

Teaching Today

An Introduction to Education

Ninth Edition



David G. Armstrong

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NINTH EDITION

TEACHING TODAY

AN INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATION

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Armstrong, David G.

Teaching today: an introduction to education/David G. Armstrong, Late of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Kenneth T. Henson, The Citadel, Tom V. Savage, Santa Clara University.—Ninth edition.

pages cm

ISBN 978-0-13-358431-8—ISBN 978-0-13-358432-5 (coursesmart)—ISBN 978-0-13-358434-9 (epub)

1. Teaching—United States. 2. Education—Study and teaching—United States. 3. Teaching—Vocational guidance—United States. I. Henson, Kenneth T. II. Savage, Tom V. III. Title.

LB1775.2.A75 2015

370.102—dc23

2013050404

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

PEARSON

ISBN 10: 0-13-358431-3

ISBN 13: 978-0-13-358431-8



*The authors have been blessed to have career-long companions who have endured the frustrations and celebrated the successes of this enduring project. We believe their support has enriched the quality of each edition. Thus, we are happy to dedicate this ninth edition to **Sharon Henson** and **Marsha Savage**.*

PREFACE

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.
- 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

Several individuals have helped shape the ninth edition of *Teaching Today*. We are grateful for the helpful comments of several professionals who reviewed the eighth edition and preliminary versions of new and revised chapters. These include Julianna M. Alitto, University of Wisconsin-Waukesha; Donna W. Bennett, California State University, Fullerton; Cindy Dell, Montana State University-Billings; Shelby Gilbert, Florida Gulf Coast University; and Joanne Greata, Lake-Sumter Community College.

In addition, we are especially grateful for the help of professionals at Pearson. These include Ann Davis and Janelle Criner.

BRIEF CONTENTS

PART I	THE CHANGING PROFESSION	1
CHAPTER 1	How Is Education Changing?	2
CHAPTER 2	What Does It Take to Become a Professional Educator?	32
CHAPTER 3	What Are the Proposals for School Reform?	62
PART II	WORKING WITH STUDENTS	91
CHAPTER 4	How Our Changing Students Are Changing Teaching	92
CHAPTER 5	How Can We Create a Positive Learning Environment?	128
CHAPTER 6	What Is Taught and How Is It Taught?	156
CHAPTER 7	How Do We Know Students Have Learned?	190
PART III	FORCES SHAPING EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES	221
CHAPTER 8	How Did We Get Here?	222
CHAPTER 9	What Is the Role of School in Society?	252
CHAPTER 10	How Do Philosophical Perspectives Influence Education?	278
CHAPTER 11	What Do You Need to Know About the Law?	304

CONTENTS

PART I THE CHANGING PROFESSION 1

CHAPTER 1

How Is Education Changing? 2

- Introduction 3
- What Are the Foundations? 4
- [Web Extension 1–1: New Teacher Web Page](#) 7
- The Complexity of Teaching 7
- [A Day in the Life . . . A Typical Day](#) 8
 - Multidimensionality 10
 - Simultaneity 10
 - Immediacy 10
 - Unpredictability 11
 - Publicness 11
 - History 12
- Coping With Selected Changes 12
- [Video Viewpoints 1–1: Cell Phones in the Classroom: Learning Tools for the 21st Century](#) 13
 - Changes in the Student Population 13
 - Changes in Theories of Teaching and Learning 15
- [Web Extension 1–2: Education Week on the Web](#) 15
 - Debates on the Purposes of Education 19
 - Standards-Based Education 20
- [Critical Incident: Teaching to the Test](#) 22
 - Accountability 23
 - Efforts to Ensure New Teacher Quality 25
- [Web Extension 1–3: Investigating Praxis](#) 26
- Key Ideas in Summary 26
- Reflections 28
- Field Experiences, Projects, and Enrichment 29
- References 30

CHAPTER 2

What Does It Take to Become a Professional Educator? 32

- Introduction 33

- Preparation as a Process 34
- Professional Development Phases 35
 - Pretraining 35
 - Formal Preparation 36
 - Induction Years 37
 - Continuing Growth 38
- Two General Organizations for Teachers 40
 - National Education Association 40
- [Web Extension 2–1: Professional Organizations](#) 41
 - American Federation of Teachers 41
- Professional Ethics 42
- [A Day in the Life . . . The Human Side of Teaching](#) 44
- Understanding the Broader Scope of the Profession 44
- The Structure of Educational Control 45
 - State Organization Structure 46
 - Local School District Organization 48
 - Federal Organization and Influence 54
 - Other Influences on Educational Policy 55
- The Governance Issue: Who Will Control Education? 57
- A Professional Educator 57
- Key Ideas in Summary 59
- Reflections 60
- Field Experiences, Projects, and Enrichment 61
- References 61

CHAPTER 3

What Are the Proposals for School Reform? 62

- Introduction 63
- [Critical Incident: Is My Subject Now a Frill?](#) 66
- Systemic Reform 68
- [Web Extension 3–1: Consortium for Policy Research in Education \(CPRE\)](#) 68
 - Outcome Goals 68
- School Choice 70
 - Voucher Plans 72
- [Web Extension 3–2: Education Week on the Web](#) 73

Video Viewpoints 3–1: School Choice = Better Schools 74

Charter Schools 74

Web Extension 3–3: U.S. Charter Schools 77

Open-Enrollment Plans 77

Magnet Schools 77

Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Programs 78

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 79

School–Business Partnership Programs 80

Full-Service Schools 83

Teaching in a World of Change 84

Key Ideas in Summary 85

Reflections 87

Field Experiences, Projects, and Enrichment 87

References 88

PART II WORKING WITH STUDENTS 91

CHAPTER 4

How Our Changing Students Are Changing Teaching 92

Introduction 93

View One 93

View Two 93

Searching for the Truth 94

Selected Characteristics of Today's Learners 94

Poverty and Learners 95

Minority-Group Learners 96

Learners and Violence 96

Learners With Disabilities 97

Video Viewpoints 4–1: Home Room: One Last Chance 98

Abused and Neglected Learners 98

At-Risk Learners 100

Learners' School-to-School Mobility 100

Developing a Sense of Efficacy 101

Diversity's Benefits 102

Multicultural Education 103

Establishing Culturally Appropriate Practice 103

Multiculturalism and Learning 104

The Need for Accurate Information 104

A Brief History of Attitudes Toward Minority-Group Learners 104

Desegregation and Its Influences on Learners 105

Within-Individual-School Segregation 106

Gender Issues 106

Goals and General Suggestions for Teachers 107

Committing to the Idea That All Can Learn 107

Accommodating Learning-Style Differences 107

Becoming Aware of Your Own Perspectives 107

Relying Less on Standardized Tests 108

Teacher Favoritism in the Classroom 108

Providing Good Teachers 109

Schools' Exceptional Learners 110

Learners With Disabilities 110

Federal Legislation 111

Web Extension 4–1: Office of Special Education Programs 111

Varieties of Educational Settings 112

Preparation of Individualized Education Programs 112

Altering Instruction 112

Public Reporting of Learner Performance 114

Inclusion Issues 114

Response to Intervention 115

Web Extension 4–2: Council for Exceptional Children 116

Characteristics of Learners With Specific Disabilities 116

A Day in the Life . . . Working With Parents 117

Assistive Technology 118

Overrepresentation of Certain Minorities 119

Gifted Learners 120

The Selection Issue 121

Pressures Facing Gifted Learners 121

Web Extension 4–3: Gifted and Talented Programs 121

Enrichment Programs 122

Acceleration Programs 122

Developing Learners' Potential 122

Key Ideas in Summary 123

Reflections 124

Field Experiences, Projects, and Enrichment 125

References 126

CHAPTER 5

How Can We Create a Positive Learning Environment? 128

- Introduction 129
- What Is the Learning Environment? 131
 - The Physical Elements of the Learning Environment 131
- Web Extension 5–1: Teach Safe Schools Organization** 134
- A Day in the Life . . . What Happened to the Time?** 135
 - Social Elements of the Learning Environment 136
- Establishing Teacher Leadership 137
- Critical Incident: Establishing Teacher Leadership** 142
- Responding to Student Behavior 143
- Web Extension 5–2: Discipline by Design** 144
 - Developing Self-Control 144
- Web Extension 5–3: National Education Association** 147
 - Choosing a Response to Student Behavior 147
- Key Ideas in Summary 153
- Reflections 154
- Field Experiences, Projects, and Enrichment 155
- References 155

CHAPTER 6

What Is Taught and How Is It Taught? 156

- Introduction 157
- The Curriculum 158
 - Curriculum Orientations 159
- Web Extension 6–1: Sudbury Educational Resource Network (SERN)** 162
 - Contemporary Influences on the Curriculum 165
- Critical Incident: A Curriculum-Change Proposal Confronts Practical Realities** 167
 - High-Stakes Testing 169
- Web Extension 6–2: Fair Test** 169
- Instruction 171
 - Instructional Expertise and Teachers' Dispositions 171
 - Active Teaching/Direct Instruction 172
 - Program Planning 173

- Effective Lesson Presentation 174
- Constructivist Teaching 175
- Teacher Clarity 176
- Teachers' Questions 177
- Homework and Learning 178
- Observing in the Classroom 179
- Video Viewpoints 6–1: Homework** 179
 - Developing Teaching Expertise 184
- Key Ideas in Summary 184
- Reflections 186
- Field Experiences, Projects, and Enrichment 187
- References 187

CHAPTER 7

How Do We Know Students Have Learned? 190

- Introduction 191
- The Purposes of Assessment 191
- Key Assessment Terms 192
 - Assessment 192
 - Measurement 193
- Video Viewpoints 7–1: To Take the Test or Not** 194
 - Evaluation 195
- Web Extension 7–1: American Evaluation Association** 195
 - Grades 197
- Web Extension 7–2: CRESST** 198
- Assessment and the Instructional Process 199
 - Placement Assessment 200
 - Formative Assessment 200
 - Summative Assessment 201
- Planning for Assessment 201
 - Defining Educational Outcomes 201
 - Classifying Educational Outcomes 202
 - Developing Criteria 205
- Measurement Options 206
- Web Extension 7–3: The National Center for Fair and Open Testing** 206
 - Selected-Response Measures 207
 - Free-Response Measures 209
 - Performance Assessment 211
 - Learner Portfolios 212

Critical Incident: The “Evils” of Portfolio Assessment	214
Key Ideas in Summary	216
Reflections	217
Field Experiences, Projects, and Enrichment	219
References	219

PART III FORCES SHAPING EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES 221

CHAPTER 8

How Did We Get Here? 222

Introduction	223
The Historical Perspective	225
The European Legacy	227
Origins of Selected Influences	228
Development of American Education	229
Education in the Colonies	229
Independence to the Civil War	232
Web Extension 8–1: Colonial Period	232
Civil War to 1900	234
1900 to World War II	236
A Day in the Life . . . Looking Beyond Test Scores	239
World War II to the 21st Century	240
The 21st Century	244
An Untold Story?	247
Key Ideas in Summary	247
Reflections	249
Field Experiences, Projects, and Enrichment	250
References	250

CHAPTER 9

What Is the Role of School in Society? 252

Introduction	253
Education and Tensions in Society	255
Confidence in Education	255
Tensions Among the Primary Institutions in Society	256
Sociological Modes of Analysis	259
The Functionalist Perspective	259

The Conflict Perspective	261
The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective	263
Web Extension 9–1: Social Perspectives	265
Sociological Perspectives on Educational Issues	266
Recruiting and Retaining Teachers	266
A Day in the Life . . . Are Teachers Paid Enough?	268
School Violence	270
Are the Schools Failing?	271
Key Ideas in Summary	275
Reflections	276
Field Experiences, Projects, and Enrichment	276
References	276

CHAPTER 10

How Do Philosophical Perspectives Influence Education? 278

Introduction	279
Philosophical Perspectives	280
A Day in the Life . . . Textbook Selection	281
Educational Applications of Philosophical Ideas	282
Progressivism	282
Essentialism	287
Perennialism	291
Reconstructionism	294
Web Extension 10–1: Philosophy of Education	297
Building a Personal Philosophy of Education	298
Critical Incident: What’s the Problem?	299
Key Ideas in Summary	300
Reflections	302
Field Experiences, Projects, and Enrichment	302
References	302

CHAPTER 11

What Do You Need to Know About the Law? 304

Introduction	305
Learners’ Rights and Responsibilities	306
Is Education a Privilege or a Right?	307
Due Process	308

What Are the Basic Rights of Students?	310	Critical Incident: How Free Is a Teacher to Choose a Teaching Method?	324
Freedom of Expression	310	Legal Obligations	327
Freedom of Conscience	312	Key Ideas in Summary	329
Freedom from Unreasonable Search and Seizure	314	Reflections	331
Right to Privacy	316	Field Experiences, Projects, and Enrichment	331
Special Rights for Learners with Disabilities	317	References	332
Teachers' Rights and Responsibilities	318	Glossary	333
What Are the Legal Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers?	318	Name Index	339
General Teacher Rights	322	Subject Index	341



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

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 characteristics 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.

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.”

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)

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



Classrooms are very public, multidimensional environments that require alert and active teachers.



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.

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.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

As you review the complexities of the teaching situation, reflect on the following:

- How do you cope with unpredictable events?
- Which of the dimensions of the classroom worry you most?
- Can you think of an example when the history established by the teacher with a group of students has affected teaching and learning?

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