate a plan to use reflection to enhance teacher decision making.
4. Describe ways that instruction of English language learners can be enhanced in all classrooms.

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EFFECTIVE TEACHING

DECISIONS ABOUT BASIC TEACHING FUNCTIONS

ESSENTIAL TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

EXPECTATIONS FOR EFFECTIVENESS

STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS

INTASC STANDARDS

PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING

NATIONAL BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS

THE TEACHER AS A REFLECTIVE DECISION MAKER

REFLECTION

ASPECTS OF INSTRUCTIONAL DECISION MAKING

REFLECTION AND A CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH TO TEACHING

TOOLS FOR BECOMING MORE REFLECTIVE

INCREASING STUDENT DIVERSITY

MORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

CHALLENGES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN ALL CLASSROOMS

THE SIOP MODEL

Your journey to become a teacher continues. You want to be an effective teacher, but what are the characteristics of effective teachers? What do they need to know and do? To a large extent, effective teaching involves making good decisions to help students learn.

Even before instruction takes place, teachers think about and make decisions concerning content, instructional strategies, the use of instructional materials and technology, delivery techniques, classroom management and discipline, assessment of student learning, and a host of other related issues. During instruction, teachers must implement these decisions as they interact with students in a dynamic way.

Decision making involves giving consideration to a matter, identifying the desired end result, determining the options to get to the end result, and then selecting the most suitable option to achieve the desired purpose. Teacher decisions about the issues just mentioned ultimately will influence student learning.

To examine teacher decision making and its relationship to teaching methods, the discussion in this chapter centers on four questions: What is effective teaching? What are the standards used to guide the professional development of teachers? How can a teacher be a reflective decision maker? How can instruction of English language learners (ELLs) be enhanced in all classrooms?

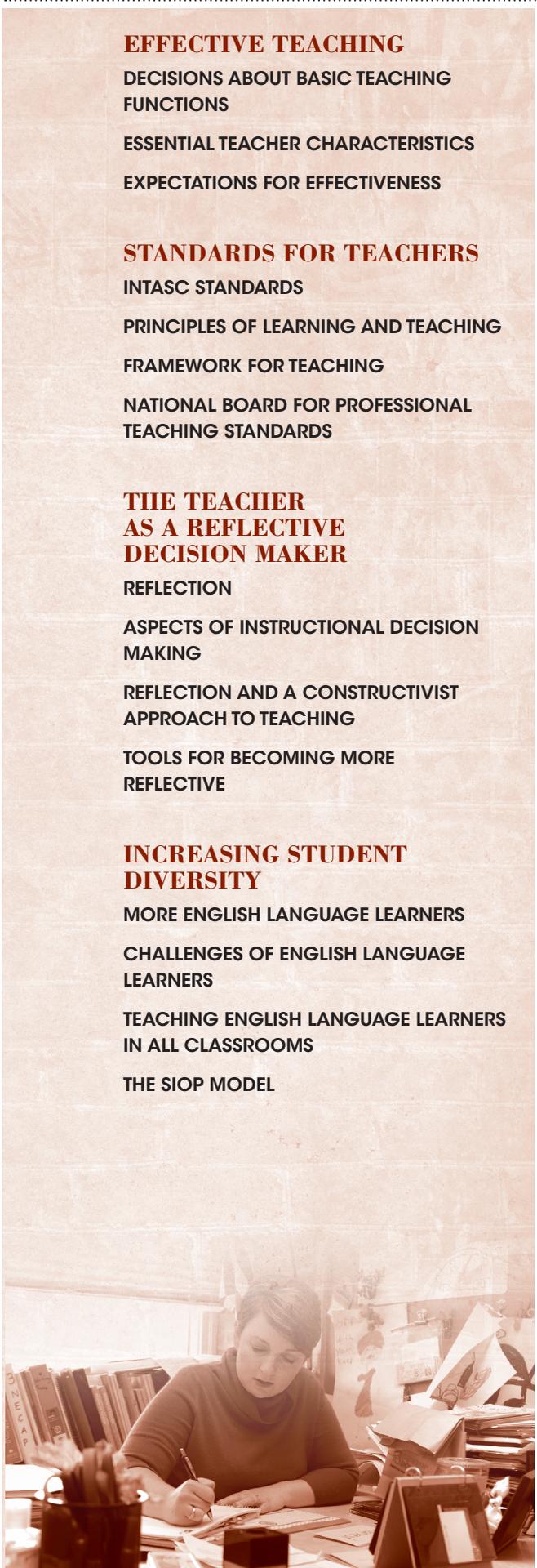
Effective Teaching

What are teachers' responsibilities, and what makes teachers effective in meeting these responsibilities? To answer these questions, it is useful to examine the basic teaching functions, essential teacher characteristics, and expectations for effectiveness.

DECISIONS ABOUT BASIC TEACHING FUNCTIONS

Teachers make countless decisions all day long in an effort to promote student learning. When you break the decisions down, they fall into three categories: planning, implementing, and assessing. Some decisions are made at the desk when preparing lesson or unit plans, designing an instructional activity, or grading papers. Other decisions are made on the spot during the dynamic interactions with students when delivering a lesson. Let's briefly examine these three basic teaching functions. Each will be considered in more detail in later chapters.

Planning. **Planning** involves teacher decisions about student needs, the most appropriate goals and objectives, the content to be taught, instructional strategies, lesson delivery techniques, instructional media, classroom climate, and student assessment. These decisions are made before actual instruction takes place. The goal of planning



is to ensure student learning. Planning occurs when teachers are alone and have time to reflect and consider issues such as short-range and long-range plans, student progress, time available, and instructional materials. Planning helps arrange the appropriate flow and sequence of instructional content and events. Planning is considered in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

Implementing. **Implementing** involves the actual enactment of the instructional plans concerning lesson delivery and assessment. Implementation occurs when interacting with students. Teaching skills that support implementation include presenting and explaining, questioning, listening, monitoring, giving feedback, and demonstrating. Additional skills are needed to monitor student behavior, enforce rules and procedures, use instructional technology, exhibit caring and respect, and create a positive learning environment.

As you can see, a multitude of skills are required for implementation of the instructional plans, and teachers make decisions constantly during the delivery of instruction to enact those plans and to promote student learning. Several chapters in this book relate to implementation, including topics such as differentiating instruction for diverse learners, instructional strategies, motivating students, strategies to promote student understanding, managing lesson delivery, and classroom management and discipline.

Assessing. **Assessing** involves determining the level of student learning. Actually, many aspects of assessment are determined during the planning phase when instructional goals and content are identified. The means to measure student learning include paper-and-pencil tests, portfolios, work samples, projects, reports, journals, models, presentations, demonstrations, and various other types of product and performance assessments. Once assessment data has been gathered, the information is recorded and judgments are made. Assessment is considered in more detail in Chapters 11 and 12.

Teacher decisions about planning, implementing, and assessing matter a great deal. As attempts are made to improve schools and increase student achievement, one constant has remained: Teachers are the most important factor in improving schools. Attempts to reform or improve education depend on the knowledge, skills, and commitment of teachers. This point is made emphatically by Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2007) in “A Good Teacher in Every Classroom: Preparing the Highly Qualified Teachers Our Children Deserve.” Teachers need to know how to implement new practices concerning the basic teaching functions, but they must also take ownership or the innovation will not succeed.

ESSENTIAL TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

When you reflect about the most effective teachers you have had, you may think about their warmth and caring, their creative instructional strategies, their strong command of the content, or their unique presentation skills. When examining effective teachers, the essential teacher characteristics fall into three categories: knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Let’s briefly examine each of these. The descriptions provided here are closely tied to the definitions of those terms provided by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2008).

Knowledge. Effective teachers must know the facts about the content they are teaching. That is vital, but it is not sufficient. Teachers also must have at least three other types of knowledge.

First, they must have professional knowledge related to teaching in general. This includes information about the historical, economic, sociological, philosophical, and psychological understanding of schooling and education. It also includes knowledge about learning, diversity, technology, professional ethics, legal and policy issues, pedagogy, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession of teaching.



DEMONSTRATING YOUR EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Teachers need to have the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be effective in the classroom. Throughout your teacher preparation program, you will learn and acquire many of these characteristics. Imagine that you are teaching a lesson in your first year of teaching.

1. How would it be evident in your lesson that you have the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be an effective teacher? What would the students observe in your teaching to identify these qualities?
2. What could you do during your teacher preparation program to acquire these qualities?

Second, teachers must have pedagogical knowledge, which includes the general concepts, theories, and research about effective teaching, regardless of the content area. Thus, it involves general teaching methods.

Finally, teachers must have pedagogical content knowledge. This involves teaching methods that are unique to a particular subject or the application of certain strategies in a manner particular to a subject. For example, there may be some unique ways to teach map reading skills in a social studies class. This also involves a thorough understanding of the content to teach it in multiple ways, drawing on the cultural backgrounds and prior knowledge and experiences of the students.

Thus, teachers must possess rich knowledge about the content, foundational information about teaching and learning, information about teaching methods in general, and information about teaching techniques unique to particular subjects.

Skills. Teachers also must possess the necessary skills to use their knowledge effectively in the four areas just described to ensure that all students are learning. Teachers must be able to apply these skills as they plan, implement, and assess in diverse teaching settings. In listings of professional standards, the term *performances* is sometimes used instead of the term *skills*.

Dispositions. Teachers also must have appropriate dispositions to promote learning for all students. **Dispositions** include the necessary values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence teacher behaviors. Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. Dispositions are affective, thus in the mind of teachers. But dispositions show up in teacher behaviors. For example, a teacher might be willing to use a variety of instructional strategies to promote learning for all students. This disposition could be evidenced by written plans indicating the use of cooperative learning groups, demonstrations, and a role-playing activity and by the actual use of those approaches when instruction took place.

When making decisions, you must have the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to help promote learning for all students. Research has shown that teacher expertise is one of the most important factors that influences student growth and achievement. There is interest in the educational community to develop criteria for the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teachers need to promote student achievement.

As a prospective teacher, it is important that you identify these essential teacher characteristics (knowledge, skills, dispositions) when you examine the main teaching functions



sample STANDARDS

DECISION MAKING AND REFLECTION

There are 10 InTASC standards (see pages xx-xxi), and each standard in the original document includes a list of performances, essential knowledge, and critical dispositions to indicate more clearly what is intended in the standard.

Since this chapter deals with decision making and reflection, some representative statements from InTASC Standard #9, Professional Learning and Ethical Practice, are listed here concerning topics in this chapter.

PERFORMANCES

- The teacher engages in ongoing learning opportunities to develop knowledge and skills in order to provide all learners with engaging curriculum and learning experiences based on local and state standards.
- The teacher engages in meaningful and appropriate professional learning experiences aligned with his/her own needs and the needs of the learners, school, and system.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

- The teacher understands and knows how to use a variety of self-assessment and problem-solving strategies to analyze and reflect on his/her practice and to plan for adaptations/adjustments.
- The teacher knows how to build and implement a plan for professional growth directly aligned with his/her needs as a growing professional using feedback from teacher evaluations and observations, data on learner performance, and school and systemwide priorities.

CRITICAL DISPOSITIONS

- The teacher sees him-/herself as a learner, continuously seeking opportunities to draw upon current education policy and research as sources of analysis and reflection to improve practice.
- The teacher understands the expectations of the profession including codes of ethics, professional standards of practice, and relevant law and policy.

of planning, implementing, and assessing. As the teaching functions are discussed in this book, several chapters have a boxed feature to indicate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to the chapter topic using the descriptions provided in the InTASC standards. For example, Chapter 3 on planning will include a box of information about representative knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to planning.

EXPECTATIONS FOR EFFECTIVENESS

Over the years, there have been calls to improve the quality of teaching, the quality and substance of the K–12 curriculum, and the performance of students on standardized tests. School districts and teachers always feel some degree of pressure from the local school district, the state and federal governments, professional organizations, legislators, and the public in general. Occasionally, there are major education reports with information about student performance, and then there are new calls for improving teacher education and the quality of teaching. Effective teaching is expected.

Measures of Effectiveness. Various approaches have been used to indicate the quality of teaching and its influence on student learning. One approach has been to examine student achievement test scores over a three-year time period in a so-called value-added comparison. This value-added concept compares the performance of a student against that same student's performance at an earlier time. The difference in the two assessments is taken as a measure of student learning growth, which can also be conceptualized as the value added by the instructional effectiveness of the teacher. Students' average annual rates of improvement are then used to estimate how much value a teacher has contributed to student achievement (Crane, 2002; Teaching Commission, 2004).

A second approach to determining the quality of teaching has involved the study of teacher test scores and their relationship to the achievement of their students. A series of studies correlated teachers' basic skills tests and college entrance exams with the scores of their students on standardized tests. These studies have found that high-scoring teachers are more likely to elicit significant gains in student achievement than their lower-scoring counterparts (Ferguson, 1998).

A third approach to determining the quality of teaching has involved the review of the content knowledge of teachers. A teacher's deep understanding of the content he or she teaches has a positive influence on student achievement. This appears especially true for science and mathematics teachers. In a review of research, Michael Allen, program director for the Education Commission of the States (ECS) Teaching Quality Policy Center, found support for the necessity of teachers being knowledgeable in their subjects and on how best to teach a particular subject (Allen, 2003).

In addition, teaching experience appears to have an influence on student achievement. Teachers with less teaching experience typically produce smaller learning gains in their students compared with more seasoned teachers (Murnane & Steele, 2007). However, most of those studies have also discovered that the benefits of experience level off after the first five or so years of teaching.

No Child Left Behind. While education is often considered a local and state matter, the federal government in the last decade has increased its involvement in how teachers are prepared and certified. This was undertaken through the “highly qualified” teacher provisions of the **No Child Left Behind Act** (NCLB, 2002). There are several provisions of this act.

1. *Highly qualified teachers.* To be deemed highly qualified, teachers must have a bachelor's degree, have full state certification or licensure, and prove that they know each subject they teach.
2. *State requirements.* NCLB requires that states (a) measure the extent to which all students have highly qualified teachers, particularly minority and disadvantaged students; (b) adopt goals and plans to ensure that all teachers are highly qualified; and (c) publicly report plans and progress in meeting teacher quality goals.
3. *Demonstration of competency.* Teachers (in middle and high schools) must prove that they know the subject they teach with (a) a major in the subject they teach, (b) credits equivalent to a major in the subject, (c) passage of a state-developed test, (d) meeting state standards for evaluation, (e) an advanced certification from the state, or (f) a graduate degree.
4. *State standards of evaluation.* NCLB allows states to develop a way for current teachers to demonstrate subject-matter competency and meet highly qualified teacher requirements. These standards must be high, objective, and uniform throughout the state. Proof may consist of a combination of teaching experience, professional development, and knowledge in the subject garnered over time in the profession.



Standards for Teachers

Each state identifies the licensure requirements for teachers. The states do not arbitrarily select criteria—they often rely on standards proposed by professional educational agencies. The following standards are among those commonly used by states: (a) InTASC standards, (b) Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT), (c) a Framework for Teaching, and (d) National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Each of these standards is outlined in detail on pages xx–xxiv of this book.

A state may use one of the standards, such as the InTASC standards, and then adapt them somewhat to serve as the basis for the teacher licensure requirements. Once a state

establishes its teacher licensure requirements, these become the standards that colleges use to design their teacher education programs. Consequently, you may see that your teacher education program includes many of the topics listed in the standards. Let's examine these four sets of standards.

INTASC STANDARDS

Sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) asked a committee of teachers, teacher educators, and state agency officials to prepare a set of standards for competent beginning teachers. Its 1992 report on model standards served as a guide for states as they determined their own teacher licensure requirements. Many states found those standards appropriate and enacted state licensure requirements that were identical or very similar to the INTASC standards.

The InTASC standards were revised in 2011. The new standards are no longer intended only for beginning teachers, but as professional practice standards. To reflect this emphasis, InTASC removed “New” from its name (and made the *N* a lower-case letter), renaming itself the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC). The new **InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards** (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011) reflect many contemporary goals of education. The model core teaching standards outline what teachers should know and be able to do to ensure every K–12 student reaches the goal of being ready to enter college or the workforce in today's world. The standards outline the common principles and foundations of teaching practice that cut across all subject areas and grade levels and that are necessary to improve student achievement.

As shown on the table of standards on pages xx–xxi, there are 10 InTASC standards in four areas: (1) the learner and learning—learner development, learning differences, and learning environments; (2) content knowledge—content knowledge and application of content; (3) instructional practice—assessment, planning for instruction, and instructional strategies; and (4) professional responsibility—professional learning and ethical practice and leadership and collaboration. For each standard, InTASC outlines the performances, essential knowledge, and critical dispositions for teachers. The identification of the dispositions makes the InTASC standards unique when comparing them to standards identified by other agencies.

PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) prepared several Praxis II tests to measure the knowledge of specific subjects that K–12 educators will teach, as well as general and subject-specific teaching skills and knowledge. The three Praxis II tests include Subject Assessments, Principles of Learning and Teaching, and Tests and Teaching Foundations Tests.

The **Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT)** test assesses general pedagogical knowledge concerning (a) students as learners, (b) instruction and assessment, (c) communication techniques, and (d) profession and community. These topics are outlined in more detail in the PLT standards list on page xxi of this book. Many states require applicants for teaching licenses to take the PLT and report a passing score before granting the teaching license. Because of this, colleges with teacher education programs often give a great deal of attention to the content of the PLT and incorporate the necessary topics into their teacher education programs.

FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) developed the Pathwise Series of Professional Development programs as a research-based approach to advance professional learning and practice for school leaders and teachers. Charlotte Danielson (2007) worked with ETS to prepare and validate the criteria for this program and then, based on the ETS program

criteria, she proposed a framework for teaching in her book *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*.

Framework for Teaching is divided into four domains and provides a useful organizer for examining the important responsibilities of teachers. In her book, Danielson provides rubrics for each item to assess the level of teacher performance. The rubric descriptors for unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and distinguished provide clarity for the meaning of each item. A detailed outline of Danielson's Framework for Teaching is displayed on page xxii of this book.

Many teacher education programs give a great deal of attention to the Framework for Teaching because of its strong research support. As a result, these colleges have incorporated the domains into their teacher education programs. Here is a brief review of the four domains in Danielson's Framework for Teaching.

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation. Planning provides a structure for how content is organized during the process of planning for instruction. Key concepts within this domain are (a) demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, (b) demonstrating knowledge of students, (c) selecting instructional goals, (d) demonstrating a knowledge of resources, (e) designing coherent instruction, and (f) designing student assessments.

Domain 2: Classroom Environment. The classroom environment is more than just the physical space of a classroom. It encompasses the interactions between the teacher and students, as well as the expectations for learning and achievement and the expectations and norms for learning and behavior. Positive classroom environments are associated with a range of important outcomes for students related to motivation, achievement, and safety. Key concepts in this domain are (a) creating an environment of respect and rapport, (b) establishing a culture that promotes learning, (c) managing classroom procedures, (d) managing student behavior, and (e) organizing physical space.

Domain 3: Instruction. Instruction is the central focus of the teaching–learning act. It is where the teacher and the student move through an instructional sequence. Key concepts within this domain are (a) communicating with students, (b) using questioning and discussion techniques, (c) engaging students in learning, (d) using assessments in instruction, and (e) demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness.

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities. Professional responsibilities focus on those dispositions and skills that the teacher uses not only to be effective in the present but also to ensure future success as a professional. Central to this domain is the ability to reflect accurately on the planning process and the implementation of instruction and then to think deeply about how to improve the teaching–learning process for students. Key concepts within this domain are (a) reflecting on teaching, (b) maintaining accurate records, (c) communicating with families, (d) participating in a professional community, (e) growing and developing professionally, and (f) showing professionalism.

NATIONAL BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS

The **National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)** was initiated in 1987 to establish “high and rigorous” standards for the teaching profession, create a voluntary system to certify accomplished teaching, create professional development opportunities, and increase the status of the teaching profession in America. The board's work is guided by five core propositions that articulate what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do (NBPTS, 2005). These core propositions are used as a foundation to assess teaching in a variety of subjects and for teachers working with students at all grade levels.

Details for the five core propositions are outlined on pages xxiii–xxiv. Briefly stated, the NBPTS core propositions are as follows:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

These five core propositions describe the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that characterize accomplished teaching. Because of the recognized importance of these criteria, many teacher education programs incorporate features of the five core propositions in their programs.

Experienced teachers choosing to be nationally board certified must prepare portfolios and include a videotape of their teaching, provide samples of student learning products, and provide analyses and reflection on their professional practice. A central goal of the NBPTS assessment process is to improve teacher performance through the collection of evidence of teaching excellence. After completion of the portfolio, teachers travel to an assessment center where they answer questions related to the subject area in which they teach. This rigorous process is voluntary. Some school districts provide a financial bonus for teachers who become certified through this process.



The Teacher as a Reflective Decision Maker

When teachers examine and reflect on their teaching, it opens a door to personal and professional development. The ultimate goal, of course, is to promote student learning, and teacher reflection is one way to achieve that goal. In this section, we examine reflection from several perspectives, aspects of instructional decision making, reflection as part of a constructivist way to teaching, and tools for becoming more reflective.

REFLECTION

To learn requires that a person reflect on past practice. As a consequence, reflection about one's experiences is a cornerstone of professional competence (York-Barr, Sommers, Ghre, & Montie, 2006). **Reflection** can be defined as a way of thinking about educational matters that involves the ability to make rational choices and to assume responsibility for those choices. Reflection requires that teachers be introspective, open-minded, and willing to accept responsibility for decisions and actions. Reflection facilitates learning and continued professional growth, and it is an important factor in the ability of teachers to be effective throughout their careers (Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, & Enz, 2000). Educators can reflect on many things, such as their dispositions, objectives, teaching strategies, and the effect each of these factors have on student achievement.

As reflective practitioners, teachers need to be willing to analyze their own traits and behaviors in relation to the events that take place in the classroom. Teachers, therefore, need to observe and attempt to make sense of situations by checking their insights against prior experience. Information they receive from their students can also be helpful.

Some schools arrange for two or more teachers to meet to address issues and reflect on their practice. **Reflective practice** is a problem-solving strategy by which individuals or groups can work to improve practice by reviewing routines and the procedures and other aspects of the instructional environment. To engage in reflective practice

requires an environment of support. It requires an organizational climate that encourages open communication, critical dialogue, risk taking, and collaboration (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004).

We next examine the relationship between effective teaching and reflection, reflection in the professional standards, approaches to reflection, characteristics of reflective teachers, and benefits of reflection.

Effective Teaching and Reflection. There is a relationship between effective teaching and reflection. An effective teacher draws on education and experience to make decisions about what to teach, how to teach, and how to provide an atmosphere that supports student learning (Cooper; J. M., 2011; Jensen & Kiley, 2005). Thus, effective teachers reflect on and examine their own teaching and the success of their students. Each of these skills is essential to an effective teacher who is focused on students' achievement and meeting intended learning outcomes. The relationship of these topics is displayed in Figure 1.1.

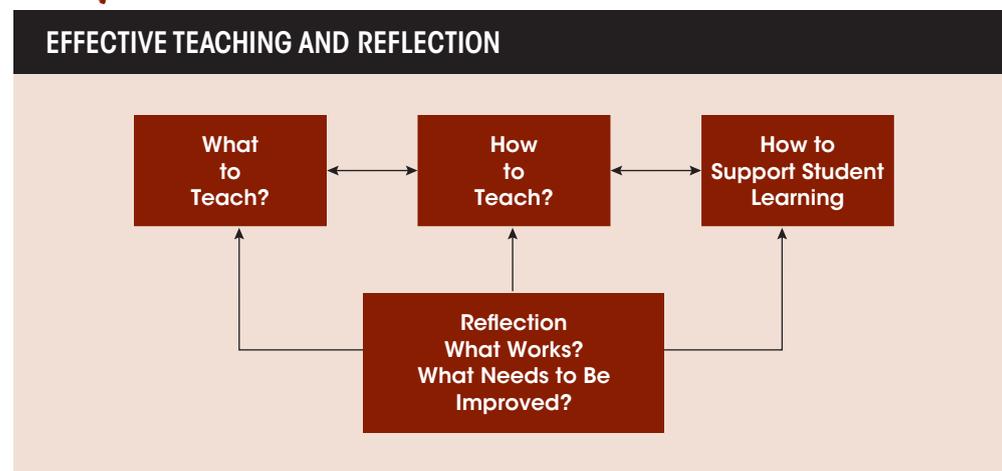
1. *What to teach.* Effective teachers have a strong command of the subject matter they are assigned to teach. In addition, they have the ability to make decisions about the selection of materials and examples used to introduce the subject matter to their students.

2. *How to teach.* Effective teachers have a large collection of teaching strategies that they can draw on to maximize student achievement. Expert teachers recognize that they need to use a variety of methods and strategies to meet the varied learning needs of their students and to capture and maintain student interest and motivation. This is especially important when teachers realize that the strategy they are using has not led to success for all students and that a different strategy needs to be employed.

3. *How to provide an atmosphere that supports student learning.* Knowing the content and knowing about instructional strategies are not sufficient to promote student learning. Effective teachers also must create the necessary classroom conditions to enable student learning; they must create a positive learning community.

Reflection in the Professional Standards. Reflection by teachers to improve their practice is included in the NBPTS and InTASC standards. Core Proposition 4 of the NBPTS states that “teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.” With this standard, teachers critically examine their practice on a regular basis to deepen knowledge, expand their repertoire of skills, and incorporate new findings into their practice. When reflecting on how a lesson went, teachers answer two reflective questions: (1) What would I do differently and (2) what are my next steps to improve my teaching and student learning?

FIGURE 1.1



The InTASC standards also offer a vision for teacher reflection. Standard #9, Professional Learning and Ethical Practice, is especially relevant to being a reflective teacher. This standard calls for teachers to engage in ongoing professional learning and use evidence to continually evaluate their practice and adapt their practice to meet the needs of each learner. Representative statements from Standard #9 for performances, essential knowledge, and critical dispositions are displayed in the Sample Standards table in this chapter on page 5.

The InTASC standards are also embraced by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2008). The council asserts that teacher candidates should be able to work with students, families, and communities to reflect the dispositions of professional educators as delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards.

Approaches for Reflection. Three commonly used approaches that teachers use as a basis for reflection are (1) classroom observations by supervisors and peers, (2) digital tapes of their teaching, and (3) document analysis. Reviewing a digital tape of one's teaching, for example, can bring focus and clarity to what worked and what did not. Building on what worked can make a real difference for students. Along with the digital tapes, analyzing related documents facilitates reflection. Examples of documents that may be collected and analyzed include daily lesson plans, long-term plans, samples of student work, instructional materials, and assessment instruments. All of these pieces of evidence can be evaluated against specific criteria related to instructional behaviors, classroom management, and teacher expectations for their students' performance.

The following six activities also can provide a focus for reflection:

1. Classroom visitations to a master teacher's classroom to view a lesson being taught, along with an opportunity to reflect and debrief.
2. Reading an article on a new strategy and discussing it with colleagues in a study group.
3. Reviewing sample lesson plans and adapting them for your classroom.
4. Co-planning and co-teaching lessons with a coach or knowledgeable peer.
5. Planning with colleagues to implement new practices, such as students' exhibits of their work.
6. Digital taping a lesson and requesting collegial review and feedback.

Learning takes place when teachers reflect on their own practice and when they are formally evaluated. Learning also happens for supervisors and peers who serve as mentors or evaluators of teachers during this reflective process (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Characteristics of Reflective Teachers. Reflective teachers share characteristics that enable them to grow and improve as they learn from experience. Teachers make decisions both big and small issues, such as how to organize students in groups, how to motivate students and promote positive behaviors, and how to focus students on the tasks and assess their learning.

Reflective teachers exhibit the following qualities:

- *Have a disposition toward reflection.* They have a good sense of when they need to think deeply about their teaching. They are purposeful and committed to improving their craft.
- *Ask questions and are curious.* They have inquisitive minds. Reflective thinking in teaching is associated with the work of Dewey (1933, 1938) who suggested that reflection begins with a dilemma. Effective teachers suspend making conclusions about a dilemma in order to gather information, study the problem, gain new knowledge, and come to a sound decision. This deliberate contemplation brings about new learning.
- *Seek deep understanding of the issues.* Reflective thought is the opposite of superficial thinking, which is thinking that lacks evidence, is based on false beliefs or assumptions,

VOICES from the Classroom

SUE GARVER, third-grade teacher, Riley, Kansas



REFLECTIONS ON MY INSTRUCTIONAL PLANS

I find myself constantly evaluating what I do in my classroom on a daily and yearly basis. There are several things that I do on a regular basis that help me be more reflective in my teaching. First, I meet with other teachers during our breaks or after school to compare ways we teach a subject and share new ideas. This is a time when I reflect on the methods I currently use to present a subject and on ways that I could improve my teaching methods.

Second, I take a few minutes at the end of each day to evaluate the lessons I taught that day. I write my reflective comments in my plan book next to the plans for each lesson. These notes address the success

of the lesson, what I did right in the lesson, what could be done to better meet the needs of individuals, and anything else that might be helpful next time I teach that lesson. I keep those lesson plans close by when planning for the following year.

Third, reflecting upon my teaching makes it easier for me to set goals for myself. I have found that I can set goals easily when I make these reflective notes during the school year and when I take time at the end of the school year to reflect on my teaching. Being a reflective person has allowed me to grow and improve in my teaching.

or mindlessly conforms to custom or authority (Valli, 1997). The experience of teaching and the events that transpire in classrooms have value. When reflected on, these experiences can shape the future for both teachers and their students. Reflective teachers seek deep understanding of all issues related to curriculum and instruction.

- *Take responsibility for their teaching decisions.* Reflective teachers accept the consequences of their decisions. They seek out better solutions for challenges or problems.
- *Are purposeful and committed to improving their craft.* Reflective teachers are not satisfied with the status quo. They want to continually improve themselves and their teaching.

Benefits of Reflection. The primary benefit of reflection is that it helps teachers improve their ability to teach and meet the needs of the students in their classes. A recent study of pre-service teachers found that higher levels of reflection by the teachers were related to higher final student teacher evaluations (Pultorak & Barnes, 2009). Novice teachers also report that they value and benefit from reflecting on teaching (Cruickshank et al., 2009).

There are many benefits for teachers who reflect on their practice. Reflective teaching can enhance your learning about teaching, increase your ability to analyze and understand classroom events, help you to establish an inviting and thoughtful environment, help you to become self-monitoring, and promote personal and professional development (Cruickshank et al., 2009).

Minott (2007) points out that reflective teaching leads to a number of positive effects for teachers, including the development of the following:

- Self-directed critical thinking inquiry skills
- Contextualized knowledge about teaching and learning that can be applied in similar situations (e.g., when to change instructional strategies or lesson pacing)
- Willingness to question, take risks in learning, and try new strategies and ideas

- Higher-order thinking skills and the ability to reflect on one's own learning process
- Both cognitive (e.g., knowing how to ask questions that help students engage and think deeply) and affective skills (e.g., valuing students as individuals capable of learning)
- Increased ability to react, respond, assess, and revise while teaching
- Ability to implement new activities and approaches on the spot
- Improved self-awareness and knowledge
- Improved coping strategies (e.g., the ability to redirect student inappropriate behaviors rather than with a response that will escalate the situation).

See Figure 1.2 for a sample teacher reflection written after viewing a recorded lesson.

ASPECTS OF INSTRUCTIONAL DECISION MAKING

The classroom teaching environment is complex and multifaceted, and dealing with complex problem situations is a dominant element in the life of a teacher. The complex life of teachers can be better understood by considering the relationship of teachers' decision making and the conditions and purposes they are trying to address in the classroom. Four aspects of decision making in the teaching environment are considered here.

First, teachers make decisions when planning, implementing, and assessing instruction and when creating proper conditions for a positive learning environment. Each step involves multifaceted classroom conditions and student characteristics. When planning for instruction, for example, teachers must decide on goals and objectives, needs assessments, appropriate instructional strategies, materials and technology, and evaluation of student performance. Numerous factors must be considered when making decisions about each step.

Second, teachers make moment-by-moment decisions to adjust their plans to fit the continually changing and uncertain conditions found in classrooms. Teachers learn to make these adjustments through the knowledge they have gained within the context of their classrooms, the interactive nature of their thinking, and their speculations about how these adjustments will affect the classroom environment.

Third, teachers make decisions to achieve varied academic, social, and behavioral goals. For instance, a teacher might make decisions about monitoring student behavior while working with a single small group of students. At the same time, the teacher might have expectations for students' social and academic performance. Thus, the teacher must consider these varied goals and decide on ways to plan and implement the goals simultaneously.

Fourth, teachers make decisions to interact with students in a variety of ways in a complex environment. For example, teachers do a number of things to monitor and respond to students' off-task behavior. Effective teachers have a high degree of **withitness**, which is their ability to be aware of what is happening in the classroom and to communicate that awareness to the students through their actions (Kounin, 1970). Decisions related to withitness are continually made by teachers.

REFLECTION AND A CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH TO TEACHING

A related concept to teacher decision making and reflection is constructivist theory. **Constructivist theory** holds that individuals construct meaning and understanding through their prior knowledge and then apply this knowledge in new current situations. In a constructivist classroom, the teacher searches for students' understandings of concepts

FIGURE 1.2

A SAMPLE TEACHER REFLECTION

The Scenario

Ms. P, a third-year eighth-grade science teacher, wrote the following reflection after viewing her recorded lesson on the effectiveness of common stomach antacids. Students were required to test the initial pH of a solution representing stomach acid, and then attempt to counteract the “heartburn” by adding doses of various liquids and tablet antacids. She digitally recorded the lesson and asked her school principal to observe the lesson and provide feedback.

The Teacher's Reflection

After viewing myself in front of the classroom, I noticed several things about my methods, technique, and delivery of instruction. For example, I think of myself as being quite mobile in the classroom, visiting with students in small groups during independent work and circulating around the room when I am engaging the whole class in instruction. I feel this helps my classroom management and keeps students more on task and engaged in the lesson. In the video, however, I was not as mobile as I typically think I am.

I also noticed that I tend to repeat myself frequently. I always considered this to be a positive aspect of my teaching, as I am sure that most students benefit from repeated instruction. My principal's feedback suggested that I rephrase information and present it in multiple ways. This way, I am still providing the information repeatedly, but in such a way that a wider range of students will be able to access the material.

Before viewing this video I prided myself on being on top of the students and keeping their attention focused for the entire length of the class. My opinion of my strengths has changed since viewing my lesson. Throughout the video, I noticed students who were totally uninterested, making faces behind my back, and unready to take risks when answering questions. I was surprised to notice that even when they were involved in hands-on activities, some students were as uninterested as they were during direct instruction.

I know that I need to increase my students' interest and motivation during instruction, but at this point I am unsure how to proceed. That's the area I want to focus on. I need to think about that and look at the research literature.

Follow-Up Questions for the Reader

What steps can Ms. P take to improve her teaching? What strategies could she utilize to maximize student interest?

How can constructive criticism from colleagues help teachers improve their practice?

What value can digitally recording lessons contribute to helping teachers reflect on their practice?

Comments Concerning the Teacher's Reflection

By digitally recording her lesson and asking the principal to observe and provide feedback, Ms. P was open to gaining new insights about her teaching and expressed interest in reflecting on her experiences in the lesson. The recording and the principal's feedback provided information that she might not otherwise have had.

Ms. P next wanted to focus on increasing student interest and motivation. She spoke to peers and researched this topic. She found one particularly useful article on the topic and decided to apply motivational concepts and strategies recommended in that article (Pintrich, 2003). The first motivational concept was *supporting the students' belief that they can succeed*. If students believe they are able to do well, they are likely to be motivated in terms of effort and persistence. Confident students will also be more cognitively engaged in thinking and learning. To apply this motivational concept, Ms. P provided opportunities for students to build skills and master the course material, and she also provided clear and accurate feedback to students on their performance. She designed tasks that challenge students but also offered the support they need to be successful.

In a later laboratory experience, students conducted a survey of the school grounds and developed appropriate classification keys to group plants and animals by shared characteristics. After the project was finished, a student mentioned that the assignment was hard but she learned a lot. Ms. P was pleased and saw this as a sign that she was providing a supportive but rigorous classroom atmosphere.

The second motivational concept was for students to *practice self-control and choice* during activities and for the teacher to *develop relationships with her students and to promote the development of a community of learners who support each other*. Ms. P began emphasizing the importance of previous lessons and their link to the current and future lessons; students then connected more readily with the material. She also stressed that students need to work hard every day and that effort, planning, and self-control lead to classroom success. She worked to build an atmosphere where students felt responsible for their

FIGURE 1.2 (continued)**A SAMPLE TEACHER REFLECTION**

learning and rejected the perception that they are “helpless learners” with no control over their engagement or achievement.

While doing this, Ms. P worked to build personal relations with her students. She did this through a series of routines, including moving around the room and engaging students on a personal level during independent work time. Her engagement had an academic focus (e.g., feedback and correctives) but also provided an opportunity for her to show students that she values them as individuals and that she cares about their personal and educational success. She also wanted to take more opportunities to praise students and refer to their work products or behaviors: “Ella you were a great scribe today for your group,” or “Aiden your hypothesis and research design in today’s activity was very well thought out.”

The third motivational concept was recognizing that *goals motivate and direct student success*.

Ms. P continues to have her students work in cooperative groups for laboratory activities but now incorporates practices into the labs that her students follow, such as students agreeing to take on a specific responsibility (e.g., organizer, timekeeper, recorder), agreeing to work together on a common activity, and everyone taking responsibility for supporting the learning of everyone in the group.

As Ms. P continues to ask questions about how she teaches and what she expects from students, she continues to use reflection and research to improve her teaching, her classroom climate, and her students’ mastery and deep understandings of science. It is not unusual for Ms. P to feel that while she is perceived as being effective, she is not satisfied. However, she plans to continue to engage in reflection about her teaching and to expand her repertoire of teaching skills. She is modeling being a reflective teacher.

and then structures learning opportunities for students to refine or revise these understandings by posing contradictions, presenting new information, asking questions, encouraging research, and/or engaging students in inquiries designed to challenge current concepts.

In a constructivist classroom, there are five overarching principles: (1) Teachers seek and value their students’ points of view, (2) classroom activities challenge students’ suppositions, (3) teachers pose problems of emerging relevance, (4) teachers build lessons around primary concepts and “big” ideas, and (5) teachers assess student learning in the context of daily teaching. As you can see, a tremendous amount of teacher decision making and reflection is needed to establish and maintain a constructivist classroom in an effort to meet the academic needs of the students when using this instructional approach.

Students should be challenged by the activities and stimulated by questions from both the teacher and themselves. A key feature of this model is that students are encouraged to actively seek understanding and knowledge by relating new investigations to previous understandings (Gagnon & Collay, 2006; Marlowe & Page, 2005).

Teachers who reflect on their own practice employ a constructivist perspective. They constantly review significant events that take place in the classroom and try to clarify and improve their understanding of teaching and learning. In a study of beginning teachers (McCombs, 2003), the teachers reported that the process of reflection and self-assessment helped them identify areas for improvement and assisted them in implementing practices to be more effective in reaching students. As you read this text, you will encounter many concepts related to teaching, and you will have the opportunity to reflect on how these concepts can help you become a better teacher and help your students become better learners.

TOOLS FOR BECOMING MORE REFLECTIVE

Teachers can improve their ability to reflect on practice by using a variety of methods. Your willingness to use these techniques can promote your professional growth.



VOICES

from the Classroom

ELLEN VANNOY, middle school language arts teacher, Charleston, West Virginia

TEACHER AS A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

After the last class of each day, I take a moment to reflect on my daily plans. I usually put an asterisk (*) on each activity that hit a major Core Standard in a positive, productive way. I place a minus sign (-) on any area that I think needs more attention. Taking the time each day to reflect

on my teaching forces me to change the lesson plan to best meet the needs of my students. I don't treat my lesson plans as pristine documents to archive for the next year. Instead, I write notes on them and scribble in the margins to guide my revision for the next time I teach the lesson.

1. Portfolio development. The development of portfolios in which teachers collect and organize materials and artifacts such as lesson plans, videotapes of lessons with self-critiques, and examples of analysis of students' work is fast becoming the norm in teacher preparation and professional licensure. Purposefully collecting and analyzing sets of artifacts demonstrate the ability to reflect on important indicators of success.

Many of the current portfolio review processes share common features with National Board Certification. Using the InTASC standards, a number of states including California, Colorado, Connecticut, and Oregon have begun requiring a portfolio as the basis for granting an initial teacher license or for beginning teachers as part of a mentoring and induction process. The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the national organization that accredits college and university teacher education programs, also uses a performance-based model of assessments to provide evidence that teachers meet teaching standards.

The portfolio process calls for you to document your plans and instructional strategies within a unit of instruction; videotape a lesson and analyze your teaching; provide students with an assessment; and evaluate whether students met objectives and if not, how you will move students to higher levels of learning. The reflection section calls for careful thought on what worked and what did not, along with an analysis and description of how you would change or improve your unit and lessons in the future.

2. Journaling. It has long been known that writing can help to clarify your thoughts and enhance your ability to think about your classroom and improve your teaching. A dialogue journal (Cruickshank et al., 2009) takes the journaling process and makes it interactive. A conversation about teaching can provide you with feedback on your analyses of your teaching and your next steps to improve your teaching or classroom procedures.

Advances in technology have made sharing journals and receiving feedback electronically fast and easily implemented. Social networking software has also expanded the number of people who can respond to a posted reflection. As the audience for a reflection is expanded, it becomes important that your journal entry include enough information about the event you are reflecting on to be helpful. These steps of journal writing are also valuable to ensure you reflect fully (Hole & McEntee, 1999):

- 1. What happened?** A brief description of the incident or event central to your reflection.
- 2. Why did it happen?** Why do you think this event, student behavior, or situation occurred?
- 3. What could I have done differently?** What strategy could you use in the future to be a more effective teacher?

4. *What might it mean for student learning?* Think about what this classroom event or incident might mean and what might you change in the future to improve student learning.

3. *Action Research.* **Action research** is systematic inquiry by teachers with the purpose of improving their practice (Levin & Rock, 2003). It often is done collaboratively by a group of colleagues who are searching for solutions to the everyday problems they face. These real problems frequently center on improving curriculum, instruction, student achievement, or other issues related to school improvement. Many school districts use action research as a powerful professional development strategy for teachers. Teachers work alongside colleagues in their buildings to collect and analyze data to gain insights into their question, take action based on what they learn in the process, and share their learning with others so the entire education community can benefit (Dana, 2009; Ferrance, 2000).

Action research projects may focus on one teacher's classroom or on broader, school-wide concerns. In a single classroom, a teacher may conduct an action research project concerning questioning techniques, the effects of a certain teaching strategy, the effects of the use of technology, or other curriculum and instruction topics. Action research projects also may focus on school improvement efforts such as assessing the impact of efforts with low-performing students, exploring alternatives to suspension as a disciplinary consequence, determining the effects of a newly implemented inclusion model for students with special needs, or other schoolwide issues.

Data collected in action research often includes measures of student achievement such as standardized test scores, grades, and dropout rates. Each of these measures can have significant implications for deciding if a program or strategy is effective. Action research also focuses on *why* certain program results were achieved, not just what was achieved. Therefore, many forms of data are collected and analyzed, including faculty and student interviews, student work samples, reflective journals, surveys, and other measures.

4. *Student Journal Writing.* Just as teachers can gain greater understanding from reflecting through journal writing, so can their students. Student journal writing can serve a number of goals (e.g., recording events or notes, personal reflections on experiences, or developing questions for future study). For our purposes, we are focusing on journals in which students construct knowledge or demonstrate understanding of what they learned and how it relates to class goals and objectives.

Journal writing can become an important tool for student learning when they are asked to write about what they learned. It promotes students' critical thinking and serves as a record of students' ability to focus on critical aspects of their education. It also reinforces the importance of writing across the curriculum and serves as a record of student thought. Journal writing helps students unpack how and what they learned and encourages students to take ownership of their learning (Boud, 2001).

Reflective journal writing has advantages for both students and teachers (Spaulding & Wilson, 2002). For students, journal writing serves as a permanent record of thoughts and experiences, establishes and supports a relationship with the teacher, provides a safe outlet for frustrations and concerns, and aids students' ability to reflect about important class objectives. For the teacher, reflective journal writing serves as a window into student thinking and learning, establishes and maintains a relationship with the student, and can also serve as a dialog between teacher and student to enhance learning for both (e.g., Bolin, 1990). Reflective journal writing provides an opportunity for both teachers and students to assess and learn.



Increasing Student Diversity

Students in your classroom will vary in many ways. This **diversity** may be in ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and even geographical area (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education,

2008). Many of these characteristics will be examined in Chapter 2. Of course, this diversity has always been evident in U.S. classrooms.

There are two areas of diversity that demand special attention—students with disabilities and English language learners. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) addresses educators' responsibilities concerning students with disabilities. Disabilities include visual, hearing, speech, or physical impairments; emotional or behavioral disorders; intellectual disabilities; autism; and other classifications. The number of students identified as disabled has increased over the years, and regular classroom teachers have a responsibility to work with these students.

The number of English language learners, however, has increased even more. Over the past 25 years, the characteristics of the U.S. population have changed, and consequently, the characteristics of the K–12 student population also have changed. The most apparent changes in schools are the increasing number of students from ethnic and racial minority groups and the significant increase in the number of students whose first language is not English. Consider the following facts about the current U.S. student population (most from Kober, 2006, unless noted otherwise):

- Children of color account for 4 out of 10 public school students—a proportion that is expected to increase in coming years (57 percent white, 19 percent Latino, 16 percent African American, 4 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 3 percent other).
- Children of color make up the majority of public school enrollments in six states and many districts.
- Hispanics, African Americans, and Asians combined make up the majority of the population in 48 of the 100 largest U.S. cities (Macionis, 2011).
- About one in five school-age children is a child of immigrants.
- English language learners—students whose first language is not English and who are learning English—account for 1 in every 10 public school students.

CLASSROOM CASE STUDY

IMPROVING TEACHING THROUGH REFLECTION

Joel Escher is an experienced seventh-grade language arts teacher. After attending a professional development session on reflective teaching, he decided to videotape himself during some of his classes to better understand how to involve more of his students in whole-group discussions.

After watching the videotaped sessions of his recent classes, Mr. Escher noticed that he was neglecting some of his students during class discussions because he tended to stand on one side of the room. Since his posture was directed to only half of his class, he did not notice students outside his field of vision who were raising their hands but not called on to participate in the discussion.

In addition, Mr. Escher recognized that he didn't give students much time to formulate a response after he asked a question. On the videotape, several students

appeared to be considering his question, but he called on another student before more students could formulate a response. To resolve this problem, Mr. Escher decided that he would write key questions on the board prior to class and then give students a couple of minutes prior to class discussions to jot down some ideas to share with the whole group.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. If Mr. Escher did not have access to video equipment, how else could he have learned why his whole-group discussions were unsuccessful?
2. Reflecting on your own classroom experiences, what recommendations can you make for conducting successful whole-class discussions?

- More than one third of public school students are from low-income families.
- Almost 14 percent of public school students receive special services because they have a disability. Three fourths of these students with disabilities were educated in regular classrooms with other children for a significant part of the school day.

MORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

As just noted, **English language learners (ELLs)** are students whose first language is not English and who need help learning to speak, read, and write in English. Due to immigration and the higher levels of ethnic diversity in the U.S. student population, it is not surprising that the number of ELLs has also increased significantly in the past 15 to 20 years. There are many different types of ELLs, ranging from students who are very educated to those with limited schooling, from children of professional families to children of migrant workers, from recent arrivals to the United States to those born here. In addition to functioning in two languages, ELLs also navigate two cultures.

According to statistics compiled by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA, 2011), the number of ELLs has increased by 51 percent from 1999 to 2009, totaling more than 5.3 million students, or almost 11 percent of the student population. The largest numbers of ELLs are in seven states: California, Arizona, Texas, Florida, Illinois, North Carolina, and New York. There are almost 1.5 million ELLs in California schools, representing almost 24% of the student enrollment (California Department of Education, 2011). From 1999 to 2009, high rates of growth in ELL enrollments have taken place in many Southern and Midwestern states (NCELA, 2011). Even small cities and rural areas are now home to immigrant families and their children.

Currently, over 400 different languages are spoken in the United States, with the most common language groups being Spanish (representing over 79 percent of all ELLs), Vietnamese, Hmong, Chinese, and Korean (NCELA, 2004, 2005, 2008).

You should expect to have students in your classroom who are learning English, and you should be prepared to meet their learning needs. In a national study, most new teachers ranked reducing class size and preparing teachers to adapt or vary their instruction to meet the needs of a diverse classroom as the top ways to improve teaching (Public Agenda, 2008).

CHALLENGES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Imagine what it would be like to have limited knowledge of English when attending school. It would be difficult to understand the teacher and the other students, and it would affect your ability to understand teacher directions, participate in the instructional activities, and complete classroom assessments. Your overall school performance would be affected. In fact, ELLs often experience challenges in school, as indicated by the following facts:

- A dramatic, lingering divide in achievement exists between white students and those from culturally and linguistically diverse groups on state and national measures of achievement (California Dept. of Education, 2004; Grigg, Daane, Jin, & Campbell, 2002; Kindler, 2002).
- ELLs have some of the highest dropout rates and are more frequently placed in lower-ability groups and academic tracks than language-majority students (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000; Steinberg & Almeida, 2004).
- Only 10 percent of young adults who speak English at home fail to complete high school, but the percentage is three times higher (31 percent) for young adult ELLs (NCES, 2005).

TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN ALL CLASSROOMS

Because of the large number of ELLs in schools today, *all* teachers are teachers of English. There are four major instructional models for serving ELLs, characterized by the degree to



HOW YOU ADDRESS STUDENT DIVERSITY

You will likely have students with many different characteristics in your first year of teaching. Student diversity is evident in many ways, such as by language, disability, or cognitive ability. Some types of diversity are easily recognized or noticed, other types are less obvious. Nevertheless, effective teachers need to promote learning by all of their students.

1. In what ways are you similar to other students in your current college class? In what ways are you different?
2. What challenges do you envision when you address the diversity of students in your first year of teaching? What can you do during your teacher preparation program to minimize these challenges?

which they incorporate a student's native language and the approach they take to delivering academic content (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007): (1) instructional methods using the native language, (2) instructional methods using the native language as support, (3) instructional methods using English as a second language (ESL), and (4) content-based or sheltered instruction.

The last approach, sheltered instruction, has been widely used in the United States. **Sheltered instruction** is an approach to teaching content to ELLs in strategic ways that make subject-matter concepts comprehensible while promoting the students' English language development. There are two well-known sheltered instruction programs: the cognitive academic language learning approach (CALLA) and the sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP).

CALLA is a program that integrates content-area instruction with language development activities and explicit instruction in learning strategies (Chamot, 2009). It helps ELLs become active learners who focus on concepts and meanings, rather than language forms. CALLA teachers develop five-phase lesson plans that include preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation, and expansion. This approach has been used successfully by many teachers in sheltered classes, but some teachers have found the planning to be difficult. In addition, ELLs with low levels of English proficiency and limited background knowledge still struggle to learn grade-appropriate content in English (Freeman & Freeman, 2007). Of the sheltered instruction programs, the SIOP model is widely adopted and is emphasized here.

THE SIOP MODEL

One of the best researched and most highly developed models to teach ELLs is the **sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP) model** (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). The SIOP model was originally a lesson plan observation protocol, but it has evolved to an effective lesson planning and delivery system. It is a way to plan and teach content in a way that is understandable for ELLs and that also promotes their English language development. With increasing student diversity in language, meeting the needs of ELLs can be facilitated by the SIOP model because it provides more flexibility in the design and delivery of instruction.

The SIOP model may be used as a lesson planning guide for sheltered content lessons, and it embeds features of high-quality instruction into its design. The model is not an add-on responsibility for teachers but rather a planning framework that ensures effective practices are implemented to benefit all learners (Echevarria et al., 2008). The SIOP model has eight components and 30 features, as displayed in Figure 1.3. Other than the lesson preparation component being first, there is no particular hierarchy or order to the eight

SIOP components. The components and features of the SIOP model are interrelated and integrated into each lesson.

Even students who are not struggling readers or English learners will benefit when a teacher plans and delivers instruction using the SIOP model (Echevarria et al., 2008). Mainstream teachers at all grade levels can effectively use the SIOP model to benefit all learners in their classrooms. Because of this, various components of the SIOP model will be more fully described in other chapters in this book. For example, information in the SIOP model concerning lesson delivery will be discussed in Chapter 8, Managing Lesson Delivery. Other topics will be considered in the appropriate chapters to provide guidance in using the SIOP model components to meet the needs of all learners.

FIGURE 1.3

COMPONENTS OF THE SIOP MODEL

Lesson Preparation

- Clearly define, display, and review content objectives with the students.
- Clearly define, display, and review language objectives with the students.
- Select content concepts that are appropriate for age and educational background of the students.
- Use supplementary materials to a high degree, making the lesson clear and meaningful.
- Adapt content to all levels of student proficiency.
- Provide meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts with language practice opportunities.

Building Background

- Explicitly link concepts to students' background experiences.
- Make explicit links between past learning and new concepts.
- Emphasize key vocabulary.

Comprehensible Input

- Speak appropriately for students' proficiency levels.
- Provide clear explanations of academic tasks.
- Use a variety of techniques to make content concepts clear.

Strategies

- Provide ample opportunities for students to use learning strategies.
- Consistently use scaffolding techniques to assist and support student understanding.
- Use a variety of questions or tasks that promote higher-order thinking skills.

Interaction

- Provide frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion.

- Group students to support language and content objectives of the lesson.
- Consistently provide sufficient wait time for student responses.
- Give ample opportunities for students to clarify key concepts in their first language.

Practice / Application

- Supply hands-on materials for students to practice using new content knowledge.
- Provide activities for students to apply content and language knowledge.
- Integrate all language skills into each lesson.

Lesson Delivery

- Clearly support content objectives by lesson delivery.
- Clearly support language objectives by lesson delivery.
- Engage students during 90–100 percent of the lesson.
- Appropriately pace the lesson to the students' ability levels.

Review and Assessment

- Provide comprehensive review of key vocabulary.
- Supply comprehensive review of key content concepts.
- Provide regular feedback to students on their output.
- Conduct assessments of student comprehension and learning of all lesson objectives throughout the lesson.

Source: Adapted from Echevarria, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D. J. (2008). *Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Key Terms

Action research
Assessing
Constructivist theory
Decision making
Dispositions
Diversity
English language learners (ELLs)

Framework for Teaching Implementing
Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC)
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)

No Child Left Behind Act
Planning
Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT)
Reflection
Reflective practice
Sheltered instruction

Sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP) model
Withitness



Major Concepts

1. Teachers make decisions concerning three basic teaching functions: planning, implementing, and assessing.
2. Essential teacher characteristics fall into three categories: knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
3. Teachers are expected to be effective, and many surveys, reports, and state and federal guidelines address ways for them to achieve this.
4. Professional teaching standards are used to guide the selection of state teaching licensure requirements and the development of teacher education programs at colleges and universities.
5. Teaching is centrally the act of decision making. Teachers plan and act through the process of thought and reflection.
6. Reflection can be defined as a way of thinking about educational matters that involves the ability to make rational choices and to assume responsibility for those choices.
7. The strategies in the SIOP model can be used to reach English language learners in all classrooms.



Discussion/Reflective Questions

1. Which is the most important teaching function: planning, implementing, or assessing? Why?
2. Give some examples of dispositions related to teaching. Why are dispositions important?
3. How might teacher reflection help teachers improve their practice?
4. What are some of the strengths of the SIOP model?



Suggested Activities

FOR CLINICAL SETTINGS

1. Select a significant event from a class you have attended on campus during the last three weeks. Reflect on what worked well in that class using one of the teacher standard tables discussed in this chapter. (The standard tables with the complete list of items and subitems are displayed in this book just before Chapter 1.)
2. Teach a brief lesson to a small group of peers. Write and reflect about a significant event that took place during your lesson. Consider how you could improve the lesson if you were to teach it again.
3. Imagine that you will be teaching a lesson on your state's history to eighth graders. Identify ways that you might apply at least five aspects of the SIOP model (see Figure 1.3) in that lesson.

FOR FIELD EXPERIENCES

1. Talk with several teachers to see how they have continued their professional development since beginning to teach (e.g., staff development programs, graduate courses). Show them the Framework for Teaching table (just before Chapter 1) and ask them to identify and discuss the areas where they have improved.
2. Ask several teachers to discuss how they think about their teaching and then decide to make improvements. Do they have a regular process for this? What suggestions do they have for your reflective process?
3. Ask several teachers to describe how they teach English language learners in their classroom.



Further Reading

Carr, J. F., Fauske, J. R., & Rushton, S. (2008). *Teaching and leading from the inside out: A model for reflection, exploration, and action*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Explains reflective practice and offers practical strategies to integrate reflective practice into daily work.

Echevarria, J. J., Vogt, M. J., & Short, D. J. (2008). *Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Provides details about each SIOP component, rubric rating forms on SIOP use, lesson plan formats, and guidelines for use.

Taggart, G. L., & Wilson, A. P. (2005). *Promoting reflective thinking in teachers: Fifty action strategies* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

A thorough presentation of strategies for instilling reflective practices in educators. The tasks and tools provided were specifically designed to help teachers become critical thinkers.

York-Barr, J., Sommers, W. A., Ghere, G. S., & Montie, J. (2006). *Reflective practice to improve schools: An action guide for educators* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

A very useful guide that provides a framework for reflective thinking and acting. Offers examples of strategies to guide individuals, small groups, or schoolwide reflection.



Technology Resources

PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

<http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/0524.pdf>

This is the official website describing the PLT test. A detailed outline for each of the six content categories is provided.

WORDPRESS

<http://wordpress.com/>

This is one of the more popular blogging platforms that can be used for reflective practice. This free service also gives access to plenty of tools such as spell-check, an integrated statistics tracker, and spam protection. A hosted WordPress has many more options and features than the free version. A good place to have a hosted (i.e., paid) WordPress blog is DynamicsDS (<http://dynamicsds.com/w/>).

BLOGGER

<http://www.blogger.com>

Blogger is a Google application that offers lots of tools for easy blogging. You will need a Google account, but it also works well with all the other Google tools.

WRIGHT'S ROOM

<http://shelleywright.wordpress.com/>

Is an actual blog by a high school teacher, and is a fine example of reflective blogging and information sharing.

MyEducationLab™

Go to the **MyEducationLab** (www.myeducationlab.com) for General Methods and familiarize yourself with the content:

- Topically organized Assignments and Activities, tied to learning outcomes for the course, that can help you more deeply understand course content
- Topically organized Building Teaching Skills and Dispositions learning units allow you to apply and develop understanding of teaching methods.
- A chapter-specific pretest that assesses your understanding of the content offers hints and feedback for

each question and generates a study plan including links to Review, Practice, and Enrichment activities that will enhance your understanding of the concepts. A Study Plan posttest with hints and feedback ensures you understood concepts from the chapter after having completed the enrichment activities.

A Correlation Guide may be downloaded by instructors to show how MyEducationLab content aligns to this book.

