



# Your Introduction to Education

## Explorations in Teaching

Fourth Edition



Sara Davis Powell

# Your Introduction to Education:

Explorations in Teaching

Fourth Edition

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## ***Dedication***

*Jesse White teaches in an innovative charter school where students learn through experimentation and real-life problem solving. He represents dedicated teachers everywhere who use their creativity and energy to engage students in the teaching and learning process—teachers who make critical differences in the lives of their students. To these teachers, and to Jesse, my son, I dedicate this fourth edition.*

# Brief Contents

- 1** Teachers and the Teaching Profession 1
- 2** Student Similarities and Differences 30
- 3** School Similarities and Differences 71
- 4** Curriculum, Assessment, and Accountability 103
- 5** The Science, Art, and Service of Teaching 138
- 6** Creating and Maintaining a Positive and Productive Learning Environment 168
- 7** History of Education in the United States 199
- 8** Philosophical Foundations of Education in the United States 235
- 9** The Societal Context of Schooling in the United States 254
- 10** Ethical and Legal Issues in U.S. Schools 293
- 11** Governing and Financing Public Schools 325
- 12** Professionalism in Relationships, Reality, and Reform 352

# Contents

Dedication	iii	Social Aspects of Gender	40
Preface	x	Achievement and Gender	40
		Sexual Diversity	41
<b>1 Teachers and the Teaching Profession</b>	<b>1</b>	How Are Cultural and Language Diversity Manifested in Schools?	<b>43</b>
<b>Where Do IS tand?</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>The Opinion Page</b>	<b>43</b>
Who Teaches in the United States and Why?	4	Cultural Diversity	44
Deciding to Teach	4	Language Diversity	47
<b>Teaching in Focus</b>	<b>8</b>	What Is the Impact on Students of Family Structure, Religion, and Socioeconomic Status?	<b>53</b>
How Do We Prepare to Teach?	9	Family Diversity	53
Traditional Paths to Teacher Preparation	9	Religious Diversity	53
Alternative Paths to Teacher Preparation	9	Socioeconomic Diversity	54
Getting to Know Schools, Teachers, and Students	10	How Are Learning Differences Manifested in Schools?	<b>56</b>
Meet the Focus Teachers	11	Multiple Intelligences Theory	56
Is Teaching a Profession?	14	Learning Preferences	56
Characteristics of a Profession	14	Who Are Students with Exceptionalities and How Do We Serve Them?	<b>58</b>
Professional Associations	15	Students with Disabilities	59
What Is Teacher Professionalism?	17	Legal Support for Students with Disabilities	61
Put Students First	17	Assistive Technology	61
Strive for Excellence	18	Individualized Educational Programs	62
Commit to Growth	18	Inclusion	62
<b>SocialMedia</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Getting to Know Trista</b>	<b>63</b>
What Are the Characteristics of Effective Teachers?	21	Students Designated as Gifted and Talented	64
<b>The Opinion Page</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>Social Media</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Teaching in Focus</b>	<b>24</b>	Concluding Thoughts	66
Effective Teachers are 100 % Present	24	<b>Chapter in Review</b>	<b>67</b>
Effective Teachers make a Difference	25	<b>26 Developing Professional Competence</b>	<b>68</b>
Teaching is Hard Work	25		
Concluding Thoughts	26		
<b>Chapter in Review</b>	<b>26</b>		
<b>Developing Professional Competence</b>	<b>27</b>		
		<b>3 School Similarities and Differences</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>2 Student Similarities and Differences</b>	<b>30</b>	What Are the Purposes of Public Schools in the United States?	71
How Are Students Similar?	30	Distinctions between Education and Schooling	72
Nature and Nurture	31	Complementary Purposes of Public Schools	72
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs	31	What Is the Culture of a School?	<b>74</b>
<b>Student Development</b>	<b>32</b>	Teachers and School Culture	75
Focus Students: Early Childhood	32	Changing School Culture	75
Focus Students: Elementary	33	How Do School Venues Differ?	<b>75</b>
Focus Students: Middle School	34	Public School Venues	75
Focus Students: High School	34	Private School Venues	79
How Are Gender Differences Manifested in Schools?	40	School Choice	81

<b>The Opinion Page</b>			
What Is School Like at Different Levels?			
Structure and Organization of Early Childhood Education	84	85	127
<b>Focus School</b>			
Structure and Organization of Elementary Education	85	87	130
<b>Focus School</b>			
Structure and Organization of Middle-Level Education	87	88	131
<b>Focus School</b>			
Structure and Organization of High School Education	88	89	132
<b>Focus School</b>			
Structure and Organization of High School Education	89	90	133
<b>Focus School</b>			
Structure and Organization of High School Education	90	91	134
<b>Focus School</b>			
Structure and Organization of High School Education	91	92	135
<b>Focus School</b>			
Structure and Organization of High School Education	92	93	136
<b>Focus School</b>			
Structure and Organization of High School Education	93	94	
What Are the Three Principal Settings of U.S. Schools?	94	94	
Rural Schools	94	95	138
Suburban Schools	94	95	138
Urban Schools	94	95	139
<b>SocialMEdia</b>			
What Is an Effective School?	95	96	140
Characteristics of Effective Schools	96	97	146
Concluding Thoughts	97	98	151
<b>Chapter in Review</b>			
<b>Developing Professional Competence</b>	98	99	152
	99	100	153
<b>4 Curriculum, Assessment, and Accountability</b>	100	103	154
Where Do I Stand?	103	104	154
What Is the Formal Curriculum?	104	105	154
Standards Influence What We Teach	105	106	155
Uses and Limitations of Textbooks	106	109	158
Government Influences What We Teach	109	110	164
Additional Influences on Curriculum	110	111	164
Subjects of the Formal Curriculum	111	111	164
Important Concepts that Add Value to Curriculum	111	113	164
<b>Teaching in Focus</b>			
Controversy and Curriculum	113	115	169
<b>SocialMEdia</b>			
What Other Curricula Do We Teach in U.S. Schools?	115	116	171
Informal Curriculum	116	117	171
Extra Curriculum	117	118	173
Null Curriculum	118	119	175
<b>SocialMEdia</b>			
Withitness, Overlapping, and the Ripple Effect	119	119	176
Using Time Wisely	119	120	176
What Is Involved in Classroom Assessment?	120	120	177
Purposes of Classroom Assessment	120	121	177
Forms of Assessment	121	121	177
<b>Teaching in Focus</b>			
Assessment of 21st-Century Knowledge and Skills	121	123	178
How Do Teachers Evaluate Student Learning and Assign Grades?	123	124	181
Evaluation	124	124	182
Rubrics	124	125	183
Assigning Grades	125	126	186
84 What Are Standardized Tests, and How Are Their Results Used?	84	85	127
Standardized Tests in the United States	85	85	127
The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Standardized Testing	85	87	130
<b>The Opinion Page</b>			
Test-Taking Preparation	87	88	131
Who Is Accountable for Student Learning?	88	89	132
Concluding Thoughts	89	90	133
<b>Chapter in Review</b>			
<b>Developing Professional Competence</b>	90	91	134
	91	92	135
<b>5 The Science, Art, and Service of Teaching</b>	92	93	136
What is 3D Teaching?	93	94	138
How is Instruction Implemented in U.S. Schools?	94	95	138
Big Ideas of Instruction	95	96	139
<b>SocialMEdia</b>			
Planning for Instruction	96	97	140
What Is the Art of Teaching?	97	98	146
Differentiation as Artistry	98	99	151
High Expectations as Artistry	99	100	152
How Do Teachers Serve Students?	100	100	153
Teachers Serving Students	100	103	154
<b>Teaching in Focus</b>			
Service-Learning	103	104	154
Concluding Thoughts	104	105	155
<b>The Opinion Page</b>			
Service-Learning	105	106	158
Concluding Thoughts	106	109	164
<b>Chapter in Review</b>			
<b>Developing Professional Competence</b>	109	110	164
	110	111	165
<b>6 Creating and Maintaining a Positive and Productive Learning Environment</b>	111	111	168
Where Do I Stand?	111	113	169
How Do Teachers Create a Positive Learning Environment?	113	115	171
Physical Space	115	116	171
Building Community	116	117	173
<b>SocialMEdia</b>			
Withitness, Overlapping, and the Ripple Effect	117	119	175
Using Time Wisely	119	120	176
What Routines Contribute to Maintaining a Productive Classroom Environment?	120	120	176
Practicing Routines	120	121	177
Routines in the Four Levels of School	121	123	178
How Do Teachers Establish Expectations, Incentives, and Consequences?	123	124	181
Expectations	124	124	182
Incentives	124	125	183
Consequences	125	126	186

<b>The Opinion Page</b>	<b>189</b>	21st-Century Knowledge and Skills	225
How Can I Develop a Classroom Management Plan?	190	21st-Century Schools	226
Prominent Theories of Classroom Management	190	Addressing Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the 21st-Century	226
Consider the Students	190	African American Students	227
Incorporate 21st Century Skills	193	Hispanic American Students	227
General Guidelines for Developing a Classroom Management Plan	194	Asian American Students	228
Don't be Part of the Problem	195	<b>Be Aware of Education History in the Making</b>	<b>229</b>
Concluding Thoughts	196	<b>Teaching in Focus</b>	<b>229</b>
<b>Chapter in Review</b>	<b>196</b>	Concluding Thoughts	231
Developing Professional Competence	197	<b>Chapter in Review</b>	<b>231</b>
		Developing Professional Competence	233
<b>7 History of Education in the United States</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>8 Philosophical Foundations of Education in the United States</b>	<b>235</b>
<b>Where Do I Stand?</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>Teaching in Focus</b>	<b>236</b>
What Were the Major Influences, Issues, Ideologies, and Individuals in 17th-Century American Education?	201	Why Is a Philosophy of Education Important?	236
Context for Change	201	Philosophy Trees	237
17th-Century American Schools	203	Teacher-Centered and Student-Centered Philosophies	238
Teachers in Colonial America	206	How Do Two Prominent Teacher-Centered Philosophies of Education Affect Teaching and Learning?	239
What Were the Major Influences, Issues, Ideologies, and Individuals in 18th-Century American Education?	207	Essentialism	239
Context for Change	207	Perennialism	239
<b>SocialMedia</b>	<b>207</b>	How Do Three Prominent Student-Centered Philosophies of Education Affect Teaching and Learning?	241
18th-Century American Schools	208	Progressivism	241
18th-Century Teachers	209	<b>SocialMedia</b>	<b>243</b>
Education as a Priority	209	Social Reconstructionism	244
The Major Influences, Issues, Ideologies, and Individuals in 19th-Century American Education	210	<b>Teaching in Focus</b>	<b>245</b>
Context for Change	210	Existentialism	246
19th-Century American Schools	210	<b>Teaching in Focus</b>	<b>247</b>
Teacher Preparation	213	How Do I Begin to Develop My Own Personal Philosophy of Education?	248
19th-Century Education for Children with Disabilities, Minorities, and Immigrants	213	Other Philosophies	248
<b>Teaching in Focus</b>	<b>215</b>	Your Turn	248
Higher Education	217	<b>The Opinion Page</b>	<b>249</b>
What Were the Major Influences, Issues, Ideologies, and Individuals in 20th-Century American Education?	218	Concluding Thoughts	251
Context for Change	218	<b>Chapter in Review</b>	<b>251</b>
Progressive Education	218	Developing Professional Competence	252
Junior High and Middle School	219		
Montessori Method	219	 	
Influential African American Leaders	220	<b>9 The Societal Context of Schooling in the United States</b>	<b>254</b>
The Last Five Decades of the 20th Century	221	<b>Where Do I Stand?</b>	<b>255</b>
<b>The Opinion Page</b>	<b>221</b>	How Do Family, Community, and Society Impact Students in the United States?	256
What Major Influences, Issues, Ideologies, and Individuals Are We Experiencing in 21st Century American Education?	225	Family	257
Context for Change	225	Community and Society	258
No Child Left Behind	225		



**Teaching in Focus**

How Does Socioeconomic Status Affect Students in the United States?

Homeless Children and Youth

**The Opinion Page**

How Do Health Issues Affect Students in the United States?

Substance Abuse

Sexuality-Related Concerns

Childhood Obesity

Suicide

Other Risky Behaviors

How Does Racism Affect Students in the United States?

Discrimination

Immigration and Classroom Success

What Are the Effects of Bullying, Violence, and Theft on Students and Schools in the United States?

Bullying

**Social Media**

Violence and Theft in Schools

How Do Truancy and Dropping Out Affect Youth in the United States?

Truancy

Dropping Out

School Connectedness

Concluding Thoughts

**Chapter in Review**

Developing Professional Competence

**10 Ethical and Legal Issues in U.S. Schools**

What Does It Mean to Be an Ethical Teacher?

Professional Ethics

Ethics for Teachers

How Do Laws Affect Schools, Teachers, and Students?

U.S. Constitution

Federal Laws

State and Local Laws and Policies

Case Law

**The Opinion Page**

What Are the Legal Rights of Teachers?

Employment Legalities

Freedom of Expression

Academic Freedom

Teachers' Personal Lives

**Social Media**

What Are the Legal Responsibilities of Teachers?

Liability

Copyright Laws

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

261	How Does the Law Impact the Relationship between School and Religion?	313
	Religion and Compulsory Education	313
262	Prayer In School	313
264	Religious Organizations Meeting on School Grounds	314
266	What Are the Legal Rights of Students?	315
	Freedom of Expression	316
267	The Right to be Protected	317
268	Concluding Thoughts	321
270		
272	<b>Chapter in Review</b>	<b>322</b>
275	Developing Professional Competence	323
276		
277		
277		
278	<b>11 Governing and Financing Public Schools</b>	<b>325</b>
280		
280	How Does the Federal Government Influence Public Education?	326
282	Presidential Influence	326
284	Congress and the Courts	326
	U.S. Department of Education	327
285	What Is the State's Role in Public Education?	328
285	Balance of Power at the State Level	328
286	State Board of Education	329
289	State Department of Education	330
290	How Do School Districts Function?	330
290	District School Boards	332
291	District Superintendent and Staff	333
	<b>The Opinion Page</b>	<b>334</b>
	What Is the Management Structure of Individual Schools?	335
293	Principals	335
	<b>SocialMedia</b>	<b>336</b>
294	Assistant Principals	339
294	Teacher Leaders	339
295		
297	What Other Entities Impact the Governance of Public Schools in the United States?	340
297	Parents	340
298	Businesses	341
298	Universities	341
298	Special Interest Groups	341
299	How Are Public Schools Financed?	342
301	Federal Funding	342
301	State Funding	343
303	Local Funding	344
303		
306	How Are Funds for Education Spent?	346
306	Expenditure Per Pupil	346
307	Allocation of Education Funding	346
309	Concluding Thoughts	348
309		
310	<b>Chapter in Review</b>	<b>348</b>
312	Developing Professional Competence	350

<b>12 Professionalism in Relationships, Reality, and Reform</b>	<b>352</b>		
How Can I Develop as a Professional?	352		
Professionalism During Teacher Preparation	353		
Professionalism as a Teacher	356		
Contributing to the Teaching Profession	357		
<b>Teaching in Focus</b>	<b>358</b>		
How Do I Develop and Maintain Professional Relationships?	359		
Relationships With Students	359		
Relationships With Families	360		
<b>Teaching in Focus</b>	<b>364</b>		
Relationships With the Community	364		
Professional Relationships With Colleagues	365		
Professional Relationships With Other Adults in the School	366		
What Are Some Realities of Teaching?	367		
Bureaucratic Overload	367		
When Teacher Preparation Doesn't Match Reality	367		
Classroom Management	368		
Changing Demographics	368		
		Budget issues	369
		Public Education Under Attack	369
		What Is My Role as a Professional in Education Reform?	370
		Reform of Teacher Evaluation	371
		Performance-Based Pay	372
		State Reform Efforts	373
		<b>The Opinion Page</b>	<b>374</b>
		District Reform Efforts	375
		Standards and Assessment Controversy	376
		Instructional Reforms	376
		<b>SocialMedia</b>	<b>377</b>
		Reform Based on International Comparisons	378
		<b>Teaching in Focus</b>	<b>380</b>
		Reform in Perspective	380
		Concluding Thoughts	382
		<b>Chapter in Review</b>	<b>382</b>
		Developing Professional Competence	383
		Glossary	386
		References	396
		Name Index	404
		Subject Index	407

# Preface

Using an approach that is unique among introduction to education college texts, the fourth edition of *Your Introduction to Education: Explorations in Teaching* takes you on a journey into authentic classrooms. It guides you through issues and dilemmas as they affect real teachers and students in real schools to help you determine whether teaching is for you and, if so, what your teaching identity may be.

The most distinctive feature of this text is how it weaves the real-life experiences of 8 teachers and 8 students from 4 schools across the country into its content. These people and places are drawn from urban, suburban, and rural settings, allowing you to examine teaching and learning from a variety of perspectives.

The teachers and students are from Summit Station, Ohio; Spanish Fork, Utah; Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina; and Fresno, California. Classroom scenarios, person-to-person features, and nearly every photo in this book—along with hours of video—are the direct result of time the author spent at each school with every one of the teachers, principals, students, and family members we met.

Current and relevant issues in education are discussed in engaging ways through two features: The Opinion Page and SocialMedia. **The Opinion Page** feature presents real opinion editorials published in recent newspapers from across the country to explore today's dilemmas and controversies. You are asked to think about your own opinions and respond to prompts that require reflection and critical thinking. In each **SocialMedia** feature, a social media tool is presented through a teaching and learning lens to ignite your imagination and sense of innovation concerning possibilities for your own future classrooms.

The **art** and **service** of teaching are emphasized right alongside the **science** of teaching. Just as we know that effective teachers teach the *whole* child, we also know that teachers are most effective when they use their minds and hearts, as well as their gifts and talents, to interact with students in growth-promoting ways.

Each chapter begins with a **Dear Reader** letter that introduces in personal and engaging ways the topics to come. This book, built entirely on authentic classroom experience, will empower future teachers to *explore* content and classrooms, *reflect* on their learning, and *develop* an image of the teacher they aspire to be.

## New to this Edition

**Dynamic content designed for the way today's students read, think, and learn brings concepts to life:**

- Self-exploration inventories called **Where Do I Stand?** occur at the beginning of each major section of the book. These inventories activate your prior knowledge and opinions—a teaching strategy that promotes interest and effectively sets the stage for learning.

## Important Content Changes in the New Edition

### **NUMEROUS NEW TABLES AND FIGURES DEPICTING THE SOCIETAL CONTEXT OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

Future teachers envision realistic portrayals of dilemmas and life circumstances of the children and adolescents who will fill their classrooms.

### **INCREASED EMPHASIS ON BULLYING PREVENTION**

Future teachers learn to recognize signs and symptoms of bullying in its many forms—including cyberbullying, along with productive ways to approach the bully, the bullied, and the bystander.

### **TABLES DETAILING LAWS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS**

Future teachers need to have a basic understanding of how laws affect them, their students, and their profession. The tables help you comprehend implications of multiple case law rulings through commonsense explanations, written in easy-to-understand language.

### **COMMENTARY ON CURRENT ATTACKS ON PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Because public education is just that—public—it will always be the topic of discussion, often disparagingly, of all who attended or didn't attend public schools. Some find public education to be the hope of the future and some blame much of what they view as wrong in our country on public schools. This pretty much describes everyone. Read and reflect on the commentary in Chapter 12 concerning what appears to be attacks on public teaching and learning.

### **COMPARING AND CONTRASTING U.S. PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND FINISH SCHOOLS**

An examination of the context and practices of U.S. public schools and those of other countries helps us better understand possible reasons for international test score disparities, as well as innovations to improve teaching and learning in the 21st century. In recent years, U.S. educators searching for possible solutions to dilemmas have looked to Finland, an international leader when countries are compared. In a special section, public education in Finland is explored.

specific opportunities to meet and get to know these important people. Look for the **Teaching in Focus** headings to alert you to opportunities to get acquainted.

## Teaching in Focus

We visit classrooms of the teachers you come to know as they talk about specific topics that affect their classroom teaching in **Teaching in Focus** features throughout each chapter. Each of these features is accompanied by a picture of the teacher speaking to us in his or her own words. Watch the interviews, room tours, and lessons as you read about these outstanding teachers.

## Where Do I Stand?

These five fascinating inventories ask you to think about concepts before reading more about them. Not only does this engage you in what's to come but it also helps you personalize information you are asked to examine and reexamine as each chapter progresses.

# This text will help you REFLECT On Your Evolving Understanding of Yourself as an Educator

**POINT OF REFLECTION** These features ask you to pause and think through what you've read and apply the ideas to your own notions of teaching and learning. You will find **Points of Reflection** throughout each chapter.

**THE OPINION PAGE** This feature in each chapter explores issues in education through opinion editorials published in newspapers, asking you to consider the expressed opinions, the issues, and your own opinions, and then to respond to items related to **The Opinion Page** piece. The context is set by the chapter content, along with background information about the specific topic or issue involved.

**DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE** This end-of-chapter feature probes the issues of classroom teaching and helps prepare you for licensure exams by posing a case, again featuring the focus teachers you have come to know. Following the case are multiple-choice and essay questions that connect classroom issues with pertinent standards, providing an excellent study tool.

# This text will help you EXPLORE Teaching and Classrooms

## Authentic Classrooms

The teachers and students you will meet and revisit throughout the text are *real* teachers and students who teach and learn in authentic classrooms. You'll have many

CHAPTER	EARLY CHILDHOOD	ELEMENTARY	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL
<b>Chapter 1: Teachers and the Teaching Profession</b>	08: <i>Teaching in Focus</i> 09–11: Traditional Paths to Teacher Preparation	09–11: Traditional Paths to Teacher Preparation	24: <i>Teaching in Focus</i> 09–11: Traditional Paths to Teacher Preparation 11–14: Focus Teachers	04–05: Interest in Subject Matter 09–11: Traditional Paths to Teacher Preparation
<b>Chapter 2: Student Similarities and Differences</b>	39: Developmental Characteristics by Level 43–52: Language Diversity	33–34: <i>Focus Students</i> 39: Developmental Characteristics by Level	39: Developmental Characteristics by Level	34–35: <i>Teaching in Focus</i> 39: Developmental Characteristics by Level 43–52: Language Diversity 50: Bilingual Education 63–64: <i>Getting to Know Trista</i>
<b>Chapter 3: School Similarities and Differences</b>	87: <i>Focus School</i> 85–86: Structure and Organization	89 <i>Focus School</i> 88–90: Structure and Organization	90–91: Structure and Organization	93: <i>Focus School</i> 92: Structure and Organization
<b>Chapter 4: Curriculum, Assessment, and Accountability</b>	123: <i>Teaching in Focus</i> 121–123: Assessment of Dylan	115: <i>Teaching in Focus</i>		
<b>Chapter 5: The Science, Art, and Service of Teaching</b>	148: Instruction	155: <i>Teaching in Focus</i> 149: Instruction	150: Instruction	150–151: Instruction
<b>Chapter 6: Creating and Maintaining a Positive and Productive Learning Environment</b>	178–179: Routines 183–185: Extrinsic Incentives 190–196: Developing a Classroom Management Plan	179: Routines 183–185: Extrinsic Incentives 190–196: Developing a Classroom Management Plan	179–180: Routines 190–196: Developing a Classroom Management Plan	180–181: Routines 190–196: Developing a Classroom Management Plan
<b>Chapter 7: History of Education in the United States</b>	212: Kindergarten 219: Montessori Method	211–212: Common Schools	219: Junior High and Middle School	215: <i>Teaching in Focus</i> 204–205: Latin grammar school 208–209: Academies 212: Secondary schools 229: <i>Teaching in Focus</i>
<b>Chapter 8: Philosophical Foundations of Education in the United States</b>		236: <i>Teaching in Focus</i> 245: <i>Teaching in Focus</i> 251: Brenda's Philosophy Tree	247: <i>Teaching in Focus</i>	
<b>Chapter 9: The Societal Context of Schooling in the United States</b>	258: Child abuse statistics 272–274: Childhood obesity study	261: <i>Teaching in Focus</i> 268–270: Substance abuse statistics 272–274: Childhood obesity study	268–270: Substance abuse statistics 270–272: Sexuality-Related Concerns 275–276: Suicide	268–270: Substance abuse statistics 270–272: Sexuality-Related Concerns 275–276: Suicide 278–280: Immigration 280–281: Bullying and Columbine 285–289: Dropping Out
<b>Chapter 10: Ethical and Legal Issues in U.S. Schools</b>	296: Recognizing Ethical Dilemmas	296: Recognizing Ethical Dilemmas	296: Recognizing Ethical Dilemmas 305–306, 308–309: Legal cases	296: Recognizing Ethical Dilemmas 305–306, 308–309: Legal cases
<b>Chapter 11: Governing and Financing Public Schools</b>	338: Characteristics of Principals	338: Characteristics of Principals	338: Characteristics of Principals	338: Characteristics of Principals
<b>Chapter 12: Professionalism in Relationships, Reality, and Reform</b>	358: <i>Teaching in Focus</i>	364: <i>Teaching in Focus</i>	364: <i>Teaching in Focus</i> 380: <i>Teaching in Focus</i>	

**DEVELOP GRADE LEVEL AND CONTENT UNDERSTANDING** Throughout this text, your attention is drawn to the basic levels of early childhood, elementary, middle school, and high school. Regardless of the school grade configuration, student growth and learning generally move along a continuum that we address within these four broad levels.

We approach teaching and learning differently based largely on the developmental level of the students. A first-grade teacher in a primary school and a first-grade teacher in an elementary school both teach children in the phase of early childhood. Similarly, sixth-grade students in an elementary school and sixth-grade students in a middle school are all

young adolescents in the middle-level phase of development. The following table indicates where you can find grade-level specific information about a range of content in the text.

## Ancillaries

The following supplements to the textbook are available for download. Visit [www.pearsonhighered.com](http://www.pearsonhighered.com); enter the author, title, or ISBN; and then select this textbook, *Your Introduction to Education: Explorations in Teaching*, 4th edition. Click on the “Resources” button to view and download the supplements detailed below.

## Online Instructor’s Manual with Test Items

An expanded and improved online Instructor’s Resource Manual (0-13-356337-5) includes numerous recommendations for presenting and extending text content. The manual consists of chapter overviews, focus questions, outlines, suggested teaching strategies, and Web resources that cover the essential concepts addressed in each chapter. You’ll also find a complete chapter-by-chapter bank of test items.

This new edition Instructors’ Manual also includes a detailed mapping of 162 text features to the subcategories of the 10 InTASC Standards and the edTPA content addressing planning, instruction, and assessment, all in one comprehensive table.

## Digital Test Generator

The computerized test bank software, Test Gen (0-13-356339-1), allows instructors to create and customize exams for classroom testing and for other specialized delivery options, such as over a local area network or on the Web. A test bank typically contains a large set of test items, organized by chapter, and ready for your use in creating a test based on the associated textbook material. The tests can be downloaded in the following formats:

- **TestGen** Testbank file—PC
- **TestGen** Testbank file—MAC
- **TestGen** Testbank—**Blackboard 9**
- **TestGen** Testbank—**Blackboard CE/Vista (WebCT)**
- **Angel** Test Bank
- **D2L** Test Bank
- **Moodle** Test Bank
- **Sakai** Test Bank

## Powerpoint Slides

These lecture slides (0-13-356335-9) highlight key concepts and summarize key content from each chapter of the text.

## Acknowledgments

As a teacher and teacher educator for more than four decades, I found the writing of this text to be a labor of love. I have experienced extraordinary professional development opportunities through this project as I have probed deeply the many and varied issues involved in teaching PreK–12 children and adolescents.

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# Chapter 1

# Teachers and the Teaching Profession

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## Learning Objectives

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*After studying this chapter, you will have knowledge and skills to:*

- 1.1** Explain who teaches in the United States and why.
- 1.2** Summarize ways to prepare to teach.
- 1.3** Determine if teaching is a profession.
- 1.4** Identify characteristics of teacher professionalism.
- 1.5** Describe the characteristics of effective teachers.

### Dear Reader

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

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

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

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

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



## Where Do I Stand?



[Click here to complete the inventory online](#)

*This is the first of the self-exploration inventories you will also complete at the beginning of Chapters 4, 6, 7, and 9. The purpose of the inventories is to activate your prior knowledge and opinions, a teaching strategy that promotes interest and effectively sets the stage for learning. As you explore the content of your course and this text, some of your initial responses will likely change. This is how we grow. We consider what we know and what we think. Then we explore and learn more and more, leading to inevitable changes of opinions and broadening of perspectives. Exciting prospect, don't you think?*

*This first inventory helps you explore your personal reasons for considering teaching as a career. Read each item and decide how meaningful it is to you. If an item resonates very strongly within you, then choose "4: I strongly agree." Reserve a choice of "4" for those items you genuinely care most about. If you agree with a statement, but are not overly enthusiastic about it, then choose "3: I agree." If you really don't care one way or the other about a statement, choose "2: I don't have an opinion." If you simply disagree with a statement, choose "1: I disagree." If you feel adamantly opposed to a statement, choose "0: I strongly disagree." In this inventory, **there are no right or wrong answers, just differing experiences and viewpoints.** Following the inventory are directions for how to organize your responses and what they may indicate in terms of where you stand.*

**4 I strongly agree**

**3 I agree**

**2 I don't have an opinion**

**1 I disagree**

**0 I strongly disagree**

- \_\_\_ 1. Some of my fondest memories involve experiences working with children/teens.
- \_\_\_ 2. The health insurance and retirement benefits of teaching mean a lot to me.
- \_\_\_ 3. In K–12 school I excelled in a particular subject.
- \_\_\_ 4. As a teacher, I look forward to growing professionally.
- \_\_\_ 5. At least one member of my family is an educator.
- \_\_\_ 6. I am considering teaching because I believe education has necessary societal value.
- \_\_\_ 7. Teaching is most worthwhile because of the opportunity to influence students.
- \_\_\_ 8. Although I may be interested in other professions, the stability of a career in the public school system draws me to teaching.
- \_\_\_ 9. Both the daily work hours and the yearly schedule of a teacher appeal to me.
- \_\_\_ 10. Doing the same thing in the same way repeatedly does not appeal to me.
- \_\_\_ 11. My desire to teach is based on my love of a particular subject.
- \_\_\_ 12. There was a teacher in my K–12 experiences who had a profound impact on my life.
- \_\_\_ 13. Change is invigorating to me.
- \_\_\_ 14. A teacher's primary task is to help students become productive citizens.
- \_\_\_ 15. Being with children/adolescents is something I enjoy and look forward to.
- \_\_\_ 16. I am anxious to read whatever I can about the teaching profession.
- \_\_\_ 17. A major reason for choosing the teaching profession is the appeal of having holidays and spring break time off.
- \_\_\_ 18. Being a teacher means always having a job.
- \_\_\_ 19. Education is necessary for the continued success of our country.
- \_\_\_ 20. I have very fond memories of my relationship with one or more teachers in K–12 school.
- \_\_\_ 21. Having a long summer vacation means a lot to me.
- \_\_\_ 22. I have been drawn to topics in a particular subject area for years.
- \_\_\_ 23. Professional self-growth motivates me.



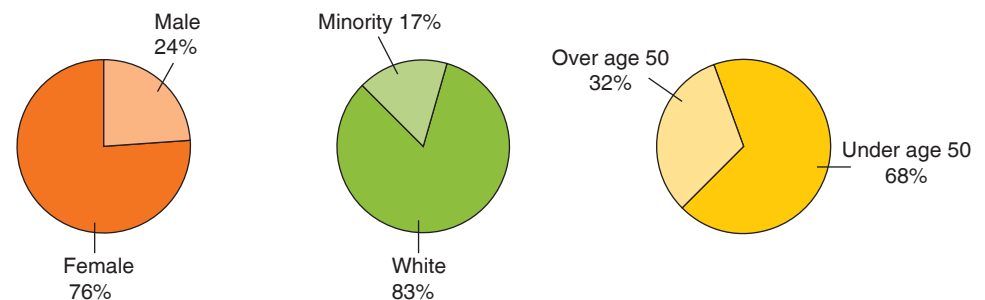
# 1.1 Who Teaches in the United States and Why?

## 1.1 Explain who teaches in the United States and why.

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

## Deciding to Teach

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



**Figure 1.1** U.S. teachers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Within our ranks we smile at these harmless jokes. But the *schedule and hours of teachers* attract some to the field. Those who have not taught, or don't understand the pressure of having 15 or 25 or even 100 students dependent on them for at least part of each day, may view the schedule of a teacher as excessively punctuated with days off. However, time away from school is well deserved, even if it is used to catch up on teaching-related tasks. The change of pace is refreshing, allowing opportunities for revitalization.

Aside from summer vacation and days off, other aspects of scheduling make teaching a desirable choice for many. During the school year, most teachers do not have students after about 3:30 or 4:00 in the afternoon. To people who work 8-to-5 jobs, 4:00 seems like a luxury. However, most teachers spend additional time either at school or at home planning for the next day and completing necessary administrative tasks. The teaching schedule allows for this kind of flexibility. A teacher's schedule is also ideal for families with school-age children. Having a daily routine similar to that of other family members has definite benefits.

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

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

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

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

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

Rank Based on Mean Average Salary	State	Mean Average Salary
1	New York	\$79,152
2	California	\$77,179
3	Massachusetts	\$76,981
4	District of Columbia	\$75,810
5	Connecticut	\$72,013
6	New Jersey	\$69,330
7	Alaska	\$67,443
8	Maryland	\$66,456
9	Rhode Island	\$66,197
10	New Hampshire	\$65,616
11	Pennsylvania	\$65,151
12	Michigan	\$62,028
13	Illinois	\$61,342
14	Oregon	\$60,359
15	Delaware	\$59,960
16	Vermont	\$58,901
	<b>U.S Average</b>	<b>\$58,353</b>
17	Wyoming	\$58,140
18	Hawaii	\$57,431
19	Nevada	\$56,943
20	Minnesota	\$56,913
21	Ohio	\$56,441
22	Iowa	\$54,416
23	Georgia	\$54,190
24	Wisconsin	\$54,115
25	Washington	\$53,378
26	Kentucky	\$52,134
27	Texas	\$51,890
28	Virginia	\$51,834
29	Nebraska	\$51,386
30	Montana	\$51,034
31	Indiana	\$50,715
32	Maine	\$50,498
33	North Dakota	\$50,472
34	Louisiana	\$49,745
35	Florida	\$49,199
36	South Carolina	\$48,796
37	Alabama	\$48,518
38	Arkansas	\$48,218
39	Tennessee	\$48,217
40	Missouri	\$47,957
41	North Carolina	\$47,941
42	Kansas	\$47,755
43	Arizona	\$47,218
44	New Mexico	\$47,163
45	Utah	\$46,887
46	Colorado	\$46,155
47	Idaho	\$46,122
48	West Virginia	\$45,622
49	Oklahoma	\$45,276
50	Mississippi	\$42,744
51	South Dakota	\$42,025

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

most of small-town America. Also consider both the beginning salaries and the average salaries when thinking about a state in which you might want to teach. Some states may lure teachers with higher beginning salaries that tend to not grow as rapidly as in other states.

Teacher salaries tend to change often. For the most up-to-date numbers, check state department of education websites in addition to individual district websites. Often, salaries within a state can vary widely. For instance, in North Carolina the state sets the minimum salary with districts adding to the amount. Illustrating the advantage of finding the most recent data, North Carolina has increased beginning teacher salary from about \$31,000 in 2013 to over \$36,000 for the 2016–2017 school year, with individual districts adding from \$1,000 to \$8,000 to the amount. In Florida in 2016, average teacher salaries varied between \$39,044 in Union County, the smallest in the state, and \$58,389 in Monroe County, the county seat of Key West—almost a \$20,000 difference. When cost of living is considered, the difference is not as extreme.

Brandi Wade, one of our focus teachers at Summit Primary School in Summit Station, Ohio, tells us that perhaps we don't choose teaching, but rather teaching *chooses us*. Read about her philosophy in *Teaching in Focus*.

## Teaching in Focus

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

Brandi Wade, kindergarten, Summit Primary, Ohio. *In her own words.* . . .

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



Sara Davis Powell

Laugh with the children, laugh at yourself, and never hold a grudge. Don't be afraid to say "I'm sorry" to a child when you have done something unprofessional or hurtful. If children do hurtful things, just hug them a little more tightly and make them feel safe. Children learn best when they feel safe and loved no matter what.

I don't teach to be remembered, although it's nice to think that you'll never be completely forgotten. I teach so that I can remember. I remember their personalities and how they

grow. I remember the times we struggled with learning and succeeded, as well as those times when we fell short of our goals. I remember the laughter and the tears we shared.

Some people say, "Leave school at school." The best teachers I know often lose sleep thinking about and worrying about their students. It's worth every toss and turn!

Reprinted by permission from Brandi Wade

### Point of Reflection 1.1

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

## 1.2 How Do We Prepare to Teach?

### 1.2 Summarize ways to prepare to teach.

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

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

### Traditional Paths to Teacher Preparation

The traditional paths to initial teacher preparation come through a university department of education. National and state organizations carefully scrutinize university programs and evaluate how teacher candidates are prepared. About two thirds of states require university teacher education programs to be accredited (authorized to prepare teachers) through the **Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)**.

All three initial teacher preparation paths—bachelor’s degree, fifth-year program, and master’s degree—include one or two semesters of **student teaching**, also called **clinical internship**. During this extended fieldwork, teacher candidates teach lessons and, for a designated time frame, take over all classroom duties. A classroom teacher serves as the **cooperating teacher** (host and mentor) while a university instructor supervises the experience.

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

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

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

### Alternative Paths to Teacher Preparation

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



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

Since 1983, the number of teachers entering the classroom through alternative means rapidly increased. Today, all 50 states offer one or more of over a hundred different programs offering alternative certification/licensure, with some estimates stating that as many as a third of new teachers are using alternative routes to the classroom. Adults who decide that teaching is for them after having other careers are likely to enter the profession through alternative paths. In fact, 70% of those seeking certification through alternative routes are over 30 years old, most with noneducation-related careers. Alternative routes attract more men and minorities to the profession than the national averages (as shown in Figure 1.1). Men account for 30% and minorities account for 30% of the teachers who prepare in alternative ways (Teacher-Certification.com, 2016).

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

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

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

## Getting to Know Schools, Teachers, and Students

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

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