

EXPLORING EDUCATION



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Alice Hale Exploring Education

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This text was compiled on 06/15/2026

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: Why Be a Teacher?

1.1: The Joys of Teaching

1.2: Teaching Is Different from in the Past

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1.1: The Joys of Teaching

A teacher named Ashley reflects: She looked around the classroom, enjoying a blessed moment of quiet after the students left at the end of the day. "Ashley, the teacher, that's me", she said proudly to the empty room. "But why am I doing this?" she asked herself quietly—and realized she wasn't always sure of the answer. But then she remembered one reason: she was teaching for Nadia, who sat at the table to the left, always smiled so well and always (well, usually) tried hard. And another reason: she was teaching for Lincoln, tired old Lincoln, who needed her help more than he realized. She remembered twenty other reasons— twenty other students. And one last reason: she was also teaching for herself challenging herself to see if she really could keep up with twenty-two young people at once, and really accomplish something worthwhile with them. She was teaching so she could keep growing as a person, keep connecting with others, keep learning new ideas. That's why she was teaching.

Why teach?

Why be a teacher? The short answer is easy:

- to witness the diversity of growth in young people, and their joy in learning
- to encourage lifelong learning—both for yourself and for others
- to experience the challenge of devising and doing interesting, exciting activities for the young

There is, of course, more than this to be said about the value of teaching. Consider, for instance, the "young people" referred to above. In one class they could be six years old; in another they could be sixteen, or even older. They could be rich, poor, or somewhere in between. They could come from any ethnic background. Their first language could be English, or something else. There are all sorts of possibilities. But whoever the particular students are, they will have potential as human beings: talents and personal qualities— possibly not yet realized— that can contribute to society, whether as leaders, experts, or supporters of others. A teacher's job— in fact a teacher's privilege— is to help particular "young people" to realize their potential.

Another teacher reflects: Nathan paused for a deep breath before speaking to me. "It's not like I expected it to be," he said. "I've got five kids who speak English as a second language. I didn't expect that. I've got two, maybe three, with reading disabilities, and one of them has a part-time aide. I've had to learn more about using computers than I ever expected— they're a lot of curriculum materials online now, and the computers help the kids that need more practice or who finish activities early. I'm doing more screening and testing of kids than I expected, and it all takes time away from teaching. "But it's not all surprises. I expected to be able to 'light a fire' under kids about learning to read. And that has actually happened, at least sometimes with some children!" The joys of teaching

"But it's not all surprises. I expected to be able to 'light a fire' under kids about learning to read. And that has actually happened, at least sometimes with some children!"

As a teacher, you will be able to do this by laying groundwork for lifelong learning. You will not teach any one student forever, of course, but you will often work with them long enough to convey a crucial message: that there is much in life to learn— more in fact than any one teacher or school can provide in a lifetime. The knowledge may be about science, math, or learning to read; the skills may be sports, music, or art— anything. Whatever you teach, its immensity can be a source of curiosity, wonder and excitement. It can be a reason to be optimistic about life in general and about your students in particular. Learning, when properly understood, is never-ending, even though it often focuses on short-term, immediate concerns. As a teacher, you will have an advantage not shared by every member of society, namely the excuse not only to teach valuable knowledge and skills, but to point students beyond what they will be able to learn from you. As an old limerick put it (before the days of gender-balanced language), "The world is full of such a plenty of things, I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings."

Jennifer Fuller, a third teacher reflects: "OK", suddenly getting businesslike in her tone. "Here's my typical day teaching tenth grade: I get up at 6:30, have a quick breakfast, get to school by 7:45 if the traffic's not bad. Then I check my email— usually there's a little stuff from the principal or some other administrator, maybe one or two from parents concerned because their child is doing poorly in one of my classes, maybe one or two from students— "I'm going to be sick today, Ms Fuller!"— that sort of thing. Now it's 8:15 and I have two hours before my first class— this term I teach only biology, and I only teach periods 2, 3, and 5. Maybe I have marking to do before class, or maybe I have to get a lab demonstration ready. Or maybe we all have to troupe down to the library for a staff meeting (groan...). Whatever I don't finish in the morning, I have to finish after school. But that's also when I meet with the Ecology Club (I'm the faculty advisor), so I might have to finish stuff in the evening. I try not to do it then, but a lot of times I have to. But I always quit by 9:00— that's always when I watch TV for an hour, or just "vegetate " with a book."

Whatever you teach, you will be able to feel the satisfaction of designing and orchestrating complex activities that communicate new ideas and skills effectively. The challenge is attractive to many teachers, because that is where they exercise judgment and "artistry" the most freely and frequently. Your students will depend on your skill at planning and managing, though sometimes without realizing how much they do so. Teachers will need you to know how to explain ideas clearly, to present new materials in a sensible sequence and at an appropriate pace, to point out connections between their new learning and their prior experiences. Although these skills really take a lifetime to master, they can be practiced successfully even by beginning teachers, and they do improve steadily with continued teaching over time. Right from the start, though, skill at design and communication of curriculum is one of the major "perks" of the job.

The very complexity of classroom life virtually guarantees that teaching never needs to get boring. Something new and exciting is bound to occur just when you least expect it. A student shows an insight that you never expected to see—or fails to show one that you were sure he had. An activity goes better than expected—or worse, or merely differently. You understand for the first time why a particular student behaves as she does, and begin thinking of how to respond to the student's behavior more helpfully in the future. After teaching a particular learning objective several times, you realize that you understand it differently than the first time you taught it. And so on. The job never stays the same; it evolves continually. As long as you keep teaching, you will have a job with novelty.

Are there also challenges to teaching?

Here, too, the simple answer is "yes". Every joy of teaching has a possible frustration related to it. You may wish to make a positive difference in students' lives, but you may also have trouble reaching individuals. A student seems not to learn much, or to be unmotivated, or unfriendly, or whatever. And some teaching problems can be subtle: when you call attention to the wonderful immensity of an area of knowledge, you might accidentally discourage a student by implying that the student can never learn "enough". The complexity of designing and implementing instruction can sometimes seem overwhelming, instead of satisfying. Unexpected events in your classroom can become chaos rather than an attractive novelty. To paraphrase a popular self-help book, sometimes "bad things happen to good teachers" (Kushner, 1983). But as in the rest of life, the "bad things" of teaching do not negate the value of the good. If anything, the undesired events make the good, desired ones even more satisfying, and render the work of teaching all the more valuable. As you will see throughout this book, there are resources for maximizing the good, the valuable, and the satisfying. You can bring these resources to your work, along with your growing professional knowledge and a healthy dose of common sense. In this sense you will not need to "go it alone" in learning to teach well. You will, however, be personally responsible for becoming and remaining the best teacher that you can possibly be; the only person who can make that happen will be you. Many of the resources for making this happen are described in this book in the chapters ahead.

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1.2: Teaching Is Different from in the Past

In the past decade or two teaching has changed significantly, so much in fact that schools may not be what some of us remember from our own childhood. Changes have affected both the opportunities and the challenges of teaching, as well as the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to prepare for a teaching career. The changes have influenced much of the content of this book.

To see what we mean, look briefly at four new trends in education, at how they have changed what teachers do, and at how you will therefore need to prepare to teach:

- **increased diversity:** there are more differences among students than there used to be. Diversity has made teaching more fulfilling as a career, but also made more challenging in certain respects.
- * **increased instructional technology:** classrooms, schools, and students use computers more often today than in the past for research, writing, communicating, and keeping records. Technology has created new ways for students to learn (for example, this textbook would not be possible without Internet technology!). It has also altered how teachers can teach most effectively, and even raised issues about what constitutes "true" teaching and learning.
- **greater accountability in education:** both the public and educators themselves pay more attention than in the past to how to assess (or provide evidence for) learning and good quality teaching. The attention has increased the importance of education to the public (a good thing) and improved education for some students. But it has also created new constraints on what teachers teach and what students learn.
- **increased professionalism of teachers:** Now more than ever, teachers are able to assess the quality of their own work as well as that of colleagues, and to take steps to improve it when necessary. Professionalism improves teaching, but by creating higher standards of practice it also creates greater worries about whether particular teachers and schools are "good enough".

How do these changes show up in the daily life of classrooms? The answer depends partly on where you teach; circumstances differ among schools, cities, and even whole societies. Some clues about the effects of the trends on classroom life can be found, however, by considering one particular case—the changes happening in North America.

New trend #1: diversity in students

Students have, of course, always been diverse. Whether in the past or in the present day, students learn at unique paces, show unique personalities, and learn in their own ways. In recent decades, though, the forms and extent of diversity have increased. Now more than ever, teachers are likely to serve students from diverse language backgrounds, to serve more individuals with special educational needs, and to teach students either younger and older than in the past.

Language diversity

Take the case of language diversity. In the United States, about 40 million people, or 14 per cent of the population are Hispanic. About 20 per cent of these speak primarily Spanish, and approximately another 50 per cent speak only limited English (United States Census Bureau, 2005). The educators responsible for the children in this group need to accommodate instruction to these students somehow. Part of the solution, of course, is to arrange specialized second-language teachers and classes. But adjustment must also happen in "regular" classrooms of various grade levels and subjects. Classroom teachers must learn to communicate with students whose English language background is limited, at the same time that the students themselves are learning to use English more fluently (Pitt, 2005). Since relatively few teachers are Hispanic or speak fluent Spanish, the adjustments can sometimes be a challenge. Teachers must plan lessons and tasks that students actually understand. At the same time teachers must also keep track of the major learning goals of the curriculum. In Chapter 4 ("Student Diversity") and Chapter 10 ("Planning Instruction"), some strategies for doing so are described. As you gain experience teaching, you will no doubt find additional strategies and resources (Gebhard, 2006), especially if second-language learners become an important part of your classes.

Diversity of special educational needs

Another factor making classroom increasingly diverse has been the inclusion of students with disabilities into classrooms with non-disabled peers. In the United States the trend began in the 1970s, but accelerated with the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1975, and again when the Act was amended in 2004 (United States Government Printing Office, 2005). In Canada similar legislation was passed in individual provinces during the same general time period. The laws guarantee free, appropriate education for children with disabilities of any kind—whether the impairment is physical, cognitive, emotional, or behavioral. The laws also recognize that such students need special supports in order to learn or function effectively in a classroom

with non-disabled peers, so they provide for special services (for example, teaching assistants) and procedures for making individualized educational plans for students with disabilities.

As a result of these changes, most American and Canadian teachers are likely to have at least a few students with special educational needs, even if they are not trained as special education teachers or have had no prior personal experience with people with disabilities. Classroom teachers are also likely to work as part of a professional team focused on helping these students to learn as well as possible and to participate in the life of the school. The trend toward inclusion is definitely new compared to circumstances just a generation or two ago. It raises new challenges about planning instruction (such as how is a teacher to find time to plan for individuals?), and philosophical questions about the very nature of education (such as what in the curriculum is truly important to learn?). These questions will come up again in Chapter 5, where we discuss teaching students with special educational needs.

Lifelong learning

The diversity of modern classrooms is not limited to language or disabilities. Another recent change has been the broadening simply of the age range of individuals who count as "students". In many nations of the world, half or most of all three- and four-year-olds attend some form of educational program, either part-time preschool or full-time child care (National Institute for Early Education Research, 2006). In North America some public school divisions have moved toward including nursery or preschool programs as a newer "grade level" preceding kindergarten. Others have expanded the hours of kindergarten (itself considered a "new" program early in the 20th century) to span a full-day program.

The obvious differences in maturity between preschoolers and older children lead most teachers of the very young to use flexible, open-ended plans and teaching strategies, and to develop more personal or family-like relationships with their young "students" than typical with older students (Bredenkamp & Copple, 1997). Just as important, though, are the educational and philosophical issues that early childhood education has brought to public attention. Some educational critics ask whether preschool and day care programs risk becoming inappropriate substitutes for families. Other educators suggest, in contrast, that teachers of older students can learn from the flexibility and open-ended approach common in early childhood education. For teachers of any grade level, it is a debate that cannot be avoided completely or permanently. In this book, it reappears in Chapter 3, where I discuss students' development—their major long-term, changes in skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

The other end of the age spectrum has also expanded. Many individuals take courses well into adulthood even if they do not attend formal university or college. Adult education, as it is sometimes called, often takes place in workplaces, but it often also happens in public high schools or at local community colleges or universities. Some adult students may be completing high school credentials that they missed earlier in their lives, but often the students have other purposes that are even more focused, such as learning a trade-related skill. The teachers of adult students have to adjust their instructional strategies and relationships with students so as to challenge and respect their special strengths and constraints as adults (Bash, 2005). The students' maturity often means that they have had life experiences that enhance and motivate their learning. But it may also mean that they have significant personal responsibilities—such as parenting or a full-time job—which compete for study time, and that make them impatient with teaching that is irrelevant to their personal goals or needs. These advantages and constraints also occur to a lesser extent among "regular" high school students. Even secondary school teachers must ask, how they can make sure that instruction does not waste students' time, and how they can make it truly efficient, effective, and valuable. Elsewhere in this book (especially in Chapters 9 through 11, about assessment and instruction), we discuss these questions from a number of perspectives.

New trend #2: using technology to support learning

For most teachers, "technology" means using computers and the Internet as resources for teaching and learning. These tools have greatly increased the amount and range of information available to students, even if their benefits have sometimes been exaggerated in media reports (Cuban, 2001). With the Internet, it is now relatively easy to access up-to-date information on practically any subject imaginable, often with pictures, video clips, and audio to accompany them. It would seem not only that the Internet and its associated technologies have the potential to transform traditional school-based learning, but also that they have in fact begun to do so.

For a variety of reasons, however, technology has not always been integrated into teachers' practices very thoroughly (Haertel & Means, 2003). One reason is practical: in many societies and regions, classrooms contain only one or two computers at most, and many schools have at best only limited access to the Internet. Waiting for a turn on the computer or arranging to visit a computer lab or school library limits how much students use the Internet, no matter how valuable the Internet may be. In such cases,

furthermore, computers tend to function in relatively traditional ways that do not take full advantage of the Internet: as a word processor (a "fancy typewriter"), for example, or as a reference book similar to an encyclopedia.

Even so, single-computer classrooms create new possibilities and challenges for teachers. A single computer can be used, for example, to present upcoming assignments or supplementary material to students, either one at a time or small groups. In functioning in this way, the computer gives students more flexibility about when to finish old tasks or to begin new ones. A single computer can also enrich the learning of individual students with special interests or motivation. And it can provide additional review to students who need extra help. These changes are not dramatic, but they lead to important revisions in teachers' roles: they move teachers away from simply delivering information to students, and toward facilitating students' own constructions of knowledge.

A shift from "full-frontal teaching" to "guide on the side" becomes easier as the amount and use of computer and Internet technologies increases. If a school (or better yet, a classroom) has numerous computers with full Internet access, then students' can in principle direct their own learning more independently than if computers are scarce commodities. With ample technology available, teachers can focus much more on helping individuals in developing and carrying out learning plans, as well as on assisting individuals with special learning problems. In these ways a strong shift to computers and the Internet can change a teacher's role significantly, and make the teacher more effective.

But technology also brings some challenges, or even creates problems. It costs money to equip classrooms and schools fully: often that money is scarce, and may therefore mean depriving students of other valuable resources, like additional staff or additional books and supplies. Other challenges are less tangible. In using the Internet, for example, students need help in sorting out trustworthy information or websites from the "fluff, websites that are unreliable or even damaging (Seiter, 2005). Providing this help can sometimes be challenging even for experienced teachers. And some educational activities simply do not lend themselves to computerized learning— sports, for example, driver education, or choral practice. As a new teacher, therefore, you will need not only to assess what technologies are possible in your particular classroom, but also what will actually be assisted by new technologies. Then be prepared for your decisions to affect how you teach— the ways you work with students.

New trend #3: accountability in education

In recent years, the public and its leaders have increasingly expected teachers and students to be accountable for their work, meaning that schools and teachers are held responsible for implementing particular curricula and goals, and that students are held responsible for learning particular knowledge. The trend toward accountability has increased the legal requirements for becoming and (sometimes) remaining certified as a teacher. In the United States in particular, preservice teachers need more subject-area and education-related courses than in the past. They must also spend more time practice teaching than in the past, and they must pass one or more examinations of knowledge of subject matter and teaching strategies. The specifics of these requirements vary among regions, but the general trend— toward more numerous and "higher" levels of requirements— has occurred broadly throughout the English-speaking world. The changes obviously affect individuals' experiences of becoming a teacher— especially the speed and cost of doing so.

Public accountability has led to increased use of high-stakes testing, which are tests taken by all students in a district or region that have important consequences for students' further education (Fuhrman & Elmore, 2004). High-stakes tests may influence grades that students receive in courses or determine whether students graduate or continue to the next level of schooling. The tests are often a mixture of essay and structured-response questions (such as multiple-choice items), and raise important issues about what teachers should teach, as well as how (and whether) teachers should help students to pass the examinations. It also raises issues about whether high-stakes testing is fair to all students and consistent with other ideals of public education, such as giving students the best possible start in life instead of disqualifying them from educational opportunities. Furthermore, since the results of high-stakes tests are sometimes also used to evaluate the performance of teachers, schools, or school districts, insuring students' success on them becomes an obvious concern for teachers— one that affects instructional decisions on a daily basis. For this reason we discuss the purpose, nature, and effects of high-stakes tests in detail in Chapter 12.

New trend #4: increased professionalism of teachers

Whatever your reactions to the first three trends, it is important to realize that they have contributed to a fourth trend, an increase in professionalism of teachers. By most definitions, an occupation (like medicine or law— or in this case teaching) is a profession if its members take personal responsibility for the quality of their work, hold each other accountable for its quality, and recognize and require special training in order to practice it.

By this definition, teaching has definitely become more professional than in the past (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005). Increased expectations of achievement by students mean that teachers have increased responsibility not only for their students' academic success, but also for their own development as teachers. Becoming a new teacher now requires more specialized work than in the past, as reflected in the increased requirements for certification and licensing in many societies and regions. The increased requirements are partly a response to the complexities created by the increasing diversity of students and increasing use of technology in classrooms.

Greater professionalism has also been encouraged by initiatives from educators themselves to study and improve their own practice. One way to do so, for example, is through action research (sometimes also called teacher research), a form of investigation carried out by teachers about their own students or their own teaching.

Action research studies lead to concrete decisions that improve teaching and learning in particular educational contexts (Mertler, 2006; Stringer, 2004). The studies can take many forms, but here are a few brief examples:

- How precisely do individual children learn to read? In an action research study, the teacher might observe and track one child's reading progress carefully for an extended time. From the observations she can get clues about how to help not only that particular child to read better, but also other children in her class or even in colleagues' classes.
- Does it really matter if a high school social studies teacher uses more, rather than fewer, open-ended questions? As an action of research study, the teacher might videotape his own lessons, and systematically compare students' responses to his open-ended questions compared to their responses to more closed questions (the ones with more fixed answers). The analysis might suggest when and how much it is indeed desirable to use open-ended questions.
- Can an art teacher actually entice students to take more creative risks with their drawings? As an action research study, the teacher might examine the students' drawings carefully for signs of visual novelty and innovation, and then see if the signs increase if she encourages novelty and innovation explicitly.

Table 1.2.1: Examples of action research projects

Steps in action research Project	Example 1: students' use of the Internet	Example 2: a teacher's helpfulness to ESL students
Purpose of the research (as expressed by the teacher doing the research)	"In doing assignments, how successful are my students at finding high-quality, relevant information?"	"Am I responding to my ESL students as fully and helpfully as to my English-speaking students, and why or why not?"
Who is doing the study?	Classroom teacher (elementary level) and school computer specialist teacher	Classroom teacher (senior high level)—studying self; Possibly collaborating with other teachers or with ESL specialist.
How information is gathered and recorded	Assessing students' assignments; Observing students while they search the Internet. Interviewing students about their search experiences	Videotaping of self interacting during class discussions; Journal diary by teacher of experiences with ESL vs other students; Interviews with teacher's ESL students
How information is analyzed	Look for obstacles and "search tips" expressed by several students; Look for common strengths and problems with research cited on assignments.	Look for differences in type and amount of interactions with ESL vs. other students; Look for patterns in the differences; Try altering the patterns of interaction and observe the result.
How information is reported and communicated	Write a brief report of results for fellow staff; Give a brief oral report to fellow staff about results	Write a summary of the results in teacher's journal diary; Share results with fellow staff; Share results with teacher's students.

Two other, more complete examples of action research are summarized in Table 1.2.1. Although these examples, like many action research studies, resemble "especially good teaching practice", they are planned more thoughtfully than usual, carried out and recorded more systematically, and shared with fellow teachers more thoroughly and openly. As such, they yield special benefits to

teachers as professionals, though they also take special time and effort. For now, the important point is that use of action research simultaneously reflects the increasing professionalism of teachers, but at the same time creates higher standards for teachers when they teach.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: History of American Education

[2.1: History of American Education](#)

[2.2: Educational Milestones of the 20th century](#)

[2.3: A Nation at Risk](#)

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2.1: History of American Education

Learning Objectives

- Identify important points during the timeline of American Education
- Explain how past events continue to affect current education and educational policy.
- Locate and explain, by referencing examples in a Nation at Risk, the three competing goals of public education: democratic equality, social efficiency, and social mobility.
- Explain the Nation at Risk commission's recommendations.
- Identify two recommendations that affect current educational policies.

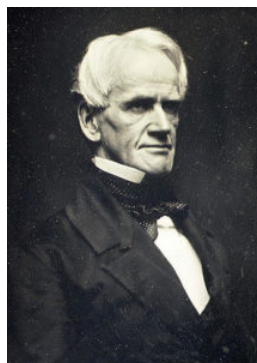


Portrait of Noah Webster

In this chapter, by studying the history of education in America, a better understanding of what currently exists in the educational landscape and why can be achieved. Important innovations have occurred throughout the history of education. In contrast, not every policy or strategy resulted in better education. In the beginning, education was not very widespread and definitely not available to all children.

Thomas Jefferson (1779) had a radical idea that every child should receive an education at the public's expense. The education Jefferson proposed was limited in scope compared with the amount of time spent by a student currently. One of the needs in a democratic society required the ability to read and understand what was read. Jefferson's efforts met with stiff resistance while all efforts to obtain legislative approval failed. And of course, we know that Jefferson didn't mean *every* child, as his vision excluded Black enslaved Americans and women as well.

After the Revolution, America needed to separate itself from Britain. Noah Webster called for the elimination of British texts. He wrote the popular Blue Back Speller that Americanized the spelling of many words. Other authors began writing texts that promoted national ideals. Education was being used to make America a unique country.



Daguerreotype of Horace Mann

In the early 1800s Horace Mann began the make-over of the Massachusetts school system as the state superintendent of education. Mann began visiting schools, making reports, and publicly arguing for a free education for all children. In addition, Mann argued for teacher preparation and standardized equipment. His ideas resulted in common schools that were free, had standard

curriculums, were funded by taxes, and gave some local control back to the state. Shortly after Mann's death, he was recognized as a leader in public education and Massachusetts passed public, tax supported, compulsory education.

Slavery had been abolished in Massachusetts early, but African American children were mistreated and harassed in integrated schools leading to segregated schools. A concern about the growth of prejudice generated by segregation in schools and a resentment among African American parents over supporting schools their children could not attend led to unsuccessful petitions to close segregated schools. *Roberts v City of Boston* (1850) argued before the state supreme court failed because the court cited provisions had been made for the African American children to have a school even though it was segregated. In 1855 the state legislature abolished segregation in schools.

Since the beginning of American education, the Protestant faith was a dominant influence with philosophy, holidays, and even prayers. There was wide spread prejudice against Catholics, and the curriculum in schools was overtly Protestant, and even considered "anti-Catholic". In the well-attended Great School Debates, New York City Cardinal Hughes argued for public funds to start Catholic schools, but the NY City School Board held the line on funding only public schools. As a result, the Catholic Church developed its own system of parochial schools for Catholic families who wanted to leave the public school system.

In Southern states, while slavery was legal, it was generally illegal for enslaved African American to learn to read, and it was illegal to teach them as well, as whites feared education was a threat to their economic system. [Henry Bibb](#), a slave in [Shelby County, Kentucky](#), recalled in his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave*: "Slaves were not allowed books, pen, ink, nor paper, to improve their minds. There was a Miss Davies, a poor white girl, who offered to teach a Sabbath School for the slaves. Books were supplied and she started the school; but the news got to our owners that she was teaching us to read. This caused quite an excitement in the neighbourhood. Patrols were appointed to go and break it up the next Sabbath."

At the end of the Civil War, slavery was abolished by the Thirteenth Amendment. Unfortunately, although African Americans were no longer slaves, states of the former Confederacy actively fought integration. Reconstruction ended with the Compromise of 1877 signaling the beginning of the Jim Crow era and the erosion of black civil rights and liberties. By 1896, states had been using the doctrine of separate but equal to justify segregation. Facilities and equipment were vastly inferior for African American students, not equal. *Plessy v. Ferguson* had worked its way up to the US Supreme Court. *Plessy* argued Louisiana's law of separate but equal violated the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments and that segregation labeled African American people as inferior. The Supreme Court ruled that separate but equal did not violate the Constitution.



Brown County's Sod High School

As more and more people migrated to the West for opportunity, state constitutions touted free public educations. So many schools were opening that a new source of teachers was needed. Katherine Beecher established teaching as a female moral calling. Beecher's stand allowed females to journey into the vast expanse of the western plains. With the influx of female teachers, care came into the American classrooms. Students also received moral education through the very popular McGuffey's Readers.

By 1890, America's public schools were educating more students than any other nation on Earth. Unfortunately, many minorities were segregated from public education including, African Americans, Native Americans, and Mexicans. In 1896, John Dewey open his first progressive laboratory in Massachusetts. The progressive philosophy practiced hands-on learning that led to problem solving and critical thinking. Progressivism was popular until World War II.

In 1954, a unanimous decision crafted by Chief Justice Earl Warren in the case of *Brown v. the Topeka Board of Education* heard before the US Supreme Court ended segregation in public schools. Cases from Kansas, Delaware, Washington, DC, South Carolina, and Virginia were combined. In Topeka, each of the students who tried to enroll in a neighborhood school were denied admission. Thurgood Marshall, a future Supreme Court Justice, was one of the lawyers who argued the case for the NAACP. The justices stated that separate facilities are inherently unequal, and that education is a right. Not much changed, the southern states resisted integration, and African American faculty of students who were integrated lost their jobs. As nine students, the Little Rock

Nine, tried to integrate a white high school the Alabama National Guard under the direction of the governor prevented the students from entering the school. President Eisenhower federalized the national guard and sent federal troops to enforce the integration in 1959. Finally, when the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964 stipulating that noncompliance in integration would result in the loss of federal funds, states complied with the Court's order. By 1972, 91% of students attended integrated schools.



In 1958, the Russians launched Sputnik, the world's first satellite. America found itself behind in the resulting space race. The National Defense Education Act called for finding and educating more talent in science, mathematics, foreign languages, and technology. Monetary support was given to states and students. Vocational education received funding, also. A call for experimentation and research in media to improve the presentation of academic subject matter with training given to teachers.

In 1965, Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to provide all students a fair and equal opportunity to achieve an exceptional education. Part of the act's goal was to close the achievement gap between poor students and all other students. The three major titles of the act are: Title I – Financial Assistance for the Education of Low-Income Families; Title VI – Aid to Handicapped Children; and Title VII – Bilingual Education Programs, which established the federal fingerprints on education. Congress reauthorized the act in 2001 as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). A major provision added testing of all students in grades 3 through 8 in reading and mathematics with each state setting their own standards. Wide spread criticism caused Congress to reauthorize the act as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015. Although the testing continued, accountability was transferred to the states. States submit goals and standards with a plan on how they will be achieved. States also determine the consequences for low-achieving schools (bottom 10%). In addition, all schools are to offer college and career counseling and Advanced Placement courses to all students.



In 1968, Mexican American students from three Los Angeles East Side high schools (Garfield, Roosevelt, and Lincoln) walked out over high dropout rates, lack of college prep courses, rundown schools, and a low number of Mexican American teachers. Student walkouts were a part of a larger scope of activism in the Mexican American community that grew out of treatment as second-class citizens. The walkouts lasted more than a week with student speeches and clashes with the police culminating with students presenting demands at a board of education meeting. The board of education granted the request for smaller class sizes and more bilingual counselors and teachers immediately. A grand jury indicted the activists, the "Eastside 13," but an appeals court vacated the indictment in 1970. Actions taken by the students cultivated a sense of possibility in the community.

By 1971, Detroit and its suburbs presented areas of entrenched segregation as a result of white flight, real estate policies, neighborhood associations, and town policies. A judge approved the Detroit metro plan as a remedy, but the plan failed to garner support from most of the groups involved. In fact, the plan failed to reverse segregation and did not raise the quality of education.

When the Supreme Court struck down busing as a means of achieving integration in the *Milliken v Bradley* case, integration was deemed the responsibility of the city. Detroit is still searching for a solution to this thorny issue.

In 1972, Congress passed Title IX of the Education Amendments Act that states: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (US Congress). Title IX corrected an oversight by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which did not prohibit sex discrimination against persons employed at educational institutions. If a school discriminated on the basis of gender, federal funds would be withheld from the school. Enforcement fell to lawsuits brought by the federal government. The act resulted in the creation of public-school sports teams for girls.

Lau v. Nicols (1974) was decided unanimously by the Supreme Court. Supplemental language instruction was denied to most Chinese students who were integrated into the San Francisco public school system; therefore, these students did not receive a meaningful education. In fact, few students throughout the country received supplemental English instruction since funding was limited and participation was voluntary. The Court stated that supplemental instruction was required because the school district received federal funds. The Court argued that a “sink or swim” policy for learning was prohibited. Subsequent decisions required plaintiffs to provide proof of intentional discrimination which weakened the *Lau* finding.

In 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act was passed by Congress that required “public schools receiving federal funds to provide equal education to students with physical and mental disabilities” (US Congress). To ensure that the education provided students with disabilities closely aligned with the education of non-disabled students, students with disabilities were evaluated and an educational plan with parent input was created. Schools were required to provide procedures for parents to dispute decisions with judicial review as a last resort. The act required disabled students to be placed in the least restrictive environment with the greatest opportunity to interact with non-disabled students. Only when the nature and severity of the disability prevented education in a regular classroom were separate schools allowed.

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2.2: Educational Milestones of the 20th century

Veronica Montalvo

INTRODUCTION AND THE GROWTH OF EDUCATION

In the United States, the start of the twentieth century marked a movement towards the inclusion of more people than ever into the educational system. In 1900, close to six percent of teenagers graduated from high school (Thattai, 2001). States attempted to increase that number by making that goal more accessible through the construction of more high schools in both urban and rural localities (Wolfe, 2001). Laws were passed that made school mandatory for children until elementary school; later it became obligatory until the child became sixteen years old (Thattai, 2001). However, a good and equal education was not yet widely available to all Americans. Marginalized groups hovered at the fringes of the educational system. African-Americans received unequal and inferior educations as compared to that of whites, as did other minorities and students with limited-English-proficiency (LEP). Women were discriminated against, as well as the handicapped, in being fully included in the educational system. Major developments in the twentieth-century education system include various rulings and acts that promoted a fair and equal education for Americans that had been neglected and marginalized.

G.I. BILL of 1944

Established in 1944, the G.I. Bill was designed to provide assistance to veterans returning from World War II. Although the educational provisions within the Bill were originally intended as “another form of unemployment relief,” the educational system experienced a drastic change in its perception by Americans (Clark, 1998, p. 173). Prior to the influx of veterans in colleges and universities, a college education was perceived as being a privilege of the wealthy and a mark of high status. The veterans returning from WWII were viewed as everyday men, and to see and hear about them going to college broke down that perception and made the dream of a college education more of a reality for all Americans (Clark, 1998). According to Hess and McGuinn (2002), “Education gained a new prominence after World War II” (p. 76). More students were graduating from high school and going to college after the G.I. Bill passed (Hess and McGuinn, 2002).

Aside from changing the perception of college education and increasing enrollments, the G.I. Bill led to the growth of community colleges and vocational schools (Wolfe, 2001). The 2.2 million veterans utilizing the educational benefits of the G.I. Bill (Bound and Turner, 2002) demanded a curriculum with classes more similar to what they had been exposed to in the military. Practicality was a vital aspect in their desired education, and schools responded by creating vocational programs to suit their needs (Clark, 1998). The G.I. Bill impacted future generations by making college more accessible to the average citizen and by causing the expansion of the college curriculum.

BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION, 1954

In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The decision marked the beginning of more educational opportunities for African-Americans, but these opportunities were still severely limited. The Supreme Court declared that schools must desegregate, but did not make a deadline or any guidelines as to when it must be complete (Carson, 2004). A decade after the decision, less than 10% of black students were attending an integrated school (Ravitch, 2000). Throughout the ‘60s and ‘70s, the government used funds to force schools to desegregate or risk losing their funding (Carper, 2001), and by 1980, the practice of legal segregation for the most part had ended (Thattai, 2001).

Despite the long delay in achieving the goal of desegregation, the message that *Brown* delivered impacted the educational system and future policy in civil rights (Carson, 2004). *Brown* revealed the potential for other minority groups to begin the struggle for equal educational access (Gándara, Moran, and García, 2004). Equal and fair education began to be viewed as “the birthright of a free citizenry” (Hess and McGuinn, 2002, pp. 76–77), and more groups began demanding that right.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 sought to equalize the education opportunities for all children. As the start of federal government grants to states for education (Hess and McGuinn, 2000), the law attempted “to compensate in some sense for disadvantages due to inequities in the social system” (Wolfe, 2001). President Johnson hoped that increasing and equalizing education for all children would one day rid the country of poverty (Easley, 2005). Funds were provided to the states for services for poor and minority students (Baker, 2001) as well as for “school library resources, textbooks, and other instructional materials for school children” (*Digest of Education Statistics*, 2006). In 1967, Title VII authorized grants to be given for programs for LEP

students (Baker, 2001). More than giving funds for different programs for the poor and minorities, ESEA along with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 aided in providing funds for the desegregation of southern schools who had refused to do so (Ravitch, 2000), more than a decade after the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. ESEA served to make an equal education more obtainable for all classes and races.

TITLE IX OF 1972

The place of women within the educational system was limited in terms of opportunities and the material being taught. The Civil Rights Movement during the '60s and '70s led women to protest more and demand equality in education. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 included the requirement that grants be given to the states in order for them to work towards that gender equality in education, and in 1972, Title IX of the Education Amendments was passed (Marshall, 2002). Title IX required that there be gender equality in schools that received money from the government and that "curricula should not stereotype girls' and boys' interests and careers" (Marshall, 2002, p. 712). In spite of the worthwhile objectives of Title IX, it was a feeble mandate. No penalties existed for schools that refused to comply, and a way to even supervise them was not set up until a quarter of the century after the passage of Title IX (Marshall, 2002).

In 1974, the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) was passed. This act provided a financial backbone to Title IX with funds granted to the schools and agencies in order to fulfill the goals of Title IX (*Women's Educational Equity*). Title IX and WEEA made great strides in opening up more doors to education for women in the twentieth century.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1975

The place of handicapped children in schools improved in the twentieth century. Almost five percent of students have a mental disability (Gunning, 2008), and with the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children's Act, they are able to receive a better education (Keyes, Hanley-Maxwell, and Capper, 1999). The name later changed to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), but the goal of guaranteeing an education to disabled students remained the same (Keyes, Hanley-Maxwell, and Capper, 1999). A "free appropriate public education" or FAPE requires that "special education and related services are provided at public expense" (McLaughlin and Thurlow, 2003, p. 436). Disabled children must be placed in the least restrictive environment possible, meaning that their educational environment is as close to that of their nondisabled classmates as possible (Keyes, Hanley-Maxwell, and Capper, 1999). Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are used to monitor the learning disabled student's progress, and in 1997, assessments became mandatory for disabled students in order to make the schools more accountable for the students' progress (McLaughlin and Thurlow, 2003). If necessary, accommodations in the assessments may be used (Gunning, 2008). Thanks to IDEA, more disabled students are graduating than if IDEA had not been passed (*Special Education and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*).

CONCLUSION

The twentieth century achieved a great deal in terms of including more groups that had been previously excluded or marginalized. A great deal still remains to be done in making education truly equal and accessible to every American, but the foundation has been laid for more work in the twenty-first century. Each American deserves to have equal educational opportunities, and as society progresses and more policies are created, that goal may be achievable.

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2.3: A Nation at Risk

A Nation at Risk was the report published in 1983 by the commission on excellence in education appointed by President Reagan. The report quickly pointed out that the level of student illiteracy was high and that SAT scores had been on a steady decline for the two decades before publication of the report. Mediocrity was a word used to describe the state of education in America. SAT scores actually started to improve beginning in 1980.

The report provided specific recommendations for improving the nation's educational system. Every student at the minimum should be required to take: (a) 4 years of English; (b) 3 years of mathematics; (c) 3 years of science; (d) 3 years of social studies; and (e) one-half year of computer science. All K-12 schools and colleges should adopt rigorous standards. To be effective, the standards needed to be measurable. In fact, the report kicked off the standard movement with professional education organizations creating and publishing national standards. Longer school days or years would be needed to study the curricula outlined by the new standards. Many suggestions were given to improve teacher preparation programs, educational leadership, and fiscal support.

Education was directly tied to economic competitiveness, and schools were to be accountable for the quality of student education verified by external testing. The call for more testing began with the report. Comparisons of American schools began to be made to international schools. Scores of America's top-level students were highest or near the top on international tests.

"Any attempt to isolate developments in the schools from those in society at large turns out to reflect principally the inclination to institutionalize blame for whatever is going wrong: the formal part of the learning process cannot be separated from its societal context" (College Board). In the 1960s and 70s society was tumultuous during a large part of the report. Watching tv for longer periods of time was on the rise among students. More students of poverty and color were taking the SATs. Single-parent families were on the increase. These were all factors that, in general, affect the academic performance of students negatively.

Teachers have increasingly resisted what they see as misplaced blame and narrowing of the curriculum. A large part of the problem is that negative political rhetoric about education increased. One aspect of misplaced blame is the concentration and increase of students living in poverty. The tipping point depends on what the purpose of education is determined to be. Teachers lean to expanding the minds of students and want art and music included in the curriculum.

Wrap Up

Past educational events continue to have an impact on educational policy and how American teachers go about educating students. Groups that have had to fight for educational equity still struggle today, and the history of discrimination and institutional racism continues to reverberate in communities today. Examining history in context gives reason to much of the current educational landscape. A Nation at Risk still holds a strong sway on how education is viewed in this country, and has shaped a persistently negative view of public education, from a belief that our educational system doesn't provide for the country's economic well being, to holding teachers solely responsible for the quality of graduates.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Educational Philosophy

3.1: What are philosophies of education?

3.2: What is the purpose of education?

3.3: How is Plato a philosophical leader in education?

3.4: What is constructivism?

3.5: What is the difference between teacher-centered vs. student-centered philosophies?

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3.1: What are philosophies of education?

by Dionne Nichols

Introduction

What makes a teacher? Teaching is like a salad. Think about it. If you were to attend a party for any given holiday, the number of and variations to each salad recipe that might be present for consumption could outnumber those present at the party. There are so many different ways to teach, varying circumstances to take into account, and philosophies to apply to each classroom. In imparting knowledge to our students, it is inevitable that we must take into account our own personal beliefs and values, our pedagogies (methods of teaching), and see what larger philosophies of education align with those beliefs, values and pedagogies.

Note

An analogy (such as the analogy of the salad in the paragraph above) is one of a teacher's most useful tools. It helps the instructor relate a difficult concept to something the students will already have the infrastructure for, thus enabling the students to cement the ideas in their mind.

What is an educational philosophy?

What, exactly, are education philosophies? According to Thelma Roberson (2000), most prospective teachers confuse their beliefs with the ideas of teaching (p. 6). Education philosophies, then, are not *what* you want to do in class to aid learning, but *why* you do them and how they work. For example, Roberson's students state they "want to use cooperative learning techniques" in their classroom. The question posed is, why? "[I]s cooperative learning a true philosophy or is it something you do in the classroom because of your belief about the way children learn?" (Roberson, 2000, p. 6). Philosophies need to translate ideas into action – if you want to use certain techniques, then you need to understand how they are effective in the classroom to create that portion of your education philosophy. It helps to have an overview of the various schools out there.

Philosophies of Education have traveled down a tree of branches. The first four support branches of philosophy are the Idealist school, the Realist school, the Pragmatist school, and the Existential schools of thought (Ornstein, 2003, p. 99). It might help to look at the tree and its individual branches rather than read about them...

- Idealism - focuses on a subject-matter curriculum emphasizing the great ideas of the culture. You must ponder ideas to make them whole (Ornstein, 2003, p. 99).
- Realism - A subject-matter curriculum stressing objective knowledge and values. Reality is objective, meaning everyone should obtain the same results regardless of what he does or how he consider concepts (Ornstein, 2003, p. 101)
 - Perennialism - Focuses on human concerns that have caused concern for centuries, revealed through 'great works' (Ornstein, 2003, p. 110)
 - Essentialism - Rooted partially in Idealism, as well - Emphasizes skills and subjects that demonstrate the cultural heritage and contribute to society (Ornstein, 2003, p. 110)
- Pragmatism - Instruction is organized around problem-solving following the steps of the scientific method - emphasizes the need to act on concepts by testing them (Ornstein, 2003, p. 104).
 - Progressivism - Instruction features problem solving and group activities - The instructor acts as a facilitator as opposed to a leader (Ornstein, 2003, p. 110)
 - Social Reconstructionism - Instruction that focuses on significant social and economic problems in an effort to solve them (Ornstein, 2003, pg.110)
- Existentialism - Classroom dialogue stimulates awareness - each person creates an awareness gleaned from discussion and encourages deep personal reflection on his or her convictions (Ornstein, 2003, p. 108).

Perennialism

Perennialists are instructors who feel that the knowledge that has been passed through the ages should be continued as the basis of the curriculum, like the classic works of Plato and Einstein. Perennialists base their teachings on reason, logic, and analytical thought. Only information that stood the test of time is relevant. They do not illicit student input. The classes most likely to be considered under this approach would be history, science, math, and religion classes (Educational Philosophies in the Classroom, pg.1).

Positivism

The instructors whose teaching philosophies are based on documented facts and tangible truths are normally those who would be in the math and science departments. These teachers do not feel that religion and the supernatural should be a part of the thinking process. The idea of uncertainty and the unknown is considered illogical (Educational Philosophies in the Classroom, pg.1).

Behaviorism

Behaviorists believe in rewards and punishments as an approach to controlling the teaching environment due to their belief in the intrinsic nature of humans to react to internal or external stimuli. This teacher-centered system ultimately allows the students to be controlled by the educator, who makes the environment pleasant or unpleasant depending on the students' behavior (Foundations of Education, pg.1).

Essentialism

Essentialists believe that there is a universal pool of knowledge needed by all students. The fundamentals of teaching are the basis of the curriculum: math, science, history, foreign language, and English. Vocational classes are not seen as a necessary part of educational training. Classrooms are formal, teacher-centered, and students are passive learners. Evaluations are predominately through testing, and there are few, if any, projects or portfolios. These instructors easily accept the No Child Left-Behind Act because test scores are the main form of evaluation (Foundations of Education, pg. 1).

Progressivism

This is a student-centered form of instruction where students follow the scientific method of questioning and searching for the answer. Evaluations include projects and portfolios. Current events are used to keep students interested in the required subject matter. Students are active learners as opposed to passive learners. The teacher is a facilitator rather than the center of the educational process. Student input is encouraged, and students are asked to find their interpretation of the answer (Educational Philosophies in the classroom, pg.1).

Reconstructionism

This student-centered philosophy strives to instill a desire to make the world a better place. It places a focus on controversial world issues and uses current events as a springboard for the thinking process. These students are taught the importance of working together to bring about change. These teachers incorporate what is happening in the world with what they are learning in the classroom (Educational Philosophies in the Classroom, pg.1).

Constructivism

Active participation is the key to this teaching style. Students are free to explore their own ideas and share concepts with one another in nontraditional ways. "Hands on activity [...] is the most effective way of learning and is considered true learning" (Educational Philosophies in the Classroom, pg.1).

Humanism/ Existentialism

Also a student-centered philosophy, this educational method is based on the idea that the students should be presented with choices about the learning process. The student is engaged in all aspects of learning and works together with the teacher and her peers to develop a curriculum and evaluation system that allows for individual interests and abilities (Educational philosophies in the Classroom, pg.1).

Note

Your philosophy of education is what you believe about education and the way children learn." - Roberson pg 4

In addition, the 'constructivist' school of philosophy, rooted in the Pragmatic pedagogy and branched off from the 'Social Reconstructivist' school, has gained much popularity. Around the turn of the century (early 1990s), many teachers felt the rote memorization and mindless routine that was common then was ineffective, and began to look for alternate ways to reach their students (Ornstein, 2003, p. 111). Through the constructivist approach, "students "construct" knowledge through an interaction between what they already think and know and with new ideas and experiences" (Roberson, 2000, p. 8). This is an active learning process that leads to deeper understanding of the concepts presented in class, and is based on the abilities and readiness of the children rather than set curriculum guidelines (Ornstein, 2003, p. 112). Constructivism "emphasizes socially interactive and process-oriented 'hands on' learning in which students work collaboratively to expand and revise their knowledge base" (Ornstein, 2003, p. 112). Essentially, knowledge which is shaped by experience is reconstructed, or altered, to assist the student in

understanding new concepts (Ornstein, 2003, p. 112). You, as the teacher, help the students build the scaffolding they need to maintain the information even after the test is taken and graded.

Four Philosophies in Assessment

Once you know how you want to lead your classroom, it is important to consider how to assess your students' progress. And when we think of school, we automatically consider the threesome subjects, Reading, Writing, and 'Rithmetic. In all aspects of learning, however, the ability to communicate comes to the forefront. Communication is used in class discussion as well as unit test short answers. Writing is present in almost all subjects in some form, and writing translates to communication. Richard Fulkerson (2000), in his article "Four Philosophies of Composition," questions whether "a [...] set of four philosophies of composition might exist, each one stressing a different element in the communicative transaction" (p. 3). Fulkerson's schools of communicative philosophy fall into the following categories:

- **Expressionism:** a way of writing that demonstrates the students' thoughts and can be lead by "non-directive teachers, some of whom insist that one neither can nor should evaluate writing" or more hands-on teachers who "design classroom activities to maximize student self-discovery" (p. 5). This school of thought emphasizes the student.
- **Rhetorical:** this school states that good writing is adapted to achieve a specific reaction from the audience (p. 6). This is focused on the connection between goal and process in completing assignments, and it emphasizes the audience.
- **Mimesis:** states that "a clear connection exists between good writing and good thinking" and focuses on logic and reason as exemplified in the completion of assignments (p. 5). This school emphasizes a well-rounded student in that, research, prior knowledge, and the ability to recognize both sides of an argument are necessary for success (p. 6).
- **Formalism:** this school focuses primarily on the form of the assignment – it disregards content to the extent that poor grammar can distract the audience from absorbing the content, and therefore, the work is judged "primarily by whether it shows certain internal [mistakes]" (p. 4).

While most teachers fall primarily into one school of composition pedagogy, Fulkerson (2000) points out that it is necessary to hold on to them all when he states "they are not mutually exclusive" (p. 6). The trick is to learn when each is applicable and to what extent it should be employed.

Hooked on Phonics?

So, you know how you want to lead your class, and you have an idea as to which kind of 'grader' you are. What next? Another area where teachers have struggled is simply in helping their students learn to or improve their reading. How do we teach reading? The two battling schools of thought are between those who support Whole Language, and those who support Phonics. "The disputes have been dubbed the Reading Wars, and the participants call them 'vicious'" (Collins, 1997, n.p.). Several states have even intervened and enacted laws mandating one or the other.

But what are they? Just as their names state, the difference is in how the words are read. Phonics was taught primarily in the 1970s (Collins, 1997, n.p.) and study the individual components of each word, called 'phonemes,' which are the "smallest meaningful sounds in a language" (Collins, 1997, n.p.). "Cat, for example, has three: "kuh-aa-tuh" (Collins, 1997, n.p.). A reader needs to understand how the words are broken up and that each letter has its own sound in order to read (Collins, 1997, n.p.). Phonic teaching focuses on code learning. Once the students understand the 'code,' and how the words phonemes are put together, they are supposed to be able to understand the entire word.

Whole language advocates disagree with the process of breaking each word down. They feel readers cannot focus on every letter in a word, or every word in a text (Collins, 1997, n.p.) and made their opinions known during the 1980s (Collins, 1997, n.p.). If they did, "and if they tried to translate what they saw into sounds, reading would be much too cumbersome" (Collins, 1997, n.p.). Instead, whole language teachers instruct their students in 'skipping strategies' – ways of guessing which word comes next to fill in any blanks (Collins, 1997, n.p.). Overall, reading is considered an organic process by which the students learn phonics "only when a question about phonics comes up in the course of reading" (Collins, 1997, n.p.). Whole language focuses on the meaning behind the words.

Which is better?

Just as in many other walks of life, statistics and studies show that one philosophy of teaching will prevail over another. The National Assessment of Educational Progress, as stated in J. Collin's article (1997), claims that "from 1971 to 1980 there was a

steady improvement in the reading comprehension of nine-year-olds. However, during the 1980s...the scores did not improve and rather declined” (n.p.).

The 1990s brought the topic full circle. It was then that Marilyn Adams, a cognitive psychologist, wrote a book describing the best methods to teach learning. “Programs that combined systematic phonics instruction with meaning emphasis seemed to work best of all” (Collins, 1997, n.p.). The key to reading is that words need to be recognized so the brain can interpret the meaning behind it (Collins, 1997, n.p.). Thus, putting the two methods together was necessary for correct comprehension of the concepts presented.

What else do I need to know?

We’ve discussed the accepted definition of pedagogy, varying schools of thought for assessment, and the difference between reading philosophies. Your salad components are increasing by number exponentially. But what toppings to you add to your thought salad? What else do you need to consider when you are setting up your classroom, your teaching styles, and your lessons?

Teaching is the hardest job you can have. You are in a position to touch hundreds of lives over the course of a career, and yet, how do you succeed? The fact remains that “when a teacher and his/her students face each other in the classroom they must truly work with each other” (Cadenas, 1999, n.p.). How else can you ensure that the students are learning what you are teaching?

The first thing to keep in mind is your own knowledge basis. Cadenas (1999) recommends that you “renew and refresh your knowledge of the subject matter” (n.p.) to stay on top of changes and help you incorporate them in to your lessons. Our world changes so rapidly that to stay on top of technology, your field of expertise, or even other areas that can be integrated into your subject matter, it is necessary to take a class or attend a seminar every once in a while (Cadenas, 1999, n.p.).

Next, “prepare interesting, colorful, captivating lesson plans and deliver them with gusto” (Cadenas, 1999, n.p.). An entertaining teacher will help cement information into a student’s memory with much more ease than one who is monotone or inactive (Cadenas, 1999, n.p.). The more entertaining you are, the deeper a connection you will make with your students, as well.

In addition to the captivating lesson, make sure “it [is] a number one priority to ensure that your student can follow the lesson” (Cadenas, 1999, n.p.). This will assist all your students in grasping the information you are placing before them in class, and will help you reach students of all learning styles (Cadenas, 1999, n.p.). You don’t want to end up teaching only to the auditory learners and leaving the visual learners to fend for themselves!

Last, “help your students to put their learning to use immediately” (Cadenas, 1999, n.p.). Show them how the lessons you are teaching are applicable to them so they feel like school is worth an investment of time and energy (Cadenas, 1999, n.p.). If nothing else, have them help each other out in class to reinforce the lesson!

Note

[You] may spend as much as 60 hours a week creating lesson plans, teaching, advising students, grading, supervising extracurricular activities and meeting with colleagues and parents” Valerie Marchant – *Time*

Conclusion

You are ready to graze at a Fourth of July picnic. You walk over to the table, and you see an array of salads ready for you to dive in to them. How do you pick which ones you want to sample now or save for later? How do you narrow the choices down?

Educational philosophies are as abundant as salads at any holiday spread. And even though the difference between one potato salad and the one next to it is an addition of mustard, the two are by no means exactly alike. Your classes will be just as diverse. You will have students from all economic classes, with differing levels of English language ability, and all bringing various and beautiful experiences to your class. How do you reach each individual?

Knowing who you are as a teacher before you enter the classroom will help significantly. Teaching is so much more than just the content. Teaching is a learning curve on philosophy that will never be finished. Just as your classroom will change every year, continue to alter your philosophies. See what works for you and your students on a collaborative level. **In the words of J. W. Apps, “a working philosophy is never completely developed the ultimate working philosophy never reached. We’re always moving toward, hopefully, a more complete, and thus more useful, working philosophy.” (The Educational Philosophies of Training and Development Professors, Leaders, and Practitioners, pg. 1)**

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3.2: What is the purpose of education?

By: Karen Herndon

Introduction

Have you ever asked yourself what the purpose of education is? It is believed to be a question that is highly thought about but in reality it is not. We tend to focus on the tasks at hand rather than the overall goal. Many will find that when asked specifically what education's purpose is, the answer in return is nothing outside of the course curriculum (Bass, 1997). Well you may be questioning why this is. In order to provide an answer we need to consider both sides of the topic. On one hand the government controls the educational system which enforces the use of mandatory testing to evaluate each student as well as the educational institution. In other words, emphasis is placed on providing students with the skill that they will need to succeed. On the other hand, there is the belief that children should not only be presented with the abilities to learn but they should be able to expand what is given through individual growth and development beyond materials obtained from the classroom. Their inner talents need to be brought out and polished (Minor, 2007).

Note

"Do not then train youth to learn by force and harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each." ~Plato (Minor, 2007)

Government Effects on Education's Purpose

If one looks closely at the government's heavy involvement in what to teach and what not to teach children it's the administering of assessment tests. These tests do not allow a child to form opinions on subjects which in turn impedes social growth and development. The government forces school districts to meet certain minimal requirements so unfortunately the focal point has become mainly to teach material that students will need to know in order to obtain passing scores on standardized tests (Bass, 1997). This is attributed to the government's implementation of laws such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (A Firsthand Look at NCLB, 2006). Students are expected to follow certain guidelines and curriculum; however teachers are pressed for time. In order to ensure they achieve all of the mandated guidelines and curriculum they teach only what they are required to. This leaves little time to introduce material to students that may be beneficial to them in the long run (Bass, 1997). For example the NCLB has received strict criticism for focusing too much on testing and not enough on actually teaching and allowing the student to further their knowledge. It has been brought up that the NCLB's ignorance towards equity has caused problems. For instance one school system may possess funding which would make it easier to obtain the minimum passing score versus a school system that lacked funding. (A Firsthand Look at NCLB, 2006).

Social Development's Role in Education

Education is not only being presented with material to learn but to also expand one's knowledge of themselves and their surroundings. It appears that the growing trend today in school systems is to teach students particular course work with little to no regard to instruction on how this material could relate to life. Since most subjects utilize textbooks they are heavily relied upon and do not allow the student much freedom to think outside the box (Lim, 2005). Children will naturally form opinions from the material that is presented and being able to express these opinions will only help them to grow socially and eventually fit in with the rest of the world. Social growth is very important because when it is time for the child to become independent if they have not developed that part of their life then interaction with other people and situations could be quite daunting. Most parents and parental guardians do want their child to follow a structured curriculum; however, they still want their child to have time for recreation and family. Childhood is an important part of everyone's life. It encourages social interaction and development as well as teaching them to be independent. People that are deprived of their childhood regret it when they grow up which could negatively impact their lives and the lives of others (Lim, 2005).

Note

"The only purpose of education is to teach a student how to live his life-by developing his mind and equipping him to deal with reality. The training he needs is theoretical, i.e., conceptual. He has to be taught to think, to understand, to integrate, to prove.

He has to be taught the essentials of the knowledge discovered in the past-and he has to be equipped to acquire further knowledge by his own effort. ~Ayn Rand

(Yero, 2001-2002. p. 1)

Thomas Jefferson's View

With regard to the purpose of education Thomas Jefferson was one of the biggest advocates of the principle that ignorance and political liberty could not co-exist. Jefferson believed the purpose of education was to properly prepare young minds so they would be able to make educated decisions and uphold the integrity of the country. He insisted on providing four main subjects to elementary school students. Geography, arithmetic along with reading and writing made up these subjects. These subjects were deemed crucial for the proper development of children in order to function later in life. One example of this is that Jefferson believed that children needed to be given proper education in order to become informed voters. He supported free education through taxation as well as equal opportunity education. Jefferson believed the purpose of education was not to segregate but to educate (Jewett, 1997). Of course, the spectrum of children that Jefferson saw needing this education was very narrow -- only male and white. Ironically, it was for this very reason -- that education would lead to political liberty -- that whites who participated in the system of slavery denied enslaved African-Americans the right to an education.

Evaluating Student Assessment

Getting back to assessment and student evaluation drives one to consider if whether we are going about education wrong as a country by placing so much importance upon standardized tests. As previously stated, it has been debated whether The No Child Left Behind Act does little to expand the constantly developing minds of our youth (A Firsthand Look at NCLB, 2006). A child's mind can be compared to a sponge, in that they need to soak up information and substance in order for it to expand, otherwise, it dries out. If you observe the examinations and how students are generally evaluated in today's school systems, you will see that the vast majority of them are made up of multiple choice questions. Since there is typically only one correct answer, it is almost impossible for the child to reflect upon the question and develop a view that they can grow from or share with others if they so choose (Yero, 2001-2002).

In Summation

When considering both sides of the purpose of education you may want to reflect on the words of Plato when he said: "Do not then train youth to learn by force and harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each (Minor, 2007)." However, the government's involvement in education has had positive impacts on students since the NCLB has forced teachers and other school officials to focus on all children including those with special needs (A Firsthand Look at NCLB, 2006). No matter what side of the river you are on with regard to your opinion on this topic, it is hard to discredit the fact that one purpose (if not the main purpose) of education is to prepare the youth for their future and ours.

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3.3: How is Plato a philosophical leader in education?

By Laura Stewart

Learning Objectives

- Readers should be able to define the Socratic method
- Readers should be able to give an example of the dialectic method
- Readers should be able to describe Plato's educational thought as outlined in *The Republic*

Overview of Plato

Considered by historians to be one of the most influential minds of Western thought, Plato described the Socratic method of instruction and further developed this dialectic method in his later years. (Smith, 1997). The Socratic method is basically a learning method using a question and answer dialogue between the teacher and student. The idea is that the ensuing debate exposes flaws in reasoning and brings forth a better understanding of the issue. Plato improved on the Socratic method in his later years and developed a philosophy of education as outlined in *The Republic* that became the hallmark of a European liberal arts education.

427 to 347 BC. Plato was born in Athens in 427BC. When his father died, his mother married, Pyrilampes, a friend of Pericles. Plato began to pursue a political career, but became disillusioned with the politics of the time. Evidently, he was good at athletics, poetry and drama. In 409 BC he met Socrates, and according to Plato, he was one of Socrates more outstanding students. Socrates did not follow the then current trend of the Sophist method of teaching which used rhetoric or persuasion to dictate learning to their students. The Sophists asked high fees for their teaching while Socrates charged nothing. Plato, while mistrustful of the Sophists did share their interest in investigating values rather than physical science. In 399 Socrates was brought to trial for corrupting the minds of youth because of his skepticism regarding religious deities. He was convicted and sentenced to death. Socrates committed suicide rather than face execution. Plato wrote about the trial and Socrates decision not to try to escape from prison. After this Plato traveled extensively studying religion, geometry and astronomy. In 387 BC he returned to Athens and founded a university that included philosophy, physical science, astronomy and mathematics. Plato also developed a philosophy of education for prospective rulers requiring them to be philosophers first and rulers second as detailed in *The Republic* He is thought to have died at the age of 80 in 347 BC. (GradeSaver).



Figure 3.3.1: Bust of Plato Read a short [biography](#) or read a [more detailed one](#). (CC0, [Wikimedia](#))

Socratic Method

The Socratic method is a dialectic method of teaching, named after the Greek philosopher Socrates, in which the teacher uses questions to get the student to think about what he/she already knows and to realize what they do not know. (This is in contrast to a didactic method of teaching, in which a teacher just delivers information to students.) This question and answer session stimulates the brain, engages the learner, and can bring new ideas to life. As one educator stated, “Think of it as the relentless pursuit of truth through unceasing questions. To engage in dialectic method, establish your goal to clearly understand truth and get on with it.” (Kern, 2008).

Today, law schools are trying to find better ways to teach their students the important concepts they will need in the future. The Socratic Method is one of the ways a lot of teachers have found to be most useful. Since the Socratic Method is the basis for which courts handle cases, it seems only fitting to have the students at a law school learn that way. In a court room a series of questions

are asked to get the judge and/or jury to see the truth of the situation at hand. The teacher likes using the Socratic Method in their classes because they believe it helps the students get into the mind set of being a lawyer, plus they believe it helps the students learn and retain the information better. "One of the principle benefits that the Socratic Method confers is to allow large bodies of students to engage in "active learning." "Students learn better when they are actively involved in the learning process" rather than passively taking notes and the teacher dispenses information." (Jackson, 2007).

Note

[Here are some Videos on Plato](#)

These links will take you to some very interesting videos about Plato and Socrates.

1. **Watch this clip,** [Plato](#) The Encyclopedia Channel. YouTube.
2. **Watch this clip,** [Socrates](#) How Stuff Works.
3. **Watch this clip,** [Socratic Method in Law school](#) Pacific McGeorge School of Law Faculty. YouTube.

Dialectic Method Example

The benefits of this method are that the student becomes engaged in the learning process and contributes in developing the answers (led by the teacher). This is in contrast to didactic learning in which the teacher tells the student what they need to know.

Begin with a question that has several possible answers or is ambiguous so that you can begin asking the question in different ways until the students reason out the answer you wish them to learn. Then encourage them to ask themselves other responses.

For example: High School class discussion after reading the Noah's Ark story from the Old Testament:

Teacher: What is a covenant?

Possible answer: An agreement.

Teacher: I agree to meet you for lunch, is that a covenant?

Possible answer: Sort of.

Teacher: What was the covenant God made to Noah?

Possible answer: God promised never to destroy the world by a flood.

Teacher: Does a covenant imply something more than an agreement?

Possible answer: A promise

Teacher: Yes, a covenant is an agreement with a promise. I make an agreement to meet you for lunch and I promise to be there no matter what.

Notice in this example the student has come up with the answer. If the teacher had simply told the student the definition of a covenant, chances are the student would simply not care to remember the meaning. In this example, the student is more likely to remember the meaning since he/she was involved in finding the answer.

Note

Go to this link for a specific [example](#) that was used in a 3rd grade elementary math class.

Thoughts on the Republic

Plato believed that a teacher must care deeply for the student and have a good understanding of the subject being taught. In *The Republic* Plato outlines a lifelong learning process for rulers that begins with learning to read, write and do mathematics at age six. As the child grows music and sports are added. At age 18 military services are added. At age 30 the ruler should study philosophy and politics. It is not until age 50 that the ruler should rule. This lifelong liberal arts education would ensure that the ruler had experience and wisdom in order to make just decisions. *The Republic* is mostly about defining justice and the different types of justice. Only a philosopher-King can dispense the appropriate justice. This method of instruction became useful during the Middle Ages in the royal classes, and can be seen in the British royal family today. The British males are required to do military service,

attend university, and work in civil service for many years before they take over the role of King. An interesting note is that the current Queen of England, Elizabeth, was reluctant to hand over the reins to Phillip until after he had a wife and family, and has not yet retired. (Jowett)



Figure 3.3.2: Plato and Aristotle in the School of Athens by Raphael (CC0, [Wikimedia](#))

Note

Here are some other interesting links on Plato

These links will take you to some very interesting videos about Plato and Socrates.

1. Click this link, [Plato Biography](#) Kraut.
2. Click this link, [Plato Outline](#) Kemerling.
3. Click this link, [Socratic Method in Law Schools](#) Jackson.

Summary

Both the Didactic and Dialectic methods are necessary for teaching. There are many times when telling the student what he/she needs to know is the only way to impart information. However, the dialectic method is essential for engaging students in interactive learning, in giving them some ownership of discovery in the learning process. The dialectic method can provide an opportunity for debate of issues, exploration of ideas and use of higher thinking skills. Since the object of learning is to be able to discern and make decisions based on knowledge, the dialectic method is critical for growth of knowledge.

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3.4: What is constructivism?

Todd Douglas Vanderbilt

What is Constructivism?

The root word of *Constructivism* is “construct.” Basically, Constructivism is the theory that knowledge must be constructed by a person, not just transmitted to the person. People construct knowledge by taking new information and integrating it with their own pre-existing knowledge (Cooper, 2007; Woolfolk, 2007). When trying to learn the applications of Constructivism, it is good to know the theory first.

Jean Piaget's Theory of Constructivism

Jean Piaget was one of the major constructivists in past history. His theory looks at how people construct knowledge cognitively. In Piaget's theory, everybody has *schemes*. People organize and structure knowledge and information. This organization, or structure, of knowledge and information is known as a scheme. For example, “food” can have a scheme. It can be organized into different food groups such as the following: bread/ pastas, fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy, and sweets (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2007).

According to Piaget's theory, one way people construct knowledge is through *assimilation*. People assimilate when they incorporate new knowledge and information into pre-existing schemes. Here is an example. A child sees a car and learns that it can be called a vehicle. Then the child sees a motorcycle and learns that it can be called a vehicle as well. Then the child sees a truck and calls it a vehicle. Basically, the child developed a scheme for “vehicles” and incorporated trucks into that scheme (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2007).

Another way people construct knowledge, according to Piaget's theory, is through *accommodation*. People accommodate when they modify or change their pre-existing schemes. Here is an example. A child sees a dog (a furry four-legged animal) and learns that it can be called a pet. Then the child sees a cat (a furry four-legged animal) and learns that it can be called a pet as well. Then the child sees a raccoon (also a furry four-legged animal) and calls it a pet. Afterwards, the child learns from his or her parents that a raccoon is not a pet. At first, the child develops a scheme for “pet” which includes all furry four-legged animals. Then the child learns that not all furry four-legged animals are pets. Because of this, the child needs to accommodate his or her scheme for “pet.” According to Piaget, people learn through a balance of assimilation and accommodation (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2007).

Lev Vygotsky's Theory of Constructivism

Lev Vygotsky was another major constructivist in past history. While Jean Piaget's theory is a cognitive perspective, Vygotsky's theory is a sociocultural perspective. His theory looks at how people construct knowledge by collaborating with others. In Vygotsky's theory, people learn and construct knowledge within the *Zone of Proximal Development*. People have an independent level of performance where they can do things independently. Likewise, people have an instructional level of performance where they can do things above the independent level with the help and guidance of others. The range, or zone, between these two levels is the Zone of Proximal Development (Cooper, 2007; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2007; Woolfolk, 2007).

In the Zone of Proximal Development, assistance needs to be given by another person. This assistance, help, or guidance is known as *scaffolding*. Because the zone has a range, assistance needs to be given, but not too much. If not enough assistance is given, a person may not be able to learn the task. On the other hand, if too much assistance is given, the person may not be able to fully construct the new acquired information into knowledge. For example, a child needs help doing math homework. With no help, the child may not be able to do it. With too much help, the homework is done for the child, so the child may not fully understand the math homework anyway (Cooper, 2007; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2007; Woolfolk, 2007).

Constructivism in the Classroom

In the classroom, the teacher can use Constructivism to help teach the students. The teacher can base the instruction on the cognitive strategies, experiences, and culture of the students. The teacher can make the instruction interesting by correlating it with real life applications, especially applications within the students' own communities. Students can work and collaborate together during particular activities. The teacher can provide feedback for the students so they know what they can do independently and know what they need help with. New concepts can be related to the students' prior knowledge. The teacher can also explain how new concepts can be used in different contexts and subjects. All these ideas are based on Constructivism (Sherman & Kurshan, 2005).

Research shows that constructivistic teaching can be effective. According to research conducted by Jong Suk Kim at Chungnam National University in Korea, constructivistic teaching is more effective than traditional teaching when looking at the students' academic achievement. The research also shows that students have some preference for constructivistic teaching (Kim, 2005). Again, when the theory of Constructivism is actually applied in the classroom, it can be effective for teaching students.

Response from the Author

According to the research, incorporating constructivistic teaching into the classroom is a good idea. Allowing students to work together can be beneficial; however, there may be a problem with time management if the classroom management is not under control. Correlating new concepts to real life applications is a great way to further develop students' schemes. Again, the problem with doing this may be time management. With all the material that needs to be covered throughout the school year due to standardized testing, it is possible that real life applications can become "irrelevant" because they won't be on the standardized tests.

Based on Constructivism, it can be argued that rote memorization is not real learning. Rote memorization requires no assimilation or accommodation. It is like putting information on a solitary island all by itself. Once the information has served its temporary purpose, it will just float away. By assimilating new information into pre-existing schemes, this problem can be avoided.

The last point is that it is not the sole responsibility of the teachers to educate the students. According to Constructivism, students have some responsibilities when learning. A student may be quick to blame the teacher for not understanding the material, but it could be the case that the student is not doing everything he or she could be doing. Because knowledge is constructed, not transmitted, students need to make an effort to assimilate, accommodate, and make sense of information. They also need to make an effort to collaborate with others, especially if they are having a hard time understanding the information.

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3.5: What is the difference between teacher-centered vs. student-centered philosophies?

By: Hope Gibbs

Learning Targets

Readers will be able to understand the differences of teacher-centered philosophies and student-centered philosophies.

Introduction

In today's school, there are essentially two types of teaching philosophies. Both types will be different in their teaching styles; however, both want the best for their students. So what kind of teachers am I talking about? I am talking about teacher-centered and student centered teachers. Their philosophies are different. What type are you? Your ideas and attitudes about education will help shape what kind of teacher you want to be.

Students vs. Teachers

Even though both teacher-centered and student-centered teachers want to help the students learn, they are like night and day in their approaches. Teacher-centered philosophies focus around essentialism and perennialism. Some of the most popular student-centered philosophies include progressivism, social reconstructionism, and existentialism. According to Mary P. Driscoll, “teacher-centered and student-centered views put primacy on the learning of the student, and all other aspects of the learning environment and instruction are planned from that initial standpoint” (1999).

What are Teacher-Centered Philosophies?

Teacher-centered philosophies are the ones you are probably most familiar with. These philosophies focus on what the teacher wants his or her students to learn. There are a lot of factors that determine what kind of teaching philosophies to use. Shawn A. Faulkner and Christopher M. Cook state that “the state tests seem to drive the curriculum and warrant more teacher-focused instructional methods—lecture, worksheets, and whole-class discussion” (2006). We remember this from our own experiences in school. Do you remember when you were in class and the teacher was in front and she lectured to you? Everyone student remembers taking notes off of the blackboard. These are just two examples of teacher-centered practices. Kathy Brown clarifies that “the teacher-centered approach is associated chiefly with the transmission of knowledge” (2003). Getting the knowledge out and to the student is the main focus. The students are accountable for what they have learned and the teachers are also. Teachers are in control and they plan out activities and learning strategies according to specific times during the lesson (Teacher Vision). Teacher-centered philosophies that are mostly used in teaching include essentialism and perennialism. Let us briefly look at these two philosophies.

1. Essentialism in the Classroom

In the excerpt of the book *Teachers, Schools, and Society: A Brief Introduction to Education*, authors David Miller Sadker, Ph.D and Karen R. Zittleman, Ph.D state how “Essentialism strives to teach students the accumulated knowledge of our civilization through core courses in the traditional academic disciplines” (2007). What this means is that our society has certain viewpoints and practices that schools must pass down to students in a more authoritarian way. According to William Gaudelli, who is an assistant professor of social studies education at the University of Central Florida, “essentialists concern themselves with teaching students how to survive, succeed in their lives, and not be a burden to others” (Gaudelli, 2002). Essentialist teachers believe that what they teach will help their students in real-life situations as they grow older (Gaudelli, 2002). In the classroom, you will most likely see traditional subjects such as math, English, science, and history as the foundations of learning. “Essentialist teachers rely on achievement tests scores to evaluate progress and teachers expect that students will leave school not only with basic skills, but also disciplined, practical minds that are capable of applying lessons taught in school in the real world” (Sadker and Zittleman, 2007). In essence, teachers want their students to be able to use what they have learned in school and use it appropriately in the real world.

2. Perennialism in the Classroom

Perennialism and essentialism may sound somewhat alike, but perennialists are in fact different in their approaches. “Perennialists recommend that students learn directly from the “Great Books”—works by history’s finest thinkers and writers, books meaningful today as when they were first written” (Sadker and Zittleman, 2007). “Perennialist generally prefer a past orientation, because it tends to be based on historical truth, rather than conjecture about the present and guessing about the future” (Gaudelli, 2002). This

means that perennialists believe that a student can be influenced by such heroes in our past like Washington and Lincoln. In a perennialist classroom, the teacher will focus on the importance of reading and will often use the underlying reading lessons to make a moral point (Sadker and Zittleman, 2007). These teachers want to teach their students how to be excellent leaders in society just like history portrays.

What are Student-Centered Philosophies?

Student-centered learning is just what it says. It is basically learning by doing. Teachers believe that education should be child-centered. According to Julie K. Brown, she basically says that “student-centered instruction is when the planning, teaching, and assessment revolve around the needs and abilities of the students” (2008). This is quite the opposite from what you have just read. “Regardless of variations in developmental levels, all children are exposed to the same content in the same time period and the teacher’s role is to facilitate growth by utilizing the interests and unique needs of students as a guide for meaningful instruction” (Teacher Vision). According to Becky A. Smerdon and David T. Burkam, “students develop analytic skills that can be applied to other problems and situations, rather than accept their teachers’ explanation” (1999). This technique gives the students the chance to use their abilities and experiences to solve problems and find new ways of learning. One example of this would be if a math teacher lets his or her students work in groups to solve different problems or let students create their own test. With student-centered learning, students and teachers are committed to working together and finding the best achievable way of learning.

1. Progressivism in the Classroom

“Progressivists build the curriculum around the experiences, interests, and abilities of students, and encourage students to work together cooperatively” (Sadker and Zittleman). The progressivist teacher would use games like Monopoly or Jeopardy to illustrate important points. Unlike Perennialists, Progressivists do not believe in teaching “Great Books,” but use “computer simulations, field trips, and interactive websites on the Internet to offer realistic learning challenges for students, and build on students’ multiple intelligences” (Sadker and Zittleman, 2007). Many props are used to expand the students’ abilities and to make them think a little differently. Instead of just lecturing to students, teachers try to find more interesting ways to communicate important learning techniques and this “affords students opportunities to explore ideas and construct knowledge based on their own observations and experiences” (Smerdon and Burkam, 1999). Teachers ultimately serve as their students’ guide and they want their students to use problem-solving strategies they have learned in class to help manage the challenges of life.

2. Social Reconstructionism in the Classroom

“Social Reconstructionism encourages schools, teachers, and students to focus their studies and energies on alleviating pervasive inequities, and as the name implies, reconstruct into a new and more just social order” (Sadker and Zittleman, 2007). Social reform is the key to this type of philosophy and social challenges and problems help guide teachers with their message. A social reconstructionist teacher wants to not only inform their students, but rouse emotions and point out the inequalities that surround them and the world (Sadker and Zittleman, 2007). The teacher engages the students to discuss and address problems such as poverty, homelessness, violence and many more issues that create disparity. The teacher’s role is to explore social problems, suggest alternate perspectives, and assist students’ examinations of these problems (Sadker and Zittleman, 2007). For examples in the classroom, “one group of students might analyze news coverage of racial and ethnic groups of a community or students might arrest and trial records in order to determine the role race plays in differential application of the law” (Sadker and Zittleman, 2007). The main focus of this philosophy is to help students find ways to improve society. The teacher wants the student to value society and realize that there is unfairness in the world and it is important to be aware and act as advocates for those who are being judged.

3. Existentialism in the Classroom

Existentialism is another student-centered philosophy. “Existentialism places the highest degree of importance on student perceptions, decisions, and actions” and individuals are responsible for determining for themselves what is true or false, right or wrong, beautiful or ugly (Sadker and Zittleman, 2007). To sum it up, students make choices and then take the time to evaluate those choices. “The teacher’s role is to help students define their own essence by exposing them to various paths they may take in life and by creating an environment in which they can freely choose their way” (Sadker and Zittleman, 2007). This philosophy means that students think for themselves and are aware of responsibilities assigned to them. Existentialism philosophies say no to tradition and focuses on the students’ unique talents. The teacher views each student as an individual and students learn how to achieve their full potential by trying new concepts.

Conclusion

There are many philosophies that come along with teacher and student-centered teaching. Which one is the best? It depends on the content being taught. Research indicates that teachers' personal and professional characteristics are related to how they teach (Smerdon and Berkam, 1999). The way a teacher feels comfortable with the subject matter may influence him or her on how the subject will be taught. The most important goal is to teach the students and help them prepare for life after school. Both teacher-centered and student-centered philosophies can achieve that for the student.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Becoming a Teacher

4.1: Becoming a Teacher in California

4.2: Building a Resume

4.3: Professional Organizations (Joining a Larger Community)

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4.1: Becoming a Teacher in California

To teach in California's public schools, from Transitional Kindergarten through High School, you need a teaching credential. Most teachers, after completing their Bachelor's degree, enter a credential program and after a combination of coursework and student teaching, they are issued a **preliminary credential**. After working on the job for two years with additional training and mentorship, they earn a **clear credential**.

In California, the [Commission on Teacher Credentialing](#) (CTC) is the agency that holds the regulations and processes for how to become a credentialed teacher. There have been many changes in the qualification process for teachers in California in recent years so it is always good to check the CTC website to make sure you have the most up-to-date information.

What kind of credential should you get?

There are a variety of credentials offered in California. Which one you get depends on the grade level of the students you want to teach. There are three basic credentials that most teachers hold:

- Multi-subject: this is for elementary school teachers;
- Single-subject: generally for middle and high school teachers who teach one subject;
- Education specialist: for special education teachers.



There is a new credential that is being developed for early childhood, pending final approval by the CTC and the state office of Administrative Law:

- PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Credential: this will authorize teachers in preschool through grade 3 (including Transitional Kindergarten).

Requirements

The basic requirements for a preliminary credential include:

- A bachelor's degree. This can be in any subject, though for those planning to become a teacher the following are recommended:
 - For Multi-subject credential: Liberal studies BA
 - For single-subject credential: A degree in the subject you wish to teach
 - For PK-3: Child or human development, or at least 24 units in child development or early childhood education
- Completion of an accredited teacher preparation program.
- Completion of 600 hours of student teaching.
- Fingerprinting and a background check.
- Satisfy the Basic Skills requirement, either by passing the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST), other qualifying tests or through coursework.
- Prove Subject Matter competency, either through an exam (CSET), coursework or degree completion.
- For Multi-Subject Candidates, pass Reading Instruction Competence Assessment ([RICA](#))
- Completed a course or passed a test on the provisions and principles of the U.S. Constitution. (This is often completed as part of a bachelor's degree. Candidates who earned a degree in another country would probably need to take this course.)
- Earned a recommendation from their teacher preparation program.

Basic Skills requirement

In order to teach, you must show that you have basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Recently, legislation has expanded the list of ways to fulfill this requirement. For complete information go to the [CTC website](#) but here is a summary of some of the ways to meet this requirement:

- Pass the CBEST
- Pass the California SET: Multiple Subjects plus Writing Skills Examination.
- Pass the CSU Early Assessment Program or the CSU Placement examinations.
- Earn a qualifying score on SAT, ACT test or College Board Advanced Placement Examinations.
- Pass a basic skills test from another state.
- Submit a transcript that shows a grade of B or better in one course in critical thinking, literature, philosophy, reading, rhetoric or textual analysis to show reading proficiency; a course in composition, English, rhetoric, written communication or writing to demonstrate writing proficiency; and a course in algebra, mathematics, quantitative reasoning or statistics to show math proficiency;
- Complete a combination of courses and exams to meet the requirement.

Subject-Matter Competency

You have to demonstrate a proficiency in the subject you are going to teach. Legislation has also expanded the ways this requirement can be met and they are outlined below. Again, see the [CTC website](#) for complete information.

- Completion of a bachelor's (or higher) degree that aligns with what you want to teach:
 - For Single-Subject candidates, a degree in the subject you want to teach for which the CTC issues a credential;
 - For Multi-Subject candidates, a degree in Liberal Studies;
 - For Education Specialist (special education) either a degree in a subject for which the CTC issues a credential or a Liberal Studies degree;
 - For the new PK-3 ECE Specialist, a degree in Child Development or Early Childhood education or at least 24 units in those subjects (though these regulations are still being finalized and are subject to change);
- Completion of a CTC-approved degree program at a university;
- Passing the appropriate sections of the California Subject Examination for Teachers (CSET);
- Combination of CSET and coursework.

Some of this may be confusing, particularly in the area of the Single-Subject credential (Does a BA in Kinesiology qualify for the credential in PE?) Credential programs will make the determination of whether a degree qualifies, so if you are thinking of getting a credential, you should contact the credential program you are interested in to find out if your degree qualifies to meet this requirement.

Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA)

Concerns about literacy and low reading test scores have made it critical that multiple-subject credential holders, education specialists and ECE specialists know how to effectively teach reading. The current RICA is expected to be eliminated in 2025 when it will be incorporated into the [Teacher Performance Assessment](#), which requires teachers to demonstrate their ability to teach.

Teaching Performance Assessment

Before earning a preliminary credential, candidates are required to complete a [performance assessment](#) that demonstrates how well they assess students, design instruction, organize subject matter and perform other skills in the classroom with students. The three assessment models — the California Teaching Performance Assessment, edTPA and Fresno Assessment of Student Teachers — require that teachers make a video of themselves teaching at the school where they work. Candidates are assessed according to the six domains of the Teacher Performance Expectations.

Special Education Credentials

If you want the Education Specialist (Special Education) credential, you have to meet all the requirements for the other credentials, and receive instruction in one of four areas of concentration: mild to moderate support needs; extensive support needs; deaf and hard of hearing, visual impairments; and early childhood special education.

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4.2: Building a Resume

Building a resume is an important task as you join any professional community, teaching or otherwise. A resume is a quick and professional introduction to you and your skills. It allows potential employers and collaborators get to know you. A resume should tell a good story. A *teaching* resume should tell a good story about your professional education and experiences that shape your stance as a qualified educator. It is important to begin shaping your professional teaching resume early in your teacher preparation program. You may then continue adding to and revising the resume as you gain valuable professional experiences by completing and documenting field experience opportunities in the program.

Discussion Questions

- What are the conventions of a teaching resume?
- In what ways do resumes tell a story?
- What makes an educational resume different than other professions?

Sample Resume

BEA A. TEACHER

Local Street Address,

City, State Zip

Permanent Street Address, City, State Zip phone
number • email

OBJECTIVE

To obtain a teaching position at the elementary level in the Oneonta City School District

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Early Childhood/Childhood Education (B-6), Concentration in Biology Month Year

State University of New York (SUNY), College at Oneonta, Oneonta, NY NCATE Accredited

Advanced Regents Diploma Month Year

Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Senior High School, Burnt Hills, NY

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Teacher, School Name, City, State Month Year – Month Year

- Work with 25 students, K-12, and all ability levels
- Instruction in reading, writing, math, and study skills
- Effectively manage average classroom of 20 students
- Met with parents regarding student classroom behavior

Student Teacher – Kindergarten, School Name, City, State Month Year – Month Year

- Used centers for math, science, social studies, health, and writing
- Implemented a positive discipline plan and phonics instruction with small groups
- Developed thematic unit on plants/gardening around major instructional goals

Student Teacher – Fourth Grade, School Name, City, State Month Year – Month Year

- Created and implemented literature units on density
- Developed and taught writing unit on “why” stories
- Used teacher’s manuals as guideline for teaching math and science
- Modified lesson plans to meet students’ needs required for 504/IEP plans
- Adapted units for time, money, geometry, and weather

Program Assistant, School/Organization Name, City, State Month Year – Month Year

- After school program sponsored by XYZ Central School
- Supervised and managed groups of 15-20 children grades K-5

FIELD EXPERIENCE

Observation/Participation – 200 Hours Year – Year

- Kindergarten Participation, Unadilla Valley Central School, New Berlin, NY
- Pre-Kindergarten, Head Start/Early Head Start Day Care, Oneonta, NY
- Fourth Grade, Commack Road Elementary School, Islip, NY
- First Grade, Wing Elementary School, Islip, NY

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Support Staff, Company Name, City, State Month Year – Month Year

- Various clerical responsibilities, including developed proficiency in all Microsoft Office products

Sales Clerk, Department Store, City, State Month Year – Month Year

- Provided exceptional customer service to approximately 40 individuals each day
- Utilized creativity to design two store displays each month
- Responsible for additional duties in manager’s absence

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

St. Vincent Elementary School, St. Vincent, NY Month Year – Month Year

- Coordinated after school program for 25 children, ages 5 to 8
- Maintained a safe and conducive learning environment

ACTIVITIES

Leadership Institute, SUNY Oneonta, Oneonta, NY Month Year – Month Year

Elementary Education Club, SUNY Oneonta, Oneonta, NY Month Year – Month Year

Professional Memberships

Professional Education Council, SUNY Oneonta, Oneonta, NY Month Year – Month Year

Association for Teachers, SUNY Oneonta, Oneonta, NY Month Year – Month Year

Skills

Foreign Language: Spanish Fluency

Computer Programs: MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access Classroom Technology: ELMO, SmartBoard

MM 08/17

Figure 1. Sample Resume Adapted from Template (All Business Templates, 2017)

Many resources exist on the campus of SUNY Oneonta to assist you in building your resume. The Career Development Center (2019) is available to provide guidance concerning the necessary components and steps for building your resume.

The document is provided by the Career Development Center, specifically for students who are beginning to build their professional resume.

10 Steps to Building A Solid Resume

Students often ask: what should I be doing now to prepare to write my resume when the time comes? Here are some steps that you can take today to make sure that yours will be a resume that will gain the attention of potential future employers:

1. **Establish solid relationships with professors and employers.** Don't be afraid to talk to your professors. They can provide a wealth of information and assistance as you determine your career path. You can also learn a great deal from work supervisors, even in part-time and summer jobs. Some day you will be asking these people to write or give a verbal reference for you; the better they know you, the more qualified they will feel to speak about your skills and abilities.
2. **Set career goals.** As soon as you are ready to do so, it is better to start off in a direction, even if you may need to alter that direction later on. Do some research— talk to professors, advisors, career counselors, professionals in fields of interest, etc.— and then weigh the information you have collected. The suggestions in the remainder of this article will help you as you evaluate your plans and goals.
3. **Join clubs and participate in activities related to your career goals.** There are many clubs and organizations on your campus; some relate to academic majors, others to interest areas. Participating in any of these groups can help you to gain insight into a particular field or investigate your interests and skills. Working with fellow students, faculty advisors, and others you encounter can also provide extremely valuable experience in building teamwork and communication skills, both of which are vital to almost any career you may pursue.
4. **Be selective about part-time and summer employment.** While any job can provide valuable experience, employers are often looking for someone who can demonstrate as many of the necessary skills as possible for their available position. The more relevant experience you have, the better prepared you are for a position in your chosen field. You can also use part-time and summer jobs to “test drive” a career choice you are considering.
5. **Volunteer with an organization or agency where you can gain skills related to your career goals.** Volunteering is another a great way to meet people, gain skills, and find out if a certain career is really a good “fit” for you. There are many wonderful opportunities for volunteering in most communities; showing that you had the initiative to take advantage of this type of experience can be very impressive to future employers. This step is especially important for those students who are limited in their choices of summer and part-time jobs.
6. **Do an internship.** What better way to familiarize yourself with the inner workings of a prospective career field than to do an internship with a company or organization in that field? For many internships, academic credit is obtained through the student's major department. Contact your academic advisor for more information and, if encouraged to locate your own internship, you can contact your college career center for further assistance.
7. **Get good grades.** In almost any career you can imagine, employers are looking for the best and brightest graduates to fill their company's openings. Whether you plan to be a teacher, an accountant, a stockbroker, or a psychologist, the better you have performed in your past “job” (as a student), the better your prospective employers can expect you to perform for them. And if you plan to attend graduate school, a high GPA may be an entrance requirement.
8. **Determine skills and abilities needed to succeed in your career and take every possible opportunity to strengthen them.** Flexibility? Communication? Computer literacy? Initiative? What are the skills you will need to succeed on the job? Look at job descriptions, talk to employers, professors, and those currently employed in your field of choice to find out what you will need to do to succeed in your chosen career. Skills do not magically appear your first day on the job (or during your interview!) but take time and effort to build. Start now with your “job” as a student and practice, practice, practice! Be on time for class, initiate questions or discussions, gain computer skills, and make sure that all work you submit shows your best possible effort.
9. **Start planning early.** As you can see from steps #1 – 8 above, planning and preparing for a career is not something that can be done well during the last semester of your senior year. You can write your resume during that time, but if you want some good, quality information to put on it, the earlier you start, the better off you'll be.
10. **Visit your college career center.** For the most current information about almost any career field you can imagine, your college career center is the first place you should check. If you need any assistance at all in determining what your career path might be, staff members will be willing to take the time to answer your questions. And when you are ready to write your resume, many career centers offer workshops, written materials, and/or a resume critiquing service to help ensure that your resume is the best possible tool for marketing your skills to employers.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

Northland University (2019) has created an excellent guide to creating a resume. This guide is geared toward new educators who wish to build their resumes in order to highlight experience during their programs. This guide is available at <https://my.northland.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/07/Education-Majors-Resume-Guide.pdf>

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4.3: Professional Organizations (Joining a Larger Community)

Professional organizations are essential contributors in assisting educators in developing, building, and sustaining teachers' professional learning networks.

✓ Discussion Questions

Consider the following questions:

- What are your professional organization's belief statements or position statements on teaching
- What journals do your organization publish for practicing teachers?
- What resources do your professional organization provide teachers?
- What special events does your organization hold for teachers?

Professional organizations are important to ongoing professional development and growth. Teachers take advantage of conferences, meetings and opportunities to both mentor and be mentored through the professional organizations for their content areas and/or interest areas.

All professional organizations have web sites that assist in understanding their content, the activities and opportunities they provide to their members, and any publications that the organization may publish for its members. In addition, most professional organizations offer a student rate that can assist in building your resume and networking with like-minded educators. A list of national professional organizations adapted from Masters in Education (2019) appear below.

Professional Organizations by Subject/Concentration Area

- National Council of Teachers of English – NCTE www.ncte.org
- National Science Teachers Association – NSTA www.nsta.org
- National Council for the Social Studies – NCSS <http://www.socialstudies.org/>
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages – ACTFL www.actfl.org
- American Association of Family and Consumer Science – AAFCS www.aafcs.org
- International Literacy Association – ILA <http://literacyworldwide.org>
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics – NCTM www.nctm.org/
- Professional Organizations for birth-6th grade practitioners
- Association for Childhood Education International www.acei.org
- Teachers First <https://www.teachersfirst.com/proforgs.cfm>
- Association of American Educators <https://www.aateachers.org/>
- Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), Division for Early Childhood (DEC) <http://www.dec-sped.org/>
- National Association for the Education of Young Children <http://www.naeyc.org/>

In addition to those on the national level, most states will also have professional organizations for various contents and grade levels. These are an excellent way to make contacts with other educators in your state.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Curriculum

5.1: Is it still the "three Rs"?

5.2: Sociological Influences of the Four Curricula

5.3: What are the effects of standardized testing on school curricula?

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5.1: Is it still the "three Rs"?

Krista Olah

Learning Objectives

- recognize and understand the concepts of the original R's
- grasp the basic concepts of writing
- understand the differences between phonics and whole language
- decide if a piece of work is plagiarized

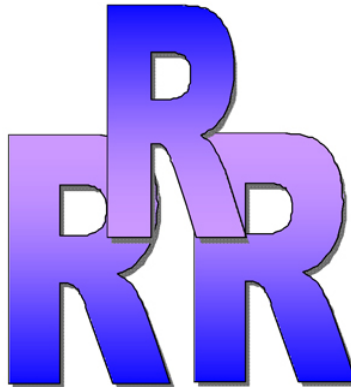


Figure \(\backslash\text{PageIndex}\{1\}\): The three Rs (CC-BY-SA, Kolah001 [Wikimedia](#))

Introduction

Back in the 1800's, Sir William Curtis an alderman later dubbed Lord Mayor of London made a toast to the Board of Education(Sir William) about "reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic"(American Heritage). It is unknown if he pronounced the words inaccurately on purpose due to illiteracy or if he was trying to be ironic. Either way, the phrase was found intriguing and used by others. However, there are more subjects in today's schools, more and different jobs that involve technology and other medias than there was in the 1800's, so it's smart to say that the 'Three R's' have changed or expanded from just reading, writing, and arithmetic. Because of this teaching has changed as a whole, instead of focusing on teaching the original 'Three R's' we are now teaching multiple subjects.

Original Three R's

When Sir William Curtis introduced the 'Three R's', it was from then on assumed that reading, writing, and arithmetic would be the basis of education. One had to master these three subjects before he, and sometimes she, could move on in life and be successful. From there he could go into a profession and learn other subjects such as science, history, literature, etc. In modern times we are taught first how to count, recite the alphabet and recognize it. Afterwards, we expand to applying this knowledge into reading literature, studying history, investigating science, and others. From there we choose different electives to study more in depth leading us to our chosen careers.

Students should be able to absorb the 'Three R's' knowledge and use it. Basically being able to recite, recognize, and write letters' then form them into words. Finally, these words can become sentences, paragraphs, papers. Students also need to know how to count and calculate. From there they can solve mathematical problems that can help with medical, scientific, and technological breakthroughs. However there are certain rules and steps they need to follow in order to do these things properly.

Reading

The ongoing debate on how to teach to read is whether to use phonics, pronouncing the word by each syllable, or whole language, emphasizing the use and recognition of words in everyday context (whole language). The debate is whether to stress technique and mastery, phonics, or meaning and context, whole language (Roy). There are three sides to this, those supporting phonics, those in favor of whole language, and some who believe that reading should involve both ideas. "Research evidence also shows that a balanced approach works better for children learning to read" (Early).

Writing

Writing follows precise rules such as grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

Grammar includes:

- Person, Place or Thing
- Subject, verbs and their agreement
 - Fluffy and Babydoll are my pets.
- Pronouns
 - I, You, He, She, It, We, They
- Adjectives
 - Describe Nouns
 - "sweet apple"; "ugly color"
- Adverbs
 - revise any word except for nouns and pronouns
 - answers how, when, where
 - "swam quickly"

Punctuation includes:

- Periods, Quotation Marks, Question Marks, Exclamation Points
- Colons, Parenthesis
- And many more

Along with the writing rules, there is also a **legal** rule. Plagiarism, the use of one's words or ideas as your own without crediting them, in education betrays trust in the student and teacher, creates liars and dishonest people. Plagiarism is also theft, if caught you could face charges from failing the paper being arrested, having a record, and paying a fine. However, some may not realize that they are plagiarizing. Here are some tips on how to avoid it, always give credit when (Overview):

- another person's ideas, opinions, or theories are used
- facts, statistics, graphics, drawings, music, etc., is used and did not come from the government
- quoting
- paraphrasing
- giving a fact that is not common knowledge

Arithmetic

Math is important because we use it in everyday routines, such as (Importance):

- Problem solving
- Budgeting money
- Time management
- Calculating tips and tax
- Memorizing phone numbers and locker combinations
- Estimating distances or weight



Figure \(\backslash\text{PageIndex}\{2\}\): A clock icon (BSD, Vadim Plessky, [Wikimedia](#))

Fourth R and Beyond

In today's classrooms reading, writing, and arithmetic are still the basis for learning everyday subjects such as math, literature, history and science. However, knowledge in the classroom does not stop there but continues on into saving the environment, forming relationships, and expanding the creative side of your brain. If you were to go out into the world today and ask people what they thought the 'Three R's' were you might be told multiple different things such as Relief, Recovery and Reform from the Great Depression; or Revenue, cost Reduction, and Regulations from a businessman (Three Rs). Although, these 'Three R's' do not relate to education another set does and that is reduce, recycle and reuse (Waste Hierarchy).

Reduce, Recycle, Reuse

It may not seem to be a part of education; however, teachers are always trying to teach their students to conserve and be a part of repairing the environment. Some schools, such as Southeastern Elementary in Chesapeake, Virginia, will have each grade level plant at least one tree every year. The students are being taught how to use scissors correctly and are praised when they waste as little paper as necessary. Teachers even come up with art ideas such as using old scraps of paper to form a collage.

Relationship

Teachers today want their students not only to be successful in technology and knowledge, but to be able to go out in the world and form a relationship with friends, family, boss, co-workers, future children, and future husband/wife.

Rhythm

Music is a part of everyday life. People listen to it in their car, at home, in movies, while trying to relax, at concerts, and much more. Music is a stress reliever and helps increase energy. Music cannot be made without rhythm. As a fourth R, Rhythm can also be used to help memorize a poem, or make a story interesting like in the movie "Renaissance Man".

Art

Art, Fine Art, is important because it brings knowledge to your brain, senses, and emotions, basically educating your soul. Art teaches many things such as observing reality, making judgments, understanding the human conditions, expressing values, training the mind, and uniting reason and emotion (Fourth R).

Some educators believe that one or more of the above should be added on to the 'Three R's'.

To Answer the Question

In my opinion, the basics of learning reside in the original "Three R's", however as time goes on we expand our knowledge. Since we are expanding our knowledge there are more lessons being taught. Some of these lessons have SOL's, Standards of Learning tests (state of Virginia) such as a being able to read the amount of liquid in a tube whereas others do not such as Recycle, Reduce and Reuse. Just like in the debate of phonic and whole language, it is the combination of all these things and more that make up education.

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5.2: Sociological Influences of the Four Curricula

There are four different types of curricula that educators have to address in the classroom; these four are the explicit, implicit, null, and extracurricular. The most obvious curriculum in the classroom is the explicit curriculum because that is the curriculum that has been approved by the agency that approves public school curriculum in your state (in California, that is the California Department of Education) as well as by your school district. Curriculum of extracurricular activities also exists for such activities as academic clubs, band and chorus, or sports. The curriculum that is not so obvious is the implicit or “hidden curriculum” and the null curriculum, which is information that students may never be exposed to because they are excluded from the explicit curriculum. Each of these curricula will be explained below with examples to illustrate what each entail.

Different Types of Curriculum

Explicit Curriculum

- The subjects that will be taught, and the knowledge and skills that the school expects successful students to acquire.

Implicit Curriculum

- The lessons that arise from the culture of the school and the behaviors, attitudes, and expectations that characterize that culture.

Null Curriculum

- “The options students are not afforded; the concepts and skills that are not a part of their intellectual repertoire” (Eisner, 1994, pp. 106-107).

Extracurricular Experiences

- All of the schools-sponsored programs (athletics, band) that are intended to supplement the academic aspect of the school experience.

Explicit

Explicit instruction can be described as being a curriculum that has been intentionally designed, field tested by educators, and disseminated publicly, often with resources that will help teachers facilitate classroom instruction.

In California, [Curriculum Frameworks](#) guide the development of criteria. From the California Department of Education website:

Curriculum frameworks provide guidance for implementing the content standards adopted by the [State Board of Education](#) (SBE). Frameworks are developed by the [Instructional Quality Commission](#), formerly known as the Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission, which also reviews and recommends textbooks and other instructional materials to be adopted by the SBE.

Schools in California, other states and abroad may review and use the California State Board of Education-adopted Content Standards and Curriculum Frameworks in developing their own curricula.

The following is an excerpt from the [Executive Summary English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools](#), Kindergarten-Grade 12. It gives an indication of how a curriculum framework guides instruction:

Grade Five Students approach text with greater purpose and critical stances. They voice their views in light of multiple perspectives and textual evidence. They begin to realize that they can interact with a text in ways that allow them to more deeply understand the text’s meaning and also question its premises. Students use several sources when conducting research projects. Their language and knowledge continue to expand as they engage in voluminous reading and participate in rich content instruction. They learn about the varieties of English used in stories, dramas, or poems. They also become skilled at keyboarding, typing a minimum of two pages in a single setting, and use technology and media to learn and to share their ideas. Foundational skills are used effortlessly; reinforcement is provided as necessary to ensure fluency with print.

Implicit

The hidden curriculum are lessons that emerge from the culture of the local school district school and the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs that have defined by the district. Bruner (1960) addressed the need to cultivate an understanding of ideas by including content beyond the explicit curriculum. An example of a hidden curriculum is character education. Character education may address values that are not part of the state-approved curriculum. While character education can be found in the explicit curriculum, the nuances of the character education program may be informed by many factors present in the local school district including the school community’s cultural expectations, values, and perspectives. A character education program may also include specific

curricular topics which may contain varying ideological and/or cultural messages. Teaching strategies that connect the school to the community like problem-based learning or applied learning, can also be part of the implicit curriculum.

Null

Eisner (1985) defined null curriculum as information that schools do not teach:

... the options students are not afforded, the perspectives they may never know about, much less be able to use, the concepts and skills that are not part of their intellectual repertoire (Eisner, 1985, p. 107).

There are several examples of null curriculum that can be identified in content areas. For example, in social studies, the teacher may give a general overview of the history of science while covering the scientific revolution. However, this information is excluded from the formal curriculum. Another example would be the exclusion of Darwin's theory of evolution from the official biology curriculum. Null content may represent specific facts omitted in a particular unit of study. An example of this would be a social studies unit focusing on the New Deal may not reference the fact that the New Deal failed to resolve the problem of unemployment.

Extra

Extra-curricular curriculum includes school-sponsored opportunities that fall outside of academic requirements prescribed on the local and state levels. Examples of extra-curricular activities include participation in sports, music, student governance, yearbook, school newspaper, and academic clubs. Extracurricular participation is a strategy to promote school connectedness (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). Extracurricular activities are often associated with many positive outcomes such as higher academic achievement and decreased school dropout (Farb & Matjasko, 2012).

According to the United States National Center for Education Statistics (2012), sports are the most common type of extracurricular activity among secondary school students, with 44% of high school seniors reporting participation in some type of sport. Additionally, 21% of students participate in music activities, as well as clubs, such as academic (21%), hobby (12%), and vocational clubs (16%).

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5.3: What are the effects of standardized testing on school curricula?

by Angela Marcotte

Learning Objectives

- distinguish between benefits and downfalls of standardized testing
- know how standardized tests are utilized
- determine who is being held accountable by standardized testing

Introduction

Testing students has been around since the time of Socrates. For instance, in order to better guide a student in his or her learning, the teacher would ask students questions to measure what has been absorbed from his teachings. Since the first World War, standardized tests have been used to "sort, track and stratify individuals and groups... for employment, higher education and the professions." (Scherer, 2005). More recently, as an admission requirement for colleges and universities, the SAT and ACT standardized tests are claimed to be useful tools in determining college readiness (Giuliano, 2006, 80).

Within the past decade, state and national governments have made annual administration of standardized testing mandatory. The original goal of standardized testing was to help administrators and government officials determine if progress was being made in the education of our youth.

The View of the Supporters

Some believe there are pros to standardized testing. Because many standardized tests consist of true-false or multiple choice questions, the scoring can be done expediently and rather inexpensively. Many of the exams given to students today are scored by computers rather than by people (K12 Academics). Scantron sheets are fed into a machine and read, grading papers in a reasonable time period. Computers can grade multiple tests with minimal errors. It would likely take a teacher longer to grade exams by hand, with an opportunity for errors and bias. Rather than measuring the students' mastery of the subject, a teacher may take into account his or her personal feelings of the student when grading an essay or free writing. Another example would be human error. If the person grading the exam is distracted, he or she may mark something incorrectly.

Many supporters believe standardized assessments are the best way to guarantee high principles of learning and accountability. It is believed that the tests convey what is expected of students and education professionals. Exams measure levels of progress and where it is being made. The reasoning behind accountability is that educators should be making progress and the improvements should be apparent in the results of the students' exams (Giuliano, 2006).

The View of the Opposition

Opponents to standardized testing feel that a single test is not an accurate assessment of performance. Some argue that because of the pressure put on accountability testing, children are denied access to a more challenging, diverse curriculum. Others believe that rather than using a more sophisticated thought process, which may call for more of an explanation, students are given test questions that are based on rote memorization. While this form of testing will evaluate knowledge, it does not evaluate how and why the students came to their conclusion. (Popham, 2004).

According to Alfie Kohn, author of *The Case Against Standardized Testing*, the content and format of instruction are affected by standardized testing in that what is tested becomes the focus or curriculum for the school year. Furthermore, Kohn explains that many people feel that standardized testing has caused a "dumbing" down on the American education system (Kohn, 2000, p29).

Due to the pressure put on teachers for their students to succeed, many educators do not spend time on curriculum that is not going to be covered on the standardized tests. A teacher may instead fixate on the test rather than focusing on the meaningful learning of the tested material. If the students do poorly on the exams, it affects the amount of school funding provided by the government, in addition to affecting the employment of many qualified teachers. (Popham, 2004, p. 167-168)

 Note

"If instruction focuses on the test, students have few opportunities to display the attributes of higher-order thinking such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and creativity, which are needed for success in school, college and life." (Neill, 2006).

 Note

"While state accountability tests are important, they do not give a full picture of student learning... there are usually some important educational goals that aren't easily assessed in a large-scale, standardized way" (Jay McTighe, in an interview by Judith Richardson, 2009).

In Summary

There are many conflicting views regarding the validity and necessity of standardized testing. While there is a serious need to measure the progress and capabilities of a school, its teachers, and its students, there are more opportunities available than one year-end test.

Many educators have mixed feelings regarding standardized assessments. They believe that all schools, teachers, and students must be evaluated to ensure that proper instruction and an understanding of material is being put forth. Many object to the final judgment implied by these tests, and the importance that parents and communities give to them. There are many options for evaluation and many different factors that affect the way students test, and many different ways to look at the effectiveness of teachers and schools.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Lesson Planning

6.1: Instructional Strategies

6.2: Creating Objectives

6.3: How can we teach to meet all students' needs?

6.4: Assessment and Evaluation

6.5: Formative and Summative Assessment

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6.1: Instructional Strategies

When we start talking about lesson planning, in addition to discussing the "what" of teaching (curriculum) we have to think about the "how" -- instructional methods. This page describes several kinds of instructional strategies. Which ones do you think are most effective? What do you prefer to experience as a student?

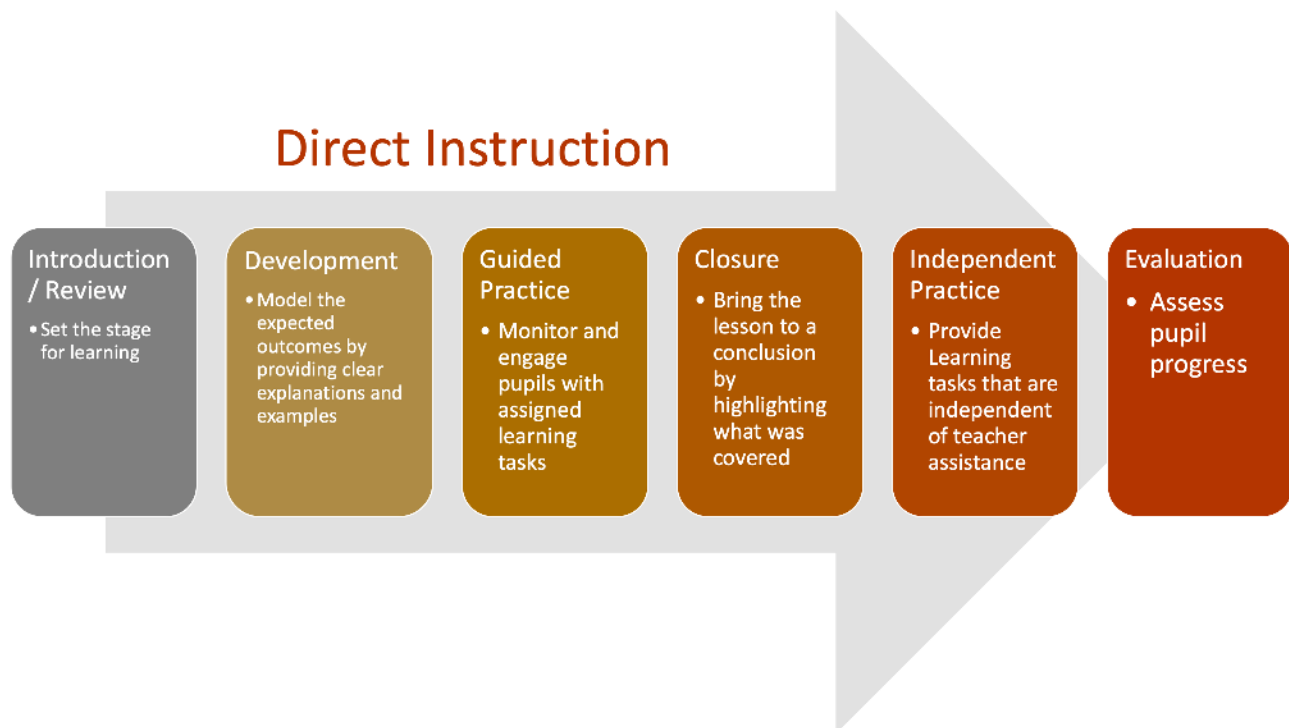
Direct Instruction

In general usage, the term direct instruction refers to (1) instructional approaches that are structured, sequenced, and led by teachers, and/or (2) the presentation of academic content to students by teachers, such as in a lecture or demonstration. In other words, teachers are "directing" the instructional process or instruction is being "directed" at students.

The basic techniques of direct instruction not only extend beyond lecturing, presenting, or demonstrating, but many are considered to be foundational to effective teaching. For example:

- Establishing learning objectives for lessons, activities, and projects, and then making sure that students understand the goals.
- Purposefully organizing and sequencing a series of lessons, projects, and assignments that move students toward understanding and the achievement of specific academic goals.
- Reviewing instructions for an activity or modeling a process—such as a scientific experiment—so that students know what they are expected to do.
- Providing students with clear explanations, descriptions, and illustrations of the knowledge and skills being taught.
- Asking questions to make sure of student understanding after a lesson.

As seen in Figure Two, teachers rarely use either direct instruction or some other teaching approach—in practice, diverse strategies are frequently blended together. For these reasons, negative perceptions of direct instruction likely result more from a widespread overreliance on the approach, and from the tendency to view it as an either/or option, rather than from its inherent value to the instructional process (Carnine, Silbert, Kameenui, & Tarver, 1997).



Drill and Practice



The drill and practice instructional strategy refers to small tasks, such as the memorization of spelling and vocabulary words, or the practicing of the multiplication tables repeatedly. As students, drill and practice instruction was probably a familiar memory throughout your schooling. It is used primarily for students to master fundamental materials through repetition. By today's educational standards, drill and practice is considered outdated and often deemed ineffective as an instructional strategy. According to Jill Sunday Bartoli, "Having to spend long periods of time on repetitive tasks is a sign that learning is not taking place — that this is not a productive learning situation." (Bartoli, 1989, p. 292)

Lecture



Megan Schreder talks to her fifth-grade classroom.

Lecture is a convenient instructional strategy. Material can be delivered efficiently since there are no interruptions from students. Lecture still allows the teacher to relate new material to other topics in the course, define and explain key terms, and relate material to students' interests.

Lecture is an instructional strategy that places students in a passive role. Essentially the lecturer is the expert and the students are having knowledge poured into their brains. The material and presentation are solely the intellectual product of the teacher. Students sit silently at desks that face the lecturer.

Often lecture topics are not remembered well because retrieval pathways to memory have not been established by students actively participating in the instruction. Students have not taken the presented material and created their own interpreted meaning. The lecturer usually does not know if students understand the topic because there is no feedback from students (Lujan, H. & DiCarlo, S, 2006).

Question and Answer



Megan Schreder asks her students questions during a Q&A session with her class.

The technique of question and answer allows the application of knowledge by students and offers a more reflective response. By asking questions, teachers are inviting brief responses from students, which incorporate their prior knowledge and some interpretation of that knowledge. This allows indications of whether students were listening and understand the material being presented. Questions serve both to motivate students to listen and to assess how much and how well they know the material.

Incorporating this instructional approach allows both the teacher to ask students questions and students to ask the teacher questions, fostering a better understanding of the lesson (Paul & Elder, 2007).

Discussion

In this instructional strategy, the role of the teacher shifts to leading an exchange of ideas about a specific topic. The teacher is no longer the sole provider of the content as students gain a voice for their ideas and the research they have conducted. At times, the teacher may assign students individual concepts that they have to speak about during the discussion. Some control of what course the discussion takes devolves to students. All of the content planned for the lesson might not be discussed. In fact, after reflecting on the day's discussion a teacher might have to begin the next day's discussion on important content that had been overlooked or squeezed out of the lesson.

Teachers need to develop strategies so that the voices of all students are heard. In addition, for effective class discussions students need to listen to what their classmates are saying so the points made during the dialogue allow students to make sense of the new ideas. As the discussion takes place, time should be taken for the teacher or better yet, a student to summarize the important points (Brookfield & Preskill, 2012).

Mental modeling

When a person perceives how something works in the real world and then formalizes that thought process a mental model is created. Mental modeling is a student-centered pedagogical strategy that helps students to solve problems or make decisions. For example, a mathematics teacher verbally modeling the thought process she is using while solving a problem in front of the class is using mental modeling. When teachers model the process of thinking or doing, the strategy of mental modeling becomes clearer to students. Students may then explain their own mental models to learn the strategy and improve their use of it.

Mental modeling often starts with a question, for example: why does lake effect snow occur? "What if" questions are also good starting points, for example: What if gravity ceased entirely? Strategies used by teachers and students engaged in mental modeling include observation, asking questions, as well as location and analysis of information. The level of cognitive load in mental modeling is high making it a strategy that should be employed often.

Teachers are encouraged to help students select the right mental model and help students select relevant information to develop their model. Teachers should create or find problems, case studies, lab activities, and projects at the appropriate grade level for their students. For students to have success they need to possess the appropriate background knowledge and supports to develop an accurate mental model. Often students encounter more success when they focus on the process instead of the outcome (Hestenes, D, 2010).

Inquiry



When students investigate to answer a question about a particular topic, they are using inquiry or inquiry-based learning. When teachers use inquiry-based learning, students or teachers may identify questions, however in any case questions posed should be open ended. Inquiry learning may be experienced individually; but it is beneficial when students work with other students. Differing perspectives and varied resources are important to inquiry-based projects.

Providing responses to questions such as "Why is the sky blue?" demands high-order thinking skills from both the student and the teacher. Allowing students to explore a broad topic, and to choose questions in which they are invested creates the best environment for successful inquiry-based projects. Students benefit from learning and negotiating through group investigation in order to answer a question.

Teachers who wish to engage in inquiry-based learning set the stage for this process in three ways:

1. Assess students to determine their knowledge of the topic, and lay groundwork when that knowledge does not exist.

2. Match the scope of the inquiry question to the learning level of students.
3. Provide resources and/or provide internet search strategies for locating credible resources that will inform the inquiry.

The teacher's role in inquiry-based learning is one of mentor and advisor. Students may struggle through problems; however, if the struggle occurs at a level that students may be successful, this struggle is worthwhile. The teacher's most difficult role, in this case, is to resist answering questions that would inform the inquiry and therefore negate the process for the student!

Inquiry based learning requires time and patience; however this teaching strategy lays groundwork for real-world learning in which students will engage throughout their lives (Sharples, Collins, Feißt, Gaved, Mulholland, Paxton, & Wright, 2011).

Discovery Learning

"Discovery learning is a type of learning where learners construct their own knowledge by experimenting with a domain and inferring rules from the results of these experiments" (Van Joolingen, 2000, p.385).

In today's educational realm, discovery learning is also called problem-based learning or experiential learning. Students participate through a hands-on approach and learning is interactive. Through discovery learning students are encouraged to explore with little guidance from the instructor. Discovery learning is based on the beliefs of Piaget (Ültanır, 2012), in which students are provided with a topic, and from that point students choose how they are going to learn, discover new information, synthesize the information and do so without correction from the teacher. The teacher does feed back to the student, as do the other members of the class, once the project is complete.

It is important that teachers create specific goals and guide students through discovery learning using pre-determined structures, for example, groupwork, fieldwork, or interaction with others. Unless this is the case, students may have too much freedom resulting in a lack of rigor within the method. However, Mayer (2004) states, "In many ways, guided discovery appears to offer the best method for promoting constructivist learning. The challenge of teaching by guided discovery is to know how much and what kind of guidance to provide and to know how to specify the desired outcome of learning." (p.14)

Group work

In group work, students are assigned one or more partners to collaborate with on ideas in a strategy like think-pair-share or problem solving. Before students begin working, the teacher explains the objectives, expectations, and details of the activity or project. This explanation is meant to ensure all group members understand the goal of the group. As the group works together it is expected that all members teach and learn from each other. At the end of the group activity the teacher may debrief with groups or may provide a grade on a group artifact.

Students often need to be oriented on how to work effectively with their peers. Listening to group members' ideas and not attaching self-worth to proposed ideas go a long way toward reaching the goals of the activity. Compromise is a skill that requires practice to be effective. Alignment of group activities with the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Benchmarks (New York State, 2018) provides a well-defined way to identify and advance the skills students need to be effective group members.

When engaging students in groupwork, teachers should circulate to monitor the groups' progress toward accomplishing the objectives of the lesson. Asking groups what they are discussing and why that is important to the topic assists in reinforcing the idea that the group activity is educational. As teachers see group behavior that is not on-task, the teacher should not hesitate to address this with the group. This reinforces to all groups that students are individually accountable for their behavior in the group. They are not "lost in a crowd". (Blatchford, Kutnick, Baines, & Galton, 2003).

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6.2: Creating Objectives

A learning objective is a short statement of the goals and objectives that students should know or be able to put into practice after a lesson.

? Key Points

- Teacher's curriculum guides often provide overarching objectives for a unit of study in your content area's standards. Teachers must use the standards for their content area to individual teacher to formulate learning objectives for daily lesson plans. (To view the content area standards for California, visit the [CDE website](#).)
- Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1956) is a framework that categorizes different educational goals. Each level of the Taxonomy has a different level of complexity. The lowest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy require lower order thinking skills (ex. remembering and understanding) and the categories on the higher level of the Taxonomy require higher-order thinking skills (analyzing, evaluating and creating).

Term

Learning Objective

- Any fact, technique or other outcome that a student is expected to achieve at the end of a specific course of instruction

A learning objective is a short statement of the goals and objectives that students should know or be able to put into practice after a lesson. Focusing on what students should know is frequently called the “cognitive” approach; focusing on what students should be able to do is known as the “behavioral” approach. While most teachers are, by temperament, drawn to one of the two approaches, in practice, most teachers often combine the two, perhaps without knowing it.

Large-scale learning objectives will be articulated in a teacher's curriculum guide, but it is up to each individual teacher to formulate learning objectives for individual lesson plans. Teachers must create lesson plans that include objectives that are:

1. Measurable
2. Observable
3. Content-based
4. Student-centered
5. Aligned to the state standards

California provides teachers with standards for each content area. The teacher must create objectives that align with the standards. Teachers need to make sure that they can measure if the students have met the objectives of the lesson. This can be achieved by giving [formative and summative assessments](#). If students do not meet the objective of the lesson, a teacher needs to be aware and try to remediate to ensure that students can meet the objectives with support from the teacher or a fellow student. In order to be able to measure objectives teachers have to be able to observe the student meeting the objective. For example, I caution pre-service teachers to not use “know” or “understand” in their objectives. These verbs are not concrete and they hard to measure.

It is important to have 2-3 objectives in a lesson plan. This allows the teacher to scaffold instruction (Wood, Bruner, and Ross, 1976). Teachers have to consider that students have varying levels of readiness to complete a certain task. If teachers offer support to students during the learning process, they may be able to complete complex tasks. Teachers can use multiple levels of Bloom's Taxonomy to create objectives that start with tasks that require lower order thinking skills, and moving to more complex tasks that require higher order thinking instruction. If there are multiple objectives, a teacher can measure what objective the students did not meet, and just address that part of the lesson.

✓ Example Objectives

Knowledge (1):

The student will be able to list the parts of a fish with 85% accuracy

The student will be able to recognize nouns in a sentence with 85% accuracy.

Comprehension (2):

The student will be able to paraphrase the results of the survey on the effects of second-hand smoke with 85% accuracy.

The student will be able to summarize Wilson's Fourteen Points with 85% accuracy.

Application (3):

The student will produce argumentative essays on school uniforms with 85% accuracy.

The student will be able create a graph of emissions of greenhouse gases with 85% accuracy.

Analysis (4):

The student will be able to compare and contrast mitosis and meiosis with 85% accuracy.

The student will be able to explain the various ways to solve an equation 85% accuracy.

Evaluation (5):

The student will be able to critique the New Deal policies with 85% accuracy

The student will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of U.S. propaganda during WWII with 85%.

Create (6):

The student will be able to construct a program for addressing flood disaster relief with 85% accuracy.

The student will be able to create an annotated timeline of the Cold War with 85% accuracy.

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6.3: How can we teach to meet all students' needs?

By Honorina Maristela

Learning Objectives

- Define differentiated instruction and understand the use of this approach in the classroom.
- Identify the teacher's role in differentiated instruction.

Introduction

In a traditional classroom setting, the teachers talk while the students listen. Nowadays, traditional settings have completely changed in the field of education. The way the classroom are set-up, the teaching and learning style, the accommodation of individual students and application of small group instruction made the school and teaching challenging both for teachers and students. In addition to these changes, differentiated instruction has been emphasized.

The district and state and federal governments have established our standards and have handed our curriculum down to us. These standards make up goals established for all students. How we reach the goals may require different paths. The core of differentiated instruction is flexibility in content, process, and product based on students' strengths, needs and learning styles. (Levy, 2008 cited in The Clearing House, 2008)

What is Differentiated Instruction?

At the most basic level, differentiating instruction means “shaking up” what goes on in the classroom. Students have multiple options for taking in information, making sense of ideas and expressing what they learn. (Tomlinson, 2001) In other words, differentiated instructing is catering to student's needs and interests so they can acquire learning efficiently..

The State of Virginia encourages the school districts to apply differentiated instruction in the classrooms. In 2004, the Superintendent of Public Instruction conducted a Professional Development to all School Heads, member of Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, Assistant Principals and Lead teachers to participate in the conference entitled “ Differentiated Instruction: Meeting the Needs of All Children” the highlight for this conference included the special needs students and at-risk students.

Why differentiate?

Individual students are different in many ways. The use of differentiated instruction will gives the students the opportunity to meet their needs in an intensive step that will expedite the learning skill of the individual student. We as teachers give the support and the careful planning of the instruction to make sure that the activities will be in the students' instructional level and interest.

Differentiate Why: addresses the teachers' reason for modifying the leaning experience. Teachers believe modification is important for many reasons. Three key reasons include access to learning, motivation to learn and efficiency of learning. Any or all of these three reasons for differentiating instruction can be tied to students readiness, interest, and learning profile. (Tomlinson, 1999)

In differentiated classroom, teachers begin at the level of the students, not the front of a curriculum guide. They accept and build upon the premise that learners differ in important ways. Thus, they also accept and act on the premise that teachers must be ready to engage students in instruction though different learning modalities, by appealing to differing interest and by using varied rates of instruction along with varied degrees of complexity. In differentiated classrooms, teachers ensure that a student competes against himself or herself as he or she grows and develops more than he or she competes against other students. (Tomlinson, 1999)

Though differentiated instruction and activities, students take a greater responsibility and ownership of their own learning, activities that are primarily focused on students' multiple intelligences, higher order thinking, and learning styles. With this in mind, differentiated instruction is an effective tool to implement in the classroom in order to meet students' learning style and strengthen multiple intelligences and encourage them to use high order thinking. (Bailey and Williams-Black, p. 134)

How to Differentiate?

It has been a big question for teachers how to differentiate instruction in the classroom. It is indeed a challenging task to put into use this approach. I myself can relate to this for it took me five years to attain the effectiveness of this approach and I am still

learning until now. The preparation and designed activities should target the individual needs of the students.

Being in an inclusion is a tough job, having four groups of students with individual needs ranging from high, average, low level and special needs students with IEP (Individualized Education Program) and 504 plans. It is a team work of the teacher, special education teacher and the students in carrying out the activities in the classroom.

Use formal and informal assessments in making decision with small group instruction. Most schools are required certain formal assessments such as TPRI(Texas Primary Reading Assessment, DIBLE(Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skill, DRA(Developmental Reading Assessment) and/or QRI(Qualitative Reading Inventory). (Diller, 2007)

These assessments are useful tools for teachers for figuring out how to start with their small groups. Once the teacher determined the level of the individual students she may begin applying the differentiated instruction in the classroom. The teacher can design her own activities that are according to the instructional level of the students. One great example is in reading. Using leveled books that are color coded are useful in targeting the instructional level of the students and work towards it to improve to the fullest. The idea of using the flexible grouping of Debbie Diller is useful for teachers to differentiate. As Diller stated, to create flexible group folders for thinking about small groups as well as in whole group. Once the student show progress he/she can be moved into different group. (Diller, 2007,p. 24)

Flexible groupings were defined by Radencich and McKay (1995) as” grouping that is not static, where members of the group change frequently. This emerged as a practice to address concerns. It acknowledges that all grouping patterns- large groups, small groups, teams and individuals have value because they all offer the reader slightly different experiences with different outcomes. Students may work with a partner, in a small cooperative or teacher-led group, or with the whole class. The basis for this may be students’ interest or needs. (Ford, 2005 cited in Radencich and McKay, 1995)

In planning flexible grouping teachers should consider the strengths and weaknesses of each grouping approach and then put them together to allow the teacher to best meet the needs of the classroom. The groups are formed and dissolved as needs changes to allow for maximum flexibility, avoiding the static nature of the grouping patterns of the past. (Ford, 2005 cited in Radencich and McKay, 1995)

Note

Key Principles of a Differentiated Instruction

- The teacher is clear about what matters in subject matter.
- The teacher understands, appreciates, and builds upon student differences.
- Assessment and instruction are inseparable.
- The teacher adjusts content, process and product in response to student readiness, interest, and learning profile.
- All students participate in respectful work.
- Students and teachers are collaborators in learning.
- Goals of a differentiated classroom are maximum growth and individual success.
- Flexibility is the hallmark of a differentiated classroom.(Tomlinson, 1999)

Teachers Role

Mixed-ability classrooms that offer differentiated instruction make good sense for teachers, as well a student. For many teachers, offering differentiated instruction first requires a paradigm shift. (Tomlinson, 2001)

Teachers who become comfortable with differentiated classroom would probably say their role differs in some significant ways from that of a traditional teacher. When teacher differentiate instruction, they move away from being themselves as keepers and dispensers of knowledge and move toward seeing themselves as organizers of learning opportunities. (Tomlnison, 2001)

Teachers who differentiate instruction focus on their role as coach or mentor(Tomlinson, 2001). We serve as a guide and facilitator for the students in doing their responsibilities in completing their task. We organize the activities for them to discover, explore and share acquired knowledge. ..

 Note

A teacher is a compass that activates the magnets of curiosity, knowledge, and wisdom in the pupils. ~Ever Garrison

Conclusion

When applying differentiated instruction time is required in order for it to work. It is not an overnight activity to see the effectiveness of this approach. It takes time and dedication to help the learners be successful.

For most teachers, the classroom is the place where we spend our career. The classroom is the place where we give the better part of our lifetime trying to make a difference. It is a curiosity of teaching that no two days are the alike. We must remember that we have every opportunity to transform ourselves and our practice, just as we have every opportunity to stagnate, remain much the same teacher we were when we began. (Tomlinson, 1999)

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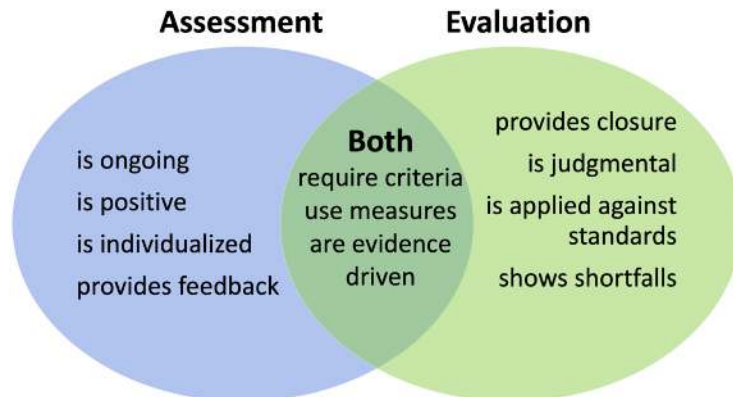
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6.4: Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment, as defined by www.edglossary.org, “refers to the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students.” It is analogous to evaluation, judgment, rating, appraisal, and analysis. (Great Schools Partnership, 2015)

Although the terms assessment and evaluation are often used synonymously, they are in fact distinctive and different. The intent of assessment is to measure effectiveness; evaluation adds a value component to the process. A teacher may assess a student to ascertain how well the individual successfully met the learning target. If, however, the measurement is used to determine program placement, for example with a special education program, honors club, or for Individual Educational Program documentation, the assessment constitutes an evaluation.



Goals of Assessment

Assessment is two-fold in nature. It enables the teacher to gather information and to then determine what the learner knows or does not know and concurrently drives the planning phase. In order to meet the needs of all learners, the teacher may need to differentiate the instruction.

The teacher is then responsible for providing positive feedback in a timely manner to the student. This feedback should include specifically whether the student met the learning target, specifically what needs to be improved upon, and who and how these goals will be met.

The intent of assessment has traditionally been to determine what the learner has learned. Today, the emphasis is on authentic assessment. While the former typically employed recall methods, the latter encourages learners to demonstrate greater comprehension. (Wiggins, 1990)

7 Keys to Effective Feedback

Characteristics	Outcome
1) Goal-referenced	Learner knows whether they are on track towards a goal or need to change course.
2) Tangible & transparent	Learners can understand exactly how your feedback relates to the task at hand.
3) Actionable	Learners know specifically what actions to take to move towards their goal
4) User-friendly	Learner finds the feedback appropriate to his/her cognitive level.
5) Timely	Learner receives feedback while the attempt and effect are still fresh in their mind.
6) Ongoing	Learner has multiple opportunities to learn and improve towards the ultimate goal.

Characteristics	Outcome
7) Consistent	Learner can adjust his/her performance based on stable, accurate, and trust-worthy feedback.

Methods to Assess

Within an academic setting, assessment may include “the process of observing learning; describing, collecting, recording, scoring, and interpreting information about a student’s or one’s own learning <http://www.k12.hi.us/atr/evaluation/glossary.htm>.”

It can occur by observations, interviews, tests, projects or any other information gathering method. Within the early childhood and early primary elementary grades, observations are used frequently to assess learners. Teachers may use a checklist to note areas of proficiency or readiness and may opt to use checkmarks or some other consistent means for record-keeping.



Another form of assessment in the early grades incorporates anecdotal records. These consist of narratives in which the teacher notes behaviors or abilities. Anecdotal records should be factual accounts, with interpretation clearly delineated.

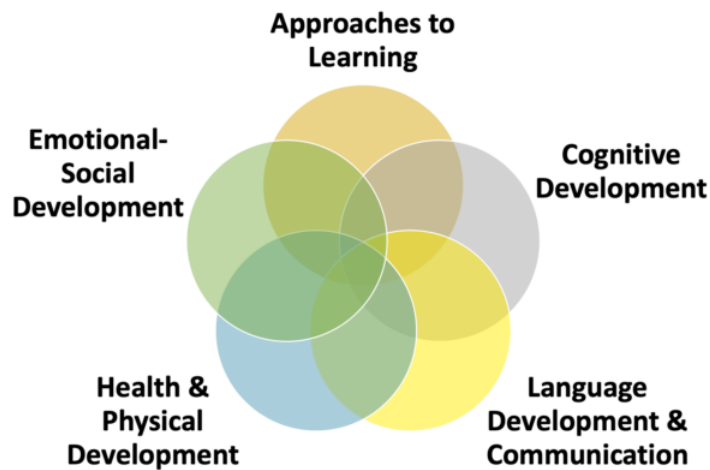
It is helpful for a teacher to include the date, day, and time. This record-keeping may result in emerging patterns. Does the learner exhibit certain behaviors or respond to learning activities because of proximity to lunchtime, or morning or afternoon? The aspect of understanding how individuals learn can be noted within the affective domain. (Kirk, N/D) This may influence how a student learns and behaves within a classroom setting. Seating, natural and artificial lighting, noise, and temperature all influence how a student feels and interacts within the environment and can have effect cognitive behaviors.

Interviews can be used on the elementary or secondary levels as an assessment tool. Like any other well- planned assessment tool, they necessitate careful planning and development of questions, positive rapport with the student, and an environment that is free from distractions, outside noise, and time constraints. Interviews may or may not be audiotaped or videotaped and scoring rubrics may be used to assess (Southerland, ND).

Tests offer yet another venue for assessment purposes. They may take the form of essay or short response, fill-in-the-blank, matching, or true or false formats. Like any of the other methods, they should be valid and reliable. Carefully thought out test questions need to be tied to learning standards and a clear and fair scoring measure needs to be in place.

Typically, assessment has been viewed as the result; the letter or point assigned at the end of an assignment; however, assessment can and should come at the beginning, end and throughout the teaching and learning process. While assessment should drive instruction, it often falls short when determining instructional decisions

5 Domains of Learning and Development



Scenario

Danielle Stein eagerly anticipated the upcoming parent-teacher conferences of the day. She had studied hard as a Childhood Education major and had worked diligently in her first year as a third-grade teacher at Maplewood Elementary School. Danielle had planned interdisciplinary lessons, employed inquiry-based learning centers, and met regularly with individual students to ensure that they had mastered the skills as determined by the state standards.

Each student had a portfolio filled with dated representations of their work. Ms. Stein understood the importance of specific and timely feedback and had painstakingly provided detailed written feedback on each work sample. She meticulously arranged the portfolios along with anecdotal notes and looked forward to sharing the accomplishments of the students with their family members.

As last-minute jitters began to set in, Danielle realized that she had no grades for any of the students. Despite doing all the right things, she had no way to assign a grade to any of the work the students had done. How would she respond when guardians asked what grade their child would earn on the first report card? How would she accurately tell them how they compared with their peers in reading? In math? In social studies and science?

Danielle quickly realized she was not as prepared as she had anticipated.

Discussion Questions

How do teachers assess student work? Is there a certain number of assignments that should be graded within a 9-week session? Are there alternatives to letter grades? Reflect on how you were graded as a student.

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6.5: Formative and Summative Assessment

Formative Assessment

Assessment should be designed to inform the teacher and learner in order to accommodate the needs of the learner. The **formative assessment** is one which occurs throughout a lesson or unit and may take a variety of forms. A teacher may determine what students know by question and answer formats, checklists, or by paper and pencil assignments. Likewise, games such as Kahoot and Jeopardy may assist in similar data collection. The informed teacher can utilize the results of the formative assessment to re-engage or to modify the teaching plans to meet the individual needs of the students.

Summative Assessment

The **summative assessment** is the evaluation that is given at the conclusion of a unit or lesson. It may determine student placement or level of knowledge and is often thought of as a grade determinant. Results of summative assessment are not used in lesson planning; rather, they are used to evaluate the mastery of material. It can take the form of a question and answer or paper and pencil approach like the formative assessment. Summative assessments also typically have one correct answer.

Formative Assessment	Both	Summative Assessment
They are assessments that we carry out to help inform the learning 'in the moment'. Formative assessment is continuous, informal and should have a central and pivotal role in every classroom. If used correctly, it will have a high impact on current learning and help you guide your instruction and teaching	Are ways to assess pupils. Must evaluate pupils effectively Are used for student feedback Assist in future lesson planning	There are different types of summative assessments that we carry out 'after the event,' often periodic (rather than continuous), and are often measured against a set standard. Summative assessment can be thought of as helping to validate and 'check' formative assessment – it is a periodic measure of how children are, overall, progressing in their mathematics learning.
Includes: • Quizzes • Talking in class • Creating diagrams or charts • Homework or classwork • Exit Surveys		Includes: • End of year assessments • Midterm or end-of-term exams • End of term portfolios • SATs

High-Stakes Assessments is one example of a summative evaluation in that it is used to determine a grade or placement. As American students falter compared to other industrialized countries, policy makers have shifted toward a great concentration on high-stakes testing to increase student standing. Unfortunately, this emphasis on high-stakes testing has not yielded an increase in scores (Michael Hout, 2012).

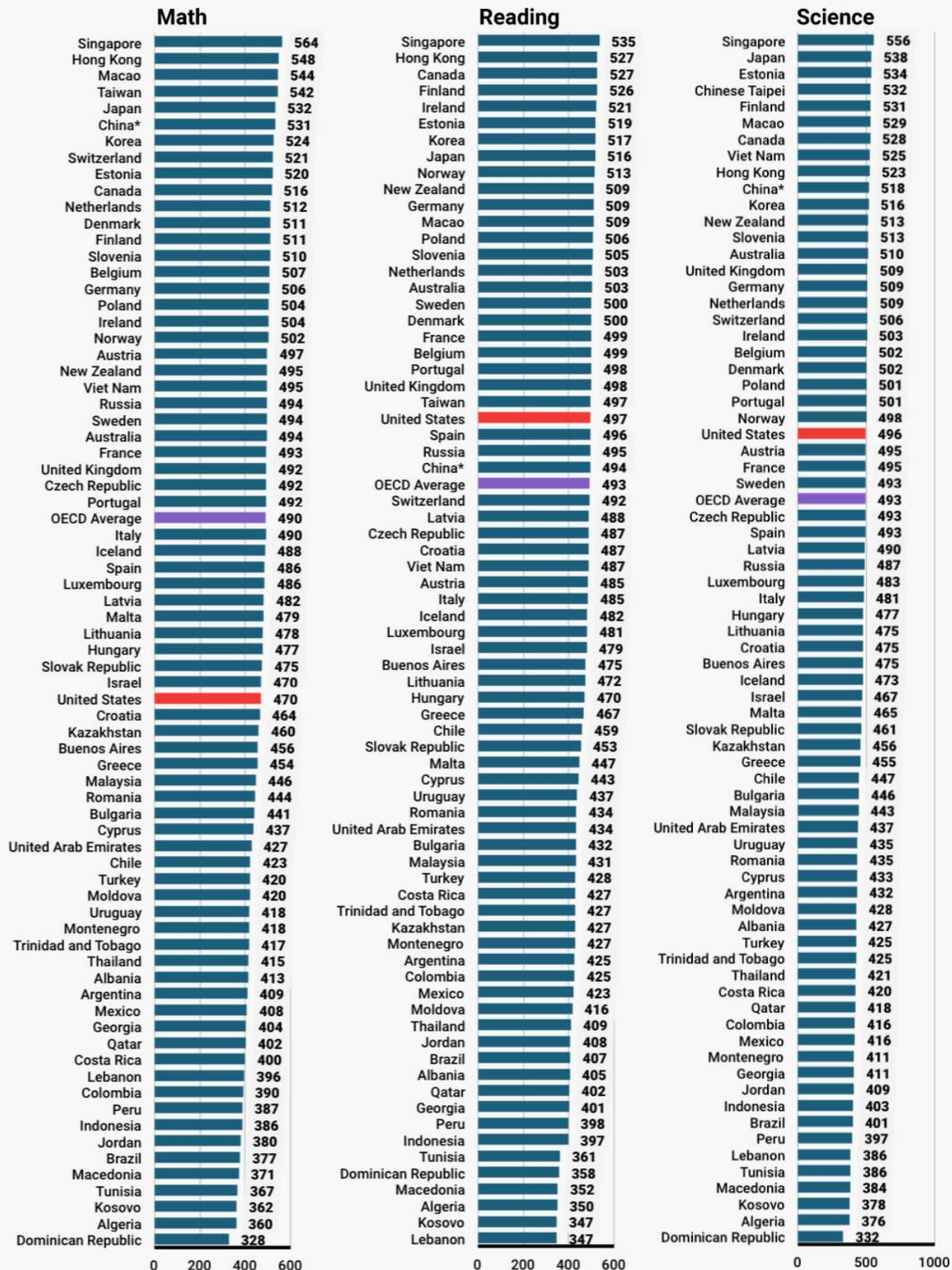
Global Assessment

According to the *Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)*, **Reading Literacy** scores, United States students earned an average score of 497, while Singapore students earned the highest average, 535 and Lebanon students tied with Kosovo for the lowest average of 347. This places United States students in the average range of reading. (Reading Literacy: Average Scores, 2015)

1. **Mathematics Literacy** scores revealed an average of 470 for U.S. students as compared to Singapore scores of 564 at the highest end and 328 from the Dominican Republic at the lowest end placing United States students as below average performers. (Mathematics Literacy: Average Scores, 2015)

Although students in the United States have demonstrated an interest and positive attitude toward science, the scores reveal a discrepancy between attitude and performance, with United States students scoring at an average of 496 as compared to a high of 556 (Singapore), and a low of Dominican Republic (332).

2015 PISA AVERAGE SCORES



Assigning Grades

If you return to the *Think About and Discuss* at the beginning of this chapter, you may realize that there is no one way to assess and no one way that educators will agree upon. Ultimately, as a reflective educator, you will recognize that the intent of assessment should be to communicate to students and family members how closely learners have met the learning goals. How you choose to determine this is left to you or to the school in which you teach. Will you choose to assign letter grades, comments, or both? Will you give partial credit? Will opt not to use grades at times?

Will your grades be fairly assigned? Will you measure what the student knew initially and then measure the learning gain or will you opt to only measure the latter?

How will the grades impact the motivation and social-emotional state of the learner?

Final Words

As you can see, the stroke of a pen can have lasting impressions on the student. Grades can classify learners. They can motivate or squelch desire. They can encourage or demean. They can be used to punish or to teach. How will you use grades as a means to plan and instruct for the benefit of all learners?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Culturally Responsive and Anti-Bias Teaching

7.1: Student Diversity

7.2: How can we teach English language learners?

7.3: How can we be culturally responsive in our teaching?

7.4: How can we create equity in the classroom?

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7.1: Student Diversity



When you envision your future classroom full of students, what does it look like? How does it sound? What do your students have in common? How do they differ? Reflecting on these questions is valuable. Hopefully, you will come to understand that you are not going to be teaching a *class* of students, as much as a collection of individuals, each with their own strengths, talents, weaknesses, personalities and needs. There are many ways in which your future students may differ. The following is a brief overview of some of the myriad factors that will make your students unique and, in some cases, challenging.

As defined by the National Education Association (www.nea.org, n.d.), diversity is “the sum of the ways that people are both alike and different” (para. 1). The NEA goes on to list a variety of dimensions that are included in diversity. Some of these are: “race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion, mental and physical ability, class and immigration status” (para. 1, www.nea.org, n.d.). It is such diversity that creates both richness and challenge within a classroom. The variety of students in one’s classroom provide many opportunities for learning and growth for everyone in that community. Concurrently, such diversity brings with it many related challenges such as the need for differentiated learning techniques to meet the needs of every student. Individual perspectives relating to diversity can provide the fuel for bullying and harassment of students. And these are just two potential issues; there are many more.

Reflect on the Following:

Race	Ethnicity
Gender	Sexual Orientation
Language	Culture
Religion	Mental and Physical Ability
Socioeconomic Status	Immigration Status

Some of the many dimensions of student diversity as noted by the NEA (n.d.)

What does each of these mean to you? Where do you fit in each of these categories? What was your school like regarding diversity on these levels? Is anything missing?

Activity (The Regents of the University of Michigan, 2016) www.crlt.umich.edu/print/355

You might identify your own attitudes toward diversity by remembering certain pivotal moments in your life. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Recall the incident in which you first became aware of differences. What was your reaction? Were you the focus of attention or were others? How did that affect how you reacted to the situation?
- What are the “messages” that you learned about various “minorities” or “majorities” when you were a child? At home? In school? Have your views changed considerably since then? Why or why not?
- Recall an experience in which your own difference put you in an uncomfortable position vis-à-vis the people directly around you. What was that difference? How did it affect you?
- How do your memories of differences affect you today? How do they (or might they) affect your teaching?



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Another term we hear used a lot regarding today’s classrooms is multicultural. When you think of the word culture, what comes to mind? The word means different things to different people. Culture is a very all-encompassing concept and includes the many things that combine to make one community or group different from another, such as their: values, clothing, religion, holidays, traditions, language, music, literature, beliefs and expectations (Alsubaie, 2015; Perso, 2012). If we look at culture that way, it is clear that everyone is coming from their own unique cultural experience, including students and teachers. The culture of the teacher and the students in one classroom will affect the education process found there (Alsubaie, 2015). It is, therefore, very important to seek to understand both your own background and cultural beliefs and those of your students. As stated by Alsubaie (2015) “teachers who learn more about their students’ backgrounds, cultures and experiences will feel more capable and efficient in their work as teachers” (p. 88). The more aware you become of your own personal set of beliefs, values and expectations, and even of your own biases, the better able you will be to seek to understand your future students.

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7.2: How can we teach English language learners?

By: Tatiana Torres

Teaching English Language Learners can be a very difficult task without any understanding of the issue. However, with the proper knowledge of successful methods and approaches to the matter, it can be a very successful and rewarding experience. There are many different ideas of how to make an experience of teaching ELLs (English Language Learners) a positive one. The main idea to keep in mind is that every situation is different and different people respond well to different things, so there is no right or wrong way to handle English Language Learners. There are however, a few main ideas that have been popularly used throughout diverse classrooms and have had successful end results.

Helping ELLs Understand the Teacher

It is very commonly said to keep your ELLs in mind when speaking to the class and making special adjustments to the way you speak to make it a little easier on the ELLs to understand basic directions, along with providing additional assistance where it is needed apart from class lecture. The idea is not to single an English Language Learner out from their group of fellow classmates, but rather, allow them to build relationships with the teacher as well as with their classmates by giving them the help that they need on a more personal level. “Diverse children should be part of a learning community where people acknowledge, help, and support one another”.ⁱ Using lots of visual aids when teaching ELLs makes their learning easier because it gets rid of the language barrier. Other helpful strategies include activities that are hands on, giving the students the option of participating when they feel comfortable, and understanding that time is needed to master a new language.

Note

“Use visual cues such as posters, overhead pictures, slide shows, videos, and illustrated books. Use active methods of learning such as games, skits, songs, partner interviews and structured conversation with classmates”.

Alienation

When English Language Learners are put into an environment where they are at a disadvantage because of the language barrier along with a serious culture shock with being in a completely different country that has numerous differences in culture norms, ELLs can become very alienated and depressed.ⁱ “Many children are made fun of when they try to speak English and also when they speak their native language; so they end up silent and withdraw from participation. This further interferes with their learning and achievement.”ⁱⁱⁱ This problem can be avoided by making all of the students culturally understanding. Another approach to helping this problem is to seat students with similar backgrounds near each other so they can help each other with instructions and understanding. It is also important to make sure that the English Language Learners culturally understand proper classroom behavior such as when it is appropriate to speak and when it is appropriate to sit and listen. Other cultures may have different norms in this environment and could cause the student to be embarrassed in front of their peers if the difference is not properly understood.

Usage of Translators

The aid of translators can be very useful in a classroom with numerous students that speak the same foreign language. This can be used in communication with non-English speaking parents. In a note going home to the parents, the translator can be used to translate the note into the parents’ language so that foreign parents can also be involved in their children’s school lives and are not less involved because of the language barrier. This is an example where it is also important to remember that parents can also feel alienated and depressed from the same struggles that their children have with a language barrier. However, it is not safe to assume that all of the non-English speaking parents always want to speak in their native language, some parents may be offended by this since they are trying to learn how to speak English and want to practice speaking English as much as they can. It is important to get to know each of the parents and know their preference with speaking and adjust to that in proper manner. If a teacher shows the effort to learn the ELLs native language as well that could be a very flattering and rewarding experience for both the ELL student and their parents. It is easier to have a productive and positive environment in a classroom if everyone is happy and comfortable with the each other; this includes parents of the students.

It is very important for teachers of English Language Learners to remember that their students have a different cultural background then the rest of the class. Good ways to make that factor a positive learning opportunity is to allow the students to do learning

activities where they learn about different cultures around the world, including the ones of their classmates.

Note

“Plan assignments that bring student’s cultures, families, languages, and experiences front and center”.

Cultural Differences

It is recommended that teachers use questions frequently throughout a lesson. Doing this offers ELLs the chance to use English and a chance for the teacher to assess the English Language Learner’s grasp on the information that is being presented to them. “... Teachers must know the stages of language acquisition and be able to determine what stage each ELL is in...By knowing the stages of language acquisition and stage-appropriate questions, a teacher can engage students at the correct level of discourse”.iv It is important as the teacher to make yourself familiar with the students background. Learning about the students culture will not only make you more aware of the student but will also show the student that you care. Because ELL students feel like outcasts this could help stop that feeling of complete isolation. More importantly, “students whose native culture is valued have a greater sense of self-worth and higher academic achievement”. vi

Things To Remember

There are general standards schools have that can help teachers stay on track of keeping an equal learning environment, which may be forgotten with the challenge of teaching English Language Learners. There must be a supportive, as well as challenging atmosphere in the school. There must be strong instructional leadership in the school. It is necessary to have a special learning environment that tends to the needs of all of the students according to the differences in their needs. There must be a curriculum that balances both basic and higher-order skills. There must be instructional strategies that help understanding of material being learned along with being able to practice those skills. And family involvement to build a strong environment between the home and the school.v

To sum up, teaching English Language Learners is not just a job for ESL (English as a second language) teachers to deal with. Although the aid of ESL teachers and translators can be very helpful when teaching ELLs, a teacher cannot depend on them solely, there are other factors that can and will affect their classroom as well. Therefore, it is key for the teacher to try not just one approach, but several approaches, because each classroom is different as well as each student. What works for most of the classroom may not work for one particular ELL individual, leaving them feeling alienated. Teachers can even get creative and try their own approach they think may work. The idea is to just keep trying until the right one is found and the whole class is happy and able to learn properly.

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7.3: How can we be culturally responsive in our teaching?

by Jenny Pennington

Learning Objectives

- The reader should be able to identify how Culturally Responsive Teaching can be integrated into the classroom
- The reader should be able to recognize examples of different cultural norms that may conflict with standard classroom behavior
- The reader should be able to understand how typical teacher candidate training may create culturally insular educators

The Increasing Need for Cultural Response

As our nation's cultural diversity continues to evolve, teachers are finding it necessary to adapt their mindset and lesson plans to accommodate students with varying cultural identities and experiences. A common phrase for helping students from different backgrounds adapt to each other is building a cultural bridge. According to the "InTime: Integrating New Technologies Into the Methods of Education" (2002) website, teachers can become proactive in combining "academic abstractions" and "lived sociocultural realities" through Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). Today's teachers have a greater responsibility to address the growing "melting pot" of students in their classrooms and to adapt lesson plans to respect the varying cultural identities of a heterogeneous group.

Note

Noted scholar Gay describes Culturally Responsive Teaching as "Validating, Comprehensive, Multidimensional, Empowering, Transformative, and Emancipatory" (as cited in Edwards and Kuhlman, 2007)

What Is It?

Culturally Responsive Teaching is "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them" ("Intime" par. 1). Being mindful of this type of teaching requires "teach[ing] to and through the strengths of students" ("InTime", 2002, para. 1) by using "multicultural information, resources, and materials in all subjects" (para. 1).

Some characteristics of Culturally Responsive Teaching include:

- "Acknowledge[ing] the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum
- Use[ing] a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles
- Teach[ing] students to know and praise their own and each others' cultural heritages" ("InTime", 2002, para. 2).

How CRT Affects Teachers

Noted and oft-cited scholar in CRT studies, Gay contends teachers tend to be "culturally insular" (as cited in Edwards and Kuhlman, 2007, para. 3), or narrow-minded, and can learn how to use CRT as a "means for releasing the potential of ethnically diverse students by exploring both the academic and psychosocial abilities of the students" (para. 3). Gay finds teachers "often focus on what their students 'don't have and can't do' while claiming cultural neutrality, believing that their own personal experiences are normal" (para. 6). Furthermore, Gay explains the reason behind this mentality is that teacher candidates begin their teaching careers "with little preparation for working with children who differ from them racially, culturally, and economically" (para. 7). Obviously, Gay's stance is not true of all teachers and their training. Yet it is worth questioning if teaching in an area where students' backgrounds are similar to each other or similar to the teacher is the fault of either. It is hard to imagine anyone disputing the need for cultural sensitivity whether students experience different cultures firsthand or study them in class. Barnes (2006) notes in her article "Preparing Preservice Teachers to Teach in a Culturally Responsive Way" that the "teaching force remains homogenous—predominantly white, female, and middle class" (para. 1). The perception that the teaching force is not heterogeneous highlights a larger issue that isn't addressed here, but the idea that those who typically choose to enter the teacher profession exhibit similar traits certainly does not mean the teachers are doomed to complacency in their lessons or apathy toward their students. There may be a "cultural discontinuity" between teacher and student (para. 1), but it can be inferred that as the diversity in our population increases, it will be evident among teaching staff, not just students. Diversity is more apparent in urban

school settings; however, research indicates that teachers across the nation train through “curricula historically grounded in Eurocentric traditional styles of pedagogy” (Barnes, 2006, para. 1). Therefore, until the teacher training curriculum reflects an understanding of different cultures (i.e. reading literature from authors with more diverse backgrounds), new teachers may have to adopt the practice that how they teach is not how they were taught. Respecting and having a passionate curiosity in each other's cultures are ways to break the perceived disconnect in the teacher-student relationship.

Another factor that may account for a lack of Culturally Responsive Teaching in the past is the common “fostering” of individualism in U.S. school systems (Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield, and Trumbull, 1999, p. 64), which “emphasizes information disengaged from its social context” (p. 64). Educators may recognize collectivistic values in some students, or values that “emphasize the interdependence of family members” (p. 64). Teachers see collectivism in students who tend to join or help others in a task so that they are “contribut[ing] to the success of any group they belong to” (p. 64). Collectivism may also account for students who relate school-based instruction to stories told in their home instead of discussing learned information in more “scientific language” (p. 66). Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield, and Trumbull (1999) suggest that as part of “advocating cultural sensitivity [. . .] teachers recognize their own practices as cultural in origin rather than as simply the ‘right way’ to do things” (p. 66). Acknowledging cultural differences and how they affect learning is akin to the need to realize that everyone has an accent—everyone has a culture and we all should respect that if we wish to address the needs of all our students.

In “Cultural and Academic Excellence Leaves No Child Behind,” Stickney (2003) states that “[e]ffective educators understand the verbal and nonverbal communication styles of cultures other than their own” (para. 6). Cultural norms may dictate students perform or react in ways anathema to what teachers expect, which is using “eye contact, tak[ing] turns, speak[ing] one at a time, and us[ing] body language that shows they are being attentive” (para. 6). One example of this perceived deviation is in African American cultures in which students “sometimes use call-and-response banter when communicating (a self-explanatory practice in which someone speaks and another replies = banter), [in] Latino cultures [when students] at times talk along with speakers to show support for what is being said, and [in] Hawaiian cultures [when students] communicate more effectively by storytelling than by quick replies” (para. 6). Teachers will need to research the cultural norms of their students—such norms are far too varied and complex to be summarized here, and new norms may emerge each year as new students enter our classrooms. In general, students’ behavior in classrooms will “depend upon cultural norms regarding what is polite or respectful, [even] culturally accepted gender roles” (para. 7). If one is to incorporate cultural sensitivity in his or her teaching, “lesson plans need to blend information on how students can become comfortable with American culture with ways that other students can become culturally responsive to members of diverse cultures” (para. 7). As the U.S. population diversifies, an inspiring definition of American culture will be just that—diversity, the idea of the “melting pot” becoming a lived reality in more and more places.

Note

Ladson-Billings (Education Alliance, 2009) contends that Culturally Responsive Teaching is “an approach that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.”

What Can CRT Do?

CRT can capitalize on cooperative learning (“InTime”, 2009, para. 11) as students “become social critics” (para. 10) with “more caring, concerned, and humane interpersonal skills” (para. 12). Students can benefit from CRT by gaining a “better understanding of interconnections among individual, local, national, ethnic, global, and human identities” as well as “acceptance of knowledge as something to be continuously shared, critiqued, revised, and renewed” (para. 12). “The Knowledge Loom” (2009), a site created by the Education Alliance at Brown University, maintains CRT is “premised on the idea that culture is central to student learning” (para. 1), and also suggests CRT is a means to “recognize, respect, and use students’ identities and backgrounds as meaningful sources for creating optimal learning environments” (para. 1). One can deduce that the CRT concept negates the groundbreaking notion that students’ minds are a blank slate, or *tabula rosa* (“The Knowledge Loom”, 2009, para. 4), since background and experience are integral factors in the learning environment—and can provide richer learning experiences for student and teacher.

In the Classroom

The premise of a learning community can come to fruition in a culturally responsive classroom. Since CRT can expand to all subjects, teachers can collaborate to make students’ experiences multidimensional through: “curriculum content, learning context, classroom climate, student-teacher relationships, instructional techniques, and performance assessments” (“InTime”, 2009, para. 6). In fact, teachers of varied subjects like language arts, science, social studies, and music can collaborate “in teaching a single

cultural concept, such as protest” (para. 6). Cooperative learning lends itself not just to student groups but to a group of teachers who can work together to strengthen cultural understanding.

CRT and NCLB

A strong correlation between the No Child Left Behind act and Culturally Responsive Teaching is the result of higher test scores because “educators’ integration of cultural nuances and acceptance of different cultural communication styles in classrooms positively correlate with improvements in time on task, attending behaviors, participation in classroom dialogue, concept mastery, recall of factual information with greater accuracy, and more student enthusiasm and confidence in learning” (Stickney, 2003, para. 4). Proponents of the NCLB act promote CRT since they consider “students from less dominant cultures [. . .] to be at particular risk for school failure” (para. 1). Cooperative learning through students working in groups helps students get to know each other's backgrounds while working together to complete a task or meet a goal. If anyone can argue against a student feeling accepted into a diverse group, it may be from a homeogenous mindset a la speaking in Standard English or all people using/speaking the same language.

Conclusion

Studies of Culturally Responsive Teaching indicate that teachers’ “perceptions of culturally relevant teaching varie[s]” (Edwards and Kuhlman, 2007, para. 27), but one can integrate CRT in the classroom in the same vein one works with students “who may have emotional and physical problems” (para. 28)—i.e., by continuing to acknowledge and accommodate diversity among student populations. Edwards and Kuhlman (2007) urge teachers to “know that the process of becoming a culturally responsive teacher is nurtured by living, experimenting, traveling, and reading” (para. 28). Combining teachers’ knowledge of different cultural norms with classroom application creates an “opportunity to insert education into culture rather than culture into education” (para. 11). Imagine a classroom in which the teacher and student stir who they are, where they come from, and what they believe into the collective pot, creating a respectful school culture where diversity is the accepted norm.

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7.4: How can we create equity in the classroom?

by: Anthony D. Richardson

INTRODUCTION

There are many avenues we can take toward equity in the school. We will discuss Culture, School Size, Gender, Learning, and Funding. Five important topics needed for equity in the classroom. Before you can fair assessment of anything a person faces, they must try to understand the what, when, why and how. Equity is what every Teacher, Principal, School Super Attendant, and Parent should strive for.

CULTURE

Year 2004 represented the 50th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (1954), the Supreme Court decision outlawing racial segregation in schools. Brown v. Board has been called the defining legal decision of the 20th century, framing as it did the United States' struggle with issues of race and racial equality. In that decision, the justices clearly state that they were striking down segregation in public schools both to increase educational equity and to eliminate the racial stigma associated with segregation.

Despite a wide range of efforts over the past 50 years, issues of racial and ethnic stigma and its relationship to identity and motivation remain central issues for those interested in creating racially equitable educational settings today. I argue that efforts to improve educational equity can only advance when a corresponding effort is made to reduce racial and ethnic stigma.

In the 50 years since the first Brown decision, we have learned a great deal about both the value of diverse learning environments for student development and how to create effective diverse learning environments. Nevertheless, as we come to understand that the racial and ethnic stigma discussed in Brown continues to play a central role in modern educational outcomes and inequities, we can direct our reform efforts in productive ways.

- First, teachers much acknowledge how deficit-based notions of diverse students continue to permeate traditional school thinking, practices, and placement, and critique their own thoughts and practices to ensure they do not reinforce prejudiced behavior.
- Second, culturally relevant pedagogy recognizes the explicit connection between culture and learning, and sees students' cultural capital as an asset and not a detriment to their school success.
- Third, culturally relevant teaching is mindful of how traditional teaching practices reflect middle-class; European-American cultural values, and thus seeks to incorporate a wider range of dynamic and fluid teaching practices outcomes through the amelioration of stigma

Note

Culture ... impacts our lives by determining what is important and what is not, what makes sense and what does not. The culture then makes these constructions available to the young and to new initiates for appropriation and use in transforming their participation in that culture. Learning, then, becomes a matter of changes in one's relation to the culture(s) to which one is connected.

SCHOOL SIZE

A large-scale quantitative study using nationally representative and longitudinal data attempted to identify the ideal size of a high school, based on student learning. The study explored these issues for about 10,000 students in 800 public and private schools in the United States. Although most research on this topic has been framed within a "bigger versus smaller" mode, the objective here was to estimate an appropriate balance point between student learning and school size. Achievement gains in mathematics and reading over the course of high school were found to be largest in middle-sized high schools (600-900 students). Schools of this size were also favored in terms of social equity, in that they had weaker relationships between student socioeconomic status (SES) and achievement. Lee and Smith also found that even though the same "ideal size" was consistent across schools identified by their average SES and minority concentrations, school size was a more important factor in determining learning in schools enrolling more disadvantaged students.

Investigating the effects of school size in Chicago's (K-8) elementary schools, another study also found favorable effects for smaller schools in terms of student learning and teachers' willingness to take responsibility for their students' learning. Although without exception, teachers and students reported that social relations were more personal in the smaller high schools; this was not always seen as a benefit. A few students in the smaller high schools reported that they were unable to "live down" the negative reputations of their older siblings or even parents. Some teachers in such schools had to work hard to keep a modicum of privacy.

Sociological theory suggests that human interactions and ties become more formal as organizations grow. Organizational growth generates new bureaucratic structures, as connections between individuals become less personal. These structures can inhibit communal organization. This general theory has been confirmed in research identifying the organizational characteristics of effective schools. In school climate studies, for example, size operates as an ecological feature of the social structure, part of the physical environment that influences the nature of social interactions. In general, the sociological evidence about high schools suggests that social relations are generally more positive in smaller schools.

GENDER

As young people move into adolescence, they begin to explore gender roles. Finding their way through this potential minefield is complicated and challenging for middle school students. The process of determining the variations in masculinity and femininity is largely a social function, not a biological one. What it means to be a man, and what it means to be a woman, is communicated to children by all the adults in a child's life, including teachers.

Boys and girls create very distinct cultures; when they are in same-gender groups they act and play very differently. Girls are talkative and cooperative, boys are competitive and physical. Teachers need to understand these differences and be purposeful in the treatment of each so as to send the healthiest messages to adolescents.

In 1992 the American Association of University Women (AAUW) published a groundbreaking study about how schools were not meeting the needs of young girls. Their schools shortchanged girls in many ways: when questioned in class, girls were less likely to receive a prompt to clarify thinking if they answered incorrectly; boys were more regularly called on, and if not, they were just as likely to shout out an answer, leaving girls to sit quietly; and girls were not encouraged to take advanced math and science classes (AAUW 1992). Perhaps not surprisingly, then, in their middle school years, girls stopped being successful in math and science.

So what do we do? The first thing is to become aware of the differences between genders. Once these differences are explained and accepted, educators must be proactive in the way boys and girls are treated in schools. Indeed, there are distinct advantages to educating boys and girls together appropriately, for in doing so, each gender will begin to see how the other thinks, feels, responds, and reacts. Such understanding is in itself a major goal for gender-friendly classrooms.

We should also consider the nature of the differences between boys and girls. Creating a gender-friendly classroom does not mean that you create gender-specific activities, divide your classroom, or even insist on single-sex classes. Students should at some times have an opportunity to work in a gender-matched activity, while at other times they should learn to function in a more typical gender-mismatched one. This allows students to experience instructional times that are more comfortable for students when the activities are matched to their nature. But they also learn to function outside that comfort area when they are in a mismatched situation, and thus strengthen weaker areas.

For teachers the imperative is to learn about the differences in gender. Teachers need to accept that learning occurs differently for each gender, and to measure out activities and experiences that favor one some of the time, and the other some of the time. Keep in mind that although some girls may be more linguistically advanced than boys, some boys are just as advanced. Although some boys manipulate objects well and see patterns better than girls, some girls are headed toward engineering schools. When boys see girls appropriately modeling relationship behaviors, the boys learn how to be more sensitive and open. Likewise, when girls see the appropriate use of assertiveness that boys learn early, the girls see that this can be used to their advantage as well.

LEARNING

Human beings, in our conscious hours at least, are always learning. We cannot do otherwise; learning is an involuntary human activity. What varies among us is what we learn, how our learning is put to use and reinforced, and what learning is valued by a particular group of people at a particular time—our education. The result is that, while everyone learns, some learn to survive and some learn to thrive.

Unfortunately, access to the learning experiences that help people to thrive, though these depend on context, are not equally or equitably available to everyone. And although there may be value in all types of learning experiences, a deep understanding in the

field of education of the range of learning experiences available to people who thrive is the first step toward ensuring adequate access to these experiences for all.

Schools, then, are only one of society's educative institutions. Although schools may be the most widely recognized of such institutions, a theory of education must encompass not just a theory of schooling but also a theory of the relation of various educative interactions and institutions with one another and to the members of the society at large. And a vision of educational equity must become a vision of providing access not just to schooling but also to these other resources.

Holistic approach to learning

- High quality early childhood education programs
- Rigorous and challenging curricula for all students
- High quality teaching
- Effective, sustained educational leadership
- Appropriate class sizes
- Mental and physical health care services
- Appropriate academic support for English language learners
- Appropriate academic support for special education students
- Appropriate academic support for children in areas of highly concentrated poverty
- Effective after-school, community, and summer programs
- Effective parental involvement and family support
- Policies that foster racially and economically diverse schools

FUNDING

Throughout the United States, wide performance gaps exist between poor and minority students and their peers in other groups. The inequities that result in those performance gaps carry enormous costs, not only for the children and families involved, but for the nation as a whole. The annual price tag of inadequately educating our young people is staggering, in the realm of \$250 billion per year in health and welfare costs, criminal justice expenses, and lost tax revenues. The heavy toll on the social and civic fabric of the nation is an additional, inestimable price that we all pay every year.

If we are to meet the global economic challenges of an increasingly "flat world," if we are to prepare our students to be capable civic participants in our democratic society, and if we are to fulfill the moral imperative of ensuring that a child's racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, or family background no longer predicts that child's educational attainment or level of achievement, we need a comprehensive approach to educational equity that attends to the full array of factors that affect educational opportunity.

Since late in the 20th century, there has been a burgeoning of initiatives, programs, projects, and activities that fall under the umbrella of what we are calling "comprehensive educational equity" by seeking to integrate education and supports and services in other areas that enhance students' abilities to succeed.

A wide range of institutions, from federal and state governments to national and local foundations, to individual schools, carries out some type of "comprehensive educational equity" effort. The delivery models employed include community, full-service, and extended schools; comprehensive early childhood programs; school-linked services projects; school-community partnerships; private interagency commissions; family support and education programs; integrated-services initiatives; comprehensive community initiatives; and state programs and broad national legislation.

Within these models, individual efforts have varying goals, rationales, methodologies, scopes, participants, scales, and time frames. The proliferation of these efforts provides a rich and complex field of study for potential models, best practices, and policy direction on which to build. Their many variations point to challenges for study, evaluation, and replication.

CONCLUSION

Equity in the class room is not an easy task, but a necessity. As we continue to create equity in our classrooms were contributing and enhancing peoples lives. We are better equipping students, parents, communities, America, and the World. We must recognize what is going on with our students by communicating with them in order to make the right assessment. We as educators must think outside the box. Times are changing so the way we educate must change as well.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Special Education

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8.1: What is Inclusion?

By Emily Mitchell

Note

"Inclusion is being a part of what everyone else is, being welcomed and embraced as a member who belongs." (Tomko,1996)

Introduction

After working as a special education aide for a year, I have developed an interest in this topic. Loneliness and fear are something we all feel when we are different from everyone else. When everyone else seems to get along and understand one another, and we are left out, we feel inferior and worthless. We would feel even more worthless if someone told us that we were not good enough to be with everyone else. We cannot talk and play with the other kids because we slow them down. The practice of inclusion attempts to help students with disabilities avoid these feelings of fear, isolation and worthlessness. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), updated in 2004, provides students with disabilities the right to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment possible. Inclusion attempts to provide this education for students with disabilities and now many school systems throughout the country practice it. Inclusive education comes with benefits as well as downsides.

Definition

Schools are not required to include students with disabilities in the general education classroom, but are required to provide them with the most appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. Including a student in the general education classroom is the best solution, if possible. This means the student is taught with his non-disabled peers and has full access to the general education curriculum, extracurricular activities and other programs available to non-disabled students. If a student is capable of being successful in this environment, it is difficult for schools to justify isolating him in a special classroom or special school. A team of educators, specialists and parents construct an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to ensure that the student's educational needs are being met. If the decision is made to keep the student from the general education classroom, this team must have valid reasons why that environment is not appropriate for the student (Stout 2007). In order to allow students to be successful in the least restrictive environment, schools use paraprofessionals or co teaching to help the student integrate into the general education classroom (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & Mcduffie, 2007). The idea of inclusion does not relate to academics alone. Students with disabilities are included in the community of the class and school as well. Inclusion encourages students to be a part of the classroom both academically and socially (Burke & Sutherland, 2004).

What does Inclusion Look Like?

A student who attends an inclusive school spends the majority of his school day in the general education classroom, with other students his age. Depending on the level of his disability, he will have an aide assigned to shadow him throughout the day and help him when necessary. The job of the aide is to help enable the student to be successful, while allowing the student to gain independence and confidence in the process. The aide helps to adapt materials and find resources that will help the child function well in the general education classroom. A school practicing inclusion seeks to adapt the classroom in order to meet the needs of students with disabilities (Burke & Sutherland, 2004). A student is not thrown into a classroom and expected to function like everyone else. His teachers must adapt their curriculum and practices to ensure his success. In order for inclusion to be successful, teachers must be comfortable teaching students with disabilities. Many general education teachers do not feel equipped to handle the issues associated with these students. In the article, "Attitudes Toward Inclusion: Knowledge vs. Experience", authors Burke and Sutherland (2004) explain that many teachers will leave the teaching profession after being exposed to an inclusive classroom they feel unequipped to handle. The authors later stated that teachers who received the most intense training to work with students with disabilities were the most successful in an inclusive classroom. The general classroom teacher must be willing to help include the student, for inclusive education, to work. Authors Griffin, Otis-Wilborn and Winn (2005) in their article, "Beginning Special Educators' Forays into General Education", also stress the importance of preparing teachers to be successful in an inclusive setting. They explain that many special education teachers are not prepared for inclusion either. The article states, "many special education teachers are lacking knowledge of general classroom curriculum and pedagogy, skills to accommodate resources effectively for their students and strategies for clarifying roles and for collaborating with general classroom teachers". In order for inclusive education to be successful, all members of a student's educational team must be equipped to deal with that student's needs.

Inclusion Impacts all Members of the School Community

Many wonder what effect inclusion has on non-disabled students in an inclusive classroom. In the article “Parent Perception of the Impacts of Inclusion on their Nondisabled Child” authors Gallucci, Peck, and Staub (2004) report a study done to find out what impact inclusion has on non-disabled students. The authors cite a study that surveyed eighty-one parents whose children were in elementary classrooms with students with severe disabilities. Eighty percent of these parents reported that they believed their children were gaining positive social and emotional growth. Over ninety percent believed their child’s experience with a classmate with a disability was positive. Not all parents or community members agree with the parents surveyed, however. While working as an aide I had a student with autism who tended to display extremely aggressive behavior. He began the year in the general classroom, but after biting and scratching the same child twice, he was removed. The parent of the child who had been bitten demanded that the child with autism be separated from his child. The decision was made to remove the child with autism from his general education classroom and place him in the special education classroom alone. For the second half of the year, this child spent the majority of his school day being educated by aides and isolated from his classmates. He spent thirty minutes a day with a licensed teacher. Inclusion causes a problem when the student is unable to function successfully in the general classroom, or when the parents of the non-disabled children are unwilling to cooperate with the efforts of the teachers and aides to include that student.

Issues with Inclusion

Authors Griffin et al. (2005) speak to other issues that arise in an inclusive classroom. Some teachers are unwilling to dedicate the extra energy and work necessary to include a student with disabilities in their classroom. In addition, confusion can arise over who is primarily responsible for the student’s education. General classroom teachers do not necessarily take responsibility for the student and the collaboration of all members of a student’s educational team is crucial to that student’s success. Effective communication between general and special education teachers can be another challenge of inclusion. The student may not feel safe or supported in the classroom and will not be as successful as a result. At the beginning of the school year, one of my students with autism communicated to his teacher that he did not want to do his work because he did not think she believed he was smart. The student learned to trust her, and things improved overall. Students with disabilities need to feel wanted in the general education classroom or they will be less successful. If the teachers involved do not communicate, or if the general education teacher refuses to reach out to the student, he will not be successful in an inclusive environment. According to Margaret Hoban a couple of the problems faced by teachers that teach inclusion classes is the little teacher prep time and limited resources and the need for extra professional development dealing with inclusion. As well as, the officials applying more effort to developing the inclusion model and monitor their success more efficiently (<http://escholarship.bc.edu>). The states are now requiring more and more standardized and comprehensive testing. Teachers are already overwhelmed and are sometimes unable to meet the schools and states request for academic accountability and achievement. When teachers have an inclusive classroom, they are put under more pressure and strain. Another problem that is dealt with inclusion is labeling. You hear that a child for instance has ADHD the child is automatically seen as a problem child, and the teacher usually has a low learning expectation of the student. This can and does affect the child’s learning and behavior. According to Deloney and Thompkins, regular students in inclusive classes do not get the full learning time allotted to them. A lot of the time, their education is interrupted because of the students with disabilities. Either the teacher has to stop their teaching process because of behavior problems, outbursts/distractions, or explaining things over and over. You also have the teachers that really do not understand or really want to teach in such an environment could do much to undermine the potentially positive benefits of inclusion.

Those Who Like It

Although, there are parents, teachers and administrators who are not in favor of the inclusive classroom, there are those who think that inclusion has a lot of positive benefits. Socialization is a key factor to this. Many parents, teachers and administrators feel that students with disabilities that are in inclusive classrooms have higher self concept about themselves and achieve at higher levels when with their peers (Deloney, Thompkins). They have “normal” role models and therefore, know what age appropriate behavior is supposed to be. Children learn from each other and will learn how to act and how not to act during certain settings and situations. Scholars also think that the regular students benefit from being in an inclusive class. They will learn to accept differences among people, and become more accepting towards people’s differences as they get older. This acceptance may cause them to have a diverse set of friends. Having students with disabilities in their class will encourage cooperation and patience. Traits that will be good to have growing up.

Improving the Inclusion Model

Some improvements that can be made on existing models can be made to better the quality of learning for both the special ed and the non special ed students. Such as “increasing, the quality time spent with getting disability children to focus on material through enhanced and stimulating communications”. This can be by using power points. Children are growing up on computers and to just teach via lecture and note taking may not be right for a special needs student. I have found jeopardy websites dealing with topics that I have taught in classes and the students really love these. They are all done via power point. I noticed an increase in test grades dealing with the topics that I have played the jeopardy games with as well as other games. The students really enjoy competing with one another. We have hangman and spelling word whomps with our spelling words every week. This as well has increased the spelling test grades. Teachers can also allow more time for the organization of information just received. It is proven that students with disabilities need more time to organize and apply the information that they just learned.

Conclusion

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires that a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment be provided to all students with disabilities. As a result, general and special education teachers must work together to provide the best education for their students with disabilities. This process can be rewarding for everyone involved if they are willing to expand their comfort zones and are willing to work at including the student. Inclusion is not an easy process. As with all educational practices, inclusion has strengths and weaknesses. In light of this reality, educators and parents must determine what educational plan will best meet the individual student’s needs and work to successfully implement that plan. Ideally, the student will feel included in the general education classroom both socially and academically and will receive the best education possible.

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8.2: Three People on the Margins

The first person: In 1761 a six-year-old girl was captured from West Africa, given the name Phillis Wheatley, and sold into slavery in the City of Boston in Colonial America. By the time she was 17, Phillis had taught herself to read and write and had developed a special love and talent for poetry. Her owner was a wealthy businessman and sought to improve his reputation by publishing an anthology of her poems. Unfortunately he encountered stiff resistance from publishers because few people at that time believed Africans to be capable of the thought and imagination needed to write poetry. People who heard of her poetry were skeptical and inclined to think that it was faked. Eventually, to save his own reputation, the owner assembled a tribunal of 18 prominent judges— including the governor of Massachusetts and John Hancock, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence— to assess the young woman's mental capacity. After cross-examining her, the judges finally decided that Ms Wheatley was, after all, capable of writing poetry (Robinson, 1982).

The second person: A century later, a child named Helen Keller lost her sight and hearing as a result of illness during infancy. In spite of this misfortune, though, Helen devised a language of gestural signs for communicating with a tutor, and was soon also using Braille to study both French and Latin. At ten, she wrote and published a short story. Yet like Ms Wheatley, Ms Keller also faced substantial, chronic skepticism about her capacities. Prominent educators accused her of plagiarizing others' writings and merely "parroting" others' ideas without understanding them (Keller, 1954; Bogdan, 2006). Eventually, as with Wheatley, a panel was assembled— though this time the members were professional experts about disabilities— to determine whether Ms Keller was in fact capable of writing what she published. The panel decided that she was indeed capable, though only by a slim margin (five judges vs four).

The third person: In 1978, Sue Rubin was born with a disability that limited her speech to disordered bursts of sound and occasionally echoing phrases of other people. She was labeled autistic because of her symptoms, and assumed to be profoundly retarded. With support and encouragement from her mother and others, however, Sue eventually learned to type on a keyboard without assistance. She learned to communicate effectively when she was about 13 and was able to go to school. Since then she has made many presentations about autism at conferences and recently co-edited a book about autism, titled *Autism: The Myth of the Person Alone* (Bogdan, et al., 2005).

One of these individuals experienced racial discrimination and the other two experienced physical disabilities, but notice something important: that all three were defined by society as disabled intellectually. Initially, their with special educational needs achievements were dismissed because of widespread assumptions— whether about race or disability— of their inherent incompetence. All three had to work harder than usual, not only to acquire literacy itself, but also to prove that their literacy was genuine and worthy of respect.

Since the time of Phillis Wheatley, North American society has eliminated slavery and made some progress at reducing certain forms of racism, though much remains to be done. In 1954, for example, the United States Supreme Court ruled that public schools could not be segregated by race, and in doing so recognized, at least legally, the intellectual competence of African-Americans as well as the moral obligation of society to provide all citizens with the best possible education. It has taken longer to recognize legally the rights and competence of persons with disabilities, but events and trends beginning in the 1970s have begun to make it happen. This chapter begins by explaining some of these and how they have altered the work of teachers.

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8.3: Growing Support for People with Disabilities- Legislation and Its Effects

Since the 1970s political and social attitudes have moved increasingly toward including people with disabilities into a wide variety of "regular" activities. In the United States, the shift is illustrated clearly in the Federal legislation that was enacted during this time. The legislation partly stimulated the change in attitudes, but at the same time they partly resulted from the change. Three major laws were passed that guaranteed the rights of persons with disabilities, and of children and students with disabilities in particular. Although the first two affected teachers' work in the classroom, the third has had the biggest impact on education.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504

This law—the first of its kind—required that individuals with disabilities be accommodated in any program or activity that receives Federal funding (PL 93-112, 1973). Although this law was not intended specifically for education, in practice it has protected students' rights in some extra-curricular activities (for older students) and in some child care or after-school care programs (for younger students). If those programs receive Federal funding of any kind, the programs are not allowed to exclude children or youths with disabilities, and they have to find reasonable ways to accommodate the individuals' disabilities.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (or ADA).

This legislation also prohibited discrimination on the basis of disability, just as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act had done (PL 101-336, 1990). Although the ADA also applies to all people (not just to students), its provisions are more specific and "stronger" than those of Section 504. In particular, ADA extends to all employment and jobs, not just those receiving Federal funding. It also specifically requires accommodations to be made in public facilities such as with buses, restrooms, and telephones. ADA legislation is therefore responsible for some of the "minor" renovations in schools that you may have noticed in recent years, like wheelchair-accessible doors, ramps, and restrooms, and public telephones with volume controls.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (or IDEA)

As its name implied this legislation was more focused on education than either Section 504 or ADA. It was first passed in 1975 and has been amended several times since, including most recently in 2004 (PL 108-446, 2004). In its current form, the law guarantees the following rights related to education for anyone with a disability from birth to age 21. The first two influence schooling in general, but the last three affect the work of classroom teachers rather directly:

- *Free, appropriate education:* An individual or an individual's family should not have to pay for education simply because the individual has a disability, and the educational program should be truly educational (i.e. not merely care-taking or "babysitting" of the person).
- *Due process:* In case of disagreements between an individual with a disability and the schools or other professionals, there must be procedures for resolving the disagreements that are fair and accessible to all parties—including the person himself or herself or the person's representative.
- *Fair evaluation of performance in spite of disability:* Tests or other evaluations should not assume test-taking skills that a person with a disability cannot reasonably be expected to have, such as holding a pencil, hearing or seeing questions, working quickly, or understanding and speaking orally. Evaluation procedures should be modified to allow for these differences. This provision of the law applies both to evaluations made by teachers and to school-wide or "high-stakes" testing programs.
- *Education in the "least restrictive environment":* Education for someone with a disability should provide as many educational opportunities and options for the person as possible, both in the short term and in the long term. In practice this requirement has meant including students in regular classrooms and school activities as much as possible, though often not totally.
- *An individualized educational program:* Given that every disability is unique, instructional planning for a person with a disability should be unique or individualized as well. In practice this provision has led to classroom teachers planning individualized programs jointly with other professionals (like reading specialists, psychologists, or medical personnel) as part of a team.

Considered together, these provisions are both a cause and an effect of basic democratic philosophy. The legislation says, in effect, that all individuals should have access to society in general and to education in particular. Although teachers certainly support this philosophy in broad terms, and many have welcomed the IDEA legislation, others have found the prospect of applying it in classrooms leads to a number of questions and concerns. Some ask, for example, whether a student with a disability will disrupt the class; others, whether the student will interfere with covering the curriculum; still others, whether the student might be teased by classmates. Since these are legitimate concerns, I will return to them at the end of this chapter. First, however, let me clarify exactly

how the IDEA legislation affects the work of teachers, and then describe in more detail the major disabilities that you are likely to encounter in students.

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8.4: Responsibilities of Teachers for Students with Disabilities

The IDEA legislation has affected the work of teachers by creating three new expectations. The first expectation is to provide alternative methods of assessment for students with disabilities; the second is to arrange a learning environment that is as normal or as "least restrictive" as possible; and the third is to participate in creating individual educational plans for students with disabilities.

Alternative assessments

In the context of students with disabilities, **assessment** refers to gathering information about a student in order both to identify the strengths of the student, and to decide what special educational support, if any, the student needs. In principle, of course, these are tasks that teachers have for *all* students: assessment is a major reason why we give tests and assignments, for example, and why we listen carefully to the quality of students' comments during class discussions. For students with disabilities, however, such traditional or conventional strategies of assessment often seriously underestimate the students' competence (Koretz & Barton, 2003/2004; Pullin, 2005). Depending on the disability, a student may have trouble with (a) holding a pencil, (b) hearing a question clearly, (c) focusing on a picture, (d) marking an answer in time even when he or she knows the answer, (e) concentrating on a task in the presence of other people, or (f) answering a question at the pace needed by the rest of the class. Traditionally, teachers have assumed that all students either have these skills or can learn them with just modest amounts of coaching, encouragement, and will power. For many other students, for example, it may be enough to say something like: "Remember to listen to the question carefully!" For students with disabilities, however, a comment like this may not work and may even be insensitive. A student with visual impairment does not need to be reminded to "look closely at what I am writing on the board"; doing so will not cause the student to see the chalkboard more clearly— though the reminder might increase the student's anxiety and self-consciousness.

There are a number of strategies for modifying assessments in ways that attempt to be fair and that at the same time recognize how busy teachers usually are. One is to consider supplementing conventional assignments or tests with **portfolios**, which are collections of a student's work that demonstrate a student's development over time, and which usually include some sort of reflective or evaluative comments from the student, the teacher, or both (Carothers & Taylor, 2003; Wesson & King, 1996). Another is to devise a system for observing the student regularly, even if briefly, and informally recording notes about the observations for later consideration and assessment. A third strategy is to recruit help from teacher assistants, who are sometimes present to help a student with a disability; an assistant can often conduct a brief test or activity with the student, and later report on and discuss the results with you.

If you reflect on these strategies, you may realize that they may sometimes create issues about fairness. If a student with a disability demonstrates competence one way but other students demonstrate it another, should they be given similar credit? On the other hand, is it fair for one student to get a lower mark because the student lacks an ability— such as normal hearing— that teachers cannot, in principle, ever teach? These ethical issues are legitimate and important, and I therefore return to them in Chapters 11 and 12, which discuss assessment in much more detail.

Least restrictive environment

The IDEA legislation calls for placing students with disabilities in the **least restrictive environment** (or **LRE**), defined as the combination of settings that involve the student with regular classrooms and school programs as much as possible. The precise combination is determined by the circumstances of a particular school and of the student. A kindergarten child with a mild cognitive disability, for example, may spend the majority of time in a regular kindergarten class, working alongside and playing with non-disabled classmates and relying on a teacher assistant for help where needed. An individual with a similar disability in high school, however, might be assigned primarily to classes specially intended for slow learners, but nonetheless participate in some school-wide activities alongside non-disabled students. The difference in LREs might reflect teachers' perceptions of how difficult it is to modify the curriculum in each case; rightly or wrongly, teachers are apt to regard adaptation as more challenging at "higher" grade levels. By the same token, a student with a disability that is strictly physical might spend virtually all his or her time in regular classes throughout the student's school career; in this case, adjustment of the curriculum would not be an issue.

For you, the policy favoring the least restrictive environment means that if you continue teaching long enough, you will very likely encounter a student with a disability in one or more of your classes, or at least have one in a school-related activity for which you are responsible. It also means that the special educational needs of these students will most often be the "mildest". Statistically, the most frequent forms of special needs are *learning disabilities*, which are impairments in specific aspects of learning, and especially of reading. Learning disabilities account for about half of all special educational needs— as much as all other types put together. Somewhat less common are *speech and language disorders*, *cognitive disabilities*, and *attention deficit hyperactivity disorders* (or

ADHD). Because of their frequency and of the likelihood that you will meet students for whom these labels have been considered, I describe them more fully later in this chapter, along with other disability conditions that you will encounter much less frequently.

Individual educational plan

The third way that IDEA legislation and current educational approaches affect teachers is by requiring teachers and other professional staff to develop an annual **individual educational plan** (or **IEP**) for each student with a disability. The plan is created by a team of individuals who know the student's strengths and needs; at a minimum it includes one or more classroom teachers, a "resource" or special education teacher, and the student's parents or guardians. Sometimes, too, the team includes a school administrator (like a vice-principal) or other professionals from outside the school (like a psychologist or physician), depending on the nature of the child's disability. An IEP can take many forms, but it always describes a student's current social and academic strengths as well as the student's social or academic needs. It also specifies educational goals or objectives for the coming year, lists special services to be provided, and describes how progress toward the goals will be assessed at the end of the year. Exhibit 6 shows a simple, imaginary IEP. (But keep in mind that the actual visual formats of IEP plans vary widely among states, provinces, and school jurisdictions.) This particular plan is for a student named Sean, a boy having difficulties with reading. IEPs, like the one in the figure, originally served mainly students in the younger grades, but more recently they have been extended and modified to serve **transition planning** for adolescents with disabilities who are approaching the end of their public schooling (West, et al., 1999). For these students, the goals of the plan often include activities (like finding employment) to extend beyond schooling. See below.

 Exhibit 8.4.1: A sample individual educational plan (Note that actual visual formats of IEP plans vary).

Student: Sean Cortinez	Birth Date: 26 May 2002	Period Covered by IEP: September 20xx – July 20xy
Address:		Phone:
School: Grant Park Middle School	Grade Level: 3	Teacher(s): G. Eidse

Support Team
List specialists (educational, medical, or other) involved in assisting the student: Resource teacher, instructional aide (part time):
Special Curriculum Needs to be Addressed:
List general needs here; use separate sheet(s) for specific, short-term objectives as appropriate:
Sean can read short, familiar words singly, but cannot read connected text even when familiar. Needs help especially with decoding and other "word attack" skills. Some trouble focusing on reading tasks. Sean speaks clearly and often listens well when the topic interests him.
Special Materials or Equipment Needed:
Modified test procedures and reading materials as required. Signatures:
Parent or guardian: K. Cortinez
Teacher(s): G. Eidse
Principal: L. Stauffer
Date of IEP Meeting: 26 October 20xx

If you have a student with an IEP, you can expect two consequences for teaching. The first is that you should expect to make definite, clear plans for the student, and to put the plans in writing. This consequence does not, of course, prevent you from taking advantage of unexpected or spontaneous classroom events as well in order to enrich the curriculum. But it does mean that an educational program for a student with a disability cannot consist only of the unexpected or spontaneous. The second consequence is that you should not expect to construct an educational plan alone, as is commonly done when planning regular classroom programs. When it comes to students with disabilities, expect instead to plan as part of a team. Working with others ensures that everyone who is concerned about the student has a voice. It also makes it possible to improve the quality of IEPs by pooling ideas from many sources— even if, as you might suspect, it also challenges professionals to communicate clearly and cooperate respectfully with team members in order to serve a student as well as possible.

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8.5: Categories of disabilities- Learning Disabilities

Categories of Disabilities and Their Ambiguities

So far I have said a lot about why inclusion has come to be important for teachers, but not much about the actual nature of students' disabilities. Part of the reason for delaying was because, to put it simply, disabilities are inherently ambiguous. Naming and describing "types" of them implies that disabilities are relatively fixed, stable, and distinct, like different kinds of fruit or vegetables. As many teachers discover, though, the reality is somewhat different. The behavior and qualities of a particular student with a disability can be hard to categorize. The student may be challenged not only by the disability, but also by experiences common to all students, disabled or not. Any particular disability, furthermore, poses problems more in some situations than in others. A student with a reading difficulty may have trouble in a language arts class, for example, but not in a physical education class; a student with a hearing impairment may have more trouble "hearing" a topic that he dislikes compared to one that he likes. Because official descriptions of types or categories of disabilities overlook these complexities, they risk stereotyping the real, live people to whom they are applied (Green, et al., 2005). Even the simplifications might not be a serious problem if the resulting stereotypes were complimentary—most of us would not mind being called a "genius", for example, even if the description is not always true. Stereotypes about disabilities, however, are usually stigmatizing, not complimentary.

Still, categories of disabilities do serve useful purposes by giving teachers, parents, and other professionals a language or frame of reference for talking about disabilities. They also can help educators when arranging special support services for students, since a student has to "have" an identifiable, nameable need if professionals are to provide help. Educational authorities have therefore continued to use categories (or "labels") to classify disabilities in spite of expressing continuing concern about whether the practice hurts students' self-esteem or standing in the eyes of peers (Biklen & Kliever, 2006). For classroom teachers, the best strategy may be simply to understand how categories of disabilities are defined, while also keeping their limitations in mind and being ready to explain their limitations (tactfully, of course) to parents or others who use the labels inappropriately.

That said, what in fact are the major types of disabilities encountered by teachers? Let us take them one at a time, beginning with the more common ones.

Learning disabilities

A **learning disability** (or **LD**) is a specific impairment of academic learning that interferes with a specific aspect of schoolwork and that reduces a student's academic performance significantly. An LD shows itself as a major discrepancy between a student's ability and some feature of achievement: the student may be delayed in reading, writing, listening, speaking, or doing mathematics, but not in all of these at once. A learning problem is not considered a *learning* disability if it stems from physical, sensory, or motor handicaps, or from generalized intellectual impairment (or mental retardation). It is also not an LD if the learning problem really reflects the challenges of learning English as a second language. Genuine LDs are the learning problems left over after these other possibilities are accounted for or excluded. Typically, a student with an LD has not been helped by teachers' ordinary efforts to assist the student when he or she falls behind academically—though what counts as an "ordinary effort", of course, differs among teachers, schools, and students. Most importantly, though, an LD relates to a fairly specific area of academic learning. A student may be able to read and compute well enough, for example, but not be able to write.

LDs are by far the most common form of special educational need, accounting for half of all students with special needs in the United States and anywhere from 5 to 20 per cent of all students, depending on how the numbers are estimated (United States Department of Education, 2005; Ysseldyke & Bielinski, 2002). Students with LDs are so common, in fact, that most teachers regularly encounter at least one per class in any given school year, regardless of the grade level they teach.

Defining learning disabilities clearly

With so many students defined as having learning disabilities, it is not surprising that the term itself becomes ambiguous in the truest sense of "having many meanings". Specific features of LDs vary considerably. Any of the following students, for example, qualify as having a learning disability, assuming that they have no other disease, condition, or circumstance to account for their behavior:

- Albert, an eighth-grader, has trouble solving word problems that he reads, but can solve them easily if he hears them orally.
- Bill, also in eighth grade, has the reverse problem: he can solve word problems only when he can read them, not when he hears them.

- Carole, a fifth-grader, constantly makes errors when she reads textual material aloud, either leaving out words, adding words, or substituting her own words for the printed text.
- Emily, in seventh grade, has terrible handwriting; her letters vary in size and wobble all over the page, much like a first- or second-grader.
- Denny reads very slowly, even though he is in fourth grade. His comprehension suffers as a result, because he sometimes forgets what he read at the beginning of a sentence by the time he reaches the end.
- Garnet's spelling would have to be called "inventive", even though he has practiced conventionally correct spelling more than other students. Garnet is in sixth grade.
- Harmin, a ninth-grader has particular trouble decoding individual words and letters if they are unfamiliar; he reads conceal as "concol" and *alternate* as "alfoonte".
- Irma, a tenth-grader, adds multiple-digit numbers as if they were single-digit numbers stuck together: $42 + 59$ equals 911 rather than 101, though $23 + 54$ correctly equals 77.

With so many expressions of LDs, it is not surprising that educators sometimes disagree about their nature and about the kind of help students need as a consequence. Such controversy may be inevitable because LDs by definition are learning problems with no obvious origin. There is good news, however, from this state of affairs, in that it opens the way to try a variety of solutions for helping students with learning disabilities.

Assisting students with learning disabilities

There are various ways to assist students with learning disabilities, depending not only on the nature of the disability, of course, but also on the concepts or theory of learning guiding you. Take Irma, the girl mentioned above who adds two-digit numbers as if they were one digit numbers. Stated more formally, Irma adds two-digit numbers without carrying digits forward from the ones column to the tens column, or from the tens to the hundreds column. Exhibit 7 shows the effect that her strategy has on one of her homework papers. What is going on here and how could a teacher help Irma?

Exhibit 8.5.1: Irma's math homework about two-digit addition

Directions: Add the following numbers.

42	23	11	47	97
<u>+ 59</u>	<u>+ 54</u>	<u>+ 48</u>	<u>+ 23</u>	<u>+ 64</u>
911	77	59	610	1511

Three out of the six problems are done correctly, even though Irma seems to use an incorrect strategy systematically on all six problems.

Behaviorism: reinforcement for wrong strategies

One possible approach comes from the behaviorist theory discussed in Chapter 2. Irma may persist with the single-digit strategy because it has been reinforced a lot in the past. Maybe she was rewarded so much for adding single-digit numbers ($3+5$, $7+8$ etc.) correctly that she generalized this skill to two-digit problems— in fact over generalized it. This explanation is plausible because she would still get many two-digit problems right, as you can confirm by looking at it. In behaviorist terms, her incorrect strategy would still be reinforced, but now only on a "partial schedule of reinforcement". As I pointed out in Chapter 2, partial schedules are especially slow to extinguish, so Irma persists seemingly indefinitely with treating two-digit problems as if they were single-digit problems.

From the point of view of behaviorism, changing Irma's behavior is tricky since the desired behavior (borrowing correctly) rarely happens and therefore cannot be reinforced very often. It might therefore help for the teacher to reward behaviors that compete directly with Irma's inappropriate strategy. The teacher might reduce credit for simply finding the correct answer, for example, and increase credit for a student showing her work— including the work of carrying digits forward correctly. Or the teacher might make a point of discussing Irma's math work with Irma frequently, so as to create more occasions when she can praise Irma for working problems correctly.

Metacognition and responding reflectively

Part of Irma's problem may be that she is thoughtless about doing her math: the minute she sees numbers on a worksheet, she stuffs them into the first arithmetic procedure that comes to mind. Her learning style, that is, seems too impulsive and not reflective enough, as discussed in Chapter 4. Her style also suggests a failure of metacognition (remember that idea from Chapter 2?), which is her self-monitoring of her own thinking and its effectiveness. As a solution, the teacher could encourage Irma to think out loud when she completes two-digit problems—literally get her to "talk her way through" each problem. If participating in these conversations was sometimes impractical, the teacher might also arrange for a skilled classmate to take her place some of the time. Cooperation between Irma and the classmate might help the classmate as well, or even improve overall social relationships in the classroom.

Constructivism, mentoring, and the zone of proximal development

Perhaps Irma has in fact learned how to carry digits forward, but not learned the procedure well enough to use it reliably on her own; so she constantly falls back on the earlier, better-learned strategy of single-digit addition. In that case her problem can be seen in the constructivist terms, like those that I discussed in Chapter 2. In essence, Irma has lacked appropriate mentoring from someone more expert than herself, someone who can create a "zone of proximal development" in which she can display and consolidate her skills more successfully. She still needs mentoring or "assisted coaching" more than independent practice. The teacher can arrange some of this in much the way she encourages to be more reflective, either by working with Irma herself or by arranging for a classmate or even a parent volunteer to do so. In this case, however, whoever serves as mentor should not only listen, but also actively offer Irma help. The help has to be just enough to insure that Irma completes two-digit problems correctly—neither more nor less. Too much help may prevent Irma from taking responsibility for learning the new strategy, but too little may cause her to take the responsibility prematurely.

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8.6: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (or **ADHD**) is a problem with sustaining attention and controlling impulses. As students, almost all of us have these problems at one time or another, but a student with ADHD shows them much more frequently than usual, and often at home as well as at school. In the classroom, the student with ADHD may fidget and squirm a lot, or have trouble remaining seated, or continually get distracted and off task, or have trouble waiting for a turn, or blurt out answers and comments. The student may shift continually from one activity to another, or have trouble playing quietly, or talk excessively without listening to others. Or the student may misplace things and seem generally disorganized, or be inclined to try risky activities without enough thought to the consequences. Although the list of problem behaviors is obviously quite extensive, keep in mind that the student will not do *all* of these things. It is just that over time, the student with ADHD is likely to do several of them chronically or repeatedly, and in more than one setting (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). In the classroom, of course, the behaviors may annoy classmates and frustrate teachers.

Differences in perceptions: ADHD versus high activity

It is important to note that classrooms are places that make heavy demands on not showing ADHD-like behaviors: students are often supposed to sit for long periods, avoid interrupting others, finish tasks after beginning them, and keep their minds (and materials) organized. Ironically, therefore, classroom life may sometimes aggravate ADHD without the teacher intending for it to do so. A student with only a mild or occasional tendency to be restless, for example, may fit in well outdoors playing soccer, but feel unusually restless indoors during class. It also should not be surprising that teachers sometimes mistake a student who is merely rather active for a student with ADHD, since any tendency to be physically active may contribute to problems with classroom management.

The tendency to "over-diagnose" is more likely for boys than for girls (Maniadaki, et al., 2003), presumably because gender role expectations cause teachers to be especially alert to high activity in boys. Over-diagnosis is also especially likely for students who are culturally or linguistically non-Anglo (Chamberlain, 2005), presumably because cultural and language differences may sometimes lead teachers to misinterpret students' behavior. To avoid making such mistakes, it is important to keep in mind that in true ADHD, restlessness, activity, and distractibility are widespread and sustained. A student who shows such problems at school but never at home, for example, may not have ADHD; he may simply not be getting along with his teacher or classmates.

Causes of ADHD

Most psychologists and medical specialists agree that true ADHD, as opposed to "mere" intermittent distractibility or high activity, reflects a problem in how the nervous system functions, but they do not know the exact nature or causes of the problem (Rutter, 2004, 2005). Research shows that ADHD tends to run in families, with children— especially boys— of parents who had ADHD somewhat more likely than usual to experience the condition themselves. The association does not necessarily mean, though, that ADHD is inborn or genetic. Why? It is because it is possible that parents who formerly had ADHD may raise their children more strictly in an effort to prevent their own condition in their children; yet their strictness, ironically, may trigger a bit more tendency, rather than less, toward the restless distractibility characteristic of ADHD. On the other hand (or is it "on the third hand"?), the parents' strictness may also be a result, as well as a cause of, a child's restlessness. The bottom line for teachers: sorting out causes from effects is confusing, if not impossible, and in any case may not help much to determine actual teaching strategies to help the students learn more effectively.

Teaching students with ADHD

Research also shows that ADHD can be reduced for many students if they take certain medications, of which the most common is *methylphenidate*, commonly known by the name Ritalin (Wilens, 2005; Olfson, 2003). This drug and others like it act by stimulating the nervous system, which reduces symptoms by helping a student pay better attention to the choices he or she makes and to the impact of actions on others. Unfortunately the medications do not work on all students with ADHD, especially after they reach adolescence, and in any case has certain practical problems. Drugs cost money, for one thing, which is a problem for a family without much money to begin with, or for a family lacking medical insurance that pays for medications— a particularly common situation in the United States. For another thing, drugs must be taken regularly in order to be effective, including on weekends. Keeping a regular schedule can be difficult if parents' own schedules are irregular or simply differ from the child's, for example because of night shifts at work or because parents are separated and share custody of the child.

In any case, since teachers are not doctors and medications are not under teachers' control, it may be more important simply to provide an environment where a student with ADHD can organize choices and actions easily and successfully. Clear rules and procedures, for example, can reduce the "noise" or chaotic quality in the child's classroom life significantly. The rules and procedures can be generated jointly with the child; they do not have to be imposed arbitrarily, as if the student were incapable of thinking about them reasonably. Sometimes a classmate can be enlisted to model slower, more reflective styles of working, but in ways that do not imply undue criticism of the student with ADHD. The more reflective student can complete a set of math problems, for example, while explaining what he or she is thinking about while doing the work. Sometimes the teacher can help by making lists of tasks or of steps in long tasks. It can help to divide focused work into small, short sessions rather than grouping it into single, longer sessions. Whatever the strategies that you use, they should be consistent, predictable, and generated by the student as much as possible. By having these qualities, the strategies can strengthen the student's self-direction and ability to screen out the distractions of classroom life. The goal for teachers, in essence, is to build the student's metacognitive capacity, while at the same time, of course, treating the student with respect.

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8.7: Summary, Key Words and References

Chapter summary

Since the 1970s support for people with disabilities has grown significantly, as reflected in the United States by three key pieces of legislation: the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The support has led to new educational practices, including alternative assessments for students with disabilities, placement in the least restrictive environment, and individual educational plans.

There are many ways of classifying people with disabilities, all of which carry risks of stereotyping and oversimplifying individuals' strengths and needs. For the purposes of education, the most frequent category is learning disabilities, which are difficulties with specific aspects of academic work. The high prevalence of learning disabilities makes this category especially ambiguous as a description of particular students. Assistance for students with learning disabilities can be framed in terms of behaviorist reinforcement, metacognitive strategies, or constructivist mentoring.

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a problem in sustaining attention and controlling impulses. It can often be controlled with medications, but usually it is also important for teachers to provide a structured environment for the student as well.

Intellectual disabilities (or mental retardation) are general limitations in cognitive functioning as well as in the tasks of daily living. Contemporary experts tend to classify individuals with these disabilities according to the amount and frequency of support they need from others. Teachers can assist these students by giving more time and practice than usual, by including adaptive and functional skills in what they teach, and by making sure that the student is included in the daily life of the classroom.

Behavioral disorders are conditions in which students chronically perform highly inappropriate behaviors. Students with these problems present challenges for classroom management, which teachers can meet by identifying circumstances that trigger inappropriate behaviors, by teaching interpersonal skills explicitly, and by making sure that punishments or disciplinary actions are fair and have been previously agreed upon.

Physical and sensory disabilities are significant limitations in health, hearing, or vision. The signs both of hearing loss and of vision loss can be subtle, but can sometimes be observed over a period of time. Teaching students with either a hearing loss or a vision loss primarily involves making use of the students' residual sensory abilities and insuring that the student is included in and supported by the class as well as possible.

Key terms	
Alternative assessment	Least restrictive environment (LRE)
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990	Learning disabilities
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	Mental retardation
Behavioral disorders	Portfolio assessment
Contingency contracts	Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Hearing loss	Sensory impairment
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	Transition planning
Individual educational plan (IEP)	Visual impairment
Intellectual disabilities	

On the Internet

Each of the following websites represents an organization focused on the needs of people with one particular type of disability. Each includes free access to archives of non-current journals and other publications, as well as information about conferences, professional training events, and political news relevant to persons with disabilities. (Note that the sponsoring organizations about hearing loss and about intellectual disabilities changed their names recently, though not their purposes, so their websites may eventually change names as well.)

- < <https://ldaamerica.org/>> This is primarily about learning disabilities, but also somewhat about ADHD.
- < <https://add.org/>> This website is primarily about ADHD. Note that its website name uses an older terminology for this disability, ADD (no "H") for attention deficit disorder (with the term hyperactivity).
- <<https://www.hearingloss.org/>> This one primarily discusses about hearing loss.
- < <http://www.lighthouseguild.org/navh>> This website is primarily about visual impairment.
- < <http://www.aamr.org/>> This one is primarily about intellectual disabilities or mental retardation.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Social Emotional Learning

9.1: Childhood Trauma

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9.1: Childhood Trauma



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You can now see how many factors combine to create each unique student that you will teach, as well as how challenging it can be to meet the needs of such a variety of learners. Another issue of which new teachers should be aware is that of childhood trauma. While there is enough information on this topic to fill its own textbook, having a brief overview of the information will be beneficial to your understanding of working with a diverse array of students.

What is trauma?

According to the Child Welfare Information Gateway (2014), trauma is “an emotional response to an intense event that threatens or causes harm. This harm can be physical or emotional, real or perceived, and it can threaten a child or someone close to him or her. Trauma can be a result of a single event, or it can result from exposure to multiple events over time” (p. 2). There are many events that might possibly cause trauma. These include, but are not limited to physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect, effects of poverty, being separated from your loved ones, bullying, domestic or community violence through which harm to a loved one or pet has been witnessed, accidents, natural disasters, and behavior that is unpredictable due to addiction or mental illness (Child Information Gateway, 2014, p. 2). A traumatic experience is very often overwhelming to the individual, extremely painful or frightening, and include a loss of control and the inability to regulate one’s emotions. It is vital to remember that a traumatic experience overwhelms one’s ability to cope and that this can be different for each person. Therefore, due to a variety of factors (such as resilience) what might be traumatic to one student might not be to another. Again, this is not a “one size fits all” scenario. Each student is an individual.

How Trauma Affects the Brain



There is no shortage of information regarding how trauma affects brain development, but very basically, “when a stressful experience (such as being abused, neglected, or bullied) overwhelms the child’s natural ability to cope” this can cause a “flight, fight or freeze” response. This response results in changes in the body, including an accelerated heart rate and higher blood pressure. This also results in changes in how the brain “perceives and responds to the world”. The result of this can be that the “trauma interferes with normal development and can have long lasting effects” (above information from Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2014, p. 2).

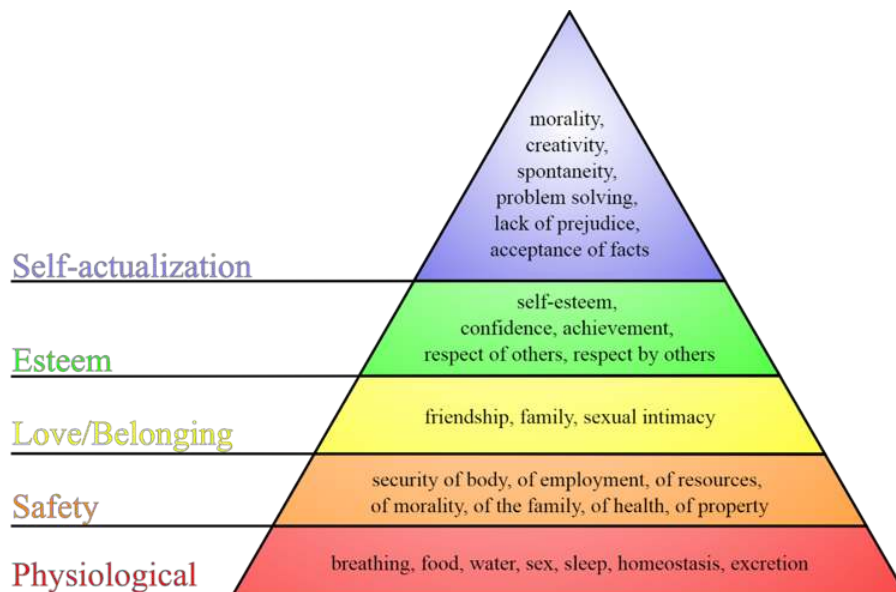
How Trauma Affects Learning and Classroom Environment

What is the likelihood that you will have students in your classroom who are dealing with trauma related incidents? According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (n.d.), More than two-thirds of children reported at least one traumatic event by the age of sixteen. I would say that your chances are quite good that you will encounter students facing these issues.

A variety of learning related tasks are affected by trauma. Students who have experienced trauma may have difficulty regulating emotions. They may have impaired cognitive functions. The ability to organize material sequentially may be difficult. Transitions may be problematic. Problem solving might be hard. They may be self-protective, easily frustrated, and have inconsistent moods. This is just a brief non-inclusive list of some of the ways in which your classroom could be impacted by students with a background of child trauma.

Maslow vs. Blooms

In a previous chapter, you learned about Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning, which guides teachers in the creation of excellent learning experiences. In psychology, you may have heard about Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (represented below).



Look this over carefully. Now go back and look at Bloom's Taxonomy?

Reflection: Can you see any issue with trying to do both at the same time? Which should come first? What does the above depiction say to you about your students and your classroom?

Read the following and then think about how this might play out in your future classroom.

- At the base of the pyramid are all of the physiological needs that are necessary for survival. These are followed by basic needs for security and safety, the need to be loved and to have a sense of belonging, and the need to have self-worth and confidence. The top tier of the pyramid is self-actualization, which is a need that essentially equates to achieving one's full potential, and it can only be realized when needs lower on the pyramid have been met. According to Maslow (1943), one must satisfy lower-level needs before addressing those needs that occur higher in the pyramid. So, for example, if someone is struggling to find enough food to meet his nutritional requirements, it is quite unlikely that he would spend an inordinate amount of time thinking about whether others viewed him as a good person or not. Instead, all of his energies would be geared toward finding something to eat.

Trauma Informed Practice

Some students can exhibit difficult behaviors because of their backgrounds while some will not. All of them need to be understood and supported. According to the Substance Abuse for Mental Health Administration (2014), the components of trauma-informed care consist of the creation of a safe environment, supporting and teaching emotional regulation and building relationships and connectedness. Knowing your student is vital. Trying to understand your students' triggers is also of key importance. Remember always that they are not trying to push your buttons (We Are Teachers Staff, 2018). Their behaviors are often reactions to being

triggered by something (such as a loud noise or yelling). The primary function of the triggered response is to help the child achieve safety in the face of perceived danger. Seek first to understand the child's behavior and change your thinking from "what is wrong with this student?" to "what has this student been through?" (Bashant, 2016).

If relationship building, support, understanding and the creation of a safe environment are key to working with your students, what doesn't work is equally apparent. Sadly, it is often the first thing educators turn to when these behaviors appear. The research is clear that punishment of this behavior not only does not work, it is highly detrimental to the student. According to NEA Today (2016), because traumatic experiences directly shape your students' brains, the disruptive behavior that is witnessed and often punished isn't willful disobedience or defiance, but a subconscious effort to self-protect. Their altered brains are screaming: Flight! Flee! Freeze! Their goal is to be safe. Respond in ways that help to make your students feel connected and safe first, and then revisit possible consequences for any broken rules.

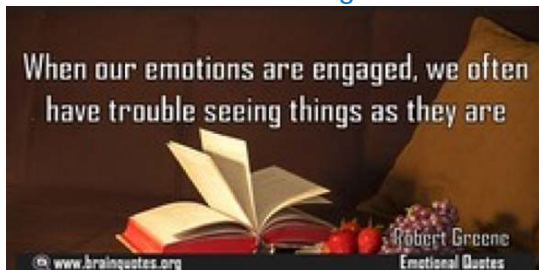
Starr Commonweath Chief Clinical Officer, Dr. Caelan Soma (2018) offered these tips for understanding and working with students who have experienced trauma.

1. They are not trying to push your buttons.
2. They worry about what is going to happen next.
3. Even if the situation doesn't seem that bad to you, it is how the child feels that matters, not how you feel.
4. Trauma does not always have to be associated with violence
5. You don't need to know how the trauma was caused to be able to help.
6. They need to feel that they are good at something and that they can have a positive influence on the world.
7. There is a direct connection between stress and learning.
8. Self-regulation is a challenge.
9. You can ask kids directly what you can do to help them make it through the day.
10. Be supportive of students with trauma even when they are outside of your classroom.

(for more information, the link to the above article is located in the teacher references section).

There are numerous videos, books, and articles regarding trauma informed best practices. At the end of this chapter, there is a link to the National Child Traumatic Stress Networks Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators. This free and easy to download resource has numerous tips and suggestions for teachers.

Social Emotional Learning



Social emotional learning (SEL) has become part of many states' educational missions, including New York. SEL can be defined as "the process through which children, youth, and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for other, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions" (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, 2015, para. 1 as cited in NYSED, 2018) p. 6). Five core social emotional competencies were created as a framework for SEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) 2017). These are:



According to the New York State Education Department (2018) “extensive research indicates that effective mastery of social emotional competencies is associated with greater well-being and better school performance; whereas the lack of competency in these areas can lead to a variety of personal, social and academic issues” (p. 6). Because of this, New York State Education Department development social emotional learning benchmarks to serve as a guide for educators in the state. The goals of the SEL benchmarks for New York State schools are:

1. Develop self-awareness and self-management skills essential to success in school and in life.
 2. Use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.
 3. Demonstrate ethical decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.
- (NYSED.gov, 2018).

To learn more about NYSED’s position on SEL, you can find the document online (see resources link at the end of the chapter).



The goal of introducing SEL into the daily activities on a school is, in part, foster a more positive school climate. Additionally, SEL can help children gain skills needed to succeed in school, in the workplace and in life (www.cfcchildren.org). According to CASEL, SEL works, and leads to increased academic achievement and improved behavior (casel.org, 2018).

Building Relationships

Over the course of your education to become a teacher you will most likely hear a lot about the value of forming good relationships with your students. It may sound like a “no-brainer”, but its importance cannot be overstated. According to the Room 241 Team (Concordia University Portland, 2018), “...for children who have been affected by trauma, strong connections are vital. Rich relationships with teachers help children form the foundations of resilience” (para. 3). Venet (2018) echoed the value of relationship building as part of the delicate balancing act of working with trauma-affected students. The author stated that “...students who have experienced trauma, start by flipping traditional classroom paradigm: Relationships have to come before content...” (para. 6). The more you know and understand your students, the better.



Connell (2016) suggested ten ways that a teacher can build relationships with their students:

1. Greet each student every day with both a hello and a good-bye.
2. Use letters and questionnaires to help you find out about your students.
3. Get parent input if you can.
4. Appeal to your students' interests.
5. Speak to students with respect.
6. Attend outside activities.
7. Let students inside your world (with appropriate boundaries, of course).
8. Let your students have a voice.
9. Be real.
10. Trust that they will all do great things.

This teacher from North Carolina has a unique way of beginning each class: (USA Today, Moments that Give us Hope (2017).

<https://youtu.be/4JueNr1e0H4>

As you move forward in your education, be sure to always remember the importance of listening. So many students are not listened to at home. People are distracted. Do your best to have your students feel heard and valued. It can make all the difference in the world.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/foundationsofeducation/?p=142

-America's Promise Alliance, 2015

Summary

Every year teachers will meet new groups of students. Every class will be a unique combination of individuals. They will vary by many factors related to diversity. They will have different temperaments and learning styles. Their motivation levels won't all be

the same. Some will have experienced many childhood traumas, while some will have experienced few or none. Their experience and maturity in relation to social emotional learning will differ as well. However, one thing will remain constant. Your students will do best in a positive environment where mutual respect is fostered. Strong teacher-student relationships are the cornerstone of these classrooms. Having knowledge about yourself, child development and differentiated instruction will help you to have a greater understanding of your students. You will be learning this as you move forward in your education. What you cannot be taught is to care about forging these relationships in the first place. That must already be a part of who you are.

Additional Resources:

- 10 Things About Childhood Trauma Every Teacher Needs to Know (STARR Commonwealth)
 - <https://www.weareteachers.com/10-things-about-childhood-trauma-every-teacher-needs-to-know/>
- A great resource for teachers regarding trauma is the National Child Traumatic Stress Network Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators which can be found and downloaded here:
 - <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/child-trauma-toolkit-educators>
- NYSED Social Emotional Benchmarks:
 - <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/NYSSELBenchmarks.pdf>
- NYSED Social Emotional Learning Information:
 - <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/GuideToSystemicWholeSchoolImplementationFINAL.pdf>
- A great article on trauma informed practices and SEL:
 - <https://www.edutopia.org/article/how-and-why-trauma-informed-teaching>

One of the first studies on trauma informed practices in public school was covered in a full-length documentary entitled: Paper Tigers. It can be rented on numerous sites, including You Tube here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iV3wzUhJSKs>

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: Classroom Management

10.1: Introduction

10.2: Why Classroom Management Matters

10.3: Preventing Management Problems by Focusing Students on Learning

10.4: Responding to Student Misbehavior

10.5: Keeping Management Issues in Perspective

10.6: Summary, Key Words and References

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10.1: Introduction

This is an excerpt from a professional journal kept by one of us (Kelvin Seifert) when he was teaching kindergarten:

20XX-11-14: *Today my student Carol sat in the circle, watching others while we all played Duck, Duck, Goose (in this game, one student is outside the circle, tags another student who then chases the first person around the circle). Carol's turn had already passed. Apparently she was bored, because she flopped on her back, smiling broadly, rolling around luxuriously on the floor in the path of the other runners. Several classmates noticed her, smiled or giggled, began flopping down as well. One chaser tripped over a "flopper".*

"Sit up, Carol", said I, the ever-vigilant teacher. "You're in the way." But no result. I repeated this twice, firmly; then moved to pick her up.

Instantly Carol ran to the far side of the gym, still smiling broadly. Then her best friend ran off with her. Now a whole new game was launched, or really two games: "Run-from-the-teacher" and "Enjoy-being-watched-by-everybody". A lot more exciting, unfortunately, than Duck, Duck, Goose!

An excerpt from Kelvin's same journal several years later, when he was teaching math in high school:

20XX-3-4: *The same four students sat in the back again today, as usual. They seem to look in every direction except at me, even when I'm explaining material that they need to know. The way they smile and whisper to each other, it seems almost like they are "in love" with each other, though I can't be sure who loves whom the most.*

Others— students not part of the foursome— seem to react variously. Some seem annoyed, turn the other way, avoid talking with the group, and so on. But others seem almost envious— as if they want to be part of the "in" group, too, and were impressed with the foursome's ability to get away with being inattentive and almost rude. Either way, I think a lot of other students are being distracted.

Twice during the period today, I happened to notice members of the group passing a note, and then giggling and looking at me. By the end, I had had enough of this sort of thing, so I kept them in briefly after class and asked one of them to read the note. They looked a bit embarrassed and hesitant, but eventually one of them opened the note and read it out loud. "Choose one", it said. "Mr Seifert looks (1) old , (2) stupid , or (3) clueless ."

Kelvin's experiences in managing these very different classrooms taught him what every teacher knows or else quickly learns: management matters a lot. But his experiences also taught him that management is about *more* than correcting the misbehaviors of individuals, *more* than just discipline. **Classroom management** is also about orchestrating or coordinating entire sets or sequences of learning activities so that *everyone*, misbehaving or not, learns as easily and productively as possible. Educators sometimes therefore describe good management as the **creation of a positive learning environment**, because the term calls attention to the totality of activities and people in a classroom, as well as to their goals and expectations about learning (Jones & Jones, 2007). When one of us (Kelvin) was teaching, he used both terms almost interchangeably, though in speaking of *management* he more often was referring to individual students' behavior and learning, and in speaking of the *learning environment* he more often meant the overall "feel" of the class as a whole.

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10.2: Why Classroom Management Matters

Managing the learning environment is both a major responsibility and an on-going concern for all teachers, even those with years of experience (Good & Brophy, 2002). There are several reasons. In the first place, a lot goes on in classrooms simultaneously, even when students seem to be doing only one task in common. Twenty-five students may all seem to be working on a sheet of math problems. But look more closely: several may be stuck on a particular problem, each for different reasons. A few others have worked only the first problem or two and are now chatting quietly with each other instead of continuing. Still others have finished and are wondering what to do next. At any one moment each student needs something different— different information, different hints, different kinds of encouragement. Such diversity increases even more if the teacher deliberately assigns multiple activities to different groups or individuals (for example, if some students do a reading assignment while others do the math problems).

Another reason that managing the environment is challenging is because a teacher can not predict everything that will happen in a class. A well-planned lesson may fall flat on its face, or take less time than expected, and you find yourself improvising to fill class time. On the other hand an unplanned moment may become a wonderful, sustained exchange among students, and prompt you to drop previous plans and follow the flow of discussion. Interruptions happen continually: a fire drill, a drop-in visit from another teacher or the principal, a call on the intercom from the office. An activity may indeed turn out well, but also rather differently than you intended; you therefore have to decide how, if at all, to adjust the next day's lesson to allow for this surprise.

A third reason for the importance of management is that students form opinions and perceptions about your teaching that are inconsistent with your own. What you intend as encouragement for a shy student may seem to the student herself like "forced participation". An eager, outgoing classmate watching your effort to encourage the shy student, moreover, may not see you as *either* encouraging or coercing, but as overlooking or ignoring *other* students who already want to participate. The variety of perceptions can lead to surprises in students' responses— most often small ones, but occasionally major.

At the broadest, society-wide level, classroom management challenges teachers because public schooling is not voluntary, and students' presence in a classroom is therefore not a sign, in and of itself, that they wish to learn. Instead, students' presence is just a sign that an *opportunity* exists for teachers to motivate students to learn. Some students, of course, do enjoy learning and being in school, almost regardless of what teachers do! Others do enjoy school, but only because teachers have worked hard to make classroom life pleasant and interesting. Those students become motivated because you have successfully created a positive learning environment and have sustained it through skillful management.

Fortunately it is possible to earn this sort of commitment from many students, and this chapter describes ways of doing so. We begin with ways of *preventing* management problems from happening by increasing students' focus on learning. The methods include ideas about arranging classroom space, about establishing procedures, routines, and rules, and about communicating the importance of learning to students and parents. After these prevention oriented discussions, we look at ways of *refocusing* students when and if their minds or actions stray from the tasks at hand. As you probably know from being a student, bringing students back on task can happen in many ways, and the ways vary widely in the energy and persistence required of the teacher. We try to indicate some of these variations, but because of space limitations and because of the richness of classroom life, we cannot describe them all.

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10.3: Preventing Management Problems by Focusing Students on Learning

The easiest management problems to solve are ones that do not happen in the first place! Even before the school year begins, you can minimize behavior problems by arranging classroom furniture and materials in ways that encourage a focus on learning as much as possible. Later, once school begins, you can establish procedures and rules that support a focus on learning even more.

Arranging classroom space

Viewed broadly, classrooms may seem to be arranged in similar ways, but there are actually important alternative arrangements to consider. Variations exist because of grade level, the subjects taught, the teacher's philosophy of education, and of course the size of the room and the furniture available. Whatever the arrangement that you choose, it should help students to focus on learning tasks as much as possible and minimize the chances of distractions. Beyond these basic principles, however, the "best" arrangement depends on what your students need and on the kind of teaching that you prefer and feel able to provide (Boyner, 2003; Nations & Boyett, 2002). The next sections describe some of the options. In considering them (and before moving too much furniture around your room!), you might want to try experimenting with spatial arrangements "virtually" by using one of the computer programs available on the Internet (see: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/178666310189912023/> for example).

Displays and wall space

All classrooms have walls, of course, and how you fill them can affect the mood or feeling of a classroom. Ample displays make a room interesting and can be used to reinforce curriculum goals and display (and hence publicly recognize) students' work. But too many displays can also make a room seem "busy" or distracting as well as physically smaller. They can also be more work to maintain. If you are starting a new school year, then, a good strategy is to decorate some of the wall or bulletin board space, but not to fill it all immediately. Leaving some space open leaves flexibility to respond to ideas and curriculum needs that emerge after the year is underway. The same advice applies especially for displays that are high maintenance, such as aquariums, pets, and plants. These can serve wonderfully as learning aids, but do not have to be in place on the first day of school. Not only the students, but also you yourself, may already have enough to cope with at that time.

Computers in the classroom

If you are like the majority of teachers, you will have only one computer in your room, or at most just a few, and their placement may be pre-determined by the location of power and cable outlets. If so, you need to think about computer placement early in the process of setting up a room. Once the location of computers is set, locations for desks, high-usage shelves, and other moveable items can be chosen more sensibly— in general, as already mentioned, so as to minimize distractions to students and to avoid unnecessary traffic congestion.

Visibility of and interactions with students

Learning is facilitated if the furniture and space allow you to see all students and to interact with them from a comfortable distance. Usually this means that the main, central part of the room— where desks and tables are usually located— needs to be as open and as spacious as possible. While this idea may seem obvious, enacting it can be challenging in practice if the room itself is small or shaped unusually. In classrooms with young students (kindergarten), furthermore, open spaces tend to allow, if not invite, physical movement of children— a feature that you may consider either constructive or annoying, depending on your educational goals and the actual level of activity that occurs.

Spatial arrangements unique to grade levels or subjects

The best room arrangement sometimes depends on the grade level or subject area of the class. If you teach in elementary school, for example, you may need to think especially about where students can keep their daily belongings, such as coats and lunches. In some schools, these can be kept outside the classroom— but not necessarily. Some subjects and grade levels, furthermore, lend themselves especially well to small group interaction, in which case you might prefer not to seat students in rows, but instead around small-group tables or work areas. The latter arrangement is sometimes preferred by elementary teachers, but is also useful in high schools wherever students need lots of counter space, as in some shops or art courses, or where they need to interact, as in English as a Second Language courses (McCafferty, Jacobs, & Iddings, 2006). The key issue in deciding between tables and rows, however, is not grade level or subject as such, but the amount of small group interaction you want to encourage, compared to the

amount of whole-group instruction. As a rule, tables make working with peers easier, and rows make listening to the teacher more likely and group work slightly more awkward physically.

Ironically, some teachers also experience challenges about room arrangement because they do not actually have a classroom of their own, because they must move each day among other teachers' rooms. "Floating" is especially likely for specialized teachers (e.g. music teachers in elementary schools, who move from class to class) and in schools have an overall shortage of classrooms. Floating can sometimes be annoying to the teacher, though it actually also has advantages, such as not having to take responsibility for how other teachers' rooms are arranged. If you find yourself floating, it helps to consider a few key strategies, such as:

- consider using a permanent cart to move crucial supplies from room to room
- make sure that every one of your rooms has an overhead projector (do not count on using chalkboards or computers in other teachers' rooms)
- talk to the other teachers about having at least one shelf or corner in each room designated for your exclusive use

Establishing daily procedures and routines

Procedures or **routines** are specific ways of doing common, repeated classroom tasks or activities. Examples include checking daily attendance, dealing with students who arrive late, or granting permission to leave the classroom for an errand. Academically related procedures include ways of turning in daily homework (e.g. putting it on a designated shelf at a particular time), of gaining the teacher's attention during quiet seat work (e.g. raising your hand and waiting), and of starting a "free choice" activity after completing a classroom assignment.

Procedures serve the largely practical purpose of making activities and tasks flow smoothly—a valuable and necessary purpose in classrooms, where the actions of many people have to be coordinated within limited time and space. As such, procedures are more like social conventions than like moral expectations. They are only indirectly about what is ethically *right* or ethically *desirable* to do (Turiel, 2006). Most procedures or routines can be accomplished in more than one way, with only minor differences in outcomes. There is more than one way, for example, for the procedure of taking attendance: the teacher could call the role, delegate a student to call the role, or note students' presence on a seating chart. Each variation accomplishes essentially the same task, and the choice may be less important than the fact that the class coordinates its actions *somehow*, by committing to *some* sort of choice.

For teachers, of course, an initial management task is to establish procedures and routines as promptly as possible. Because of the conventional quality of procedures, some teachers find that it works well simply to announce and explain key procedures without inviting much discussion from students ("Here is how we will choose partners for the group work"). Other teachers prefer to invite input from students when creating procedures (asking the class, "What do you feel is the best way for students to get my attention during a quiet reading time?"). Both approaches have advantages as well as disadvantages. Simply announcing key procedures saves time and insures consistency in case you teach more than one class (as you would in high school). But it puts more responsibility on the teacher to choose procedures that are truly reasonable and practical. Inviting students' input, on the other hand, can help students to become aware of and committed to procedures, but at the cost of requiring more time to settle on them. It also risks creating confusion if you teach multiple classes, each of which adopts different procedures. Whatever approach you choose, of course, they have to take into account any procedures or rules imposed by the school or school district as a whole. A school may have a uniform policy about how to record daily attendance, for example, and that policy may determine, either partly or completely, how you take attendance with your particular students.

Establishing classroom rules

Unlike procedures or routines, **rules** express standards of behavior for which individual students need to take responsibility. Although they are like procedures in that they sometimes help in insuring the efficiency of classroom tasks, they are really about encouraging students to be responsible for learning and showing respect for each other.

Exhibit 10.3.1: Sample set of classroom rules

- Treat others with courtesy and politeness.
- Make sure to bring required materials to class and to activities.
- Be on time for class and other activities.
- Listen to the teacher and to others when they are speaking.

- Follow all school rules

Note three things about the examples in Exhibit 10.3.1. One is that the rules are not numerous; the table lists only five. Most educational experts recommend keeping the number of rules to a minimum in order to make them easier to remember (Thorson, 2003; Brophy, 2004). A second feature is that they are stated in positive terms ("Do X...") rather than negative terms ("Do not do Y..."), a strategy that emphasizes and clarifies what students should do rather than what they should avoid. A third feature is that each rule actually covers a collection of more specific behaviors. The rule "Bring all materials to class", for example, covers bringing pencils, paper, textbooks, homework papers, and permission slips— depending on the situation. As a result of their generality, rules often have a degree of ambiguity that sometimes requires interpretation. Infractions may occur that are marginal or "in a grey area", rather than clear cut. A student may bring a pen, for example, but the pen may not work properly. You may therefore wonder whether this incident is really a failure to follow the rule, or just an unfortunate (and in this case minor) fault of the pen manufacturer.

As with classroom procedures, rules can be planned either by the teacher alone, or by the teacher with advice from students. The arguments for each approach are similar to the arguments for procedures: rules "laid on" by the teacher may be more efficient and consistent, and in this sense more fair, but rules influenced by the students may be supported more fully by the students. Because rules focus strongly on personal responsibility, however, there is a stronger case for involving students in making them than in making classroom procedures (Brookfield, 2006; Kohn, 2006). In any case the question of who plans classroom rules is not necessarily an either/or choice. It is possible in principle to impose certain rules on students (for example, "Always be polite to each other") but let the students determine the consequences for violations of certain rules (for example, "If a student is discourteous to a classmate, he/she must apologize to the student in writing"). Some mixture of influences is probably inevitable, in fact, if only because the class needs to take into account your own moral commitments as the teacher as well as any imposed by the school (like "No smoking in the school" or "Always walk in the hallways").

Pacing and structuring lessons and activities

One of the best ways to prevent management problems is by pacing and structuring lessons or activities as smoothly and continuously as possible. This goal depends on three major strategies:

- selecting tasks or activities at an appropriate level of difficulty for your students
- providing a moderate level of structure or clarity to students about what they are supposed to do, especially during transitions between activities
- keeping alert to the flow and interplay of behaviors for the class as a whole and for individuals within it.

Each strategy presents special challenges to teachers, but also opportunities for helping students to learn.

Choosing tasks at an appropriate level of difficulty

As experienced teachers know and as research has confirmed, students are most likely to engage with learning when tasks are of moderate difficulty, neither too easy nor too hard and therefore neither boring nor frustrating (Britt, 2005). Finding the right level of difficulty, however, can be a challenge if you have little experience teaching a particular grade level or curriculum, or even if students are simply new to you and their abilities unknown. Whether familiar or not, members of any class are likely to have diverse skills and readiness—a fact that makes it challenging to determine what level of difficulty is appropriate. A common strategy for dealing with these challenges is to begin units, lessons, or projects with tasks that are relatively easy and familiar. Then, introduce more difficult material or tasks gradually until students seem challenged, but not overwhelmed. Following this strategy gives the teacher a chance to observe and diagnose students' learning needs before adjusting content, and it gives students a chance to orient themselves to the teacher's expectations, teaching style, and topic of study without becoming frustrated prematurely. Later in a unit, lesson, or project, students seem better able to deal with more difficult tasks or content (Van Merriënboer, 2003). The principle seems to help as well with "authentic" learning tasks—ones that resemble real-world activities, such as learning to drive an automobile or to cook a meal, and that present a variety of complex tasks simultaneously. Even in those cases it helps to isolate and focus on the simplest subtasks first (such as "put the key in the ignition") and move to harder tasks only later (such as parallel parking).

Sequencing instruction is only a partial solution to finding the best "level" of difficulty, however, because it does not deal with enduring individual differences among students. The fundamental challenge to teachers is to individualize or differentiate instruction fully: to tailor it not only to the class as a group, but to the lasting differences among members of the class. One way to

approach this sort of diversity, obviously, is to plan different content or activities for different students or groups of students. While one group works on Task A, another group works on Task B; one group works on relatively easy math problems, for example, while another works on harder ones. Differentiating instruction in this way complicates a teacher's job, but it can be done, and has in fact been done by many teachers (it also makes teaching more interesting!). In the next chapter, we describe some classroom management strategies that help with such multi-tasking.

Providing moderate amounts of structure and detail

Chances are that at some point in your educational career you have wished that a teacher would clarify or explain an assignment more fully, and perhaps give it a clearer structure or organization. Students' desire for clarity is especially common with assignments that are by nature open-ended, such as long essays, large projects, or creative works. Simply being told to "write an essay critiquing the novel", for example, leaves more room for uncertainty (and worry) than being given guidelines about what questions the essay should address, what topics or parts it should have, and what its length or style should be (Chesebro, 2003). As you might suspect, some students desire clarity more than others, and improve their performance especially much when provided with plenty of structure and clarity. Students with certain kinds of learning difficulties, in particular, often learn effectively and stay on task only if provided with somewhat explicit, detailed instructions about the tasks expected of them (Marks, et al., 2003).

As a teacher, the challenge is to accommodate students' need for clarity without making guidance so specific or detailed that students do little thinking for themselves. As a (ridiculously extreme) example, consider a teacher gives "clear" instructions for an essay by announcing not only exactly which articles to read and cite in the essay and which topics or issues to cover, but even requires specific wording of sentences in their essays. This much specificity may reduce students' uncertainties and make the teacher's task of evaluating the essays relatively straightforward and easy. But it also reduces or even eliminates the educational value of the assignment—assuming, of course, that its purpose is to get students to think for themselves.

Ideally, then, structure should be moderate rather than extreme. There should be just enough to give students some sense of direction and to stimulate more accomplishment than if they worked with less structure or guidance. This ideal is an application of Vygotsky's idea of the zone of proximal development that we discussed in Chapter 2: a place (figuratively speaking) where students get more done with help than without it. The ideal amount of guidance—the "location" of the zone of proximal development—varies with the assignment and the student, and it (hopefully) decreases over time for all students. One student may need more guidance to do his or her best in math, but less guidance in order to write her or his best essay. Another student may need the reverse. But if all goes well, both students may need less at the end of the year than at the beginning.

Managing transitions

Transitions between activities is often full of distractions and "lost" time, and is a time when inappropriate behaviors are especially likely to occur. Part of the problem is intrinsic to transitions: students may have to wait before a new activity actually begins, and therefore get bored at the very moment when the teacher is preoccupied with arranging materials for the new activity. From the point of view of the students, transitions may seem essentially like unsupervised group time, when seemingly any behavior is tolerated.

Minimizing such problems requires two strategies, one of which is easier to implement than the other. The easier strategy is for you, as teacher, to organize materials as well as possible ahead of time, so that you minimize the time needed to begin a new activity. The advice sounds simple, and mostly is, but it sometimes takes a bit of practice to implement smoothly. When one of us (Kelvin) first began teaching university, for example, particular papers or overhead transparencies sometimes got lost in the wrong folder in spite of Kelvin's efforts to keep them where they were easy to find. The resulting delays about finding them slowed the pace of class and caused frustrations.

A second, more complex strategy is to teach students ways to manage their own behavior during transitions (Marzano & Marzano, 2004). If students talk too loudly at these times, for example, then discuss with them what constitutes appropriate levels or amounts of talk, and discuss the need for them to monitor their own sound level. Or if students stop work early in anticipation of ending an activity, then talk about—or even practice—waiting for a signal from yourself to indicate the true ending point for an activity. If certain students continue working *beyond* the end of an activity. On the other hand, try giving them warning of the impending end in advance, and remind them about to take responsibility for actually finishing work once they hear the advance warning, and so on. The point of these tactics is to encourage responsibility for behavior during transitions, and thereby reduce your own need to monitor students at that crucial time.

None of these ideas, of course, mean that you, as teacher, should give up monitoring students' behavior entirely. Chances are that you still will need to notice if and when someone talks too loudly, finishes too early, or continues too long, and you will still need to give some students appropriate reminders. But the amount of reminding will be less to the extent that students can remind and monitor themselves—a welcome trend at any time, but especially during transitions.

Maintaining the flow of activities

A lot of classroom management is really about keeping activities flowing smoothly, both during individual lessons and across the school day. The trouble is that there is never just "one" event happening at a time, even if only one activity has been formally planned and is supposed to be occurring. Imagine, for example, that everyone is supposed to be attending a single whole-class discussion on a topic; yet individual students will be having different experiences at any one moment. Several students may be listening and contributing comments, for example, but a few others may be planning what they want to say next and ignoring the current speakers, still others may be ruminating about what a previous speaker said, and still others may be thinking about unrelated matters—the restroom, food, or sex. Things get even more complicated if the teacher deliberately plans multiple activities: in that case some students may interact with the teacher, for example, while others do work in an unsupervised group or work independently in a different part of the room. How is a teacher to keep activities flowing smoothly in the face of such variety?

A common mistake of beginning teachers in multi-faceted settings like these is to pay too much attention to any *one* activity, student, or small group, at the expense of noticing and responding to all the others. If you are helping a student on one side of the room when someone on the other side disturbs classmates with off-task conversation, it can be less effective either to finish with the student you are helping before attending to the disruption, or to interrupt yourself to solve the disruption on the other side of the room. Although one of these responses may be necessary, either one involves disruption *somewhere*. There is a risk that either the student's chatting may spread to others, or the interrupted student may become bored with waiting for the teacher's attention and wander off-task herself.

A better solution, though one that at first may seem challenging, is to attend to *both* events at once—a strategy that was named **withitness** in a series of now-classic research studies several decades ago (Kounin, 1970). Withitness does not mean that you focus on all simultaneous activities with equal care, but only that you remain aware of multiple activities, behaviors, and events to some degree. At a particular moment, for example, you may be focusing on helping a student, but in some corner of your mind you also notice when chatting begins on the other side of the room. You have, as the saying goes, "eyes in the back of your head". Research has found that experienced teachers are much more likely to show withitness than inexperienced teachers, and that these qualities are associated with managing classrooms successfully (Emmer & Stough, 2001).

Simultaneous awareness— withitness— makes possible responses to the multiple events that are immediate and nearly simultaneous— what educators sometimes called **overlapping**. The teacher's responses to each event or behavior need not take equal time, nor even be equally noticeable to all students. If you are helping one student with seat work at the precise moment when another student begins chatting off-task, for example, a quick glance to the second student may be enough to bring the second one back to the work at hand, and may scarcely interrupt your conversation with the first student, or be noticed by others who are not even involved. The result is a smoother flow to activities overall.

As a new teacher, you may find that withitness and overlapping develop more easily in some situations than in others. It may be easier to keep an eye (or ear) on multiple activities during familiar routines, such as taking attendance, but harder to do the same during activities that are unfamiliar or complex, such as introducing a new topic or unit that you have never taught before. But skill at broadening your attention does increase with time and practice. It helps to keep trying. Merely demonstrating to students that you are "withit", in fact, even without making deliberate overlapping responses, can sometimes deter students from off-task behavior. Someone who is tempted to pass notes in class, for example, might not do so because she believes that you will probably notice her doing it anyway, whether or not you are able to notice in fact.

Communicating the importance of learning and of positive behavior

Altogether, the factors we have discussed— arranging space, procedures, and rules, and developing *withitness*— help communicate an important message: that in the classroom learning and positive social behavior are priorities. In addition, teachers can convey this message by offering timely feedback to students about performance, by keeping accurate records of the performance, and by deliberately communicating with parents or caregivers about their children and about class activities.

Communicating effectively is so important for all aspects of teaching, in fact, that we discuss it more fully later in this book (see Chapter 8, "The nature of classroom communication"). Here we focus on only one of its important aspects: how communication

contributes to a smoothly functioning classroom and in this way helps prevent behavior problems.

Giving timely feedback

The term *feedback*, when used by educators, refers to responses to students about their behavior or performance. Feedback is essential if students are to learn and if they are to develop classroom behavior that is socially skilled and "mature". But feedback can only be fully effective if offered as soon as possible, when it is still relevant to the task or activity at hand (Reynolds, 1992). A score on a test is more informative immediately after a test than after a six-month delay, when students may have forgotten much of the content of the test. A teacher's comment to a student about an inappropriate, off-task behavior may not be especially welcome at the moment the behavior occurs, but it can be more influential and informative then; later, both teacher and student will have trouble remembering the details of the off-task behavior, and in this sense may literally "not know what they are talking about". The same is true for comments about a *positive* behavior by a student: hearing a compliment right away makes it easier to the comment with the behavior, and allows the compliment to influence the student more strongly. There are of course practical limits to how fast feedback can be given, but the general principle is clear: feedback tends to work better when it is timely.

The principle of timely feedback is consistent, incidentally, with a central principle of operant conditioning discussed in Chapter 2: reinforcement works best when it follows a to-be-learned operant behavior closely (Skinner, 1957)- In this case a teacher's feedback serves as a form of reinforcement. The analogy is easiest to understand when the feedback takes the form of praise; in operant conditioning terms, the reinforcing praise then functions like a "reward". When feedback is negative, it functions as an "aversive stimulus" (in operant terms), shutting down the behavior criticized. At other times, though, criticism can also function as an unintended reinforcement. This happens, for example, if a student experiences criticism as a reduction in isolation and therefore as an increase in his importance in the class— a relatively desirable change. So the inappropriate behavior continues, or even increases, contrary to the teacher's intentions. Exhibit 9 diagrams this sequence of events.

Exhibit 10.3.2: Attracting attention as negative reinforcement

Exhibit 10.3.2: Attracting attention as negative reinforcement

Example of Unintended Negative Reinforcement in the Classroom:

Student is isolated socially → Student publicly misbehaves → Student gains others' attention

Reinforcement can happen in class if an undesirable behavior, leads to a less aversive state for a student. Social isolation can be reduced by public misbehavior, which stimulates attention that is reinforcing. Ironically, the effort to end misbehavior ends up stimulating the misbehavior.

Maintaining accurate records

Although timeliness in responding to students can sometimes happen naturally during class, there are also situations where promptness depends on having organized key information ahead of time. Obvious examples are the scores, marks, and grades returned to students for their work. A short quiz (such as a weekly spelling test) may be possible to return quite soon after the quiz — sometimes you or even the students themselves can mark it during class. More often, though, assignments and tests require longer processing times: you have to read, score, or add comments to each paper individually. Excessive time to evaluate students' work can reduce the usefulness of a teacher's evaluations to students when she finally does return the work (Black, et al., 2004). During the days or weeks waiting for a test or assignment to be returned, students are left without information about the quality or nature of their performance; at the extreme they may even have to complete another test or do another assignment before getting information about an earlier one. (Perhaps you yourself have experienced this particular problem!)

Delays in providing feedback about academic performance can never be eliminated entirely, but they can be reduced by keeping accurate, well-organized records of students' work. A number of computer programs are available to help with this challenge; if your school does not already have one in use, then there are several downloadable either free or at low cost [from the Internet](#). Describing these is beyond the scope of this book. For now we simply emphasize that grading systems benefit students' learning the most when they provide feedback as quickly and frequently as possible (McMillan, 2001), precisely the reason why accurate, well-organized record-keeping is important to keep.

Accurate records are helpful not only for scores on tests, quizzes, or assignments, but also for developing descriptive summaries of the nature of students' academic skills or progress. A common way to develop a description is the student portfolio, which is a compilation of the student's work and on-going assessments of it created by the teacher or in some cases by the student (Moritz &

Christie, 2005; White, 2005). To know how a student's science project evolved from its beginning, for example, a teacher and student can keep a portfolio of lab notes, logs, preliminary data, and the like. To know how a student's writing skills developed, they could keep a portfolio of early drafts on various writing assignments. As the work accumulates, the student can discuss it with the teacher, and write brief reflections on its strengths thus far or on the steps needed to improve the work further. By providing a way to respond to work as it evolves, and by including students in making the assessments, portfolios provide relatively prompt feedback, and in any case provide it sooner than by waiting for the teacher to review work that is complete or final.

Communicating with parents and caregivers

Since parents and caregivers in a sense "donate" their children to schools (at least figuratively speaking), teachers are responsible for keeping them informed and involved to whatever extent is practical. Virtually all parents understand and assume that schools are generally intended for learning. Detailed communication can enrich parents' understanding, of how learning is addressed with their particular child's classroom, and show them more precisely what their particular child is doing. The better such understanding in turn encourages parents and caregivers to support their child's learning more confidently and "intelligently". In this sense it contributes indirectly to a positive learning environment in their child's class.

There are various ways to communicate with parents, each with advantages and limitations. Here are three common examples:

- *A regular classroom newsletter:* A newsletter establishes a link with parents or caregivers with comparatively little effort on the part of the teacher. At the beginning of the year, for example, a newsletter can tell about special materials that students will need, important dates to remember (like professional development days when there is no school), or about curriculum plans for the next few weeks. But newsletters also have limitations. They can seem impersonal, and they may get lost on the way home and never reach parents or caregivers. They can also be impractical for teachers with multiple classes, as in high school or in specialist subjects (like music or physical education), where each class follows a different program or curriculum.
- *Telephone calls:* The main advantage of phoning is its immediacy and individuality. Teacher and parent or caregiver can talk about a particular student, behavior, or concern, and do it now. By the same token, however, phone calls are not an efficient way for informing parents about events or activities that affect everyone in common. The individuality of phoning may explain why teachers often use this method when a student has a problem that is urgent or unusual— as when he has failed a test, missed classes, or misbehaved seriously. Rightly or wrongly, a student's successes tend not to prompt phone calls to the student's home (though in fairness students may be more likely to tell parents about their successes themselves, making it less essential for the teacher to do so).
- *Parent-teacher conferences:* Most schools schedule periodic times— often a day or evening per term— when teachers meet briefly with parents or caregivers who wish to meet. Under good conditions, the conferences have the individuality of phone calls, but also the richness of communication possible only in face-to-face meetings. Since conferences are available to all parents, they need not focus on behavior or academic problems, but often simply help to build rapport and understanding between parents or caregivers and the teacher. Sometimes too, particularly at younger grade levels, teachers involve students in leading their own conferences; the students display and explain their own work using a portfolio or other archive of accumulated materials (Benson & Barnett, 2005; Stiggins & Chappuis, 2005). In spite of all of these advantages, though, parent-teacher conferences have limitations. Some parents cannot get to conferences because of work schedules, child care, or transportation problems. Others may feel intimidated by any school- sponsored event because they speak limited English or because they remember painful experiences from their own school days.

Even if you make several efforts to communicate, some parents may remain out of contact. In these cases it is important to remember that the parents may not be indifferent to their child or to the value of education. Other possibilities exist, as some of our comments above imply: parents may have difficulties with child care, for example, have inconvenient work schedules, or feel self-conscious about their own communication skills (Stevens & Tollafeld, 2003). Even so, there are ways to encourage parents who may be shy, hesitant, or busy. One is to think about how they can assist the school even from home— for example, by making materials to be used in class or (if they are comfortable using English) phoning other parents about class events. A second way is to have a specific task for the parents in mind— one with clear structure, such as photocopying materials to be used by students later. A third is to remember to encourage, support, and respect the parents' presence and contributions when they *do* show up at school functions. Keep in mind that parents are experts about their own particular children, and without them, you would have no students to teach!

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10.4: Responding to Student Misbehavior

So far we have focused on preventing behaviors that are inappropriate or annoying. The advice has all been pro-active or forward-looking: plan classroom space thoughtfully, create reasonable procedures and rules, pace lessons and activities appropriately, and communicate the importance of learning clearly. Although we consider these ideas important, it would be naive to imply they are enough to prevent all behavior problems. For various reasons, students sometimes still do things that disrupt other students or interrupt the flow of activities. At such moments the challenge is not about long-term planning but about making appropriate, but prompt responses. Misbehaviors left alone can be contagious, a process educators sometimes call the **ripple effect** (Kounin, 1970). Chatting between two students, for example, can gradually spread to six students; rudeness by one can eventually become rudeness by several; and so on. Because of this tendency, delaying a response to inappropriate behavior can make the job of getting students back on track harder than responding to it as immediately as possible.

There are many ways to respond to inappropriate behaviors, of course, and they vary in how much they focus on the immediate behavior compared to longer-term features or patterns of a student's behavior. There are so many ways to respond, in fact, that we can describe only a sample of the possibilities here. None are effective all of the time, though all do work at least some of the time. We start with a response that may not seem on the surface like a remedy at all— simply ignoring misbehaviors.

Ignoring misbehaviors

A lot of misbehaviors are not important or frequent enough to deserve any response at all. They are likely to disappear (or *extinguish*, in behaviorist terms) simply if left alone. If a student who is usually quiet during class happens to whisper to a neighbor once in awhile, it is probably less disruptive and just as effective to ignore the infraction than to respond to it. Some misbehaviors may not be worth a response even if they are frequent, as long as they do not seem to bother others. Suppose, for example, that a certain student has a habit of choosing quiet seat-work times to sharpen her pencil. She is continually out of her seat to go to the sharpener. Yet this behavior is not really noticed by others. Is it then really a problem, however unnecessary or ill-timed it may be? In both examples ignoring the behavior may be wise because there is little danger of the behavior disrupting other students or of becoming more frequent. Interrupting your activities— or the students'— might cause more disruption than simply ignoring the problem.

That said, there can still be problems in deciding whether a particular misbehavior is truly minor, infrequent, or unnoticed by others. Unlike in our example above, students may whisper to each other more than "rarely" but less than "often": in that case, when do you decide that the whispering is in fact *too* frequent and needs a more active response from you? Or the student who sharpens her pencil, mentioned above, may not bother most others, but she may nonetheless bother a few. In that case how many bothered classmates are "too many"? Five, three, just one, or...? In these ambiguous cases, you may need more active ways of dealing with an inappropriate behavior, like the ones described in the next sections.

Gesturing nonverbally

Sometimes it works to communicate using gestures, eye contact, or "body language" that involve little or no speaking. Nonverbal cues are often appropriate if a misbehavior is just a bit too serious or frequent to ignore, but not serious or frequent enough to merit taking the time deliberately to speak to or talk with the student. If two students are chatting off-task for a relatively extended time, for example, sometimes a glance in their direction, a frown, or even just moving closer to the students is enough of a reminder to get them back on task. Even if these responses prove not to be enough, they may help to keep the off-task behavior from spreading to other students.

A risk of relying on nonverbal cues, however, is that some students may not understand their meaning, or may even fail to notice them. If the two chatting students mentioned above are engrossed in their talking, for example, they may not see you glance or frown at them. Or they might notice but not interpret your cue as a reminder to get back on task. Misinterpretation of nonverbal gestures and cues is more likely with young children, who are still learning the subtleties of adults' nonverbal "language" (Guerrero & Floyd, 2005; Heimann, et al., 2006). It is also more likely with students who speak limited English or whose cultural background differs significantly from your own. These students may have learned different nonverbal gestures from your own as part of their participation in their original culture (Marsh, Elfenbein, & Ambady, 2003).

Natural and logical consequences

Consequences are the outcomes or results of an action. When managing a classroom, two kinds of consequences are especially effective for influencing students' behavior: natural consequences and logical consequences. As the term implies, **natural**

consequences happen "naturally", without deliberate intention by anyone. If a student is late for class, for example, a natural consequence is that he misses information or material that needed to do an assignment. **Logical consequences** are ones that happen because of the responses of or decisions by others, but that also have an obvious or "logical" relationship to the original action. If one student steals another's lunch, for example, a logical consequence might be for the thief to reimburse the victim for the cost of the lunch. Natural and logical consequences are often woven together and thus hard to distinguish: if one student picks a fight with another student, a natural consequence might be injury not only to the victim, but also to the aggressor (an inherent byproduct of fighting), but a logical consequence might be to lose friends (the response of others to fighting). In practice both may occur.

In general research has found that both natural and logical consequences can be effective for minimizing undesirable behaviors, provided they are applied in appropriate situations (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004). Consider a student who runs impulsively down school hallways. The student is likely to have "traffic accidents", and thus (hopefully) to see that running is not safe and to reduce the frequency of running. Or consider a student who chronically talks during class instead of working on an assigned task. The student may have to make up the assignment later, possibly as homework. Because the behavior and the consequence are connected logically, the student is relatively likely to see the drawback of choosing to talk, and to reduce how much he or she talks on subsequent occasions. In either case, whether natural or logical, the key features that make consequences work are (a) that they are appropriate to the misbehavior and (b) that the student understands the connection between the consequences and the original behavior.

Notice, though, that natural and logical consequences do not always work; if they did, there would be no further need for management strategies! One limitation is that misbehaviors can sometimes be so serious that no natural or logical consequence seems sufficient or appropriate. Suppose, for example, that one student deliberately breaks another student's eyeglasses. There may be a natural consequence for the *victim* (he or she will not be able to see easily), but not for the student who broke the glasses. There may also be no consequences for the aggressor that are both logical and fully satisfactory: the aggressor student will not be able to repair the broken glasses himself, and may not be able to pay for new glasses either.

Another limitation of natural and logical consequences is that their success depends on the motives of the misbehaving student. If the student is seeking attention or acceptance by others, then consequences often work well. Bullying in order to impress others, for example, is more likely to *lose* friends than to win them— so bullying motivated in this way is self-limiting. If a student is seeking power over others, on the other hand, then the consequences of bullying may not reduce the behavior. Bullying in order to control others' actions by definition actually achieves its own goal, and its "natural" result (losing friends) would be irrelevant. Of course, a bully might also act from a combination of motives, so that natural and logical consequences limit bullying behavior, but only partially.

A third problem with natural and logical consequences is that they can easily be confused with deliberate punishment (Kohn, 2006). The difference is important. Consequences are focused on repairing damage and restoring relationships, and in this sense they focus on the future. Punishments highlight a mistake or wrongdoing and in this sense focus on the past. Consequences tend to be more solution focused. Punishments tend to highlight the person who committed the action, and they often shame or humiliate the wrong doer. (Table 17 summarizes these and other differences.)

Table 10.4.1: : Differences between consequences and punishments

Focused on future solutions	Focused on past mistakes
Focused on individual's actions	Focused on character of student or child
Focused on repairing mistakes	Focused on establishing blame
Focused on restoring positive relationships	Focused on isolating wrong-doer
Tend to reduce emotional pain and conflict	Tend to impose emotional pain or conflict

Classroom examples of the differences between consequences and punishment are plentiful. If a student fails to listen to the teacher's instructions, then a consequence is that he or she misses important information, but a punishment may be that the teacher criticizes or reprimands the student. If a student speaks rudely to the teacher, a consequence may be that the teacher does not respond to the comment, or simply reminds the student to speak courteously. A punishment may be that the teacher scolds the student in the presence of others , or even imposes a detention ("Stay after school for 15 minutes").

Conflict resolution and problem solving

When a student misbehaves persistently and disruptively, you will need strategies that are more active and assertive than the ones discussed so far, and that focus on **conflict resolution**— the reduction of disagreements that persist over time. Conflict resolution strategies that educators and teachers tend to use usually have two parts (Jones, 2004). First, they involve ways of identifying what "the" problem is precisely. Second, they remind the student of classroom expectations and rules with simple clarity and assertiveness, but *without* apology or harshness. When used together, the two strategies not only reduce conflicts between a teacher and an individual student, but also provide a model for other students to follow when they have disagreements of their own. The next sections discuss the nature of assertion and clarification for conflict resolution in more detail.

Step 1: clarifying and focusing: problem ownership

Classrooms can be emotional places even though their primary purpose is to promote thinking rather than expression of feelings. The emotions can be quite desirable: they can give teachers and students "passion" for learning and a sense of care among members of the class. But feelings can also cause trouble if students misbehave: at those moments negative feelings— annoyance, anger, discomfort— can interfere with understanding exactly what is wrong and how to set things right again. Gaining a bit of distance from the negative feelings is exactly what those moments need, especially on the part of the teacher, the person with (presumably) the greatest maturity.

In a widely cited approach to conflict resolution called *Teacher Effectiveness Training*, the educator Thomas Gordon describes this challenge as an issue of **problem ownership**, or deciding whose problem a behavior or conflict it really is (Gordon, 2003). The "owner" of the problem is the primary person who is troubled or bothered by it. The owner can be the student committing the behavior, the teacher, or another student who merely happens to see the behavior. Since the owner of a problem needs to take primary responsibility for solving it, identifying ownership makes a difference in how to deal with the behavior or problem effectively.

Suppose, for example, that a student named David makes a remark that the teacher finds offensive (like "Sean is fat"). Is this remark the student's problem or the teacher's? If David made the comment privately to the teacher and is unlikely to repeat it, then maybe it is only the teacher's problem. If he is likely to repeat it to other students or to Sean himself, however, then maybe the problem is really David's. On the other hand, suppose that a different student, Sarah, complains repeatedly that classmates refuse to let her into group projects. This is less likely to be the teacher's problem rather than Sarah's: her difficulty may affect her ability to do her own work, but not really affect the teacher or classmates directly. As you might suspect, too, a problem may sometimes affect several people at once. David, who criticized Sean, may discover that he offended not only the teacher, but also classmates, who therefore avoid working with him. At that point the whole class begins to share in some aspect of "the" problem: not only is David prevented from working with others comfortably, but also classmates *and* the teacher begin dealing with bad feelings about David.

Step 2: active, empathetic listening

Diagnosing accurately who really has a problem with a behavior— who "owns" it— is helped by a number of strategies. One is **active listening**— attending carefully to all aspects of what a student says and attempting to understand or empathize as fully as possible, even if you do not agree with what is being said (Cooper & Simonds, 2003). Active listening involves asking questions in order continually to check your understanding. It also involves encouraging the student to elaborate on his or her remarks, and paraphrasing and summarizing what the student says in order to check your perceptions of what is said. It is important *not* to move too fast toward solving the problem with advice, instructions, or scolding, even if these are responses that you might, as a teacher, feel responsible for making. Responding too soon with solutions can shut down communication prematurely, and leave you with inaccurate impressions of the source or nature of the problem.

Step 3: assertive discipline and I-messages

Once you have listened well to the student's point of view, it helps to frame your responses and comments in terms of how the student's behavior affects you in particular, especially in your role as the teacher. The comments should have several features:

- They should be *assertive*— neither passive and apologetic, nor unnecessarily hostile and aggressive (Cantor, 1996). State the problem as matter-of-factly as possible: "Joe, you are talking while I'm explaining something", instead of either "Joe, do you think you could be quiet now?" or "Joe, be quiet!"

- The comments should emphasize **I-messages** (Gordon, 1981), which are comments that focus on how the problem behavior is affecting the teacher's ability to teach, as well as how the behavior makes the teacher feel. They are distinct from *you-messages*, which focus on evaluating the mistake or problem which the student has created. An I-message might be, "Your talking is making it hard for me to remember what I'm trying to say." A you-message might be, "Your talking is rude."
- The comments should encourage the student to think about the effects of his or her actions on others— a strategy that in effect encourages the student to consider the ethical implications of the actions (Gibbs, 2003). Instead of simply saying: "When you cut in line ahead of the other kids, that was not fair to them", you can try saying, "How do you think the other kids feel when you cut in line ahead of them?"

Step 4: negotiation

The first three steps describe ways of interacting that are desirable, but also fairly specific in scope and limited in duration. But in themselves, they may not be enough when conflict persists over time and develops a number of complications or confusing features. A student may persist in being late for class, for example, in spite of efforts by the teacher to modify this behavior. Or two students may repeatedly speak rudely to each other, even though the teacher has mediated this conflict in the past. Or a student may fail to complete homework, time after time. Because these problems develop over time, and because they may involve repeated disagreements, they can eventually become stressful for the teacher, the student, and any classmates who may be affected. Their persistence can tempt a teacher simply to dictate a resolution— a decision that can leave everyone feeling defeated, including the teacher.

Often in these situations it is better to **negotiate** a solution, which means systematically discussing options and compromising on one if possible. Although negotiation always requires time and effort, it is often less time or effort than continuing to cope with the original problem, and the results can be beneficial to everyone. A number of experts on conflict resolution have suggested strategies for negotiating with students about persistent problems (Davidson & Wood, 2004). The suggestions vary in detail, but usually include some combination of the steps we have already discussed above, along with a few others:

- *Decide as accurately as possible what the problem is.* Usually this step involves a lot of the active listening described above.
- *Brainstorm possible solutions, and **then** consider their effectiveness.* Remember to include students in this step; otherwise you end up simply imposing a solution on others, which is not what negotiation is supposed to achieve.
- *If possible, choose a solution by consensus.* Complete agreement on the choice may not be possible, but strive for it as best you can. Remember that taking a vote may be a democratic, acceptable way to settle differences in some situations, but if feelings are running high, voting does not work as well. In that case voting may simply allow the majority to impose its will on the minority, leaving the underlying conflict unresolved.
- *Pay attention to how well the solution works after it is underway.* For many reasons, things may not work out the way you or students hope or expect. You may need to renegotiate the solution at a later time.

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10.5: Keeping Management Issues in Perspective

There are two primary messages from this chapter. One is that management issues are important, complex, and deserving of serious attention. The other is that strategies exist that can reduce, if not eliminate, management problems when and if they occur. We have explained some of those strategies— including some intended to prevent problems and others intended to remedy problems.

But there is an underlying assumption about management that this chapter emphasized fully: that good classroom management is not an end in itself, but a means for creating a classroom where learning happens and students are motivated. Amidst the stresses of handling a problem behavior, there is a risk of losing sight of this idea. Telling a student to be quiet is never a goal in itself, for example; it is desirable only because (or when) it allows all students to hear the teacher's instructions or classmates' spoken comments, or because it allows students to concentrate on their work. There may actually be moments when students' keeping quiet is not appropriate, such as during a "free choice" time in an elementary classroom or during a group work task in a middle school classroom. As teachers, we need to keep this perspective firmly in mind. Classroom management should serve students' learning, and not the other way around. The next chapter is based on this idea, because it discusses ways not just to set the stage for learning, as this chapter has done, but ways to plan directly for students' learning.

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10.6: Summary, Key Words and References

Chapter summary

Classroom management is the coordination of lessons and activities to make learning as productive as possible. It is important because classrooms are complex and somewhat unpredictable, because students respond to teachers' actions in diverse ways, and because society requires that students attend school. There are two major features of management: preventing problems before they occur and responding to them after they occur. Many management problems can be prevented by attending to how classroom space is used, by establishing daily procedures, routines, and rules, by pacing and structuring activities appropriately, and by communicating the importance of learning and of positive behavior to students and parents. There are several ways of dealing with a management problem after it occurs, and the choice depends on the nature of the problem. A teacher can simply ignore a misbehavior, gesture or cue students nonverbally, rely on natural and logical consequences, or engage conflict resolution strategies. Whatever tactics the teacher uses, it is important to keep in mind their ultimate purpose: to make learning possible and effective.

On the Internet

<http://www.theteachersguide.com/ClassManagement.htm> This is part of a larger website for teachers containing resources of all kinds. This section— about classroom management— has several articles with very "nuts and bolts" tips about management. You may also find their page of resources for substitute teachers useful.

<https://teachnet.com/> Another website for teachers with lots of resources of all kinds. A section called "Power Tools" has dozens of brief articles about various aspects of classroom management.

Key terms	
Active listening	Overlapping
Classroom management	Portfolio
Conflict resolution	Problem ownership
I-messages	Procedures
Learning environment	Ripple effect
Logical consequences	Rules
Natural consequences	Withitness
Negotiation	

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: School Governance and Funding

11.1: Are all schools created equal?

11.2: How are individual schools governed?

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11.1: Are all schools created equal?



Figure 11.1.1: Field of lavender (CC-BY-SA, Shelly Simmonds, [Wikimedia](#))

By Shelly Simmonds

School funding: Are all schools created equal?

Just imagine; you're moving to a new city, you've got a wife and two young kids and tons of money. Where would you want to send your kids to school?

If you moved to New Hampshire, you could send them to a private boarding school called Phillips Exeter Academy where they have small class sizes, talented students and a one billion dollar endowment (Fabrikant, 2008). Or you could send your child to a poor public school district an hour away in Lawrence, Massachusetts where students have at times needed to bring in their own toilet paper (Kozol 1992).

Hummmm.... difficult decision? I don't think so. All parents make rational choices about their children's education. Unfortunately, poor parents in the inner city don't have the same choices as wealthy and middle class parents because they are physically stuck where they are by limited opportunities. Minorities in the inner city are the biggest victims of school funding inequality, or the way some schools in America have more resources than others.

The topic of equal funding for schools is very important for teachers because many of us are asked to prepare students for a successful future without adequate resources. In my opinion, we are increasingly held accountable for the success or failure of our students, although we are rarely provided with the facilities, materials and support needed for success.

This article will provide teachers with new information on how their schools are funded and show how current inequalities in school funding impact minority students. In it, I will argue that the inability of the United States to fix inequalities in school funding could hurt our country's future economic growth. This inequality also threatens to create an underclass of people who cannot find jobs and as a result, place a drain on government resources. The article will conclude by presenting multiple perspectives on ways to solve the current problems in school funding.

Why are there inequities in America's schools?

Public schools are funded by a complex mix of local property tax revenue, state funding and federal grants. The federal government currently only contributes 9 percent of K-12 funding with states and localities contributing the rest (Miller, 2008).

Although most people agree that more money should be spent on school funding, there is much debate over which level of government should provide the money. This disagreement has stood in the way of school finance reform (Walter and Sweetland, 2003). Both local and state budgets are under increased pressure for funds in areas such as pensions, health care, and corrections (Walter and Sweetland, 2003).

Local control of schools, and school funding, dates back to colonial times when colonists were leery of central government authority. When rich and poor lived side by side in cities and towns property taxes seemed like a fair way to fund the schools all children attended (Miller, 2008). But the funding gap began to increase in the 20th century as the wealthy and middle classes began moving out of large cities and into the suburbs, leaving poorer citizens behind.

What is the impact of this inequity on minorities?

The reason that the school funding issue is so important is that it has a huge impact on minorities who are the majority of students attending schools in the inner-city. These are also the schools without a large property tax base. Over time many inner-city schools have been the victims of a downward spiral in revenue which occurs like this: Once schools become known for having insufficient

resources, those with means move else where, which causes housing prices to drop, which in turn means even fewer tax dollars can be collected to pay for schools (Miller, 2008). The result is that the poorer schools get poorer and the richer schools get richer.

“The dirty little secret of local control is the enormous tax advantage it confers on better off Americans; communities with high property wealth can tax themselves at low rates and still generate far more dollars per pupil than poor communities taxing themselves heavily,” argued Matt Miller in the online edition of the Atlantic Monthly (2008).

This dynamic has a huge impact on minorities, who make up the majority of those attending poorly-financed city schools. Students of color made up 69 percent of students in the 100 largest school districts³ (Darling-Hammond, 2007).

As the number of minorities increase as a percentage of our population, our failure to educate them in urban schools will decrease the number of our citizens who can enter the job market of the future (Darling-Hammond, 2007). This failure to invest in education will cost the country in economic growth over the long run.

According to Darling-Hammond (2007) “Those who are undereducated can no longer access the labor market. While the United States must fill many of its high-tech jobs with individuals educated overseas, a growing share of its own citizens are unemployable and relegated to the welfare or prison systems, representing a drain on the nation’s economy and social well-being rather than a contribution to our national welfare,” (p 318).

Note

Why it matters

- The United States once had the highest percentage of students attending university in the world. Today European countries are sending almost 50 percent of their students to college – whereas just over a third of US students participate in higher education today (Darling-Hammond, 2007).
- The lost taxes from one class year of high school dropouts equals \$192 billion dollars, or 1.6 percent of gross domestic product, according to Rouse (2006), an economists whose research appeared in Education Week.
- Dropping out of high school increases your chances of going to jail. According to research by Moretti (2006) published in Education Week, the United States could save over \$1 billion a year for each percent we increase high school graduation rates, just because of the reduction in crime.



Figure 11.1.2: 2005 unemployment rates of persons 25 and up, by highest level of education. (Public Domain, [National Center for Education Statistics](#))

How can we provide equal opportunity in education?

- One of the main indicators of school success, or failure, is the quality of instruction students receive. An increasing body of research has linked student success to the quality of teachers, according to Darling-Hammond (2007). She suggests a national policy as aggressive as the post World War II Marshall Plan to increase the number of qualified teachers in impoverished schools. This new policy would include: \$25,000 service scholarships to draw teachers to high-need school districts; stipends to experienced teachers who agree to teach in high-poverty schools; improved teacher preparation and professional development; as well as programs to mentor all beginning teachers. (Darling-Hammond, 2007).
- A number of experts have pointed to the need for more federal government support of education. Darling-Hammond also recommends that the federal government create programs to promote “thinking curriculums” which would emphasize problem solving and the higher-order thinking skills required of the 21st Century jobs.

Others are calling for the federal government to greatly increase the amount of funding it grants local schools. Much of the recent educational gain by European countries can be attributed to centrally funded schools with clear national standards for education (Miller, 2008).

“If we’re serious about improving our schools, and especially about raising up the lowest, Uncle Sam’s contribution must rise to 25 or 30 percent of the total,” stated Miller (2008, online).

- Another strategy being pursued to improve the quality of inner-city schools is fiscal equity litigation. This entails using lawsuits to force states to provide adequate educational opportunities for all students. They are also called adequacy lawsuits. Over the last 20 years many such lawsuits have been successful and funding models having been declared unconstitutional in 17 states (Rebell, 1999). Unfortunately, enforcing such rulings has been difficult and many rulings have been ignored by state legislatures.

The recent court rulings in favor of more equitable funding shows that people are increasingly concerned about fairness in education (Rebell, 1999). According to Rebell (1999) “what seems to be at play here is the resurgence of a powerful democratic imperative at the core of the American political tradition” (p. 5). In other words, more and more people are seeing equal access to education as an essential part of democracy.

Conclusion: is change on the horizon?

This change in attitude is good news for those in favor of more evenly distributed school funding. For many years Americans have stuck to the notion that our current funding system offers equal opportunity to all (Darling-Hammond, 2007). This belief has been a major obstacle to change because, until there is a consensus about resource problems in our poorest schools, we won’t begin looking for solutions.

“The common presumption that schools currently provide a level playing field paralyzes necessary efforts to invest in schools attended primarily by students of color,” according to Darling-Hammond (p. 329).

In this way, I think the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 may have moved the country closer to accepting the fact of inequality. Now that the government acknowledges the problem as a matter of law, it needs to invest real financial resources in the solution.

Efforts to equalize educational resources are already working in my city, Newport News, Virginia. Millions of dollars were recently spent to renovate a crumbling urban school and, as a result, children from more wealthy neighborhoods are happily riding the bus downtown to attend. The school, Booker T Washington, now has a Marine science focus, a new aquarium, a small number of students, and some of the best teachers in the city. My daughter has begged me to let her go there for middle school. Difficult decision? I don’t think so.

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11.2: How are individual schools governed?

Learning Objectives

Students will identify the tiers of the hierarchy of public school governing.

Students will identify the responsibilities of each tier.

The Hierarchy of the System

Who is the boss in the school systems? The public school governing system is actually a hierarchy (March, 1978). There are several tiers to this hierarchy beginning with the federal level and ending with the individual teachers. It is a pyramid of administrators doing everything they can to educate today's students.

Federal and State

While some may believe that administration of schools starts with the federal government, the truth is that on the federal level there is very little involvement in education, even in funding (Federal Role, n.d.). The federal government sets some guidelines for education, such as the No Child Left Behind Act, but not specific ones such as curriculum taught. In actuality, the states have most of the power over their own schools and what they teach (Education Commission of the States [ECS], 1999). The states set what the students will learn and what standards they have to meet. This means that if a child is meeting their grade level standard in Tennessee they may or may not be meeting the Virginia standards for that grade level. States try to decide what knowledge is imperative for students to learn before they move on to the next grade or even college (ECS, 1999).

States also choose the standards that the teachers must meet (ECS, 1999). The state wants the teacher to be able to educate the students to achieve the set standards. There are things that every state requires, but each of them has their own variation. Every state requires the teacher to have a college degree and some form of standardized testing to be able to teach in their public school system. There are national tests available, but each state requires different ones. Teachers moving to a different state may be required to complete a new test or even a new course before gaining licensure in that state.

States have the largest financial role in the schools. Very little funding comes from the federal government. Most of the federal funding is applied for by the individual school in the form of a grant for a special purpose (Federal Role, n.d.). The states provide teacher salaries and the money required to run each individual school. Each individual school has a PTA that can help the school gain funds for things like technology (ECS, 1999).

Note

Hierarchy Tiers on a District Level

School Board

Superintendent

Principal

Teacher

District

Each state is broken up into districts (ECS, 1999). Most administration deals on a small level, either within the district, or in the individual school (March, 1978). The districts each have their own school board made of elected members (Office of the Education Ombudsman, n.d.). Those boards decide how their schools will achieve the standards set by the state. They will also decide anything else they believe the schools should be doing to service their district's children. Some of these things include overseeing the curriculum and helping to promote better teaching techniques (Education Administrators, n.d.). The board has to have all schools achieving at a level set by the state, so they use their resources to push the schools to achieve the standards they have set (ECS, 1999).

Superintendent

A superintendent is chosen to oversee the schools in the district (ECS, 1999). Much like a politician, this office is often given to those who have worked their way up from the bottom of the hierarchy (March, 1978). They are in charge of making sure the schools are doing what is required by the school board. They make routine visits to schools to check on how they are doing. They work with the principals and teachers to see that children are getting the most out of each school day.

Principal and Assistant Principal

The district hires principals to oversee each individual school. These principals are there to see that the teachers are doing their job and the children are getting the education they deserve (Office of the Education Ombudsman, n.d.). They are responsible for scheduling, planning the daily activities, and managing the overall activities of the school (Office of the Education Ombudsman, n.d.). Principals make routine visits to classrooms to make sure they are running smoothly and that teachers are making the most of their instructional time. Another difficult duty of the principal is the budget for the school. The principal must decide how to best spend the school's money (Education Administrators, n.d.).

The schools also have assistant principals. These administrators help the principal in the daily activities of the school. They also handle most of the discipline problems leaving the principal available to focus on other duties (Education Administrators, n.d.).

Teacher

Each school is responsible for the hire of their teachers. The principal can decide who to hire as long as they are qualified by the state (ECS, 1999). Teachers apply for a job through the district and might interview at several schools before being hired by one. Each school is different so principals often look for a teacher who will fit into the school.

The teacher is the one with the most direct affect on students. They ultimately decide what happens in the classrooms (ECS, 1999). When the door closes every morning it is up to the teacher to make an effective use of time and get children to those standards set by the state. If children in their classrooms are not performing well, the teacher is held responsible.

Summary

In summary, the federal government makes general regulations for education and contributes very little funding for the schools (Federal Role, n.d.).

The states have most of the power because they are able to set the standards for teachers and students, and they fund the public school system almost completely (ECS, 1999).

The district has the power in the area entrusted to them by the state. Each district has an elected school board that determines how state standards are achieved and anything else they see fit to better the students' education (Office of the Education Ombudsman, n.d.).

The superintendent oversees the schools in the district and makes sure they are following what is set by the states and the district (ECS, 1999).

The principals manage their individual school with assistance from the assistant principal (Office of the Education Ombudsman, n.d.).

The teachers instruct the students in accordance with the standards set before them by all levels of the hierarchy.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

12: Teacher Quality

12.1: Are teachers born or made?

12.2: Who decides if I am successful, and how?

12.3: What does it mean to be an ethical teacher?

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12.1: Are teachers born or made?

By Brittany Bowman

Learning Objectives

1. Understand that some people are born with certain qualities that make them better suited for the job.
2. Understand the benefits of proper training and experience.
3. Understand that the teaching profession demands more than just training ensure success.

Introduction

While good teachers are essential, great teachers are invaluable. We always remember our greatest teachers. They are the ones that not only educated us, but the ones that motivated and pushed us to our greatest potential. They were driven by the passion of intellectual aspiration. They are the ones that we looked up to as role models, giving us inspiration to one day repay their dedication and teach our future students with as much passion as when they taught us. They are the individuals we go back to visit to reaffirm how great they once were and how great they still are. These are the teachers that we are so fortunate to have had in our lives. But what makes up a great teacher? Some say it is in the genetic make-up of individuals who are born with distinct, innate qualities and characteristics that makes them better equipped for working in the classroom. Others say that taking courses and reading through textbooks makes a teacher better suited for the job. But who is to say that it can not be somewhere in the middle. Taking into consideration the ideas behind both sides, maybe the answer to the question 'are teachers born or made?' is simply both?

Note

"It's easy to make a buck. It's a lot tougher to make a difference." -Tom Brokaw (Brokaw 2009)

It's in the Genes

Some believe that genetics and the structured DNA sequence that makes up an individual plays a significant role in how that individual can excel within the classroom as a teacher. A person's genetic sequence can enable them to inherit certain characteristics and qualities that enables their nurturing and teaching side to emerge. These innate characteristics and personality traits can not necessarily be taught, and by tapping into inner talents, the full potential of the teacher can be discovered.

"By nature, some people possess a combination of personality characteristics that are conducive to effective teaching" (Malikow, 2006 1). Having a caring, patient, encouraging, and joyous personality really makes a 'born' teacher stand out compared to a 'made' teacher. These innate characteristics along with many others can not be learned or acquired from reading a textbook or by taking education courses; you either have them or you don't. For a teacher from Framingham, Massachusetts, he had all these qualities and much more. Everyone always remembered Charles Sposato as a natural-born teacher, he went above and beyond expectations. Mr. Sposato was known to be full of spirit and have high amounts of energy that he brought in the classroom to ensure that his students would always be surrounded by a positive environment (Spitz 2007). He even helped a student's family buy needed clothing when money was scarce (Spitz 2007). All the little things really do add up. Based on Mr. Sposato's actions, he was more than a teacher to his students, and he didn't learn that by reading through any textbook.

Note

"Teaching is the only major occupation of man for which we have not yet developed tools that make an average person capable of competence and performance. In teaching we rely on the "naturals," the ones who somehow know how to teach." -Peter Drucker
(Drucker 2007)

Along with many other professions, teaching is primarily based on leadership and communication (Vilhanova 2008). Teachers must have the ability to lead and guide their classroom in a way that promotes controlled and free thinking. It is very important for teachers to be able to communicate effectively, not only to the students but to the parents as well. Communicating to the students is so important to the learning process. If a teacher can not get his/her point across, then it is very possible for the students to not understand the lesson being taught. Communication must be present among, both the teacher and the student. This is where the

student can begin to gain trust from the teacher, and vice versa, where the teacher can gain trust from the student (Vilhanova 2008). Gaining each other's trust is very valuable because they are able to rely on each other.

All these aspects and characteristics can only be obtained if it is present in the individuals genes. They can not be taught or learned and that is why, those who possess these innate traits must use them productively or else they would just go to waste.

It's in the Books

To some individuals, an excellent education and a comprehensive training creates the best foundation in the classroom setting and that natural talent helps but it can't provide for the necessities that makes up an adequate and positive teaching environment. Being good or great at something does not always mean that there will always be passion. People who may not possess a natural talent for teaching, but are determined to still become a teacher, may have more passion than those born with the gift. These individuals would have to work harder for their reward, which shows how driven and committed they truly are.

Note

"...even the most brilliant scientists may not know how to communicate their knowledge to children." -Jay Mathews (Mathews 2002)

The main point for teacher education and training programs is to inform teachers about effective instruction methods that can be very beneficial to improve and make the overall classroom experiences more desirable and more successful (Malikow, 2006 2). Once the teacher training and education is completed, the teachers become higher quality because it allowed teachers to gain more practice and experience. In essence, teachers really do 'make themselves' (Moore, 2004 6).

Teachers' work reflects on the students' work. Studies have shown that teachers, with no means of education training or certification, have a negative influence on students in the classroom. Teachers without this proper training, have a higher percentage of students in their class that scored lower on standardized tests (Mathews 2002). Other studies have revealed that the individuals who received a five-year degree from a teacher education program, tend to stay teaching longer than those who graduated with a four-year degree; also, the individuals with four-year degrees stay teaching longer than those with little or no training at all (Mathews 2002).

According to Education Secretary, Roderick P. Paige, and his teacher quality report, he states that "we now have concrete evidence that smart teachers with solid content knowledge have the greatest effect on student achievement" (Mathews 2002). Well isn't that exactly what teachers strive to accomplish? They want their students to be able to reach their greatest or maximum potential and to get the most out of their education. There is an old saying that parents want what is best for their children. Can't teachers want what is best for their students? The answer is of course, and by spending more time taking extra classes or going through additional educational training, this really underlines how the average teacher can be 'made' into a great teacher.

It's Both

To the others who fall in the middle, including myself, we believe that great teachers are a combination between the two. Having the qualities, characteristics, and drive in becoming a good teacher is one thing, but taking classes to better educate yourself on how to better your students really takes it over the edge into becoming a great teacher. Who is to say that teachers who seem to be born with this raw, natural talent, couldn't benefit from some type of educational training to reemphasize their strengths and build on their weaknesses.

Teachers are a lot like athletes and artists. All three were born with talents, and those talents will be refined because of the training and performance that comes along with each career (Malikow 1). Even the people that were born with all the traits that would make them an excellent teaching candidate, they still might be missing something. If they do not have the desire, drive, or passion to become a teacher, then these innate traits can be thrown out the window. Proper training and experience will help give advise on different techniques and methods that can be utilized. After teaching for quit some time, the teacher will be able to throw out the methods and techniques that did not work or fix the methods to better suit or accommodate the students. Practice makes perfect!

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12.2: Who decides if I am successful, and how?

By Patrick King

Introduction

The teaching profession is one of the most important, fundamental occupations in today's society. Teachers play a very influential role in the lives of their students, and have a great impact on their future and on society as a whole. Because teachers play such an intricate part in society's well-being, school systems have to make sure teachers have efficient skills and knowledge in their disciplines, and that their methods of teaching are effective. Teachers frequently have to undergo an evaluation process in which school administrators assess the teacher's competence, teaching abilities, effectiveness, and overall success. It is imperative that this assessment be carried out honestly and accurately to ensure the best quality of education for the students.

The Evaluation Process: Who Evaluates?

The teacher evaluation process is a collaborative project in which members of the School administration take part. The principal, and other administrators in the school system, come together to complete this task. Before the school year begins, the principal, administrators, and teachers meet to discuss specific goals for the school and its classes. The principal explains the supervision process, and reviews the evaluation instrument with the teachers (Spokane, 2002). The teacher must then prepare the lesson plan for the class and think of a way to administer the classroom in an effective manner. The principal usually has scheduled observation dates, and may also have unscheduled and unannounced dates of observation and evaluation. The teacher is assessed based on performance, the validity of the material taught, and overall effectiveness and connectivity with the students.

Note

"By understanding the means by which teachers have attained student learning and growth, assessors can verify that they actually possess the skills, knowledge, and habits necessary to attain consistent, continued student learning and growth," (Johnson & Jones, 1998, p. 1).

The Evaluation Process: Support and Criticisms

Each teacher has his or her own individual style and methods of teaching. It is impossible for all teachers to adopt a universal system of teaching because each teacher has a different background, different life experiences, and unique morals and values. These differences must be taken into consideration when creating an evaluation rubric for teachers, and in the actual process of evaluation. Many people believe that most teacher evaluation systems are fair, but a great number of people disagree. They feel that many evaluation instruments used in school systems eliminate individuality in teaching styles and take away the essence of a good education. Teachers and administrators have very different outlooks on the evaluation process. According to Enz & Searfoss (1993), evaluation of teacher performance "only perpetuates the status quo (principals' views) and causes nothing but frustration over missed opportunities (teachers' views)," (p. 7). Enz & Searfoss (1993) found that administrators were reluctant to alter the status quo. Even though the administrators agreed that the evaluation system should be augmented to improve the assessment of holistic, integrated classrooms, they felt change was unnecessary because the effective teachers would "top out" on the evaluation instrument regardless, and their merit pay would not be affected by the change (Enz & Searfoss, 1993, p. 5). The teachers in this study felt that their holistic and integrative teaching philosophy was unappreciated by the principals, who used an evaluation system based on a direct instruction model (Enz & Searfoss, 1993, p. 3). Rather than trying to defend their holistic, integrated beliefs, the teachers prepared a direct instruction lesson for their evaluation in order to please the principals (Enz & Searfoss, 1993, p. 6). These teachers viewed their evaluations as missed opportunities: opportunities in which the principals missed out on discovering the accomplishments of holistic, integrated classrooms (Enz & Searfoss, 1993, p. 6).

The Impact of Evaluation: Teachers, administrators, and students

Teacher evaluations affect everyone in the school system, directly or inadvertently. Teachers' stress levels may increase due to the fear of poor performance or receiving a bad report. Students in the class during an evaluation may feel that they are being evaluated as well and may either become more engaged in the class or may avoid giving input, asking questions, or participating in discussions as much. Administrators, especially those who directly carry out the evaluations, may be stressed by the number of evaluations or might be concerned with making sure the evaluation is a fair assessment. Teacher evaluations may also create a strange relationship between teachers and administrators, increasing tensions on both sides. The positive impacts of teacher

evaluation outweigh the negatives and are much more important for the well-being of the students. Proper evaluation of teachers allows the administration to determine which teachers are beneficial to the students. An extremely significant duty of the administration is to maintain a school wide, productive learning atmosphere for all students. Accurate and honest teacher evaluation is an essential part of maintaining an efficient school system.

What happens after evaluation?

Once the teacher is evaluated by the administrator, decisions regarding the teacher's performance will be made based on the results. The teacher's quality is judged based on his or her own personal performance, and how the students benefited from the teacher. This calls for two main types of assessment, formative and summative (Harris, 2007, p. 2). Formative assessment is on-going throughout the year, which includes the periodic announced and unannounced teacher and classroom evaluations (FCIT, 2007, "Classroom Assessment"). The summative assessment refers to the end-of-the-year compilation of retrieved data to come to a conclusion about the teacher's overall performance and effectiveness (FCIT, 2007). These assessments are also used to monitor the students' progress throughout the year, and how beneficial the teacher's instructional methods were to them. Beginning in 2001, with the passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law, schools have shifted toward evaluating the teachers based on the students' results more so than individual performance and characteristics (Harris, 2007, p. 3). Even though the NCLB law has put more focus on holding schools accountable for students' success rather than individual teachers, the pressures were designed to "trickle down" and influence the actions of the teachers (Harris, 2007, p. 4).

Universal Evaluation Practices

The process of teacher evaluation should be somewhat universal in order to provide fair and just treatment of teachers. Teach for America (TFA), a national teacher corps of recent college graduates, developed an evaluation instrument called the Performance Assessment Instrument (PAI) (Johnson & Jones, 1998, p. 1). The main ideas that the instrument is based on are the extent to which the teacher has attained the goals established in student learning and growth, and the means by which the teacher has impacted student learning and growth (Johnson & Jones, 1998, p. 1).

Conclusion

Teacher evaluation plays a monumental role in the educational experience of students, in the proficiency of school systems, and in the society as a whole. The school administrations must deliver evaluations that effectively assess the teacher's abilities, interactivity, and the resulting success of the students. Proper teacher evaluations allow successful teachers to teach and lead the students who will become the future of society.

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12.3: What does it mean to be an ethical teacher?

By: T. Burrell

Introduction

“In teaching, as in life more generally, core principles relating to virtues such as honesty, justice, fairness, care, empathy, integrity, courage, respect and responsibility should guide conduct and interpersonal relations” (Campbell, 2006, p. 32). These virtues are a good description of what an ethical teacher should be, but the use of these virtues can be a difficult task when a teacher is faced with so many unpredictable situations in the classroom and in the school system. The teacher’s knowledge of what ethics is and the practice of it, will aid the teacher in making the best decision when ethical predicaments arise in their daily teaching lives.

Knowledge

Ethical knowledge is an intrinsic feature of awareness between moral and ethical principles. A teacher’s possession of these principles will allow teachers to display moral and ethical values, which includes a sense of right and wrong, treating others with respect, being objective, patient and compassionate. Embodying ethical knowledge gives the teacher the ability to practice their teaching skills with morals and ethics and not just viewing their job as being teaching only. It goes beyond the curriculum, assessment and technical conditions of the profession. The practicing of ethical knowledge by the teacher can be modeled by returning graded papers to the student in a timely manner, by being sensitive to the use of classroom materials that may offend some students, using precaution when displaying a student’s work or by selecting student achievement without bias. The use of ethical knowledge by a teacher can be expressed by the way a teacher projects the tone of his/her voice towards the student, by avoiding student embarrassment and by reminding students of how their behavior can affect other classmates. There are many ways to show how a teacher can demonstrate their ethical knowledge, but a teacher can only do but so much to implement moral and ethical behavior on a daily basis. As we may know, teaching can be a very demanding profession, with moments of chaos, frustration and unexpected events of the day. This tells us that a teacher’s reaction to these situations cannot be choreographed and why the practice of ethical knowledge can help teachers become aware of their “ethical” behavior when such events occur (Campbell).

Personal

The personal ethics for each individual teacher varies according to the teacher’s belief of what is ethical. Each teacher may believe that their interpretation of ethics is being practiced in their behavior and in their personal lives and if this is true, then he/she is demonstrating “ethical principles” and “virtues” of a “moral person” and a “moral professional (Covaleskie, 2005, p. 134).” By demonstrating the characteristics of ethics and virtue in the classroom with the use of actions, attitudes and words will make a positive impact on the many students that the teacher will come into contact with throughout their teaching career. This demonstration of ethics will also let the student know, “that if I respect you, then you can respect me” (Campbell).

Classroom

Classroom ethics involve issues the teacher comes into contact with on daily basis concerning their students within the classroom. A teacher is placed in the position of deciding what is the ethical thing to do when issues such as student consideration, content coverage and assessment arises. The assessment issue or better “known as grading” should have “fair standards” that shows the student’s knowledge of the curricula. The teacher has to decide what impact the grade given, will have on the student’s future career choices, the school’s reputation and the parents of the student. The teacher also has to decide the best way to explain to a student why they received an unsatisfactory grade on a specific assignment. The explanation may not be an easy one, but it is only to help improve the student’s academic performance. The content the teacher brings into the classroom questions the teacher’s ethics of what “subject matter” they want to include in their instructions. The teacher has to decide whether there will be enough time to cover each skill of the content area and if there is, “Should some critical thinking skills be included even though my school does not require its coverage? Or, should I just leave out the difficult parts of the course content, even though the students will need it (Kienzler)?” The teacher also has to decide which actions to take, especially when considering the emotional needs of the student. Content of a subject matter that is being discussed in the classroom may reflect upon the home-life of a student whose mother and father maybe going through a divorce or the loss of a parent. How does a teacher deal with these issues in the classroom? And how certain subject matter is taught? Each of these questions requires “that one is not only doing the right thing, but doing it in the right way, at the right time and for the right reasons” (Covaleskie, 2005, p. 134).

School

The ethics of the school may not agree with the ethics of a teacher. A teacher may be faced with numerous moral problems when it concerns the school's leadership practice of disciplining students. The teacher may question the reason behind the discipline and whether or not it will deter or increase future student behavior (Colnerud, 2006, p. 378). Ethical tensions do exist within schools among individual teachers (Allison, 2003, p. 124). A teacher may see a colleague mistreating a student and try to make a decision of whether or not to intervene in the situation. "The teacher cannot bring himself/herself to intervene; the teacher says that fear is the reason for their silence and that intervening is considered to be a breach of loyalty (Colnerud, 2006, p. 378)." This is a clear example of what teachers deal with on a daily basis in relation to the ethics of their colleagues.

"The Educator, believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence and nurture of the democratic principles. Essential to these goals is the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards." -The National Education Association's preamble for its code of ethics.

Dilemmas

Teachers encounter ethical dilemmas throughout their teaching careers. This brings up the question, "How do teachers deal with deciding what is the right or wrong thing to do when such dilemmas arise?" When a teacher is faced with ethical and moral dilemmas concerning their students and profession, they use specific codes of ethics written by many educational organizations to help them make ethical decisions. Teachers do need a guide when they are faced with the decisions of what to do if a child has a learning disability, what content matter should be taught, what should be done in defense of a student and a number of other events that will require ethical decisions. The National Education Association (NEA) has created a code of ethics for the different occupational needs of the teaching profession. The NEA created their code of ethics in 1975, which is divided into two sections. The first section lists eight ethical commitments the teacher has to the student and the second section also lists eight ethical commitments the teacher has to his/her profession (Brady, Buchotz and Keller).

National Education Association Ethics Indicators for Educators

Commitment to the Student

- Restraint of individual action and pursuit of learning
- Access to varying points of view
- Do not distort subject matter
- Protect students from harm
- Do not embarrass or disparage
- Do not discriminate
- Do not use professional relationship for private advantage
- Do not disclose confidential information

Commitment to the Profession

- Do not make false statements in application of a position
- Do not misrepresent qualifications
- Do not assist someone unqualified gain entry into the profession
- Do not make false statements concerning a candidate's qualifications
- Do not assist a noneducator in the unauthorized practice of teaching
- Do not disclose personal information about a colleague unless required by law
- Do not knowingly make false statements about a colleague
- Do not accept any gift or favor that might influence professional decisions

Conclusion

Possessing what it takes to be an ethical teacher can be a difficult task for many teachers, especially when he/she encounters unsuspecting events on a daily basis that will require an ethical decision, which may not be the exact right answer. Hopefully, it will be the ethical answer. This decision making is a great responsibility placed on the teacher, no matter how long one has been in the profession. One can only hope that the years or months of teaching has taught you enough to know what to do when ethical dilemmas occur in the classroom or within the school system.

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