WELCOME TO THE NINTH EDITION!

Because education is one of the critical components in society, the quality of education is the subject of much debate. This debate is often passionate and complex. Education is in an age of reform, focusing on every aspect of education from the preparation of teachers to the quality of preschool. These reform proposals have the potential to dramatically change education as we know it. Because change can be positive or negative, education today poses many challenges and opportunities. One thing is certain—the status quo is not acceptable.

The responsibilities of those involved in education include evaluating proposals for change and making sure that the interests of students are upheld. The nation needs quality teachers who have a clear grasp of basic issues—motivating us to write the ninth edition of Teaching Today.

We have had exciting and productive careers in education and we have found teaching to be a fascinating and rewarding profession. We want to encourage the best and the brightest of our nation to accept the challenge to be teachers. However, to enter the teaching field as a challenging responsible individual, preservice teachers must understand that thorns go with the roses. Teaching in today's world brings many challenges. Perhaps that is what makes the success sweet. Therefore, in Teaching Today we have tried to provide a strong dose of reality. We want individuals to realize that there are many conflicting points of view and no national consensus about the goals of education or how they should be accomplished. Although we recognize that there might be some who find this conflict and the prospect of profound change disconcerting, we believe that many of today's students are invigorated by this prospect, realizing that they can play an important role in shaping the lives of students and the future society.

In preparing the ninth edition, we have emphasized topics that are relevant to the world you will enter as an educator. In addition to basic information about these topics, we have attempted to give alternative perspectives on these issues so that you can better analyze, reflect, and decide.

This text provides opportunities for you to reflect on issues and develop your personal perspectives. We encourage you to track your growth toward becoming a professional educator.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS TEXT

Both undergraduate and graduate students have used earlier editions of Teaching Today in their search to develop a broad understanding of the complex world of education. This edition organizes content under three major headings, as listed and described below.

Part 1 The Changing Profession. If there is one constant in contemporary education, it is change. Many proposals for changing the education profession come from various sectors. Chapter 1 focuses on the changing nature of education and the forces influencing that change. Chapter 2 emphasizes the process of becoming
a professional educator and the possible roles that educators play. Chapter 3 discusses specific proposals for reforming schools.

**Part 2 Working with Students.** Chapter 4 presents information on selected characteristics of students and patterns of development that influence student learning and the way it is affected by diversity, including students with exceptional challenges and those with exceptional gifts. Chapter 5 focuses on the classroom environment, and Chapter 6 discusses what is taught and how it is taught. Chapter 7 emphasizes assessment. In an age of accountability, it is important for teachers to know how data are gathered and to be able to determine whether students have learned.

**Part 3 Forces Shaping Educational Policies and Practices.** This, the most extensive section, discusses several forces. Chapter 8 focuses on the history of education so that teachers can understand how educational practices and policies were developed. It is important to note that we define history as not just one story, but as several stories. Chapter 9 discusses the role of school in society and different perspectives through which education can be viewed. Chapter 10 focuses on specific educational philosophies and how they influence educational policy and practice. Chapter 11 presents legal issues relating to the rights and responsibilities of teachers and students.

**NEW TO THE NINTH EDITION**

**Additions**

- **NEW FORMAT: Pearson eText** This new ninth edition is available as a Pearson eText. Readers are able to access additional content not available through print, such as in embedded video and direct links to related content on the Web. To learn more about the Pearson eText, go to [www.pearsonhighered.com/etextbooks](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/etextbooks).

  - Two chapters (Who Are the Students and How Has Diversity Affected Teaching?) were combined to form a new chapter titled How Our Changing Students Are Changing Teaching.

  - A second new chapter was added titled How Can We Create a Positive Learning Environment?

  - Dispositions have always played a major role in teaching. The previous edition of Teaching Today discussed the importance of dispositions in teaching. Some of the chapters contained a feature titled Disposition Check. Because this feature was so strongly accepted, these activities have been added to all chapters in the ninth edition.

**Deletions**

- Because the impact of technology has spread to all parts of schooling, a chapter titled How Is Technology Changing Education? has been deleted, and the information on technology’s impact on schooling has been spread through all chapters in the book.

- A second chapter titled Who Controls and Finances Education? has been deleted.
• Previous editions of *Teaching Today* had a feature titled *Critical Incident*. Because the readers responded so favorably to this feature, additional Critical Incidents have been added to the ninth edition. The feature titled *A Day In the Life . . .* was equally popular, and therefore some new *A Day in the Life* scenarios have been added to this edition.

**Citations**

• No book can experience a true revision without a thorough updating of the research and knowledge base. The ninth edition contains updates in every chapter. This updating has been thorough: It includes new research studies, dozens of new quotes from the literature, and the latest education polls.

• New education standards and other reform efforts have been included. The new research studies include new approaches to meeting the needs of multilingual students; the exposure of current and traditional practices that contribute to violence and the lasting effects of ability grouping; new media literacy; the effects technology has on immigrant students; and new uses of technology to meet the needs of all students.

• Special attention has been given to the differences in the behaviors of teachers in low-achievement schools whose students experience high achievements; and the differences in schooling in those countries that consistently outperform U.S. students in science and mathematics.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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PART I
THE CHANGING PROFESSION

CHAPTER ONE
How Is Education Changing?

CHAPTER TWO
What Does It Take to Become a Professional Educator?

CHAPTER THREE
What Are the Proposals for School Reform?
CHAPTER ONE

HOW IS EDUCATION CHANGING?
OBJECTIVES
This chapter will help you to
• identify basic foundational questions related to education.
• describe many of the realities teachers face each day.
• point out characteristics that add to the complexity of teachers’ responsibilities.
• explain how changes related to characteristics of learners, knowledge about teaching and learning, views of education’s purposes, curriculum standards, and demands for learner and teacher accountability affect teachers’ work today.
• describe advantages of creating a professional-development portfolio.

INTRODUCTION
Welcome to the interesting world of education. Education is one of the basic institutions of society. The quality of education in a given society has a direct link to that nation’s social, economic, and political health. As a result, it is a subject of intense interest for a variety of individuals, ranging from the parents and guardians of young children to business and political leaders on the national stage.

Those considering teaching will find it to be a demanding, exciting, rewarding, and frustrating profession—sometimes all in the same day! Some teachers choose the profession because of their love of the discipline; others, because of their love of students (Zhang & Coleman, 2012). The U.S. Department of Labor reports teaching as one of the most complex occupations (Silva, 2010). But teaching is also a satisfying profession. The percentage of teachers who agree that most teachers are very satisfied with their profession increased from 40% in 1984 to 62% in 2008 (Met-Life Report, 2009). Their happiness spills over into the classroom (Ripley, 2010). There is nothing more rewarding than to see students’ eyes suddenly widen as they get it—to see the excitement of students who are succeeding, and to know that you have played an important role in their success. However, it is just as frustrating to see students with potential waste that potential and remain unmotivated or even hostile to learning and intellectual growth.

Teaching is often labeled society’s “essential” profession. As a teacher, you have an impact on the most valuable resource in society, the youth of the nation. For this reason, the effectiveness of teachers is extremely important to students’ lives (Semadeni, 2010).

Teaching has always been viewed as an honorable profession, and it is currently enjoying a high degree of popularity. Almost three-fourths (70%) of U.S. parents say they would like to have their children become teachers (Bushaw & McNee, 2009). It is not unusual for individuals who are honored for their contributions to society to single out a teacher who had an impact on their lives. Without good teachers there would not be good engineers, physicians, attorneys, scientists, musicians, politicians, and others who contribute to the overall health of a society.

There is certainly no shortage of ideas about what education should be and what teachers should do. Because all citizens have had some personal experience with education, they tend to view themselves as “experts.” For example, one
of the authors has found that the reactions of individuals vary according to how he introduces himself. If he introduces himself as a "researcher" or a "writer," there is usually a relatively low-key response. However, if he introduces himself as a "teacher," people often launch into a discussion about what needs to be done to improve education! You will find that these ideas about education vary tremendously. As you analyze individual proposals, you will encounter many suggestions that are supported by compelling evidence and have great potential for enhancing the quality of learners' experiences in school. On the other hand, you are certain to encounter other prescriptions for improvement that, if implemented, might actually diminish the quality of school programs. One of your challenges as an educator will be to distinguish between school-improvement proposals with legitimate prospects of making schools better and more dubious propositions with little potential to make positive changes.

**WHAT ARE THE FOUNDATIONS?**

To understand the current status of education and evaluate proposals for improvement requires an understanding of the foundations of education. The foundations comprise the set of historical, philosophical, social, legal, and cultural assumptions that form a logical base for decisions about schools and schooling. As a preparation for making informed decisions about competing school-improvement ideas, you will find it useful to know something about questions associated with the foundations of education. Some examples associated with selected foundation categories follow:

- **Social and philosophical foundations.** What is the good society, and how should education contribute to that society? (Many debates about changes in education are really debates among people who have different views of what constitutes the good society. Debates about what should be taught and who should be taught are two areas of conflict in the social and philosophical foundations.)

- **Historical foundations.** Where did current school practices and traditions originate, and are they still important? (Current school practices did not come about because a group of experts sat down and worked from a blank slate. Historical developments have greatly influenced our educational system. Your task is to determine the extent to which these historical influences still have merit.)

- **Political foundations.** Who has the power to decide priorities and to influence how schools operate? (You will find that some proposals for changes in the ways schools conduct their business are directed at the wrong audience. For example, letters to the editor on topics related to education are often directed to "teachers" when they should be directed at the school board or state legislators who are making the rules. You and others interested in school reform
need to know who has the power to make decisions that will result in desired changes.)

- **Curriculum foundations.** *What is taught, and why is it taught?* The term *curriculum* is used to describe the overall framework for an instructional program. (You will find that much debate about the quality of education centers on what is taught in the schools. Content is important [Hersh, 2009]. There is consensus around the idea that the curriculum must keep up to date with technological changes. However, contention rages around other issues. Should more be required of learners at earlier ages? How much content about different cultures should be included? Should young people be allowed to learn in their primary language? Are some subjects “frills” that can be eliminated?)

- **Instructional foundations.** *What is good teaching?* The term *instruction* refers to teaching approaches that are used to help learners achieve the overall purposes that are outlined in the curriculum. (The issue of good teaching is central to any debate about education. You will find that not everybody defines “good teaching” in the same way. For example, some people want teachers to embrace findings of recent research into how the brain operates and processes information. Others favor approaches based on other research or theoretical perspectives. One issue you will need to confront concerns striking a balance between (1) requiring teachers to follow certain common instructional patterns and (2) allowing teachers flexibility to implement instructional approaches of their own choosing.)

- **Legal foundations.** *What are the legal and ethical rights and responsibilities of teachers and learners?* (In recent decades there has been much litigation relating to education. Proposals for change have to take into account legal principles that influence the actions of teachers and school administrators.)

**WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

Take a couple of minutes to respond to the following questions.

- How are the foundations interrelated?
- How might an understanding of the foundations help you make an informed decision about becoming a teacher?

Throughout this text we will address these basic foundations of education. They are central to discussions about educational change. Understandings you develop related to these questions will help you better evaluate specific educational change proposals.

There are numerous misconceptions about the life of the teacher. Some see it as a relatively easy job with few intellectual demands. For example, a friend of one young woman preparing to be an elementary teacher asked, “What’s difficult about teaching someone that two plus two equals four?” One individual challenging the need to complete courses in order to obtain a teaching credential remarked, “All you need to know to be a teacher is how to read the teacher’s guide.” It is relatively common for individuals in interviews for admission to teacher-preparation programs to state, “Oh, I know I’ll be a good teacher because I’ve done lots of babysitting and teaching in church school.” In fact, some recent
proposals for reforming education seem to presume that, other than subject matter, there is little a teacher needs to know.

What is teaching really like? You have spent thousands of hours as a learner in classrooms, and you may have spent time observing teachers. You may also have spent considerable time working with youngsters in a variety of other settings. As a result, you may think you have a clear grasp of the role of the teacher. However, it is probable that at this point in your professional development, you still have a somewhat restricted view of what teachers do.

As a recipient of instructional services and as an observer, you have experienced only the visible actions of teachers as they communicated with their learners. Actually, teaching is one of the most complex professions (Silva, 2010). The reality is that many excellent teachers are so good at what they do that they make teaching look easy to observers. They move smoothly through the curriculum, their learners are engaged in lessons, and few disruptions interfere with the instructional process. What you probably were not able to discern during your observations were (1) the thinking and the decision making involved in lesson preparation and (2) the teachers' prior efforts to understand the interests and motivations of individuals, resulting in lesson strategies that learners found meaningful. Often, too, good teachers make small, important, and sometimes invisible-to-observers, adjustments to changing classroom situations that keep learning on track. As a result, what you may have seen as a seamless, almost effortless activity actually involved a complex interplay of actions requiring application of sophisticated learner-understanding and interpersonal-communication skills.

The unobserved aspects of the public performance of good teachers may be only one of the surprises you will encounter as you start work in the profession. We have often heard former students comment, “There is so much I don’t know.” Many people are surprised at how much time is taken up by activities that don’t involve direct work with learners. Among them are responsibilities associated with

- planning lessons,
- record keeping and other administrative duties,
- participating in special school events (back-to-school nights, parent-teacher meetings, athletic contests, school dances, graduation exercises, and so forth),
- serving on various committees,
- participating in professional group activities, and
- communicating with parents or guardians.

The types of activities you will be involved with will vary according to the age level of your learners and the nature of your school and school district. What might be an issue in one place may not be an issue in another. For example, the special characterics of your school may make it essential that you quickly come to an understanding of the political climate. This understanding might be less critical in another setting. If you teach at the secondary level, you may be expected to serve as an adviser or a sponsor for a school organization or to assist at athletic events. If you teach in an elementary school, you may spend time monitoring learners on the playground or in the lunchroom.
Chapter 1  How Is Education Changing?

There are no ordinary days in teaching, and there are no typical schools. As a result, place-to-place and day-to-day differences make it difficult to describe the reality of a day in the life of a teacher. However, we thought it worthwhile to make the attempt. We observed a randomly chosen elementary teacher for a single day. We make no claim that this scenario generalizes to this teacher's other days or to other teachers in other settings. Our purpose is not to suggest that this day is typical. Rather, our intent is to prompt you to reflect on some aspects of teaching that you may not have considered.

Throughout the text, we have placed "A Day in the Life . . ." features. These features are based on actual experiences of teachers. Our intent is to give you a glimpse into the rewards and frustrations that accompany being a teacher. In all of these instances, we have identified the teacher as “Pat Taylor.” See this chapter's “A Day in the Life: A Typical Day.”

WEB EXTENSION 1–1

New Teacher Web Page
The Web offers an excellent opportunity for you to extend your understanding and to find resources that can assist you in accomplishing your professional goals. A good place to start is the New Teacher Web page. This site provides specific information about a variety of topics such as finding a job, substitute teaching, and becoming a professional in the classroom.

www.newteacher.com

The Complexity of Teaching

As you review the day described next, consider the variety of things to which Pat Taylor had to attend. When you begin your career in the classroom, your duties will embrace much more than simply teaching lessons. You may find yourself emotionally stretched as you learn to cope with these many responsibilities. Teaching is, indeed, a complex process (Weingarten, 2010). Walter Doyle (1986)
A DAY IN THE LIFE . . . A Typical Day

Students in Pat Taylor’s elementary school are expected to arrive by 8:30 a.m. However, the day for Pat and the rest of the teachers begins much earlier, because school regulations require teachers to be present no later than 8:00 a.m. Many teachers are in the building by 7:30 a.m. or earlier, working on room decorations, preparing lessons, making copies, taking care of administrative work, and preparing for the instructional day. On this morning, Pat spends time completing paperwork from the district personnel department relating to validation of summer-term courses taken at a local university.

Pat learns that a parent has called the school. Her child is ill and will miss several days of school. Pat has been asked to prepare assignments that the parent can pick up and use with the child at home. The parent does not want her son to fall behind. Another surprise event this morning is the unexpected arrival of another parent. This parent is concerned about her child's progress, and Pat and the parent spend some time discussing the situation. Phone calls from parents, unexpected arrivals, and other early-morning events are typical of what is encountered most mornings. On some days, there are scheduled early-morning meetings of the entire faculty. What all this means is that there are few days when Pat has uninterrupted time in the morning to work in the classroom.

We are visiting Pat early in the fall when the district regularly holds its annual “Back-to-School Night.” During this event, each teacher gives parents an overview of the curriculum and teacher expectations. Pat knows that the explanation will need to be repeated at least twice so that parents with more than one child can visit at least two classrooms. Even though the event does place an additional burden on the teachers, Pat welcomes the opportunity to make contact with parents. Establishing positive rapport now can pay off later in the year.

Pat is expected to pay close attention to the public relations importance of the back-to-school event, and extra time will have to be spent making the room attractive and stimulating. This morning, with the time that is left, samples of student work are put on the bulletin boards.

The children arrive, and things begin to move quickly. During the first part of the morning, Pat moves the class smoothly through the curriculum. Class members are generally on task, and things go well. Recess time arrives, and students quickly leave the classroom. Pat gathers materials and books that have been used and puts them away. Then, after checking to make sure all material is ready for the rest of the morning, there is time for a brief trip to the lounge for a cup of coffee and conversation with other teachers.

Recess time passes quickly. Pat and the other teachers position themselves outside their doors to monitor students as they return to the classrooms. A couple of problems have occurred during recess. One of the girls has a skinned elbow that needs attention, so Pat sends the youngster to the office. In times past, the school nurse would have handled this situation, but because of budget cuts, a nurse is available only one day a week. As a result, the school secretary calls the girl's parents and gets permission to bandage her elbow.

Pat also has to deal with a complaint brought by several children who claim that some students were not behaving properly on the playground during recess. Pat informs them that the matter will be addressed. These assurances seem to satisfy them, and the class is soon back to work. As learners work independently, Pat holds a brief conference with those involved in the recess incident. A warning with a firm tone of voice seems to achieve the desired outcome.

As the morning passes, some class members have trouble staying on task because their attention spans shorten. In response to this situation, Pat moves around the classroom working with different groups and refocusing learners’ attention on what they are supposed to be doing. Lunch comes as a welcome break.

The lunch period begins with a trip to the cafeteria. Joking and light conversation with other teachers make the time go swiftly. A quick trip to the mailbox reveals some messages and an announcement about Back-to-School Night that needs to be sent home with the students that afternoon. The lunch break is concluded with a hurried gathering of equipment needed for the afternoon science lesson. As usual, several items are missing. This discovery prompts a quick search and some adjustments to the original lesson plan.
Chapter 1  How Is Education Changing?

After arriving back in the classroom before it is time for the class members to return, Pat quickly cleans up things left out from the morning. A few notes are added to the plan book as reminders of things that must be done tomorrow.

Pat is still making preparations for the afternoon when the bell rings and students line up outside the classroom. They are still excited from lunch and the few minutes they have spent on the playground. They are talking loudly. To calm them, Pat instructs them to go quickly to their seats and sit quietly. Then, Pat takes a favorite children’s book from the desk and begins to read aloud. There are a few groans when the reading stops. It is time for the next lesson. This lesson and those that follow go well, but the rest of the school day seems to pass slowly. The class is restless and less attentive. Pat knows this is a typical pattern, and many afternoon activities feature active learner participation in the hope that this will keep class members focused and involved. A few minutes before the dismissal bell, Pat stops all instructional activities. Pat asks members of the class who have been assigned as workers to perform their duties. Books are placed in the bookshelves, papers are collected, and Pat takes time to make last-minute announcements and to give reminders about homework. Pat distributes the papers that need to be sent home and dismisses the class.

Today Pat has bus duty. After a hurried walk to the bus loading zone, the behavior of students who ride buses is monitored. Once all the buses have left, Pat heads back to the classroom.

The first order of business is to gather the papers that need to be taken home and corrected. Next, Pat reviews lessons for the next day and jots reminders about what needs to be done in the margins of the daily plan book. Then it is time to create, gather, and organize supplementary material that will be used. Some materials for tomorrow need work, and these are placed in the “take-home” bag. Over an hour has passed since the last child boarded the bus. Finally, Pat locks the door and heads home, carrying papers to be graded and lessons to be planned.

DISPOSITION CHECK

In recent years, studies about teachers have extended beyond just skill acquisition to the area of teacher dispositions. Teacher dispositions are defined as those attitudes, values, and perceptions that influence teacher behavior and decision making. In the “Day in the Life . . .” feature we will ask you to consider teacher dispositions.

This scenario indicates that the day in the life of a teacher is a busy one. The attitudes and dispositions of the teacher have a powerful influence on the lives of students. Teachers soon learn that they are the most important variable in the classroom. Their moods create the daily “weather.” Teachers have tremendous power to make a student’s life exciting or unpleasant. In the face of pressure, teachers must remain calm and professional as they face unexpected events and unplanned interruptions. As professionals, teachers cannot afford to “lose it.”

Reflect on Pat’s day.

1. What attitudes and dispositions were present?
2. What dispositions do you think are important for success in teaching?
3. Which of these dispositions do you possess?

suggests that the following features combine to make the role you will play as a teacher particularly complex:

- Multidimensionality
- Simultaneity
- Immediacy
- Unpredictability
- Publicness
- History
Multidimensionality

Multidimensionality refers to the idea that teachers’ responsibilities range across a broad array of duties. When you teach, you have to know how to multi-task. In addition to planning and delivering instruction, you have to diagnose learning difficulties, spot misconceptions, monitor learner progress, make on-the-spot adjustments, respond to unanticipated events, administer standardized tests, attend meetings, keep accurate records, relate to parents, work productively with colleagues, and create materials. You may wonder, “How am I supposed to do all of these things and still teach?”

Perhaps the biggest challenge you will face as a teacher is responding adequately to young people in your classes who come to you with different backgrounds, motivations, aspirations, needs, abilities, and learning styles. Some of them will have the requisite skills and abilities to achieve success; some will not. Some learners will come from backgrounds that differ from your own. Some will come to school cheerful and well rested, but others may be tired and angry. Although many young people you teach are likely to see you as a caring and supportive mentor, a few may see you as a threatening adult who cares little for the things they deem important.

But most students who are entering the teaching profession today are Generation Y members (born between 1971 and 1995), and most Generation Y members will welcome the opportunity to serve today’s many disadvantaged students (Behrstock-Sherratt & Coggshall, 2010). New teachers can bring their schools fresh ideas and energy (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010).

Simultaneity

Simultaneity refers to the idea that many things happen at once in the classroom. When you stand before students, you need to watch for indications of comprehension, interest, and attention. You should listen carefully to answers to determine their relevance and to spot misconceptions and signs of confusion. While providing assistance to one learner, you must, at the same time, monitor the behavior of the rest of the class. You also need to devise ways to keep members of your class focused on your lesson when you must deal with an unexpected interruption, such as a message from the office that requires an immediate written response. Over time, you will grow in your ability to prioritize and respond immediately to multiple stimuli.

Immediacy

Immediacy refers to the classroom reality of situations that require you as a teacher to respond at once. Often you will not have the luxury of placing things on hold until you have the time and energy to deal with them. The need to act quickly in complex situations places great stress on teachers. This kind of stress is likely to be particularly acute when you are new to the profession and inclined to worry about whether you have made appropriate decisions.

The immediacy character of the classroom requires you to develop good judgment. You cannot learn these kinds of decision-making skills from reading a book. However, you can prepare yourself by thinking about kinds of situations that might develop in the classroom and by considering possible responses you might make. Henson (2012) labels this practice proactive teaching and provides
activities to develop proactive skills. In essence, teachers must be problem solvers (Martinez, 2006). The process of simulating responses will help you feel more comfortable when confronted with making real decisions in your own classroom.

**Unpredictability**

Unpredictability refers to teachers’ challenges in working with learners whose reactions do not always follow consistent patterns and with situations that may unexpectedly interfere with established routines. Neither you nor your learners are programmable computers who respond in consistent ways to similar situations. This reality contributes to making teaching both interesting and challenging. Individual learners and classes respond to the same stimuli in different ways. You will soon learn that a lesson that works well with one class may not be effective with learners in another.

Risk taking is an important indicator of professionalism (Warner, 2009/2010). Unpredictability results not just from differences among individual learners but from unexpected distractions and interruptions that occur when you are teaching. Unexpected visitors, a call over the intercom, a fire drill, a suddenly ill member of your class, or an unusual change in the daily schedule are events that often intrude just as you are trying to make an important point in your lesson.

How should you respond to unpredictable events? The answer will vary depending on your personality, philosophical views, and general orientation to teaching. In other words, different teachers respond to similar situations in various ways. For example, one of your colleagues might interpret an unexpected learner response as an act of defiance, whereas you might see it as a manifestation of nothing more than a lack of understanding. There probably will be occasions when you will view unanticipated occurrences as frustrating disruptions and other occasions when you may see them as providing interesting, though unexpected, learning opportunities.

How should you respond to unpredictability? Do you need to have things follow a predictable pattern? Do you get upset if things do not always go as planned? You need to think about your answers to these questions. Although you need to work to ensure that your classroom runs smoothly, unpredictable events will happen and will upset the best of plans. You need to be ready for this reality. If you are uncomfortable in situations that feature unpredictability, you might want to consider a career other than teaching.

**Publicness**

Publicness refers to the idea that teaching occurs in an arena that allows recipients of the instructional process to monitor every classroom action their instructor takes. When you teach, your learners can observe your every move. Young people are keen observers, and they will soon make personal decisions about what you are “really like.” Your mannerisms, enthusiasms, biases, and values will become public knowledge in no time. Some members of your class will quickly learn what pleases you and what upsets you.

The particular character of your interaction with learners is strongly influenced by the interplay between your actions and your learners’ interpretations of those actions. A ripple effect often follows your actions in the classroom. In other words, your actions will be observed and interpreted and have consequences beyond the immediate situation. For example, if you display great anger
When a learner makes a mistake in class, you may find class members increasingly fearful of volunteering responses to your questions. On the other hand, if you are willing to experiment and share your errors, your classroom will become a safe place where your students will become scientific risk takers (Phelps, 2006). If you teach in a middle school or high school, behaviors you have displayed in one class quickly become known and affect your relationships with other classes you teach.

History

The interaction you have with class members over a term or an entire year develops a class history. A class history is a kind of culture that is unique to each class of students and results from an ongoing record of interaction between the teacher and students. The manner in which you relate to learners, plan instruction, and react to unpredictable events creates this history.

Differences in particular class histories explain why apparently similar behaviors by different teachers do not always produce similar results. For example, you might find that a quiet word can stop inappropriate behavior, but another teacher using this approach can find that it fails to correct the situation. As you think about developing your own teaching style, you will not find it productive to simply mimic another teacher's behavior. Your class members will have a history that may vary considerably from the history of learners of the teacher you are trying to emulate. As a result, your learners will have a different interpretation of your actions.

Coping with Selected Changes

Education is a part of society, not separate from society. As society changes, education must also change. Not that many years ago, personal computers, the World Wide Web, cell phones, and satellite television did not exist. Now, we find it hard to imagine life without them. These technological innovations have an impact on educational practices. There have been changes in the composition of the student population. Increased mobility means that schools in every part of the nation are likely to have a diverse student population. The underlying values and beliefs of students are likely to be quite different from those of students just a few decades ago. Unfortunately, education is often slow to change and adapt to new realities. As a future teacher, you need to realize that education must constantly change. Over time, the role of the teacher may become significantly different. You need to be aware of some of the changes that are taking place in education and consider how they may affect teaching and learning. For instance, 75 percent of all kids...
Chapter 1 How Is Education Changing?

Video Viewpoints

1–1

Cell Phones in the Classroom: Learning Tools for the 21st Century

Watch: This YouTube video segment—http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXt_de2-HBE on the controversy regarding the presence of cell phones in school illustrates how changes in society and technology have affected the classroom in unexpected ways. In this instance, the debate concerns even allowing students to bring cell phones to school. This video illustrates the difficulty that many schools have in coping with new technology.

Think: Discuss with your classmates or write in your reflective journal your responses to the following questions:

1. What is your response to the attempt to ban cell phones from schools?
2. How do you respond to the arguments against cell phones?
3. How do you respond to the concerns of parents?
4. What do you think would be a reasonable solution?

Link: What are some other innovations that have the potential to affect the classroom?

ages 12 to 17 have cell phones (Ferriter, 2010). See this chapter's Video Viewpoints feature to see the impact of cell phones on teaching and learning today.

Changes in the Student Population

One of the most significant changes in society has been an increase in diversity. Because of population mobility and international interdependence, you are almost certain to be teaching in communities in which schools enroll young people from varied cultural and language backgrounds. Many adults and policymakers have not grasped the significance of this change. By the year 2020, half of the nation's public school students will be minorities, but only about 5% of the teachers will be minorities (Meyer & Rhodes, 2006). School leaders today struggle as they attempt to help the general public understand that the characteristics of learners in today's schools differ markedly from those of learners enrolled just a decade or two ago.

Today's schools enroll many young people from homes in which the primary language spoken is not English. From the 1997–1998 school year to the 2008–2009 school year, the number of English-language learners increased by 51% (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2013). In some states, these young people make up high percentages of the total school population. In California, for example, fully one-fourth of the young people in grades K–12 are nonnative speakers of English. Other states with schools that enroll extremely high percentages of these learners are Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, and Arizona. As a teacher, you will face tremendous challenges in creating an environment in which all learners can succeed. Most textbooks are written at a level above these students, and few textbooks make connections between major concepts (Curts, 2012).

Attempts to respond to this diversity in the classroom have led to several important changes. Many schools have bilingual education programs, where learners are taught in their native language for at least a part of the day until they become proficient in English. There has been a major emphasis on multicultural
education, a perspective that holds that school programs should present learners with instruction that honors and respects the contributions of many individual cultures to our nation and world.

James Banks (2001), a leading expert on multicultural education, points out that growing ethnic and cultural diversity requires rethinking school curricula. He believes that all learners should develop multicultural perspectives. Banks wants school curricula to accurately describe how different cultural groups have interacted with and influenced Western civilization.

Supporters of multicultural education have begun to exert a serious influence on educational practices. For example, many school textbooks now include multicultural content, and many states mandate the inclusion of multicultural content in the curriculum. Not everyone supports the idea that more multicultural perspectives should be included.

Critics of multicultural education worry that, at best, multicultural content replaces important substantive content in the curriculum or, at worst, it tears down the basic values of our national heritage and leads to national disunity (Schlesinger, 1995). They fear that traditional Western writers such as Shakespeare will be eliminated from the curriculum and the teaching of history will be distorted.

Bilingual education also has both supporters and critics. Advocates contend that learners’ education should not be delayed until they acquire English proficiency. The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was developed as a program to help nonnative speakers of English study school subjects in their home languages until they develop adequate proficiency in English. This arrangement allows young people to continue to master school subjects while their facility with English develops. Research on the bilingual arrangement supports the view that learning in one’s primary language improves feelings of self-worth and helps develop an understanding of one’s own culture (Macedo, 1995).

Critics contend that the effectiveness of bilingual education has not been validated (Ravitch, 1995). They believe that a common language promotes national unity. Some opponents of bilingual education also object to its high cost. Still other critics contend that allowing young people to learn in their home language delays their acquisition of English.

Some critics of bilingual education suggest that learners who come to school speaking home languages other than English should be enrolled in total immersion programs (Ravitch, 1995). Total immersion programs attempt to speed nonnative speakers’ acquisition of English by surrounding them with English-language instruction. The controversy over bilingual education has sparked an effort to have English declared the official language of the United States. Some supporters of this idea would like to take money currently spent on bilingual education and reallocate it to pay for total immersion programs for learners.

**What do you think?**

- What is your response to the arguments regarding multicultural content in the curriculum? What evidence can you cite to support your view?
- How do you think the schools should accommodate students who speak a language other than English? Do you think bilingual education or immersion is the better approach? Why?
Another type of diversity that has had an impact on the classroom is the increasing presence of learners with a range of mental and physical challenges. Inclusion refers to a commitment to the view that learners, regardless of unique personal characteristics (disabilities, for example), not only have a legal right to services in the regular classroom but are welcomed and wanted as members of these classes. Our schools have always played a major role in preventing and controlling diseases. In 1991, 270,000 Americans had been diagnosed as having contracted acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Twenty years later, this number had increased to more than 1 million (www.cap.org). For many years, the traditional practice was to separate learners with special needs in special education classrooms. Today, special education teachers, who have received special academic preparation related to teaching learners with varying disabilities, increasingly work with regular classroom teachers in designing and delivering instruction to these learners.

Changes in Theories of Teaching and Learning

How individuals learn has been the subject of debate for centuries. There is still much that we do not know about the human brain and what causes learning to occur. We do know that the brain is incredibly complex. In recent years, new insights into the brain and into the nature of what is termed “intelligence” have influenced educational practice. Today, many teachers are implementing instructional programs that are strongly influenced by research related to (1) constructivism and (2) multiple intelligences. To say the least, we need to think about the diverse ways students learn (Starnes, 2010).

Constructivism

Constructivism is based on the principle that individuals cannot simply be given knowledge. Rather, individuals must create knowledge as they interact with the world around them. Their constructions of knowledge are rooted in their prior knowledge. Your learners’ knowledge will grow as they compare new information with what they already know. The theory holds that the mind is constantly searching for patterns and attempting to resolve discrepancies. These patterns result in broad content generalizations (concepts), as opposed to isolated facts. Any learning that does not lead to discovering these concepts will fall short (Winger, 2009). Teachers must focus on “big ideas” (Olson & Mokhtari, 2010). JoAnn Susko (2010) at Rider University uses exit cards at the end of each lesson to ensure that students remember the lesson’s most important concepts.

Teachers must learn to slow down and give students time to discover the most important concepts (Anderson, 2009; Boix-Mansilla & Gardner, 2008). Australian and Japanese students, who outscore U.S. students in mathematics and science, have teachers who purposely limit the number of concepts covered per lesson to only one or two (Roth & Garnier, 2007).

Dr. Donna McCaw at Western Illinois University (2010) discourages teachers from ever using the word “cover” because she realizes the harm done by...
Part I  The Changing Profession

rushing to cover content. One tool that teachers find useful for helping students discover and connect concepts is called a concept map (or cognitive map). Dr. Jaime Curts at the University of Texas Pan American (2010) uses a variation of concept maps called bilingual maps to teach vocabulary while simultaneously teaching mathematical concepts.

Students need to see the relationships among the major concepts learned in each study unit. Dr. Victoria Robinson (2010) at the University of Southern Mississippi has her teachers create mini-units and explain how their major concepts are connected.

The social and cultural contexts within which learning takes place also heavily influence what is constructed or learned.

Constructivism has several important implications. One is that the conditions that best facilitate learning are what might be described as learner centered and problem centered. This means that as a teacher, you need to provide learners with complete, complete, “authentic” problems. Once this is done, guidance is provided to class members to help them gain the knowledge needed to solve the problems. C. J. Boink (2010) describes the teacher’s new role as a concierge of educational resources. This contrasts with more traditional approaches that introduce learners to small pieces of information that, in time, are put together into a whole.

For example, a traditional approach to teaching elementary children arithmetic emphasizes lessons requiring them to memorize multiplication tables. The expectation is that the information will prove useful at some future date when they need to apply these skills to solve problems that are important to them. By way of contrast, a constructivist approach to teaching multiplication tables might begin by presenting learners with a problem that requires multiplication skills in order to find a solution. The students work together to consider what they need to know to solve the problem. If you are using a constructivist approach, you help class members note patterns and develop a generalization on how multiplication processes work. The idea is to teach multiplication in the context of “real” problems when your learners need this skill.

In the same vein, constructivist approaches to teaching topics such as punctuation and spelling are embedded within larger story-writing activities that provide learners with a real need to know this kind of content. The general approach has led to a reading philosophy commonly referred to as whole language instruction, which features lessons in which reading, writing, speaking, and listening are taught as a single, integrated process. Youngsters in the earliest grades are urged to write stories and then read them to others. The focus is on encouraging them to use language, to look for patterns, and to learn writing and spelling conventions as they are needed.

Storytelling is another activity that constructivist teachers use and that works well with students of all ages and abilities. Former Virginia Teacher of the Year Mary Bicouvaris (see Henson & Eller, 2012, pp. 124–125) explains, “The smartest students love storytelling; the weakest ones worship it.”

Another assumption of constructivism is that members of your class need to be actively engaged in the learning process. They must actively seek solutions to problems and share ideas. Because the social and cultural context is important, and because it is not likely that any one individual can find the solution when working alone, your learners will often work in pairs or in teams. As a result, lessons built around constructivist principles may involve members of your class in considerable talking and movement.
Chapter 1  How Is Education Changing?

Constructivism also has changed conceptions of **assessment**, the process of ascertaining what members of your class have learned. If you are teaching according to this perspective, you will be interested in assessment procedures that focus on how well class members can solve problems and on their ability to explain what they have discovered and learned. You will be less interested in traditional tests that often measure largely what learners remember about what they have been told.

As you may have already noted, these approaches differ from certain popular present-day assessment practices. The current emphasis on **accountability**, the idea that teachers and schools should be held directly responsible for teaching specific information to specific learners, has relied heavily on the use of standardized tests. Standardized tests are developed by testing experts and are designed to test a large population of students. The tests specify conditions under which they are to be used. The items included in the standardized tests have been tested on a reference group and often have a set of “norms” that allow comparison of a single student to a larger population of students. The emphasis on standardized testing has caused many teachers to focus on the information that might be tested and to use practices that run counter to constructivist learning.

Accountability concerns also have led to the creation of highly controlled instructional approaches. In these approaches, the role of the teacher is to follow a provided script. Constructivists argue that this type of instruction does not take into account prior knowledge of learner differences and is based on the old idea that learning has to proceed in small, predictable steps.

**Multiple Intelligences**

Another important change that has influenced education relates to conceptions of intelligence. Throughout history, debates have focused on the nature of intelligence (Woolfolk, 2001). Traditionally, intelligence has been viewed as a single trait that can be measured by an intelligence quotient or IQ test. The IQ test assumes that if a person is smart in one area, he or she will be smart in other areas as well. People with higher IQ scores are assumed to have more of the “intelligence trait” and hence to be able to achieve more success in challenging academic endeavors. Most of the research on intelligence was done in the early 20th century, and many of the intelligence tests that are used today were developed at that time. Although the use of IQ scores to determine single intelligence quotients has been discredited (Murdoch, 2007), many schools still use these tests to sort students and set expectations (Olson, 2008).

In recent years, there has been growing support for the idea that intelligence has many facets or that there are **multiple intelligences**. According to this view, intelligence is not a unitary trait but rather consists of a number of separate categories. A person may have different levels of ability in individual categories. That is, a person may be smart in certain categories of intelligence and not so smart in terms of certain other categories. Most people are thought to have combinations of strengths rather than just a strength in one area and weakness in all others. Howard Gardner (1999), a leading authority in multiple intelligences, has identified at least nine distinct kinds of intelligence:

- **Logical-mathematical intelligence.** People with strengths in this area are good at seeking meaning through analytical processes that involve the use of abstract symbols.
• **Linguistic intelligence.** People with strengths in this area are especially adept at making sense of the world through language.

• **Musical intelligence.** People with strengths in this area have the capacity to communicate and create meaning that involves consideration of sound.

• **Spatial intelligence.** People with strengths in this area have facility in perceiving, transforming, and re-creating visual images that contribute to their understanding of their world.

• **Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence.** People with strengths in this area are good at using muscular and other body systems to respond to situations and to solve problems.

• **Interpersonal intelligence.** People with strengths in this area are particularly good at recognizing and responding to feelings and motivations of others.

• **Intrapersonal intelligence.** People with strengths in this area heavily weigh their own personal capacities and attitudes when determining which course of action to follow in a given situation.

• **Naturalist intelligence.** People with strengths in this area are especially good at making inferences based on classifications and analyses of features of the physical world.

• **Existential intelligence.** People with strengths in this area seek insights regarding ultimate issues such as the meaning of life and how their own existence does or should fit into this scheme.

Yet another dimension to the conception of multiple intelligence has been added by Daniel Goleman (1995). Goleman defined what he calls *emotional intelligence* as the ability to exercise self-control, remain persistent, and be self-motivating. Individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence have developed expertise in five key areas:

• **Mood management.** A person's ability to handle feelings in ways that are appropriate to and relevant for a situation.

• **Self-awareness.** A person's ability to know feelings he or she is sensing and to discriminate among them in meaningful ways.

• **Self-motivation.** A person's ability to organize feelings in ways that allow self-directed activity on behalf of a goal to go forward, even in the face of self-doubts and distracting temptations.

• **Empathy.** A person's ability to recognize verbal and nonverbal cues of others and to be sensitive to their feelings.

• **Managing relationships.** A person's ability to work productively with others to resolve conflicts, to maintain open lines of communication, and to negotiate compromises.

Multiple-intelligence theories have implications for you as a teacher. Perhaps the most important is the need to avoid labeling learners according to their IQ scores. Scholars who have studied multiple intelligences point out that there are many ways an individual can be gifted. Another implication is that you need to vary your instructional program in ways that excite and challenge learners with strengths in varying kinds of intelligences. This reality means that you need
to vary your modes of presentation. A lesson that is perfectly appropriate for a learner with great strength in the area of linguistic intelligence may not well serve the needs of another learner who is weak in this area but strong in spatial intelligence.

Debates on the Purposes of Education

As you strive for excellence in education and seek to defend your instructional decisions, one of the realities you will face is that people hold wildly different views regarding what schools and educators should be doing (Clincy, 1998). You will find that different individuals often give quite varied answers to questions such as:

- What subjects should our schools emphasize?
- Should we be primarily concerned about preparing academically proficient individuals for higher education?
- Should we be producing individuals with marketable vocational skills?
- Should schools be addressing social justice issues?
- To what extent should schools address persistent social problems such as substance abuse and healthy living?
- To what extent should schools be developing the moral and ethical character of learners?
- Should there be standardized expectations for all learners, or should there be a focus on the development of the unique potential of individuals?
- What should schools do to prepare individuals for their citizenship responsibilities?

The normal perspective in response to these issues has been that it is a part of the responsibility of the schools to address important societal concerns. When there is a prominent health concern, such as AIDS, new programs are added to schools. When there is an increase in crime, there is a call for schools to spend more time on morality and character education. In times of national crisis, more emphasis on citizenship is promoted. When the economy dips, schools are expected to produce skilled workers who can immediately enter the workplace as productive employees. Almost always, parents are worried about whether their children are being prepared to gain admission to higher education.

Because individuals have varying priorities, proposals to improve or reform education reflect a tremendous diversity. Throughout the history of American education there have always been voices criticizing the schools and calling for reform. For example, in the 1940s and 1950s, books such as *Crisis in Education: A Challenge to American Complacency* (Bell, 1949), *Educational Wastelands: The Retreat from Learning in Our Public Schools* (Bestor, 1953), *The Diminished Mind: A Study of Planned Mediocrity in Our Public Schools* (Smith, 1954), and *Quackery in the Public School* (Lynd, 1953) leveled criticisms against the schools that in some ways are similar to those we continue to hear today. During the late 1950s and 1960s, American space failures following the 1957 appearance of *Sputnik*, a satellite launched by the former Soviet Union, were blamed on poor education, and a decade of pressure for school reform followed. In the 1970s the focus changed to a concern about potential damage that highly structured school
programs might be doing to children. The view of schools as repressive, unimaginative places was reflected in widely read books, including How Children Fail (Holt, 1964), Death at an Early Age (Kozol, 1967), Teaching as a Subversive Activity (Postman & Weingartner, 1969), and Crisis in the Classroom (Silberman, 1970).

One thing you will discover is that many critics of the schools have little knowledge of the history of educational reform efforts. It is interesting to hear contemporary critics call for a return to the schools of the past, a suggestion that implies that nobody complained about the quality of the schools we had 10, 20, 30, or more years ago. As the list of titles introduced in the previous paragraph attests, the idea that there was a “golden age” just a few years ago when everybody agreed the schools were excellent simply is nonsense. There has never been a time in our educational history when everybody believed our schools were performing appropriately.

Because people have varied views about which aspects of schooling are important, the evidence used to measure the success of schools varies according to the purposes that are given priority. For example, in recent decades some groups have measured the success or failure of schools by using the scores of students taking college entrance exams such as the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT), international tests of learner achievement, and most recently, standardized achievement tests. Obviously, these indicators of school success focus on just a few of the purposes of education. Some critics contend that these indicators are poor measures of many important educational goals.

**Standards-Based Education**

As policymakers have attempted to respond to a call for school improvement and reform, they have been frustrated by the lack of valid and reliable data with which to judge the success of schools. These frustrations have led to support for standards-based education. Beginning lesson planning with standards makes the planning easier and more successful (Monroe, 2012). New teachers must align their objectives, content, and assessment with their state standards (Troyer, 2012). **Standards-based education** is an attempt to develop clear, measurable descriptions of what learners should know and be able to do as a result of their education. These descriptions typically take the form of goals to reach or levels of proficiency to be attained (Noddings, 1997). Educational specialist Elliot Eisner (1999) notes that one basic motivation behind the standards-based movement is to hold schools accountable. Accountability is facilitated when there are common standards that allow schools, classrooms, teachers, and learners to be compared. Most states and many professional associations have spent considerable time and effort defining standards. The most recent effort has been the development of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). This is a set of standards that has been adopted by nearly all of the states and is influencing the development of curriculum and achievement tests to measure student learning.

There are several different types of standards. Performance standards relate to the identification of levels of proficiency that given groups of learners are expected to attain. For example, a performance standard in reading might state that all learners will attain a certain level of reading proficiency. Content standards describe what teachers are supposed to teach and what young people in their classrooms are expected to learn (Noddings, 1997).
Many national subject-matter groups have developed content standards for what they believe to be essential learning in their subjects. Many states also have developed academic content standards for most of the subjects commonly taught in their schools.

Proponents of clearly defined content standards believe that once standards are specified, measurements can be developed that will provide data that can be used to evaluate school performance and to guide the allocation of scarce resources. They argue that this information is important to provide the public with information on the relative excellence of their schools and teachers. It is assumed that this will prompt teachers to higher levels of performance and provide parents with more information that they can use in selecting schools for their children. Jon Schnur (2010), the founder and executive officer of New Leaders for New Schools, says the second most important strategy to improve our schools (second only to improving teacher quality) is adopting college and career-ready standards and high-quality, aligned assessments.

Not everyone agrees that standards-based education is a good idea. Elliot Eisner (1999), for example, suggests that this approach is based on a faulty understanding of the educational process. He argues that proponents of standards-based education inappropriately view schooling as something like a horse race or an educational Olympics that emphasizes competition among individuals rather than as an enterprise designed to develop the distinctive talents and abilities of individuals. C. Thomas Holmes (2006, p. 58) says, “Standardized test results should be used for identifying areas in curriculum that need improvement, not for holding students accountable.”

The focus on standards represents a fundamental shift in the traditional ways educational decisions have been made. It is a particular challenge to the tradition of local control. Local control has meant that (1) curriculum decisions and school improvement efforts have been made at the local community level and (2) attempts have been made to match improvement efforts with local priorities and interests (Stake, 1999). Standards applied across the entire nation or across an entire state effectively remove control from local school authorities. Robert Stake acknowledges that whole states and the entire nation do have a legitimate interest in what every child is learning. However, he argues that this does not mean that every child should learn exactly the same content.

Stake’s concern raises this critical question: Who should determine the content standards for the schools? Should a group appointed by politicians such as the president, members of Congress, or governors determine them? Should the standards be decided by a group of business leaders or academic professors in higher education? Is the role of education to supply a trained workforce for industry, or should programs be designed with the expectation that all learners will qualify for admission to a college or university? At times in recent years, members of all of these groups have been involved in efforts to define educational content standards.

Efforts to establish standards have often led to divisive debates. For example, when national standards for history were proposed, there was widespread support for the project. However, once the original standards were published, many people, even those who had originally supported the project, quickly rejected them as too multicultural and unpatriotic. Hence, the seemingly logical and innocent idea of clearly defining expectations for learners quickly assumed political overtones.
In another instance, when science standards were proposed in California, a group of Nobel Prize winners in science criticized them and proposed their own set of standards. Because of the prize winners’ high profiles, the media disseminated their views widely, and a debate was under way. Critics pointed out that a Nobel Prize does not necessarily confer on the winner a store of validated knowledge about what is appropriate for young people to learn at different grade levels. Others attacked the Nobel Prize winners’ assumption that every public school learner should master science content at a level of sophistication necessary to qualify for admission to the most selective universities.

One of the most significant changes brought about by standards-based education has been a tremendous increase in the emphasis on testing in every subject and at every grade level (Stake, 1999). Much of this assessment consists of high-stakes testing. “High stakes” means that the results of assessments have important consequences. Scores may strongly influence the promotion or retention of learners, and retention adversely affects minority youths more than mainstream students (Holmes, 2006). Scores also influence the graduation of high school students, the evaluation and the salaries of teachers, and the levels of funding individual schools receive. Because low learner scores can have extremely negative effects, today teachers spend considerable time helping students master content that will be assessed on high-stakes tests. Today, high-stakes testing is prevalent throughout the world (Cankoy & Tut, 2005). In some schools where you might accept employment, you and your colleagues may sense pressure to “get test scores up.” For an example, see the “Critical Incident: Teaching to the Test” feature at the bottom of this page.

Such pressures have the potential to narrow the extent of the taught curriculum. In effect, the curriculum becomes that content most likely to be emphasized by standardized-test makers. Some critics of standardized testing assert that this tendency has given anonymous test makers more power over the content of the curriculum than they legitimately should have.

**CRITICAL INCIDENT**

**Teaching to the Test**

Maria is a first-year teacher. She wants to develop lessons that interest and motivate her students. Recently, her principal visited her classroom for an observation. Following the lesson, the principal said, “You had an interesting lesson, and everybody in your class was engaged. However, you need to remember that test scores are very important here. Our parents expect us to post high test scores, and we cannot afford to let them slip. We expect that all of the students in your classroom will do well on the test. If I were a parent and asked you how today’s lesson ties to the testing program, what would you say?”

1. What are your reactions to the principal’s comments?
2. Should teachers be teaching to the test?
3. Is there an inconsistency between having interesting lessons and meeting standards?
4. How would you respond?
Accountability

Although under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) each state’s education agency can request flexibility in specific No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed improvement plans, the concept of accountability relates closely to standards-based education. Standards are developed to indicate what schools should be teaching and the level of performance that learners should be attaining. Accountability frequently is related to issues such as the financing and control of the schools. In many places, schools that do not demonstrate attainment of certain learner performance levels, usually measured by standardized tests, face certain consequences. For example, they may lose a portion of their funding, the principals may be replaced, learners may be allowed to transfer to other schools, and the schools or districts may even be placed under state control. In some places, a tendency has developed for teacher evaluations to be based not on general observations of their classroom performance, but rather on their learners’ test scores. Recently, in the town of one of the authors, five schools were closed in one year because of low performance on standardized tests (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Accountability has developed in response to several concerns. One relates to education costs. Educational expenditures are a significant portion of any state budget. As education costs have increased, policymakers have demanded that schools be held responsible for spending the money in ways that result in improved learning. However, the accountability emphasis might end up costing the state more money for education. Some states have ruled that if the state establishes standards for student graduation, it is then responsible for providing an appropriate education for all students. This has been called “adequacy funding,” and estimates are that this method of funding is more costly than current methods.
When considering debates regarding accountability, you need to separate the general concept of accountability from the issue of measurements that are used to make judgments about teachers and school programs. For example, few educators oppose the general idea of accountability. When you begin teaching, you will find that the majority of your colleagues are sincerely interested in using resources carefully and in working to ensure that students get the best education possible. Issues teachers have with accountability center not on the idea itself, but rather on what is used to determine whether educational services are as good as they should be. In particular, teachers argue against using standardized-test scores as the only accountability measure.

One problem with using standardized-test scores is that a judgment about a teacher's instructional effectiveness is based on what a learner does on a single day of standardized testing. Critics claim that this is too limited a sample of the learner's levels of understanding to be taken as overall evidence of what he or she has learned. In addition, critics point out that test scores depend on several variables other than the quality of instruction they receive. Further, many variables are beyond an individual teacher's control. Some variables that may affect learners' test scores and that are not subject to teacher influence include the following:

- The home language of individual learners. (Learners who speak a language at home other than English sometimes have difficulty scoring well on standardized tests.)
- The income and educational levels of learners' families. (Learners' home situations affect their school learning. There are huge differences in reading material found in individual learners' homes, levels of parental education and hence parental capacities to help with homework, noise levels in the home, and so forth. Scores on standardized tests are highly correlated with the socioeconomic status of parents. Therefore, they are probably a better indicator of parental status than of teacher performance.)
- The quality of learning materials provided to supplement instruction. (Are books available that are appropriate for the grade level? Is content of the adopted books consistent with content assessed on standardized tests?)
- The nature of the school's facilities. (Is classroom lighting adequate? Are classrooms well insulated from outside noise? And so forth.)

Even assuming none of these differences existed, problems are still associated with using learners' scores on tests as accountability measures. Critics point out that these tests are poorly suited to stand as academic-success indicators. Because so many learners take standardized tests, individual items must be presented in a form that allows for quick, mechanical scoring. This tends to limit test content to fairly unsophisticated information that can be assessed using item formats that require learners to use less complex thinking levels. Tests fail to challenge learners to use the sophisticated thinking processes they need to engage more difficult content. Another problem is that to avoid penalties for their teachers and schools, some administrators require students to spend so much time preparing for these tests that they do not have time to integrate what they are learning or apply their new knowledge (Cankoy & Tut, 2005).

How might accountability data be gathered in ways that more appropriately respond to some difficulties associated with overuse of standardized-test
results? Some critics of present practices propose that data on such topics as school dropout and graduation rates, college acceptance rates, follow-up studies of graduates, teacher-turnover rates, school safety issues (such as the number of suspensions and discipline incidents), and other variables need to be considered in addition to test scores. The problem is that gathering this information can be time consuming, difficult, and expensive.

In summary, you are certain to encounter continued discussions of concerns related to standards and accountability when you enter the profession. You and other professionals will face challenges as you seek to ensure that adopted standards are consistent with the purposes of education and that the measurements used for accountability purposes are valid and fair.

Efforts to Ensure New Teacher Quality

The focus on standards has not been confined to the K–12 schools. In recent years, a broadened accountability interest has embraced development of standards for beginning teachers. Accompanying assessments seek to evaluate higher education programs based on how well their graduates meet those standards. In previous years, state authorities issued teaching certificates to newcomers based only on their completion of a prescribed sequence of college courses. Today, many states are moving to performance-based systems that judge candidates’ readiness in terms of their ability to perform in the classroom in ways consistent with adopted professional standards.

Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium

Each state has responsibility for determining what is required in order to obtain a teaching credential. This complicates the process of addressing the issue of teacher quality. In the early 1990s, more than 30 states participated in a consortium called the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). The purpose of INTASC was to establish standards that would serve as guidelines for states as they addressed the issue of teacher quality. INTASC identified 10 standards that beginning teachers should know and be able to meet. For the past two decades, these standards have had an impact on the preparation of new teachers.

You can obtain more information about the INTASC standards and about content standards that have been developed for particular subjects by accessing the INTASC Web site (www.ccsso.org) and search Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium.

You may wish to review your own professional development in terms of your growing ability to understand and perform in ways consistent with the INTASC Model Core Standards.

In recent years there have been renewed calls for changing the preparation of teachers. Many of these changes mirror the changes recommended for education as a whole. There is an increased demand for more testing, stronger subject matter preparation, more field work, and in some cases fewer education courses.

Praxis Assessments for Beginning Teachers

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) developed the Praxis series of assessments to evaluate individuals preparing for careers in teaching at various points in their professional development. Many states and universities use results of these tests as a basis for making program-entry decisions; awarding teaching
certificates, licenses, or credentials (documents making it legally possible for a person to teach in a state’s schools); and determining whether beginners’ levels of teaching performance are acceptable. Currently, 35 states use some or all of the assessments as a credential requirement.

Praxis has three different assessment categories. Praxis I consists of academic skills assessments. These tests are used early in the academic careers of students who wish to pursue education careers. They seek to determine whether prospective teacher candidates have adequate reading, writing, and mathematics skills.

Praxis II assessments provide information about teacher candidates’ knowledge of the subject(s), important pedagogical knowledge, and knowledge of important learning and teaching principles. In many places, teacher candidates must receive certain minimum scores before they will be issued teaching licenses, certificates, or credentials.

Praxis III is a classroom-performance assessment that usually takes place during the first year of teaching. Local assessors use nationally validated criteria to observe and make judgments about a teacher’s performance. Results often are used to help newcomers to the profession prepare professional improvement plans.

As you go through your professional development program, you may find it particularly useful to keep in mind some categories assessed by the Praxis II assessments. Because Praxis II assessments are used in a large majority of the states, at some point in your program you may be required to take these tests. Even if you are not required to do so, the Praxis II categories describe aspects of practice that are important for you to master as you work to become a professional educator.

Some of the topics covered in the Principles of Learning and Teaching Test include how learning occurs, learner motivation, learner diversity, different instructional approaches, planning instruction, effective communication, the role of the school in the community, debates on best teaching practices, major laws relating to learner and teacher rights, and personal reflection on teaching practices.

WEB EXTENSION 1–3
Investigating Praxis
More detailed information on the Praxis series of assessments and even sample questions can be found on their Web site.

www.ets.org/praxis

**KEY IDEAS IN SUMMARY**

- Because education is viewed as such an important societal institution, it is the subject of much debate and numerous proposals for change. Because there is no national consensus regarding the purposes of education, you are likely to find disagreements and inconsistency among proposals to improve the schools.

- School policies and practices are influenced by answers to important questions associated with the foundations of the education profession. These
questions include those associated with (1) social and philosophical foundations, (2) historical foundations, (3) political foundations, (4) curriculum foundations, (5) instructional foundations, and (6) legal foundations.

- Teachers’ roles require them to discharge diverse responsibilities. These include (1) planning lessons, (2) maintaining records, (3) attending special school events, (4) working on committees, (5) participating in professional groups’ activities, and (6) communicating with parents and guardians.

- The complexity of teaching relates to its *multidimensionality* (the idea that responsibilities range across a broad variety of duties), *simultaneity* (the need for teachers to work in an environment in which many things occur at the same time), *immediacy* (the necessity to respond at the same time to multiple events), *unpredictability* (the need to work in an environment in which learners’ behaviors do not always follow consistent patterns), *publicness* (the need to work in an arena that is subject to constant monitoring by others), and *history* (the need to cope with classroom patterns or culture that have resulted from previous teacher-learner interactions).

- As a teacher today, you will confront challenges that change over time in important ways. These challenges require you to be flexible and to be willing to modify your teaching approaches in light of new conditions and situations.

- Instructional approaches tied to *constructivism* and *multiple intelligences* are examples of those you may encounter early in your career. Constructivism refers to the idea that people cannot simply be given new knowledge. For knowledge to become meaningful, learners must create understanding through interactions that involve prior knowledge and knowledge that is presented to them for the first time. Multiple-intelligence theory holds that intelligence is not a unitary trait. Rather, there are various kinds of intelligences, and individuals are likely to be “smarter” in terms of some intelligence types than others.

- Over time, there have been numerous debates about the appropriate purposes of schooling. There has never been a time in our educational history when everyone agreed on what constitutes a good education. You may expect to encounter debates about what we need to do to “make schools better” throughout your career in the profession.

- Today, there is great interest in establishing public standards against which to measure learners’ academic progress. These standards often are accompanied by testing programs that seek to assess how well young people are mastering the prescribed content. Increasingly, school leaders and teachers are being held accountable for learner performance on these tests. Some people argue that this trend irresponsibly forces teachers to “teach to the test.”

- In recent years, legislators and others responsible for overseeing the schools have become greatly interested in the issue of teacher quality. The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) is an example of an entity created as a result of this interest. INTASC has developed a set of expectations for new teachers known as the *INTASC Model Core Standards*. These standards lay out knowledge and behavioral expectations for
beginning teachers. Many colleges and universities use these standards as a framework for constructing their teacher-preparation programs.

- The *Praxis* series of assessments represents another response to the desire to ensure that new teachers meet acceptable minimum standards of quality. Many states require all prospective teachers to take these tests. Individual *Praxis* tests are given at three points during a teacher's professional development sequence: (1) a basic understanding and skills test is given as a precondition to formal entry into the professional component of a teacher education program; (2) a test over subject matter and pedagogical knowledge is given as a prerequisite to awarding teacher certificates, licenses, or credentials; and (3) a classroom-performance assessment is given during a new teacher's first year in the classroom.
- You may wish to keep an *initial-development portfolio* as you go through your teacher-preparation program. The portfolio allows you to organize information, reflect on it, and make decisions about what important information you already know and what important information you need to obtain to adequately prepare yourself for the classroom.

**REFLECTIONS**

1. In this chapter, you learned that many debates about education are rooted in different perceptions about what is a good society and how education should contribute to that society. What are your views of the good society? How does your view of the good society influence your views of what education should be?

2. Schools reflect society, and changes in society influence education. What do you see as two or three changes that are occurring in society that will have an important impact on schools and education? What impact do you think they will have? How do you propose to react to these changes?

3. Review material in the chapter dealing with *constructivism*. If you decided to embrace this approach, what would your lessons be like? What is your response to constructivism, and why do you feel this way? Do you recall any of your own teachers operating in ways that are consistent with this approach? What did they do that you liked or disliked?

4. Sometimes today's critics paint pictures of so-called golden ages when the schools were excellent and everybody was happy with our educational system. In this chapter you learned that, contrary to the pronouncements of these critics, there has never been a time when there has been an absence of debate about the quality of our educational system. During your career, you are virtually certain to encounter some people who will tell you, “Our schools are much worse than they used to be.” How will you respond to people who share this view?

5. The INTASC standards and *Praxis* examinations have become important components guiding the preparation and licensure of teachers. What is your reaction to them? How will you use information you now have about the INTASC standards and the *Praxis* examinations as you continue your preparation for classroom teaching?
FIELD EXPERIENCES, PROJECTS, AND ENRICHMENT

1. Interview a teacher who has taught for at least 10 years. Select someone who teaches at a grade level and in a subject area you would like to teach. Ask this person to reflect on the kinds of criticisms of teachers and schools he or she has heard over the years. What has been the general nature of this criticism? Have all critics complained about the same things? What remedies have been proposed? How have this teacher and his or her teaching colleagues dealt with these criticisms? Share responses with others in your class.

2. Observe a teacher and look for instances of multidimensionality, unpredictability, simultaneity, immediacy, and history. After your observation, ask the teacher what impact these have on planning and instructing. Which of these variables does the teacher think provided the most challenges during his or her first year of teaching? What advice does the teacher have for a newcomer to the profession who will be dealing with these challenges for the first time? Share your findings with others in your class.

3. In this chapter you read a brief explanation of emotional intelligence. Educators are becoming increasingly interested in this topic. To enrich your own understanding, use a good search engine such as Google (www.google.com), enter the search terms emotional intelligence, and conduct an Internet search. You will find dozens of sites with good information. One you may particularly wish to visit is the EQ International Site on Emotions, Emotional Needs, and Emotional Intelligence (www.eqi.org). At this site, you can follow a link to a massive table of contents including topics such as conflict resolution, emotional awareness, emotional literacy, emotional intelligence, and emotional needs. Review information at one or more Internet sites. Then, prepare a short report for others in your class that will expand their understanding of emotional intelligence.

4. Research the state standards and state assessment programs for the grade level(s) and subject(s) you plan to teach. Your instructor will be able to help you locate this information. Many state departments of education put this information on their Web sites. Then, think about these questions: Did you find any surprises? Do you agree with them? Why or why not? To conclude the exercise, prepare a personal plan of action in which you outline some specific things you intend to do to gain the knowledge and expertise you will need to deal with any standards (and related tests) for which you do not feel your present preparation is adequate.

5. Take the 10 principles outlined by the INTASC standards and create an Already Know/Want to Learn/Learned chart. For each standard, make three columns. At the top of the first column, write “Know.” At the top of the second, write “Want to Learn.” At the top of the third, write “Learned.” Begin by entering what you think you already know about the principle in the first column and what you want or need to learn about it in the second column. As you progress in your development, write what you learn about each principle in the third column. You may wish to keep this in a professional-development portfolio as documentation of what you have learned.
Part I  The Changing Profession

REFERENCES


Chapter 1  How Is Education Changing?

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR?
OBJECTIVES

This chapter will help you to:
• identify the steps in the process of preparing for teaching.
• define the functions of the two large teacher organizations.
• state the components of the Code of Ethics for Teachers.
• identify the relationships among local school districts, state government, and federal government in determining educational policy and practice.
• explain changes in the influence of the federal government in recent decades.
• describe the organization of the local school district.
• explain the implications of shifts in the control of education.
• define what is required of a professional educator.

INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to be “preparing” for teaching? To prepare means to make oneself ready. Preparing to be a teacher means getting yourself ready to assume the role of a teacher. What do you need to know or be able to do to prepare for this role? Is it something that comes naturally, or is there some specialized knowledge and skill that you need to possess? Is it something that can be learned quickly, or does it require significant knowledge and experience? These questions are the focus of considerable debate as the educational reform agenda focuses on teacher preparation. There are those who claim that there is little need for specialized teacher preparation. They claim that all that is needed is subject matter knowledge. Our view is that this is the equivalent of saying that all a medical doctor needs to know is biology, and all an attorney needs to know is the Constitution. Although these are certainly important ingredients in their preparation, they are not sufficient. The same is true of teachers. Although good subject matter knowledge is important, it is not the whole story.

These same individuals often state that there is no body of knowledge that individuals need to learn outside of the content area, and therefore teacher preparation can be accomplished with little effort or time. They argue that good teaching is an art that cannot be taught. The trick, then, is not preparation, but finding a way to identify those who possess these “artistic” skills. However, it should be noted that there are schools for art and music where even the most gifted artists go to refine and develop their skills.

Others, however, make the case that there is a specialized body of knowledge and a set of skills that need to be learned in order to be qualified to be a teacher. They can point to research studies indicating that there are skills and abilities that make a difference in the classroom. Even though some individuals do possess aptitudes and skills that make it easier for them to assume the role of “teacher,” they are even better teachers after they learn the body of knowledge and skills that characterize a professional educator. As we consider the role of teacher preparation, we need to remember that teachers are dealing with our most valuable natural resource—our children. Individuals should not be allowed to have authority over and responsibility for this valuable resource until they
have demonstrated the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that facilitate learning and do no harm. We hold this position. We believe that there is a specialized body of knowledge that individuals must possess. In addition, we believe that preparing to be a teacher is not just a short process that is easily gone through. It is a lifelong process. Because of the great diversity of students, changes in society, and advances in knowledge about learning, teachers never reach the point where they can say that they now know all that they need to know. In essence, good teachers are lifelong learners!

In this chapter, we introduce you to different phases of the deliberative professional development sequence and to a variety of things that a person needs to know to begin preparing for the awesome responsibility of teaching the youth of our nation.

**Preparation as a Process**

In our work with a wide variety of individuals who are preparing to be teachers, we have often observed those who experience what might be termed “the shock of the familiar”—a disorientation that occurs when individuals preparing to be teachers, who have spent thousands of hours in classrooms and are very familiar with the environment, first stand in front of the classroom. They have always felt comfortable in this familiar environment and are shocked to find that, from the front of the classroom, things suddenly look very different!

Yes, the classroom is different when viewed from behind the teacher’s desk. There are responsibilities and actions required of a teacher that students usually do not observe or understand. Each group of students is different. Unpredictable events occur. Quick decisions are required—and a teacher can’t simply stop everything to look up an answer! A solid teacher preparation program can help individuals learn how to confront the diversity of the classroom and how to
address the unpredictable nature of an environment of 30 or more individuals, some who may not want to be there at all.

In this chapter, we emphasize the term professional. An important part of a preparation program is helping prospective teachers develop an understanding of what constitutes professionalism in teaching. Professionalism is more than just an application of skills. It is an understanding of the ethical, legal, and interpersonal dimensions of the role. Veteran teacher educator Patricia Phelps (2006, p. 69) says that helping students develop professionalism is “the most challenging aspect of preparing new teachers.” A part of being a professional is developing a commitment to career-long growth (Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, & Enz, 2000). That means that as a teacher, you are committed to increasing your knowledge and improving your skills so that you can better meet the needs of those you teach.

There are ethical standards to which members of the teaching profession subscribe. Those include a shared commitment to certain ethical practices; a concern for the development of the capacities of all learners who come to school; a respect for the dignity of all learners in spite of their physical, emotional, and sociological circumstances; and a sense that education should be a high-priority concern for the entire society. Professional organizations such as the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) help define these ethical standards and the development of national and state education agendas.

**Professional Development Phases**

Your professional development as a teacher did not begin when you entered your teacher-preparation program. The roots of your decision go all the way back to your personal set of prior experiences, your thoughts about them, and the decisions you made that ultimately resulted in your taking steps to pursue a program leading to a teaching certificate, license, or credential.

Although your teacher-preparation program helps you begin the process of becoming a professional, the preparatory process will continue throughout your career. As you think about entering the profession, you may find it helpful to know something about four important phases that characterize teachers’ professional lives. They are

- the **pretraining phase**,
- the **formal-preparation phase**,
- the **induction-years phase**, and
- the **continuing-growth phase**.

**Pretraining**

Your personal experiences and the attitudes you developed before enrolling in any teacher-preparation program are important components of the pretraining phase of your professional development. Your attitudes probably derive in part from views that your family members hold. In addition, most teachers can cite influences on their desire to be a teacher or on the type of teacher they want to be. Some have been influenced by teachers in their past who inspired them. Others may have had negative experience with teachers and have a commitment to do better. Influences of your own school experiences are to be expected, given
that the typical high school graduate has spent more than 10,000 hours in K–12 classrooms.

Memories of your own school days may not be as helpful as you think. Schools and learners today vary tremendously. You may find that the schools you observe during your preparation program are quite different from those you attended. The young people, too, may differ from those with whom you went to school, and you may find that some instructional techniques that your favorite teachers used (and that you liked) do not work well with other learners in other settings. You need to keep an open mind about what constitutes “good teaching” and recognize that practices that are enthusiastically received by learners in some places may not be appropriate for learners in others.

Formal Preparation

You are reading this text, so you are probably in the formal-preparation phase of your professional development. Although there are some differences from institution to institution, there are common features in most teacher-preparation programs. In part, these common features have been developed in response to guidelines of state and national accrediting bodies such as the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Preparation programs often have these three basic parts:

- core studies,
- teaching specialization(s)/academic major(s), and
- professional education.

Core Studies

In addition to the specific content areas you will be expected to teach, you are expected to be a well-educated person. Neither students nor parents will have confidence in a teacher who does not appear to be knowledgeable. The core-studies component of teacher-preparation programs is designed to accommodate this need. Typically, core studies requires students to take content courses from a broad academic core that usually includes mathematics, the sciences, the social sciences, and the liberal arts. These courses constitute about 30% to 40% of a typical bachelor's degree program.

Teaching Specializations/Academic Majors

If you are preparing for a career in elementary schools, you will be expected to teach a variety of content areas. You might also have a particular teaching specialization, such as reading or mathematics, that you have studied in some depth as part of your preparation program.

Prospective middle school teachers often have a teaching specialization or a formal academic major, and future high school teachers almost always have an academic major. If you are preparing to teach in high school, you probably intend to teach courses in your academic major. You may also be assigned to teach at least a few courses in another subject area. (Requirements related to teaching outside of the academic major vary greatly; however, a certain minimum number of college or university courses is often required.)

Misconceptions often exist about the role of academic specialization. Some say that teachers need academic specialization so they will have specific
knowledge and information to pass on to their future students. However, students have tremendous resources for obtaining information at their fingertips. As a result, the role of the teacher is changing from “provider of information” to more like a concierge who knows how to form the right questions and help students find information and resources as they need them (Bonk, 2010).

Professional Education
The professional-education component of your preparation program seeks to give you the expertise needed to deliver instruction and manage the classroom. In recent years, there has been a trend toward having more of this component of the preparation program offered in K–12 schools rather than on college campuses. Prospective teachers today spend much more time in the schools than was the case just a couple of decades ago. The goal is to smooth the transition from the college or university environment to the K–12 environment. Many programs today provide opportunities for prospective teachers to engage in some supervised instruction of learners during various stages throughout their preparation program. Historically, preparation programs provided prospective teachers with little direct contact with K–12 schools until student teaching, a capstone experience that often did not occur until the term just before graduation.

You may have already had some experience teaching K–12 students as part of your preparation program. If not, you probably will soon have an opportunity to do so. Successes you experience will be confidence builders. They can also broaden your appreciation of the many kinds of learners in the schools, and they can challenge your capacity for honoring and responding professionally to the diversity you probably will encounter. Work in the schools, particularly when it is approached seriously, can be a wonderful beginning to a successful teaching career.

Induction Years
The first years in teaching are sometimes called the induction-years phase. This term implies that no one assumes you will arrive on the job fully formed as a professional educator. It is another recognition that professionals are involved in a process of career-long development and that the early years are times of particularly intense learning. During this phase of development, teachers must take responsibility for their own learning (Rothman, 2009). While there may be some

**FIGURE 2–1** Obtaining a Teaching Credential

**Obtaining a Teaching Credential**
Each state is responsible for setting standards for teachers in that state. To learn about getting a credential or license for a particular state, look at the Web site for the state. The licensing requirements are usually found on the Web site for the state department of education. They may be found under the topic of “Teacher Credentialing.” This site will also address the types of credentials that can be obtained and what licensure exams you may need to pass.

- Look up the requirements for the state that interests you.
- What are the specific standards for obtaining a credential?
- What is the balance of content courses, teacher education courses, and field work?
basic professional development requirements during the induction phase, individual teachers usually have much more responsibility for continuing their own professional growth. Much of the learning during the first few years of teaching centers on adapting to the special characteristics of the school, the learners, the surrounding community, the prescribed curriculum, the available resources, and the interpersonal relationships among the teachers.

Even new teachers from the finest preparation programs experience stress during the initial years of teaching. Beginners sometimes miss the support university supervisors and supervising teachers provided them during student teaching. Many school systems recognize this problem, and some respond by assigning experienced mentor teachers to work with newcomers. Some states now have laws requiring school districts to provide this kind of support to new teachers.

Much discussion about challenges facing newcomers to the profession used to focus on the first year of teaching. Today, educators recognize that beginners take several years to settle comfortably into their new roles. Increasingly, school leaders are thinking about ways to provide special assistance during the first two to four years of teachers' professional service. Some states permit teacher-education students to graduate, but they withhold teacher certification until the new teachers have experienced a successful year of supervised internship.

**What do you think?**

- What is your response to the idea of extending the teacher-preparation process?
- What do you think would be helpful to teachers during their first years of teaching?

**Continuing Growth**

Professional development does not end with your induction into teaching. Teaching is not a mechanical or rote process that involves merely repeating the same actions over and over. Every class is different, each year is different, and students always present new challenges. Even those of us who think we have seen it all find ourselves surprised! Good teachers discover that they need to continually learn in order to meet the challenges of teaching. Although school districts often provide incentives for continued professional growth, good teachers discover that professional growth has other rewards. Teachers learn that when they are doing a good job of teaching, their job is actually easier! When students are motivated and interested, there are fewer problems, and teaching is more rewarding. There are several opportunities for continued professional growth. Those include:

- staff-development opportunities,
- college and university courses, and
- work associated with professional organizations.

**Staff Development**

You may find yourself employed in one of the many school districts that organize extensive *staff-development* activities for teachers. School districts often commit funds to these activities as part of their efforts to enhance the overall
quality of instruction. The term *in-service education* often is applied to these efforts. These programs often feature special sessions to introduce new teaching techniques, introduce well-known educational speakers, give workshops to prepare materials or modify curricula, or “share” sessions in which participants exchange materials and ideas.

It is likely that you will be required to attend some staff-development sessions; others may be optional. In some districts, teachers receive staff-development credits, and when they have accumulated enough credits, they qualify for a higher step in the salary schedule. Some schools provide workshops during the school day that allow teachers and parents to work together. These workshops tend to have a positive academic impact. For example, using a survey of 18 elementary and secondary schools in seven states, Sheldon and Epstein (2005) reported that dramatic achievement gains occurred when schools offered such workshops and assigned homework that required students to show and discuss their work with their parents. American teachers will probably spend more time on faculty development in the future. Currently, American teachers spend an average of 14 to 16 hours a year engaged in faculty development activities. In contrast, teachers in academically achieving countries such as Singapore, Sweden, and the Netherlands spend at least 100 hours annually in faculty development activities (Carney, 2010). American teachers will welcome the opportunity to spend more time in faculty development workshops, but only if they center around long-term projects and programs, as opposed to short-term lingo-loaded seminars (Garcia, 2010).

**College and University Courses**

You may elect to take college and university courses to expand your professional knowledge. Many institutions offer night courses so teachers can take them during the school year. It is common for colleges and universities to have extensive summer-session offerings for teachers. You can often use college and university courses to fulfill requirements for an advanced degree. Frequently, school districts award increases in salaries to teachers who complete specified courses or fulfill advanced-degree requirements.

As you consider possible courses you might take during your early years in the classroom, think first about taking those that will help you meet specific challenges you might be facing in the classroom. You should focus on selecting courses that will directly help you with your work rather than those designed to meet advanced-degree requirements. You may be in the profession for a long time. There will be plenty of time to complete an advanced-degree program after you have addressed some more pressing gaps in the knowledge you need to succeed in the classroom.

**Involvement with Professional Groups**

You will find that many professional organizations sponsor meetings that include sessions designed to improve teachers’ expertise. These groups often offer professional-development opportunities of various kinds, including workshops or more formal sessions in which individual presenters share ideas. Some professional organizations focus on specific subject areas and specific categories of learners. Some sources you may wish to contact for further information include:

- American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD)—([www.aahperd.org](http://www.aahperd.org))
Joining a professional group gives you an opportunity to meet people with shared interests. Members often get productive new ideas from even casual conversations with others in the group. Many professional organizations sponsor the publication of journals that feature excellent, practical how-to-do-it articles.

**Two General Organizations for Teachers**

In addition to the many specialty organizations that serve teachers with particular grade-level or subject-area interests, two national organizations represent the more general interests of the teaching profession. These organizations are

- the National Education Association (NEA) and
- the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

These organizations perform many services for their members. They help explain teachers' work to the public at large. They engage in lobbying activities seeking legislation thought to advance the interest of their members and oppose legislation thought to have negative implications for teachers. They provide opportunities for classroom practitioners to keep abreast of new knowledge as it relates to their professional development and practice. They also often specify standards of appropriate or ethical practice.

**National Education Association**

The National Education Association (NEA) is the larger of the two major teachers' organizations. Though today the NEA does recognize the strike as one legitimate course of action that teachers can use as they seek...
improved conditions of practice and better salaries, in general the organization conceives of teachers as members of a learned profession such as law and medicine. The NEA has had a tradition of supporting policies that give teachers more control over their profession. This implies a role for teachers in such areas as the preparation of new teachers, qualifications for hiring teachers, selection of learning materials, teacher evaluation processes, and the choice of instructional methods.

**American Federation of Teachers**

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT), a union affiliated with the AFL-CIO, views teachers as occupying positions similar to those of employees of large corporations. The AFT points out that teachers, unlike professionals such as lawyers, rarely are self-employed. Nearly all of them work for institutions (school districts). This employment reality creates a situation in which many teachers work at sites distant from the lead administrators in their districts. In the view of the AFT, this creates a need for teachers to have a strong organization to counter the possibility that distant administrators may make decisions that adversely affect teachers and learners.

The AFT has long embraced the strike as a legitimate bargaining tool. It seeks negotiated decisions that maximize teachers’ benefits and restrict arbitrary exercise of administrative power. Negotiated agreements tend to specify in considerable detail the responsibilities and rights of both teachers and administrators. When there are differences of interpretation related to these agreements, an arbitration system is followed that is similar to those used in traditional labor-management disputes (see Essex, 2002).

The issue of teacher strikes is one that elicits heated exchanges between supporters and opponents. People opposed to strikes often argue that they undermine teachers’ images. They fear that strikes will alienate middle- and upper-class citizens who traditionally have been among public education’s strongest supporters. Disgust with strikes could lead these citizens to oppose needed funding for the schools.

Supporters of strikes often observe that people in general are simply unaware of the pressures teachers face. For example, they point to obligations many state legislatures have placed on teachers to raise learners’ achievement levels in the absence of new commitments of state revenues to help them get the
job done. Proponents of strikes contend that people may “talk a good line” about the need to improve schools, but little real action is likely without pressure such as can be exerted by a strike.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

- Do strike actions threaten teachers’ credibility with parents and other influential members of the community? Why or why not?
- Should the question of whether or not teachers should strike be answered “yes” in some instances and “no” in others? If so, under what circumstances might strikes be appropriate? Under what conditions might they be inappropriate?
- Have you or any of your family members been involved in a strike, particularly one involving schools? If so, what were the reactions of various groups of people who had a stake in the outcome?
- How do you personally feel about strikes by teachers? Have you had personal experiences that have led you to your position on this issue?

**PROFESSIONAL ETHICS**

One of the marks of a profession is that the practitioners of that profession follow a code of ethics. Ethics refers to a moral code or standard embraced by individuals or groups. In the “helping” professions, such as teaching, an underlying principle of that moral code is that those in the profession act with the well-being of the client in mind rather than personal concerns or satisfactions. In law, an attorney should act in a manner that is best for the client regardless of how the attorney feels about the guilt or innocence of the person. In medicine, a physician should act in the best interest of the patient and not those of the physician, the hospital, or pharmaceutical companies. In teaching, it requires considering what is best for a student. For example, it might be personally satisfying to seek revenge on a student who has interrupted your lesson by misbehaving. However, as a teacher, you must consider your response in terms of what would be best for the education of the student.

The National Education Association Code of Ethics identifies two major areas of ethical responsibility: those related to the students and those related to the profession.

There are basically three major areas of ethical concern for educators. The first is the interactions and relationship with the students, the second is fulfilling professional responsibilities, and the third is relationships with others such as teachers and parents.

The first area is especially important in education because we are dealing with impressionable students, acknowledged to be among the most vulnerable “clients.” As a teacher, you are in a position to have a profound influence on students’ future well-being. You are also in a position of considerable power. That power needs to be exercised in an ethical and responsible manner.

You do not simply influence the lives of students through academic learning; you influence their moral and ethical development through your actions. Students are keen observers of teacher behavior. Everyday events have a great impact on them. For many students, teachers are significant adults in their lives. What teachers do and say has a profound influence on them. This is an awesome
Chapter 2  What Does It Take to Become a Professional Educator?

responsibility that should not be taken lightly. As a teacher, you need to think beyond the bounds of your own self-interest.

One of the elements of a profession is that the practitioners of that profession have acquired a unique set of skills through their professional preparation. These are skills that would generally not be found in the general population. Therefore, ethical concerns in the realm of professional responsibilities include such things as being prepared for class, making sure that all students have an opportunity to learn, presenting content that is accurate, and making sure that student assessments are valid and free of bias and distortion.

Relationships with others in fulfilling the role of teacher can lead to some of the most difficult ethical dilemmas. For example, what do you do if you perceive that another teacher is not following professional standards of teaching? What should you do if a school administrator asks you to do something that you do not think is in the best interests of the students or violates an ethical principle? For example, one of the authors was called in to mediate a situation where a school principal was observed drinking and even becoming inebriated during the school day. A couple of teachers had exhibited courage in acting on their ethical principles by bringing this potentially dangerous situation to the attention of others in spite of incurring the displeasure of other teachers and the school district administration.

Relationships with others in fulfilling the role of teacher can also lead to some of the most satisfying and rewarding successes. David Piercey (2010) argues that teachers don’t collaborate nearly enough, although the professional literature provides strong evidence that collaboration works (p. 55). Teaming together can help meet the needs of diverse groups (Grskovic & Trzcinka, 2012), and interdisciplinary teaming (working with teachers from other disciplines) improves teachers’ self-efficacy and helps them understands their students’ needs, increasing teacher satisfaction (Good & Karn, 2012).

Ethical issues usually do not have easy right or wrong answers. They often involve a conflict of two or more values or moral principles. Behaving ethically means that you do the “right” thing, not just the expedient or the easy thing.

You will not get very far into your career of teaching without facing ethical dilemmas. In teaching, ethical considerations seem to be around every corner. For example, what should be given priority in responding to discipline problems: the needs of the individual, or the needs of the group? How should you handle the dilemma of being required to teach to the test because the school is being judged by test scores, when it is apparent that the students need something different? It is normal that you will have some favorite students. When does keeping the role of teacher can lead to some of the most difficult ethical dilemmas. For example, what do you do if you perceive that another teacher is not following professional standards of teaching? What should you do if a school administrator asks you to do something that you do not think is in the best interests of the students or violates an ethical principle? For example, one of the authors was called in to mediate a situation where a school principal was observed drinking and even becoming inebriated during the school day. A couple of teachers had exhibited courage in acting on their ethical principles by bringing this potentially dangerous situation to the attention of others in spite of incurring the displeasure of other teachers and the school district administration.

Relationships with others in fulfilling the role of teacher can also lead to some of the most satisfying and rewarding successes. David Piercey (2010) argues that teachers don’t collaborate nearly enough, although the professional literature provides strong evidence that collaboration works (p. 55). Teaming together can help meet the needs of diverse groups (Grskovic & Trzcinka, 2012), and interdisciplinary teaming (working with teachers from other disciplines) improves teachers’ self-efficacy and helps them understands their students’ needs, increasing teacher satisfaction (Good & Karn, 2012).

Ethical issues usually do not have easy right or wrong answers. They often involve a conflict of two or more values or moral principles. Behaving ethically means that you do the “right” thing, not just the expedient or the easy thing.

You will not get very far into your career of teaching without facing ethical dilemmas. In teaching, ethical considerations seem to be around every corner. For example, what should be given priority in responding to discipline problems: the needs of the individual, or the needs of the group? How should you handle the dilemma of being required to teach to the test because the school is being judged by test scores, when it is apparent that the students need something different? It is normal that you will have some favorite students. When does

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A DAY IN THE LIFE . . . The Human Side of Teaching

It is a beautiful, crisp day late in the fall. The leaves are falling from the trees, and everyone is looking forward to the coming holidays. However, Pat Taylor is preoccupied in the drive to school. One of Pat’s students has been withdrawn lately and has stopped participating in class. Yesterday, on a writing assignment, the student hinted that it would be appropriate for children who were neglected at home to run away.

Pat is unsure about what to do. Was this just a piece of fiction created for this assignment? Was it just a typical adolescent feeling of loneliness? Was the student really experiencing neglect at home? Should a conference be held with the student, or would the student see this as a violation of trust between the student and teacher? Should the administration or the school counselor be brought into the situation? Would it be appropriate to contact the parents and have a conference?

Pat begins to reflect on the hidden dimensions of teaching. Because teachers are involved in the lives of impressionable youth, they cannot ignore the human side of teaching. This often creates ethical and moral dilemmas that do not have easy answers. Pat wonders if people really know how many sleepless nights teachers spent worrying about students in their classrooms.

Some of the older teachers seem to have developed an immunity or even a callousness that lets them shed these concerns and just focus on teaching as another job. However, Pat isn’t sure that is the right approach.

DISPOSITION CHECK

The human side of teaching has a powerful influence on both students and teachers. When teachers face moral and ethical choices, skills are not relevant. Ultimately, it is attitudes and values that are most influential. The personal involvement and the concern of teachers about their students create ethical and moral dilemmas that may not be present for those who do not care. Surveys of students indicate, however, that students identify their favorite teachers more on their personal, caring qualities than on their teaching skills.

Reflect on this ethical dilemma.

1. What attitudes and values seem to be influencing Pat?
2. What do you see as the most important values to consider in this situation?
3. How do you feel about the power teachers have over the lives of students?
4. Are your dispositions up to the challenge?

UNDERSTANDING THE BROADER SCOPE OF THE PROFESSION

Those individuals just beginning their preparation for teaching are most interested in what happens in the classroom on a day-to-day basis. This is understandable. However, decisions made far from the classroom have a direct impact on the day-to-day operation of the classroom. Teachers are not independent contractors who can do as they see fit. They operate under a whole set of controls and regulations. Therefore, understanding who controls education is absolutely critical in becoming a professional educator.

In recent decades, the governance of education has captured the attention of governors, mayors, state legislators, Congress, and even presidents. Educational issues have become campaign platforms for politicians. Their interest is fueled by the knowledge that education, as one of the primary institutions of society, has an important impact on the economic, social, and political development of a nation.
At the national level, political leaders have been concerned about international competition. They are concerned that the lack of a unified and well-coordinated national school system and a consistent school curriculum places the nation at a competitive disadvantage with other nations. They understand that good schools are essential in preparing future leaders and in fueling innovation that will keep the nation competitive with other emerging nations in the world. Therefore, the federal government has been much more active in advocating school reforms such as a common core of curriculum standards that all states should follow, how educational attainment should be measured, and what is required to obtain a teaching credential.

States within the nation are in competition with other states in expanding their economic base. They seek to attract business and industry to their state. The quality of the education system within a state is an important component in attracting new investments. The result has been that governors and state-level politicians have made education a major issue in their political platforms and have reduced the power and authority of local school districts.

At the local level, mayors of large cities have been frustrated as they attempt to improve the quality of life in their cities because they have little control over the educational system. Therefore, they have sought to place the school system under their control so that they can build an infrastructure that will attract new businesses and residents to their community (Epstein, 2004). In some large cities, the mayors have assumed much more control over the local school district and in making educational policies.

The result of these forces has been a significant shift in the control of education. This transformation and shift of power in education will have a powerful impact on its future. We must address questions such as, “What should be the role of politicians in making educational decisions?” There are some real dangers in allowing political leaders too much power over educational decisions. For example, there was great concern a few years ago when a state-level textbook commission in Texas passed guidelines for new textbooks that favored the inclusion of conservative political viewpoints and deleted information inconsistent with their political philosophy. Because of the influence of Texas on the textbook market, this change would influence the content of textbooks in many states outside of Texas.

**The Structure of Educational Control**

The Tenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States reserves those powers not specifically delegated to the federal government for the states. Because education is not specifically mentioned in the Constitution, governance of education has been delegated to the individual states. All educational activities within the state are subject to the regulations and the decisions of the individual state. The state enacts legislation that is binding on all the schools in the state, determines financial formulas for funding education, defines criteria for granting and revoking teacher and administrator credentials, establishes curriculum standards, accredits schools, and in some instances determines which textbooks can be used in the schools.

Most states have an education code. This is a collection of all the regulations that govern the operation of the schools in the state. Because the education code covers everything from school construction requirements to curriculum...
standards, the education code is usually a very large document. Most teachers
know very little about this code. It is often something that an individual will
learn about in a graduate course in educational administration.

The structure of educational governance has evolved into what has been
described as a unique form of government that is somewhat separate from the
traditional political structure (Kirst, 2004). The rationale for developing a sepa-
rate governance structure was to shield the schools from undue political interfer-
ence (Epstein, 2004).

A key principle has been that educational decisions should be kept sepa-
rate from partisan politics and should be kept as close as possible to the local
community and to the parents. Therefore, even though states have the legal
responsibility for education, much of the responsibility for the schools has been
delegated to the local school district, which operates under the supervision of a
locally elected school board. The usual procedure has been for the state to estab-
lish overall policies and directions as outlined in the education code and leave
the implementation and the day-to-day operation of the schools to the local
school board. The assumption behind local control is that the citizens of the local
community best know the needs of their community and the students.

However, this unique governance structure is not without drawbacks. One
is that few people in a given state understand or participate in the governance of
education. For example, few people can identify their local school board mem-
bers, and few participate in local school board elections. Usually, only about 10%
to 15% of eligible voters turn out for school board elections (Kirst, 2004). This
raises the question of just how informed and involved are the residents of a
given community in the operation of the schools?

State Organization Structure

Remember that the state is still the level of government that has legal respon-
sibility for education within the state. A number of forces within the state influence this policy. These include the governor, the legislature, the state board of
education, the chief state school officer, and the state department of education.
The amount of influence of each of these groups varies from state to state according to how they are defined in the state constitution.

State Legislature and Governor

The state legislature is usually the most powerful force in controlling education in a state, because this body establishes educational policy and passes the laws that govern education. In addition, education is usually the largest item in the state budget. In every state, numerous bills are introduced every legislative session related to education. Most states have had a dramatic increase in the number of bills introduced that relate to some dimension of education. In some instances, court decisions force state legislatures to make changes in the education code. In recent years a number of these changes have related to school finance formulas.

State governors have the potential for exerting considerable influence on
education because they have the power to propose legislation and to veto bills
that are passed by the legislature. In addition, governors have used their position to lobby and influence public opinion regarding educational issues. Together, state legislatures and the governor act on state budgets that determine funding for education in the state. Other areas that have received considerable state-level
attention include the establishment of charter schools, adoption of the common core curriculum standards, standardized testing and accountability, teacher tenure, and teacher evaluation. This issue has a profound influence on the lives of teachers.

**Chief State School Officer**

Another key education figure within a state is the chief state school officer. This position has different titles in different states. Most common is the title of “state superintendent of education” or “state commissioner of education.” This individual is often viewed as the “voice” for education within a state. The actual power of this person varies according to the governance and the organization of the state government. In some states the person in this role has considerable power to influence educational policy and practice, and in other states their influence is quite limited. The person who fills this role is usually the executive officer for the state board of education and the chief administrator for the state department of education.

**State Board of Education**

The state board of education is a group that is charged with the actual implementation of policy and legislative action. They usually set the policies that are then turned over to the chief state school officer and the state department of education for implementation. They compile and update the education code, direct the implementation of new legislation related to education, set goals and priorities, advise the governor and the state legislature on educational issues, guide the implementation of curriculum standards, and enforce regulations on the local school district. For example, if the state legislature passes legislation relating to an issue such as statewide testing of students, that legislation will be given to the state board to implement.

**State Department of Education**

The state department of education is the body that carries out the work of the state board of education. Because education in any state is complex, the state department often has a number of departments and employees. The state department of education performs such tasks as compiling statistical reports, administering the budget, implementing curriculum frameworks, conducting state assessments, administering special grants and projects, and establishing standards for teaching and administrative credentials.

Those entering the teaching profession will have their most direct contact with the state department of education through the credentialing process. The state department is responsible for making sure that individuals seeking a teaching or administrative credential pass all of the examinations, complete all the required coursework, and meet all the legal requirements that qualify them for the credential they seek. All individuals seeking any sort of a credential in education within a given state usually apply to the credential division of the state department of education. This is important to those preparing to be teachers because legally, a person must have the appropriate teaching credential in order to be considered for a teaching position in the public schools of the state. Individuals who accept a position in the public schools without the appropriate credential are generally considered by the courts as “volunteers”! However, this seldom occurs, because most school districts have strict procedures that require proof of a teaching credential before a contract of employment is offered.
Because education is primarily a state responsibility, each state has its own requirements for a teaching credential. For example, if you decide to move from the state where you complete a teaching credential to another state, you will need to meet the requirements of the state you move to in order to be qualified to accept a teaching position in a public school in that state. In some instances, states have reciprocal agreements in place that allow a credentialed teacher in another state to qualify for the beginning credential. However, they may require these teachers to pass any examinations required in their state, and they may require additional coursework in order to renew the credential. Individuals who plan on teaching in a state other than the one where they complete their credential program should investigate the requirements in the state where they wish to teach.

Local School District Organization

The day-to-day operation of the schools is the responsibility of the local school districts. They operate the schools, hire the teachers, purchase the supplies, run the buses, build and maintain the buildings, maintain the budget, and perform all the functions needed to keep the schools in the district operating. They also develop and submit tax proposals to be voted on by the citizens who reside in the school district, and they establish attendance boundaries.

Local school districts are established by the state and are subject to the rules and regulations of the state board of education. The state can change the school district boundaries, modify the powers of the school district, and even eliminate school districts. In recent years, state departments of education have assumed control of local school district operations because of poor student performance or financial difficulties.

Currently in the United States, there are about 14,000 local school districts governing about 96,000 schools that teach around 50 million students. This represents a decline in the number of school districts over the past 75 years. In 1940, there were more than 117,000 public school districts governing more than 226,000 schools. This reduction is the result of school and school district consolidations. For example, in 1940, there were more than 113,000 one-teacher schools (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005a). Today, one-teacher schools are extremely rare.

Most local school districts share common features. The structure of a local district usually includes a local school board, a superintendent, central office staff, school principals, assistant principals, teachers, and school staff.

The Local School Board

The legal responsibility for operating local school districts rests in the hands of the local school board. The local school board is the only group that can make commitments that are legally binding. This means that for an action to be legal, such as contracting a district for services or hiring a teacher, it must be approved by the local school board. This is important for new teachers to understand, because a contract to teach in a school district is not official until the school board has acted on the recommendation and has officially entered it into the school board minutes. Even though a school principal, personnel director, or even a superintendent has indicated to a prospective teacher or administrator that the school district is going to employ them, the decision is legal and binding only when the school board acts.
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The local school board usually consists of individuals who reside within the boundaries of the school district and who are elected by the voters who reside in the school district. A few school boards are appointed by the mayor. Normally, school board members cannot be employees of the school district. Teachers or administrators who reside in the school district but teach in another school district may serve on the school board. However, the vast majority of school board members are individuals who are not educators. Because education is often a large business with a substantial budget, a large number of local school board members tend to have business and management backgrounds.

The terms of office for school board members are usually staggered so that there are always some continuing members on the board. In spite of the power and responsibilities of local school boards, members elected to the board usually serve with little or no compensation. The responsibilities of the school board include staffing the schools (including the selection of the superintendent), establishing policies and procedures for the daily operation of the schools in the district, developing a budget, keeping the school district solvent, dealing with employee relations such as collective bargaining, maintaining community relations, establishing requirements for promotion and graduation, making decisions regarding matters such as extracurricular activities, and program evaluation and assessment. Although many of these daily activities are delegated to the superintendent and members of the central staff, the school board members are the ones who are legally responsible for them.

**The District Superintendent**

One of the most important functions of the school board is the selection and employment of the superintendent. In a few places the superintendent is elected, but that is the exception. Because the local school board is usually made up of individuals who have limited expertise in education, the educational leader of the school district is the superintendent. The school board looks to the person filling this role for advice when making decisions.

Superintendents usually have a significant impact on the local district. The most important role of the superintendent is that of providing leadership for the school district and overseeing its daily operation. The superintendent must advise the school board regarding educational issues, establish priorities for the district, supervise the school principals and the administrative team, oversee the budget, maintain positive relationships with the community, and build support for district programs.

As can be noted, the superintendent has a wide range of responsibilities. Some large urban districts have a complex organization structure with numerous divisions, extensive budgets, and constant interactions with politicians and organized special-interest groups. In these districts, the superintendent is more like the CEO of a complex organization, and superintendents may be hired based on criteria other than their educational expertise. However, recent research (Grissom & Andersen, 2012) indicates that the turnover of superintendents in large school districts is quite high. This study of superintendents in California found that 71% of the superintendents of large districts left within three years. This high turnover rate is probably related to the high-stakes politics in large cities, greater pressure on superintendents, and more conflicts with the school board.

There are implications related to the turnover rate. Because it takes a number of years to implement new programs and change the curriculum, urban districts
with a high turnover of superintendents would probably have more difficulty actually making substantive changes in the school district.

The wide range of superintendent responsibilities also brings a high degree of risk. Superintendents must maintain positive support from a wide range of constituents, and it is almost inevitable that there will be some who disagree with the superintendent. Maintaining support of the school board is one of the most important tasks. The school board employs the superintendent and, if support of the board is lost, the probabilities are high that the superintendent will soon be dismissed. Maintaining the support of the school board can be difficult because the composition of the school board can change with every election. Because of normally low turnouts for school elections, special interest groups who convince their constituents to vote can influence the composition of the school board. This is one of the reasons why the turnover rate of superintendents is quite high. A teacher who works in a school district for any length of time is likely to work under several different superintendents. This can be a challenge for teachers, as each new superintendent brings in new perspectives and priorities.

Central Office Staff

Even though the superintendent is responsible for the daily operations of the school district, the central office staff is critical in the operation of the district. The central office staff is a network of individuals with expertise in different areas. They advise the superintendent and carry out his or her priorities and wishes. The central office staff usually consists of individuals who have responsibility for business and finance, human resources, curriculum and instruction, facilities, grants and special services, and special education. The number of individuals in the central office and their range of responsibilities are related to the size of the school district. A small school may have a few central office staff members, and each individual might have several areas of responsibility. Large school districts will usually have a large central office staff, each with a specialized area of responsibility. For example, in a small district there might be only one individual assigned responsibility for curriculum and instruction. In a large school district, however, there might be one director of elementary curriculum and another for secondary. In addition, there might be individuals under the director with responsibility for different subject areas such as reading, math, science, social science, art, music, health, and physical education.

School Principal

Normally, the school principal is in charge of the operation of a local school. Principals are a part of the administrative team and serve under the direction of the superintendent and the school board. This means that they can be removed at any time. Although most principals are former teachers who have acquired tenure as a teacher, they do not acquire tenure as school principals. A principal can be removed and assigned to other responsibilities, including returning to classroom teaching. Therefore, the school principal must be the voice of the central administration to the teaching staff. This can place school principals in a difficult position when the interests of the superintendent and the school board are different from those of the teachers.

New teachers will have the most direct contact with the administration of the school district through the school principal. The principal usually interviews prospective teachers, manages the school budget, supervises and evaluates the
teachers and the school staff, takes care of necessary paperwork, responds to serious problems, and exerts leadership over the curriculum and the instruction of the school. The responsibilities of the school principal vary somewhat between elementary and secondary schools. Secondary school principals generally view themselves more as managers, whereas elementary principals tend to view themselves as more responsible for teaching and learning.

Regardless of the level, the role of building principal can be demanding. School principals normally have advanced educational preparation and possess an administrative credential that qualifies them to serve as a school principal. Because of the complexity of the role, it is time-consuming and can have a high degree of stress. For example, a school principal might have to deal with the custodian regarding a building problem and the school secretary regarding required paperwork, as well as a problem student, an upset teacher, an irate parent, a meeting with the superintendent, and the monitoring of after-school programs such as athletic events, all in the course of a day!

Effective school principals are the instructional leaders for the school and are critical in establishing a positive teaching and learning climate. Therefore, they should have a depth of understanding regarding teaching and learning. The contact of secondary school teachers with the school principal is usually considerably less than that of an elementary teacher. However, at both levels, individuals seeking teaching positions are well advised to consider the interpersonal skills and the leadership ability of the principal before accepting a teaching position in the school.

Assistant Principals
Depending on its size, a school may have one or more assistant principals. These are individuals who work under the supervision of the school principal. Large secondary schools may have several assistant principals with different responsibilities. For example, one might be in charge of discipline, and another in charge of curriculum and instruction. An assistant principal might have the responsibility to assist and supervise new teachers in the school. Therefore, it is likely that new teachers in secondary schools will have more contact with an assistant principal than with the principal. However, it is the responsibility of the school principal to make personnel decisions regarding the hiring and retention of new teachers. Principals will often do this in consultation with assistant principals, but they certainly have the authority to override the assistants' recommendations. In other words, the principal has the power over your continued employment. It is imperative that you get to know your principal and the expectations he or she has for new teachers.

Department Heads and Team Leaders
Secondary schools normally have department heads, and elementary schools may have grade-level or team leaders. These are teachers who take on additional responsibility for helping address the specific needs of their department or team. At the secondary level, there is usually a department head for each of the content areas such as math, English, science, social science, art, music, and physical education. At the elementary level, there may be team leaders with responsibility to address the specific needs of a given grade level. There may be first grade team leaders, second grade team leaders, and so on. The role of these individuals is to identify the specific needs of their department and team and to communicate these to the adminis-
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They also communicate the concerns of the school administrators back to their department or team. Because these individuals are teachers, they usually do not have evaluative responsibilities over teachers. However, they may serve as mentors to new teachers and may advise the school administration regarding the strengths and needs of new teachers. In large secondary schools, department chairs may be given some released time from teaching duties to perform their role as department chair.

Teachers

The largest number of professionals in the school will be the teachers. Smaller elementary schools may have only one or two teachers per grade level; large secondary schools may have as many as 100 or more teachers. In an elementary school, it is typical that all teachers know each other and converse on a regular basis. At a secondary school, teachers may only have a nodding acquaintance with teachers in other departments.

Teachers form the informal power structure in a school. Although they do not have formal evaluative functions, the social power structure of the teachers in a school can certainly make the life of a new teacher either easier or more difficult. You need to understand that each school develops a particular “culture” that is a combination of both formal and informal power structures. This culture usually includes the written and unwritten rules and expectations for those working in the school. For example, some schools have a culture that values cooperation and sharing with others, and other schools do not. In some schools, the teachers may have a great deal of trust and confidence in the school administrators. In other schools, the administrators, including the principal and the superintendent, are viewed more as adversaries than professional colleagues. These elements of the school culture will have an impact on the satisfactions you get from going to work and teaching.

1. Who seems to have the most power in schools where you have had some experience?
2. What are some examples that you have observed of how the school “culture” affects teachers in the school?
3. What would you look for in identifying the “culture” of a school where you are considering a teaching role?

When searching for a teaching position, try to identify the culture and the informal power structure of the school. Is there a sense of trust and cooperation? Are teachers helping each other? Do the teachers and the administration seem to be working toward common goals? Is there a high level of professionalism in the school?
School Support Staff

An important cadre of people in a school is the support staff. The support staff usually consists of the front office and the custodial personnel. These are important individuals who keep the school functioning smoothly. The administrative assistant and the front office staff usually keep all the records and files, answer the phones, greet visitors, order supplies, and are the first point of contact when someone enters the school. They are the individuals who can answer most of the questions a new teacher might have and can assist you in getting the materials and the supplies you need. It is wise to cultivate a friendship with the front office staff!

Custodians are in charge of the building and the repairs. They keep the school clean and can often help a teacher find things such as filing cabinets, bookcases, extra chairs, and desks. They are often charged with watching for things such as violations of safety and fire regulations. Needless to say, they can be very important in helping you create a satisfying working environment. When one of the authors was an administrative intern, one of the first pieces of advice he was given was to cultivate a good relationship with the school support staff by treating them with respect.

In summary, not every school and not every school district are alike. Some school districts have dedicated and supportive school boards that work to create a positive educational environment in the school district. They have strong central staffs that listen to teachers and administrators and support their efforts. On the other hand, there are districts and schools where there is a constant tension throughout the school district and the administrative team and the teachers appear to be adversaries.

Some schools have a warm atmosphere where the administration, the support staff, and the teachers are working together to make sure that teachers have what they need to teach and students are learning. In others, there is little cooperation among teachers and little communication between the administration and the faculty. These factors do influence teaching satisfaction and the turnover of school personnel. They should be considered when seeking a teaching position.

Intermediate School Districts

Another type of school district that is generally less visible than the local school district is the intermediate school district. Thirty-three states have intermediate school districts. Across the nation, there are a little over 1,400 intermediate school units (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005b). In some states, these districts are arranged around county lines, and the name of the school district may correspond to the name of the county. In other places, they are arranged by regions and are often called “intermediate” or “regional” school districts.

The usual role of the intermediate school district is to provide services that may be difficult for local school districts to provide. For example, many intermediate school districts provide expensive classes for special needs students and vocational education programs. They often maintain a materials library that all local school districts can use, and they may have subject-matter specialists who can provide assistance to small school districts in tasks such as curriculum development or in-service training. Some intermediate school districts provide services such as job fairs that help connect individuals seeking a teaching position with school districts that have openings.

In many places the intermediate districts have responsibility of oversight to make sure that local school districts are complying with state regulations. They
track legislation that is passed and help inform local school districts of the rules and procedures that must be followed. They may have responsibility to monitor the finances of local school districts and have the power to take action if the finances of a local school district are fiscally irresponsible.

Intermediate school districts do not have responsibilities for hiring and evaluating teachers other than those they may employ for special programs. Although you may not have extensive contact with an intermediate school district, you should check on their activities. They may offer good services that you can use as a classroom teacher and may provide opportunities for professional growth. They also may have listings for teaching vacancies across the region and may sponsor job fairs where you can make initial contact with a number of school districts.

Federal Organization and Influence

As indicated earlier in the chapter, the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution assigns authority for education to the states. Therefore, there has been limited federal influence over education. Over the years, the most important role of the federal government has been through the court system. The federal courts have had a significant impact over the years by making sure that the rights of citizens guaranteed by the Constitution are not violated. Such issues as school desegregation, family rights and privacy, providing services for special needs individuals, due process rights for students, and teacher rights relating to academic freedom have had important impacts on education across the nation.

In addition to the role of the courts, the federal government has sought to have more direct impact on state and local schools through the issuance of federal reports designed to focus public attention on educational issues and to pressure local and state authorities to take action. In recent years, the federal influence has increased dramatically through the use of what is called the Constitution’s “Spending Clause” (U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8, Clause 1). This clause gives Congress the power to tax and spend in order to provide for the general welfare of the people. What this means is that the federal government can influence state policy by attaching conditions to the funds they supply to the states under the claim that it is for the “general welfare of the people.” Using this general welfare clause has enabled the federal government to use funds as a “carrot and a stick” to accomplish indirectly what they are prohibited from accomplishing directly (Ryan, 2004).

To illustrate the significance of this spending clause on education and educational policy, the federal government funds more than 60 educational programs (Ryan, 2004). This means that there is federal involvement in a wide variety of educational activities. States have the choice of either accepting the federal funds for these programs and the strings that are attached, or refusing the funding for all of them. Because this is a significant money stream for most states, states usually comply with the federal mandates. This shift in the federal influence over education is one of the most significant educational changes in recent history. It has prompted lots of discussion and debate. There are solid arguments both for and against this increased federal role, and those entering education need to understand the significance of these changes and its effect on their role in the classroom.

The U.S. Department of Education

The federal agency with the most influence on educational policy is the Department of Education. The role of the Department of Education is to manage policy, provide federal leadership on educational issues, administer federal grants and
programs, gather and disseminate statistics about education, and support and engage in research.

The growth of the U.S. Department of Education mirrors the growing influence of the federal government related to education. Originally established as an Office of Education shortly after the Civil War, it achieved cabinet-level status in 1979 when President Carter signed legislation creating a new Department of Education. Previously, the U.S. Office of Education had been a part of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Several other cabinet-level departments had education-related programs, so the Department of Education brought together education-related programs and grants and raised the status of education as a national concern. Although there are still occasional calls to eliminate the Department of Education during national elections, the probability of such an action has diminished over time.

The Secretary of Education, as a cabinet-level appointee, plays a major role in advising the president and Congress on educational issues. The secretary is also the person in charge of the Department of Education and establishes priorities for such items as federal grants and research.

An example of the influence of the Secretary of Education and the U.S. Department of Education is the Race to the Top (RTT) program. Shortly after his election in 2008, President Obama was faced with a serious economic crisis. In response to this crisis, in February 2009 he signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Although the main focus of the act was the economic condition of the nation, it included $4.35 billion for the RTT Fund. This fund established a competitive grant program of money for states if they would address specific aspects of the educational reform movement. In order to compete for a federal RTT grant, states agreed to design and implement statewide standardized assessment of student achievement, use data to drive instructional decisions, reform teacher preparation programs, revise teacher evaluations by placing more emphasis on student achievement, improve teacher compensation and retention policies, and implement strict programs to “turn around” low-performing schools. RTT became a major priority of Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Numerous states quickly changed their policies in order to qualify for the funds. The focus on using standardized tests to assess student progress and use the data for important educational decisions became a significant item of educational reform across the nation, even in those states that did not apply for RTT funds.

In summary, although the Constitution delegates responsibility over education to the individual states, the federal government has played an increasing role in educational policy. Much of this has been accomplished through the general welfare clause of the Constitution as a tool to tie federal money to educational reform. The result has been that the federal government and the U.S. Department of Education have had a powerful influence on education across the nation.

Other Influences on Educational Policy

Two large professional associations, the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), represent the voice of teachers and have a powerful impact on educational policy. More than 80% of all public school teachers across the nation belong to one of these two organizations (Fischer, Schimmel, & Steelman, 2007).
Part I  The Changing Profession

Politicians at the national and state levels have recognized that these associations are powerful lobbies with a significant funding base that can turn out large numbers of voters and campaign volunteers. This has given professional associations considerable political influence. As a result, these professional organizations have become the target of some politicians, who have used national economic conditions as an excuse for limiting collective bargaining for teachers in those states where it is allowed and to restrict the use of member dues to support political candidates. This is likely to remain a major political issue into the near future.

New teachers will have the most direct contact with the local affiliates of these two professional organizations and may be asked to join one of them. This is especially the case in states where professional associations have the right to be collective bargaining agents for teachers. Currently, 35 states have policies that allow for collective bargaining for local teachers. However, collective bargaining has been an issue in some states that are addressing educational change. The assertion by some policymakers is that collective bargaining makes it too difficult to remove poorly performing teachers. This is likely to be an issue in future elections in several states. You should check with the state where you wish to teach to get the latest information on the legality of collective bargaining in that state.

Collective bargaining generally means that a professional association has the right to represent teachers in a school district and negotiate with the school board on issues of wages and other conditions of employment. Specific regulations as to what is open to collective bargaining vary from state to state. In some states, the regulations are relatively general, whereas in other states, specific items such as the teacher evaluation processes, teacher transfer policies, grievance procedures, class size, and leave policies are available for collective bargaining.

When new teachers sign contracts with local school districts that have collective bargaining, they will be asked to join the local teacher organization that has the collective bargaining rights. Teachers cannot be forced to join the organization, and there are some who choose not to do so because of religious or other beliefs. However, they can be asked to pay a fee to the organization as a condition of employment. The rationale for this fee is that all teachers in the district benefit from the collective bargaining and therefore should pay a fair share of costs incurred by the professional association.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

• What is your view of being involved in a professional teacher organization?
• Do you think it is fair to have to pay a fee to an organization for collective bargaining?
• Do you think that a professional organization ought to able to use the dues paid to the organization in support of political positions that you may not hold?

In summary, although professional teacher associations have no designated authority for educational policy, they do have considerable influence and power. Understanding the dynamics of governance and the forces that influence policy requires that you have a solid grasp of the role of professional teacher associations.
Chapter 2  What Does It Take to Become a Professional Educator?

THE GOVERNANCE ISSUE: WHO WILL CONTROL EDUCATION?

Local control of the schools has long been a staple of educational governance across the nation. However, the recent trend has been away from local control to more direct state invention and federal influence.

Some view this as a positive development. They point out that education is a national priority and the education of the youth of the nation is vital for the future. They contend that more centralized control of education is necessary in order to keep the nation competitive with other nations of the world, to improve the quality of life, to reduce poverty, and to address other persistent social problems (Cuban, 2004).

In some states, efforts have been made to shift some of the power away from state school boards and to place education more directly under the influence of the governor. Some large cities have already given considerable power to the mayor over the operation of the school district (Chicago, IL; Washington, DC; New York, NY; Los Angeles, CA).

The federal government has certainly taken a more active role in influencing educational policy. Efforts such as the one to implement the Common Core State Standards across the nation in order to develop a common curriculum across state boundaries are examples of this influence. Education has become a major plank in the political platforms of many candidates for political office.

However, there are others who see dangers in this movement. They worry about political “dirty tricks” that attempt to use the schools as a means to further a specific political agenda. They are concerned that specific political interests will control what is taught in schools and the political orientation of those who teach them.

In addition, schools seem to work best when they are kept close to the community. In surveys of attitudes toward education, most people rate their local school performance much higher than they rate the performance of state or national schools. When compared to other influential individuals, they rate public teachers higher than they rate most other leaders in the amount of trust that citizens have for them. Will the movement away from local control weaken confidence in local schools and the amount of trust that individuals have in educators? Will this result in the weakening of the idea of public education?

Times are changing, and the future of education is unclear. What is clear is that the status quo will not continue. There will be dramatic changes in education, and those seeking a career in teaching need to understand that the profession they will be entering will be different from the profession that has served the nation in the past.

A PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR

As we reach the conclusion of this chapter on becoming a professional educator, it is useful to reflect on what is required of a teacher in contemporary society. Individuals are finding that enjoyment of working with young people and/or love for your subject matter are important components of teaching. They are not, however, sufficient reasons for choosing teaching as a profession.
Becoming a professional educator requires you to be a lifelong learner. You need to realize that no one knows all there is to know about teaching, and we are learning more every year. Becoming a professional educator can be a difficult journey as you proceed through all of the requirements to obtain a credential and continue to grow through in-service workshops and additional coursework. At the same time, you hear critics claim that teaching is a “soft job” with lots of time off and that schools are filled with intellectually inferior individuals.

Becoming a professional educator requires that you understand something of the complexities of the interpersonal relationships involved in working with students, parents, and other professionals. At times these relationships are highly satisfying, and at other times they are very frustrating. Few things in life are more rewarding than to see the light go on when a student finally understands. It is then that you realize that the rewards of teaching are found in the impact you have on the lives of individual students. It is very satisfying to be a part of a committed faculty that develops innovative programs and influences the lives of students on a daily basis.

However, many frustrations are a part of the role. It is frustrating when your performance is measured by standardized tests that do not measure some of the more important aspects of education. It is maddening to hear individuals who have little or no knowledge of the day-to-day complexities of the classroom make declarations about what needs to be done to improve education. It is distressing to observe other teachers who have given up and only seem to be going through the motions. Sometimes politics seems to play a more important role in deciding educational policy and practice than solid research about teaching and learning. It can be heartbreaking to have students in the classroom who do not have support at home or in the community. The fact that there is a relatively high rate of turnover of teachers in the first few years of teaching would seem to indicate that there are a number of new teachers who find that the profession does not measure up to their expectations.

Every year, many individuals decide that teaching is not for them. Some teachers leave because they have discovered that teaching did not live up to their erroneous preconceptions of what is required of a professional educator. To a degree, at least, some of these erroneous impressions result from those teachers’ mistaken notion that they “know all about teaching” because, after all, they had extensive experience as students. Another part of this turnover results from individuals who believe that anybody can teach and that there is nothing they need to learn. When they encounter students who are not like them or frustrations they did not understand to be a part of teaching, they become disenchanted.

The authors want you to know that their experiences as public school teachers and their opportunities to work with students in a variety of settings have been personally rewarding. We believe that teaching is one of the most important professions, and we are excited when we see bright and dedicated individuals move into the teaching profession and find satisfaction and success. However, we also caution that teaching is a difficult and challenging role.

As you proceed through this text, we challenge you to continually reflect on the knowledge base of the profession and evaluate how this knowledge contributes to your development as a competent and compassionate professional.
KEY IDEAS IN SUMMARY

• The phrase “preparing for teaching” does not suggest that the process of preparation has a definite ending point. Rather, it implies that preparation is a career-long process of professional growth and adaptation.

• Teachers’ professional development has four important phases. These include (1) the pretraining phase, (2) the formal-preparation phase, (3) the induction-years phase, and (4) the continuing-growth phase.

• The pretraining phase of teachers’ professional development essentially represents a time when their attitudes and predispositions toward teaching are shaped by family influences and other life experiences. These experiences often give prospective teachers a set of expectations about teachers and their work and a limited view of what teachers do.

• The formal-preparation phase of teachers’ professional development divides into three parts. Core studies include academic content that educated adults are expected to know, regardless of their college or university major. The teaching specialization(s)/academic major(s) component embraces content of the academic major (in the case of prospective secondary teachers) or academic content of the several school subjects they will teach (in the case of prospective elementary teachers). The professional-education component consists of preparation experiences related to instruction, evaluation, and management of school learners.

• The induction years, the first years of fully licensed classroom teaching, present important challenges to many teachers. During this period, teachers learn to adapt to the particular characteristics of their learners and to the special characteristics of their schools and communities.

• The continuing-growth phase of a teacher’s career provides many opportunities for continued professional development. Among them are (1) staff-development opportunities sponsored by local school districts and local, state, and national professional associations; (2) college and university courses; and (3) possibilities for involvement with local, state, and national units of major professional groups.

• Two large national organizations represent the general interests of the teaching profession. The largest of these is the National Education Association (NEA). Another important general organization for teachers is the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), a group that is affiliated with organized labor.

• Because teachers are dealing with some of the most vulnerable individuals in society—impressionable youth—high ethical standards are required of teachers. Those standards mean that professional teachers must be more than just knowledgeable adults. They must understand that being a part of a profession requires that they follow the ethical standards of the profession. The National Education Association has developed a Code of Ethics of the Education Profession. It obligates teachers to certain patterns of behavior with respect to their learners and with respect to the teaching profession.
Because of the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution, primary responsibility for education rests with the states. However, the federal government has used the general welfare clause to exert significant influence on educational policy and practice.

There are several layers of government at the state level that establish educational policy within a state. It starts with the governor and the state legislature and includes a state board of education, the state department of education, and a state superintendent of education.

The day-to-day work of the school district is delegated by the state to local school districts. The local district is governed by an elected board of education that hires a district superintendent to conduct the daily operations of the district. The superintendent serves at the pleasure of the board.

The school principal is the person in charge of the operation of the school. In larger schools there may be one or more assistant principals who have responsibilities delegated by the principal. The principal serves at the pleasure of the superintendent and can be removed by the superintendent at any time.

Historically, local control has been a major characteristic of educational governance. In recent years, however, there has been a shift of control away from the local school board, with more emphasis at the state level and more pressure exerted by the federal government.

REFLECTIONS

1. In this chapter, you learned that pretraining influences of families and prior experiences of prospective teachers often give them certain attitudes and perspectives on the education profession. Such influences may have influenced your own views. For example, think about how you would answer these questions:
   • What do good teachers do?
   • What is the ideal school like?
   • What kind of behaviors do you expect to characterize learners you will teach?

   Now, take time to think about where you acquired these perspectives. How sure are you that your present ideas represent an accurate picture of the teaching profession? How might you test the adequacy and accuracy of some of your present impressions?

2. What are the basic ethical principles that a teacher should follow? Can you think of some other ethical issues that should be included in the Code of Ethics? Which of the areas of the Code of Ethics do you think presents the most challenges to a teacher?

3. What is your reaction to the levels of control of education? Do you think the federal government should have a large role in determining educational policy and practice across the nation?

4. How might you go about determining the “culture” of a school where you are seeking a teaching position?
Chapter 2  What Does It Take to Become a Professional Educator?

FIELD EXPERIENCES, PROJECTS, AND ENRICHMENT

1. Interview a teacher who has been in the profession for at least 15 years. Ask this person to describe his or her preparation for teaching and any in-service or other developmental activities he or she has experienced over the years. Make a report to your class on this topic: “The Professional Life Space of a Teacher: One Person’s Experience.”

2. Some people argue that teachers should have higher ethical standards than the population as a whole. Others suggest that this kind of a standard ensures that only atypical people will serve in the classrooms and that such individuals will be unrealistic models for young people. Organize a class debate on the issue, “Resolved: That Teachers Must Be More Ethical Than Typical Citizens.”

3. Attend a local school board meeting. Identify the items on the agenda and note the interactions between the school board members and the superintendent.

4. Look at the organizational chart of a local school district. Identify the individuals that are responsible for different aspects of the operation of the school district.

5. Talk with teachers in a local school about changes that have occurred in the actual practice of education that is the result of new state and federal initiatives and mandates. What is their reaction to increased control of education by state and federal governments?

REFERENCES


