

TED-1110-DL01: PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS AND DISPOSITIONS IN AN EDUCATIONAL SETTING



Dr. Ashanti Bryant Foster
Prince George's Community College

TED-1110-DL01 - Professional Behaviors and
Dispositions in an Educational Setting

Dr. Ashanti Bryant Foster

This text is disseminated via the Open Education Resource (OER) LibreTexts Project (<https://LibreTexts.org>) and like the thousands of other texts available within this powerful platform, it is freely available for reading, printing, and "consuming."

The LibreTexts mission is to bring together students, faculty, and scholars in a collaborative effort to provide an accessible, and comprehensive platform that empowers our community to develop, curate, adapt, and adopt openly licensed resources and technologies; through these efforts we can reduce the financial burden born from traditional educational resource costs, ensuring education is more accessible for students and communities worldwide.

Most, but not all, pages in the library have licenses that may allow individuals to make changes, save, and print this book. Carefully consult the applicable license(s) before pursuing such effects. Instructors can adopt existing LibreTexts texts or Remix them to quickly build course-specific resources to meet the needs of their students. Unlike traditional textbooks, LibreTexts' web based origins allow powerful integration of advanced features and new technologies to support learning.



LibreTexts is the adaptable, user-friendly non-profit open education resource platform that educators trust for creating, customizing, and sharing accessible, interactive textbooks, adaptive homework, and ancillary materials. We collaborate with individuals and organizations to champion open education initiatives, support institutional publishing programs, drive curriculum development projects, and more.

The LibreTexts libraries are Powered by [NICE CXone Expert](#) and was supported by the Department of Education Open Textbook Pilot Project, the California Education Learning Lab, the UC Davis Office of the Provost, the UC Davis Library, the California State University Affordable Learning Solutions Program, and Merlot. This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. 1246120, 1525057, and 1413739.

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation nor the US Department of Education.

Have questions or comments? For information about adoptions or adaptations contact info@LibreTexts.org or visit our main website at <https://LibreTexts.org>.

This text was compiled on 04/16/2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Licensing

1: Teacher as a Professional

- 1.1: Teacher as a Professional
- 1.2: Education in Early Childhood
- 1.3: InTASC Core Teaching Standards and Progressions
- 1.4: Early Childhood Generalist
- 1.5: NAEYC Standards
- 1.6: What Does it Mean to be an Ethical Teacher?
- 1.7: Development of Teachers' Identity
- 1.8: Assessing Your Values
- 1.9: The Ethical Implications of Teachers Using Social Networking Sites to Communicate

2: Teacher as a Communicator

- 2.1: Teacher as a Communicator
- 2.2: Communication Skills of a Teacher and Its Role in the Development of the Students' Academic Success
- 2.3: Verbal and Non-Verbal Communications
- 2.4: Key Differences in Verbal and Non Verbal Communication
- 2.5: Communication Styles in the Classroom
- 2.6: Listening Quiz
- 2.7: Written Communication- An Educator's Calling Card

3: Teacher as a Collaborator

- 3.1: Teacher as a Collaborator
- 3.2: Lifelong Learning and Professional Development
- 3.3: Assessing Your Strengths and Learning Styles
- 3.4: Learning in Groups
- 3.5: Building Trusting Collaborative Relationships with Families
- 3.6: School and Community Partnerships- Communities in Schools
- 3.7: How to Develop, Expand and Maintain Professional Relationships
- 3.8: Remaining Professional When You're Frustrated
- 3.9: Assessments

4: Teacher as an Observer

- 4.1: Teacher as an Observer
- 4.2: Why We Observe
- 4.3: Becoming a Skilled Observer
- 4.4: Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques
- 4.5: The Role of Observation
- 4.6: Early Childhood Observation
- 4.7: Observation Environments
- 4.8: Teachers' observation, questioning, and record keeping
- 4.9: Questions to Plan for the Next Observation

5: Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner

- 5.1: Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner
- 5.2: The Reflective Practitioner
- 5.3: The Reflective Teacher- Professional Organizations
- 5.4: Peer Feedback and Reflection
- 5.5: Reflective Practice
- 5.6: Reflective Teaching- an Element of Life-Long Learning
- 5.7: Reviewing and Reflecting on Documentation
- 5.8: How to be a More Reflective Teacher
- 5.9: Activity- Write a My Future Self

6: Teacher as a Proactive Practitioner

- 6.1: Teacher as a Proactive Practitioner
- 6.2: The Teacher's Role - Build and Maintain Positive Relationships with Children
- 6.3: Building Environments that Encourage Positive Behavior- The Preschool behavior Support Self-Assessment
- 6.4: Factors that Influence Behavior
- 6.5: Redirecting Behavior- A Proactive Approach
- 6.6: Proactive versus Reactive Classroom Management
- 6.7: Are You Reactive or Proactive?
- 6.8: Social-Emotional Learning- What is SEL and Why SEL Matters
- 6.9: Positive Behavior Support

7: Teacher as a Presenter

- 7.1: Teacher as a Presenter
- 7.2: Your Presentation Style
- 7.3: 10-20-30 Rule Article
- 7.4: Presentations
- 7.5: Bad Presentations- Death by PowerPoint
- 7.6: Public Speaking and Class Presentations
- 7.7: Presentation Accommodations
- 7.8: How to Fix Your Presentation; 21 Tips

Index

Detailed Licensing

Licensing

A detailed breakdown of this resource's licensing can be found in [Back Matter/Detailed Licensing](#).

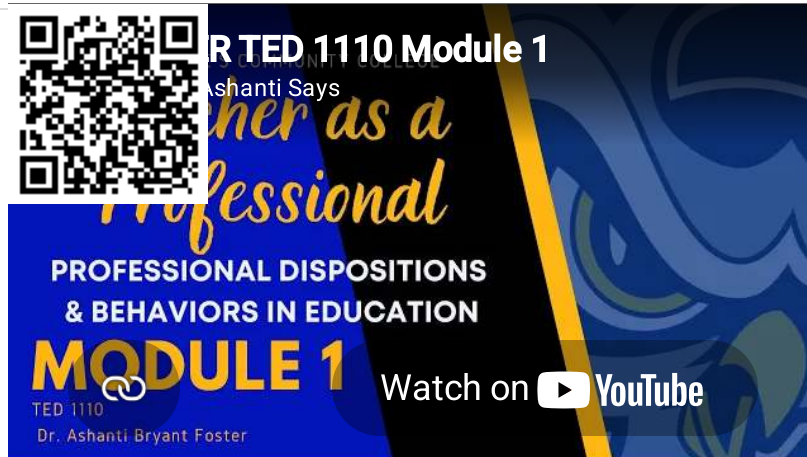
CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: Teacher as a Professional

- 1.1: Teacher as a Professional
- 1.2: Education in Early Childhood
- 1.3: InTASC Core Teaching Standards and Progressions
- 1.4: Early Childhood Generalist
- 1.5: NAEYC Standards
- 1.6: What Does it Mean to be an Ethical Teacher?
- 1.7: Development of Teachers' Identity
- 1.8: Assessing Your Values
- 1.9: The Ethical Implications of Teachers Using Social Networking Sites to Communicate

This page titled [1: Teacher as a Professional](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

1.1: Teacher as a Professional



This page titled [1.1: Teacher as a Professional](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

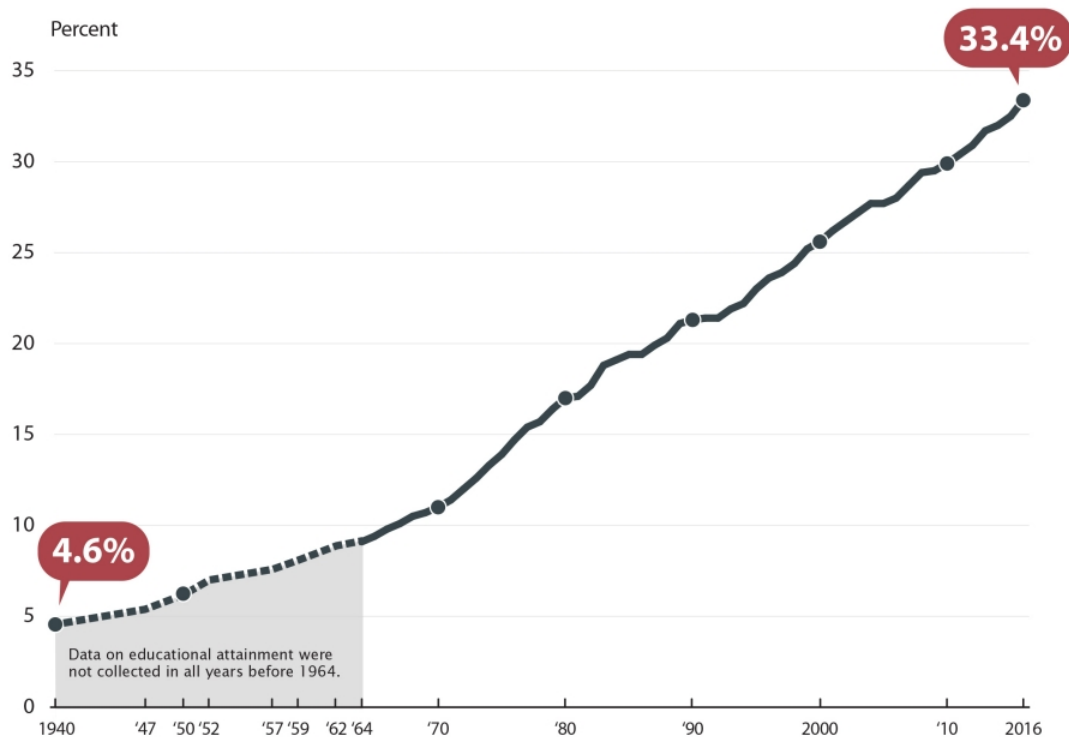
1.2: Education in Early Childhood

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2017), 90 percent of the American population 25 and older have completed high school or higher level of education—compare this to just 24 percent in 1940!^[1] Each generation tends to earn (and perhaps need) increased levels of formal education. As we can see in the graph, approximately one-third of the American adult population has a bachelor's degree or higher, as compared with less than 5 percent in 1940. Educational attainment rates vary by gender and race. All races combined, women are slightly more likely to have graduated from college than men; that gap widens with graduate and professional degrees. However, wide racial disparities still exist. For example, 23 percent of African-Americans have a college degree and only 16.4 percent of Hispanic Americans have a college degree, compared to 37 percent of non-Hispanic white Americans. The college graduation rates of African-Americans and Hispanic Americans have been growing in recent years, however (the rate has doubled since 1991 for African-Americans and it has increased 60 percent in the last two decades for Hispanic-Americans).



Highest Educational Attainment Levels Since 1940

Adults 25 Years and Older With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher



United States™
Census
Bureau

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
census.gov

Source: 1940-2010 Censuses and
Current Population Survey
www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html
www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html

Figure 1. Since 1940, there has been a significant rise in educational attainment for adults over age 25.

What about those young or emerging adults graduating high school today—is the majority of that group going to college? According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017), 66.7 percent of youth ages 16-24 who graduated high school between January and October 2017 were enrolled in colleges or universities in October 2017. There were gender differences (71.7 percent of females vs. 61.1 percent of males) and racial differences (83 percent of Asians, 67.1 percent of non-Hispanic whites, 61 percent Hispanics, and 59.4 percent Blacks). Not all of these students will persist and earn college degrees, however.^[2]

Try It

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/16629>

Education and the Workplace

With the rising costs of higher education, various news headlines have asked if a college education is worth the cost. One way to address this question is in terms of the earning potential associated with various levels of educational achievement. In 2016, the average earnings for Americans 25 and older with only a high school education was \$35,615, compared with \$65,482 for those with a bachelor's degree, compared with \$92,525 for those with more advanced degrees. Average earnings vary by gender, race, and geographical location in the United States.^[3]

Of concern in recent years is the relationship between higher education and the workplace. In 2005, American educator and then Harvard University President, Derek Bok, called for a closer alignment between the goals of educators and the demands of the economy. Companies outsource much of their work, not only to save costs but to find workers with the skills they need. What is required to do well in today's economy? Colleges and universities, he argued, need to promote global awareness, critical thinking skills, the ability to communicate, moral reasoning, and responsibility in their students. Regional accrediting agencies and state organizations provide similar guidelines for educators. Workers need skills in listening, reading, writing, speaking, global awareness, critical thinking, civility, and computer literacy—all skills that enhance success in the workplace.

More than a decade later, the question remains: does formal education prepare young adults for the workplace? It depends on whom you ask. In an article referring to information from the National Association of Colleges and Employers' 2018 Job Outlook Survey, Bauer-Wolf (2018) explains that employers perceive gaps in students' competencies but many graduating college seniors are overly confident. The biggest difference was in perceived professionalism and work ethic (only 43 percent of employers thought that students are competent in this area compared to 90 percent of the students).^[4] Similar differences were also found in terms of oral communication, written communication, and critical thinking skills. Only in terms of digital technology skills were more employers confident about students' competencies than were the students (66 percent compared to 60 percent).



Figure 2. A college education helps students learn job skills and develop soft skills to prepare them for the workplace, but there are still many career paths that do not necessitate a college degree.

It appears that students need to learn what some call “soft skills,” as well as the particular knowledge and skills within their college major. As education researcher Loni Bordoloi Pazich (2018) noted, most American college students today are enrolling in business or other pre-professional programs and to be effective and successful workers and leaders, they would benefit from the communication, teamwork, and critical thinking skills, as well as the content knowledge, gained from liberal arts education.^[5] In fact, two-thirds of children starting primary school now will be employed in jobs in the future that currently do not exist. Therefore, students cannot learn every single skill or fact that they may need to know, but they can learn how to learn, think, research, and communicate well so that they are prepared to continually learn new things and adapt effectively in their careers and lives since the economy, technology, and global markets will continue to evolve.^[6]

Career Choices in Early Adulthood

Hopefully, we are each becoming lifelong learners, particularly since we are living longer and will most likely change jobs multiple times during our lives. However, for many, our job changes will be within the same general occupational field, so our initial career choice is still significant. We’ve seen with Erikson that identity largely involves occupation and, as we will learn in the next section, Levinson found that young adults typically form a dream about work (though females may have to choose to focus relatively more on work or family initially with “split” dreams). The American School Counselor Association recommends that school counselors aid students in their career development beginning as early as kindergarten and continue this development throughout their education.^[7]

One of the most well-known theories about career choice is from John Holland (1985), who proposed that there are six personality types (realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional), as well as varying types of work environments.^[8] The better matched one’s personality is to the workplace characteristics, the more satisfied and successful one is predicted to be with that career or vocational choice. Research support has been mixed and we should note that there is more to satisfaction and success

in a career than one's personality traits or likes and dislikes. For instance, education, training, and abilities need to match the expectations and demands of the job, plus the state of the economy, availability of positions, and salary rates may play practical roles in choices about work.

Link to Learning: What's Your Right Career?

To complete a free online career questionnaire and identify potential careers based on your preferences, go to:

[Career One Stop Questionnaire](#)

Did you find out anything interesting? Think of this activity as a starting point to your career exploration. Other great ways for young adults to research careers include informational interviewing, job shadowing, volunteering, practicums, and internships. Once you have a few careers in mind that you want to find out more about, go to the [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics to learn about job tasks, required education, average pay, and projected outlook for the future.

Try It

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/16630>

1. US Census Bureau (2017, March). Highest Educational Levels Reached by Adults in the U.S. Since 1940. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2017/cb17-51.html>↵
2. US Census Bureau. (2017, March). Highest Educational Levels Reached by Adults in the U.S. Since 1940. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2017/cb17-51.html>↵
3. US Census Bureau. (2017, March). Highest Educational Levels Reached by Adults in the U.S. Since 1940. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2017/cb17-51.html>↵
4. Bauer-Wolf, J. (2018, February 23). Study: students believe they are prepared for the workplace; employers disagree. Inside Higher Ed. <https://www.insidehighered.com/print/news/2018/02/23/study-student>↵
5. Bordoloi Pazich, L. (2018, September 26). The power of academic friendship. Inside Higher Ed. <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2018/09/26/need-combine-business>↵
6. Henseler, C. (2017, September 6). Liberal arts is the foundation for professional success in the 21st century. Huffington Post. ↵
7. The School Counselor and Career Development (2017). American School Counselor Association. Retrieved from https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/PositionStatements/PS_CareerDevelopment.pdf↵
8. Holland, J.L. (1985). Making vocational choices: A theory of vocational personalities and work environments. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Psyc 200 Lifespan Psychology. **Authored by:** Laura Overstreet. **Located at:** <http://opencourselibrary.org/econ-201/>. **License:** [CC BY: Attribution](#)
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by:** Margaret Clark-Plaskie for Lumen Learning. **Provided by:** Lumen Learning. **License:** [CC BY: Attribution](#)

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Glass workers. **Provided by:** Pixabay. **Located at:** <https://pixabay.com/photos/glass-work-workers-carrying-glass-3770982/>. **License:** [Public Domain: No Known Copyright](#)

All rights reserved content

- Highest Educational Levels Reached by Adults in the U.S. Since 1940. **Provided by:** U.S. Census Bureau. **Located at:** https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2017/comm/cb17-51_educational_attainment.html. **License:** [All Rights Reserved](#)

11.8: Education and Work is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

This page titled 1.2: Education in Early Childhood is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

1.3: InTASC Core Teaching Standards and Progressions

https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/2013_INTASC_Learning_Progressions_for_Teachers.pdf

This page titled [1.3: InTASC Core Teaching Standards and Progressions](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

1.4: Early Childhood Generalist

<https://www.nbpts.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/EC-GEN.pdf>

This page titled [1.4: Early Childhood Generalist](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

1.5: NAEYC Standards

<https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/accreditation/early-learning/2022elpstandardsandassessmentitems-compressed.pdf>

This page titled [1.5: NAEYC Standards](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

1.6: What Does it Mean to be an Ethical Teacher?

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 National Education Association's preamble for its code of ethics.

"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."

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 is 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.

References

- Allison, Derek J. (2004). Reviews the book "The Ethical Teacher," by Elizabeth Campbell. *American Journal of Education*. 111(1), 122-126.
- Brady, Michael P., Bucholz, Jessica L., & Keller, Cassandra L. (2007). *Teachers Ethical Dilemmas: What Would You Do? Teaching Exceptional Children*, 40(2), 60-64.
- Campbell, Elizabeth. (2006). *Ethical Knowledge in Teaching: A Moral Imperative of Professionalism*. *Education Canada*. 46(4), 32-35.
- Colnerud, Gunnel. (2006). Teacher ethics as a research problem: syntheses achieved and new issues. *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice*. 12(3), 365-385.
- Covaleskie, John F. (2005). *Ethical Teachers: Ethical People*. *Philosophy of Education Yearbook*, 34-136.
- Kienzler, Donna. (2004). *Teaching Ethics Isn't Enough*. *Journal of Business Communication*. 41(3), 292-301.

Application Questions

1. What is ethical knowledge?

Choose the best answer.

- A. Intrinsic features of awareness between moral and ethical principles.
- B. Knowing what is good or evil
- C. Practicing ethics
- D. The practice of common sense

2. When a teacher demonstrates characteristics of ethics in the classroom it causes what to occur?

Choose the best answer.

- A. Behavioral change of students
- B. Depletion of student interest
- C. Lack of class participation
- D. Positive impact on many students

3. What should teacher assessment practice include?

Choose the best answer

- A. Bias factors
- B. Fair standards
- C. Instructional objectives
- D. Opinions of the teacher

4. Many teachers do not intervene when they see their colleague mistreating a student due to what factor?

Choose the best answer.

- A. Confidentiality
 - B. Embarrassment
 - C. Fear
 - D. Respect
5. What do teachers use as a guide or reference, when they need to make an ethical decision?

Choose the best answer.

- A. Code of ethics for educators
- B. Law books
- C. School policies
- D. Teacher's code of ethics

Answer Key:

- 1. A
- 2. D
- 3. B
- 4. C
- 5. A

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Foundations of Education and Instructional Assessment. **Authored by:** Jennifer Kidd, Jamie Kaufman, Peter Baker, Patrick O'Shea, Dwight Allen, and the students of Old Dominion University's ECI301. **Provided by:** Old Dominion University. **Located at:** https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Foundations_of_Education_and_Instructional_Assessment. **License:** [CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike](#)

3.7: Ethics is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

This page titled [1.6: What Does it Mean to be an Ethical Teacher?](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

1.7: Development of Teachers' Identity

As our identity affects so much about the way we respond, it is critical to look at our own identity as individuals and in our professional role of early childhood educators. In addition to developing a personal and social identity, teachers also develop a specific professional identity. This process begins during childhood and continues throughout the lifespan.

The professional identity of teachers includes the following: their personal values and beliefs, their professional values and belief, and their cultural experiences which they learned in their childhood and their cultural experiences that they have accepted into their daily lives. In reflecting on these experiences, it affords teachers opportunities to gain deeper understanding of themselves which helps them to understand others. It provides them opportunities to gain empathy and understanding of others that can only be accomplished when we understand ourselves.

Most early childhood professionals had experiences during their schooling that have shaped their ideas of teaching. ^[41]



“I do not exactly remember what I, as a child, wanted to be when I grew up. I think it was not a concern of mine. But I recall a certain episode, already in 4th grade, in which I answered I wanted to be “a teacher of children”. By that time, my representation of a teacher was “someone who knows a lot of things”. Later, throughout the years, I wanted to be other things, depending on my interests:... It was only later, when I was already in college, studying to be a teacher, that the desire of the 4th-grade girl intensified. It was the experience in a summer camp, with children aged 4 to 12, which made me want to know more about the world of the child. Now, looking back, I think, humorously, that this profession, at that time, was still “not yet born” and that, somehow, I was expecting its birth [emphasis added].”

Miranda (student teacher) ^[42]

The teaching profession is a journey of reflection to learn more about ourselves in this role. As we learn more about who we are, we are able to understand our teaching philosophies and our role in promoting equitable learning environments. The journey is one of progress not perfection. As we interact with the children and families we serve, we become more aware of our role.

Learning is inherent to the human condition. Every human has the capacity to learn throughout the lifespan. Education provides opportunities to improve oneself, acquire and/or modify knowledge, gain competency, and construct meaning (which may be the same as acquiring and/or modifying information so may not need to include that or use that instead of the former). We do this through the experiences we have, the interactions with others (development of interpersonal relationships), observing other teachers in action and applying what we have observed and learned in our course of study.

This learning includes:

- Knowledge for practice is the one which derives from academic research (formal knowledge) and from which teachers structure their practice, i.e., it is the application of formal knowledge to practical teaching situations.
- Knowledge in practice is the one acquired during the activity, since teachers' knowledge is immersed in their practice, in what they perform about practice, in questioning, and in the narrative of this practice. Knowledge comes from action/experience, from the understanding, and from the reflections and decisions which teachers make every day in schools.
- Knowledge of practice is what Formosinho (2009) calls the knowledge built in a collective manner inside local communities, formed by teachers who work in school development, education, or collaborative questioning projects.

It is from the gaining of knowledge and engagement in learning experiences (action) that it becomes possible to articulate theory and practice. The teacher learns how to learn and learns how to teach.



Figure 4.1: Part of the student teaching experience is the formation of the professional identity. ^[43]

This group culture and the feeling of belonging to a professional family (Tejada Fernández, 2009a, 2009b) constitute a complex, interactive, and multidirectional process between the student and the teacher, in which relationships are based on ethics, respect, and by valuing social differences (Tejada-Fernández, Carvalho, & Bueno, 2014). ^[44]

In response to increased accountability measures and evaluation systems, schools adopt new approaches and innovations. Such activities often require teachers to adopt new roles and responsibilities, develop new knowledge and skill, and reconfigure their relationships with peers and administrators. As a result, teachers build new professional identities in response to the underlying question—who am I as a teacher? ^[45]

Becoming Equity Minded

Once the student teacher becomes a teacher in an early childhood classroom, the journey of gaining knowledge and experience continues. This journey includes taking the path towards social equity. This requires teachers reflecting on the underlying reasons for the way they educate and care for children so that they can become equity-minded. One way to define equity-minded.



Think About It...

Based on what you've read and learned so far, how would you define equity-minded?



Figure 4.2: Teachers must reflect on their role in creating social equity. ^[46]

It is important for teachers to act as critical thinkers and not just supposedly neutral performers of what is considered to be effective teaching. Very often teaching young children is seen as just supervising play, managing behaviors, and implementing activities with children. But teaching should be considered to be an important responsibility, in which the teachers use what they know about children and their families to create a developmentally appropriate curriculum and build strong, reciprocal relationships with children and families based on their cultural and social contexts.

This culturally responsive approach, supports children to become participants in a democratic society and work towards equity. This involves taking an active responsibility in asking fundamental questions about what they actually teach, and especially about the broader aims which they wish to achieve, and about their role in developing a democratic and just society. Books, such as this one and the course it was written for will support your journey as an equity minded early

This page titled [1.7: Development of Teachers' Identity](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

1.8: Assessing Your Values

The journey of achieving success in college begins with a single step: identifying your personal values. Your personal values are your core beliefs and guiding principles. They shape the roles you play in daily life. They color your interests and passions, and frame your thoughts and words. In essence, your values are a compass that help you make decisions and choices.

What are your values, then? Which are most important to you, and which are least important? How do your values fit into your educational goals? How do your educational goals relate to your future career?

To help you answer these questions, you can use a “self-assessment” survey. These surveys can help you evaluate your personal identity—your thoughts, actions, attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors—in relationship to the task at hand, like going to college and preparing for a career.

Many different self-assessment surveys are available from college career centers and online sites. Some are designed as personality tests, like the Keirsey Temperament Sorter, or as inventories, like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MTBI®), the most widely used personality inventory in history. You may also come across instruments designed as scales, or measures, games, surveys, and more. These descriptors are often interchangeably used, although most often they refer to questionnaires. The distinctions are not as important as whether or not the instrument meets your self-assessment needs.

Some popular, free surveys are noted here.

	SURVEY INSTRUMENT	DESCRIPTION
1	ISEEK Career Cluster Interest Survey ISEEK Careers / Minnesota Colleges and Universities	This online survey lets you rate activities you enjoy, your personal qualities, and school subjects you like. Then you can see which career clusters are a match for your interests.
2	Values Clarification Questionnaire InSite / Electric Eggplant	This online survey, in two parts, looks at the specific values of ambition, appearance, family, friendship, independence, wealth, education, freedom, happiness, privacy, security, honesty. A scorecard and interpretation are generated.
3	Career Interest Survey CheckOutACollege.com / Community and Technical Colleges of Washington State	This online survey allows you to select activities you like to do, personality traits that describe you, and subjects that interest you. Auto results suggest one or more of sixteen career clusters that match your selections.

CC licensed content, Original

- College Success. **Authored by:** Linda Bruce. **Provided by:** Lumen Learning. **License:** [CC BY: Attribution](#)

This page titled [1.8: Assessing Your Values](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

1.9: The Ethical Implications of Teachers Using Social Networking Sites to Communicate

Author Note

There are no conflicts of interest to disclose.

Correspondence concerning this chapter should be addressed to htumbach@gmail.com.

Introduction

As teachers strive to build productive and positive relationships with their students, parents, and colleagues, they may employ different techniques to do so. The main reason behind developing effective relationships with these stakeholders is to put students at the forefront of authentic learning. It is recognized that strengthening relationships with parents, students, and even colleagues can be one way to support student learning (Alberta Government, 2018). One of the most critical ways to foster strong relationships is through effective communication (White, 2016).

Teachers are tasked with sharing a multitude of information from events, field trips, and student learning progress to professional learning opportunities and resources. Known as command communication (White, 2016), teachers communicate “in clearly prescribed ways” (p. 70) using tools such as email, websites, and newsletters. As White (2016) points out, “[w]ritten communication is probably the most efficient and effective way teachers provide clear information” (p. 70). Teacher communication is not limited to the command function, but also to a relational function, which is the “basis of effective learning relationships and enables the development of communities of practice, dialogues, and fusions of horizons” (White, 2016, p. 71). Teachers can communicate with both functions to “maximize sharing of information and understanding” (White, 2016, p. 70). This can be challenging to accomplish, but with the integration of technology, teachers build relationships and communities, encourage dialogue, share information and overcome the barriers of time, distance, and even languages. Social Network Sites (SNSs), such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, lend themselves as a platform to achieve strong teacher communication to build and strengthen relationships.

Table 2.1 *Common social networking sites and their uses (SNSs).*

Facebook	Users connect and share various media, such as text and pictures, with followers, who are known as ‘friends’ online. Friends can comment on user posts.
Twitter	Users post 140-character messages (tweets) to followers. Tweets can be commented on and shared. Private messages are also available.
Instagram	Users share with followers photos and videos that can be commented on and shared. Altering or filtering is a common practice by users.

Ethical Considerations of SNSs Use in K-12 Classrooms

This innovative use of SNSs creates ethical dilemmas for educators. From the lens of a consequentialist approach, “teachers are in a difficult position of trying to innovate in their classroom using SNSs while at the same time being conscious of the risks” (Henderson, et al., 2014, p. 2). This chapter will navigate the ethical implications teachers face when using SNSs to communicate the learning that happens in their classrooms.

The framework for teachers using SNSs for communication, adapted from Farrow’s (2016) OER Research Hub project, identifies the three normative ethical theories and highlights considerations for teachers who do engage with SNSs for communication purposes (Table 2.2). These ethical perspectives attempt to guide how teachers and students can and should behave, which rules and procedures they should adhere to, and which beliefs and values teachers should have (Farrow, 2016). SNSs used in the classroom context can be powerful, but what are the implications of balancing the pressure and desires to use social media for communication from our colleagues and parent community with the ethical expectations of the teaching profession?

Table 2.2 Completed framework for teachers using social media networking sites for communication, in relation to normative ethical theories

based on Farrow's (2016) *Uncompleted Framework*

Principle	Duties & Responsibilities (deontological)	Outcome (consequentialist)	Personal Development (virtue)
Full disclosure	- Teachers have a responsibility to follow ATA Code of Conduct, FOIP, and their district's policies when sharing classroom and student information. - Teachers could share with parents and students the purpose, methods, and intended use of the social media platform.	- Parents may opt out of their child being displayed on social media. - Teachers should consider a student's and parent's perspective and allow them to have a voice when the teacher uses social media for classroom purposes.	- Teachers are accountable to be aware of current policies and legalities. - Teachers are responsible for providing a culture of care. - Develops a professional learning network for teachers, students and parents.
Privacy & data security	- There are legal implications for protecting student data. - Read and understand Privacy Policy and Terms of Service of chosen SNS. - When required, obtain consent.	- When interacting with SNSs, a digital footprint is created. - Whether SNS are used personally or professionally, users should consider all posts public.	- Teachers' digital presence is in line with the virtue of being a teacher. - Two options: - One profile for personal and private life. - Two profiles – one private and one public.
Informed consent	Teachers have to ensure consent from students and parents before posting content that may be identifiable.	- Students & parents have the ability to request posts to be removed and request be honoured. - Due to the changing nature of SNS policies and cultural practices, teachers should consider asking for consent on a regular basis.	- When seeking consent, there is an opportunity to have more forethought before posting. - Students have the opportunity to create their own PLN.
Integrity	- All students have the opportunity to develop their online communication skills and not just for the students who can afford to access from home. - Consider context when communicating online, teachers, students and parents	- Teachers can model communication, digital citizenship and literacy skills. - Teachers should recognize that not all may be able to participate due to financial limitations of affording technology.	- Respect and allow for diverse experiences. - Teachers have in loco parentis.
Avoid harm/minimize risk	- Due to "in loco parentis" teachers have the same rights and responsibilities as the parent and should act accordingly. - Consider that any activity on social media is public.	As teachers aim to maximize the benefits of using SNSs as a form of communication, they should also take measures to minimize the potential risk of harm to themselves and those they interact with.	- Consider that any activity on social media is public, so associate with groups/individuals that are suitable. - Professional 24-7. - Create and maintain expectations.

		• Set and share expectations with parents and students.	
Respect for participant autonomy	• Teachers may be directed to use SNSs, but may have the choice of which platform. • Teachers ensure that parents and students can access communication via technology or not.	• Teachers ensure that they minimize the impact on student's digital footprint. • Teachers ensure that students and parents have opportunities to participate in posting content on SNSs.	• By using SNSs, users can connect, create and share knowledge with a larger community.
Independence	• Teachers can control what they post and how often. • Students can contribute to class SNSs content.	• Parents who don't want to communicate via social media may want the information in another modality. • Teachers should consider Equity of Access and how it creates and removes barriers.	• Students are exposed to digital literacy and citizenship skills that can be transferred out of the classroom experience. • Teachers influence online identities.

Full Disclosure

As teachers join the growing movement of using SNSs for their classroom communication (Auld & Henderson, 2014), there are expectations placed on them by their principal, districts, and professional bodies. Even though not explicitly defined, these expectations contain Nias' (1999) six components of a culture of care, which include: being affective, responsibility for learners, responsibility for relationships in the school, self-sacrifice and obedience, over-conscientiousness, and identity (Figure 7.1). Teachers who use SNSs should employ a due culture of care to ensure that they meet the professional expectations placed upon them. This culture of care should include an evaluation of the consequences of using SNSs, followed by the disclosure of the consequences and pertinent information to the parties involved, including parents, students, and colleagues.



Figure 2.1 Six components of culture of care, as described in Nias (1999).

Luckin et al. (2009), as cited in Howard (2013), suggest that “[t]o facilitate effective use of Web 2.0 technology in the classrooms, teachers are encouraged to be willing to embrace risk and to consider small ways of navigating existing cultures and reframing old contexts to incorporate new ones” (p. 44). As teachers transform the purpose of SNSs to fit their classroom contexts, they should consider the notion of full disclosure, which is when the teacher makes all information and facts known (Oxford University Press, 2019). The following section will examine two components to this disclosure: teacher communication expectations and the use of personal learning networks to share and co-construct knowledge.

Teacher Policies and Procedures

Regardless of whether or not a teacher participates in SNSs, there are policies and procedures to which they must adhere to as a member of a professional association, not only for their own professional protection but also for the protection of colleagues, students, and parents. By following the specified policies and procedures for communication, teachers meet the aspects of a culture of care.

Teachers in Alberta, for example, are required to follow the ATA Code of Conduct, the Teaching Quality Standards, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and their own district’s Administrative Procedures. These guiding documents define what data and information teachers have access to, who can provide permission to use the platform, and how they can use it to support the learning that happens in their classrooms.

Due to the openness and highly connected nature of SNSs, teachers should communicate to parents, students, and colleagues (including administration) which SNSs they are using and their purpose for using those platforms. As well, teachers should notify stakeholders what they will be posting, before they post it. This will give parents and students opportunities to have input and the ability to give or refuse consent. As Henderson et al. (2014) point out, “teachers should be aware that this consent might need to be renegotiated at regular intervals” (p. 3). Auld and Henderson (2014) also argue that teachers have the responsibility to ensure that students (and parents) want their own virtual identities to be made public when using SNSs as a tool for communication. As students or parents comment on a post, they are at risk of exposing their online identity which they may not have considered.

Sharing and Co-Construction of Knowledge Through Personal Learning Networks (PLNs)

Many professionals have been adapting and adopting various emerging practices, such as using SNSs, to network, share, and co-create knowledge (Veletsianos, 2016). Teachers may find themselves using SNSs in the classroom for the same purposes, while guiding students in developing the skills to participate effectively in Personal Learning Networks (PLNs). “Research that suggests that such platforms can facilitate the shared construction of knowledge and peer interactions that support learning adds to the perception that SNSs, such as Facebook, could be a catalyst for classroom engagement and collaboration” (Howard, 2013, p. 43). Whether it is a teacher’s own PLN with other professionals or a student-based PLN, teachers should disclose what they, themselves, are gaining from integrating SNSs as a modality. As Auld and Henderson (2014) identify, “[t]eachers need to consider what the implications are for co-inhabiting spaces that are designed to connect people and share information” (p. 199); however, disclosure of benefits should not be limited to the teacher viewpoint. Emphasis should also be placed on the student viewpoint. What does the student have to gain or lose by participating in a PLN via SNSs? What opportunities and guidance will students (and parents for that matter) have to participate in PLNs? What opportunities exist to be part of a PLN if parents do not want to use SNSs? These are all aspects of full disclosure that teachers should consider and communicate.

As teachers disclose the purpose for using SNSs in their classroom practice, they should consider the six aspects of the culture of care. By keeping these practices student-centred, the argument could be made that the choices the teacher is making to build relationships and enhance communication are inherently good. By having an environment that is built on full disclosure, teachers will continue to build “a sense of community, people-making, and dialogue” which is foundational to school-family partnerships (White, 2016, p. 69).

It should be recognized that full disclosure should not be limited to the intent and should also include other considerations such as privacy and security. The next section will explore these elements and the ethical dilemmas they create.

Section 2: Privacy, Data Security, and Informed Consent

When it comes to the role of the teacher, and protection of privacy, evolving technology has created a need for privacy and security awareness. As mentioned in the previous section, teachers must follow various policies and procedures, such as the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(FOIP\) \[New Tab\]](#) (Alberta Teachers Association, 1999), which is a legally binding document and mandatory. In this particular act, “the privacy of students and parents is protected by rules that school [administrative procedures] must follow in the collection, use, protection and disclosure of personal information” (para. 4). While engaging on SNS platforms, teachers may expose themselves, students, and parents to breaches of privacy and careless consent to the collection of data. In their paper, Regan and Jesse (2019) explored the ethical concerns of privacy in 21st-century learning and identified six distinct ethical concerns. The following section will explore three of the six privacy and data security concerns when teachers post and share content on SNSs.

Information Privacy

When posting any content online, there is exposure and formation to one’s identity. Regardless of whether a teacher creates a digital identity to connect with PLCs, share lessons, or celebrate the connections in the classroom, there is a tension between confidentiality and transparency. Teachers may carelessly expose themselves, parents, and students to the collection of data.

Teachers can enlist proper attitudes that help limit exposure. Summarized by Regan and Jesse (2019) as, “notice, consent, choice and transparency” (p. 170), when posting any information online, teachers are responsible to those parties involved (students, parents, colleagues, etc.) to communicate the purpose and content of the post, to seek consent, and to allow those involved to choose what is posted or to be removed from the post, and to be able to see the post after submission.

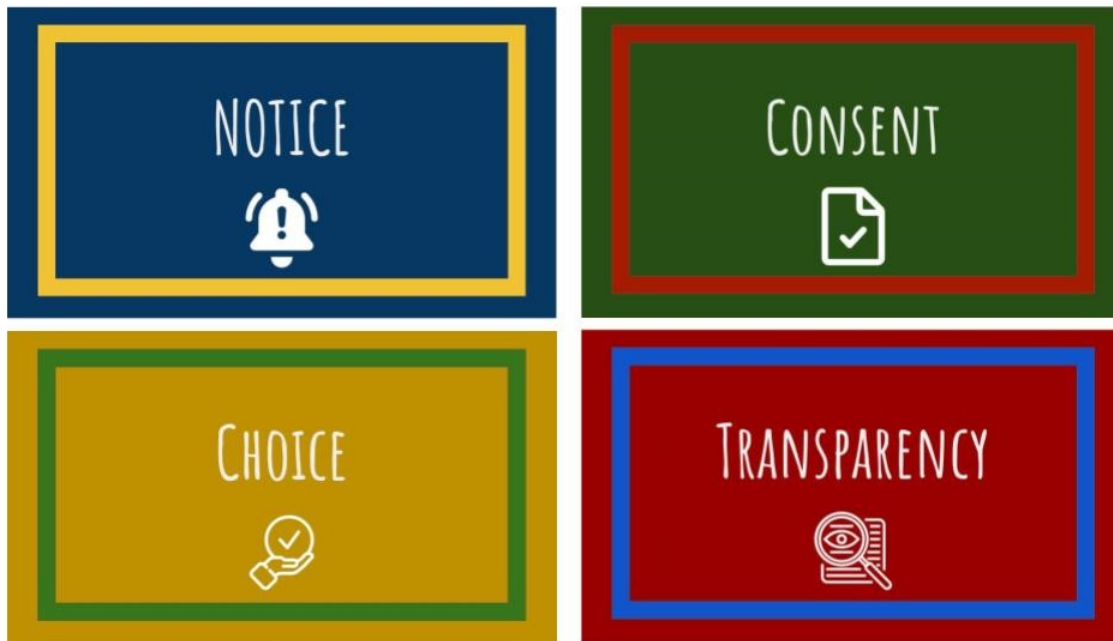


Figure 2.2 Attitudes to limit exposure of privacy, as described in Regan and Jesse (2019).

Ownership of Information

Once content is posted, who owns the post and its contents? The answer depends on the SNS platform and its privacy policy. When looking at a privacy policy, or reading the terms of service before clicking accept, one may notice that these are long and complex documents. Readers can become lost in jargon, and, as a result, users accept the agreements without becoming aware of critical information, such as data collection and ownership of information. For example, [Facebook's Privacy Policy \[New Tab\]](#), which also includes Instagram, explains ownership of information.

According to Facebook (2019), “you own the intellectual property rights (things such as copyright or trademarks) in any such content that you create and share on Facebook” (“Your commitments” section); they go on to identify that if users share, post, or upload content, Facebook is granted the permissions to use, distribute, modify, copy, and create derivative products of the content. If a teacher posts a picture of students working in the classroom, the teacher has given Facebook and Instagram the ability to “store, copy, and share it with others” (Facebook, 2019, “Your commitments” section) based on the privacy settings. Even when parents grant permission to use photos of their child, they may not understand that the child’s photo may be used by third-party companies, based on the SNS platform. Students should be consulted when their work will be posted on SNSs, as they own the intellectual property rights to their content, and they may not want to give those platforms the ability to remix and reuse their work.

Part of learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication. Engaging in digital environments can promote learning, teaching and collaboration for students, staff and parents. The very nature of SNSs introduces a potential lack of personal control of content and dissemination of content. Due care and attention is required to safeguard privacy. (Elk Island Catholic Schools, 2019, para. 1)

Understanding the agreements of SNS platforms is crucial to effective communication practices. Some may consider the practice of deleting the content after the school year is over, as those students move on to another classroom; however, teachers should be aware of the adage ‘once online, always online.’ Facebook identifies that if the content is deleted by the user, it will be removed from Facebook’s systems, though it may exist elsewhere (2019). As Molnar and Boninger (2015) point out, “[e]ducators are obliged not only to learn how student data may be gathered and exploited but also to develop privacy policies that protect their students from such exploitation” (p. 8).

Surveillance – AI

It would be naive to believe that one's online presence is not tracked in some form or another. "Tracking software also records adult behaviour on the Internet, of course, although many adults may be unaware of it. Since educators are, however, responsible for the children entrusted to their care, they cannot afford to be uninformed about potential threats to student privacy" (Molnar and Boninger, 2015, p. 8). As soon as a teacher engages with SNSs, there is surveillance of their activity and that of the users to whom they are connected. For example, as soon as the student does connect to the content posted on the teacher's SNS, marketers can track the student's online activity and direct ads to that student (Molnar and Boninger, 2015, p. 7).

Even as teachers consider information privacy, ownership of information, and surveillance, they may still fail to protect all invested parties' privacy. A common phenomenon exists known as the Privacy Paradox. First discussed by Barnes (2006), the Privacy Paradox identifies that there is a contradiction between online behaviour and privacy concerns (Table 2.3). The research conducted by Dienline and Trepte (2014) showed that people on SNSs "engage in self-disclosing behaviours that do not adequately reflect their concerns" (p. 285). "Despite privacy concerns, users, most of the time, fail to protect their privacy within SNSs, thus putting themselves and other users at risk" (Sideri, et al., 2017, p. 79).

Table 2.3 Barnes (2006) observed 4 phenomena related to the Privacy Paradox.

4 Privacy Paradox Phenomena of Social Network Sites
1. Large quantity of information disclosed online
2. The illusion of privacy
3. Discrepancy between context and behaviour (even when known to be public, act like SNSs are private)
4. Users' poor understanding of data processing actions by online businesses

Knowing the phenomena, teachers can act in an ethical manner that ensures the protection of privacy to the best of their ability. Prior to the first post, teachers should read the privacy policy and terms of service of their chosen platform. They can then act according to what they are comfortable with and what is best for all users involved in the communication. Also, informing parents and students of the terms and allowing them to create their own limitations of content to be posted, would reduce the breach in privacy and data collection from the post.

In the end, even with instilled practices to limit the accessibility of data or enable privacy features, these features may dissolve at any point, leading to the risk that the content become public (Auld & Henderson, 2014). It is this point that leads to the exploration of what the teacher can do to maintain educational integrity by avoiding harm and minimizing risk.

Educational Integrity by Avoiding Harm and Minimizing Risk

When parents send their children to school, they entrust educators to provide quality education while ensuring that their child is cared for and protected. Known as *in loco parentis*, the teacher is in place of a parent and is given the same rights and responsibilities (Law Now, 2019). In Alberta, according to the competencies in the Teaching Quality Standard (2018), teachers are expected to "recognize that the professional practice of a teacher is bound by standards of conduct expected of a caring, knowledgeable and reasonable adult entrusted with the custody, care or education of students" (p. 3). When teachers engage in posting on SNSs, this care should still be practiced. As teachers aim to maximize the benefits of using SNSs as a form of communication, they should also take measures to minimize the potential risk of harm to themselves and those with whom they interact. This section will look at opportunities educators have to maintain educational integrity while avoiding harm and reducing risks when engaging in online communication.

Modelling Digital Communication

Teachers are held in high regard in society, and what they do in their personal lives will usually be viewed with a lens that relates to the profession. "The teacher acts in a manner which maintains the honour and dignity of the profession" (ATA, 2018, standard 18). This also applies to the teacher's interaction with SNSs. Whether being used to connect with other teachers in PLCs, with parents and students, or with friends and family, "teachers need to maintain a respectful and professional identity" (Planbook.com, 2018, Section 1, para. 4).

In 2012, George Couros, an educator and recognized keynote speaker for professional audiences, posted a blog titled “[Personal and Professional vs. Public and Private](#)” [New Tab]. He discussed the debate of teachers having a personal SNS account separate from a professional account. His argument is that whether teachers have separate accounts or not, there is the potential for anyone to see the posted content. “What I am always aware of is that no matter who sees what I put out there, anyone can see it eventually, whether it is through me or someone else” (Couros, 2012, Section 1, para. 4). In fact, by combining the personal and professional accounts into one, teachers have a unique opportunity to model effective digital citizenship and digital literacy skills to their followers, which may include parents, students, and other teachers, rather than letting them figure it out on their own (Howard, 2013).

Setting Expectations

By communicating expectations for parents, students, colleagues, and themselves, teachers can reduce the risks that come with engaging in SNSs. “Even if we deem the benefits of SNSs worth the potential risks, a plan for managing those risks is warranted” (Howard, 2013, p. 44). It is interesting to note that due to the recent COVID-19 crisis (Spring 2020), educators have found themselves needing to turn to emerging technologies such as SNSs to communicate effectively with students and parents. If they do not set up expectations from the beginning of the school year, teachers may struggle with boundaries and guidelines for themselves, parents, and students. Teachers should look to their guiding policies and procedures to provide support for navigating this challenge. However, it is recognized that with the fast pace of technological change, these policies and procedures may need constant revision to remain current.

Many school districts have developed administrative procedures that identify the expectations of all parties involved with using SNSs. As Howard (2013) points out, “[p]olicies that prevent private one-to-one communication between teachers and students that do not generate a permanent record are extremely important to ensure the public’s trust that the users of these networks are operating above-board” (p. 50). For example, Elk Island Catholic Schools (2019) has Administrative Procedure 146, titled “Social Media”, which identifies expectations for division staff, students, and parents (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4 Excerpt from Elk Island Catholic Schools’ Administrative Procedure: 146 social media (2019).

Procedures
1. Principals shall:
1.1 Ensure students, parents, and staff are aware of the Division’s expectations for responsible use of Social Media.
1.2 Encourage parents to communicate to school personnel any concerns they may have about inappropriate use of Social Media.
1.3 Ensure students, parents, and staff are educated in the appropriate use of Social Media and the associated benefits and dangers of a public online presence.

When teachers do set guidelines for how SNSs will be used, they should include expectations for:

- Timeliness of posts
- Expectations and moderation of responses
- Procedures for one-to-one communication
- What will happen to content after the school year is over
- Limitations to having followers and following back

Teachers who model effective use and positive communication skills with SNSs remain consistent with the rights and responsibilities placed upon them as professionals. Each post should be considered an opportunity to develop digital literacy skills for teachers, students, and parents. By setting and following expectations, all stakeholders will reduce risk and the opportunity for harm. However, risk and harm are reduced not only by expectations, but also by understanding how using SNSs can impact autonomy and independence.

Respect for Participant Autonomy and Independence

Teachers may find themselves in situations where they are directed to engage with SNSs, such as when a school leader suggests that teachers can add a Twitter post about their weekly classroom events. When this occurs, teachers may feel obligated to use

social media even if they do not feel comfortable with the digital tool. Alberta Education's Learning and Technology Policy Framework (2013), Policy Direction 3 indicates that teachers are expected to "engage in professional growth opportunities that are broadened and diversified through technology, social media, and communities of practice" (Section 3, para. 1). Although some teachers may struggle to give up autonomy over their professional learning choices, they may still have control over what technologies they use or how they use them. The student-centred goal, is that "teachers . . . develop, maintain, and apply the knowledge, skills, and attributes that enable them to use technology effectively, efficiently, and innovatively in support of learning and teaching" (Alberta Education, 2013, Section 3, para 1). Teachers need to consider the magnitude of this responsibility when they do engage with SNSs, as they are in a position in which they can create and shape their own online persona, while also shaping and influencing the identity of their students. In this final section, we will expand on the ethical examination of the teacher's role in shaping identity and equity of access.

(Re)Shaping Identity

When teachers use SNSs in their classroom, their motivation may be to build relationships, provide support, reduce the feeling of being isolated (for both student and teacher), build personal and professional learning environments, and to create and share knowledge (Forbes, 2018). SNSs are not limited to these opportunities and may provide other features and abilities, such as 'going live' to show parents the events in the classroom; however, the fact that teachers and students have the ability to use these features does not necessarily mean that they should.

As previously discussed, teachers and students who engage with SNSs may blur the lines between private and public identity. What teachers should consider is that as they post content such as pictures, student work, or discussions about what happened within the class, they create a digital footprint for themselves, as well as for their students, which may be accessed and retrieved by others (Auld & Henderson, 2014). As teachers move to a more digital learning environment, K-12 teachers are faced with the reality that their digital interactions influence identity, regardless of whether they take place on a private or public SNS account. *Forbes* (2018) eloquently points out that "what an individual does with social media does not occur in a vacuum and is likely to affect or influence others by virtue of the social character of the communications" (p.178). As teachers consider this influence, they are held ethically to the principle of responsible care, "where professionalism entails doing good and minimizing harm" (*Forbes*, 2018, p.178).

To build on this idea of doing good and minimizing harm, teachers should consider the power of their influence. By modelling positive digital citizenship and literacy skills, they can inadvertently shape their own and students' identities in a positive way. One example is practicing proper citations and copyright practices. As Auld and Henderson (2014) point out, the use of a picture of a celebrity or cartoon picture to create a social media avatar may seem harmless, but it is a breach of copyright and possible identity theft. This is an opportunity for a teachable moment that may have lasting effects on students' identities and on the identity of the original subject whose image was used.

Teachers' ability to model and shape identity is not just proximal. Auld and Henderson (2014) explain that "teachers can model how to respect the other even if they are not known to the students or the teacher" (p. 202). This removal of barriers is powerful, but the strength is limited by the opportunity for digital equity of access.

Equity of Access

Digital access and equity involve many components and ethical considerations that teachers should consider as they use SNSs. Rooted in social justice, there is a belief that emerging technologies, such as social media, will "level the playing field, effectively creating equal access to learning opportunities by democratizing information and instruction" (Bulger, 2016, p. 2). This is supported by the fact that creating an account on SNSs is most often free. As well, SNSs are ubiquitous communication platforms where, because they are digital, users can access assistive technologies such as speech to text, text to speech, and translation to participate in the discussion. By integrating SNSs in the classroom, teachers provide opportunities for all students to develop their online communication skills, not just the students who can afford to access the platforms from home (Howard, 2013).

The argument that SNSs are free is limited to the actual cost to participate on the site. In order to access SNSs, one needs technology and internet access in the first place. As well, parents may not want their children, or themselves, to communicate online. In order to respect the autonomy of parents and students, teachers may want to consider providing alternatives to online communication. By doing so, teachers follow the social justice principle of recognitive, which, as Lambert (2018) points out, involves recognition and respect for diverse views and experiences.

As teachers use SNSs for communication, their reach of influence is not limited to just their own identity, but beyond. In fact, the impact on identity is a community approach involving (but not limited to) teachers, parents, and students. To maintain the educational integrity that teachers are responsible for, teachers should also consider opportunities for autonomy when involving technology-based practices in their classrooms. By allowing for voice and choice by parents and students, teachers can continue, with effective communication, to build the sense of community that is needed (White, 2016), which was the goal in the first place.

Conclusion

As teachers decide to integrate SNSs into their classroom practices, they should consider the ethical implications that this type of technological opportunity creates. According to Auld and Henderson (2014), “a professional SNS profile is a potentially valuable strategy but it still requires considerable thought and considerable maintenance” (p. 199). By focusing on four main areas of ethical exploration, this chapter examined the topics of full disclosure, privacy and security, educational integrity, and autonomy and independence, in order to address how teachers can tackle the complexity and unique opportunities of using SNSs to communicate in their classroom.

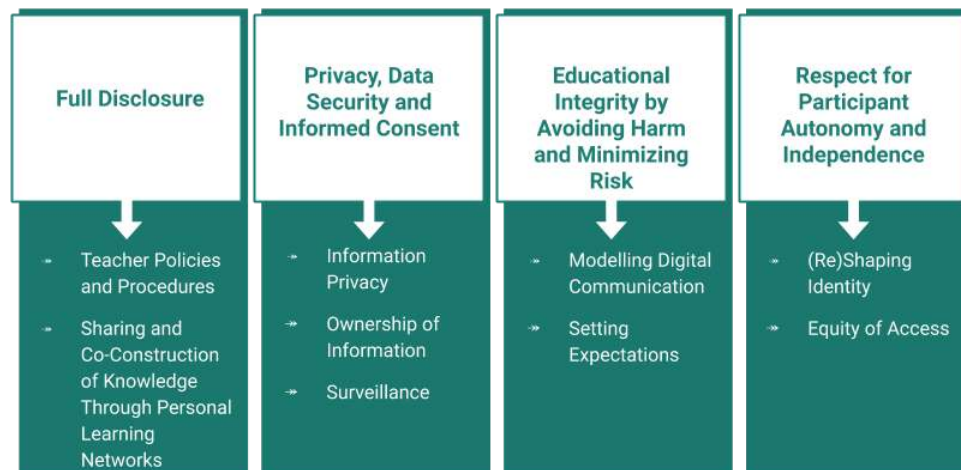


Figure 2.4 Four areas of ethical implications of using SNSs for communication by teachers.

No matter the tool, teachers should consider the magnitude of their responsibility when they do engage with SNS for communication. Part of the attraction of SNSs is the unique abilities to enhance communication, but one may want to have the mantra: just because you have the ability, doesn’t mean you should use it. By continually reflecting on the goal and ethical implications, teachers will have a strong foundation for the use of SNSs for communication.

Questions to Consider for Future Research

- Technology is always evolving, and with it, a teacher’s practice should evolve, too. COVID-19 has required teachers across the globe to move their classrooms to an online environment. Teachers who had never considered SNSs as a way to communicate are now adapting these platforms to fit their classroom needs. What impact will this mass uptake of using SNSs have on pedagogy?
- In what ways are teachers and students reshaping the role SNSs have in education?
- What ethical considerations should be considered when students who are under the age of consent use technology to support their learning?
- Lastly, as teachers model different competencies in their classroom, there are opportunities to embed digital literacies and citizenship while creating opportunities to develop PLNs online. What do students have to gain or lose by participating in a PLN via SNSs?
- What frameworks could teachers consider to scaffold students developing their own PLNs using SNS (refer to Appendix A)?

References

Alberta Education. (2013). *Learning and technology policy framework*. <https://education.alberta.ca/media/1045/ltpf-quick-guide-web.pdf>

- Alberta Education. (2018). *Teaching quality standard*. https://education.alberta.ca/media/3739620/standardsdoc-tqs_fa-web-2018-01-17.pdf
- Alberta Teachers Association. (1999, March 30). *What you should know about the FOIP Act*. ATA News. <https://www.teachers.ab.ca/News%20Room/ata%20news/Volume%2033/Number%2015/In%20the%20News/Pages/What%20you%20should%20know%20about%20the%20FOIP%20Act.aspx>
- Alberta Teachers Association. (2018). *ATA code of professional conduct*. <https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Teachers-as-Professionals/IM-4E%20Code%20of%20Professional%20Conduct.pdf>
- Auld, G., & Henderson, M. (2014) The ethical dilemmas of social networking sites in classroom contexts. In G. Mallia (Ed.), *The Social Classroom: Integrating Social Network Use in Education* (pp. 192-207). Ringgold Inc. <http://ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/docview/1494511269?accountid=9838>
- Barnes, S. B. (2006). A privacy paradox: Social networking in the United States. *First Monday*, 11(9). <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v11i9.1394>
- Bulger, M. (2016). *Personalized learning: The conversations we're not having*. Data & Society. https://datasociety.net/pubs/ecl/PersonalizedLearning_primer_2016.pdf
- Couros, G. (2012, November 18). Personal and professional vs. public and private. *George Couros*. <https://georgecouros.ca/blog/archives/3432>
- Dienlin, T., & Trepte, S. (2015). Is the privacy paradox a relic of the past? An in-depth analysis of privacy attitudes and privacy behaviors. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 45(3), 285–297. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2049>
- Elk Island Catholic Schools. (2019, September). *Social media*. Administrative Procedure 146. <https://www.eics.ab.ca/download/218652>
- Facebook. (2019, July 31). *Terms of service*. <https://www.facebook.com/terms.php>
- Farrow, R. (2016). A framework for the ethics of open education. *Open Praxis*, 8(2), 93-109. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5944/openpraxis.8.2.291>
- Forbes, D. (2017). Professional online presence and learning networks: Educating for ethical use of social media. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 18(7), 175-190. <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v18i7.2826>
- Henderson, M., Auld, G., & Johnson, N. F. (2014, September 30-October 3). *Ethics of teaching with social media* [Paper presentation]. Australian Computers in Education Conference 2014, Adelaide, SA. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.719.2437&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Howard, K. E. (2013). Using Facebook and other SNSs in k-12 classrooms: Ethical considerations for safe social networking. *Issues in Teacher Education*, 22(2), 39-54. https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/education_articles/50/
- International Council on Human Rights Policy. (2011). *Navigating the dataverse: Privacy, technology, human rights*. http://www.ichrp.org/files/reports/64/132_report_en.pdf
- Law Now. (2019, September 3). *In loco parentis*. <https://www.lawnow.org/in-loco-parentis/>
- Molnar, A., & Boninger, F. (2015). *On the block: Student data and privacy in the digital age*. National Education Policy Center. <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/schoolhouse-commercialism-2014>.
- Nias, J. (1999). Primary teaching as a culture of care. In J. Prosser (Ed.), *School culture* (pp. 66-81). SAGE Publications Ltd. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446219362.n5>
- Oxford University Press (OUP). (2019). *Disclosure: definition of disclosure*. <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/disclosure>
- Planbook. (n.d.). Digital ethics: Responsible social media practices for educators. <https://blog.planbook.com/digital-ethics/>
- Regan, P., & Jesse, J. (2019). Ethical challenges of edtech, big data and personalized learning: Twenty-first century student sorting and tracking. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 21(3), 167-179. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-018-9492-2>

Roberts, V. (2019). *Open educational practices (OEP): Design-based research on expanded high school learning environments, spaces, and experiences* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. University of Calgary.

Sideri, M., Kitsiou, A., Kalloniatis, C., Tzortzaki, E., & Gritzalis, S. (2017). "I have learned that I must think twice before...". An educational intervention for enhancing students' privacy awareness on Facebook. *Communications in Computer and Information Science*, 792, 79-94. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71117-1_6

Velestianos, G. (Ed.). (2016). *Emergence and innovation in digital learning: Foundations and applications*. AU Press, Athabasca University. <https://doi.org/10.15215/aupress/9781771991490.01>

White, K. W. (2016). *Teacher communication: A guide to relational, organizational, and classroom communication*. ProQuest Ebook Central <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca>

Appendix A

Table 2.5 Possible frameworks for scaffolding students in developing their own PLNs using SNS (adapted from Roberts, 2019).

Teacher-Led Walled Garden of Open Learning	Transition Between Teacher-Led Walled Garden & Independent Open Learning	Developing Personal Learning Networks
Up to age 11 AND/OR. Emerging open readiness learners	Ages 11-14 AND/OR. Low & medium open readiness learners	Ages 14+ AND/OR. High open readiness learners
Example: Teacher connects with their PLN to share classroom learning experience using classroom social media identity.	Example: Teacher co-designs for learning pathway that includes inside/outside experts & open/closed sharing of learning experiences.	Example: Teacher co-designs for learning pathway that encourages inside/outside classroom experts, nodes of learning, & perspectives in order to solve problem with choice open/closed sharing of learning.

Media Attributions

- Figure 2.1 Six components of culture of care, adapted from Nias (1999) © Heather van Struen is licensed under a [CC BY \(Attribution\)](#) license
- Figure 2.2 Attitudes to limit exposure of privacy, adapted from Regan and Jesse (2019) © Heather van Struen is licensed under a [CC BY \(Attribution\)](#) license
- fig8_struen

This page titled [1.2: Chapter 2: Beware: Be Aware - The Ethical Implications of Teachers Who Use Social Networking Sites \(SNSs\) to Communicate](#) is shared under a [CC BY](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Barbara Brown, Verena Roberts, Michele Jacobsen, Christie Hurrell, Kourtney Kerr, Heather van Streun, Nicole Neutzling, Jeff Lowry, Simo Zarkovic, Jennifer Ansorger, Terri Marles, Emma Lockyer, and Dean Parthenis](#) (Open Education Alberta) .

This page titled [1.9: The Ethical Implications of Teachers Using Social Networking Sites to Communicate](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Teacher as a Communicator

2.1: Teacher as a Communicator

2.2: Communication Skills of a Teacher and Its Role in the Development of the Students' Academic Success

2.3: Verbal and Non-Verbal Communications

2.4: Key Differences in Verbal and Non Verbal Communication

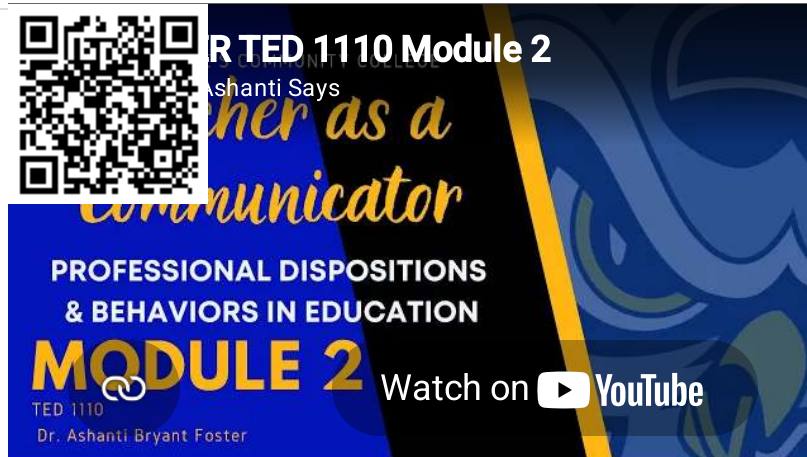
2.5: Communication Styles in the Classroom

2.6: Listening Quiz

2.7: Written Communication- An Educator's Calling Card

This page titled [2: Teacher as a Communicator](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

2.1: Teacher as a Communicator



This page titled [2.1: Teacher as a Communicator](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

2.2: Communication Skills of a Teacher and Its Role in the Development of the Students' Academic Success

Communication skills can be defined as the transmission of a message that involves the shared understanding between the contexts in which the communication takes place (Saunders and Mills, 1999). In addition, teacher communication skills are important for a teacher in delivery of education to students (McCarthy and Carter, 2001). Communication skills involve listening and speaking as well as reading and writing. For effective teaching a teacher need to be highly skilled in all these areas. Teacher with good communication always make the things easier and understandable (Freddie Silver). Effective communication skills are really important for a teacher in transmitting of education, classroom management and interaction with students in the class. Teacher has to teach the students having different thinking approaches. To teach in accordance with the ability and capability of the students a teacher need to adopt such skills of communication which motivate the students toward their learning process (Sng Bee, 2012). Good communication skills of teacher are the basic need of academics success of students, and professional success of life. Teacher communicates more instructions orally in classroom to students. Teacher with poor communication skills may cause failure of students to learn and promote their academics. Student need to understand that what is right, and what is wrong while it totally depend upon the communication skills of teachers which he adopt in class-room (Sherwyn P. Morreale, Michael M. Osborn Judy c. Pearson, 2000). Good communications minimize the potential of unkind feeling during the process of teaching. For learning the learner must be attentive toward their teacher during the lecture. Loss (2000), recommended that teacher communicate in clear and understandable manner. Communication is a dynamic process which need of mind and courage to face the other and convey his/her message in effective way. Communication process is successful when we deliver the message in clear and understandable way. Effective communication need to convey and accept his/her message in all kind of situation and circumstances. Good communication is considered a strong tool for effectiveness in the teaching profession (Monika Srivastava, NA) As variety of skills are needed for good teaching and teachers. A study conducted by Ehindero & Ajibade, (2000) indicates that for effective teaching, teacher requires good communication skills such as good communication, good classroom management, updating knowledge and maintaining personality. No one can teach effectively until having these basics skills of teaching. Different research revolves that there is significant co-relation between communication skills and supervisor perception of job performance (Maes, Weldy, & Icenogle, 1997). Furthermore, Student's character building and academic background totally depends upon the professional attitude of teachers. If teachers adopt positive professional attitude towards the students in their academic and as well as their social achievements, then students can easily promote their academic level. Teacher has the responsibility to teach and practically prepare students for the purpose that they can cope with all type of situations. It also comes under the responsibilities of teacher to behave as role model to the students (Honby, 2006). Communication means the process which one adopts while sharing his / her views with others. For a teacher it is necessary to have good communication skills for the good learning of the students. Teachers need good communication skills for facilitating the students and achieving good professional goals. Effectiveness of teaching is not dependent on technicality but on the method adopted by the teacher while teaching to the students. Teachers need clear communication for the good understanding of students and avoiding the problems for students while learning from their lecture. It is also needed by the teachers to understand first himself before teaching to students (Loss, J. 2000). Good communication is not only needed for the effective teaching profession but it is also very important for the effectiveness of every concern to our life (Batenburg & Smal, 1997 Cited in Ihmeideh). Performance of teachers in classroom totally depends upon the communication skills. If the teacher has good communication skills then he can easily convey his /her message or deliver the lecture in an understandable manner (Maes, Weldy & Icenogle, 1997).

This page titled [2.2: Communication Skills of a Teacher and Its Role in the Development of the Students' Academic Success](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

2.3: Verbal and Non-Verbal Communications



This page titled [2.3: Verbal and Non-Verbal Communications](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

2.4: Key Differences in Verbal and Non Verbal Communication



This page titled [2.4: Key Differences in Verbal and Non Verbal Communication](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

2.5: Communication Styles in the Classroom

Teachers and students have identifiable styles of talking to each other that linguists call a *register*. A **register** is a pattern of vocabulary, grammar, and expressions or comments that people associate with a social role. A familiar example is the "baby-talk" register often used to speak to an infant. Its features— simple repeated words and nonsense syllables, and exaggerated changes in pitch— mark the speaker as an adult and mark the listener as an infant. The classroom language register works the same way; it helps indicate who the teacher is and who the student is. Teachers and students use the register more in some situations than in others, but its use is common enough that most people in our society have no trouble recognizing it when they hear it (Cazden, 2001). In the following scene, for example, the speakers are labeled only with letters of the alphabet; yet figuring out who is the teacher and who are the students is not difficult:

A: All right now, I want your eyes up here. All eyes on me, please. B, are you ready to work? We are going to try a new kind of math problem today. It's called long division. Does anyone know what long division is? C, what do you think it is?

C: Division with bigger numbers?

A: Any other ideas? D?

E (notD): Division by two digits.

A: ...I only call on people who raise their hands. D, can you help with the answer?

D: Division with remainders.

A: Close. Actually you're both partly right.

In this scene Person A must surely be the teacher because he or she uses a lot of procedural and control talk, and because he or she introduces a new curriculum topic, long division. The other Persons (B, C, D, and E) must be students because they only respond to questions, and because they individually say relatively little compared to Person A.

In general, effective classroom communication depends on understanding how features of the classroom talk register like these operate during actual class times. In the following sections therefore we describe details of classroom talk, and then follow with suggestions about how to use the register as effectively as possible. In both of these sections we assume that the better the communication, the better the learning and thinking displayed by students. For convenience we divide classroom talk into two parts, teacher talk and student talk.

How teachers talk

Although teacher talk varies somewhat with the tasks or purposes at hand, it also has uniformities that occur across a range of situations. Using detailed observations of discourse in science activities, for example, Jay Lemke identified all of the following strategies from observations of teachers' classroom talk (1990). Each strategy simultaneously influences the course of discussion and focuses students' attention, and in these ways also helps indirectly to insure appropriate classroom behavior:

- *Nominating, terminating, and interrupting speakers:* Teachers often choose who gets to speak. ("Jose, what do you think about X?"). On the other hand, they often bring an end to a student's turn at speaking or even interrupt the student before he or she finishes. ("Thanks; we need to move on now.")
- *Marking importance or irrelevance:* Teachers sometimes indicate that an idea is important ("That's a good idea, Lyla."). On the other hand, they sometimes also indicate that an idea is not crucial or important ("Your right, but that's not quite the answer I was looking for."), or fully relevant ("We're talking about the book *Wuthering Heights*, not the movie that you may have seen."). Marking importance and relevance obviously helps a teacher to reinforce key content. But the strategy can also serve to improve relationships among students if the teacher deliberately marks or highlights an idea offered by a quiet or shy student (O'Connor & Michaels, 1996; Cohen, et al., 2004). In that case marking importance can build both a student's confidence and the student's status in the eyes of classmates.
- *Signaling boundaries between activities:* Teachers declare when an activity is over and a new one is starting— an example of the procedural talk that we discussed earlier. ("We need to move on. Put away your spelling and find your math books.") In addition to clarifying procedures, though, signaling boundaries can also insure appropriate classroom behavior. Ending an activity can

sometimes help restore order among students who have become overly energetic, and shifting to a new activity can sometimes restore motivation to students who have become bored or tired.

- Asking "test" questions and evaluating students' responses: Teachers often ask test questions— questions to which they already know the answer. Then they evaluate the quality or correctness of the students' answers (Teacher: "How much is 6×7 ?" Student: "42." Teacher: "That's right.>"). Test questions obviously help teachers to assess students' learning, but they also mark the teacher as the expert in the classroom, and therefore as a person entitled to control the flow of discourse.

There are additional features of teacher-talk that are not unique to teachers. These primarily function to make teachers' comments more comprehensible, especially when spoken to a group, but they also help to mark a person who uses them as a teacher (Cazden, 2001; Black, 2004):

- *Exaggerated changes in pitch*: When busy teaching, teachers tend to exaggerate changes in the pitch of their voice— reminiscent of the "sing-song" style of adults when directing speech to infants. Exaggerated pitch changes are especially characteristic of teachers of young students, but they happen at all grade levels.
- *Careful enunciation*: In class teachers tend to speak more slowly, clearly, and carefully than when conversing with a friend. The style makes a speaker sound somewhat formal, especially when combined with formal vocabulary and grammar, mentioned next.
- *Formal vocabulary and grammar*: Teachers tend to use vocabulary and grammar that is more formally polite and correct, and that uses relatively few slang or casual expressions. (Instead of saying "Get out your stuff, they more likely say, "Please get out your materials.") The formality creates a businesslike distance between teachers and students— hopefully one conducive to getting work done, rather than one that seems simply cold or uncaring. The touch of formality also makes teachers sound a bit more intelligent or intellectual than in casual conversation, and in this way reinforces their authority in the classroom.

How students talk

Children and youth also use a characteristic speech register when they are in a classroom and playing the role of students in the presence of a teacher. Their register— student talk— differs somewhat from the teacher's because of their obvious differences in responsibilities, levels of knowledge, and relationships with each other and with the teacher. Student-talk and teacher-talk are similar in that both involve language strategies that guide content and procedures, and that sometimes seek to limit the inappropriate behavior of others. Compared to teachers', though, students' language strategies often pursue these goals a bit more indirectly.

- *Agenda enforcement*: Sometimes students interrupt a discussion to ask about or remind others, and especially the teacher, of an agreed-on agenda. If the teacher tells students to open their text to an incorrect page, for example, a student may raise her hand to correct the teacher— or even do so without raising a hand. This communication strategy is one of more public, direct ways that students influence activities in the classroom, but its power is limited, since it does not create new activities, but simply returns the class to activities agreed on previously.
- *Digression attempts*: During a discussion or activity, a student asks a question or makes a statement that is not relevant to the task at hand. While the teacher is leading students in a discussion of a story that they read, for example, a student raises his hand and asks, "Mr X, when does recess begin?"
- *Side talk*: One student talks to another student, either to be sociable ("Did you see that movie last week?") or to get information needed for the current assigned task ("What page are we on?"). Sometimes side talk also serves to control or limit fellow students' behavior, and in this way functions like control-talk by teachers (as when a student whispers, "Shhh! I'm trying to listen" or "Go ahead and ask her!"). The ability of such talk to influence classmates' behavior is real, but limited, since students generally do not have as much authority as teachers.
- *Calling out*: A student speaks out of turn without being recognized by the teacher. The student's comment may or may not be relevant to the ongoing task or topic, and the teacher may or may not acknowledge or respond to it. Whether ignored or not, however, calling out may change the direction of a discussion by influencing fellow students' thinking or behavior, or by triggering procedural and control talk by the teacher. ("Jason, it's not your turn; I only call on students who raise their hands.")
- *Answering a question with a question*: Instead of answering a teacher's "test" question directly, the student responds with a question of their own, either for clarification or as a stalling tactic ("Do you mean X?"). Either way, the effect is to shift the

discussion or questioning to content or topics that are safer and more familiar.

- *Silence*: The student says nothing in response to a speaker's comments or to an invitation to speak. The speaker could be either the teacher or a fellow student. The silence makes the speaker less likely to continue the current topic, and more likely to seek a new one.
- *Eye contact, gaze aversion, and posture*: The student looks directly at the teacher while the teacher is speaking, or else deliberately averts gaze. The student may also adopt any variety of postures while sitting (sit up straight vs slouching). As we discussed earlier in this chapter, the timing of eye gaze depends partly on cultural expectations that the student brings to school. But it may also represent a deliberate choice by the student— a message to the teacher and to classmates. The same can be said about sitting posture. In classroom situations, listening is conventionally indicated by looking directly at the teacher, and either sitting up straight or leaning slightly forward. Although these behaviors can be faked, they tend to indicate, and to be taken as, a show of interest in and acceptance of what a speaker is saying. By engaging in or avoiding these behaviors, therefore, students can sometimes influence the length and direction of a discussion or activity.

This page titled [2.5: Communication Styles in the Classroom](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

2.6: Listening Quiz



Poor listeners "hear" what's being said, but they don't "listen."

FatCamera / GettyImages

For many of us, listening is the communication skill we use the most. Yet, many people listen poorly, and they rarely think to improve this important skill.

Poor listeners "hear" what's being said, but they rarely "listen" to the whole message.

They get distracted by their own thoughts or by what's going on around them, and they formulate their responses before the person who they're talking to has finished speaking. Because of this, they miss crucial information.

Good listeners, on the other hand, enjoy better relationships, because they fully understand what other people are saying. Their team members are also more productive, because they feel that they can discuss problems easily, and talk through solutions.

So, how good do you think your listening skills are? Test them below, and then find out how you can improve.

How Good Are Your Listening Skills?

Instructions

Evaluate each statement as you actually are, rather than as you think you should be. When you've finished, click "Calculate My Total" to add up your score, and use the table that follows to think about next steps.

14 Statements to Answer	Not at All	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
1. To be more productive, I respond to emails and instant messages while I'm speaking to people on the phone.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I repeat points back during a conversation to clarify my understanding of what the other person is saying.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. When people speak to me about sensitive subjects, I make an effort to put them at ease.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I feel uncomfortable with silence during conversations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. As I listen, I compare the other person's viewpoint with my own.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. To get people to elaborate on their point, I ask open questions (ones that can't be answered with "yes" or "no").	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. When someone is speaking to me, I nod and say things like "OK" and "uh-huh" occasionally.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I play "devil's advocate" to prompt responses from the other person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. I catch myself asking leading questions to	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14 Statements to Answer	Not at All	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
encourage the other person to agree with my viewpoint.					
10. I interrupt people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. When people speak to me, I stay completely still so that I don't distract them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. I try to read the other person's body language as I listen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. If the other person is struggling to explain something, I jump in with my own suggestions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. If I'm busy, I let others talk to me as long as they're quick.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Calculate My Total

Preparing to Listen (Questions 1, 3, 14)

Good preparation is essential for effective listening. Without it, it's hard to listen to people successfully.

Before you have an important conversation, remove anything that may distract you, so that you can focus and give the other person your full attention. Switch off your cell phone, turn off instant messaging and email alerts, put your work away, close your meeting room door, and do what you can to make sure that you won't be interrupted.

If you know that you won't be able to offer the other person your full attention – for example, if you're working on an urgent task – schedule a better time to speak. However, make sure that the other person knows that the conversation is important to you.

Also, do what you can to make the other person feel at ease. Use open [body language](#), and a friendly tone.

If he indicates that he wants to speak about a sensitive subject, and if this is appropriate, remind him that the conversation is in confidential, and that he can be honest with you. (If you're a manager, there may be some things, however, that you cannot keep confidential, harassment, for instance, or negligent behavior. If your conversation is beginning to encroach on these, make this clear to the other person.)

Active Listening (Questions 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

When you [listen actively](#), you not only make a conscious effort to hear the other person's words, but, more importantly, you try to understand their whole message.

To do this, learn how to read people's [body language](#) and tone, so that you can identify "hidden" nonverbal messages.

Also, don't interrupt people, or allow yourself to become distracted by your own thoughts or opinions. Instead, focus completely on what the other person is saying. Nod or say "OK" occasionally to acknowledge that you're listening.

If you don't understand something, wait for the other person to finish what she's saying before you ask for clarification.

Above all, don't formulate a response until she has communicated her whole message, and avoid any judgment or criticism until it's your turn to speak. If you argue or "play devil's advocate" while you listen, you may discourage her from opening up to you.

Tip:

It can be difficult not to formulate a response while the other person is talking. This is because we typically think much faster than other people can speak, so our brains are often "whirring away" while they are talking. You'll need to concentrate hard to stay focused on the person who's speaking, and this can take a lot of effort.

Empathic Listening (Questions 2, 4, 6, 13)

When you demonstrate [empathy](#), you recognize other people's emotions, and you do what you can to understand their perspectives. As such, it can really help to take active listening to the next level.

To [listen empathically](#), put yourself "in the other person's shoes," and try to see things from his point of view. Then, summarize what he says, in your own words, to show him that you understand his perspective.

Also, ask open [questions](#) to help him to articulate himself fully, and avoid using leading questions that "put words in his mouth." This gives him the opportunity to add further detail, and to talk about his feelings.

Importantly, don't fear moments of silence when you listen. Instead, embrace pauses as a way to give him time to finish his point, and to allow him to reflect on what he has said.

Key Points

When you have good listening skills, you not only "hear" what's being said, you listen to the whole message as well. Because of this, you enable others to express themselves fully.

When you need to listen, make sure that you're prepared, and that things in your environment will not distract you. Also, do what you can to put people at ease.

Next, use active listening techniques so that you give people your full attention, and look out for the nonverbal elements of their message.

Finally, take your listening skills to the next level with empathic listening. When appropriate, embrace silence and make an effort to see things from other people's perspectives.

This page titled [2.6: Listening Quiz](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

2.7: Written Communication- An Educator's Calling Card

A teacher's writing ability is more important than ever. Our written notes to parents are no longer limited to quarterly report card comments. We communicate with parents via e-mail, classroom Web pages, and newsletters -- to name just a few of the vehicles we use. Indeed, our written communications speak volumes about our competence as teachers, contends educator Max Fischer in this week's Voice of Experience essay. What do your written communications with parents say about you? Included: Five tips for improved written communications.



Max W. Fischer

Perhaps you have seen these alleged teacher report card comments from a humorous Internet Web site:

"Your child is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot." "When your daughter's IQ reaches 50, she should sell." "The student has a 'full six-pack,' but lacks the plastic thingy to hold it all together."

The aforementioned quotes supposedly came from the teacher comments section of student report cards. According to the Web site, the authors of those remarks and others listed were reprimanded by their respective school boards. If that information is indeed true, teacher comments of that ilk would be devastating to any student and probably would completely rupture any hope of a constructive home-school relationship. The extremism of those remarks serves as a backdrop to the vital, but fragile, art of written communication by teachers

At one point in time, especially at the elementary level, what the teacher penned in the comment section of the report card was center stage for displaying his or her writing ability. With the proliferation of e-mail and computerized report card comments, the emphasis on written communication has shifted. A teacher's writing abilities are more important now than ever before:

- More direct and efficient than playing phone tag, teacher e-mail contact is becoming increasingly popular with many parents, and it is already a staple for communication among colleagues and administrators in many districts.
- School or teacher-sponsored Web sites provide additional opportunities for high-tech written communication.
- Coursework to update licensure requirements, newsletters for parents, individual letters of praise to students, and inquiries into community resources about programs for field trips attest to the importance traditional paper communiquis.
- Finally, let's not forget that a teacher's most routine correspondence is with students in the form of written instructions for a variety of tasks.

Writing has the potential to grease the wheels of a teacher's working relationship with students, parents, professional colleagues, and the community at large. If not lubed properly, however, friction is certain to develop.

MAYBE NOT THE PULITZER

Although no one expects teachers to be Pulitzer Prize-winning writers, competent application of writing mechanics, including syntax and spelling, is requisite. Like it or not, written communication -- much like its oral counterpart -- has the power to project an image and set a tone in a teacher's relationships. That *image* can be professional or incompetent; conciliatory or inflammatory; cooperative or antagonistic. Sometimes, by the words teachers use in their written communications, or the manner in which they write their messages, teachers unwittingly shoot themselves in the foot.

Regardless of whether you teach first grade, middle school art, or high school physics, proficient writing skills can, at the very least, bolster your credibility. More importantly, they can promote your objectives within the class by developing integral relationships outside of class.

LESSONS I HAVE LEARNED

With a competent style secured, it is important that your intended message be direct and to the point. Be respectful of your audience's time; most often, a linguistic snapshot is more appreciated than a wordy mural.

There are times, however, when brevity must be sacrificed in the interests of sufficient detail. A mother's e-mail inquiry expressing concern about her middle school daughter's safety at school certainly deserves a more thoughtful and measured response than a routine procedural question about a school project.

Over the years, I've learned a few things (some, the hard way) about a teacher's writing:

1. *Neatness counts.* How many times have we stressed that to our pupils? It took over a decade of teaching, some pointed parent remarks, and the introduction of the word processor to wean me from my wretched handwriting, which closely resembles a physician's script. Anything, from insufficient amounts of toner in the copier to hastily crammed letters into envelopes, can create an unflattering image of you or improperly model expected form for students.
2. *Know your audience.* Regarding general mailings, such as newsletters, some parents want loads of detail while others give any such literature only a cursory glance before tossing it away. Some parents get lost in any teacher jargon or advanced vocabulary in a mailing, while others use the same mailing to judge the caliber of your professionalism. If you teach in a district where your clientele is a heterogeneous socio-economic mix, you might offer an expanded newsletter with one additional sheet that highlights the most critical information in larger font, for example,

*OPEN HOUSE --TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 7:00P.M.orPLEASE NOTE OUR
HOMEWORK HOTLINE VOICEMAIL PHONE 444-4444.*

In that manner, those parents prone to not reading an entire newsletter would acquire the most vital information (especially if the highlighted notice is the first sheet of the packet).

3. *Be sensitive to the situation.* As in the safety issue noted above, when a parent e-mails me and wants an update about his or her child's progress, usually there has been a previously established concern. In those cases, I give parents a thorough accounting of the student's performance, adding any anecdotal items that may be germane to the student's improvement or inability to progress. Conversely, for those parents checking in on a child who has done well in the past and continues to excel, a one or two sentence response affirming that is all that's needed.
4. *Proofread your mechanics.* Again, isn't this what we, as teachers, preach to our charges? Every teacher has asked the question, "Did you check your work?" You, your spouse, a colleague, or the computer's spell/grammar checker are viable tools to help you make sure you don't embarrass yourself. Occasional errors happen to all of us. however, chronic abuse of the English language in a teacher's written work can open up a Pandora's Box of issues from parental complaints to poor performance evaluations.
5. *Proofread your content through the eyes of the intended audience.* Does your message convey a collaborative tenor or a confrontational one? I know I began to appreciate this idea after my children began school and I became the recipient of teachers' letters. Consider the following statements regarding a procedural issue at the end of a field trip:

"Parents, be at the school by 4:00 to pick up your children."

"We would appreciate it if children were picked up at school no later than 4:00."

As a parent, which statement might ruffle your feathers? By avoiding superlatives or demanding statements, an educator frames a more supportive tone in the letter. Furthermore, if a teacher needs to be assertive in expressing a position to a parent or colleague, it shouldn't be couched in abrasive language.

Most teachers have limited need of business cards. However, in more ways than you might think, our writing ability acts as our calling card. What is yours saying?

A teacher for nearly three decades, Max Fischer currently teaches seventh graders the marvels of ancient history. A National Board certified teacher in the area of early adolescence social studies/history, Max has authored nine resource books for teachers in the fields of social studies, health, and math. You can read a previously published article about Fischer: [Simulations Engage Students in Active Learning](#).

Article by Max W. Fischer

Education World®

Copyright © 2005 Education World

This page titled [2.7: Written Communication- An Educator's Calling Card](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

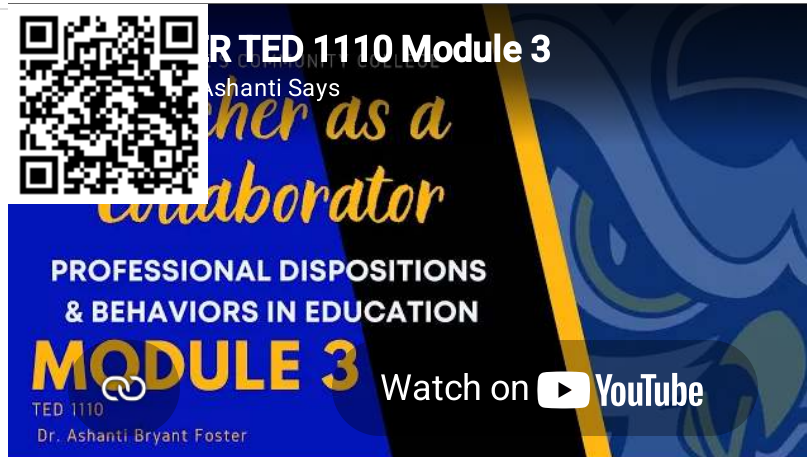
CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Teacher as a Collaborator

- 3.1: Teacher as a Collaborator
- 3.2: Lifelong Learning and Professional Development
- 3.3: Assessing Your Strengths and Learning Styles
- 3.4: Learning in Groups
- 3.5: Building Trusting Collaborative Relationships with Families
- 3.6: School and Community Partnerships- Communities in Schools
- 3.7: How to Develop, Expand and Maintain Professional Relationships
- 3.8: Remaining Professional When You're Frustrated
- 3.9: Assessments

This page titled [3: Teacher as a Collaborator](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

3.1: Teacher as a Collaborator



This page titled [3.1: Teacher as a Collaborator](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

3.2: Lifelong Learning and Professional Development

Teachers engage in the process of lifelong learning as a way to meet the needs of their students, respond to best practices in the literature and research and try to integrate the newly acquired approaches to support student learning. Some examples of lifelong learning, also known as professional development, may be attendance at a conference, mentoring (either as the mentee or mentor), joining a professional organization and conducting research. As an undergraduate student pursuing your Bachelors Degree in education you are immersed in a constant environment of learning.

New York state has teacher induction requirements for first-year teachers. As a first-year teacher in New York State, you will be assigned a mentor in your district who will serve to support and guide you through the challenges, questions, and joys that your first year of teaching will offer. Strong mentor-mentee programs increase the development of a new teacher's connection to the school community and reduce isolations (NYSED, 2013).

ACTIVITY: THINK IT, INK IT

Think it, Ink it (5 minutes) and divide into groups of 4-5 students and share your answers.

1. As a first-year teacher what personal qualities would you hope for in a mentor?
2. What specific type of information do you want your mentor to provide you with?
3. How will you advocate for your needs as a first-year teacher/ mentee?

Report out to the class the results of the group's conversation.

Resources for professional development and learning

At some level reflection on practice is something you must do for yourself, since only you have had your particular teaching experiences, and only you can choose how to interpret and make use of them. But this individual activity also may benefit from the stimulus and challenge offered by fellow professionals. Others' ideas may differ from your own, and they can, therefore, help in working out your own thoughts and in alerting you to ideas that you may otherwise take for granted. These benefits of reflection can happen in any number of ways, but most fall into one of four general categories:

- talking and collaborating with colleagues
- participating in professional associations
- attending professional development workshops and conferences
- reading professional literature

Many teacher education preparation programs follow the INTASC Standards developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers. Standard nine outlines professional learning and ethical practice. Below you will find the exact excerpt from Standard 9. Notice Some of the relevant aspects are using data and evidence to support and evaluate classroom practices. Another key component to lifelong learning is engaging in ongoing reflective practice. Reflection is a hallmark of instructional leaders and assists teachers in meeting a diverse range of student needs.

Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice

The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community, and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

PERFORMANCES

9(a) The teacher engages in ongoing learning opportunities to develop knowledge and skills in order to provide all learners with engaging curriculum and learning experiences based on local and state standards.

9(b) The teacher engages in meaningful and appropriate professional learning experiences aligned with his/her own needs and the needs of the learners, school, and system.

9(c) Independently and in collaboration with colleagues, the teacher uses a variety of data (e.g., systematic observation, information about learners, research) to evaluate the outcomes of teaching and learning and to adapt planning and practice.

9(d) The teacher actively seeks professional, community, and technological resources, within and outside the school, as supports for analysis, reflection, and problem-solving.

9(e) The teacher reflects on his/her personal biases and accesses resources to deepen his/her own understanding of cultural, ethnic, gender, and learning differences to build stronger relationships and create more relevant learning experiences.

9(f) The teacher advocates, models, and teaches safe, legal, and ethical use of information and technology including appropriate documentation of sources and respect for others in the use of social media.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

9(g) The teacher understands and knows how to use a variety of selfassessment and problem-solving strategies to analyze and reflect on his/her practice and to plan for adaptations/adjustments.

9(h) The teacher knows how to use learner data to analyze practice and differentiate instruction accordingly.

9(i) The teacher understands how personal identity, worldview, and prior experience affect perceptions and expectations, and recognizes how they may bias behaviors and interactions with others.

9(j) The teacher understands laws related to learners' rights and teacher responsibilities (e.g., for educational equity, appropriate education for learners with disabilities, confidentiality, privacy, appropriate treatment of learners, reporting in situations related to possible child abuse).

9(k) The teacher knows how to build and implement a plan for professional growth directly aligned with his/her needs as a growing professional using feedback from teacher evaluations and observations, data on learner performance, and school- and systemwide priorities.

CRITICAL DISPOSITIONS

9(l) The teacher takes responsibility for student learning and uses ongoing analysis and reflection to improve planning and practice.

9(m) The teacher is committed to deepening understanding of his/her own frames of reference (e.g., culture, gender, language, abilities, ways of knowing), the potential biases in these frames, and their impact on expectations for and relationships with learners and their families.

9(n) The teacher sees him/herself as a learner, continuously seeking opportunities to draw upon current education policy and research as sources of analysis and reflection to improve practice.

9(o) The teacher understands the expectations of the profession including codes of ethics, professional standards of practice, and relevant law and policy

Activity: How do you plan to integrate reflection into your practice as a teacher? How does reflection connect to teacher induction and mentor programs?

LICENSES AND ATTRIBUTIONS

CC LICENSED CONTENT, ORIGINAL

- Foundations of Education. **Authored by:** SUNY Oneonta Education Department. **License:** [CC BY: Attribution](#)

CC LICENSED CONTENT, SHARED PREVIOUSLY

- Professional Development Banner. **Authored by:** Nick Youngson. **Provided by:** Alpha Stock Images. **Located at:** <http://www.thebluediamondgallery.com/handwriting/p/professional-development.html>. **License:** [CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike](#)

This page titled [3.2: Lifelong Learning and Professional Development](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

3.3: Assessing Your Strengths and Learning Styles

During the college years, young adults often test and solidify their own set of values

and determine what direction they want to take in life. While it is commonly recognized that this self-reflection can be a lifelong process, the college years can be a time when students can develop directions in life based on information gathered in systematic self-exploration opportunities. Understanding more about what you value in life, what interests you, your general personality characteristics, your preferences for methods of learning, your strengths, and your weaknesses can better inform you about the directions that may lead to a more fulfilling life.

General Self-Exploration

According to Clifton and Anderson (2002), successful people leverage their strengths in order to be successful in life. Investigating your strengths can be simply reflecting on those situations in your life in which you felt successful and what contributed to that, or it could be something like a formal assessment that provides you with a profile of yourself. If you joined a Learning Community or enrolled in a freshman seminar, you may have taken the StrengthsFinder Inventory that provided you with your Top Five Signature Themes. Often, our students take the Myers-Brigg Type Indicator (MBTI) offered in workshops offered by UT Arlington's Counseling and Psychological Services or a similar tool, the Kiersey Temperament Sorter®, offered free

online

as a means of assessing personality characteristics that may indicate how they interact with the world.

StrengthsQuest® – www.strengthsquest.com

Kiersey Temperament Sorter® – www.kiersey.com

Reflecting on life experiences can inform students about their

values

and about what interests them. Think back to those activities that you remember enjoying vividly. Consider what aspects of those activities contributed to the enjoyment. For instance, if you loved to play a sport growing up, was it the competition that you enjoyed? Was it being outside? Was it working with a group of people? Was it how the physical exertion made you feel? Was it the recognition you received? More structured assessments can also be found for interests and

values

. Counseling and Psychological Services offers the Strong's Interest Inventory in regular workshops that would help you hone in on your basic life interests and how those interests might relate to professionals in certain careers. A tool like the Santa Cruz County Regional Occupational Work

Values

Inventory could inform you more about your core

values

and what you might prefer in a work environment. Overall, engaging in these types of self-exploration activities can inform so many aspects of students' lives—what to

major

in or how to specialize in a given

major

, what types of co-curricular activities they might enjoy, the environments in which they might like to learn, and

career

options. **Santa Cruz County Regional Occupational Work**

Values

Inventory

www.rop.santacruz.k12.ca.us/resources/career_planning/step1tool1.pdf

Activity 8-1:

Take the Kiersey Temperament Sorter II

online

at <http://kiersey.com> by clicking the box in the upper right-hand corner of the Web site entitled “Take the KTS-II—Free Sorter Access.” Are you an Artisan, Guardian, Rational, or Idealist? Is this consistent with how you see yourself? How might this impact the way you think about college, studying, or choice of

major

or

career

?

Learning Preferences

In college, faculty members implement many different ways of sharing material with their students—through readings, class lectures that may or may not include

PowerPoint

slides or handouts, class discussions,

online

interactions, and assignments. Think about a student who likes to take in the world visually. For this student, a book without graphs, charts, and pictures and a lecture with a professor simply talking about the information would be less appealing than a book and lecture environment full of visual images. Situations like the one described points to learning preferences—the way that a person learns best—sometimes also referred to as a learning style.

Common scales of learning preferences tend to categorize students into visual, auditory, and

kinesthetic

learners. The VARK also includes Read-Write as a style. Other scales consider other factors such as how students interact with information in terms of their thinking, feeling, and methods



of experiencing the world, such as with the Index of Learning Styles

Questionnaire. It is no secret that there is disagreement in the academic community regarding how and what should be measured regarding learning preferences (Coffield, Moseley, & Ecclestone, 2004), but what is important is that college students engage in opportunities to learn more about themselves and how they learn.

Students who are more informed about their learning preferences can act more proactively. In some cases, students who know how they like to learn can seek out majors and professions that may suit their styles. They can also select professors who may be more likely to teach a course in their preferred method. The question that you should be asking your classmates is not, “Is that professor easy?” The question you should be asking is, “How does that professor teach the course?” and “What methods do they use to teach the material?” A professor who teaches a course only by talking about the material will be a more difficult class for a visual learner in comparison to a professor who uses more visual elements to teach the same material.

Unfortunately, students do not always have the ability to select a professor that suits their learning preferences, and students cannot expect a faculty member to adjust their teaching style to suit the needs of one individual student. Students who are successful in college are able to adapt material to their own learning preferences. For instance, if you are a visual student, create ways to turn lecture notes into visual materials using the visual organizers discussed in Chapter 5.

Table 8-1. Activities for Different Learning Preferences

Auditory Learners	Visual Learners	Kinesthetic Learners
Read out loud.	Create charts and diagrams of concepts.	Ask questions in class or discuss material in a study group.
Talk about the main points that are being expressed in diagrams and pictures.	Review all of the pictures and charts while reading and relate the visuals to what you are reading.	Engage in lab classes or courses in which service learning is an option as a way to “live” what you are learning about.
Sit in front in class so that you can hear clearly.	Avoid busy visual environments while concentrating, as they are distracting.	Have something small that you can play with in your hand while concentrating or take notes on a laptop.

Adapted from the University of Western Ontario Student Development Centre (2009).

Learning Styles

. Retrieved from <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning/index.html?styles> on March 24, 2010.

Activity 8-2:

Take the VARK

Learning Styles

Inventory

online

at:

www.vark-learn.com/english/pa...=questionnaire

Are you multimodal, or do you have a single strong preference? Go to the help sheets for your learning preferences to find out more about the learning strategies you can implement given your learning preferences. Read through them and commit to trying a couple of the strategies in your next study session and reflect on how those strategies worked for you.

To get another point of view on your learning preferences, take the Index of

Learning Styles

Questionnaire

online

at:

<http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html>

What did you learn about your learning preferences? What activities can you engage in while studying that will help you learn new information?

7.1: Assessing Your Strengths and

Learning Styles

is shared under a [CC BY](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

1.

This page titled [3.3: Assessing Your Strengths and Learning Styles](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

3.4: Learning in Groups

LEARNING IN GROUPS

An impressive collection of studies has shown that participation in well-functioning cooperative groups leads students to feel more positive about themselves, about each other, and about the subject they're studying. Students also learn more effectively on a variety of measures when they can learn with each other instead of against each other or apart from each other. Alfie Kohn,

Punished by Rewards

In this chapter, we delve into the most commonly used form of social aggregation in campus-based, workplace, and distance-based forms of education. The group has a history that began with our primal ancestors as the most practical aggregation of individuals for survival and necessary social cooperation (Caporael, 1997; Ridley, 2010; E. O. Wilson, 2012). It has survived and flourishes today as, among many other things, the standard social form used in face-to-face classes, as the cohort and hierarchical organizational form that commonly characterizes education. The vast majority of research into social learning in formal education has focused on the group form because that has, until recently, been the only social option available to most face-to-face and distance institutional learners. In this chapter we examine the strengths and weaknesses of groups, and the typical evolution of educational groups as they form, perform, and dissolve. We also look at research on the development and support of social, teaching, and cognitive presence that defines quality online learning groups.

Defining the Group

Webster's online dictionary defines a group as "(a) a number of individuals assembled together or having some unifying relationship; (b) an assemblage of objects regarded as a unit" ("Group," n.d.). These definitions alert us to the most important characteristic of groups, whether online or face-to-face. First, groups are gathered together and exist for some purpose. Second, group members regard themselves and are regarded by others as having some unifying purpose. However, the dictionary definition allows for a wide variety of interpretations and connotations, and does not capture its distinctiveness in formal learning. We need something more precise. With that in mind, we note the following characteristics of groups used in formal and non-formal learning.

Hierarchical Structure and Leadership in Groups

In order to define the purpose and activities that are central to the definition and function of a group, members develop organization and leadership roles. In education, this function is normally assigned to the teacher, who often articulates the structure of the group's activities in the ubiquitous course syllabus. Many courses also create smaller group activities—one of the challenges of this is that individuals must determine their own sense of structure and leadership—though often teachers fill this void as well by pre-determining group membership and even leadership roles. The same applies as we work our way up the organizational hierarchy: teachers report to department heads, principals, deans, vice-chancellors, presidents, and so on up the chain, often ending at regional or national government levels.

Groups Have Rules

The fact that teachers assign and structure groups reveals perhaps their most significant feature: they are designed. Groups exist largely as a set of implicit and/ or explicit rules that govern their constitution, their activities, and expected behaviours of their members. These may be strongly stated as laws, regulations, or procedures, or be vaguer or less tangible expectations, norms and patterns associated with group membership. The rules can shift between formal and non-formal manifestations as the group persists through time. This further implies that many of the characteristics of groups are designed to foster or enhance a sense of identity, and this is often created at the cost of individual freedom.

Groups are Purposeful

Ridgeway (1983) argues that groups are formed for two possible reasons: support or task accomplishment. Primary groups are formed to provide support for their members, while task groups are formed to reach some goal or to accomplish a task. In the process of working together to meet either or both of these needs, the group creates a set of norms or an evolving culture that strengthens the sense of group commitment.

Groups are Technologically

Driven Groups are more than labels applied to a particular collection of individuals. In many cases, groups are invented devices designed to orchestrate phenomena to a purpose: they are thus technologies (Arthur, 2009). They have forms, processes, and functions that are distinct and not emergent from the members and their interactions. Groups are deliberately bound together as an assembly of processes and structural forms to achieve some purpose or set of purposes. They utilize a range of processes that relate to group function and construction. Frequently, these processes are made explicit: technologies such as scheduling, formalized processes such as lectures, seminars, or guided discussions, regulations for behavior, and so on are the engine of many groups in an academic setting. Implicit group norms, tacit process structures, and hierarchical process management also contribute the technological assembly that enables and channels group behaviors and activities. In the language of actor network theory, they are blackboxed (Latour, 2005), and translated into punctualized actors (Law, 1992). The technologizing of the group form is perhaps its most distinctive feature when compared to network and set social forms, neither of which incorporates such formal structures and processes.

Groups Exist Independently of Members

Groups celebrate the stability and comprehensibility of form and function. This is not to suggest that groups do not change as they develop over time—a field of study often referred to as “group development”—but that the process of development is constrained within the structures and norms established by the group’s founders and/or owners. In other words, groups exist as something distinct from their members. It is notable that some groups—companies, organizations, clubs, and societies, for example—have persisted for hundreds or even thousands of years with recognizable identities despite constantly shifting membership. While we might identify distinct cohorts and classes of students, the course they are enrolled in and its surrounding relationships with other technologies and structures remains a unitary object. The teacher, the location, the students, even the topics taught and means by which they are assessed may change over time, but a course can seemingly persist through all of this, like the Ship of Theseus, or a river that remains the same, though everything in it constantly changes.

Members Aware of Membership

Members of a group invariably know that they are members. There may appear to be some very rare exceptions, such as a native tribe not knowing that its members are part of a country, or non-Mormons not realizing they have been included as honorary Mormons in genealogical records but, in all cases, such membership is, from the point of view of the member, that of the set (we will have more to say about this later). Most of the time we join groups intentionally, though in some cases other actions, such as being born in a particular country, the merger of two companies or departments, living in a particular city, or being enrolled in a course because we are working in a program, can make us members without our assent. Once we are members, we become obligated to behave as the group’s regulations require, or risk exclusion and possibly expulsion.

Groups are Exclusionary

Wilson, Ludwig-Hardman, Thornam, and Dunlap (2004) refer to groups that are formed in formal education contexts as “bounded communities.” They erect barriers that separate members from non-members. Shirky (2008) observes that groups are as dependent for their existence on who they exclude as much as who they include. Most groups involve rites of admission such as filling in forms, pledges, initiations, formal introductions, rituals, admission to buildings, et cetera. They typically place restrictions on who can and who cannot join. Interestingly, restrictions are commonly defined by set-based characteristics—race, creed, gender, academic qualifications, job, location, marital status, family, et cetera— sometimes supplemented with network characteristics: whether they are known to or recommended by an existing member, for instance. There are often rules that determine how, whether, and when people might leave a group. Many groups set time limits, especially in an educational setting, have rituals for exit such as award ceremonies, retirement events, or farewell parties, and may include processes for deliberate expulsion.

Distinctive Educational Group Features

While there are many common features for all groups, whether intended as vehicles for learning or not, some features are distinctive in a teaching setting.

Participation Often Required to Obtain a Desired End

Group membership in an educational context carries with it a commitment to share time and knowledge with group members. How to assess this participation remains a contentious issue. Some teachers track attendance—reminiscent of the all-too-familiar daily ritual of elementary schools. Others use tools and rubrics to assess the quantity and quality of students’ contribution to online

discussion forums. More innovative assessments include those where students produce learning artifacts, and assess themselves and their peers for attendance and participation.

Group Members do not Select Classmates or Instructor

Although larger institutions can offer greater choice for students, and students can and do enroll in courses with close friends, admission to a program and the assignment of teachers is a task jealously guarded by administrators. Despite the exclusion of student control at this level, students as stakeholders are being increasingly welcomed onto advisory and even governance committees in many institutions.

Group Members must Commit to a Fixed Length of Time

Course organization in batches, where cohorts proceed through a course of studies together, defines the vast majority of higher education learning systems. The groups that form using this organizational model provide a ready group of collaborators for social and cooperative forms of learning.

Group Members must make an Explicit Effort to Connect with Others

By coming together online or face-to-face, synchronously or asynchronously, group members enact the technology of the group. Groups do not meet unintentionally.

Groups Restrict Pace

If students are learning together as a group, there is nearly always some constraint on the speed at which they learn. Typically, they must attend the same lectures, or engage within a fixed period in a discussion forum, or submit assignments at the same time.

Why Groups are Worthwhile

As a result of all these constraints, one might assume that groups are an unattractive form of learning organization, but this could hardly be further from the truth. The vast majority of formal education takes place in group contexts. The group is a familiar and comfortable aggregation for both learners and teachers. The agricultural-based notions of pacing study to allow students freedom to work on the farm in the summer, and the flow of cohorts into evenly spaced and paced fall and spring terms has become synonymous with institutional learning, and is matched with promotions, catalogs, and advertising for even informal and non-credit forms of education.

The rationale for organizing formal learning in bounded communities is often defended, as the resulting security allows for the creation of a safe and supportive environment. Within this protected harbor, learners and teachers are free to explore ideas, make new friends, challenge one another's interpretations, and place obligations of cooperation and support upon one another. From the earliest days of formal education, security for scholars and scholarship to evolve outside of the constraints of ideological or theological hegemony has been a dominant component of academic freedom, necessary for the development of innovative solutions to solve the complex problems facing society. Thus, there remains a strong case for the provision of group-based learning.

Cooperative Freedoms in Groups

In an educational context, grouped modes of learning share a number of distinctive characteristics, some are simply a result of physics, and others are the product of the nature of group social forms. While there are uses for groups in self-paced models of learning that we will refer to later, by far the most common model used in institutional and organizational learning is that of the paced group, which we will focus on here. We present a spider chart indicating the typical notional freedoms available to learners working at a distance in paced groups in Figure 4.1, noting that such groups in face-to-face learning are significantly more constrained.

Place

Although home situations or the need to visit cafés or libraries for Internet access may occasionally impose some limits on the freedom of where learning occurs, as in all distance learning, there is in principle virtually no limit on freedom of place in a group-based distance learning context.

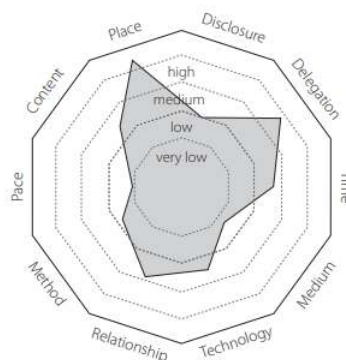


Figure 4.1 Notional levels of control in a typical paced course.

Content

Choosing or creating content has long been a defining role for teachers in group based learning. Despite the large and growing quantities of learning resources available in cyberspace, many of which are freely accessible, students expect teachers to filter and annotate the content, so as to create a structured path through learning activities and content. It is interesting to note the widening gap between the learning that occurs in formal courses—where students are expected to consume content selected by teachers—and common behavior in informal learning, where students turn to search engines, trusted friends, answer systems, or libraries when they want to learn something.

Pace

The fact that groups tend to work in lockstep makes control over pace relatively low in a group-based setting. Like time, it is a question of scale. In asynchronous mode, though a student may have to perform activities within a time period, he or she may vary the pace within those constraints. This is especially valuable when it comes to the much-lauded benefit of asynchronous discussion, because technologies provide students with time to reflect on contributions before posting them, with pedagogically beneficial results. Even when the primary mode of teaching is synchronous, the primary mode of learning may not be. It is, for example, common for readings or activities to be set so that the learner can choose to address at any time between synchronous sessions. This illustrates the important point that, though a method can be described as a social constructivist mode of learning, it will nearly always include some elements that are behaviorist/cognitivist in nature.

At the smallest scale, the way that messages are phrased in a social-constructivist dialogue will usually take into account some model of learning, implicit or explicit. We may, for instance, phrase something as simply as possible, make connections, or draw analogies, all of which assume some model of how individual people think and learn.

Method

While a teacher may determine the general pedagogies used in a group-based learning environment, there are some opportunities for learners to negotiate the method. For example, if a student in a group has difficulties with a particular issue, the teacher or other learners can reformulate a discussion, provide a different presentation, or an alternative perspective that is pedagogically different from what was originally planned. As with other freedoms in group contexts, however, the freedom of an individual may be constrained by the needs of others in the group.

Relationship

If the teacher has decided that a particular form of interaction is required, there may be relatively little control afforded to the learners in a group as to how and with whom engagement occurs. Indeed, it is commonplace in formal learning for engagement to be assessed, whether directly or indirectly, placing strong constraints on how and whether learners engage with one another or their tutors.

Technology

Most Internet-based solutions allow some control over the devices and software used to access them. This can, however, lead to problems such as inequalities between learners, and support for a preferred technology may be limited or nonexistent. Particularly

commonplace examples of this include when a textbook is only provided in either paper or electronic form, or a particular web browser must be used, or mobile devices are not supported.

Medium

Group-based approaches seldom offer much choice over the media used for learning. Normally the institution or the individual teacher makes a decision about the type of media used both for disseminating content and supporting interaction within the group. This decision has become much more challenging for both teachers and students with the development of very low cost so-called Web 2.0 applications, providing hundreds of additional choices beyond the textbook and face-to-face interaction that have defined classroom groups or the Learning Management Systems (LMSs) supporting the vast majority of online learning groups. Technical and end-user based support for large numbers of web based programs present a large and growing challenge for learning organizations that, while attempting to provide up-to-date alternatives, are constrained by the need to protect group confidentiality and security, and ensure performance.

Time

Choice of time for learning engagement depends on whether communication is synchronous or asynchronous. In most group-based classes, it is common for asynchronous tools like email and discussion forums to be used for interactions. These provide a certain amount of freedom of time for engagement, albeit usually with constraints. It is typical to require responses within a period of days, or sometimes, hours. Synchronous tools, of course, provide no freedom of time at all.

Delegation

The ability to ask for clarification, change the direction of discussion, seek help and so on, makes freedom of delegation in a group-based learning context quite high. Though the hierarchical nature of group-based approaches to learning means that teachers may play a very large role in determining how and when interactions and learning transactions occur, there are often plentiful opportunities for learners to ask for more guidance. There are some dependencies, however, on other learners. While a single individual may seek further guidance or a change in direction, the needs of one typically need to be balanced with the needs of the many. If people are learning together, then outliers who wish to take a different direction may not always be heard.

Disclosure

There is seldom a great deal of control over what and how things are disclosed in a traditional institutional group setting. It is nearly always determined by the teacher, and represents one of the more technological aspects of groups: disclosure is designed into group interactions. A teacher may, for example, decide that sharing is bad for final assignments, but necessary for collaborative work. Commonly, the teacher may require students to engage in discussion forums or, less obviously controlling but equally coercive, may provide a discussion forum where every message is seen by all members of the group that is the only formal means of engagement for a course.

Transactional Distance and Control in Group Learning

Moore formulated his theory of transactional distance (1993) in an era when it was assumed that the teaching presence might be mediated through structured resources or more immediate communication between a student and his or her teacher via phone or letter. However, it provides a useful lens for exploring dynamics within groups. In a group, learners and peers may also participate as teaching presences, leading to a more complex dynamic of distance. It is certainly true in most learning based on social constructivist models that the communication distance between teacher and learner is much lower than it is in an instructivist setting. This puts the learner in a more powerful position when negotiating control, where he or she is able to challenge and change the path of learning.

However, this occurs in a group setting in the company of other learners, each likewise engaged in negotiation for control, and each who may become the teaching presence in a learning transaction. The communication and psychological distance is thus very low, thanks to the effects of distribution within the group. However, transactional control is affected by competition. For example, if a learner seeks clarification from a teacher, though this increases control for him or her, from the point of view of others in the group their control is diminished, at least until they contribute and take back the reins themselves.

Group Size

Different patterns and methods work differently in various sizes of groups. In most cases, this is not due to the nature of groups as a social form so much as it is to the constraints of physics. For example, a teaching method that involves each member of the group sharing what they have learned with the rest may be effective among five to ten learners, but would require more hours than there are in the day with a group of 200, and would lead to massive decreases in attention and engagement after the first few students had shared their findings.

The technological nature of groups means that pedagogies for them must be engineered with due consideration for the exigencies and constraints of the group context, including its size. In the example above, one might use a different pedagogy altogether, or if one were set on the pedagogy, one could split the larger group into smaller ones, pick some students to present to the rest, or use a pyramiding process so that small groups selected the best and presented these to larger groups. While most size limitations are amenable to common sense, there are some differences in various kinds of groups that are worth mentioning.

Dyads

The basic dyad consisting of two individuals is common in, for example, supervisor-supervisee relationships, such as Socratic dialogue, master-apprentice models of learning, and personal tutelage. This is, as we observed in Chapter 2, a highly effective but generally too costly method of learning. While a group of two may be the smallest social group form from a logical perspective, there is normally little to distinguish a group of two from a set or net of two: individuals will establish roles and rules according to their needs. An exception exists in the supervisory relationship, where there may be rules and procedures that govern the nature of the interaction.

Work/Family Groups

It is not uncommon for study groups, tutorial groups, and small breakout groups to contain around five members, corresponding to the archetypal work/family group identified by Caporael (1997). Such small groups make the coordination and allocation of tasks simple to perform, even in the absence of particularly strong roles. In an online setting, a small group often communicates with nothing more than email or teleconferencing, modes of communication that, in larger groups, become very unwieldy.

Demes

The typical class in a school, and in many adult learning classes, is the rough size of what Caporael (1997) called a deme (from the Greek *dēmos*, or “people”), like the hunter/gatherer bands of our distant ancestors, consisting of around 30 members. It is at least a plausible hypothesis that we have evolved through group-level selection such that the deme is a manageable size of group that can work face-to-face in a coordinated way, assuming some leadership role to organize its actions.

Tribes

Identified by Caporael (1997) as the “macrodeme,” some group forms drift toward the set in their constitution, typically when they approach or exceed around 150 members. As we have previously noted this is significant in an educational context because tribal groups such as universities, schools, and colleges have the features of closed membership, rules, roles, and hierarchies that are common to all groups but typically lack the close connections, time, and pace restrictions of things like classes, tutorial groups, and workgroups. In these cases, as well as in more time constrained settings such as lectures given to large groups of students who do not know one another, it may be more useful to think of the group as being a set. Unlike a true set, a tribal group’s hierarchies and rules mean the form of learning that occurs is typically very much dominated by the teacher or other group leader. This is not the self-directed, topic-driven process that characterizes set-based learning: the teacher not only determines content and activities but also can act as arbiter and judge of what the set shares. This latter feature of tribal learning is particularly valuable, as the teacher can guide the learner down the desired learning path. Also, as suggested by our example, the teacher is able to manage the group processes so that larger tribes can be split into smaller groups, with all the benefits they bring.

Learning in Groups

Since group learning has been such a dominant form in institutional and organizational education, there is plenty of literature on how groups work in that context. Groups are as much machines for social action as they are social binders, and they are replete with repeatable processes that enable their construction and maintenance. In the following sections we explore some of the features of this semi-mechanical nature.

Online Group Formation

As groups in education are temporally bound, with pacing and scheduling limited by constraints on time for their formation and dissolution, it is important to pay attention to the way they evolve over time. A large number of researchers have studied the way groups form and develop. Here we present some of the more well-founded models.

Dimensions of Change

Many kinds of group development show great similarity among cyclical, linear, and recurring models. J.D. Smith (2001) argue that groups develop in three dimensions. The first is the social dimension, and occurs most often at the early stages of group formation when members come to know one another and the roles they are playing in the task. The second dimension relates to task development, in which the task that the group sets for itself evolves over time as component parts are completed and new assignments are accepted. The third, as Smith notes, is the dimension of group culture that develops with norms, values, and standards of behavior. Even when assessment is criteria-based, student perceptions can lead to a competitive rather than cooperative environment. This interplay between dimensions provides a useful way to understand the growth of groups.

Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning

Perhaps the most commonly known and easily remembered model of group development is Tuckman and Jensen's five-stage model of forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning (1977). This model adapts well to online learning groups.

Forming. The formation stage is often set by the educational institution and is quite normalized by the familiar roles that teachers (assertive and taking charge) and students (passive) easily fall into. Once a course has begun subgroups may form, but they are typically guided in their inception by the teacher.

Storming. The storming phase is also often constrained in formal education by the expectations and compliance of group members. Although aggressive and flaming behaviors in online groups have been widely studied (N. McCormick & McCormick, 1992; Schrage, 2003) formal education groups note the almost complete absence of such behavior, and even an excess of what our colleague Walter Archer, cited in Garrison and Anderson (2003), refers to as "pathological politeness." Fabro and Garrison (1998) reported that the cohort they studied was "generally conditioned in many ways to be polite" and disagreement was taken "as either a personal affront or they were open and a very few people were open" (p. 48). This group appeared to be "quite timid" and "polite" and "began to just agree with each other rather than challenge each other's ideas" (Fabro & Garrison, 1998, p. 48). It should be noted however that these observations were made on Canadian students, who may have distinct national problems with pathological politeness! Thus, for groups to form effectively in formal education, teachers might be advised to stimulate rather than repress "storming" behavior; this might explain the popularity of online debates (Fox & MacKeough, 2003; Jeong, 2003).

Norming. Norming refers to the comfort level that members of groups develop with one another as they come to have both their social and task expectations confirmed in their interactions with others in group meetings. The group stage is now set for the production and accomplishment of tasks. In some cases, the norming stage may be formalized into rules, procedures, and perhaps even a social contract that specifies expectations (Kort, Reilly, & Williams, 2002).

Performing. Once the previous stages of group development have been accomplished, the group can get on with doing what it is supposed to do.

Adjourning. Finally the group prepares for adjourning, with such rituals as the end of class party, completion of course evaluation forms, and fretting and extensive questions related to final examinations and term paper requirements.

Despite the linear nature of Tuckman and Jensen's model (1977), many researchers have noted that group development also proceeds cyclically, revisiting earlier stages, or even progresses swinging like a pendulum, with "storming, norming, and performing" being visited in succession as the group develops over time.

Salmon's Five-stage Model

Most of the interest in and study of groups occurred during the last half of the twentieth century before online groups were common. Perhaps the most influential model of group development for online groups—and especially those within educational context—was developed by Gilly Salmon (2000). Her five-stage model has been particularly popular and successful in recent years as a means of developing learning communities. Emerging from her research into online communities, the model is both descriptive of successful learning communities and prescriptive as to how they evolve, particularly with regard to the role of the moderator in facilitating their development. The model works in Maslowian hierarchical style. The five stages are:

Access and motivation. At this stage, the moderator's role is to ensure that learners are able to use the relevant technologies, are enrolled as group members, and feel welcomed on arrival.

Online socialization. Learners engage in non-threatening message sending, typically greeting others, saying something about themselves, and getting to know people in the group. Salmon suggests that the moderator should help students become familiar with the norms and behaviors expected, offering bridges between this and prior experience in online and offline communities.

Information exchange. Learners begin to share ideas and knowledge with one another. The moderator now acts as a facilitator, establishing tasks and sharing learning materials and processes.

Knowledge construction. Learners begin to engage in meaningful dialogue, exploring and challenging ideas. The moderator facilitates this process with probing questions, challenging ideas, summarizing, channeling, and modeling good practices.

Development. At this stage, not reached by all groups, learners take responsibility for their own learning, challenging not just ideas but the process itself, taking the learning beyond the moderator's prescribed limits. When this occurs, the moderator becomes an almost equal participant, supporting the independence of learners and dealing with problems as they arise. The model seems to fit well with our experience of online groups up to this point. However, it is not entirely clear what is being developed at this stage. We would have expected to see "learning application" or at least "integration" with relevant and authentic aspects of the real world contained within this phase.

Salmon's model has proved useful in many online learning communities, and appears to describe what tends to happen in a well-moderated learning community, offering good advice for those hoping to facilitate such a process. There are complexities, however. In many cases, a cohort of learners will have gone through this process before, and may not need to do so again. Author Dron instituted Salmon's model across a distance-taught program, applying the pattern mindfully in every course, and found that the first two or three stages were of little or no further value once they had been addressed in the first course taken by a given cohort (Dron, Seidel, & Litten, 2004). Students in a cohort were already familiar with the tools and one another, so they were able to start a new course at stage 3 or even 4 of the model. The intentionally scaffolded process thus got in the way of efficient learner-centred learning. As with any framework, the context of application needs to be taken into account and the framework modified to suit the needs, subject area, and learning history of the group concerned.

Power and Trust Relationships in Groups

Roberts (2006) notes the problems with power in groups that are referred to as "oppressed group behaviour." Power relationships that define the organization often infuse thinking and constrain creativity within the group. The accountable nature of group interactions means that members act under the power constraints that define their lives, and these often exist outside the relationships within the group. This is especially relevant in the rigid hierarchy that differentiates teacher from student identity, power, and specific contributions in group contexts.

Trust is also problematic in groups. While group members need trust in order to freely elicit honest contributions from everyone, the unbalanced power dynamics noted above and the competition among students both limit its development. Formal education is marked by the assessment of student accomplishment. This has many downsides, not least of which is the enormously demotivating effects it has for both high and low achievers (Kohn, 1999), but is particularly pronounced when assessment is norm- rather than criteria-based, such that one excels based on their accomplishment and learning compared to other students, not from absolute knowledge of content or individual learning accomplishment. This was most dramatically evident during author Anderson's first-year calculus class at a university where rather inept teaching, coupled with low motivation and a very large class resulted in a pass mark being calculated at 19%! This curve-graded score allowed all (teacher included) to feel good about their learning and themselves, even though most were failing to achieve the objectives of the class. It relates back to the problem of power relationships: competitive grading is less a way of enabling students to learn, and more a way of emphasizing and enacting the power of the teacher to control the process (Kohn, 1999). It is difficult to develop trust in competitive environments, thus explaining in part the distrust many teachers and students have for collaborative and cooperative learning models, despite the proven efficacy of these approaches (D. Johnson & Johnson, 1994).

Understanding Groups as Communities of Inquiry

In 1999 author Anderson with colleagues Randy Garrison and Walter Archer at the University of Alberta devised a conceptual model for online education, which they named the Community of Inquiry model. They developed it to provide both practical

guidelines for teachers and designers, and as a research model for what was then asynchronous, text-based models of online education that were the norm for online education. During the last decade many other researchers have employed this model, and it is likely the most frequently cited tool used to evaluate formal distance education. Google Scholar (2013) lists over 1,000 citations for each of the four major papers and the book written by the original COI authors. The seminal articles associated with this model, as well as links to the work of numerous researchers referencing and extending it are available at (www.communitiesofinquiry.com).

Foundations

The COI model has its roots in Dewey's (1933) pragmatic model of practical inquiry, in which ideas must be tested in the crucible of real application to establish and hone their accuracy. Lipman's (1991) community of inquiry provided the model with both its name and the notions of reflective learning in a formal education, which he characterizes as follows:

- Education is the outcome of participation in a teacher-guided community of inquiry;
- Teachers stir students to think about the world when they reveal knowledge to be ambiguous, equivocal, and mysterious;
- Knowledge disciplines are overlapping and are therefore problematic;
- Teachers are ready to concede fallibility;
- Students are expected to be reflective and increasingly reasonable and judicious;
- The educational process is not information acquisition, but a grasp of relationships among disciplines (Lipman, 1991, pp. 18–19).

Note especially the essential role of the teacher in Lipman's description, which fuelled the desire of Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, & Archer (2001) to explicate the role of the teacher and teaching presence created in formal education transactions. Lipman (1991) notes that within the community of inquiry members question one another, demand reasons for beliefs, and point out the consequences of one another's ideas, thus creating a self-guiding and emergent community when adequate levels of social, cognitive, and teacher presence are present. To round the process off, Garrison's (1991) model of critical thinking was used to develop stages and processes of reflection and decision-making that define critical thinking.

These theoretical works were used to provide conceptual order and a practical heuristic model to assess the teaching and learning context in the online community of inquiry. The model consists of three elements deemed essential to successful educational transactions: cognitive presence, teaching presence, and social presence. Garrison, Anderson, and Archer developed tools and techniques to reliably measure each of these three presences in text-based, asynchronous computer conferencing transcripts. In this section we expand and apply the ideas from the COI model to online group-based learning in both synchronous and asynchronous modes.

Community of Inquiry and Cognitive Presence

Cognitive presence differentiates social interaction in a group-based community of inquiry from casual interaction in the pub or on the street. Some have argued critical thinking most clearly defines quality in higher education contexts (Candy, 2000). We thus built on models and ideals of critical thinking to create our notion of cognitive presence.

Despite almost universal adoption of the notions of the importance of critical thinking in higher education, it is quite difficult to gain a consensus from the literature or practice on what it actually means. The confusion is related to the fact that critical thinking is both a process and a product (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000). Teachers in group contexts are expected to develop learning activities, model the process of critical thinking, and assess the outcomes of cognitive presence in the products of study—projects, papers, and test results—designed to provide evidence of the successful completion of critical thinking. In the Community of Inquiry model, we focused on gathering evidence of the process of critical thinking, and postulated it could be found in the activities of teachers and learners, as demonstrated by their contributions to the threaded discussions that serve as the main communication tool for much online group-based learning.

The first of four phases of cognitive presence is some sort of triggering event. This is often provided as an opening, question, or invitation for comment by the teacher's post to the group. But additional triggers arise when participants reflect upon or challenge one another. To be effective, triggering messages must be meaningful, must spring from the experience of the group, and must be accessible and within conceptual understanding of the group's members. Poscente and Fahy (2003) empirically defined triggering

statements by the numbers of responding posts learners generated and, as expected, found that teacher triggers were most heavily responded to. However, student triggering statements were also observed on a regular basis in threaded online discussion.

The second phase of cognitive presence is “exploration,” within which group members iterate between individual reflection and group questioning, probing, and extension of their ideas and solutions to the triggering idea. This exploration is a divergent phase characterized by brainstorming, questioning, clarifications, and exchange of information.

During the third “integration phase” of the group-based development of cognition presence, focus shifts from exploring meaning to constructing it, and the integration of ideas into robust conceptual models. The leadership of the group is important at this stage, as group members often feel more comfortable “exploring” a problem until interest wanes without making the serious effort needed to arrive at a conceptually whole and integrated solution.

In the final “resolution phase,” the group focuses on ways to apply the knowledge generated in the three previous phases. This resolution may take the form of application and testing in a real-life context. However, often in educational applications, the resolution is a well-argued and detailed answer to a triggering problem.

Cognitive presence has been measured through surveys of participants’ qualitative interviews, automated neural network analysis of key words, and the transcript analysis method developed by the original COI team. In nearly all studies, evidence of the fourth and final resolution phase has been minimal, indicating that perhaps true resolution and critical thinking rarely occurs in the closed and often artificial groups or classes that define most forms of higher education.

Community of Inquiry and Social Presence

The second critical component of the Community of Inquiry is social presence, defined as “the ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project themselves socially and emotionally, as ‘real’ people (i.e., their full personality), through the medium of communication being used” (Garrison et al., 2000, p. 94). This definition was later expanded to include a sense of other group members as well as self and common commitment to a task. We identified three broad categories of social presence indicators: affective, open communication, and cohesive communicative responses. Thus development of a group and individual sense of social comfort is evidenced by use of affective interactions such as humor, self-disclosure, and changes in media use such as employing bold text, or the use of emoticons in group discussion. Open communication is shown by timely responses to member posts, quoting and referring to others, asking questions and complimenting or thanking other group members for their contributions. Finally, cohesive comments such as addressing group members by name, using inclusive pronouns to describe the group, and informal salutations indicate a sense of group cohesion and commitment that we defined as a component of social presence. Once again, through transcript analysis we were able to quantify the extent of social presence evidenced in the group, and this was correlated with satisfaction and perception of learning in a number of later studies.

Community of Inquiry and Teaching Presence

The final component of an effective group-based Community of Inquiry in formal education is Teaching Presence. Teaching presence begins with the instructional design and organization of tasks that are necessary to construct a context in which social and especially cognitive presence arises. In group activities within formal education contexts, both students and teachers have accumulated expectations about these organizational issues that often lead students to a role of passive reaction to the learning agenda specified by the teacher. The second component of teaching presence is the active facilitation of group discussion or other learning activities. Good teachers find opportunities to question, drill down and challenge learners to thoroughly explore, integrate, and apply the knowledge generated by the group. They also nurture the development of social presence by insuring appropriate levels of contribution by group members, and help establish a climate of trust and acceptance within the group. Finally, teaching presence includes direct instruction where the teacher or other group participants contribute their specialized knowledge to the group, diagnose misunderstandings, and otherwise provide leadership in the attainment of deep and meaningful learning experiences.

Applying the Lessons of the Community of Inquiry Model

The COI model has been widely used by both researchers and instructional designers. The designers validated and compared it to contexts beyond asynchronous online learning to show its relevance in comparison to face-to-face learning (Heckman & Annabi, 2005). Methodologically, the COI model was validated through student survey responses (Rourke & Anderson, 2002) and factor

analysis of survey results (Arbaugh, 2007). Work has continued to develop a standardized instrument for measuring the extent of community of inquiry formation through student survey assessment (Swan et al., 2008).

We conclude this overview of COI's contribution to the design and function of group-based learning with the series of recommendations that Randy Garrison made for designers and teachers. He advises them to

- Establish a climate that will create a community of inquiry;
- Establish critical reflection and discourse that will support systematic inquiry;
- Sustain community through the expression of group cohesion;
- Encourage and support the progression of inquiry through to resolution;
- Foster the evolution of collaborative relationships where students are
- supported in assuming increasing responsibility for their learning;
- Ensure that there is resolution and metacognitive development.

As these recommendations demonstrate, the community of inquiry model has strong implications for process, and emphasizes the deeply technological nature of traditional groups in formal learning: this is about repeatable methods and techniques that carry with them assumptions of structure and architecture that are designed and enacted.

The Critical Role of Tasks on Groups

Collaborative behavior is not a function of the group, but of the learning activities assigned or undertaken by that group. The task sets the context, the goals, and in most cases the appropriate organizational structure for the group. Townsend, DeMarie, and Hendrickson define virtual teams as “groups of geographically and/ or organizationally dispersed coworkers that are assembled using a combination of telecommunications and information technologies to accomplish an organizational task” (1998, p. 18). The role of the task is highlighted as having major significance in the function, organization, and success of virtual and face-bound groups. Bell and Kozolowski (2002) observe that task complexity is an especially salient factor. However it is not only the task but also its treatment by the group that affects its complexity. Tasks used by educators with learners vary widely in a number of ways.

Van de Ven, Delbecq, & Koenig (1976) described four types of organizational structure of increasing complexity that a group may develop to accomplish a task. The first was termed polled or additive: group members simply combined their work to accomplish the task. The second requires group members to work on some part of the task before moving the incomplete work to another (often differentially specialized group member) for additional work. The third follows a less structured back-and-forth movement of task artifacts, with group members adding value at various times as the product moves through production stages to completion. The final and most complex structure was termed “intensive,” and is characterized by continuous discussion, debate, evaluation, and contribution among team members at all stages of task function.

Virtual groups, because of the reduction in proximal clues, tend to need greater and more explicit amounts of external direction (teaching presence), and more structured forms of organization. They also tend to both rely upon and nurture more self-direction among learners than teacher-dominated groups characteristic of campus education. Learners have many more responsibilities than merely arriving at the designated teaching location at the correct time each week. These include technical competencies so that they can effectively utilize the various communication and information technologies necessary to complete of group tasks. They also must be able to monitor and effectively manage their time—being focused and committed enough to attend to assigned group tasks, while at the same time able to resist time-wasting activities such as unfocused web browsing.

Trust, Cohesion, and Groupthink

Groups or “teams” (as they are often referred to in business contexts), have long been the focus of study by business sociologists. Groups function as the primary means to increase trust, alignment, cohesion, and ultimately efficiency in the workplace (Burt, 2009). Group members, through exposure to one another and common social norms and behaviors, come to share common ideas, create localized jargon, and develop and share “similar views of proper opinion and practice and similar views of how to go forward into the future” (Burt, 2009, p. 4). This commonality leads to integration, the development of trust within the group, and the expectation of support and help when needed from individual group members. Further, increased communications within a tightly defined group creates efficiencies, and perhaps just as important, an inhibiting relational cost for bad behavior. All of this is positive and is used by effective group-based teachers and campus administrators in education to foster bonding and integration within classrooms, which in turn leads to increased engagement and academic success (Kuh, 2001).

However, cohesion in groups, like most social variables, has both positive and negative consequences. The American sociologist Irving Janis is credited with coining the term “groupthink,” which he defined as “a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members’ strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action” (1972, p. 9). Groupthink is a popular concept intuitively understood (at least in part) by academics from many disciplines and the general public. However, the antecedent conditions necessary for the emergence and symptoms of groupthink have not always been substantiated by rigorous experimental study (see, for example, Turner & Pratkanis, 1998). Nonetheless, some recent scholars have argued that the groupthink phenomenon is even more ubiquitous than Janis thought, and arises even in the absence of many of his critical antecedents.

Janis identified two groups of antecedent conditions leading to groupthink. The first are of a structural nature:

- **Insulation of the group:** Insulation is a cherished characteristic found behind the closed classroom door, gated campus, and password-protected discussions common in educational groups. Though originally designed as a way to protect dissenting scholarly views, the closed group now serves as much to isolate as it does to protect group members. As S. E. Page observes, this can lead to a lack of diversity, as well as reduced creativity and problem solving capacity (2008).
- **Lack of a tradition of impartial leadership:** Educational contexts have a strong tradition of leadership exerted by the teacher and school administrators. While we do not suggest that this leadership inevitably lacks impartiality, the leadership is often authoritarian, and at best carries a bias toward scholarship and at worst one that favors conformity.
- **Lack of norms requiring methodological procedures:** School groups seldom lack methodological procedures for getting things done, but again these procedures are rarely critically examined by either students or teachers.
- **Homogeneity of members’ social background and ideology:** Despite the desire of many advocates of liberal democracy for schools to serve as a great equalizer, there is considerable evidence that schools and the groups within them are one of the main conduits for the transmission of dominant social values with accompanying class divisions and capital moving only between generations of the privileged.

Janis’s second set of antecedents of negative groupthink is associated with emergent social conditions that are characterized by

- **High stress from external threats:** The life of a student is often a very stressful one. Examinations are frequent, and the recent trend to require more group and collaborative work adds additional stress to many students forced to be dependent upon others and deal with exploitation by freeloaders and social loafers (Piezon & Ferree, 2008).
- **Recent failures:** The external threat imposed by numerous tests and examinations of course also gives rise (at least occasionally) to failures by both groups and individuals.
- **Excessive difficulties on the decision-making task:** When groups move online, there is evidence that group decision-making, though not impossible, is slower and usually less efficient (Walther, 1994); online groups “are more prone toward conflict, and, most importantly, have more difficulty achieving consensus” (Farnham, Chesley, McGhee, Kawal, & Landau, 2000, p. 299).
- **Moral dilemmas:** Formal education rarely struggles with ethical dilemmas, except through removed academic lenses. Nonetheless, educational groups have their own set of issues related to plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of ethical dilemmas (Demiray & Sharma, 2009).

From the above description of antecedents, one can see that there is high potential for groupthink and its associated negative outcomes in group-based models of formal education. Indeed, one could wonder—given the prevalence of these antecedents in formal education groups—if anything but impaired forms of groupthink ever arise. Confronting the lack of direct causal relationship between antecedents and groupthink outcomes, and the knowledge that groupthink impairments exist to some degree in almost all groups, Baron (2005) developed a ubiquity model of groupthink in which he identified three broader antecedents: shared social identity; salient norms; and low group self-efficacy.

Our own most vivid experience of groupthink in online groups was evident in the “pathological politeness” exhibited by many students in our online discussion groups (Garrison & Anderson, 2003). The literature from the earliest days of the Internet has documented examples of “flaming” and other disruptive behaviour (Lee, 2005; Sproull & Kiesler, 1986). However, in our classes and the transcripts of others we examined, we found just the opposite—many instances in which learners refused to engage in healthy debate or challenge one another’s ideas or assertions. This excessive politeness is likely an indicator that groupthink is lurking, ready to muzzle ideas that potentially strain group cohesion or challenge established authority and ideas—not an atmosphere we were hoping to develop in our graduate courses.

This brief overview of the extensive literature on groupthink underscores the potential negative consequences of facilitating education in group contexts. These are to some degree balanced by the pedagogical value associated with collaboration and productive learning in a community of inquiry. Nonetheless, groupthink lurks, ready to emerge in any group context, and both learners and teachers are advised to guard against the social forces that attract us to familiar solutions that produce less stress and conflict among group members.

Social Capital in Groups

These group connections often persist beyond the course of studies and are a prime mechanism by which the “hidden curriculum” is propagated. The hidden curriculum is often associated with classism and dissemination of dominant ideologies (Margolis, 2001). It is worth repeating that, in education contexts, especially those operating at a distance, cohesive groups also are the primary mechanism for more positive applications of the “hidden curriculum,” including help in “learning to play the game” and learn how to learn in often unfamiliar mediated contexts (T. Anderson, 2001).

The Tools of Groups

A variety of tools has been developed to support groups of learners, the most ubiquitous of which are learning management systems (LMSs), or as they are referred in the UK and some other places, Virtual or Managed Learning Environments (VLEs or MLEs).

Learning Management Systems

Learning management systems were developed to make online course creation and management possible for teachers with minimal Internet expertise. They offer a suite of tools matched to the needs and current classroom practice for average educators and trainers working with adults or high school-level students. Prior to the development of LMS, web course authorship was accessible only to those with considerable Internet and page creation skills, supplemented with unintegrated discussion tools such as newsgroups and email. Many early examples of web-based courses consisted of pages of text, with a few of the presentation, assessment, record-keeping or monitoring tools developed over the years for campus-based instruction. Thus, the arrival of effective and relatively easy-to-use LMSs proved instrumental for the rapid adoption of web technologies both in campus instruction as blended learning and for distance education applications.

A central binding feature of almost all LMSs and related systems is that of roles: there is nearly always at least a teacher role, with the power to control the environment to a far greater extent than a student role. In many systems, roles may be assigned for different features and aspects, and complex organizational forms may be embedded, with different roles for tutors, course coordinators, course designers, systems administrators, teaching assistants, evaluators, and of course, students. This deep structural embedding not only reflects the existing hierarchies but also reinforces them, preventing serendipitous ad hoc role reversals or shifts within hierarchies that might occur in a traditional classroom. The online teacher wishing to turn over control of a class to his or her students may face technical obstacles that make it difficult, awkward, or for some systems, impossible to achieve.

At the heart of the LMS is a system of security, authorization, and access control that allows learners only to enter into course spaces in which they are enrolled, and in many cases links to other components of an institution’s student information system. Most LMS systems create an opening page that links students directly to the courses they are registered in, as well as to a variety of other student services such as the registrar, libraries, student clubs, and so on. Thus, the LMS becomes a sort of personalized portal to the services provided by the institution.

In the early days of online learning, there was a proliferation of homemade and/or unintegrated systems, sometimes composed of repurposed groupware such as Lotus Notes. While several of these were well tailored to the needs of their communities, lack of integration across courses and programs, a disjointed user experience, and above all, the difficulties of maintaining, developing, and sustaining such systems led many to ossify or degenerate into disuse. Nowadays, many institutions support only a single, centrally managed LMS system, to minimize technical support issues, so that both learners and students can become familiar and competent users throughout their time of enrollment with that institution. Similarly, to enhance ease of use, most LMS systems use single login systems so that users need to remember only one username and password to access all of the institutions’ services.

LMS systems continue to increase the number and variety of modules available to instructors, in a “Swiss Army knife” approach that is designed to meet as many teaching needs as possible, while maintaining complexity and choice at manageable levels. Key components of modern LMS systems include organization and display tools with options for printing content on demand, calendars with important dates, quiz creation and administration, asynchronous text conferences, real-time text chats, group space for

collaborative work, and drop boxes and grade books for assignment. All of these tools are integrated, and most are equipped with push capabilities such that new activity triggers notification by email or Rich Site Syndication (RSS). In the competitive drive to entice more customers, LMS developers are adding tools regularly, including ones more commonly associated with network learning such as blogs, wikis, and e-portfolios.

One particular developer, Blackboard, has captured a significant portion of the commercial LMS market, especially since acquiring competitors such as WebCT and ANGEL. There is intense competition from smaller companies and products such as Desire2Learn and GlobalScholar, but it is hard for them to make inroads where Blackboard is already incumbent. To some extent Blackboard's commercial success is inevitable: once an institution chooses an LMS vendor it tends to lock into using it, since the costs of transition, training, and content migration inhibit subsequent movement to rival brands. This means that being first comes with a lot of "stickability," and Blackboard has—understandably enough for a commercial company with a strong interest in keeping the cash flowing in—not gone far out of its way to enable migration and export.

The main competition for Blackboard comes from outside of the commercial sector. The open source movement has been very active in developing and delivering LMS products, and recent studies are showing that in the higher education applications, they may even be surpassing commercial LMS products in terms of the number of installations (see, for example, the market penetration statistics at Zacker.org [2014]). The growing number of users of open source LMS systems such as Moodle, Sakai, Canvas, and aTutor (to note just a few larger systems of hundreds available), bear evidence that some learning organizations are attracted to the lower initial cost, volunteer support community, and security of code ownership afforded by open source products.

Early fears that such systems would not be scalable have been put to rest by large-scale adoptions made by institutions like the Open University of the United Kingdom (which uses Moodle), who have also contributed generously to the system's development, as Athabasca University in Canada has done, and many others. Similar to other successful open source software, a variety of companies are now offering training, support, and integration services for these products, in an attempt to meet the needs of institutions that do not wish to develop these services in-house. Interestingly, as Dawson's (2012) article details, even Blackboard has absorbed companies providing Moodle hosting in a move that surprised many industry followers.

A quick look at the many orphaned applications distributed on the SourceForge repository of open source products reveals that it is much easier to create and release the first version of an open source software package than it is to gather and sustain a community of active developers. Nonetheless, examples such as Apache, Linux, and the LMS systems mentioned earlier prove that it is possible to develop and maintain very sophisticated products over extended periods of time using open source development tools and ideals. Many institutions either making the leap into learning management systems for the first time or fed up with the high costs and lack of flexibility of commercial systems are moving to open source environments. However, while they offer many advantages, like all such systems, portability of data remains an issue. Moving from one system to another, even when both support standards such as SCORM, is often a painful experience, and lock-in, whether deliberate or unintended, is a feature of almost any centralized environment.

An alternative model of hosting in the Cloud has developed in recent years and has been enthusiastically taken up by many smaller institutions, especially schools that do not have sufficient resources of their own to manage the complex software and hardware typically needed for self-hosting. In some cases, governments or consortia that work on behalf of a collection of schools or colleges manage such systems, in others they are directly paid for commercial services, and in others still they are supported by advertising or, occasionally, are free. The risk of such services is primarily in their reliability—terms of service may change, or companies may become bankrupt. However, there are other concerns: ensuring the privacy of their users is especially important where data protection laws are not strong (such as in the US), and they will sometimes be slower than campus-based alternatives. Even if their performance, reliability, security and privacy are sufficient, data portability is a significant concern. If users and their content are bound up with a particular system, the difficulties of moving to another platform are potentially much greater than even a locally hosted server may present. This is particularly significant if the interface plays an important role: even if data are portable, they may still be unusable outside the original platform without the means to present them effectively.

Synchronous Group Tools

The need for virtual teams to operate in real time (vs. distributed time) is expected to become more critical as tasks become more complex. Bradford S. Bell and Steve W. J. Kozlowski, "A Typology of Virtual Teams"

Synchronous activities raise the visibility of all group members, especially those who use the media more effectively. Moreland and Levine (1982) argue that visibility is a key determinant of group participation, and thus group performance. Early forms of group-based online learning used audio or text chats, which were augmented by video to become ubiquitous web conferencing software (Skype, Collaborate, Connect, etc.) used in formal education, business, and personal applications. These synchronous tools have evolved into immersive environments that have attracted much interest from early adopters and researchers, but few sustained educational programs or courses make extensive use of them.

Synchronous activities bring a sense of immediacy and efficiency to group processes. Although we remain appreciative of the increased freedom, choice, and reflection affordance of asynchronous groups, we are aware that many students and teachers prefer the increased sense of camaraderie that often develops quickly through engagement in synchronous activity. In a comparison of asynchronous and synchronous courses, Somenarain, Akkaraju, and Gharbaran (2010) found increased student learning, perceptions of learning, motivation and effectiveness of communications among synchronous groups.

Effective group processes are based on trust, immediacy, and a sense of the presence. Although examples from courtship by mail to the development of social presence in asynchronous text discussion demonstrate that it is possible to develop effective educational groups through asynchronous communication, synchronous communication has many advantages.

First and most important is the sense of immediacy provided by real-time or synchronous communications. Albert Mehrabian defines immediacy as communication behaviours that “enhance closeness to and nonverbal interaction with another” (1969, p. 213). He focused on non-verbal cues that are greatly restricted in many forms of online behaviour—notably those that are text-based. But immediacy also carries a sense of immediate reactions, ones that are rich in body language, voice intonation, and facial expression.

Many researchers have studied the link between educational goals and teacher immediacy (J. Anderson, 1979; Frymier, 1993; Gorham, 1988). Generally these studies find that teacher immediacy increases student motivation to learn, student enjoyment and persistence, and to a more limited degree, cognitive outcomes. Teacher behaviours associated with immediacy include use of humour, self-disclosure, addressing students by name, and asking and answering student questions. Finkelstein (2006) argues that synchronous teaching, with implied increases in immediacy, is associated with each of Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) oft-cited Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education—notably increasing student–faculty contact, student cooperation time on task, feedback, and increasing diverse ways of knowing.

Despite these endorsements, synchronous learning activities are also associated with diminishing accessibility. Not all participants may be available at any given time, and the necessity for participants to gather in a single virtual place or have access to particular and often expensive equipment cannot always be met—especially if full-screen video is demanded to maximize the visibility of subtle nonverbal communication and body language. In our experience of online teaching, we have found that occasional use of synchronous technologies allows for quick bursts of immediacy that help forge group cohesiveness and serves to pace and synchronize the group, but it is best to make restrained use of the tools. Increased pacing leads to reduced learner control (Dron, 2007a, pp. 81-82).

Another drawback of synchronous activities is that they can and often are used to support regressive mimicking of classroom-based and lecture format teaching that not only bores learners but also fails to take advantage of new pedagogies and learning activities afforded in cyberspace. The familiar experience of teacher-led instruction can be transported online with regular video conferencing sessions. However, our experience has shown that the increase in complexity from dealing with off-site issues as well as impairments to clear visualization and auditory interaction create frustrations for those expecting “the same, only at a distance.” For such sessions to work there is a need to provide plenty of support and a thorough grounding in protocols to avoid confusion and failure, like ensuring an adequate gap between asking a question and expecting a response, avoiding talking at the same time, avoiding real-world distractions, and the appropriate use of text chat. It is also often a good idea, especially in large groups of novice users, to allocate a second moderator to help manage technical issues. Effective groups therefore tend to make use of synchronous technologies judiciously and ensure that the convenience cost is warranted by collaborative interaction.

Synchronous learning activities come in a wide variety of formats and media. Both audio- and videoconferencing were used extensively in distance education formats for many years before their migration to cost-effective web technology. Text chat was the first and still the most common form of synchronous online interaction, and was even used as the primary tool in the earliest forms

of immersive interaction (for example MOOs, MUDs, and Palaces). Text chat is, however, dependent upon typing skills and therefore is associated with the development of shorthand forms and lingo that can exclude new users from group interaction.

We are most impressed with web conferencing software as cost-effective and accessible group educational technologies (for example, Elluminate, Adobe Connect, WebEx, LiveMeeting, DimDim, etc.). Web conferencing supports multiple forms of synchronous interaction, including voice, text, low-resolution video, and presentation support. In addition, most systems support drawing on whiteboards, breakout rooms, application sharing, polling, and group excursions in cyberspace. From an accessibility perspective, web conferencing allows very easy recording and later playback for group members who are not able to attend real time sessions. Recently, student response systems have been used in classrooms, and early results are showing increases in enjoyment, attendance, and even learning outcomes (Radosevich, Salomon, & Kahn, 2008). Student response through polling is a standard feature of most web conferencing systems for online use, thus providing a tool that enhances learning at a cost that is much lower than that associated with distributing “clickers” to campus-based students.

The use of synchronous interaction is also related to the complexity of group tasks. Simple dissemination of content (as in a lecture, or a reading in a textbook or article) likely gains little from synchronous interaction. But as the need for negotiation and collaboration increases, so does the need for real-time interaction (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002).

In our work, we have evaluated the effectiveness of extending groups across multiple schools to teach high school courses to rural students via videoconferencing technology. We found that although the videoconferencing has value, especially in terms of enrichment, along with professional and administrative value for teachers, as a primary tool for distance education it creates a rather impoverished and teacher-centric learning environment (T. Anderson, 2008).

Immersive Worlds

What for decades has promised to provide the most engaging form of synchronous activity is that which takes place in immersive environments such as SecondLife, Project Wonderland, or Active Worlds. We have studied early examples of formal educational encounters in immersive environments, and conclude that group enhancing forms of cognitive and teaching presence can be developed in these environments and that opportunities for greatly enhanced social presence abound. McKerlich and Anderson argue that “as the tasks a virtual team is required to perform become more complex and challenging, requiring greater levels of expertise and specialization, a higher premium is expected to be placed on synchronous workflow arrangements and the roles of individual team members will be more likely to be clearly defined, fixed, and singular” (2007, p. 34).

However, at the time of writing, there were numerous hurdles to overcome before such systems enter the mainstream. It is hard to learn to use them, with different controls and capabilities from one system to the next, and complexity in even simple tasks such as moving around. Although touted by their creators as the “3D web,” nothing could be further from the truth. Only the most primitive of steps have been taken to enable a truly distributed and open environment like the World Wide Web in 3D immersive spaces. It was something of a breakthrough when, in 2008, IBM technologists were able to teleport an individual (without clothes or distinguishing features) from one immersive environment to another, but little mainstream development has occurred since then. Technologically, such environments still require powerful machines to operate effectively, and so far, nearly all rely on separate downloadable software as opposed to running in simple ubiquitous clients such as web browsers. This state of affairs may not last long, however. In specifications for HTML 5, real-time, 3D, and immersive environments are being considered. Various real-time technologies are already fairly advanced— Google’s Shuttle5 (code.google.com/p/shuttle5/) provides Jabber chat and uses HTML5 support for websockets, an emerging standard for enabling various protocols to work within web browsers.

Both Google and the Mozilla Foundation are working on ways to enable virtual immersive spaces within the browser, which may lead to standardization and distribution beyond the isolated server spaces of today. If and when this occurs, we may see the flowering of a 3D immersive web, perhaps developing into something not too far removed from William Gibson’s original vision of cyberspace.

Group Toolsets in the Cloud

The ever-present closed email list has been and continues to be the workhorse of many effective groups. Email has reached a saturation point in many schools and workplaces such that one can count on learners having access to email and the ability to check their accounts regularly. This familiarity with the tools, in addition to the “push” to the attention of a group means that many groups in both formal and informal learning contexts rely on the group mailing list as the primary means of communication. Recently,

large Net companies (Yahoo and Google Groups) and new Web 2.0 companies (MySpace, Facebook, etc.) have expanded and integrated new features into their group email tools to create rich group work and learning environments. These collections not only support email but also retain and organize email posts in web formats so that group members need no longer store individual copies of email in their increasingly full mailboxes. Rather, they can search and retrieve postings from the group archive. This is very useful for learners who join the group at a time after group communication has already begun. These systems also support a host of add-on features such as common calendaring, document sharing, picture archiving, group to-do lists, polls, surveys, and other tools designed to afford both synchronous and asynchronous communication among group members. A number of companies have recently stepped into the realm of educational service provision, offering richer and well-managed learning environments for group use in classes where existing tools are weak, such as Uduku and CourseLab, as well as many hosted versions of existing LMS products like Moodle and Blackboard.

Effect of Groups on Attrition

Distance learning has notoriously high attrition rates, though this is by no means true across the board (e.g., Guilar & Loring, 2008). Among the many things that help to reduce attrition rates, a central pillar is social support. While there are many factors that can lead to attrition and many mitigating factors that reduce it, sustained motivation is essential. It is very easy, without cues like the requirement to be in a particular place at a particular time, to allow other things to take precedence, so motivation plays a crucial role in success to a greater extent than it does in face-to-face learning. Ideally, that motivation will be intrinsic: rather than being coerced, cajoled, rewarded, or even working to achieve goals that align with self-image and self-worth, it is better by far to simply want to do something in the first place. However, intrinsic motivation is easily undermined; often by the very things we try to do to achieve it in the first place, such as reward systems or punishments (Ariely, 2009; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Kohn, 1999).

According to Deci and Ryan (2008), there are three distinct components to intrinsic motivation. As a rule, if learning tasks give people control, are within their range of competence, and provide relatedness with others, they will enable intrinsic motivation to emerge. Without any of those features, intrinsic motivation is almost certain to be quashed. Although the relatedness portion of this triangle may emerge in, say, family settings, friends, social networks or public acclaim, a system for learning that embeds sociability is far more likely to succeed than one that does not. A social component is therefore an extremely important means of avoiding attrition. There are many examples of this recorded in the literature. Royal Roads University, an online Canadian institution, famously achieved completion rates approaching 100% by employing the relatively simple technique of fostering cohorts, groups of mutually supporting learners who helped one another when the going got tough, even averting disaster in classically dangerous times such as changes in job, bereavement, or illness (Guilar & Loring, 2008). A closed group is especially effective at providing such support because shared goals and values, combined with a culture of mutual support, can help to foster strong community ties.

Effect of Groups on Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy—the belief that a learner can accomplish a goal—has long been associated with performance and persistence (Bandura, 1977) and resulted in a major theory and considerable study of self-efficacy in both classroom and distance education. In a major review of the sources of self-efficacy, Usher and Pajares (2008) isolate four sources of self-efficacy found in the considerable research literature. The largest source is mastery: having accomplished one goal leads to confidence that additional goals can be achieved. But after competency, the next two sources are decidedly related to social interactions that are common in group interactions. The first of these is labeled “social persuasion”: inducements made by other group members and especially teachers increase a learner’s sense that they can accomplish a challenging learning goal. Perhaps this is most clearly visualized in the sports group, where the coach and teammates’ almost continuous communications that “you can do it” are vivid social persuasions leading to increases in self-efficacy. The second source of socially induced self-efficacy relates to vicarious experiences, where learners are able to observe the success of peers and come to believe that they too can achieve these goals. Obviously the intense interactions that define group activities give rise to many opportunities for such vicarious experience, with resulting increases in self-efficacy.

Design Principles for Group Applications

As we have already observed, groups differ from networks inasmuch as they tend to have:

- Structure and leadership

- Fixed periods of operation and identifiable stages of development
- Explicit membership

However, things are complicated by the latent possibility that groups may evolve into networks and back again. There are two distinct ways for designers to cope with this:

1. Ignore the problem and leave the network aspect to a different application or applications.
2. Build support for transitions to network modes into the software itself.

We favour the latter solution. We will start, however, by briefly examining the features needed to support group modes. We will not go into great depth on this topic: software to support group interactions has been available for several decades, and we do not intend to suggest new or revolutionary approaches to its design here, apart from in terms of the transition to network modes of interaction.

Structure and Leadership

Software designed for groups needs to embody roles that provide affordances, capabilities, and levels of control to different people.

It should be possible to see the mapping between the group structure and the individuals and resources composing it. In other words, we should be aware of the organizational structure of the group, with clear signals for different roles. This may be as simple as labels or icons to indicate that a person is a teacher or group leader, or it can be more sophisticated. For example, we could display the organizational structure as a tree, or indicate ownership of resources and discussions by images or text.

Fixed Periods of Operation and Identifiable Stages of Development

- Any group system should be capable of having a specified beginning and end date/time.
- Resources and discussions for groups should have the facility for expiring or archiving

As groups pass through various phases, they need different kinds of electronic support, and these should not be mixed up. For instance, relics of experimental sharing and learning should not persist once groups have become self-sustaining and apply knowledge critically. Allowing or requiring resources and discussions to expire (or to be sidelined through archiving) is one approach to dealing with this issue. Another is to parcel the learning landscape in order to keep spaces associated with different development phases separate.

Explicit Membership

Groups imply membership, which also implies that those outside the group need to be excluded. Any application supporting groups needs explicit controls over not just authentication but also authorization. In addition, such a system needs support for subgroupings, including groups of individuals and the virtual spaces that they use. For example, this may be used to separate spaces for subgroup interaction (a common feature of LMSs), or at a higher level, to separate out instances of courses. This leads us to consider transitions from group to network modes.

Transition from Group to Network

It is not uncommon for groups to evolve into networks, especially in educational applications. Typically, people who have been in a class together may stay in contact, and even if they don't there is a great deal of potential value in using the alumni of a given course to provide support, encouragement, and other benefits to new cohorts. Unfortunately, many systems primarily designed for closed groups (including most LMSs) do not make it easy to do that, and such networks tend to arise despite the system's design rather than because of it, through email or other more network-friendly social applications (Facebook groups, for example).

To support the transition from group to network modes, it would be better if designers developed group applications that fade into networks rather than those that abruptly end. The common approach to closed course management that is used in many institutional LMSs is to archive old courses when they have ended, thereby ending a given student's association with the course. Indeed, data models behind the applications enforce this by requiring separation for each instance a course runs. Because of the data models behind many LMSs, there is little alternative to this approach because were we to leave ex-students and their discussions active, it would be confusing to new cohorts. In unpaced/self-paced learning there are further problems as, without a specific cohort to be a member of, relics of old discussions can quickly evolve into a chaotic tangle that is counterproductive in learning. In a paced

(cohort-based) course it is very valuable to make use of subgroupings for each instance of a course, but to maintain either a supertype or superclass of the course that allows users to maintain membership in the broader network.

For unpaced courses, the problem is more complex. Learners who progress through a course at their own pace, typically with discontinuous overlapping start and finish times, are in some senses a group with shared goals, a hierarchical organizational structure, clear membership and so on, but in some senses they are a set because individual ties are typically very weak, and while purposes are shared at the large scale of the course, areas of interest at any given time will typically differ.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have overviewed both the power and liabilities of group models of teaching and learning. Groups can be used by educators to create the support, solidarity, and community that encourage learners to continue the often-strenuous work of effective learning. They are also important vehicles for transmitting the cultural capital, often referred to as the hidden curriculum, which is associated with the experience of formal education.

The benefits are balanced with the tendency for groups to suffer from groupthink and serve as cliques that bar access for some to group privileges. In formal education, groups often suffer from teacher dependency than doesn't allow learners to practice the skills or develop the self-efficacy attitudes associated with selfdirected and lifelong learning. Nonetheless, we have seen the evolution of groups from place-based entities to ones that can thrive and be effective in blended online and place-based format, and on to groups that operate effectively with only online interaction and collaborative work.

There are some notable downsides to the use of groups, one of the largest being that such approaches typically impose heavy restrictions on time and pace, and distribute control in ways that may not benefit all learners. Beyond these problems, they scale badly and are very expensive to run (Annand, 1999). The organizational complexity of managing large numbers of group-based learners and the effort involved in sustaining group technologies means that more innovative ways need to be found to gain the benefits of groups at a lower cost and without the concomitant loss of learner control that they necessarily entail.

Connectivist pedagogies appear to offer such an alternative, and with that in mind, in the next chapter we move beyond groups to the fluid and emergent structures we refer to as networks.

This page titled [3.4: Learning in Groups](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

3.5: Building Trusting Collaborative Relationships with Families

● Learning Objectives

- Explain the importance of relationships between ECE program and families.
- Describe ways programs and teachers can facilitate trusting relationships with families.
- Differentiate parent involvement from family engagement.
- Defend the importance of recognizing families as having the primary role in children's lives.
- Define ways for programs to empower families.
- Describe effective communication strategies.

“A growing body of research suggests that meaningful engagement of families in their children's early learning supports school readiness and later academic success” (NAEYC 2009; Henrich and Gadaire 2008; Weiss, Caspe, and Lopez 2006). Programs and teachers who strive to build genuine partnerships with the parents, guardians, and other primary caregivers at home and encourage families to become active participants in their child's early learning and development help families to become advocates for their children. “High levels of engagement often result from strong program–family partnerships that are co-constructed and characterized by trust, shared values, ongoing bidirectional communication, mutual respect, and attention to each party's needs (Lopez, Kreider, and Caspe 2004; NAEYC 2009, 6).

In addition, early childhood education programs have learned that when they can effectively partner with families, young children benefit and families are more likely to maintain involvement with school settings across the years. By strengthening family engagement during the early years, particularly with families from diverse backgrounds, families that have children with disabilities or other special needs, and families with dual language learners, early childhood education (ECE) programs can help to reduce the achievement gap.

When programs strive to build trusting, open, and collaborative relationships with families and genuinely seek the family's input to inform program planning, family members receive the message that they play a key role in their child's development and learning. In efforts to establish strong links between home and the early care and education setting, programs and teachers focus on developing strategies for family collaboration and being responsive to each family's home language.

This page titled [3.5: Building Trusting Collaborative Relationships with Families](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

3.6: School and Community Partnerships- Communities in Schools

By: Shelby C. Blair

“I could sit in my garage all day long and that doesn’t make me a car. I can sit in class all day and that does’t make me a student. It is what you DO that makes you a student.” Jamie Accashian, Principal

Learning Targets

Students should be able to:

1. Define and give two examples of what a School and Community Partnership is.
2. Have working knowledge of what Communities In Schools is.
3. Name two benefits of School and Community Partnerships.

Introduction

Let’s imagine this scenario. You are a first year freshman English teacher. You have a student who has the potential to be very successful. However, you have noticed recently that he has skipped classes, not turned in assignments, and went from making “B’s” to “D-’s” and “F”.

You talk to the student and he tells you that he has had to take on two jobs to help support his family. What do you do? How can you help him?

What is School and Community Partnerships

A school-community partnership involves “the connections between schools and community individuals, organizations, and businesses that are forged to promote students’ social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development” (Saunders, 2001).

These organizations can give money or volunteer their time and services. A few ways they can volunteer their time is by mentoring a student, tutoring, or just allowing a student to shadow them.

Why do we need Community Partnerships in our Schools?

Schools are being held accountable for students learning and what they know. However, schools cannot do this alone. This is where school and community partnerships come into play. In these different partnerships students are given the best opportunities to succeed in school because the community can sometimes provide resources that schools cannot really afford to provide. In a personal interview with Mr. Bob Cartwright, he said that, “in tight monetary times, the financial advantages to the school are apparent” (B. Cartwright, personal communication, September 30, 2008).

What is Community In Schools?

Communities In Schools (CIS) is a nationwide organization that helps to prevent students from dropping out of school and being prepared to become active and productive citizens in their communities (Communities in Schools At A Glance). CIS is a place where students can feel safe and feel as though someone actually cares about what happens to them. They are free to learn and not worry about being bullied. For some they are given a second chance at an education. One thing CIS helps to provide is alternative high schools that offer both day and night programs.

The teacher in the above scenario could recommend this to her student. The principal and the faculty would have worked with the student to help him be able to work to help his family and to still get his degree. They could even transpose his work experience into high school credit and work with his job to make sure he is able to attend school. The teachers are caring and go out of their way to help their students. I know all of this because I was lucky enough to experience it. I was that student that wanted to learn but had a hard time functioning in regular high school. The night school program was strict, as with any Community In Schools (CIS)

program. Attendance is mandatory and if you miss so many days of school, you are dismissed from the program until the next semester. (B. Cartwright, personal communication, September 30, 2008).

Communities In Schools are making a difference in students' lives. Click here to read all about them:
<http://www.cisnet.org/about/success.asp>

Interviews

After my sophomore year, I was dealing with more family issues at home and being picked on at school. It got to the point that I really did not want to go to school and begged to be sent to a private school. Private school was not feasible and I had heard about an alternative high school that my best friend attended. It was called Burger King Academy, and the only ties we had to Burger King were that we received generous amounts of monetary funding from them.

We were still a public high school in Chesterfield County, VA. The school is now called Community High School. I actually felt free at school to learn and not be fearful of being picked on because it was simply not tolerated. Our principal was not only a leader for us but also a mentor. The teachers were able to really get to know me there because there were fewer students in my class. I had a relationship bond with them that if something was bothering me I could talk to them about it and I knew they would help me if they could. They were some of the inspirations in why I wanted to go into teaching. I still talk and visit with them today.

Benefits of School and Community Partnerships

There is research out there about the many benefits of community and school partnerships. One benefit is opportunities for students to take what they have learned in the classroom and apply it to a project that is meaningful (Bouillion and Gomez, 2001). One way this is happening is through a program called, Junior Achievement. This program pairs business professionals with students in local schools. I remember being in middle school and participating in Junior Achievement in one of my classes. Our class was broken up into groups and we were to form our own businesses. We had to come up with everything from the product to the price and everything in between.

A second benefit is students are able to build real relationships and networks to prepare them for the “real world”. Through Communities in Schools, as well as other regular high schools, students are given a chance to network with professionals in the business world through cooperative education programs. A student at a CIS school would work during the day and turn in the work to the teacher. The class would be more of an independent study course.

A third benefit is one that affects students' attendance rates. Research done by Sheldon (2007) has shown that the stronger the connection between school and community partnerships, the better school attendance is. Students test scores on achievement test went up when schools partnered with the community (Sheldon, 2003). When schools and communities partner together students graduation rates increase According to Chesterfield County Public Schools website, more than 1,000 students graduated from Chesterfield County Public Schools with the help of CIS.

“As I reflect, I keep remembering the students that could see the light at the end of the tunnel, and who could, quite often, say that they were proud of setting and reaching a goal for the first time in their lives. But they need not say it; it was always apparent in their positive attitudes, and their proud smiles.” ~ Mr. Bob Cartwright

In my personal interview with two people who worked in a Communities in Schools (CIS) High School, I asked them about the benefits of Communities in Schools (CIS). According to Coach Jamie Accashian students benefit both “financially” and through “marketable skills that would lead to direct employment” (J. Accashian, personal communication, September 22, 2008). A teacher at the night school program said, “A hand-picked, and volunteer staff that was more in tune with the needs of, and approaches to, these special situation students” (B. Cartwright, personal communication, September 30, 2008).

Conclusion

School and Community partnerships can provide students today with a better education and help with the demands put on the schools to meet expectations set by federal and state education mandates. The partnerships can provide monetary and non-monetary support. Through Communities in Schools students can have access to resources that can help them succeed in school. The benefits

of community and school partnerships are numerous. In a world that is changing every moment and with more pressure being put on teachers to make sure students meet high standards of excellence, the community can help. In my opinion all we need to do is ask.

References

Accashion, J. (n.d.) from Chesterfield Community High School website Chesterfield Community High School: Myths and Legends http://www.chesterfield.k12.va.us/Schools/Community_HS/FAQ/Misconceptions.html

B. Cartwright (personal communication, September 30, 2008) http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Foundations_of_Education_and_Instructional_Assessment/Edition_3/Foundations_Table_of_Contents/Chapter_9/9.4.2/Interviews

Bouillion, L. M., & Gomez, L. M. (2001). Connecting School and Community with Science Learning: Real World Problems and School – Community Partnerships as Contextual Scaffolds. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 38(8) 878-898.

Chesterfield County Public Schools 2008, *Communities in Schools of Chesterfield*. (n.d.) Retrieved September 19, 2008, from <http://www.chesterfield.k12.va.us/CCPS/community/community.htm>

Communities In Schools (n.d.). *Communities In Schools At A Glance/* Retrieved September 19, 2008, from <http://www.cisnet.org/member/library/resources/downloads/Communities%20In%20Schools-At-A-Glance%20Final.pdf>

J. Accashion (personal communication, September 22, 2008) http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Foundations_of_Education_and_Instructional_Assessment/Edition_3/Foundations_Table_of_Contents/Chapter_9/9.4.2/Interviews

Sanders, M. G. (2001). The Role of “Community” in Comprehensive School, Family, and Community Partnership Programs. *The Elementary School Journal*, 102(1), 19-34.

Sheldon, S. B. (2003). Linking School-Family-Community Partnerships in Urban Elementary Schools to Student Achievement on State Tests. *The Urban Review*, 35(2), 149-165.

Sheldon, S. B. (2007). Improving Student Attendance with School, Family, and Community Partnerships. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 100(5), 267-275.

Questions

1. What is not considered to be a development promoted by a school and community partnership?

- A. Cognitive
- B. Emotional
- C. Intellectual
- D. Physical

2. What is Community In School (CIS) actively trying to prevent happening to students?

- A. Absences
- B. Bullying
- C. Dropping Out
- D. Partying

3. What is one way in which you, as a teacher, can make a project meaningful?

- A. Assign the student a book and have them report on what they read.
- B. Get students involved by solving a “real-world” problem by having them participate in a clean-up project at a nearby creek.
- C. Have a party once everyone has completed the project.
- D. Have students individually work on a project and present the class.

4. What is one way in which you, as a teacher, could get the business community involved in your school?
- A. Hold Parent/Teacher conferences
 - B. Hold a Parent Teacher Association Meeting
 - C. Hold a school pep rally
 - D. Write a letter to a particular business asking for sponsorship of an enrichment program for the students

Answers

- 1. A. Cognitive
- 2. C. Dropping Out
- 3. B. Get students involved by solving a “real-world” problem by having them participate in a clean-up project at a nearby creek.
- 4. D. Write a letter to a particular business asking for sponsorship of an enrichment program for the students

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Foundations of Education and Instructional Assessment. **Authored by:** Jennifer Kidd, Jamie Kaufman, Peter Baker, Patrick O'Shea, Dwight Allen, and the students of Old Dominion University's ECI301. **Provided by:** Old Dominion University. **Located at:** https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Foundations_of_Education_and_Instructional_Assessment. **License:** [CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike](#)

This page titled [3.6: School and Community Partnerships- Communities in Schools](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

3.7: How to Develop, Expand and Maintain Professional Relationships

● Learning Objectives

1. Understand the three types of mentors to develop.
2. Learn how to find a mentor and be a good mentee.
3. Learn other relationships to cultivate outside your immediate boss and mentors.
4. Get strategies for relationship building.



Get a Mentor Who Is Not Your Boss (Get Several)

Most of you have experienced the value of mentors because you already have had someone in your life—a family member or a teacher—who has guided and supported you. While your boss can guide and support you professionally, it is ideal to get mentorship beyond your boss for several reasons:

- You want to be able to ask questions freely and share doubts and concerns. Sometimes it's perfectly fine to ask questions of your immediate boss, but sometimes you will want to test an idea or probe an issue before bringing it up to the person who decides your next project, promotion, and raise.
- You benefit from multiple perspectives. Your boss's immediate concern is the performance of his or her team and area. You want to have someone who can be a more objective outsider and is not too close to the situation.
- You establish a relationship outside your immediate area and can therefore learn more about the organization and expand your reach. It's important to know what is going on in the organization as a whole, and a mentor can provide valuable information.

Don't try to develop a mentor relationship with your boss's boss. This can be awkward because your boss might think you are trying to leapfrog or exclude him or her. In addition, you lose the ability to talk more candidly. Regardless of how objectively you try to state things, if you are raising a concern or even a question about your boss, it denigrates him or her in the eyes of the person who assigns your boss the next project, promotion, or raise.

You do not need to have just one mentor. It is unrealistic to think that one person has the time or knowledge to provide all the coaching and support you need. Consider cultivating three types of mentors:

- **Guardian angel**
- **Shepherd**
- **Board of directors**

A guardian angel is what most people think of when they hear the word, "mentor." A guardian angel is your supporter and protector. Typically, a guardian angel is two or more levels above you to have the credibility and experience to help you. Your

guardian angel looks out for plum assignments that might be beneficial to your career. Your guardian angel is experienced in how to be successful at the organization and can advise you on pitfalls to avoid or opportunities to take advantage of. If you have questions about troubleshooting a sticky office situation, your guardian angel will be able to help. For our new teacher in the earlier example, his guardian angel might be a senior teacher or even administrator. This person might propose learning tools or conferences the new teacher could use or attend. This guardian angel also might suggest the new teacher for a committee or other special assignment to raise his profile at the school.

A shepherd is typically not much more senior and may even be more junior to you. A shepherd knows the ins and outs of the organization and can guide you. We all know someone who is the social epicenter of a particular group. For your professional workplace, that is a shepherd who can help shortcut your learning curve. The shepherd knows who is influential, who might be trouble, and who is the best person to talk to for a variety of requests. The shepherd would be a good person with whom to brainstorm about possible other mentors. For our new teacher in the earlier example, his shepherd might be another teacher at the school, who doesn't need to be of a similar subject or grade, but someone more connected to the culture of the school and who can share the inside scoop.

A board of directors for a company (or **board of trustees** for a nonprofit) is typically composed of people with different backgrounds and expertise—finance, legal, human resources (HR), operations, marketing, and so forth. The board provides a resource for advice and counsel to the company or nonprofit in a variety of areas. Similarly, you will need advice and counsel on a variety of areas—career advancement, communication and presentation, work and life balance, career change, and so forth. No one person will be an expert in all issues. Instead of relying on one person, it would be helpful to cultivate a board of directors, each with a specific area of expertise important to you. It is ideal to have mentors both inside and outside your organization and even industry. This way, you have a diversity of perspectives. The new teacher might get mentorship from another teacher of a similar subject or grade to provide pedagogical advice. If he has an interest in using more multimedia or innovative teaching approaches, he might ask for guidance from a teacher outside his subject area who knows a lot about audiovisual technology. Even a school operations staff member might be a member of this teacher's "board" to inform him how the school functions.

To Attract Good Mentors, Be a Good Mentee

Mentorships are close relationships, so it is ideal when they develop naturally. Sometimes, organizations have formal mentor programs, and these are great resources for meeting people and sometimes for establishing mentorships. But don't rely on a formal mentor program because your employer might not have one or the match you get may not be ideal. Instead, be proactive and use the following tips to help you seek your own mentors:

- Think about what you need and want in your mentors.
- Meet with different people who may fit your ideal to see if a relationship develops.
- Try to expand the relationship to meet more frequently or discuss things more deeply.
- Be responsive and helpful to your mentors.

When you are just starting in an organization, find a shepherd to give you a lay of the land. You need to get acclimated to your new environment. Then think about your goals for next year, two years out, and so forth, and think about what you need to know or what skills you need to develop. This gives you an indication of where you may benefit from mentorship.

Identify people in whom you are genuinely interested who might be able to provide advice and counsel toward your goals. Meet with them for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. If you can work on a project with them, that is another way to start a relationship. You should not automatically assume someone will agree to mentor you or would even be a good mentor. Right now, you just want to see who you enjoy being with and who can also provide the mentorship you seek.

For those people who might be possible mentors to you, you do not need to ask them as formally as you would a marriage proposal—that is, no bended knee before saying, "Will you mentor me?" Instead, let them know that their advice and insights in past conversations have been helpful and ask if you can reach out to them on a more regular basis to continue the conversations. Sometimes people will say they don't have the time to commit to something regularly, but sometimes people will be flattered and enthusiastic. You will need to meet with many people before finding the right mentors, so don't be concerned if your first efforts are not fruitful. At the very least, you are meeting people and practicing networking and relationship building.

When you do secure a mentor, you want to be a good mentee. Mentorship is a relationship, so you are equally responsible for its success. You are initiating the relationship, so be mindful of how the mentor likes to communicate and at what frequency. Is it better for him or her to meet at breakfast or after work, rather than during the day? Does your mentor want to have a sit-down meeting with an agenda or a quick conversation when you both have the time? Be proactive about scheduling the meetings so that the mentor isn't doing the work to maintain the relationship.

Get to know your mentor as a whole person. Find ways to be helpful to him or her. Many mentors enter these relationships because they want to give back. At the very least, let your mentor know about the impact he or she is making by providing results updates—what happened when you took the advice they gave? If you know your mentor has a specific hobby or interest, find a helpful article or recommendation to support that interest.

Remember that your needs and your mentor's availability change over time. Mentorships evolve, so if you find that you have less to discuss and the relationship has run its course, schedule less frequent meetings. Turn the mentorship into a friendship, and steer the discussions more personally or outside the question-advice format. Treat your mentorships like two-way relationships with give and take.

Develop Professional Relationships with Different Companies, Departments, and Levels

A strong professional network is not just about mentorships. You also have colleagues who provide emotional support and more direct support, perhaps, on joint projects. You may be in a role that has customers. You may be working with consultants or vendors. Your job may require you to partner with other organizations. For your own knowledge and expertise, it is helpful to know about organizations and people outside your own employer. Organizations evolve over time, so it is helpful to know people at all levels—your peer could become your manager, or you may be asked to lead a team composed of peers.

Knowing people in different departments, at all levels, both inside and outside your employer, ensures that you have a diversity in perspectives about your role, your organization, and your industry. You may have a very specific role right now, but as your responsibilities expand, you will likely have to work with more and more people. It is helpful to establish relationships before you are forced to work together.

Our new teacher would want to know people in his school but also in other schools. If he teaches in a public school, it would be helpful to know people in independent, charter, and other schools. People in the school's administrative department or other school governing body would also be helpful contacts. Academics and experts in education, donors and supporters of education organizations, and parent organizers are other potential contacts for a teacher.

Be Proactive in Your Outreach, Communication, and Follow-Up

You need to be thoughtful and proactive about relationship-building to have quality relationships with mentors, colleagues in different departments, colleagues at different levels, and people outside your employer:

- Set aside specific time to expand your professional network.
- Work on your communication skills and style.
- Follow up over time to ensure relationships develop naturally and are not rushed.

People are busy, and you are busy. If you wait for an opportune time to start building your network, you will not find one. There is no urgency to day-to-day networking, so it will be set aside for a later time that never comes. Instead, schedule a few hours each week with the goal of expanding your professional network. You might set aside one lunch hour per week to eat with a different colleague. You might join a professional association and attend their meetings and mixers. One new teacher volunteered to be her school's union representative. She wanted to learn about the union, and though she was new, she was the only one who volunteered, so it was great exposure in her very first year. You might play on your employer's softball league. You might volunteer to organize the office holiday party. Many opportunities exist to meet a diverse mix of professionals both inside and outside your employer, but you have to consciously set aside the time to do this.

Are you comfortable introducing yourself to people and telling them what you do? Networking is one of the six job search steps, so you probably have worked on your networking pitch to get a job, but in the daily work context, your pitch is about what you do now. Plan and practice what you will say.

If the thought of joining a professional association and going to meetings makes you uncomfortable, consider joining with a more extroverted buddy. The softball league or a volunteer committee might provide a structured outlet for your networking. Find a colleague who isn't shy and ask them to introduce you to people. People are often very happy to help and may not realize you are shy. Let your boss know that you are trying to meet people, and ask him or her to introduce you to people.

Once you meet people, make time to maintain and expand relationships over time. It is impossible to schedule regular live contact with everyone in your professional network—colleagues, customers, vendors, management, former colleagues (as you progress in your career), and people in your related function or industry. However, you can keep in touch with phone calls and e-mails. The same spirit of generosity applies as you expand and deepen relationships—maintain contact without asking for anything in return.

Key Takeaways

- Mentors are an important part of your professional network to provide advice and a sounding board for ideas and concerns.
- Do not use your boss or your boss's boss as your mentor, so you can candidly speak about your issues and get an objective, outside perspective.
- Several types of mentors are available: guardian angel, shepherd, and board of directors. Ideally, you have several mentors.
- You develop strong mentorships naturally by meeting with people and letting relationships grow. Be a good mentee by being proactive and flexible about scheduling, and by being responsive to your mentor's needs.
- In addition to mentors, you want to develop relationships with people at all levels, in different departments, and inside and outside your company.
- Build relationships proactively by setting aside time to meet people and practicing how you will introduce yourself.

Exercises

1. Do you currently have mentors in your life? Pick one area of your life that you wish to improve, and try to find a mentor for that area.
2. Think about your one-year, two-year, and longer-term goals. What areas do you already know would benefit from some mentoring? Think about who might be ideal mentors for those areas. Can you start meeting these people now? Remember that you want to have mentors both inside and outside your employer, so you can start even before you are hired.
3. Look at the suggestions for building your professional network and decide which ones appeal to you. If the idea of a membership group appeals to you, can you join something now? Professional associations often have student chapters or other groups for people new to the career.

This page titled [3.7: How to Develop, Expand and Maintain Professional Relationships](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

3.8: Remaining Professional When You're Frustrated

Learning Objectives

- Discuss ways to remain professional when you are feeling frustrated with others or a situation.

Behaving in a professional manner is a key to success in the workplace. Maintaining that demeanor, even in stressful times, can be a challenge. What does it mean to be “professional” at work? The definition varies, but usually includes possessing knowledge and expertise, being in a positive mood, meeting your obligations accurately and on time, respecting all with whom you interact, using proper language, operating ethically, having social and emotional intelligence and maintaining an appropriate appearance. Other terms describing professional conduct in the workplace are soft skills, protocol, business etiquette and polish.

Here is a video with some good advice on professional work characteristics:

A link to an interactive elements can be found at the bottom of this page.

At one point or another, we have all been subjected to negative circumstances and situations in the workplace that can test the patience of even the most professional of us. We are human beings. Our professional demeanor can temporarily be dented—engaging fight or flight mode, berating yourself, and lacking clear thinking can occur. The key is to rely on our emotional intelligence to gauge our thoughts and actions during these trying times.

Here are some techniques that can help you deal with emotional reactions to negative situations at work.

1. Acceptance. It is normal to get mad when things go awry. Our brains are hard-wired to react in certain ways. It is best to step back and acknowledge that your emotions are normal so that you can move on to problem solving.
2. Displacement. While you are experiencing a range of emotions that you may not initially control, it may be best for a change of scenery. Get up from your desk, walk out of your office and take some deep breaths outside. Imagine how you would like to see yourself react while you calm down.
3. Articulation. Once you have spent some time thinking things through, it may be time to talk it out with the source of the issue. Remember your basic communication skills: Remember who you are communicating with and what will be effective in reaching them with your point.
4. Improvement. After recognizing and dealing with your feelings, it is time to understand the true source of the issue so it can be solved going forward. So you were called out on some errors made in your analysis, but you know that you were not given adequate notice to properly prepare the report and double-check it. Address this with your manager and request an appropriate process in the future to allow for more careful work.^[1]

Practice Questions

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/8675>

1. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/melodywilding/2016/06/01/5-ways-to-stay-cool-when-work-is-making-you-angry/#3520ef557865>
↩

Contributors and Attributions

CC licensed content, Original

- Remaining Professional When You're Frustrated. **Authored by:** Robert Danielson. **Provided by:** Lumen Learning. **License:** [CC BY: Attribution](#)

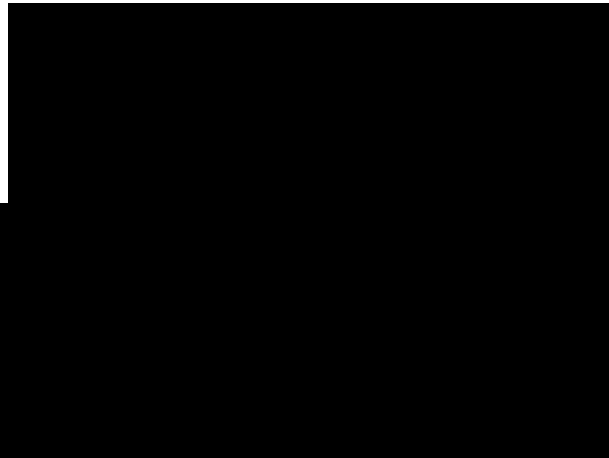
All rights reserved content

- 6 Traits of a True Professional. **Authored by:** MindToolsVideos. **Located at:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vFdQY1qSiM>. **License:** *All Rights Reserved*. **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License

This page titled [3.8: Remaining Professional When You're Frustrated](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

3.9: Assessments

True Colors Assessment



(True Colors PPT, True Colors, Worksheet)

Work Style Test: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/tests/career/work-style-test>

Interpersonal Skills Test: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/tests/relationships/interpersonal-communications-skills-test>

Organization Skills Test:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/tests/career/organization-skills-test-version-workers-students>

This page titled 3.9: Assessments is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

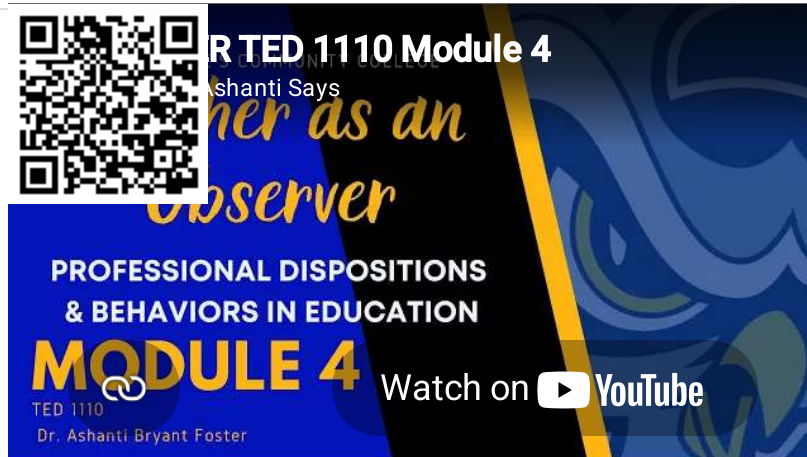
CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Teacher as an Observer

- 4.1: Teacher as an Observer
- 4.2: Why We Observe
- 4.3: Becoming a Skilled Observer
- 4.4: Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques
- 4.5: The Role of Observation
- 4.6: Early Childhood Observation
- 4.7: Observation Environments
- 4.8: Teachers' observation, questioning, and record keeping
- 4.9: Questions to Plan for the Next Observation

This page titled [4: Teacher as an Observer](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

4.1: Teacher as an Observer



This page titled [4.1: Teacher as an Observer](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

4.2: Why We Observe

Why?

There are important reasons why caregivers observe infants and toddlers.

The most common purposes behind caregiver observation include to:

- Learn about children to individualize care and the curriculum, including interactions, teaching practices, learning experiences, routines, and schedules
- To measure and track children's progress in acquiring skills and concepts over time as part of the ongoing assessment cycle.

When caregivers are intentional about observing children, they can better understand how young children think, feel, and learn about the world around them. In turn, these understandings aid caregivers in making decisions about providing responsive and informed care.

Respectful observation reflects a belief that young children's behaviors have purpose and meaning and are worth attending to. The crucial part of observation involves a great deal of thinking beforehand (Cagliari, 2004). Caregivers who believe young children have goals and intentions ask themselves essential questions:

- Why does this child do what he does?
- What is he trying to communicate or accomplish?
- How should I respond to support this child?
- What could I do to support them?"[1]

Observation becomes one tool in seeking answers to these questions. It provides opportunities to engage in a "pedagogy of listening" (Cagliari, 2004). We often silo contexts for observation by separating our observation time into two distinct categories: observation of what the child is doing now and observation to reflect on later. But a caregiver is a "participating observer" (Cagliari, 2004). As the children actively build knowledge, caregivers watch and listen, and while observing, the caregiver can find "strategies that will consequently guide the activities onward" (Cagliari, 2004). Observing from a respectful point of view helps us make essential discoveries about children, such as what they are like as individuals, how they react to other children and adults, what tasks are easy or hard for them, and how they convey their wants and needs (Dichtelmiller and Ensler, 2004). These discoveries allow caregivers to be responsive to each child's interests and needs.[2]

Observations are conducted every day in early childhood classroom environments. Caregivers are constantly surveying the environment. Forms of intentional observations are: completing safety checks to ensure the equipment and materials are safe for the children to use and daily health screenings to ensure children are healthy enough to participate in activities. Intentional caregivers use their observations to plan and implement curriculum, set up engaging learning environments, monitor the children's social interactions, track behaviors, communicate with families, and assess each child's progress and development. Through purposeful and planned observations, intentional caregivers can:

- Evaluate program and caregiver effectiveness
- Make improvements to ensure quality practices
- Plan and implement developmentally appropriate curriculum
- Measure and assess a child's development
- Develop respectful family partnerships
- Understand cultural practices
- Choose learning strategies to support and accommodate the diverse needs of children
- Ensure ethical conduct and professional standards of practice.[3]

[1] U.S Department of Health and Human Services ECLKC [Look at Me! Using Focused Child Observation with Infants and Toddlers](#) is in the public domain.

[2] U.S Department of Health and Human Services ECLKC [Child observation: The heart of individualizing responsive care for infants and toddlers](#) is in the public domain

[3] Peterson, G., & Elam, E. (2021). [Observation and Documentation - The Key to Intentional Teaching](#). In *Observation and Assessment in Early Childhood Education* is licensed under CC BY.

This page titled [29.2: Why we Observe](#) is shared under a [mixed 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Amanda Taintor](#).

1.

This page titled [4.2: Why We Observe](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

4.3: Becoming a Skilled Observer

To truly observe a child, you must be present, knowledgeable, inquisitive and intentional. With every observation, you will sharpen your skills as you learn how to effectively gather objective evidence and detailed data.

Be present: To capture all the individual mannerisms, subtle social nuances, non-verbal body language and dynamic conversations that occur throughout the day you must be attentive, focused and ready to go at any given moment. Children move fast. When we blink, we are bound to miss some little detail or precious moment, that's a given. Being present takes considerable effort and careful planning.

Be knowledgeable: Understanding the core concepts of early childhood education is extremely important if you are to set reasonable expectations and plan developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Familiarizing yourself with child development theories will help you understand and appreciate why children do what they do. Learning about the key principles in early care and education will provide you with a solid foundation and a wide range of instructional strategies to support a child's development.

Be inquisitive: Think of yourself as a researcher. Your primary mission is to investigate the children in your care by routinely gathering evidence, using a variety of observation methods and tools. As a good researcher you will need to ask some thoughtful questions. These questions will guide you as you plan purposeful observations and as you select your method of observation. Here are some sample questions you may ask yourself: What activities interest Max? How many times did Stevie hit today? What skills did Hazel master today with this activity, and what skills need further support? How long did Zoey stay engaged while playing in the sandbox? What milestones will this activity support? By asking thoughtful questions, you will learn more about the children in your care and you will do a better job at supporting each child's individual needs. Rather than fixating on a child's behavior, in time you will begin using focused observations to try and figure out the reasons why a child acts the way they do.

Be intentional: As you organize learning experiences, set up the classroom and outside environment, assess children's developmental progress, engage in activities, and interact with your children and families – you must have a thoughtful plan of action in place. “Intentional teaching means that everything you do as a teacher has a specific goal and purpose” (Gordon & Browne, 2016 p. 103). Even as spontaneous situations arise, intentional teachers must make the most of teachable moments. Intentional teachers conduct regular observations and gather objective documentation data to be accountable for the actions they take, the plans they generate and the assessments they make.

This page titled [1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer](#) is shared under a [CC BY](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Gina Peterson and Emily Elam](#).

This page titled [4.3: Becoming a Skilled Observer](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

4.4: Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques

No single observation can give you all the information you will need about a child's development. In order to truly understand a child's unique attributes, preferences, personality and strengths, you must observe them consistently, using several documentation tools and techniques. Each observation method has strengths and limitations. In this section, we will review some of the more commonly used techniques and tools that teachers use to gather objective observation evidence: Running Record; Checklists; Frequency Count; Anecdotal Record; Work Sample; Learning Story; and Technology.



Figure 3.4.13.4.1: Notetaking is one of the oldest forms of recording observations. (Public Domain; [Glenn Carstens-Peters](#) from [Unsplash](#))

Running Record

One of the oldest observation methods used in early child education is the Running Record. Running Records are considered by some as an “informal method” of observation as compared to Narrative Description or Specimen Records which are considered to be a more “formal method” of collecting data. The primary difference between the two methods is that with a Running Record, evidence is gathered in a more spontaneous (informal) manner as it occurs, whereas with a Narrative Description a (formal) plan would be arranged in advance, prior to the observation. More specifically, you would schedule a day, time and setting, you would select a specific child or group of children, and you would decide on the purpose, reason or focus of your observation (e.g. cognitive skills, social interactions, play patterns). Both methods provide rich, detailed evidence and both methods provide written accounts of everything you see and hear a child doing during a specific timeframe (Bentzen, 2009).

For the purpose of this text, we will use the term Running Record and recommend that you, as an intentional teacher, conduct Running Records (whether spontaneous or planned, informal or formal) as part of your regular or routine observations. The primary goal for using a Running Record is to “obtain a detailed, objective account of behavior without inference, interpretations, or evaluations” (Bentzen, 2009, p.112). You will know you have gathered good evidence when you can close your eyes and you can “see” the images in your mind as they are described in your Running Record (Bentzen, 2009).

Collecting Your Data

All you need is time, paper and a pen to gather your observation evidence. The goal with a running record is to write down everything you see and hear - exactly as it occurs, without adding any comments or attaching any opinions. As the saying goes, “just the facts, ma’am!” With the Running Record format, not only will you highlight children’s behaviors, you will record the “setting, situation and sequence” in which the behavior occurred. Be as descriptive as possible and yet be as concise as possible. Children move quickly, so you must write quickly. When conducting a running record, you need to be out of ratio. You are to step back and observe from a distance. Do not interfere with the child’s natural play, do not ask questions and do not run after them. Be as invisible as possible.

Organizing your Data

As you collect rich, detailed data throughout the school year, you will begin to recognize patterns of development, and you will see each child’s unique attributes, personalities, and abilities as they emerge. Be sure to date all your running records; having 12-24 children in your classroom can add up to a lot of running records. You will need to store your running records safely in a portfolio or file folder. When it comes time to assess a child’s development, you will be able to look back and review all the evidence you have collected and to monitor the child’s progress over time.

Note: A Running Record is an ideal observation method for “students”. Teachers may not always have the time or staff coverage to conduct a Running Record.

Table 3.4.13.4.1: Running Record

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Provides detailed data about the who, what, where, and when 2. Evidence is documented as it occurs, in a sequence 3. Provides objective and descriptive evidence 4. Appropriate for gathering baseline information about the child's interests, abilities and skill level 5. Ideal for tracking a child's development over time 6. Less structured, more free flowing 7. Evidence can be gathered formally or informally 8. Interpretations and reflections can be added later	1. Time consuming 2. May be difficult to keep up and follow along as children move quickly from one activity to another 3. Not a practical technique for teachers who are in ratio 4. Behaviors may not be typical for that observation day as compared to other days

Let's Practice Gathering Evidence

Example 1:

Running Record: On 7/2/2019, Jorge played in the sandbox for 20 minutes.

What did you "see" with this example? What was the setting, situation and sequence of events?

What did you learn about Jorge?

Was the evidence objective? Was the evidence descriptive?

Let's try again.

Example 2:

Running Record: 7/2/2019. Time: 10:10am

During outside play and exploration, the following activities were available: bikes, sandbox, sensory table with goop, hula hoops, balls and a reading area with a basket of books. Jorge played in the sandbox for 20 minutes. With his left hand, Jorge dug a hole using a shovel. Jorge asked Julissa if he could have the dinosaur, "When you are finished, can I have the dinosaur for my cave?" Julissa handed Jorge the dinosaur and said, "Can I see?" Jorge nodded his head up and down.

At 10:30am, the teacher announced that it was time to clean up. Jorge stood up, dropped his shovel, ran over to the door and got in line. While in line, Jorge waved his hands and said "Come on Max. Come on. Here. Come here." Max ran over and stood next to Jorge in line.

What did you "see" with this example? What was the setting, situation, and sequence of events?

What did you learn about Jorge?

Was the evidence objective? Was the evidence descriptive? ^[22]

Running Record Template #1

Date:

Start Time:

End Time:

Setting:

Activity Area:

Who did you observe:

Running Record

Running Record Template #2

Date:

Start Time:

End Time:

Setting:

Activity Area:

Who did you observe:

Running Record	Interpretation



Figure 3.4.23.4.2: When is a frequency count used? Whenever you need to tally and record how many times a behavior is occurring. ^[23]

Frequency Counts (Time or Event Sampling)

A Frequency Count is an informal observation method that is used to gather information about a child's interests, social interactions, play patterns, and temperamental traits. As the teacher observes the children at play, a tally mark is made every time the noted behavior or action occurs within a set timeframe. Frequency Counts are also used to track undesirable or challenging behaviors, as well as ideal or positive behaviors.

Collecting your data

To create a Frequency Count, you must first decide on what social interactions, behaviors, interest areas, or types of play you want to monitor. You may decide to track your child during one focused activity or timeframe, or you may map out what a typical day might look like for your child and track all the interactions and experiences they engage in throughout the day. Either way, as you observe your child, you will make a tally mark every time they play in a specified area or display one of the action items as listed on your Frequency Count.

Here are some examples of how you might use a Frequency Count to gather data:

1. Sue has been hitting a lot lately and displaying other challenging behaviors . You will want to track how many times she hits in a typical day, along with any other challenging behaviors. You will also want to track where the incidents are occurring – are there more incidents while inside the classroom or are things happening during outside play? You will want to look at when the incidents are occurring most often– are there more incidents earlier in the day or later in the day? You may want to observe what is happening at drop-off time, mealtime and at naptime. Lastly, you may want to track who Sue is socializing with and how she plays with others. Does Sue display a consistent play pattern (parallel play, cooperative play, onlooker play)?
2. Thomas is a new student and his mother wants to know how he is doing. You may want to observe which centers Thomas goes to most often throughout the day and track his interests. You may also want to track whether he plays alone or with other children.
3. You and a child in your class are constantly butting heads . How can you create a supportive environment and provide a “goodness of fit?” You may need to track the child's temperamental traits and observe how the child approaches activities and how they respond to social situations.

Organizing Your Data

After you have collected all the data for that timeframe, count the tally marks. What can you interpret from this data? What areas or action items received a high number of tally marks? What areas or action items received a low number of tally marks? Do you see any patterns? As you consider those questions, reflect on a plan of action that you might use to further support that child's development.

Table 3.4.23.4.2: Advantages and Disadvantages of Frequency Data

Advantages

1. Quick and easy to use, and no training is required
2. Can be personalized or designed to gather specific baseline data (play patterns, challenging behaviors, social situations, temperamental traits)
3. Provides immediate quantifiable data
4. Ideal for tracking behaviors over time and for noting an increase or decrease of incidents
5. Can be useful when planning behavior modification strategies
6. Data can be graphed or charted to find consistent patterns

Disadvantages

1. Does not provide rich details or context like anecdotal notes or running records
2. There is no clear sequence of events regarding certain actions or behaviors
3. (Although the behavior is tracked, information about the antecedent and the consequence is missing)
4. Does not provide qualitative evidence
5. Results may be misleading

Frequency Count to Track Areas and Interests

Child's Name:				
Observation Date:	INDOOR CYCLE		OUTDOOR CYCLE	
	Start Time:	End Time:	Start Time:	End Time:
Areas and Interests	Tally Marks	Total	Tally Marks	Total
Art				
Blocks / Legos				
Library / Reading				
Dramatic Play				
Math				
Writing / Journaling				
Science / Nature				
Sensory				
Quiet Corner				
Computer Lab				
Music / Movement				
Climbing Structure				
Bikes				
Organized Games				
Super-Hero Play				
Rough and Tumble				
Running / Chasing				

Frequency Count to Track Play Patterns and Social Interactions				
Observation Date:	INDOOR CYCLE		OUTDOOR CYCLE	
	Start Time: End Time:		Start Time: End Time:	
Play Patterns and Social Interactions	Tally Marks	Total	Tally Marks	Total
Solitary Play: Plays alone – does not seek out peer social interactions				
Parallel Play: Plays next to someone, using similar materials but did not directly interact				
Associative Play: Shares materials and talks to others while engaged in an activity				
Cooperative Play: Plays with peers in an organized manner with rules, taking turns				
Peer Interactions: Plays with Boys				
Peer Interactions: Plays with Girls				
Interactions with Teacher: Talks to teacher / shares ideas / asks for help				
Bystander: Is yelled at, hit or involved in an altercation / incident				
Instigates / Initiates Disputes: Hits, takes toys, yells at peers, causes an altercation / incident				
Problem solves: Communicated and resolved disputes without teachers help				
Teacher Interactions: Teacher needed to help resolve peer disputes / altercations				

Frequency Count to Track Temperament and Behavior				
Observation Date	INDOOR CYCLE		OUTDOOR CYCLE	
	Start Time End Time		Start Time End Time	
Temperament Traits and Behavior	Tally Marks	Total	Tally Marks	Total
Appears Highly Active – Rarely sits still, moves around, fidgets A LOT, races through activities				
Appears Easily Distracted Changes activities before finishing task / looks around a lot				
Appears Focused Completes tasks before moving on to the next task / can tune others out				
Reacts Intensely Has high emotional energy when reacting to others – yells/cries				
Remains Calm Able to transitions and go with the flow/does not react to altercations				
Appears Sensitive Squirms when touched, holds ears, squints, doesn't seem to like to touch certain textures				
Appears Cautious Hesitates or needs time to warm up to people and activities before joining in				
Appears to be in a good mood Smiles/ laughs often, cooperates with others and seems pleasant				
Appears Moody Has difficulty making transitions, displays highs and lows, rarely smiles when interacting with others				

Checklists

Checklists are an efficient and practical way to collect information about a child's development. Checklists are based on "developmental norms" as determined by developmental theorists. With each age range, there are certain expectations and skills that a child should be able to achieve. Checklists are designed to track a child's competencies in all the developmental domains including physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional. With a checklist, teachers can easily see what a child can do, as well as note what areas of development need further support. Teachers can create their own checklists based on certain skill sets, or they can download a formal developmental milestone checklist from a reputable source to look at a child's full range of development. Checklists can be used to track a large group of children or an individual child.

Collecting your data

Whether you design your own checklist or download one, use it regularly to collect data. The checklist can be utilized in two ways:

1. You can observe a child on a specific day while they are engaged in an activity (either child-directed or teacher-directed). As you observe, you will check off the skills or milestones that the child can do on that day, at that moment.
2. You can also review data from other observations (e.g. running records or anecdotal notes, work samples) that you collected, and ADD any other skills or milestones that were mastered during those previous observations.

*Note: It is vital that you note the dates that you observed the skills being mastered. A check mark alone will limit the reliability and validity

Organizing your data

Schedule a day and time to regularly review your observation data. Data collected from other observations (mastered milestones and developing skill sets) can be added to the checklist so you can clearly see a child's progress over time. You may use colored pens to track all the different dates that milestones were achieved. As you review the checklist, what can you interpret from this

data? Does the child demonstrate strengths in any of the developmental domains or areas of learning? Which milestones and skills need further support? As you consider those questions, reflect on a plan of action that you might use to further support that child's development. How can you provide opportunities for the child to gain more practice? What adjustments need to be made to make the activity more challenging? What extensions can be added to continue the learning pattern? ^[24]

Table 3.4.33.4.3: Advantages and Disadvantages of Checklists

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Ideal for tracking a child's progress over time 2. Different observers (the teacher, assistant or a support team) can check off skills that they observe the child doing 3. Checklists can be created to measure specific areas of development, or a subset of developmental skills 4. Checklists can be used to observe a group of children or an individual child 5. Checklists are quick and easy to use, and no training is required 6. Checklists can be used in conjunction with other observations 7. Checklists highlight the developmental strengths a child has mastered, as well as those skills that need further support 8. Developmental Milestone Checklists are readily available online through various agencies (i.e. Center for Disease Control) 9. Data can help plan curriculum activities	1. Checklists do not provide rich details or context like anecdotal notes or running records 2. There is no clear sequence of events to regarding certain actions or behaviors 3. Checklists focus on developmental norms and typical development with no regard for environment, family influences, cultural influences and individual development 4. Teachers tend to focus on the skills and milestones that haven't been mastered, focusing on the deficits rather than highlighting the strengths. This can make the child and parents feel as if they have failed or add unnecessary stress 5. Checklists must be updated regularly using other observation methods

Checklist for Physical Milestone

Perceptual Movement

Skills	Can Do	Needs Further Support	Date and Evidence
Moves in a zig-zag pattern – able to change directions with ease			
Plays follow the leaders and mirrors others movements			
Moves body to music cues			
Speeds up and slows down while running or riding bike			

Gross Motor Movement

Skills	Can Do	Needs Further Support	Date and Evidence
Completes tasks on an obstacle course			
Changes directions and stops quickly while running			
Pumps legs on a swing			
Runs and uses arm and legs in opposition			
Climbs			
Walks up and down stairs with one foot on each stair step			
Hops on one foot			
Kicks balls			
Catches and throws (bean bags and balls)			
Pedals a 3-wheeled bike (tricycle)			
Bounces a ball several times			
Walks along a balance beam			
Jumps up and down, jumps forward using arms			

Fine Motor Movement

Skills	Can Do	Needs Further Support	Date and Evidence
Cuts with scissors			
Uses writing utensils (markers, crayons, pencils) to scribble			
Prints letters, numbers			
Uses stamps and stamp pad			
Strings beads			
Pours liquid into cup			
Manipulates, moves and picks up small objects			
Uses utensils to feed self			
Buttons and zips			
Peels a banana or orange			
Opens and closes a Ziploc baggie			
Scoops and pours materials (sand, dirt, rocks, beads)			

Anecdotal Records

An Anecdotal Record is “an informal observation method often used by teachers as an aid to understanding the child’s personality or behavior. It provides a running account of behavior that is either typical or unusual for the child” (Bentzen, 2009, p. 178). Anecdotal Records, also referred to as “anecdotal notes,” are direct observations of a child that offer a window of opportunity to see into a child’s actions, interactions and reactions to people and events. An Anecdotal Record is an excellent tool that provides teachers with a collection of narratives that can be used to showcase a child’s progress over time. As compared to a Running Record, Anecdotal Records provide brief notes that are focused on a specific event or activity.

Collecting Your Data

To gather effective observation evidence, you need to include the following components:

1. Accurate and specific details of the event (vivid descriptions exactly as you see and hear them happening - do not summarize, assume or make judgments)
2. The context, setting and situation that surrounds the event (the where, when, who, what, and how)
3. Objective facts about the child’s behavior and interactions (report actions and conversations)
4. Write records in the past tense

Here are some examples of observation evidence you might want to gather:

- Social interactions with peers
- Everyday routines, like mealtime and transition times
- How they utilize materials at the various centers (library, block, math, science, art, music)
- How they engage in teacher-directed activities (structured learning opportunities)
- How they engage in child-directed activities (open exploration opportunities)
- How they are inside and how they are outside

Organizing your Data

Once you have completed the Anecdotal Record you will take a moment to interpret the data. You will look for patterns and you will note whether the data reflects typical or unusual behavior for the child. To measure a child's developmental progress, you will look for their strengths (skills and milestones that have been mastered) and their needs (skills and milestones that the child needs further support with). The summary notes help you to clarify instructional recommendations (adjustments that you will make to the environment to accommodate the child's individual learning style). The notes you take can help you generate developmentally appropriate lesson plan activities and interactions. All Anecdotal Records need to be dated and stored safely in the child's portfolio or file folder.

Table 3.4.43.4.4: Advantages and Disadvantages of Anecdotal Record

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Provides vivid details about the who, what, when, where and how 2. Takes less time to write up an observation as compared to using Running Records 3. Evidence is documented as it occurs, in a sequence 4. Provides objective and descriptive evidence 5. Interpretation notes can be added afterwards 6. Evidence can be gathered formally (planned) or informally (spontaneously) 7. No special training is required 8. Provides qualitative data over time and is helpful in tracking changes in a child's development over time	1. Data can be tainted if it is not written in the moment 2. Focuses on one event, situation or behavior at a time and can miss or overlook important information 3. Does not provide quantitative data results 4. 4. May not always report a child's typical pattern of development or behavior



Pin It! Writing an Anecdotal Note

Watch this video to learn [how to write an anecdotal note](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GsXvbflrLu4&t=92s) :

Watch this video to learn [how to use an anecdotal note](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAczTiO1rUg&t=3s) :

Anecdotal Note Template			
*As you gather evidence, focus on 1 specific activity. Record what you see and hear. NO INTERPRETING!			
Child (Children):			
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:	
Setting: Inside / Outside		Center or Exploration Area:	
Activity:			
Materials Used:			
Open-Ended Directed	Product	Teacher-Directed	Child-
What do you see and hear:			



Figure 3.4.33.4.3: A Child's Masterpiece.

Work Samples

Teachers have been collecting pieces of children's artwork and posting them on the classroom walls forever. Not only do the children enjoy seeing their work of art on display, parents appreciate seeing their child's work as well! To create an official work sample however takes more effort than hanging a picture on the wall. What exactly is a work sample? A work sample is a tangible piece of evidence that showcases a child's effort, progress and achievement. More specifically, not only does a work sample highlight the final product, it can highlight the process as well, by highlighting the child's problem-solving efforts, experimentation methods or collaboration skills. Work samples are authentic artifacts that provide information about the child's learning experience.

Collecting your data

Work samples can be gathered throughout the school year. Typically, you would collect a variety of samples that highlight the child's overall development in each of the developmental areas: Physical; Cognitive; Language; Social -Emotional. More specifically, you might include a child's drawing or painting, a writing sample from their journal, a cutting sample, or photographs of the child engaged in activities such as building a block tower or sandcastle or riding a bike.

Organizing your data

Whether you post a work sample on the classroom wall (using a documentation board) or you collect a sample for a child's portfolio, you must add documentation. Not only will documentation help families recognize the value of play, it reinforces the concept that every activity is an opportunity to learn. For accuracy, be sure to include the following information: Child's Name; Date; Setting; and an Anecdotal Note with a description about how and why the sample was collected. Work samples should be organized in a chronological manner to showcase progress over time. Be sure to store work samples in a safe place like a file-folder or portfolio, or electronically in a computer file.

Table 3.4.53.4.5: Advantages and Disadvantages of Work Samples

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Provides tangible/ visible evidence that teachers can use to track a child's learning, growth and development over time 2. Parents and children both enjoy seeing the work on display 3. Provides authentic documentation which is ideal for assessment 4. Teachers can use information to plan and adjust curriculum to help children achieve their learning goals 5. Families can see how children learn through play 6. Children can share their insights as to how they created the work sample and offer their perspectives as to what they were thinking (authentic evidence) 7. Children enjoy seeing their work on display and they can feel empowered when their work is valued	1. Can be time consuming adding anecdotal documentation and creating documentation boards 2. Requires ample storage space 3. Requires a financial investment in technology (camera, video or audio recorder) 4. Concerns over confidentiality and privacy when using photos, audio or videos

Work Sample Template

(insert a photo of the work sample)	
Child:	
Date:	Time:
Setting: Indoor or Outdoor	Center or Play Area:
Activity:	
What activity choices were available that day:	
Anecdotal Notes: (objective facts, vivid and descriptive details, concise observation information)	
Developmental Milestones that were supported:	
1. 2. 3.	
Quotes / Child's Perspective	

Learning Stories

In an article published in NAEYC's Teaching Young Children, Judy Pack shares her thoughts on Learning Stories, "I like to think of it as observing small moments that provide big opportunities." ^[26]

As compared to Running Records or Anecdotal Notes, a Learning Story is an observation method that is written in a narrative story format to highlight a child's learning. The Learning Story communicates more than facts about how a child approaches or accomplishes tasks, it spotlights key moments in a child's day and focuses on their strengths. When writing a Learning Story, a teacher not only writes down what she saw and heard, she can also write down what she thought about while she watched the child play. More than that, this method encourages the child and their families to be active participants in the reflective process. When the teacher shares the Learning Story with both the child and family members, they can add their comments, ask follow-up questions and make suggestions on how to move forward based on what was reported in the Learning Story. One unique aspect of Learning Stories is that when used regularly, they can help teachers connect to families and build strong, respectful relationships. ^[27]

Gathering your data

Whether you plan an observation, or you spontaneously watch a child as they play, and whether you observe during a teacher-directed activity or during a child-directed moment, you can gather some suitable evidence for your Learning Story. As you watch and listen to a child at play, you can take some pictures and jot down some objective and descriptive facts that you will use to write a story. As suggested by Park (2016), if you want to learn about a child's interests and capabilities, and how they process information; you will want to watch the following:

- Engagement: How long does the child stay focused and engaged in an activity?
- Intentionality: Does the child have a goal in mind or express a plan of action?
- Relationships: Does the child interact or connect with others?
- Learning disposition: Does the child have a particular approach to figuring things out or a preferred style of learning? ^[28]

Organizing your data

Whether you want to write a short paragraph or a full page, there are some key components that you must include in your Learning Story. We will refer to the EarlyWorks tool and the guidelines as recommended by Tom Drummond to write up your observation data. ^[29] Your Learning Story should include the following:

1. A Title – All good stories have a title that draws the reader in. Titles can act as a reminder of the content of the learning story, making it easy for educators to revisit at a later time.
2. Photos – Learning Stories should have at least one photo. Visual images evoke emotion and a connection to the story.
3. Narrative – This is where the storyteller (you) describes what is seen and heard. It is best to write in the first person, using “I...”. The narrative is the body of the story and highlights authentic observation evidence (facts and vivid details).
4. What it means – This is where the storyteller (you) interprets the learning that took place. It is best to write in the second person, using “You...”.
5. Opportunities and Possibilities – This is where you reflect on planning for the next step and building on what the child knows.
6. Family & Child’s Voice – The child’s family is encouraged to provide their understanding of the story. Families can create stories and provide valuable insight into the learning that happens at home. Children can also share their perspectives. ^[30]

*Note: A Learning Story Template is available

Table 3.4.63.4.6: Advantages and Disadvantages of Learning Stories

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. The child receives positive messages that their ideas and way of thinking are valued and they enjoy hearing stories about their successes 2. The teacher, child and family have an equal opportunity to reflect on the child’s thinking and learning 3. The stories provide insight into the best way to plan for a more meaningful curriculum. 4. The stories capture moments in a child’s daily life that can be used with other observation tools to create a comprehensive profile on a child 5. Provides authentic information about a child’s strengths in a friendly and personal format 6. Informs families how children learn through play and how they are natural learners, eager investigators, and problem solvers. 7. Opens a door for respectful conversations with parents about school experiences	1. Can be time consuming 2. Can be difficult to remain objective 3. Focuses on one event, situation or behavior at a time and can miss or overlook important information 4. Does not provide quantitative data results 5. May not always report a child’s typical pattern of development or behavior

Learning Story Template

Learning Story Title:
Child: Date: Time: Setting / Location:
Narrative: (I observed you today / I saw you / I heard you say / You played / You explored)
Reflection: (I wondered what you were thinking / I thought about...)
Major Milestones: (Here are some of the milestones you achieved today...)
Next Steps: (To extend your play and learning....)
Question to family:

Technology

Finding ways to utilize technology into regular routines can make collecting observation evidence much more efficient for busy teachers. Photographs, video, and audio recordings can authentically capture children's explorations, investigations, play and learning experiences in the actual moment. With this type of documentation, teachers can replay key moments in a child's day to look for specific interactions, play patterns, developmental milestones, struggles and accomplishments. With this technique, teachers can also listen for language development by recording actual conversations that children are having with their peers. Teachers can also monitor how children problem solve and can tape special moments as well as capture every day moments. As with work samples, teachers can share their observation evidence with the children. Children are fascinated with seeing and hearing themselves. This type of documentation provides the most authentic evidence of all the observation methods.

Collecting your data

There are numerous ways to incorporate technology into your classroom. It is important to keep in mind that each early care and education program would have their own protocol, policies and procedures regarding the use of technology to document children's learning, growth and development, so be sure to verify what you can and cannot do. Here are a few suggestions that you may want to incorporate:

- Use a camera, laptop, tablet, or smartphone to record observations and take pictures
- Ask a child to dictate a story and you can type it up on a computer or use an audio recorder
- Scan or make copies of children's work, such as drawings or writing, to create a visual timeline that shows a child's skill development over time.
- Use email or a parent communication app to post work samples
- Use voice-to-text software to document important discussions. For example, children can explain how they created their piece of art.
- Take pictures of three-dimensional work. For example, woodworking projects, block towers, sandcastles, and culinary creations.

- Film dramatic plays and musical performances that the children produce.
- Use a video camera to document how children are progressing with their developmental milestones in each of the domains. For example, look at playful interactions to track social-emotional development; watch children on the playground to track physical development; observe how children tackle science or math activities to track cognitive development. ^[31]

Organizing your data

Observation data can be conveniently stored on a computer and each child can have their own digital portfolio or file folder. For every child, you would include photos of them at play, photos of their work samples, and any audio recordings or video clips that you may have collected (as suggested above). When using smartphones to take photos or videos, you can easily upload information to your computer or transfer information to other devices. Some teachers may want to use an app to formally organize observation evidence, and some schools may purchase a program that links families to daily observations. Some centers may even use an electronic assessment program (e.g. the Desired Results Developmental Program - DRDP) to track children's developmental progress and teachers would regularly upload observation evidence as part of the assessment process. Here are a few added suggestions on how you can organize and use stored electronic observation evidence:

- Photos can be scanned, printed and posted in the classroom
- A photo slideshow can be created for family nights or as a screen saver
- The children can watch a video montage of a themed project they completed
- Children can look at "old" photos to monitor their own developmental progress and can make comments regarding their work, their thought process and their developmental outcomes. ^[32]

Table 3.4.63.4.6: Advantages and Disadvantages of Technology

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Provides tangible/ visible evidence that teachers can use to track a child's learning, growth and development over time 2. Parents and children both enjoy seeing the work on display 3. Captures authentic documentation which is ideal for assessment 4. Teachers can use information to plan and adjust curriculum to help children achieve their learning goals 5. Families can see how children learn through play 6. Children can share their insights as to how they created the work sample and offer their perspectives as to what they were thinking (authentic evidence) 7. Children enjoy seeing their work on display and they can feel empowered when their work is valued 9. With using multi -media, children can be observed in their natural settings	1. Can be time consuming adding anecdotal documentation and creating documentation boards 2. Requires ample storage space 3. Requires a financial investment in technology (camera, video or audio recorder) 4. Concerns over confidentiality and privacy when using photos, audio or videos

This page titled [4.4: Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

4.5: The Role of Observation

Observations are conducted every day in early childhood classroom environments. Teachers are constantly surveying the environment and completing safety checks to make sure the equipment and materials are safe for the children to use. Teachers also perform daily health screenings to ensure their children are healthy enough to participate in program activities. Beyond the standard safety check and health screening, teachers have many other important tasks and duties that they must do in order to maintain a copacetic classroom environment. Intentional teachers use their observations to plan and implement curriculum, set up engaging learning environments, monitor the children's social interactions, track behaviors, communicate with families, and assess each child's progress and development. Essentially, observations help teachers be more accountable. By conducting regular observations intentional teachers can:

1. Evaluate program effectiveness
2. Evaluate teacher effectiveness
3. Make improvements to ensure quality practices
4. Plan and implement developmentally appropriate curriculum
5. Measure and assess a child's development
6. Develop respectful family partnerships
7. Understand the cultural practices and family structure
8. Select effective learning strategies to support and accommodate the diverse needs of children
9. Ensure ethical conduct and professional standards of practice
10. Teach with confidence

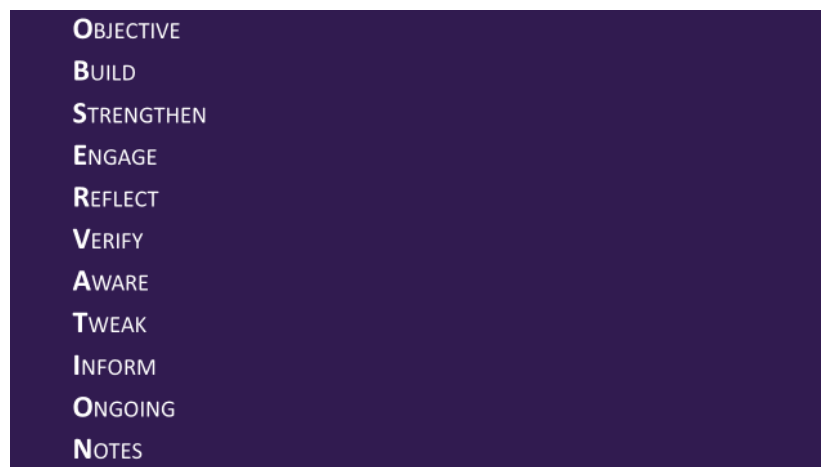


Figure 1.1: COC OER ^[1]

Pin It! Observation

Observation is defined as “the process of gathering information about objects and events using senses of sight, smell, sound, touch and taste, noticing specific details or phenomena that ordinarily might be overlooked” (CDE, 2016 p. 64).^[2]

If we want to understand children, we must first watch them and listen to them. Then, we must try to make sense of what we observed and give it meaning. The role of observation is to provide teachers with information and evidence that they will need to make informed decisions on how to best support the children in their care. With each observation, you will get a glimpse into a child's developing mind. Not only will you see a child's personality emerge, you will be able to see what a child can do. As you watch your children, you will see how they problem solve when conflicts arise and how they cope with the stress from being in a group setting. You will learn about their individual needs and their cultural practices. When you watch children closely, their interests and abilities are revealed. With each observation, you will gain useful insight that will help you become an intentional teacher.

This page titled 4.5: The Role of Observation is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

4.6: Early Childhood Observation

Early childhood assessment is a tool used to gather and provide educators, parents, and families with critical information about a child's development and growth. In Massachusetts, licensed early childhood programs are now required to include a child assessment component in their programs. Here we have included information and resources to inform educators on early childhood assessment programs.

What is childhood assessment?

Childhood assessment is a process of gathering information about a child, reviewing the information, and then using the information to plan educational activities that are at a level the child can understand and is able to learn from.

Assessment is a critical part of a high-quality, early childhood program. When educators do an assessment, they observe a child to get information about what he knows and what he can do.

Observing and documenting a child's work and performance over the course of a year allows an educator to accumulate a record of the child's growth and development. With this information, educators can begin to plan appropriate curriculum and effective individualized instruction for each child.

This assessment record is also a great tool to share with parents so they can follow their child's progress at school, understand their child's strengths and challenges, and plan how they can help extend the learning into their homes.

Why is assessment important?

Assessment provides educators, parents, and families with critical information about a child's development and growth. Assessment can:

- Provide a record of growth in all developmental areas: cognitive, physical/motor, language, social-emotional, and approaches to learning.
- Identify children who may need additional support and determine if there is a need for intervention or support services.
- Help educators plan individualized instruction for a child or for a group of children that are at the same stage of development.
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses within a program and information on how well the program meets the goals and needs of the children.
- Provide a common ground between educators and parents or families to use in collaborating on a strategy to support their child.

What are different child assessment methods?

Methods of child assessment can be informal (conducting natural observations, collecting data and children's work for portfolios, using educator and teacher ratings) and formal (using assessment tools such as questionnaires and standardized testing). Both methods are effective and can help inform educators and parents about a child's progress.

- Observations can be made with minimal or no intrusion into children's activities. Educators can observe all facets of development, including intellectual, linguistic, social-emotional, and physical development, on a regular basis.
- Portfolios are a record of data that is collected through the work children have produced over a period of time. The collection clearly shows the progress of a child's development. Portfolios can be an important tool in helping facilitate a partnership between teachers and parents.
- Educator Ratings are useful in assessing children's cognitive and language abilities as well as their social-emotional development. These ratings can be linked to other methods of assessment, such as standardized testing or other assessment tools. (See the next question below.)
- Parent Ratings integrate parents into the assessment process. Parents who are encouraged to observe and listen to their child can help detect and target important milestones and behaviors in their child's development.
- Standardized Tests are tests created to fit a set of testing standards. These tests are administered and scored in a standard manner and are often used to assess the performance of children in a program.

What are different types of child assessment systems?

There are two different types of assessment systems. Both are used to guide decisions about a child's development and program resources.

- **HighScope COR (Child Observation Record)**
Educators follow COR's three step process: 1) observe and record, 2) score, using the OnlineCOR, and 3) report findings to share.

<http://www.teachingstrategies.com>

<https://www.worksamplingonline.com>

- **Assessment aligns with instructional goals and approaches.** Different types of assessments have different purposes. It is important to first determine what should be measured; then find the assessment program that best assesses those goals.
- **Assessor knows the child.** The adult conducting the assessment should have a pre-existing relationship with the child. Ideally the assessor is the educator.
- **Assessment is “authentic.”** Assessment should take place in a child’s normal setting. The assessment should reflect everyday relationships and experiences. It should be conducted in familiar contexts and settings (such as the classroom).
- **Observations are ongoing and diverse.** For a comprehensive assessment, observations should be made at a variety of children’s activities and be ongoing in order to fully see the progress of a child.
- **Assessment is a cycle.** Although specific methods for assessment tools vary, the process is cyclical. The cycle allows educators to make changes to their curriculum to better serve children in their program. The cycle is as follows:
 - Instruct.
 - Observe. Observe children in various situations.
 - Document, Reflect. Record while observing or as soon as possible.
 - Analyze, Evaluate. Study the data with assessment tools. The assessment comes from the combination of documentation and evaluation.
 - Summarize, Plan, and Communicate. This informs a child’s specific needs and future curriculum.
 - Instruct. (The cycle repeats.)

Additional Assessment Resources

- o EEC Professional Development search form:
www.eec.state.ma.us/ProfessionalDevelopment/WebFindTraining.aspx

- Early childhood assessment presentations:
<http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/curriculum-and-learning/early-childhood-assessment-presentations.html>
- Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children (MassAEYC)
www.massaeyc.com
- Early Childhood News
www.earlychildhoodnews.com
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
www.naeyc.org
- National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)
www.nieer.org

Books

- *Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What, and How* by the [National Research Council](#). Catherine E. Snow and Susan B. Van Hemel, eds. The National Academies Press, 2008.
- *The Power of Observation: Birth through Eight* (2nd edition) by Judy R. Jablon, Amy Laura Dombro & Margo L. Dichtelmiller. Teaching Strategies Inc., 2007.
- *Ready or Not: Leadership Choices in Early Care and Education* (Early Childhood Education Series) by [Stacie G. Goffin](#) and Valora Washington. Teachers College Press, 2007.
- *Spotlight on Young Children and Assessment*. Derry Koralek, ed. NAEYC, 2004.

This page titled [4.6: Early Childhood Observation](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

4.7: Observation Environments

Can We Create a Positive Learning Environment? Positively!

By Karen Jordan

Contents

- 1.Introduction
- 2.Physical Environment
- 3.Behavioral Environment
- 4.Emotional Environment
- 5.Conclusion
- 6.Multiple Choice Quiz
- 6.1 Answers
- 7.Reference

Introduction

Why do children in today's classroom like or dislike school? How can a child have confidence in his ability to learn? What motivates a child to learn? An enthusiastic teacher can create a positive learning environment that will give a child a positive attitude toward school. He will be motivated by interesting learning experiences and strive to meet his potential because there is an enthusiastic teacher that sees the value of his contribution to the classroom family. The teacher is the thermostat that will control the classroom climate. The elements of a well-planned physical structure, effective behavior management and the caring teacher will blend together and create a positive learning environment.

Physical Environment

According to Konza, Grainer & Bradshaw (2001) in their book, *Classroom Management: A Survival Guide* explains that the physical environment within a classroom is an indicator of your expectations as a teacher. Before the school year begins, the foundation for the class must be established by the physical arrangement of the classroom. The first step in establishing conditions for learning and preventing behavior problems is to create an orderly setting. "The physical environment can influence the way teachers and students feel, think and behave." (Stewart, Evans, and Kacyzynski, Winter 1997, p. 53). A classroom that has an aesthetic appearance and is well organized can have a positive effect on student behavior, allowing for more frequent and quality teacher-student interactions without excessive noise or disruptions. (Stewart, Evans, and Kacyzynski, Winter 1997, p. 53).

The first thought in arranging the classroom is to make sure the teacher's desk is located with a bird's eye view of the classroom. The desks should be arranged to promote learning, and consideration should be given to the inclusive classroom. Analyze the specific activities you will incorporate in your lessons and design areas for this purpose, and when possible allow students to help decorate these areas. Designate an area of the classroom to display the student's work. All age groups like to see their work displayed. (Stewart, Evans, and Kacyzynski, Winter 1997, p. 53). Other options for classroom decor are to creatively post classroom rules, the students assignments and emphasize a new unit or new skills. Bulletin boards are another key area for decoration. They should be should not be cluttered, but attractive, and changed frequently. Plants are another means to make the classroom environment aesthetically pleasing. (Nevin, Knoblock, 2005 p.19).

Behavioral Environment

Chris Johnson has stated that the Chicago Fire Department spends 80% of their budget on the prevention of fires. They spend less than 20% of the remaining budget putting out the fires. Prevention is the key to a controlled classroom environment (Meyers, 2007, p. 22). From the very beginning of school, the teacher needs to establish the leadership roll.(Meadows, Melloy, Yell, 1996, p. 124.). Start by setting up the routines the first month of school. Get to know the students—who they are, their interests, and what kind of learning experiences are motivating to them (Meyers, 2007, p. 22).

From the very beginning, the teacher must establish what she expects from the students. "Rules: This is your opportunity to set yourself up for a year of happiness, or a year of grief-the decision is yours" (Meyers, 2007, p. 22). The rules should be brief and

specific, presented in a positive manner, and limited to five or six important rules (Meadows, Melloy, Yell, 1996,.p. 124). They should not be just listed and recited; instead, create a special assignment for each of the important rules you want to emphasize . Build “student ownership and include students voices and input. Finish the lesson with a follow-up that encourages students to think about, discuss and reflect upon the need for the rule in their classroom (Meyers, 2007, p. 22)”. Once the rules are established and understood, it is crucial that the consequences are enforced consistently (Meadows, Melloy, Yell, 1996,.p. 124).

Classroom behavior is also directly related to the teacher’s structure of the class. Effective classroom managers are aware of what is taking place in the class and maintain student involvement (Meadows, Melloy, Yell, 1996, p. 124). The attention of the students is increased by repeatedly giving clear instructions and keeping the pace of the instruction moving as rapidly as the class is capable. Appropriate assignments, feedback and making smooth transitions between subjects will help the students be more attentive during class. Another element that is crucial to the structure of the classroom is positive reinforcement. Given consistently, students are motivated to choose appropriate behavior. Wise choices for positive reinforcement would be positive notes and phone calls to parents, rewards, extra privileges and meaningful praise (Meadows, Melloy, Yell, 1996,.p. 124). A teacher that is effective in creating a positive learning environment will “act more than react.” Meadows, Melloy, Yell, 1996, p.124).

The student that creates behavior challenges for the teacher can pose problems within a positive environment, since it does not solve all problems. In my own experience, I have had a difficult child that was diagnosed ADHD and oppositionally defiant. This was only the beginning of the student’s symptoms. The child was a first grader and yet could not remain in his seat or sit quietly. It was not unusual for the child to be redirected to his seat 50 times in a single day. I decided to try giving this student freedom to move as he needed by creating a large boxed area with tape and giving him two desks approximately six feet apart within that space. He has freedom to move around as he needs, but he MUST stay within his box. To help with his talking out, his voice must remain in the box as well. I provided the student with his own trash can, water bottle, pencil sharpener, and extra puzzles to occupy him during transitional times in class. This has proven to be highly effective for this student, reducing the number of redirections to his seat to approximately eight times, but what works for one may not work for another. The point is that a teacher needs to be creative in an inclusive classroom.

Emotional Environment

It is the teacher who establishes the climate for the classroom. An enthusiastic teacher can supply motivation for students in a positive learning environment. “Stimulating teaching has been described as entertaining, motivating, interesting, and thought-provoking (Nevin, Knoblock, 2005 p.19).” A teacher’s attitude affects how children perceive school. She should have high expectations of their students and believe they are all capable of learning (Stewart, Evans, and Kacyzynski, Winter 1997, p. 53).

Every child has a need for acceptance and therefore the teacher needs to have a good relationship with each of the students. A teacher that focuses on the individual needs of each of the students will enthusiastically adapt the instruction to the various learning styles and at the same time make special provisions for diversity (Stewart, Evans, and Kacyzynski, Winter 1997, p. 53).

Conclusion

A positive learning environment in the classroom is possible with an enthusiastic teacher that builds a personal relationship with the students. Preparation must begin before the first day of class. The foundation needs to be laid from the beginning with the establishment of the rules that are consistently enforced throughout the remainder of the year. The teacher must be structured, conscientious and vary the lessons according to interest, learning styles and diversity. The enthusiastic teacher that has created a positive learning environment has a classroom that is motivated to learn.

Quiz

1.The key to a controlled classroom environment is:

- A. An aesthetically appealing classroom
- B. Prevention
- C. Negative Reinforcement

2.The _____ establishes the climate for the classroom.

- A. Principal

B. Students

C. Teachers

3. An effective classroom manager is aware of what is taking place in the classroom and will

A. Maintain student involvement.

B. Have mirrors strategically placed.

C. Place the desk in the front of the classroom.

4. One way to instruct the students of the classroom rules is to:

A. Write the rules 10x each.

B. A group classroom project.

C. Recite the rules daily for a week.

5. A(n) _____ can supply motivation for the students:

A. treasure box

B. enthusiastic teacher

C. firm discipline system

Answers: 1. A, 2. C, 3. C, 4. B, 5. B

References

Konza, Grainger, and Bradshaw. (2001). Classroom Management—A Survival Guide .

Meadows, Melloy, and Yell. (1996). Behavior Management as a Curriculum for Students with Emotional Disorders. *Preventing School Failure*, v40 pp. 124-130.

Meyers, J. (2007). Creating A Positive Classroom Environment. *Etfo Voice*, pp. 22-23.

Nevin, N. A., Knoblock, N. A., (2005, Jan-Feb). Is Your Classroom the Happenin' Place to Be? *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, pp17-19.

Stewart, S. C., Evans, W. H., Kacyzynski, D. J., (Winter1997). Setting the Stage for Success: Assessing the Instructional Environment. *Preventing School Failure*, v. 41, pp 53-56.

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Foundations of Education and Instructional Assessment. **Authored by:** Jennifer Kidd, Jamie Kaufman, Peter Baker, Patrick O'Shea, Dwight Allen, and the students of Old Dominion University's ECI301. **Provided by:** Old Dominion University. **Located at:** https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Foundations_of_Education_and_Instructional_Assessment. **License:** CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike

This page titled [4.7: Observation Environments](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

4.8: Teachers' observation, questioning, and record keeping

During teaching, teachers not only have to communicate the information they planned, but also continuously monitor students' learning and motivation in order to determine whether modifications have to be made (Airasian, 2005). Beginning teachers find this more difficult than experienced teachers because of the complex cognitive skills required to improvise and be responsive to students' needs while simultaneously keeping in mind the goals and plans of the lesson (Borko & Livingston, 1989).

The informal assessment strategies teachers most often use during instruction are observation and questioning.

Observation

Effective teachers observe their students from the time they enter the classroom. Some teachers greet their students at the door not only to welcome them but also to observe their mood and motivation. Are Hannah and Naomi still not talking to each other? Does Ethan have his materials with him? Gaining information on such questions can help the teacher foster student learning more effectively (e.g. suggesting Ethan goes back to his locker to get his materials before the bell rings or avoiding assigning Hannah and Naomi to the same group).

During instruction, teachers observe students' behavior to gain information about students' level of interest and understanding of the material or activity. Observation includes looking at non-verbal behaviors as well as listening to what the students are saying. For example, a teacher may observe that a number of students are looking out of the window rather than watching the science demonstration, or a teacher may hear students making comments in their group indicating they do not understand what they are supposed to be doing.

Observations also help teachers decide which student to call on next, whether to speed up or slow down the pace of the lesson, when more examples are needed, whether to begin or end an activity, how well students are performing a physical activity, and if there are potential behavior problems (Airasian, 2005). Many teachers find that moving around the classroom helps them observe more effectively because they can see more students from a variety of perspectives. However, the fast pace and complexity of most classrooms makes it difficult for teachers to gain as much information as they want.

Questioning

Teachers ask questions for many instructional reasons, including keeping students' attention on the lesson, highlighting important points and ideas, promoting critical thinking, allowing students to learn from each other's answers, and providing information about students' learning. Devising good appropriate questions and using students' responses to make effective instantaneous instructional decisions is very difficult.

Some strategies to improve questioning include:

- *planning and writing down the instructional questions that will be asked*
- *allowing sufficient wait time for students to respond*
- *listening carefully to what students say rather than listening for what is expected*
- *varying the types of questions asked*
- *making sure some of the questions are higher level*
- *asking follow-up questions*

Table 15.6.215.6.2: : Validity and reliability of observation and questioning (problem and strategies to alleviate the problem)

Problem	Strategies to alleviate problem
Teachers lack of objectivity about overall class involvement and understanding	Try to make sure you are not only seeing what you want to see. Teachers typically want to feel good about their instruction so it is easy to look for positive student interactions. Occasionally, teachers want to see negative student reactions to confirm their beliefs about an individual student or class.
Tendency to focus on process rather than learning	Remember to concentrate on student learning not just involvement. Most of teachers' observations focus on process—student attention, facial expressions posture—rather than pupil learning. Students can be active and engaged but not developing new skills.
Limited information and selective sampling	Make sure you observe a variety of students—not just those who are typically very good or very bad. Walk around the room to observe more students “up close” and view the room from multiple perspectives. Call on a wide variety of students—not just those with their hands up, or those who are skilled as the subject, or those who sit in a particular place in the room. Keep records.
Fast pace of classrooms inhibits corroborative evidence	If you want to know if you are missing important information ask a peer to visit your classroom and observe the students' behaviors. Classrooms are complex and fast paced and one teacher cannot see much of what is going on while trying to also teach.
Cultural and individual differences in the meaning of verbal and non verbal behaviors	Be cautious in the conclusions that you draw from your observations and questions. Remember that the meaning and expectations of certain types of questions, wait time, social distance, and role of “small talk” varies across cultures. Some students are quiet because of their personalities not because they are uninvolved, nor keeping up with the lesson, nor depressed or tired.

Record keeping

Keeping records of observations improves reliability and can be used to enhance understanding of one student, a group, or the whole class' interactions. Sometimes this requires help from other teachers. For example, Alexis, a beginning science teacher is aware of the research documenting that longer wait time enhances students' learning (e.g. Rowe, 2003) but is unsure of her behaviors so she asks a colleague to observe and record her wait times during one class period. Alexis learns her wait times are very short for all students so she starts practicing silently counting to five whenever she asks students a question.

Teachers can keep anecdotal records about students without help from peers. These records contain descriptions of incidents of a student's behavior, the time and place the incident takes place, and a tentative interpretation of the incident. For example, the description of the incident might involve Joseph, a second-grade student, who fell asleep during the mathematics class on a Monday morning.

A tentative interpretation could be the student did not get enough sleep over the weekend, but alternative explanations could be the student is sick or is on medications that make him drowsy. Obviously, additional information is needed and the teacher could ask Joseph why he is so sleepy and also observe him to see if he looks tired and sleepy over the next couple of weeks.

Anecdotal records often provide important information and are better than relying on one's memory, but they take time to maintain and it is difficult for teachers to be objective. For example, after seeing Joseph fall asleep the teacher may now look for any signs of Joseph's sleepiness—ignoring the days he is not sleepy. Also, it is hard for teachers to sample a wide enough range of data for their observations to be highly reliable.

Teachers also conduct more formal observations, especially for students who have IEP's. An example of the importance of informal and formal observations in a preschool follows:

The class of preschoolers in a suburban neighborhood of a large city has eight special needs students and four students—the peer models—who have been selected because of their well-developed language and social skills. Some of the special needs students have been diagnosed with delayed language, some with behavior disorders, and several with autism.

The students are sitting on the mat with the teacher who has a box with sets of three “cool” things of varying size (e.g. toy pandas) and the students are asked to put the things in order by size, big, medium and small. Students who are able are also requested to point to each item in turn and say “This is the big one”, “This is the medium one” and “This is the little one”.

For some students, only two choices (big and little) are offered because that is appropriate for their developmental level. The teacher informally observes that one of the boys is having trouble keeping his legs still so she quietly asks the aid for a weighted pad that she places on the boy’s legs to help him keep them still. The activity continues and the aide carefully observes student’s behaviors and records on IEP progress cards whether a child meets specific objectives such as: “When given two picture or object choices, Mark will point to the appropriate object in 80 per cent of the opportunities.”

The teacher and aides keep records of the relevant behavior of the special needs students during the half day they are in preschool. The daily records are summarized weekly. If there are not enough observations that have been recorded for a specific objective, the teacher and aide focus their observations more on that child, and if necessary, try to create specific situations that relate to that objective. At end of each month the teacher calculates whether the special needs children are meeting their IEP objectives.

This page titled [4.8: Teachers’ observation, questioning, and record keeping](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

4.9: Questions to Plan for the Next Observation

When should I observe?

From the moment a child walks into their classroom until the time they leave, opportunities to learn are occurring. Some observations will happen spontaneously, while others will be scheduled. To see a child's full potential, you will need to observe at various times throughout the day. For example, some children are slow-to-warm and it may take them some time to get acclimated before they can fully engage and interact with others. If a child is slow -to-warm, the morning drop-off may not be the best time to document their social development. You will want to track them throughout the day, at various times (including transition times and snack/meal times), to get a full picture of who they are and what they can do.

Where should I observe?

Many times, observations are centered around structured, teacher-directed activities. This is, in fact, a perfect time to witness what major milestones a child has mastered. However, observing a child while they are exploring in the dramatic play area (*inside*) or while they are in the sandbox area (*outside*) can prove to be just as enlightening. During child-directed play or open exploration, you will no doubt be able to document many of the developmental skills as suggested in the DRDP or Rating Scales, especially how they communicate, cooperate, solve dilemmas and create. Because children can play and learn differently while they are inside as compared to when they are outside, it is necessary to observe in both environments. Likewise, it is important to observe in all activity areas and play spaces.

What observation method should I use?

Use a variety of methods to record and document your children. You will want to “try out” several tools and techniques to find your “go to” method. Because each tool has a specific purpose or focus, using a variety of methods will provide you with sound documentation data to better understand the whole child's development. Note: In the next chapter, you will examine the various tools and techniques more closely.

Who should I observe?

You will want to observe each child as individuals, and you will want to track group interactions. Becoming aware of who is in your class is necessary if you are going to create a caring classroom community and respectful learning environment. Look for those who are the leaders in your group; find out who needs more one-to-one support and who are your helpers; watch for who plays with who. This insight can help you organize peer scaffolding opportunities which can free up some of your time. As a gentle reminder, sometimes we connect with certain children for one reason or another, and other times a child may challenge us. Either way we need to regularly observe each child with an open mind and an open heart, and we need to look at children with a clear lens that is free of bias. Each child needs your attention; each child has unique gifts; and each child needs your support.

What is the focus of my observation, what am I looking for?

With focused observations, there usually is a specific goal in mind. For example, you might want to know what milestones a child has mastered. For that, you would use a developmental checklist to “check-off” all the skills the child was observed doing. Maybe you want to learn what the child's interests are and what they like to play with. For that, you can use a frequency count to tally up all the areas and activities the child used during that observation. Keep in mind that you can observe several skills and competencies across multiple domains during one observation. For example, one day you might set out a math activity and the children are expected to create patterns using colorful beads and pipe cleaners, While they work and play, you can listen to the children's conversations as they describe the patterns they are making; and you can note their fine motor development based on how well they string the beads onto the pipe cleaner; you can also see how they shared space and materials with their peers. Although this was a math activity, many other areas of development can be observed.

This page titled [4.9: Questions to Plan for the Next Observation](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

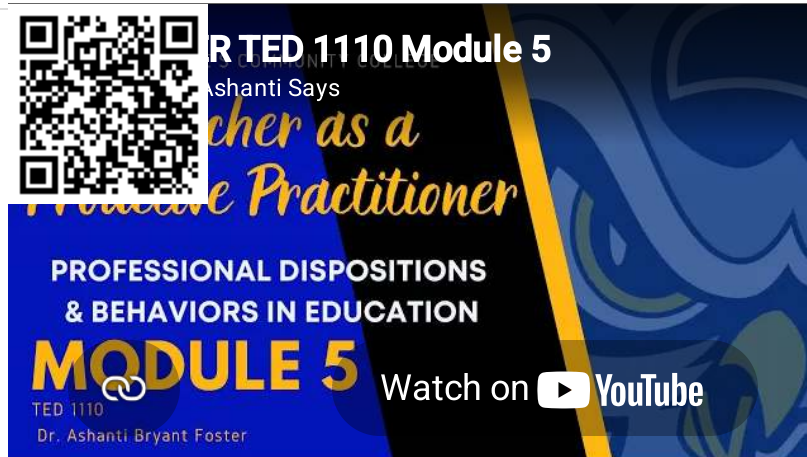
CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner

- 5.1: Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner
- 5.2: The Reflective Practitioner
- 5.3: The Reflective Teacher- Professional Organizations
- 5.4: Peer Feedback and Reflection
- 5.5: Reflective Practice
- 5.6: Reflective Teaching- an Element of Life-Long Learning
- 5.7: Reviewing and Reflecting on Documentation
- 5.8: How to be a More Reflective Teacher
- 5.9: Activity- Write a My Future Self

This page titled [5: Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

5.1: Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner



This page titled [5.1: Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

5.2: The Reflective Practitioner

In her role as the Director of the Sofia Center for Professional Development at Bosque School, Sheryl Chard hosts workshops, seminars, and retreats for Bosque School faculty and other educators in the community that are heavily informed by feedback from countless educators. These innovative professional development opportunities allow teachers to connect with local experts and other educators, explore their roles in education through art and personal expression, and provide teachers with opportunities to grow in a professional environment that recognizes the indispensable role they hold in our society.



The experience in reflective teaching is that you must plunge into the doing, and try to educate yourself before you know what it is you're trying to learn.

—Donald Schön

Donald Schön (1987), a philosopher and educational researcher, makes an important observation: learning to teach often means making choices and taking actions without knowing in advance quite what you need to learn or what the consequences will be. The problem, as we have pointed out more than once, is that classroom events are often ambiguous and ambivalent, in that they usually serve more than one purpose. A teacher compliments a student's contribution to a discussion: at that moment she may be motivating the student, but also focusing classmates' thinking on key ideas. Her comment functions simultaneously as behavioral reinforcement, information, and expression of caring. At that moment complementing the student may be exactly the right thing to do. Or not: perhaps the praise causes the teacher to neglect the contributions of others, or focuses attention on factors that students cannot control, like their ability instead of their effort. In teaching, it seems, everything cuts more than one way, signifies more than one thing. The complications can make it difficult to prepare for teaching in advance, though they also make teaching itself interesting and challenging.

The complications also mean that teachers need to learn from their own teaching by reflecting (or thinking about the significance of) their experiences. In the classrooms, students are not the only people who need to learn. So do teachers, though what teachers need to learn is less about curriculum and more about students' behavior and motivation, about how to assess their learning well, and about how to shape the class into a mutually supportive community.

Thinking about these matters begins to make a teacher a reflective practitioner, a professional who learns both from experience and about experience. Becoming thoughtful helps you in all the areas discussed in this text: it helps in understanding better how students' learning occurs, what motivates students, how you might differentiate your instruction more fully, and how you can make assessments of learning more valid and fair.

Learning to reflect on practice is so important, in fact, that we have referred to and illustrated its value throughout this book. In addition, we devote this entire appendix to how you, like other professional teachers, can develop habits of reflective practice in yourself. First, we describe what reflective practice feels like as an experience, and offer examples of places, people, and activities that can support your own reflection on practice. Then we discuss how teachers can also learn simply by observing and reflecting on their own teaching systematically, and by sharing the results with other teachers and professionals. This is an activity we

mentioned in this book previously; we call it teacher research or action research. As you will see, reflective practice not only contributes to teachers' ability to make wise decisions, but also allows them to serve as effective, principled advocates on behalf of students.

Concluding activities (check for understanding)

ACTIVITY

1. Make a list of the five most important characteristics of an excellent teacher.
 - Do you possess these characteristics?
 - If not, what steps can you take to add the characteristic(s) to your teaching profile?
2. Write a paragraph of your teaching philosophy.
 - Why content is important?
 - Best way to teach?
 - What will your style be?
 - What are your goals as a teacher?

LICENSES AND ATTRIBUTIONS

CC LICENSED CONTENT, ORIGINAL

- Foundations of Education. **Authored by:** SUNY Oneonta Education Department. **License:** [CC BY: Attribution](#)

This page titled [1.7: The reflective practitioner](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Education Department](#) (LumenLearning) .

This page titled [5.2: The Reflective Practitioner](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

5.3: The Reflective Teacher- Professional Organizations

The experience in reflective teaching is that you must plunge into the doing, and try to educate yourself before you know what it is you're trying to learn.

—Donald Schön, 1987

Donald Schön, a philosopher and educational researcher, makes an important observation: learning to teach often means making choices and taking actions without knowing in advance quite what you need to learn or what the consequences will be. The problem, as we have pointed out more than once, is that classroom events are often ambiguous and ambivalent, in that they usually serve more than one purpose. A teacher compliments a student's contribution to a discussion: at that moment she may be motivating the student, but also focusing classmates' thinking on key ideas. Her comment functions simultaneously as behavioral reinforcement, information, and expression of caring. At that moment complimenting the student may be exactly the right thing to do. Or not: perhaps the praise causes the teacher to neglect the contributions of others, or focuses attention on factors that students cannot control, like their ability instead of their effort. In teaching, it seems, everything cuts more than one way, signifies more than one thing. The complications can make it difficult to prepare for teaching in advance, though they also make teaching itself interesting and challenging.

The complications also mean that teachers need to learn from their own teaching by reflecting (or thinking about the significance of) their experiences. In the classrooms, students are not the only people who need to learn. So do teachers, though what teachers need to learn is less about curriculum and more about students' behavior and motivation, about how to assess their learning well, and about how to shape the class into a mutually supportive community.

Thinking about these matters begins to make a teacher a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983), a professional who learns both *from* experience and *about* experience. Becoming thoughtful helps you in all the areas discussed in this text: it helps in understanding better how students' learning occurs, what motivates students, how you might differentiate your instruction more fully, and how you can make assessments of learning more valid and fair.

Learning to reflect on practice is so important, in fact, that we have referred to and illustrated its value throughout this book. In addition we devote this entire appendix to how you, like other professional teachers, can develop habits of reflective practice in yourself. First, we describe what reflective practice feels like as an experience, and offer examples of places, people, and activities that can support your own reflection on practice. Then we discuss how teachers can also learn simply by observing and reflecting on their own teaching systematically, and by sharing the results with other teachers and professionals. This is an activity we mentioned in this book previously; we call it *teacher research* or *action research*. As you will see, reflective practice not only contributes to teachers' ability to make wise decisions, but also allows them to serve as effective, principled advocates on behalf of students.

Resources for professional development and learning

At some level reflection on practice is something you must do for yourself, since only you have had your particular teaching experiences, and only you can choose how to interpret and make use of them. But this rather individual activity also benefits from the stimulus and challenge offered by fellow professionals. Others' ideas may differ from your own, and they can therefore help in working out your own thoughts and in alerting you to ideas that you may otherwise take for granted. These benefits of reflection can happen in any number of ways, but most fall into one of four general categories:

- talking and collaborating with colleagues
- participating in professional associations
- attending professional development workshops and conferences
- reading professional literature

In the next sections we explore what each of these activities has to offer.

Colleagues as a resource

Perhaps the simplest way to stimulate reflections about your own teaching is to engage fellow teachers or other colleagues in dialogue (or thoughtful conversation) about teaching and learning: What do you think of this kind of experience? Have you ever

had one like it yourself, and what did you make of it? Note that to be helpful in stimulating reflection, these conversations need to be largely about educational matters, not about personal ones (“What movie did you see last night?”). Dialogues with individual colleagues have certain advantages to more complex or formal professional experiences. Talking with an individual generally allows more participation for both of you, since only two people may need to express their views. It also can provide a measure of safety or confidentiality if your conversation partner is a trusted colleague; sometimes, therefore, you can share ideas of which you are not sure, or that may be controversial.

A somewhat more complex way of stimulating reflection is group study. Several teachers at a school gather regularly to bring themselves up to date on a new curriculum, for example, or to plan activities or policies related to a school-wide theme (e.g. “the environment”). Group meetings often result in considerable dialog among the members about the best ways to teach and to manage classrooms, as well as stories about students’ behavior and learning experiences. For a beginning teacher, group study can be a particularly good way to learn from experienced, veteran teachers.

Sharing of ideas becomes even more intense if teachers collaborate with each other about their work on an extended basis. Collaboration can take many forms; in one form it might be “team teaching” by two or more teachers working with one group of students, and in another form it might be two or more teachers consulting regularly to coordinate the content of their courses. Collaborations work best when each member of the team brings responsibilities and expertise that are unique, but also related to the other members’ responsibilities. Imagine, for example, a collaboration between Sharon, who is a middle-years classroom teacher, and Pat, who is a resource teacher—one whose job is to assist classroom teachers in working with students with educational disabilities or special needs. If Pat spends time in Sharon’s classroom, then not only will the students benefit, but they both may learn from each other’s presence. Potentially, Pat can learn the details of the middle-years curriculum and learn more about the full range of students’ skills—not just those of students having difficulties. Sharon can get ideas about how to help individuals who, in a classroom context, seem especially difficult to help. Achieving these benefits, of course, comes at a cost: the two teachers may need to take time not only for the students, but also to talk with each other. Sometimes the time-cost can be reduced somewhat if their school administrators can arrange for a bit of extra planning and sharing time. But even if this does not happen, the benefits of collaboration will be very real, and often make the investment of time worthwhile.

Professional associations and professional development activities

Another way to stimulate reflection about teaching is by joining and participating in professional associations— organizations focused on supporting the work of teachers and on upholding high standards of teaching practice. Exhibit 1 lists several major professional associations related to education and their Internet addresses. Most of them are composed of local branches or chapters serving the needs of a particular city, state, or region.

Exhibit 1: A selection of professional associations related to education

- [American Association for the Mentally Retarded \(AAMR\)](#)
- [Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, & Dance \(AAHPERD\)](#)
- [Association for Experiential Education \(AEE\)](#)
- [Association for Retarded Citizens \(ARC\)](#)
- [ENC Online Resources for Math and Science Education](#)
- [National Association for Bilingual Education \(NABE\)](#)
- [National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\)](#)
- [National Council for Teachers of Mathematics \(NCTM\)](#)
- [National Council for the Social Studies \(NCSS\)](#)
- [National Council for Teachers of English \(NCTE\)](#)
- [National Science Teachers Association](#)
- [Organization of American Historians \(OAH\)](#)

To achieve their purposes, a professional association provides a mixture of publications, meetings, and conferences intended for the professional development of educators, including classroom teachers. Typically the publications include either a relatively frequent newsletter or a less frequent journal focused on issues of practice or research. Very large associations often publish more than one newsletter or journal, each of which is focused on a particular topic or type of news (for example, the National Education Association in the United States publishes eight separate periodicals). Some also publish online journals (there are several listed as

part of Exhibit 2 or online versions of print journals. Whatever format they take, professionally sponsored publications stimulate thinking by discussing issues and dilemmas faced by professional educators, and sometimes also by presenting recent educational research and the recommendations for teaching that flow from that research. We discuss ways of using these publications further in the next section of this chapter

Exhibit 2: A sampling of journals related to professional education

- [CSS Journal: Computers in the Social Studies](#)—dedicated to the encouragement of the use of computers and related technology in K-12 social studies classrooms.
- [Education Policy and Evaluation](#)—published by the College of Education at Arizona State University
- [Educational Theory](#)—publishes work in the philosophy of education and other disciplines.
- [Harvard Educational Review](#)—quarterly journal that provides an inter-disciplinary forum for innovative thinking and research in education.
- [Journal of Computing in Higher Education](#)—publishes articles that contribute to our understanding of the issues, problems, and research associated with instructional technology
- [Revista Iberoamericana de Educacion—Revista de la OEI.](#)
- [Scholarly Electronic Journals](#)—Trends and Attitudes: A Research Proposal

Meetings and conferences sponsored by a professional association also take a variety of forms. Depending on the size of the association and on the importance of the topic, a meeting could be as short as a one half-day workshop or as long as a full week with many sessions occurring simultaneously. Sometimes, too, an association might sponsor a more extended course—a series of meetings focused on one topic or problem of concern to teachers, such as classroom management or curriculum planning. In some cases, the course might carry university credit, though not always.

As you might expect, the size of a professional association makes a difference in kinds of professional development experiences it can provide. In general, the smaller the association, the more exclusively it focuses on local news and educational needs, both in its publications and in its meetings or other activities. At a professional development workshop sponsored by a local teachers' association, for example, you are relatively likely to see colleagues and acquaintances not only from your own school, but from other neighboring schools. Locally sponsored events are also more likely to focus on local issues, such as implementing a new system for assessing students' learning within the local schools. In general, too, local events tend to cost less to attend, in both time and money.

By the same token, the larger the association, the more its professional development opportunities are likely to focus on large-scale trends in education, such as the impact of the *No Child Left Behind* legislation we discussed in Chapter 1 or the latest trends in using computer technology for teaching. Conferences or other professional development events are more likely to span several days and to be located outside the immediate town or region whether you live and work. You may therefore see fewer of your everyday colleagues and acquaintances, but you may also have a greater incentive to make new acquaintances whose interests or concerns are similar to your own. The event is more likely to feature educators who are well-known nationally or internationally, and to call attention to educational trends or issues that are new or unfamiliar.

Whether large or small, the activities of professional associations can stimulate thinking and reflecting about teaching. By meeting and talking with others at a meeting of an association, teachers learn new ideas for teaching, become aware of emerging trends and issues about education, and confront assumptions that they may have made about their own practices with students. Professional meetings, conferences, and workshops can provide these benefits because they draw on the expertise and experience of a wide range of professionals—usually wider than is possible within a single school building. But compared simply to talking with your immediate colleagues, they have a distinct disadvantage: they take effort and a bit of money to attend, and sometimes they are available at convenient times. Well-balanced professional development should therefore also include activities that are available frequently, but that also draw on a wide range of expertise. Fortunately, an activity with these features is often easily at hand: the reading of professional publications about educational research and practice.

Reading and understanding professional articles

Although publications about educational issues and research can take many forms, they tend to serve three major purposes in some sort of combination. A publication could either (1) provide a framework for understanding teaching and learning, (2) offer advice

about how to teach, or (3) advocate particular ideas or practices about education. Benefiting from a professional publication depends partly on understanding which of these purposes a particular article or book is emphasizing.

Three purposes of educational publications

Consider the first purpose, to provide a framework for understanding teaching and learning (Hittleman and Simon, 2005). A “framework” in this context means a perspective or general viewpoint for understanding specific events and actions. They are much like the theories described earlier in this book, though not always as formal or broad. A published article might propose, for example, a way of understanding why certain students are disrespectful in spite of teachers’ efforts to prevent such behavior (perhaps they are reinforced by peers for being disrespectful). It might offer evidence supporting this perspective. In doing so, the author provides a sort of “theory of disrespectful behavior,” though he or she may not call it a theory explicitly.

A second purpose is to offer advice about appropriate teaching practices. An article intended for this purpose, for example, might suggest how to introduce reading instruction to first graders, or how to use fiction to teach high school history, or how to organize a class to include a student with a disability. Often giving such advice overlaps with the first purpose, providing a framework for understanding, since thinking about an educational issue in a particular way may imply certain ways of dealing with it in practice.

A third purpose of a published article is to advocate ideas and persuade others to take actions benefiting students and society. It might take a position about important issues in education: Is it a good idea or not to retain (or hold back) a student in grade level for another year if the student fails the curriculum the first time? Should schools teach about sexuality? Should girls learn science in classrooms separate from boys? In advocating for ideas or policies about such matters, the article may express concern about what is good, ethical or desirable in education, not just about what is factually true or practical. The author may seek explicitly to persuade readers of the author’s point of view. These features do not mean, however, that you need to give up thinking for yourself. On the contrary, when reading an advocacy-oriented article, reflection may be especially important.

Whatever its purpose—understanding, advice, or advocacy—an article or book about a professional issue can stimulate thinking about what you know and believe about teaching and learning. It should therefore create, rather than undermine, your individuality as a teacher. Think of professional reading as a dialogue or conversation about education: some of the comments in the conversation will probably be more helpful than others, but each participant contributes somehow, even if none can give a final answer or everlasting truth. It is the same with publications; some may be more helpful than others, but none will be so perfect that you can afford to cease further reading or further thinking. If you are about to begin a teaching career, for example, you may be especially interested in anything published about classroom management, but less interested in the problems of administering schools or in the political issues that usually accompany educational systems. Yet some publications may discuss these latter issues anyway, and eventually you may find yourself more concerned about them than at the start of a career. Your job, as a reflective teacher, will be sort out the currently useful articles (or parts of articles) from ones you cannot use immediately.

To experience educational publications in this way, however, you must think of the authors as your collaborators as well as general authorities. As a reader, you need to assume that you are entitled to consider an author’s ideas, but not obligated to accept it without journals related to professional education question. There are several strategies for developing this attitude, but to keep the discussion focused, we will look at just two. We have already discussed the first strategy, which is to understand the purposes of any particular piece of research which you encounter, in order to assess its current usefulness to your daily work and your long-term professional goals. We have already indicated several general purposes of educational research publications, but we will go into more detail about this in the next section. The second strategy for relating to authors as collaborators is to think about how you yourself might contribute to professional knowledge by engaging in research of your own, even as a classroom teacher—an activity often called action research (Mills, 2006; Stringer, 2007). At the end of this chapter we discuss what action research involves, and how you might consider using it.

Authors’ assumptions about readers

Authors of professional articles and books also make assumptions about their readers, and it helps to be aware of these while you read. The assumptions affect the style, content, and significance of the author’s ideas in ways that are both obvious and subtle.

One assumption is about the response which an author expects from you, the reader: does he or she expect you actually to do something new, or simply to consider doing something new? Or does the author just want you to be aware of a new idea? Consider, for example, an article reviewing best practices about inclusion of students with special needs. The author may imply, or even urge

you to take a moral position: you should include these students, the author may seem to say. But in a different article—one recommending particular teaching practices—the author may merely ask you to think about alternatives to your normal ways of teaching. Certain strategies worked under certain teaching conditions, the author says, so simply consider whether they might work for you as well.

A second, less obvious difference among professional publications is in their un-stated assumptions about prior experiences and attitudes of readers. This assumption may be either helpful or frustrating, depending on your actual prior background. A piece intended as a “framework for understanding” may assume, for example, that you are familiar with basic theories of learning already. If you have read and understood what we outlined in Chapter 2 of this book, the article may turn out to be relatively accessible or understandable to you even if you have relatively little experience in actual classroom teaching, and even if you have never studied learning theories in detail. The article might seem more accessible than you expect because, for example, it focuses primarily on how teacher’s praise affects students’ learning, an idea with which you may be somewhat familiar already.

On the other hand, a professional publication may assume that you have taught school for a number of years already, or that you are at least familiar with classroom life from the point of view not of students, but of a teacher. An author writing about “withitness” (discussed in Chapter 7), for example, may make this assumption, since the concept originated by observing teachers managing large group classroom activities. If you yourself are experienced at actual teaching, reading about withitness may trigger a lot of questions about just how withit teachers are able to be in practice, and about whether in fact they always need to be withit. You can also ask yourself these questions even if you have not yet been a teacher yourself, of course, but they may seem less immediate or urgent.

A professional article intended to advocate for a particular educational policy or practice may make very different assumptions about you as a reader. It may assume, for example, that you do in fact enjoy persuading others of your point of view, even when others initially disagree or react indifferently. This sort of assumption may show up as much in what the writing omits, as in what it includes: if the term cooperative learning activity is used without explanation, for example, the researcher may be assuming not only that you are the sort of person—perhaps a teacher—who knows what that term means already, but also that you already believe in the value of cooperative learning and are motivated to explain its value to others.

In making these distinctions among published articles, keep in mind a point we made at the outset: that an individual article usually serves more than one purpose at a time and makes more than one assumption about your prior knowledge and about how you are supposed to respond to the article. The differences are only about emphasis. To illustrate these ideas about the purposes and effects of research, look in the next section at three examples of actual published articles relevant to education. The studies are not a full cross-section of educational research or publications, but they do suggest some of the variety possible (and necessary) among them. Each example serves a mixture of purposes, but also emphasizes one purpose in particular (perspective-taking, teaching recommendations, or advocacy) described earlier. The authors of each example also make particular assumptions about you, the reader—about the intellectual work which the authors expect you to do and about the motivations which they assume you have or hope that you will acquire. For each example, we describe the reactions of one of us (Kelvin Seifert) as he read the article.

Example #1: How do children acquire moral commitments?

In 1997, Herbert Saltzstein and several colleagues published a research-oriented article about how children acquire moral beliefs (Saltzstein, et al., 1997). The group of researchers were all graduate students and professors of psychology, working mostly at the City University of New York. When Kelvin read of their affiliation with psychology, he suspected that they would talk about moral beliefs in general, and not necessarily about moral issues in classrooms, such as cheating or treating classmates with care and respect. Still, the article interested Kelvin as a former teacher and current university professor, because he had long been concerned with fostering qualities like integrity, honesty, cooperation, and loyalty in students. If Kelvin could find out about the mechanism or process by which children acquire mature moral beliefs, he reasoned, maybe he could modify his teaching to take advantage of that knowledge.

So Kelvin began reading the article. He discovered some parts were challenging and required careful reflection, whereas others were easier to read. One of the most challenging passages came almost immediately, in the second and third paragraphs; these paragraphs, it seemed, required a bit of prior knowledge about theories of moral development. But Kelvin was willing to

concentrate more fully on these paragraphs, because he expected that they might clarify the rest of the study. Here are the paragraphs, and some of Kelvin's thoughts as he read them:

Initial problem: We began by re-examining the phenomenon of heteronomy, Piaget's assertion (1932/1965) following Kant (1785/1959) that young children equate moral obligation with deference to authority when justifying their moral judgments. The concept is important because it is central to the organismic account of moral development as a series of differentiations and integrations.... [p. 37]	This was one of the difficult paragraphs, perhaps especially because Kelvin had never read the specific book by Piaget or by the philosopher Kant. But Kelvin did recall reading, at various times over the years, about Piaget's views on moral development. Piaget believed that at first, children define morality in terms of what adults think: an action is "good" if and only if adults (e.g. parents) consider it good, and "bad" if and only if adults consider it bad. This is the idea of "heteronomy" to which Saltzstein is referring. Children, in this view, take quite awhile to develop or "grow" into truly autonomous moral beliefs. Autonomous beliefs form slowly out of earlier beliefs, in the way that a young plant or animal might grow. This is the "organismic account of moral development" that Saltzstein is talking about.
...This account has been challenged by Turiel's domain theory (Turiel, 1983). According to Turiel and his colleagues, even young children intuitively distinguish moral from conventional rules. [p. 37]	Here was an idea that was intriguing! Saltzstein and his colleagues were pointing to research (by the person cited, named Turiel) that suggests that even preschoolers know the difference between truly moral rules and merely conventional rules. Apparently they believe, for example, that it would be wrong to steal toys or to hit someone, even if adults gave you permission to do so. But apparently they also know that it would be OK for traffic lights to use different colors—for red to mean "go" and green to mean "stop"—provided that everyone agreed on changing the rule. That is what the researcher named Turiel apparently meant by distinguishing convention from morality.

The introduction continued in this challenging style for about two pages, requiring Kelvin to read slowly and carefully in order to understand its points. Kelvin was not discouraged from continuing, though, because he wanted to find out more about how, in general, children acquire moral beliefs. Did moral beliefs take time to develop—did they "grow" on children slowly after initially being borrowed from parents or other adults? In this case, then maybe Kelvin owed it to his students to adopt and express desirable moral attitudes myself, so as to provide a good model for their developing beliefs. Or were students' key moral beliefs already in place when they entered school—almost as if "hard wired" in their minds, or at least already learned during infancy and the preschool years? In this second case, it might still be desirable for Kelvin to adopt positive moral attitudes, but not for the purpose of modeling them for students. Students already "hard wired" for key moral beliefs might not need a model so much as an enforcer of desirable moral behaviors. Concerning the issue of cheating, for example, the students might already understand the undesirable nature and implications of this behavior. As a result they might not need demonstrations of honest integrity from their teacher as much as affirmations from the teacher of the importance of honesty and integrity, along with consistent enforcement of appropriate sanctions against cheating when it did occur.

For Kelvin, therefore, the outcomes of research on moral development—including Saltzstein's that he was currently reading—posed issues of classroom management, both in university classrooms and in public school classrooms. So Kelvin read on.

Saltzstein proposed resolving the issues about the origins of moral development by distinguishing between moral conflicts and moral dilemmas:

Moral conflicts are conflicts between moral duty or right and a non-moral desire. An example might be the conflict between whether to return a wallet to its rightful owner or keep the coveted wallet with its extra cash. In contrast, moral dilemmas are conflicts involving two moral rights or duties. For example, [a person might feel a dilemma between] whether to steal a drug to save a spouse's life. [p. 38]	The distinction between conflicts and dilemmas looked promising to Kelvin. Moral conflicts looked fairly simple in cognitive terms, even if they were sometimes difficult emotionally. The “right” action was obvious. Moral dilemmas were more complex cognitively as well as emotionally, because two “goods” were being weighed against each other. The moral alternatives might both be right and wrong at the same time, and their relative “rightness” might not be immediately obvious.
---	--

Saltzstein and his colleagues proposed that when young children show awareness of moral rules, they may be doing so in the simpler context of moral conflicts. A young child might believe that you should return a dollar to its owner, even if the child has trouble in practice overcoming a selfish impulse to keep the dollar. The same child might have trouble deciding, however, whether it is “right” to inform his teacher if a best friend has cheated on a test. In that case two moral principles compete for attention—honesty and loyalty to a friend. To sort out the implications of choosing between these principles, a young child might need to rely on older, wiser minds, such as parents or other adults. The minute that he or she does so, the child is showing the moral heteronomy that Piaget used to write about and that Saltzstein referred to early in the article

Understanding these ideas took effort, but once Kelvin began figuring them out, the rest of the article was easier to follow. In reading the remaining pages, he noted in passing that the researchers used several techniques common in educational research. For example, they interviewed participants, a common way of gathering systematic information about individuals’ thinking. They also imposed controls on their procedures and on the selection of participants. Procedures were controlled, for example, by posing the same three moral dilemmas and to all participants, so that individuals’ responses could be compared meaningfully. The selection of participants was controlled by selecting two age groups for deliberate comparison with each other—one that was seven years old and the other that was eleven. Since the researchers wanted to generalize about moral development as much as possible, but they obviously could not interview every child in the world, they sampled participants: they selected a manageable number (sixty-five, to be exact) from the larger student population of one particular school. In a second part of the investigation, they also selected a comparable number of children of the same two ages (7 and 11) from the city of Recife, located in Brazil. The Brazilian group’s responses were compared deliberately with the American group’s responses, in order to allow for the impact of cultural beliefs on moral development in general. Kelvin recognized this research strategy as an example of using control groups. In research terms, the Brazilian group “controlled for” the impact of American culture on children’s moral beliefs, and vice versa, the American group controlled for the impact of Brazilian culture on children’s moral beliefs. Altogether, these techniques helped insure that the interviews of children’s moral beliefs really illustrated what they were supposed to illustrate—that they were reliable and valid, in the senses that we discussed in earlier chapters. As Kelvin noticed Saltzstein’s attention to good research techniques, he gained confidence in Saltzstein’s observations and in the interpretations that the authors made from them.

What did Saltzstein and his colleagues find out—or more to the point, what did Kelvin Seifert learn from what Saltzstein and his colleagues wrote about? There were three ideas that occurred to Kelvin. One was that in everyday life, children probably deal with moral beliefs of all levels of cognitive complexity, and not just “simple” moral conflicts and “complex” moral dilemmas. Saltzstein found that children’s solutions to moral dilemmas depended a lot on the content of the dilemma. Children advocated strongly for truthfulness in some situations (for example, in deciding whether to tell the teacher about a friend’s cheating), but not in other situations (like in deciding whether to back up a friend who is being teased and who has lied in an effort to stop the teasing). But it was rare for all children to support any one moral principle completely; they usually supported a mix

Another idea that Kelvin learned from Saltzstein’s research was about how children expressed moral heteronomy versus moral autonomy. Age, it seemed, did not affect the beliefs that children stated; younger and older children took similar positions on all dilemmas initially. But age did affect how steadfastly children held to initial beliefs. Younger children were more easily influenced to switch opinions when an adult “cross-examined” with probing questions; older children were more likely to keep to their initial position. Moral heteronomy was revealed not by a child’s views as such, but by the kind of dialogue a child has with adults.

A third idea that Kelvin learned was about children's perceptions of adults' moral beliefs. Saltzstein found that even though older children (the 11-year-olds) showed more moral autonomy (were more steadfast) than younger children, they tended to believe that adults thought about moral issues in ways similar to children who were younger. In the "teasing" dilemma mentioned above, for example, the 11-year-olds opted much more often than 7-year-olds for remaining loyal to a friend, even though doing so meant further untruthfulness with peers. Yet the 11-year-olds also more often stated a belief that adults would resolve the same dilemma in a way characteristic of 7-year-olds—that is, by telling the truth to peers and thus betraying loyalty to a friend. This finding puzzled Kelvin. Why should older, and presumably more insightful, children think that adults are more like younger children than like themselves? Saltzstein suggested an interpretation, however, that helped him make sense of the apparent inconsistency:

...Consistent with our past research, children attributed the kinds of moral choices made by younger children to adults. In our view, this finding tends to support a constructivist rather than a [social modeling] view of morality, which would predict that the child's judgments mirror (or develop toward) their representation of adult judgments. [p. 41]

In other words, thought Kelvin, if children learned moral beliefs by imitating (or modeling themselves after) parents or other adults, then they ought to see themselves as resembling adults more and more as they get older. Instead, they see themselves as resembling adults less, at least during middle childhood. This would happen only if they were preoccupied with "constructing" their own beliefs on the basis of their experiences, and therefore failed to notice that adults might also have constructed beliefs similar to their own.

Relevance: a framework for understanding moral development

The article by Saltzstein offered a way to understand how children develop moral beliefs, and especially to understand the change from moral heteronomy to moral autonomy. By imposing controls on the procedures (uniform interviews) and on the selection of participants (particular ages, particular societies or cultures), the researchers eliminated certain sources of ambiguity or variability in children's responses. By framing their project in terms of previous theories of moral development (Piaget's, Turiel's), furthermore, they made it easier to interpret their new results in the general terms of these theories as well. In these ways the investigation aspired to provide a general perspective about children's moral development. Providing a framework for understanding, you recall, is one of the major purposes of many professional publications.

But note that the authors paid a price for emphasizing this purpose. By organizing their work around existing general theory and research, they had to assume that readers already had some knowledge of that theory and research. This is not an unreasonable assumption if the readers are expected to be fellow researchers; after all, many of them make a living by "knowing the literature" of psychology. But assuming such knowledge can be an obstacle if the authors intend to communicate with non-psychologists: in that case, either the authors must make more of an effort to explain the relevant background research, or readers must educate themselves about the research. The latter activity is not necessarily difficult (the background knowledge for Saltzstein's work, for example, took me only a few paragraphs to explain in writing), but it must be done to make full sense of research that tries to provide a universal framework of psychological knowledge.

The reader's role: interested observer of children

In conducting and reporting their research, Saltzstein and his colleagues were not presenting themselves as school teachers, nor were they expecting readers necessarily to respond as teachers. As they put it in the first paragraph of the article, they sought to offer "a more contextualized perspective for understanding the development of moral judgments" [p. 37]. Unlike most teachers, they seemed indifferent to recommending how children's moral judgements ought to be fostered. Observation of children was their purpose, not intervention. The meaning of the term "contextualized perspective" was not obvious to Kelvin when he first read it, but eventually it became clearer: they were talking about the importance of distinguishing among types of moral decisions and moral beliefs. They did sometimes note information relevant to teaching—for example, they pointed out that for cultural reasons, teachers in Brazil do not command high respect and therefore compared to American children, Brazilian children may feel less compelled to tell the truth to their teachers. But this comment was not the primary focus of their research, nor did the authors discuss what (if anything) it might imply about teaching in the United States.

Yet the non-teaching perspective of the article did not keep Kelvin, a long-time school teacher and current university teacher, from reflecting on the article in terms of its educational relevance. As we mentioned already, Kelvin was attracted to the article because of his own concerns about character development in students—how do they acquire moral beliefs and commitments, and how

should he help them in doing so? Kelvin did not really expect to find an answer to the second of these questions, given the “observation” orientation of the authors. He did hope to find an answer to the first, although even here he also expected that to make allowances for the fact that research interviews are not usually identical to classroom situations. Children might respond differently when interviewed individually by a researcher, compared to how they might respond to a teacher in class. Or perhaps not. So in reflecting on the article, Kelvin had to note the context and purposes of Saltzstein’s study, and to remind himself that once a teacher went beyond simply observing children to intervening on their behalf, the teacher might be led to different conclusions about children’s moral development. But in spite of these cautions—or maybe because of them—Kelvin found much food for thought in the article related to teaching.

Example #2: Learning disability as a misleading label

In 2006, Ray McDermott, Shelley Goldman, and Hervé Varenne published an article that discussed the use of disability categories in education. The article attracted Kelvin’s attention because he had been concerned for a long time about the ambiguities of disability categories (see Chapter 5 of this book) as well as about their potential for stigmatizing individuals. He expected the article to document additional problems with labeling when a student is from a non-white ethnic group. Kelvin’s expectation was fulfilled partially, but he was surprised also to encounter an additional and tougher message in the article. Here is how the study began:

Since about 1850 . . . classifying human beings by mental ability, accurately or not, has been a politically rewarded activity. Those with power have placed others, usually the downtrodden, into ability and disposition groups that they cannot escape. . . . People who live together in a culture must struggle constantly with the constraints...of systems of classification and interpretation used in the culture.

Kelvin had a mixed reaction to this opening. In one way it seemed to say something familiar—that classification systems (such as categories for disabilities) may create problems for individuals. But the tone of the paragraph sounded more severely critical than Kelvin had expected: it was saying that power governed all classifications, implying that misclassifications may be widespread or even universal.

Kelvin’s initial hunch was therefore that the article would express a radically critical view of disability classifications—particularly as they affect the “downtrodden,” which presumably included children from minority ethnic groups. His expectation proved correct as the authors explained their point of view, which they called a *cultural approach* to understanding disability. Using learning disabilities (LD) as an example, here is how they explained their position:

We are not as interested in LD behavior as in the preoccupations—as seen from the level of classroom organization—of all those adults who are professionally poised to discover LD behavior. We are less interested in the characteristics of LD children than in the cultural arrangements that make an LD label relevant.

At this point Kelvin was not sure if he wanted to continue reading the article because it seemed like it might not be relevant to classroom life specifically. It also implied a severe criticism of professional educators—implied that they are too eager to find examples of LD and for this reason may misclassify students. On the other hand, Kelvin was already aware that LD are an especially ambiguous category of disability; maybe the article would help to show why. So he kept reading.

The authors continued by outlining the history of LD as a category of disability, describing this category as an outgrowth of the general intelligence testing movement during the twentieth century. By the 1970s, they argued, the concept of LD offered a way to classify children with academic difficulties without having to call the children mentally disabled. Because of this fact, the LD category was needed—literally—by well-off parents who did not want their children treated or educated as children with mental disabilities. LD as a concept and category came to be applied primarily to children from the white middle-class, and mental disability became, by default, the equivalent category for the non-white and poor.

To support this assertion, the authors reported a classroom observation of three non-white boys—Hector, Ricardo, and Boomer—while they worked together to design an imaginary research station in Antarctica. Citing actual transcripts of conversation while the boys worked, the authors concluded that all three boys showed intelligence and insight about the assignment, but that the teacher was only aware of the contributions of one of the boys. Hector systematically hid his knowledge from the teacher’s view by getting Boomer to speak for their group; Ricardo participated well in the group work but was rarely acknowledged by the other two boys. Boomer received considerable praise from the teacher, thanks to his speaking for the group. Yet the teacher was never aware of

these subtleties. The authors blamed her oversight not on the teacher herself, but on an educational and cultural system that leads educators to classify or typify students too quickly or easily. Here is how they put it:

The American classroom is well organized for the production of display of failure, one child at a time if possible, but group by group if necessary...Even if the teacher manages to treat every child as capable, the children can hammer each other into negative status; and even if both...resist dropping everyone into predefined categories, the children's parents can take over, demanding more and more boxes with which to specify kinds of kids doing better than other kinds of kids. In such a classroom, if there were no LD categories, someone would have to invent them.

When Kelvin read this conclusion, he did not really disagree, but he did feel that it was beside the point for most teachers. Maybe children do get classified too easily, he thought, but a teacher's job is not just to lament this possibility, as the authors seemed to be doing. Instead their job is to help the real, live children for whom they have daily responsibility. What teachers need are therefore suggestions to avoid misclassifying students by overlooking key information about them. Kelvin wished, at the end, that the authors had made some of these suggestions.

Relevance: a critical framework

In this study the authors offered a sort of backhanded framework of thinking about categories of disability; or more precisely they offered a framework for understanding what the categories are not. In essence they said that disability categories describe qualities “in” students only in the sense that educators and others happen to think of disability categories in this way. An equally reasonable way to think about disabilities, they argued, is that modern society is organized so that its citizens have to be classified for many different reasons. Educators are simply helping to implement this society-wide expectation. A frequent result in classrooms is that teachers classify students too easily and that key evidence of students’ capacity is overlooked.

In making this argument, the authors implied an indirect recommendation about how to teach, though the recommendation actually focused on what teachers should not do. Instead of (mis)identifying children with learning difficulties, the authors implied, teachers and other educators should stop concerning themselves with classifying children, and seek to reorganize classrooms and schools so that classification is less important. “Change the school,” they wrote, “and LD becomes less relevant.” This conclusion may be an important reminder, but it is not especially helpful as a recommendation to practicing teachers, who usually need to know about more than what to avoid.

The readers’ role: concerned advocate for social justice

It is not surprising that the article lacked concrete recommendations for teaching, given that the authors seemed to speak to readers not as classroom teachers, but as general critics of society who are concerned about fairness or social justice. Their comments made two assumptions: first, that readers will want to minimize unfair stereotypes of students, and second, that readers will seek greater fairness in how teachers treat students. For readers who happen to be teachers themselves, the first of these assumptions is a reasonable one; most of us would indeed like to minimize unfair stereotyping of students. The second is also reasonable, but perhaps not in a way that the authors intended. Teachers probably do try their best to treat students fairly and respectfully. Their responsibilities usually mean, however, that they can only do this conveniently with their own students; the time available to work toward general social justice is often limited. (As you might suspect, Kelvin was not fully satisfied after he finished reading this article!)

Example #3: The impact of bilingualism on reading

In 1995, three education professors—Robert Jiménez, Georgia García, and David Pearson—published a study about the impact of bilingualism on children’s ability to read English (1995). The three specialized in curriculum studies, literacy acquisition, and bilingual language development, and were therefore motivated by a concern for the academic success of bilingual children and especially by concern for identifying why bilingual children sometimes have difficulty learning to read English. Too much research on bilingualism, they argued, was based on what they called a “deficit” framework: it focused on what bilingual children lacked compared to monolinguals. They sought an alternative framework, one focused on bilingual students’ competence, and especially on their competence to read a second language.

To search for this alternative, the researchers mounted a large research program, and the article published in 1995 was one of the studies resulting from this research. It caught Kelvin’s interest not only because of its topic, but because of its approach. Instead of surveying dozens of students with a questionnaire, as researchers sometimes do, these investigators relied on just three students studied intensively. Each student became a case study and included detailed, lengthy observations and interviews of that particular

student. Each student was chosen deliberately for a particular purpose. One was a highly proficient reader who was also bilingual (Spanish and English); a second was a marginally proficient reader who was bilingual (Spanish and English); and a third was a highly proficient reader who was monolingual in English. To qualify for the study, furthermore, each student had to be comfortable reflecting on and talking about their own reading processes, so that the authors could interview them at length on this topic. The researchers asked each student to read six one-page passages in English and (where relevant) in Spanish. They invited all three to think aloud about their reading as they went along, commenting on how they figured out particular words or passages. The oral readings and think-aloud commentaries were taped and transcribed, and became the information on which the authors based their conclusions and recommendations.

Using these procedures, Jiménez, García, and Pearson discovered important differences among the three girls. The proficient bilingual, Pamela, used her growing knowledge of each language to help in learning vocabulary from the other language. When she encountered the English word “species”, for example, she guessed correctly that it meant the same as the similar Spanish word “especies”; and when she encountered the Spanish “líquido,” she guessed correctly that it meant the English “liquid.” Her focus on learning vocabulary was stronger than for the proficient monolingual, Michelle, who commented less on specific words than how the overall reading passages related to her prior general knowledge. The difference presumably stemmed from Michelle’s greater familiarity with English vocabulary—so much greater, in fact, that Michelle did not need to think about individual words deliberately. Both Michelle and Pamela differed, however, from the less-proficient bilingual reader, Christine. Like Pamela, Christine focused on vocabulary, but she did not think of her native Spanish as a resource for this task. When reading a Spanish word, she was sometimes reminded of English equivalents (“cognates,” as language teachers call them), but she did not use her much greater knowledge of Spanish to assist with her more limited English. She did not search for equivalent words deliberately, as Pamela did.

Relevance: recommendations for teaching english as an additional language

The authors of this article focused more directly on particular learning behaviors than did the authors of the two articles described earlier. Jimenez and his colleagues emphasized the importance of regarding a child’s native language as a strength in the process, not a liability, and they then pointed out the importance of facilitating vocabulary development. But they did not claim this recommendation to be appropriate for all children or for all forms of bilingualism. They only focused on a particular pair of languages (Spanish and English in the USA), and on three combinations of skill level in these two languages. These are common bilingual experiences in the United States, but they are not the only ones, either in the United States or elsewhere in the world.

For other bilingual situations, their conclusions might not hold true. For some students (e.g. Chinese Americans), the native language and the second language are much more different in vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar than Spanish is to English, and therefore may provide less of a resource to a child learning to read. In some settings, relationships between languages are more equal than in the United States. In Canada, for example, both the numbers and the overall social status of English speakers and French speakers are more equal than in the United States. In both of these situations, if a child fails to learn to read the second language, it may not be for the reasons suggested by Robert Jiménez, but for other reasons, ranging from difficulties with reading per se to cultural differences in how a child expects to be taught (Johnson, 2004).

The reader’s role: both teacher and researcher

In the published article describing their research, Jiménez, García, and Pearson assumed that readers have some familiarity with bilingual students and with issues related to teaching reading. They began their article by describing previous research studies in these areas—more than a dozen of them, in fact. In the middle they described numerous responses of the three bilingual students to the passages they were asked to read. At the end of the article they made specific suggestions for teaching, such as “focus more on vocabulary development”. When Kelvin read these various sections, he found that his prior knowledge of and reflections about teaching helped to make sense of them. But he also found that did not need to be an expert in bilingualism order to understand the authors’ messages—he had never, in fact, taught English as a Second Language, nor had he ever conducted research on reading or bilingual language development.

Action research: hearing from teachers about improving practice

Each of the professional articles just described offers ideas and recommendations that can stimulate reflection about teaching and learning. But they all suffer from a particular limitation: Although they often relate to teachers and classrooms, teachers’ role in

influencing in designing and interpreting a study is minimal. In the world of educational research, persons other than teachers—typically professors, educational administrators, or other professional researchers—tend to speak on behalf of teachers. All three of the articles described earlier in this chapter had this feature. Persons other than teachers chose the research topics.

The information that emerges from this arrangement often still relates to teaching and learning, and may contain useful insights for classroom work. But by definition, it is framed by people whose interests and fundamental commitments may not be identical with classroom teachers. As a result, the studies are somewhat more likely to attend to problems posed by academic disciplines or by educational administrators. Two of the studies which we described earlier—the ones about moral development and about labels for disabilities—showed this quality. Classroom teachers are concerned, of course, about both moral development and categorizing of students. But if teachers had designed the two projects themselves, they might have re-framed both of them to focus more explicitly on the challenges of classroom teaching. In studying moral beliefs, for example, teachers might have focused more squarely on how to foster moral beliefs in their students. In studying inclusive education, they might have focused more fully on the practical difficulties faced by teachers in assessing students' learning disabilities with validity.

The nature of action research

In view of these issues, a particularly important kind of investigation for teachers is action research (sometimes also teacher research), an activity referring to systematic, intentional inquiry by teachers for the purpose of improving their own practice (Stenhouse, 1985; Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003; Russell, T. & Loughran, J. 2005). Action research is not to be confused with research about teaching and learning, which are investigations by professional researchers on topics of teachers, teaching, or learning.

Action research has several defining characteristics, in addition to being planned and conducted by teachers. First, it originates in the problems and dilemmas of classroom practice, or in chronic problems with certain students, materials, or activities. Second, its outcomes offer information focused on particular teachers and classrooms, rather than about teachers in general or students in general. Although this feature might make action research seem less useful as a source of advice or knowledge that is truly general, supporters argue that focusing on specific learning contexts makes action research more credible or valid as a source of practical information and ideas. It is, they argue, simply more attuned to the context of real classrooms (St. Clair, 2005). Third, while the audience for action research can certainly include professors and educational administrators, the audience tends to be other teachers (Fenstermacher, 1994; Ackerman & MacKenzie, 2007). Action research is therefore in an especially strong position to provide “insider” perspectives on educational problems.

Action research in practice

Action research makes a number of assumptions as a result of its nature and purposes (Richardson, 1994; Schmuck, 2006). To varying degrees, most such studies support some combination of these ideas:

- that teaching is itself really a form of research
- that action research, like teaching itself, requires substantial reflection
- that collaboration among teachers is crucial for making teacher research meaningful, and for the improvement of teaching
- that teachers' knowledge of teaching has to be shared publicly, especially when gained systematically through action research

To see how these features look in practice, look at several examples of action research studies.

Example #1: Focusing on motivating students

A number of years ago, Patricia Clifford and Sharon Friesen published an account of their effort to develop a classroom program based on students' out-of-school interests and experiences (1993). Clifford and Friesen were co-teachers in a double-sized classroom which deliberately included children from first, second and third grades. Their interest in students' out-of-school experiences grew out of three more basic questions about teaching, which they phrased like this:

- How can curriculum remain open to children's unique experiences and connect with the world they know outside the school? Too often, the official school curriculum lacked meaning for children because it seemed cut off from the rest of the world. The result was unmotivated students and poor learning.
- Why is imaginative experience the best starting place for planning? The teachers felt that imaginative experiences—make-believe play, stories, poems—provided access to children's lives outside school—their make-believe play, or their stories or

poems. Perhaps somehow these could be connected to the goals of the official curriculum.

- What happens when teachers break down the barriers between school knowledge and real knowledge? In drawing on children's outside experiences, would children actually become more motivated or not? Would they take over the program, and fail to learn the official curriculum goals?

To answer these questions, the teachers kept extensive diaries or journals for one entire school year. These became the “data” for the research. In the journals, they described and reflected on their daily teaching experiences. The teachers also talked with each other extensively about classroom events and their significance, and the results of the conversations often entered the journals eventually during the research. In their journal, for example, the teachers recorded an experience with students about ways of telling time. In preliminary discussions the students became interested in how a sundial worked. So the teachers and students went outside, where they created a human sundial, using the students themselves. The teachers' journal kept a chronicle of these events, and noted the comments and questions which students developed as a result:

- If you stood in the same place for a whole day you would see your shadow change places because the earth changes position.
- Why is my shadow longer than I am in the evening, but shorter at noon?
- Clouds can block the sun's rays so sundials won't work on rainy days.
- How did people start to tell time?

As the year evolved and observations accumulated and were recorded, the teachers gradually began to answer their own three questions. They found, for example, that connecting the curriculum with children's interests and motives was most effective when they could establish a personal bond with a child. They also found that imaginative expression helped certain children to feel safe to explore ideas. They found that blending school-based and personal knowledge caused children to learn much more than before—although much of the additional knowledge was not part of an official curriculum. With these conclusions in mind, and with numerous examples to support them, Clifford and Friesen published their study so that others could share what they had learned about teaching, learning, and students.

The study by Clifford and Friesen is interesting in its own right, but for our purposes think for a moment about their work as an example of action research. One of its features is that it formed part of the normal course of teaching: the authors were simply more systematic about how they observed the students and recorded information about classroom events. Another feature is that the research required conscious reflection over an extended time: their journals and conversations contained not only descriptions of events, but also interpretations of the events. A third feature is that the study involved collaboration: it was not just one teacher studying the major questions, but two. The fourth feature is that the teachers not only developed their results and conclusions for themselves, but also shared them with others. These four qualities make the study by Clifford and Friesen a clear example of teacher research. Note, though, that sometimes studies conducted by teachers may not show all of these features so clearly; instead they may show some of the key features, but not all of them, as in the next two examples.

Example #2: Focusing on development

Since 1981, Vivian Paley has published a series of short books documenting and interpreting her observations of young children in classrooms (1981, 1986, 1991, 1998, 2000, 2005). Paley was interested in how young children develop or change over the long term, and in particular how the development looks from the point of view of a classroom teacher. In one of these books, for example, she observed one child in particular, Mollie, from the time she entered nursery school just after her third birthday until after the child turned four years old (Paley, 1986). Her interest was not focused on curriculum, as Clifford and Friesen's had done, but on Mollie as a growing human being; “the subject which I most wished to learn,” she wrote, “is children” (p. xiv). Paley therefore wrote extended narrative (or story-like) observations about the whole range of activities of this one child, and wove in periodic brief reflections on the observations. Because the observations took story-like form, her books read a bit like novels: themes are sometimes simply suggested by the story line, rather than stated explicitly. Using this approach, Paley demonstrated (but occasionally also stated) several important developmental changes. In *Mollie at Three* (1988), for example, she describes examples of Mollie's language development. At three years, the language was often disconnected from Mollie's actions—she would talk about one thing, but do another. By four, she was much more likely to tie language to her current activities, and in this sense she more often “said what she meant.” A result of the change was that Mollie also began understanding and following classroom rules as the year went on, because the language of rules became more connected in her mind to the actions to which they referred.

Vivian Paley's book had some of the characteristics of action research—but with differences from Clifford and Friesen's. Like their research, Paley's "data" was based on her own teaching, while her teaching was influenced in turn by her systematic observations. Like Clifford and Friesen's, Paley's research involved numerous reflections on teaching, and it led to a public sharing of the reflections—in this case in the form of several small books. Unlike Clifford and Friesen, though, Paley worked independently, without collaboration. Unlike Clifford and Friesen, she deliberately integrated observation and interpretation as they might be integrated in a piece of fiction, so that the resulting "story" often implied or showed its message without stating it in so many words. In this regard her work had qualities of what some educators call arts-based research, which are studies that take advantage of an artistic medium (in this case, narrative or story-like writing) to heighten readers' understanding and response to research findings (Barone and Eisner, 2006). If you are studying the use of space in the classroom, for example, then aesthetically organized visual depictions (photos, drawings) of the room may be more helpful and create more understanding than verbal descriptions. If you are studying children's musical knowledge, on the other hand, recordings of performances by the children may be more helpful and informative than discussions of performances.

Example #3: Focusing on collaboration

In 1996, an example of action research was published that was intended simultaneously for classroom teachers and for university researchers, and which focused on the challenges of collaboration among educators (Ulichny & Schoener, 1996). A teacher (Wendy Schoener) and a university researcher (Polly Ulichny) explored how, or even whether, teachers and university researchers could participate as equals in the study of teaching. Wendy (the two used first names throughout when they published their experiences) was a teacher of adults learning English as a Second Language (ESL); Polly was a specialist in multicultural education and wanted to observe a teacher who was successful at reaching the ethnically diverse students who normally study ESL. Polly therefore asked Wendy for permission to study her teaching for an extended period of time—to visit her class, videotape it, interview her about it, and the like.

What followed is best described as an extended negotiation between teacher and professor for access to Wendy's class, on the one hand, and for mutual respect for each other's work, on the other. In the published article, the negotiations are described separately by each participant, in order to honor the differences in their concerns and perspectives. Before, during, and after the observations, it was necessary for Polly and Wendy each to adjust expectations of what the other person could do and was willing to do. As the authors put it, some things were "easy to hear" from the other and some things were "hard to hear". Wendy, as a teacher, found it easier to hear criticisms of her teaching if they came from herself, rather than from the higher-status university professor, Polly. Polly, for her part, found it easier to hear Wendy's comments if she matched Wendy's self-criticisms and evaluations with some of her own experiences. Polly therefore made sure to tell Wendy about dilemmas and problems she experienced in her own (university) teaching. Because they needed to adjust to hearing and talking with each other, the two educators eventually focused less on Polly's original purpose—studying multicultural teaching—and more on the problem of how teachers and university researchers might collaborate effectively.

Overall, this study qualifies as a piece of action research, though it is not fully focused on classroom teaching. For example, the teachers did collaborate and reflect on their experiences, but not all of the reflection was about teaching in classrooms. The rest was about the relationship between Wendy and Polly. While the problem selected was originally about classroom teaching—Wendy's—it did not originate with the classroom teacher (Wendy) or concerns she had about her own classroom; instead it was chosen by the university researcher (Polly) and her desire to study multicultural teaching. The researchers did share what they learned by publishing their observations and ideas, but their published report speaks only partly to classroom teachers as such; in addition it speaks to academic researchers and educators of future teachers.

By pointing out differences among these examples of action research, we do not mean to imply that one is "better" than another. The point is simply to show how diverse studies by teachers can be and to appreciate their differences. Whatever their specific features, classroom studies by teachers hold in common the commitment to giving a voice to teachers as they reflect on problems and challenges intrinsic to classroom life. This goal can be accomplished in more than one way: through journals and other record-keeping methods, through oral discussions with colleagues, and through written reflections created either for themselves or for others concerned about teaching and learning. Diversity among topics and methods in action research studies should not surprise us, in fact, since classrooms are themselves so diverse.

The challenges of action research

Well and good, you may say. Action research offers teachers a way to hear each other, to learn from their own and other's experience. But there are also a few cautions to keep in mind, both ethical and practical. Look briefly at each of these areas.

Ethical cautions about action research

One caution is the possibility of conflict of interest between the roles of teaching and conducting action research (Hammack, 1997). A teacher's first priorities should be the welfare of his or her students: first and foremost, you want students to learn, to be motivated, to feel accepted by their peers, and the like. A researcher's first priorities, however, are to the field or topic being studied. The two kinds of priorities may often overlap and support each other. Vivian Paley's observations of children in her classes, described earlier, not only supported her children's learning, but also her studies of the children.

But situations can also occur in which action research and teaching are less compatible, and can create ethical dilemmas. The problems usually relate to one of three issues: privacy, informed consent, or freedom to participate. Each of these becomes an issue only if the results of a research project are made public, either in a journal or book, as with the examples we have given in this chapter, or simply by being described or shared outside the classroom. (Sharing, you may recall, is one of the defining features of action research.) Look briefly at each of the issues.

Insuring privacy of the student

Teachers often learn information about students that the students or their families may not want publicized. Suppose, for example, you have a student with an intellectual disability in your class, and you wish to study how the student learns. Observing the student work on (and possibly struggle with) academic activities may be quite consistent with a teacher's responsibilities; after all, teachers normally should pay attention to their students' academic efforts. But the student or his family may not want such observations publicized or even shared informally with other parents or teachers. They may feel that doing so would risk stigmatizing the student publicly.

To respect the student's privacy and still study his learning behavior, the teacher (alias the "action researcher") therefore needs to disguise the student's identity whenever the research results are made public. In any written or oral report, or even in any hallway conversation about the project, the teacher/researcher would use a pseudonym for the student, and change other identifying information such as the physical description of the student or even the student's gender. There are limits, however, to how much can be disguised without changing essential information. The teacher could not, for example, hide the fact of the intellectual disability without compromising the point of the study; yet the intellectual disability might be unusual enough that it would effectively identify the student being studied.

Gaining informed consent

Students may not understand what is being studied about them, or even realize that they are being studied at all, unless the teacher/researcher makes an explicit effort to inform them about the action research and how she will use the results from it. The same is true for the students' parents; unless the teacher-researcher makes an effort to contact parents, they simply will not know that their child's activities are being observed or may eventually be made public. Students' ignorance is especially likely if the students are very young (kindergarten) or have intellectual or reading difficulties, as in the example we described above. As an action researcher, therefore, a teacher is obliged to explain the nature of a research project clearly, either in a letter written in simple language or in a face-to-face conversation, or both. Parents and students need to give clear indications that they actually understand what class activities or materials will constitute data that could be made public. In most cases, indicating informed consent means asking students' parents signing a letter giving permission for the study. Sometimes, in addition, it is a good idea to recheck with students or parents periodically as the project unfolds, to make sure that they still support participation.

Insuring freedom to participate

When a student fails to participate in an ordinary class activity, most teachers consider it legitimate to insist on the student's participation—either by persuading, demanding, or (perhaps) tricking the student to join. Doing so is ethical for teachers in their roles as teachers, because teachers are primarily responsible for insuring that students learn, and students' participation presumably facilitates learning. If a teacher designates an activity as part of an action research project, however, and later shares the results with them, the teacher then also becomes partly responsible for how other teachers use knowledge of the research study. (Remember:

sharing results is intrinsically part of the research process.) The resulting dual commitment means that “forcing” a student to participate in an action research activity can no longer be justified solely as being for the student’s own educational good.

Much of the time, a simultaneous commitment to both teachers and students presents no real dilemma: what is good for the action research project may also be good for the students. But not always. Suppose, for example, that a teacher wants to do research about students’ beliefs about war and global conflict, and doing so requires that students participate in numerous extended group discussions on this topic. Even though the group discussions might resemble a social studies lesson and in this sense be generally acceptable as a class activity, some parents (or students) may object because they take too much class time away from the normal curriculum topics. Yet the research project necessitates giving it lots of discussion time in class. To respond ethically to this dilemma, therefore, the teacher may need to allow students to opt out of the discussions if they or their parents choose. She may therefore need to find ways for them to cover an alternate set of activities from the curriculum. (One way to do this, for example, is to hold the special group discussions outside regular class times—though this obviously also increases the amount of work for both the teacher and students.)

Practical issues about action research

Is action research practical? From one perspective the answer has to be “Of course not!” Action research is not practical because it may take teachers’ time and effort which they could sometimes use in other ways. Keep in mind, though, that a major part of the effort needed for action research involves the same sort of work—observing, recording information, reflecting—that is needed for any teaching that is done well. A better way to assess practicality may therefore be to recognize that teaching students always takes a lot of work, and to ask whether the additional thoughtfulness brought on by action research will make the teaching more successful.

Looked at in this way, action research is indeed practical, though probably not equally so on every occasion. If you choose to learn about the quality of conversational exchanges between yourself and students, for example, you will need some way to record these dialogues, or at least to keep accurate, detailed notes on them. Recording the dialogues may be practical and beneficial—or not, depending on your circumstances. On the other hand, if you choose to study how and why certain students remain on the margins of your class socially, this problem too may be practical as action research. Or it may not, depending on whether you can find a way to observe and reflect on students’ social interactions, or lack thereof. Much depends on your circumstances—on the attention you can afford to give to your research problem while teaching, in relation to the benefits that solutions to the problems will bring students later. In general any action research project may require certain choices about how to teach, though it should not interfere with basic instructional goals or prevent coverage of an important curriculum. The main point to remember is that action research is more than passive observation of students and classrooms; it also includes educational interventions, efforts to stimulate students to new thinking and new responses. Those are features of regular teaching; the difference is primarily in how systematically and reflectively you do them.

Benefiting from all kinds of research

Although we authors both feel a degree of sympathy for the nature and purposes of action research, we are not trying to advocate for it at the expense of other forms of educational research or at the expense of simply reading and understanding professional publications in general. The challenge for you, as a classroom teacher, is to find the value in all forms of professional development, whether it be participation in a professional association, reading general articles about research, or engaging in your own action research. To the extent that you draw on them all, your ways of learning about teaching will be enriched. You will acquire more ways to understand classroom life, while at the same time acquiring perspective on that life. You will learn ways to grasp the individuality of particular students, but also to see what they need in common. You will have more ways to interpret your own experiences as a professional teacher, but also be able to learn from the professional experience of others. Realizing these benefits fully is a challenge, because the very diversity of classrooms renders problems about teaching and learning complex and diverse as well. But you will also gain good, professional company in searching for better understanding of your work—company that includes both educational researchers, other professional teachers, and of course your students.

Appendix summary

The complexities of teaching require teachers to continue learning throughout their teaching careers. To become a lifelong reflective practitioner, teachers can rely on colleagues as a resource, on professional associations and their activities, and on

professional publications related to educational issues and needs. Understanding the latter, in turn, requires understanding the purposes of the published material—whether it is offering a general framework, recommending desirable teaching practices, or advocating for a particular educational policy or need. Interpreting published material also requires understanding the assumptions that authors make about readers’ prior knowledge and beliefs.

An important additional strategy for becoming a reflective practitioner is action research—studies of teaching and learning designed and carried out by teachers in order to improve their own practice. By nature, action research studies are highly relevant to classroom practice, but there are also cautions about it to keep in mind, both ethically and practically.

Further Resources

The two following websites belong to professional organizations dedicated to action research.

- The first belongs to the [Society for Community Research and Action](#), a division of the American Psychological Association. It promotes and publishes action research in many professions, one of which is education.
- The second website belongs to the [Action Research Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association](#); as you might suspect from its name, it focuses exclusively on action research by educators.

This website offers the lectures notes and videos of class sessions in [a course about reflective practice](#) offered at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The materials are of high quality, and go into much more detail about the concept than is possible in this appendix.

References

- Ackerman, R. & MacKenzie, S. (Eds.). (2007). *Uncovering teacher leadership: Voices from the field*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Barone, T. & Eisner, E. (2006). Arts-based research in education. In J. Green, g. Camilli, & P. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Bissex, G. (1980). *GNYS AT WRK*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Brydon-Miller, M., Greenwood, D., Maguire, D. (2003). Why action research? *Action Research*, 1(1), 3–28.
- Clifford, P. & Friesen, S. (1993). A curious plan: Managing on the twelfth. *Harvard Educational Review*, 63(3), 339–358.
- Fenstermacher, G. (1994). The knower and the known: The nature of knowledge in research on teaching. In L. Darling-Hammond (Ed.), *Review of research in education, Volume 20*, pp. 3–56. Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association.
- Hayes, D. (2006). Telling stories: Sustaining improvement in schools operating under adverse conditions. *Improving Schools*, 9(3), 203–213.
- Hittleman, D. & Simon, A. (2005). *Interpreting educational research, 4th edition*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Jimenez, R., Garcia, G., & Pearson, D. (1995). Three children, two languages and strategic reading: Case studies in bilingual/monolingual reading. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(1), 67–98.
- Johnson, M. (2004). *A philosophy of second language acquisition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Lortie, D. (1975). *Schoolteacher*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Loughran, J., Hamilton, M., LaBoskey, V., & Russell, T. (Eds.). (2004). *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer.
- McDermott, R., Goldman, S., & Varenne, H. (2006). The cultural work of learning disabilities. *Educational Researcher*, 35(6), 12–17.
- Mills, G. (2006). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher, 3rd edition*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Paley, V. (1981). *Wally's stories*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Paley, V. (1988). *Mollie is three*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Paley, V. (1991). *The boy who would be a helicopter*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Paley, V. (1998). *Kwanzaa and me*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Paley, V. (2000). *The kindness of children*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Paley, V. (2006). *A child's work: The importance of fantasy play*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ragland, B. (2007). Positioning the practitioner-researcher: Five ways of looking at practice. *Action Research*, 4(2), 165–182.
- Richardson, V. (1994). Conducting research in practice. *Educational Researcher*, 23(5), 5–10.
- Russell, T. & Loughran, J. (2005). Self-study as a context for productive learning. *Studying Teacher Education*, 1(2), 103–106.
- Samaras, A. & Freese, A. (Eds.). (2006). *Self-study of teaching practices*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Schmuck, R. (2006). *Practical action research for change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Schön, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner*. New York: Basic Books. Schön, D. (1987, April). *Educating the reflective practitioner*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, D.C.
- Saltzstein, H., Millery, M., Eisenberg, Z., Dias, M., & O'Brien, D. (1997). Moral heteronomy in context: Interviewer influence in New York City and Recife, Brazil. In H. Saltzstein (Ed.), *New directions in child development: Culture as a context for moral development*, pp. 37–50. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Seifert, Kelvin. (1981). Have we oversold mainstreaming? *Journal of the Canadian Association for Young Children*, 4(2), 6–9.
- St. Clair, R. (2005). Similarity and superunknowns: An essay on the challenges of educational research. *Harvard Educational Review*, 75(4), 435–453.
- Stenhouse, L. (1985). *Research as a basis for teaching*. London, UK: Heinemann.
- Stringer, E. (2007). *Action research, 3rd edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Publications.
- Tidwell, D. & Fitzgerald, L. (Eds.). (2006). *Self-study and diversity*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Ulichny, P. & Schoener, W. (1996). Teacher-researcher collaboration from two perspectives. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(3), 496–524.
- Zeichner, K. (2007). Accumulating knowledge across self-studies in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 58(1), 36–46.

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Educational Psychology. **Authored by:** Kelvin Seifert and Rosemary Sutton. **Located at:** <https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/31779972/Educational%20Psychology.pdf>. **Project:** Global Text. **License:** [CC BY: Attribution](#)

This page titled [5.3: The Reflective Teacher- Professional Organizations](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

5.4: Peer Feedback and Reflection

Workshop Overview

Scientific teaching is at its core an evidence-based pedagogical approach. Peer feedback based on class observation is another form of evidence that we can gather to give us an indication of the effectiveness of our teaching. During this workshop, participants will discuss the merits of feedback and reflection in helping inform course revision and improvement and practice giving feedback using two course observation rubrics - a peer mentoring rubric and a class observation protocol. Participants will also develop a 1-year mentoring plan with a colleague to provide feedback to one another on their classes.

Learning Outcomes

Participants will be able to:

- use a peer feedback rubric to provide guidance on how to make classes more active, inclusive and student-centered
- use an observation rubric to provide an objective snapshot of a peer's current use of engaged pedagogies for self-reflection
- develop a 1-year plan for visiting the classes of a peer using these rubrics to help one another develop reflective practices

Key Terms

- Peer observation
- Student-centered learning
- Active learning
- Peer Feedback
- Reflection

Active Learning/Formative Assessment Strategies

- Small group discussion/breakout rooms
- Whole class discussion
- Brainstorm
- Peer observation

Pre-Workshop

Background

Nationally, campuses are measuring the use of active learning (Stains et al., 2018). Lecturing still predominates in post-secondary STEM classes, but active, students-centered strategies are being adopted. Transitioning to active learning from lecture or Socratic methods can be uncomfortable. Peer feedback and mentoring provide support that can reduce feelings of isolation during the process and improve performance in the classroom. The peer observation protocol that we train participants with during this workshop (COPUS, Smith et al, 2014) is the same metric used in the Stains et al., (2018) nationwide project. We will use this rubric in the Generalized Observation and Reflection Protocol (GORP) platform, an online and smartphone compatible platform develop at UC Davis.

Tasks

1. IF YOU ARE USING Generalized Observation and Reflection Protocol (GORP), then sign up for an account ahead of time by doing the following:
 - Go to <https://gorp.ucdavis.edu/>
 - Click "Sign Up"
 - Your site administrator will assign you the roles you need (observation-create, observation-destroy, course-create, course-view, course-destroy, course-update)
 - Complete the sign up, and search for your university / college in the **Institution** box.
2. Watch this 9-minute Introduction video on GORP:



During Workshop

Tasks

1. Download the [Peer Mentoring Rubric](#) to practice giving feedback on a video clip, found in the [Google Drive Folder for Peer Mentoring](#). We will use this same rubric to give feedback during the final presentations.
2. Send yourself a reminder to schedule your peer observation visits using [FutureMe.org](#).
 1. Go to the website and set up a future email to yourself dated close to the beginning of the school term as a reminder to plan your peer observation visits.
 2. Include information related to the following questions:
 1. which class[es] you want to have observed
 2. who will observe your class
 3. which rubric will they use to observe, i.e. the feedback rubric, timing analysis rubric, COPUS...
 4. when will they visit, e.g., near the beginning and end to get a comparison of your progress; on certain dates when you plan to try out specific modules or strategies...

Post-Workshop

Tasks

1. If you didn't send your FutureMe.org peer observation reminder email, do so now following the instructions directly above.

Selected Resources

- Peer Evaluation Feedback Guide adapted from Jenny Momsen/FIRST IV - [Peer mentoring rubric.pdf](#)
 - A statement created by Dr. Peggy Brickman (UGA) that extols the virtues of taking part in peer mentoring and evaluation accompanied by a list of references. This statement can be added to yearly teaching evaluation portfolios for participants who visit one another's classes and provide peer feedback and mentoring. [Peer Mentoring and Evaluation blurb for yearly teaching evaluation.pdf](#)
 - A great new resource for an evidence-based, departmentally-defined approach to enhance teaching evaluation called [TEval](#) at CU Boulder, by Drs. Noah Finkelstein, Joel C. Corbo, Daniel L. Reinholz, Mark Gammon, and Jessica Keating.
 - A tool for utilizing the noise level in your classroom to gauge the % of times that students have an opportunity to be actively engaged in class: Decibel Analysis for Research in Teaching (DART): <https://sepaldart.herokuapp.com/>. Developed by Kimberly Tanner.
-

References

- Batzli, J et al., (2006) [Bridging the Pathway from Instruction to Research](#)
 - Smith, M., Jones, F., Gilber, S., Wieman, C. (2013) [The classroom observation Prototocol for Undergraduate STEM \(COPUS\): A new instrument to characterize university STEM classroom practices](#). Cell Biology Education – Life Sciences Education
 - Stains, M., Harshman, J., Barker, M. K., Chasteen, S. V., Cole, R., DeChenne-Peters, S. E., ... & Levis-Fitzgerald, M. (2018) [Anatomy of STEM teaching in North American universities](#) *Science*, 359(6383), 1468-1470.
-

Session Slides

[Peer Reflection and Feedback slide deck](#)

[2.6: Peer Feedback and Reflection](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC-SA](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

This page titled [5.4: Peer Feedback and Reflection](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

5.5: Reflective Practice

In preparation for reading this chapter, it is important to consider what you already know and what attitudes and belief systems you bring to the activity. To help you do this, the following questions are provided to focus your reflections. • Q1. What is reflection? • Q2. Who needs to reflect? • Q3. Is it important for me? • Q4. How does it help me? • Q5. Do I think reflection is important for teachers? Why? Introduction Teaching is very demanding work. It requires a lot of energy, stamina and fortitude. Among all the physical activity however, it is important to remain focused on what may be identified as the more ‘intellectual’ aspects of the teaching profession. This is significant for several reasons. Arguably the most important of these is your obligation as a beginning teacher or an aspiring teacher to make increasingly well-informed decisions in the context of your everyday practice. This is because teaching is a profession in which demanding Chapter 1: Reflective Practice 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 1 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM 2 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE FOR TEACHERS situations arise on a daily basis. Frequently there are no right or wrong answers, no procedures to follow, no time or opportunity to consult with supervising staff or colleagues. In some cases you may have the possibility of discussing with and receiving advice about incidents or concerns from appropriate others. Often, however, as a certified teacher (or even as a student teacher), you may simply be advised or expected to use your professional judgement. This may be a reasonable expectation, as it allows you to develop your skills in relation to decision making and problem solving in your specific educational context. However, it does assume that you are well-informed or have some experience of the reflective process. It assumes that you have a framework within which to consider your options and determine any possible action. Robins et al. (2003) describe reflective practice as a tool that allows teachers, student teachers and teaching assistants to understand themselves, their personal philosophies and the dynamics of their classroom more deeply. While acknowledging the critics who argue that there is little evidence that reflection actually changes behaviour, they propose that the process of engaging in reflection not only provides a personal resource that can be accessed in other similar contexts, but is also a tool that empowers individuals who use it. This is because engagement with the process of focused thinking supports self knowledge and understanding (White, 2004; Wieringa, 2011). The capacity to engage with your professional work in this manner is not always easy. One reason is that classrooms are busy, fast-moving work environments within which pupils of diverse characteristics are engaging in an extremely important undertaking: that of learning new knowledge, skills and strategies. Another is that any framework or other tool to support your professional development is only as beneficial as the user is proficient. In order to develop the skills and competencies of an expert teacher, you need to engage in reflection. Reflective practice, over time, allows you to become skilful in making informed judgements and professional decisions, and is empowering (Robins et al., 2003). Authentic engagement in reflection supports your efforts to become contemplative, to improve your professional competencies and to identify your personal strengths and relative limitations as a teacher. It is because of its potential to impact positively on individual practice that reflection is arguably the most important of the many professional attributes that characterise successful teachers at every stage of their careers (White, 2004). What is Reflection? Reflection is very broadly able to be defined as the deliberate, purposeful, metacognitive thinking and/or action in which educators engage in order to improve their professional practice. Different theories, models and levels of 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 2 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 3 reflection have most commonly focused on differentiating the major elements of this construct: • the conditions, situations or circumstances that prompt engagement in the reflective process • the process itself, different types of reflection, different concepts or opinions on how this is undertaken • the content of the reflection, what exactly needs to be analysed, examined, discussed, challenged in the reflective process and with what perspectives or ideologies • the product of the reflection, improved understanding of professional practice, action taken as a result of the reflective thinking. The brief overview of understandings of reflection in educational practice that follows illustrates some of these differences as proposed by various writers in this field. What Does the Literature Say about Reflection? It is not possible to discuss all the writings about reflection, but a variety of ideas are presented here to provide some background for your own reading and research and to establish some common understanding of different ways of engaging with the reflective process. No introduction to reflection in education, however brief, would be possible without discussing the early work of Dewey. His 1933 work *How We Think* is considered to be seminal in this area and was based on the ideas of a number of earlier philosophers and educators. Dewey’s own definition of reflection as a cognitive process – ‘the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends’ (1933: 9) – indicates some of the basic characteristics that underpin almost all models and theories of reflection. However, he stresses the active, conscious, deliberate thinking in this particular type of problem solving. He also emphasises the rational, logical analysis of the problem, in which ideas are ordered and then linked together in a meaningful way. It was then intended that this ‘chain’ of thoughts was rigorously examined for any assumptions, underlying beliefs or knowledge that had been utilised in the formulating

of a solution and any evidence that supported these ideas (Calderhead, 1989). This process relies heavily on the use of scientific theory to guide teaching practice and so the current and emerging scientific theories of that time are the predominant criteria in the evaluative processes of reflection. As a deliberate, reasoned, almost scientific activity, Dewey (1933) distinguished reflective thinking from 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 3 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM 4 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE FOR TEACHERS everyday, routine thinking and especially from impulsive thinking. Included in his notion of routine thinking was the thinking (and any subsequent actions) that resulted from an individual's automatic adherence to rules originating from authority or from tradition. He proposed instead that action taken as a result of reflective thinking was 'intelligent action' (Calderhead, 1989: 44), because the aspects of the issue had been considered rationally and the practitioner had undergone periods of doubt and uncertainty while working towards finding a solution. Dewey (1933) proposed that opportunities for reflective thinking were prompted mainly by practical events that created feelings of disquiet or confusion or by a sense of wonder and awe. These were to be resolved by the persistent, reasoned thinking that he identified as reflection, and this thinking was to be guided by the goal in mind. Dewey's understanding of the role of reflection is that it is undertaken to develop the knowledge and expertise of teaching. Despite its importance and the heavy reliance of other theorists on his work, Dewey's notion on reflection has been challenged in several ways over the decades by other writers in this area. One of the most important critiques revolves around the notion that Dewey conceptualised reflection as the process of thinking about action and had not significantly linked it to action taken as the result of reflective thinking, despite introducing the term reflective action, which would complete what was identified as the 'reflective cycle' (Gore and Zeichner, 1991; Noffke and Brennan, 1988), which most theorists understand to be the purpose of engaging in reflection. Indeed, some writers (e.g. Calderhead, 1989) are openly dismissive of reflection that does not result in action. The very popular theory on reflection developed by Schon (1983, 1987, 1991) introduces some new ideas on the reflective process itself, most especially on the implication in Dewey's (1933) theory that reflection is necessarily a process embarked on after the event, is a long, ponderous undertaking and also on the content of reflection itself. Schon (1983, 1987, 1991) suggests two levels of reflection: (i) reflection-in-action and (ii) reflection-on-action, partly based on Dewey's (1933) work. While Schon's (1983) theory differs in the criteria that constitute the content of reflection, in that he does not consider teaching to be the implementation of scientific theory in the sense that Dewey (1933) theorised, he, and others who are inspired by Dewey's work to support reflective teaching (e.g. Cruickshank, 1985), do not offer any suggestions regarding what precisely in their practice teachers do need to be reflective about. Reflection-on-action does have some of the same characteristics, specifically that the reflective process is undertaken after the event, problem or situation that initiated the process. However, Schon (1983) offers an interesting departure from the perception that problems for reflection are necessarily reflected upon after the event. He suggests that reflection-in-action is a concept that 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 4 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 5 celebrates the art of teaching, in that it allows for continual interpretation, investigation and reflective conversation with oneself about the problem while employing the information gained from past experiences to inform and guide new actions. This process of experimentation, reflection and action combined, is cyclically conducted as the problem is continuously framed and reframed and as solutions to complex or ambiguous problems are systematically sought. This approach allows for contextually orientated experimentation in problem solving; it is a way of using past experiences, reflection and action to experimentally problem solve 'on the spot' where the circumstances are confused or unclear. Schon (1983) indicates that understanding new perspectives or views is not enough. He states that '[r]eflection-in-action necessarily involves experiment' (p. 141), indicating that reflection-in-action and the new ideas that evolve as a result must be trialled in a supportive professional arena – the classroom context. In this respect, Schon is acknowledging the experiences of the teacher as a source of knowledge that is valuable in the reflective practice. However, the notion of reflection-in-action requires that teachers have some appropriate, relevant experience upon which to draw and that they have reached a level of teacher competence from which they can reflect and act simultaneously (Hatton and Smith, 1995). This observation, in turn, suggests that teachers are more likely to be able to successfully engage with the cycle that constitutes reflection-in-action as a result of prior engagement in the reflection-in-action process. What remains to be established is what exactly was the circumstance in the relevant experiences that could be usefully drawn upon and what was the content of the reflection and from which perspective or viewpoint was it analysed? Gore and Zeichner (1991) address these issues. While supporting both Cruickshank's (1985) and Schon's (1983, 1987, 1991) commitment to the development of reflective practitioners, they highlight the importance of both the quality and type of the reflection undertaken: the content of the reflection and the criteria that were considered. They note: Neither Cruickshank (1985) nor Schon (1983, 1987, 1988) have much to say about what it is that teachers ought to be reflecting about, the kinds of criteria that should come into play during the process of reflection (e.g. what distinguishes good from unacceptable educational practice) and the degree to which teachers' deliberations should incorporate a critique of the institutional contexts in which they work (V. Richardson, 1990). In some extreme cases, the impression is given that as long as teachers reflect about something, in some

manner, whatever they decide to do is acceptable, since they have reflected about it. (Gore and Zeichner, 1991: 120) Gore and Zeichner (1991) then discuss four 'varieties' of teacher reflective practice, which each have a different focus: 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 5 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM 6 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE FOR TEACHERS 1. an academic version, which focuses on teachers' skills in disseminating the discipline content and presenting in such a way as to maximise its accessibility for their students; 2. a social efficacy version, which is based on research findings and focuses on evidence-based practice; 3. a developmental version, which primarily considers age and developmentally appropriate teaching strategies that focus on students' interests and thinking; and finally 4. the social reconstructionist version, in which reflection is focused on the political and social issues of schooling and on classroom interactions designed to promote greater student equity and justice. (Gore and Zeichner, 1991: 121) There is considerable value in each of these versions of reflection; however, no one of these alone constitutes adequate, appropriate teacher reflection. While there may be a dominant focal point for reflection, the other foci also need to be considered for good teaching and reflective action to be authentic. Gore and Zeichner (1991) identify the social reconstructionist variety as 'critical reflection' although the term has a number of interpretations. Calderhead (1989) appears to use the term loosely as a general term for self criticism in reflection, while others (e.g. Gore, 1987) use the term consistently to indicate that the reflection is based on a particular set of ideological principles, and the beliefs and assumptions that are embedded in the precise philosophy that is being utilised as a frame of reference. What Does This Mean for You? Gore and Zeichner (1991) propose that each of these four types of reflection is important. They indicate four major aspects of your professional work. You need to ask and reflect on pertinent questions about each of these aspects in order to develop a deep understanding of your classroom interactions. These are some suggestions for questions you might think about in order to gain a holistic understanding of your professional work and your role in supporting successful learning by your students. You will be able to add others yourself. 1. Academic reflection: Do I know my content really well? Am I using appropriate pedagogical strategies for my students' needs? Am I well-organised and resourced in readiness to teach? Have I sequenced the content suitably for my students' needs and defining characteristics of my discipline? Have I completed the planning cycle with suitable, relevant assessment strategies 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 6 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 7 to evaluate student learning? Have I been innovative and creative in order to engage and sustain students' interest? 2. Social efficacy reflection: Am I implementing what I know from research about teaching this content? Have I considered specific strategies that have proven to increase student academic success? Have I considered any differences in the context and participants used in the research and my cohort and circumstances? Is this evidence-based practice meeting the needs of the students in my class? 3. Developmental reflection: Am I providing teaching and learning contexts, tasks and instruction that are suitable and appropriate for the age and stage of my students from a developmental perspective? Have I evaluated my students' skills and thinking to determine the stages at which each of them is able to engage in different learning contexts? Have I planned suitable instructional and task modifications to accommodate the differences in the students' thinking, emotional and physical capacities? Have I designed teaching and learning activities that are interesting for diverse groups of students? Have I taken into account and effectively utilised students' various interests to design lessons and curriculum? 4. Social reconstructionist (critical) reflection: What do I believe to be the purpose of education? Do I have specific philosophical beliefs or viewpoints about the values, purposes and functions of education? Have I critically evaluated the statements from my education authorities who articulate the purpose of schooling in my geographical location? Have I considered who determines the curriculum that is designed to meet the nominated purpose of education? Have I considered in what ways the curriculum supports or neglects the learning needs of students from different social, cultural and individual groups? Are there ways in which I can implement the mandatory curricula in my classroom to minimise any disadvantage to particular students or student groups? How can I mitigate any shortcomings in the system to provide more equitable education for all my students? Have I analysed compulsory tests or assessment items to identify bias or prejudice and taken appropriate measures to overcome or to diminish the impact of these where possible? Different Levels of Reflection This notion of different levels or types of reflective foci is not new. Van Manen (1977) had earlier developed three levels of reflection based on the work of Habermas as a hierarchical structure. The first level is technical reflection. At this level what is considered is the effectiveness and efficiency of achieving predetermined goals. These goals are not the focus of any 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 7 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM 8 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE FOR TEACHERS criticism, modification or change. All that is reflected upon are the competencies and processes that are required to achieve these goals. The second level is practical reflection. At this level, the processes or the means by which the goals can be achieved, their underlying rationale and outcomes along with the goals themselves are subject to analysis, examination and assessment. The third level is critical reflection which is concerned with informing the practical reflection by incorporating moral and ethical considerations related to the problem into the discussion with the purpose of supporting student equity, justice care and compassion without personal bias. Although both Van Manen's (1977) and Valli's (1997) frameworks (detailed below) have been criticised as

hierarchies (Hatton & Smith, 1995), they are certainly useful in that they offer different aspects of reflection practice that are important for teacher consideration. Valli's (1992) model of reflection incorporates many aspects of Schon's and Van Manen's frameworks. She describes five levels of reflection. The first is technical reflection, which is much as described by Van Manen (1977). This is where students match their own competencies to professional standards, graduate competencies, the external goals and competencies of teaching, and continue to work on improving their professional performance in relation to these predetermined benchmarks. The second level, labelled reflection-in-and-on-action, is taken directly from Schon (1983) and combines the ongoing engagement with reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, highlighting the need for ongoing reframing, reconsideration and self discussion of problems, both in the context of teaching itself and as reflection after the event. The third level, deliberative reflection, requires teachers to actively seek and consider various viewpoints in relation to pedagogical decision making. It demands that you have a strong research base from which to develop your pedagogical practice and from which to determine how to meet the diverse needs of your learners. The fourth level, personalistic reflection, is the development of an awareness of the impact of emotions, intuitions and self knowledge on your own cognition and, in turn, on your relationship with your learners and their personal growth. The final level is critical reflection, which follows the understanding of Gore (1987) and others and includes a focus on social, moral, political and ethical issues. It incorporates the development of open-mindedness, rational judgement and creativity. Although a considerable degree of overlap can easily be identified in the levels of reflection discussed, Valli's (1997) framework is the only one that explicitly acknowledges the impact of emotion, feelings and personal attributes on cognition, although others have identified it as a metacognitive activity (Calderhead, 1989; Cruickshank, 1985; Gore and Zeichner, 1991; Jay and Johnson, 2002). Ultimately, however, while each of the models discussed (and many others that are not) has afforded valuable insights into the reflection for you, the reflective process itself is an intensely personal practice. Reflective practice that is overly dominated by prescription to any ideology, imposed values 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 8 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 9 or academic evaluation is at risk of being less than authentic. Individual, personal reflection has been considered unproductive in the past (Hatton and Smith, 1995), as it has been considered to be prone to be influenced by individual bias and to be unlikely to consider individually held underlying assumptions or to consider different perspectives. However, Vartuli (cited in Heydon and Hibbert, 2010: 796) comments that the research literature confirms that teachers' beliefs are at the heart of their practice. Kinsella (2001) writes that reflective practitioners reflect on themselves, including their assumptions, and use their insights to inform their practice. Mayer (1999) concludes that teacher identities are developed from the individual's personal feelings and how they identify with being a teacher. Although he separates these aspects from teacher function, it is clear that they are, in fact, two sides of the same coin, as one cannot help but impact on another. Habermas (1974), in developing a critical science concept of reflection, regards it as self determined action. Calderhead (1989: 44) comments on this perspective, noting: Reflection is viewed as a process of becoming aware of one's context, of the influence of societal and ideological constraints on previously taken-for-granted practices, and gaining control over the direction of these influences. It appears that all theories acknowledge that teacher reflection is, of necessity, based in experience. Every individual experiences what occurs in their lives differently. It is essentially a very personal interpretation of events which is mediated by several other paradigms, including prior experiences and personal beliefs and values. Given the importance of the individual beliefs, feelings, knowledge of own assumptions, understandings of their individual professional contexts and the responsibility of each of you to be self determined, Valli's (1997) personalistic reflection may pave the way for a more authentic, personal, reflective model more closely related to an epistemological perspective. That is, a perspective that reflects what the individual believes about knowledge construction, and their personal definitions of truth and reality. You can see that: • some levels of reflection are more complex than others • as student teachers or beginning teachers, you will feel some aspects to be of more urgent consideration than others on occasion (Conway, 2001) • different situations will often require that you engage in different aspects of reflection and these will become the major focus of your activity. What is important about the notions of reflection discussed is that, irrespective of your starting point, you do need to engage in each of these aspects of reflection described and you do need to engage with these facets authentically as an individual who recognises and acknowledges the 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 9 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM 10 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE FOR TEACHERS origins and impact of your own belief systems, values and interpretations of what constitutes the role of the professional teacher. Because of your unique experiences, your perspectives in relation to a range of professional considerations will be very personal. One of the difficulties of reflective practices in the past is the perceived importance of being objective. However, the philosophical debate regarding a person's capacity to present a totally objective perspective becomes a moot point in face of the notion that all objectivity is first understood as subjective experience (Nisbett, 2005). As you critically scrutinise the origins, validity and limitations of your personal beliefs, values and principles that help you to understand your experiences, you are able to become more open to other perspectives and interpretations. From this starting point a more realistic approach to

reflection practice and its potential to enhance your practice becomes possible; an approach that values the holistic nature of individuals can be developed. Questions for Reflection • Q1. Are there any ideas or information in these short overviews which are new for you? • Q2. Which levels of reflective practice (if any) have you engaged with to date in your teacher preparation course? • Q3. Are there any ideas here that you would like to discuss or challenge? • Q4. Have you previously considered the notion of individual objectivity? • Q5. What do you think the characteristics of an authentic reflection model may look like? • Q6. Are you able to develop some sample questions that may be useful for supporting reflective practice in each aspect of, for example, Valli's model of reflection?

A Personal Model of Reflection As reflection is understood to be learning based on experience, it is not surprising that Kolb's (1994) Experiential Learning Cycle provides a framework within which to organise the basic components of a Personal Reflection Model (see Figure 1.1). The first step is to acknowledge the conditions that prompt reflection by identifying an experience upon which to reflect and then describing it. This is the What?, which is followed by So What?, which requires individuals to analyse the content of the experience in terms of their own understanding of the situation and also in terms of what needs to be discussed, evaluated or challenged. The final phase is Now What?, which is

01_Sellers_Ch-01.indd 10 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 11 conventionally understood to mean what ought to be done or what needs to be done. The final phase of this model as it is currently presented requires action of some sort. This reintroduces the debate regarding the necessity for reflection to result in action being taken in order to be educative and useful to you. There are a number of problems for aspiring and beginning teachers when faced with this requirement for action. These include:

- Who decides what ought to be done and whose belief systems and values are being promoted, supported or actioned in this decision?
- There are a number of societal and ideological restraints associated with educational workplaces that mean that these contexts do not readily accommodate the desired action, irrespective of how it may facilitate improvement in the teaching and learning process.
- A third concern focuses on the skills and capacities of the individuals engaged in the reflective cycle to actually execute the action in the event that a consensually agreed action could be determined.

Despite these limitations, however, these basic three phases of reflection are a useful starting point for a personal model of reflection designed to stimulate focused thinking without necessarily having to take action. The model presented for reflection in this instance acknowledges reflective practice as a metacognitive activity. It is an activity where you are asked to think about your own thinking processes, beliefs, values and understandings. It does not separate cognition from personal emotional responses and promotes discussion of the underlying factors that shape individual views, values and beliefs. It utilises both aspects of Gardner's (1993) intrapersonal intelligence domain in order to fully incorporate your own self knowledge and your capacity to use this information to achieve your goals related to developing authentic reflective practice. It incorporates Kolb's (1994) three-part cycle as a means of simply organising the processes embedded in the reflective process itself. The first consideration is always what exactly needs to be reflected upon. This may be an exceptionally positive, rewarding teaching experience or professional interaction or a matter that you find challenges you in some way and for which you need to think through a satisfactory answer or solution. If rules, guidelines and standards are not to be accepted blindly and acted upon superficially, then there are always experiences that need to be purposefully thought through. The selection of an experience for reflection depends heavily on your individual priorities and how you were prompted by specific aspects of the encounter. You are frequently the person who determines what is significant enough to merit purposeful consideration at a later stage or at the moment of the event. Even at this early, descriptive stage, it is useful for you to bear in mind that the actual recount of the experience, if the situation is reflection-on-action, is an essentially personal version of

01_Sellers_Ch-01.indd 11 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM 12 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE FOR TEACHERS what occurred. While there is certainly no doubt that common understanding does exist between individuals and in society in general, any recount reflects the interpretation of the person compiling it. An experience that may concern or challenge one individual may not present itself as an event or occurrence worth thinking about to you or to others. The second phase is the analytical stage. It is at this stage that the focus or foci of the experience need to be determined. This usually changes as you gain more experience and gain a greater understanding of contexts of education. For you as aspiring and beginning teachers, reflecting on your own teaching for the first time, the focus could frequently be on the more technical goals related to the profession. It may be a priority to check your own or individual pupils' performances against the levels of the standards or other benchmarks established by others as they are understood by the student teachers at that time. As can be seen in various models already Phase (Kolb, 1994) Questions related to self (Gardner, 1993) What? Why have I selected this experience as a focus for reflection? What makes it important for me consciously and purposefully think about this experience at this time? So What? What is the focus here as I understand it? Is there more than one level of reflection that I think needs to be considered as a focus for discussion in this experience? In identifying my focus what level(s) am I prioritising in my reflection? Why would that be so? Do my priorities reflect my values and beliefs about the nature of teachers' professional work? Do my priorities reflect anything about how I am developing as a prospective teacher? Do I need to

engage at a level of reflection that necessitates engaging with ethical and moral considerations? (critical reflection) Now What? Do I need to take action or just think about what action may be appropriate if the circumstances permitted? Do I have the skills, knowledge and strategies to make a well-informed decision about what action may be able to be taken? Can I realistically take action? What personal, social and ideological influences have impacted on the action I would take? How does my proposed action reflect my understanding and personal beliefs regarding what constitutes ethical, professional, effective teaching and the role of the teacher? Are my decisions and proposed actions congruent with my ethical and moral perspectives? Do I have the motivation, perseverance and capacities required to activate my plans successfully? Figure 1.1 A Personal Model of Reflection 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 12 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 13 described, there is little discussion or challenge about the actual measures themselves as they are defined for the purpose of gauging professional competencies. The practical implications of these may differ to reflect your relative strengths and limitations when you engage in the next stage. This following stage engages you in the consideration of the ways and means that these goals may be achieved. However, your rather narrow focus, in time and with some experience, needs to expand beyond basic skills and competencies and it is at this stage that you are able to become most acutely aware of your assumptions, belief systems and personal values and the impact that these have on your professional understandings and ideals. It is important to look inward and examine why you hold certain attitudes and perspectives and to challenge personal views and to assess the quality of the veracity and trustworthiness of their foundations. This activity, if engaged with authentically, allows you to examine your assumptions, prejudices, preferences and bias and assess their impact on your professional choices, decisions and practice. It can be argued that it is at this stage that the essence of professionalism comes into play because engaging at the level of critical reflection necessitates the inclusion of moral and ethical beliefs as a crucial part of the reflective process. The final stage of reflection is the stage when action is planned, options considered and perhaps some intervention or scheme is implemented. However, any prospective action or plans in this stage are significantly determined by the analysis and the level of reflection that was the focus of the preceding stage. The decisions regarding any potential action are guided by available information, your instincts, your previously related experiences and the ethical and moral considerations that guided any critical reflection. In order to plan effectively for decision making, prepare proposed changes to practice or develop a new mindset it is important to be as well-informed as possible. Many professional experiences have the potential to be enhanced, even if reflected upon retrospectively, if sufficient knowledge and understanding are part of the reflective process. Self knowledge is also as important in the final stage as it was in the analytical stage before it, most especially if action actually is to be taken. The Now What? should be reflective of your personally held values, perspectives and competencies in relation to the focus of the reflection in order to be authentic. Ideally, the ideologies, social restraints, limitations of context and personal perspectives that are embedded in decision making and potential action should be: • transparent • reasoned and founded in fact, ethical considerations and professional values • open to discussion and alternative perspectives. 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 13 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM 14 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE FOR TEACHERS However, in many practical situations, the planning for action and decision making components are not complete until they are activated. Because of this, you need to consider if you have the personal capacities to follow through with the planned actions. This is significant, not only to the required knowledge, skills and strategies but also to various personal attributes that will impact on your potential for success. These attributes include motivation, persistence and capacity to persevere when difficulties arise. Questions for Reflection • Q1. Are there any aspects of this model that might have helped you determine a course of action while on professional experience? • Q2. Does this model incorporate the aspects that you nominated as contributing to an authentic model of reflection? • Q3. Do you think that engaging with professional experiences using this process has the potential to support improved professional practice for you? Practice in Reflection Reflection is not always easy. Many professional experiences are challenging in so many ways that it can initially be difficult to conscientiously expend the time and energy required to systemically think through experiences that have proved less than optimal or even those that were serendipitously successful. The most successful approach may be to engage regularly in reflective practice with a small group of peers or with a suitable partner. Interaction of this nature, where individuals can respectfully challenge their own and others' assumptions, can both nurture the habit of engaging in the reflective process and facilitate a deeper understanding of the origins of diverse opinions and perspectives (Burrows, 1995). Additionally, this engagement with others can result in the participants broadening their knowledge base, developing increasingly skilful ways of identifying the focus of reflection and becoming more conscious of the importance of critical, professional reflection. However, as it is unlikely that any two professional experiences are identical, it may be useful to provide some common focus for the discussions. McGovern (2012) describes the use of carefully chosen objects and literature to facilitate the conversation in the reflection component of his service learning classes; the purpose of which is to help students identify and articulate their own beliefs and values. While a similar purpose can be identified in the use of reflective conversations for student teachers, in this instance, scenarios 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 14 17-Oct-13

5:57:13 PM REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 15 have been developed to illustrate some of the tensions and conflicts that characterise teaching as a profession. The scenario below and those that are presented for discussion in the following chapters are examples of experiences that can be part of any teacher's professional life. They are useful for reflective practice because there are no 'correct' answers. The diverse responses of individual teachers and students to these situations serve to illustrate both the complexity of teaching as a profession and the need to have a reflective framework from which to unpack, analyse and determine a response, albeit a theoretical response in this context. The experiences described in the scenarios stem from issues that arise from foundational beliefs or theories about teachers' work, the role of teachers as professionals and current notions of 'best practice' that are commonly used in the development of standards. Frequently, although the standards or benchmarks themselves are not usually the subject of any challenge or change, these measures include assumptions about the commonality of beliefs and value systems and about your degree of understanding and interpretation. As a result, benchmarks and professional teaching standards are often presumed to be interpreted and understood in the same way by all members of the profession, despite their personal diversity. In practice, this is unlikely to be the case, as individuals invariably interpret each construct in terms of their own knowledge and experience. Consequently, many aspects of teaching standards and benchmarks provide fertile ground for discussion, analysis and reflective practice. Scenario One James had just completed his teaching degree and was very excited when he was offered his first appointment in a large, local primary school. He had visited for the first time before the summer break for his orientation and to ensure he would be as organised as possible for his first few weeks of 'real' teaching. All was going smoothly and he felt quite comfortable and confident until he entered the staffroom towards the end of the lunch break to wait for the principal, whom he was yet to meet. In the staffroom, several experienced members of staff were discussing the new principal's plans for the upcoming school year. It appeared that he had decided, with encouragement from the local secondary school, to experiment with new class structures for all but the youngest pupils. The other pupils were to be organised in 'performance' groups for literacy and numeracy each day. They were then to be assigned a particular teacher for their group for the year. This meant that the pupils might have as many as three teachers during (Continued) 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 15 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM 16 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE FOR TEACHERS the day instead of the usual arrangement of one teacher to one group of pupils identified as their class. If the literacy or numeracy teacher they were assigned happened to be their class teacher, then those pupils experienced less movement and less changes of teachers. The teachers in the staffroom were debating the proposed changes, when another teacher came in and joined the conversation. She went on to explain that she knew of other information relating to the changes. It appeared that the principal had decided that the most experienced teachers should teach the most needy learners and that the less experienced teachers should teach those who had already demonstrated appropriate competencies in one or other area of learning. Additionally, the groups identified as 'needy' were to be small, with the group size increasing in proportion with the learners' proficiencies. She explained that the groups of needy learners were to be flexible in order to permit them to progress to the other groups as they developed increased competencies. All the restructuring was to be discussed in detail at the staff meeting day at the end of the term. At this meeting, James was invited to join the other staff members who were reflecting on the implications of the changes. Initially, there were debates and suggestions regarding the supervised movement of pupils from one class to another, the timetable was reorganised to accommodate whole-school literacy and numeracy blocks and a plan for sharing resources was devised. After lunch the teachers were to determine, with the help of the principal, which teachers were to be assigned to the performance groups. Over lunch James listened attentively to the debate about the notion of placing the more experienced teachers with the smaller groups of learners who needed explicit support. The staff members had obviously taken the time to think the ideas through. They appeared happy with the screening process that had been developed and the idea that flexibility was a key aspect of the programme, but there was some concern about three aspects of the plan. One concerned the provision of appropriate, challenging, teaching and learning tasks for the high achievers if they were in the classes allocated to the less experienced teachers. This was mentioned, they assured James, not because they felt less experienced teachers were not well-prepared but because these learners, when grouped together, needed to be provided for in a variety of ways that were not just extensions of the class activities and they considered that to be a considerable challenge for a beginning teacher. Another concern related to the organisation of the 'flexible' phases when pupils had opportunities to visit and contribute to each other's activities. They agreed that a planned schedule would help them organise that aspect of the restructuring. The third worry concerned the limited range (Continued) 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 16 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 17 of experience that the newer members of staff would have in supporting the learning of pupils with difficulties in the key areas of numeracy and literacy. As they left the staffroom on their way to the meeting in the library, James wondered how the principal would respond to the concerns that had been discussed. He was surprised to see as he walked into the library that there was a question written on the whiteboard in large letters. He read 'What is the purpose of education?' He was even more surprised to see the staff laughing and shaking their heads. It was, apparently, a familiar question for these teachers

and they began to write their responses on the paper provided. James felt uneasy. It was not the type of ‘big picture’ question that had been a priority during his teacher preparation, although it had been discussed. He sat, wondering how to respond. What was he going to write on the otherwise blank page that had his name on it? This scenario presents a predicament explicitly related to professional work. What is the purpose of it all? It illustrates the situation that often arises from the challenges implicit in proposed changes to traditionally held views of schooling. In general, as can be seen in the following chapter, professional standards for teachers generally include statements relating to the requirement for teachers to provide quality education for all learners and to develop the capacities to recognise aspects of diversity and to adapt their practice in order to ensure this goal for all learners is met. What might you consider in order to answer the following questions? Where could you begin your analysis? What important aspects of professional practice might you reflect upon first? In order to facilitate the process, the guiding questions in the Personal Reflection Model described in Figure 1.1 have been customised so they reflect the content of this scenario (see Figure 1.2). As it is often a temptation for students new to the reflective process to try to determine the Now What? before engaging in the analytical process that is embedded in the So What?, it may be useful to record your answers to each of the questions in the second phase. In this way, the congruence between your analysis and your proposed course of action can remain strong. Questions for Reflection • Q1. Are there multiple issues here for reflection? List them. • Q2. What is the issue for critical reflection? • Q3. In James’ situation, what would you contribute to the discussion? 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 17 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM 18 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE FOR TEACHERS Conclusion This chapter introduces the notion of reflective practice. It provides a brief overview of some of the models of reflection that have been developed over a number of years to support reflective practice in teaching and other professions. Additionally, it discusses some major differences in how the components of reflective practice have been defined and the impact that Phase Kolb, 1994) Questions related to self (Gardner, 1993) What? Would I have selected this experience as a focus for reflection if I were James? What makes it important for me consciously and purposefully think about this experience at this time? So What? What are the many foci here as I understand them? What are the levels of reflection (technical, practical and critical or choose from one of the other models that incorporate various types/levels of reflection. Use whichever to help you work through your experience) that I think need to be considered as foci for discussion in this experience? In identifying my focus/foci what level/s am I prioritising in my reflection? Why would that be so? Do my priorities reflect/include consideration of my values and beliefs as a beginning teacher about the nature of teachers’ professional work? Do my priorities reflect anything about how I am trying to develop as a beginning teacher? Do I need to engage at a level of reflection that necessitates engaging with my personal ethical and moral considerations (critical reflection) (i) about the purpose and process of education and (ii) my obligation to meet all students’ learning needs? Now What? What response (action), based on my responses to phase two, would I need to take at the staff meeting when asked to join the discussion about the principal’s proposed changes to the organisation and content of lessons in literacy and numeracy? Do I have the skills, knowledge and strategies to make a well-informed decision about the response I may make? If not, does this impact on my response? Can I realistically take action? Is it appropriate of me in this instance to make a response, given that I am the most recent recruit to the school’s team of teachers? What personal, social and ideological influences have impacted on the response I would make? How does my proposed action reflect my understanding and personal beliefs regarding what constitutes ethical, professional, effective teaching and the purpose of education? Are my decisions and proposed actions congruent with my ethical and moral perspectives? Do I have the motivation, perseverance and capacities required to activate any ideas I may suggest in my response and to follow them through as successfully as possible? Figure 1.2 The Personal Reflection Model for Scenario One 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 18 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 19 these variations can have on how you understand and apply strategies in this aspect of your professional work. In addition to identifying some differences, the main phases of reflection, about which there appears to be some consensus, have been discussed. There is also agreement that professional teacher reflection is inextricably linked to professional experiences, whether in action or as recounted incidents known as on action. Despite a traditional tendency to applaud the attempts of reflective practitioners to be ‘objective’ in their deliberations, a Personal Reflection Model, based on Gardner’s (1993) intrapersonal intelligence domain and utilising Kolb’s (1994) three-phase framework, has been developed as a more authentic approach to facilitate improved professional performance in the current climate of increased teacher accountability, newly developed professional standards and changing societal and ideological expectations. There is also an acknowledgement of the potential for individual interpretations and perspectives on the nature of your work as presented in various professional standards and the need for you, as a prospective teacher, to investigate and to reflect on the concepts and assumptions that underpin your standards, especially if they are presented as mandatory documents. This chapter is developed in such a way as to provide a paradigm for the chapters that follow. There will be discussions of literature, opportunities for you to think about personal knowledge, opinions and perspectives as an ongoing activity and scenarios on which to focus your thinking. This provision of scenarios for discussion provides content for a shared

conversation, a means by which you can collegially work together to identify and explore your personally held values and beliefs in relation to your professional work. These conversations also provide opportunities for you to explore some implications of the theoretical and ideological underpinnings that are integral elements of many types of professional standards for teachers. The purpose of engaging authentically with the predicaments and complexities that are conveyed in the scenario recounted in this chapter and those in the chapters that follow, will also serve to provide contexts that allow you to become familiar with, and skilful in, the identification, analysis and planning process that constitute professional reflection for teachers. How you organise your thinking, record your thoughts and reflections, is really up to you. There are a number of commonly utilised ways of recording which others have found very useful. These include pairing with a carefully selected ‘critical friend’ for discussion (Burrows, 1995), journalling your own ideas and perspectives in order to develop a deep understanding of yourself (Dinkelman, 2003; Francis, 1995), art making as an expression of self (Grushka, 2005), reflective writing (Hoover, 1994; Nyaumwe and Mtetwa, 2011), action research studies and field-based experiences (Kemmis, 2011; Liston and Zeichner, 1990; Zeichner, 1981), blogging (Killeavy and Moloney, 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 19 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM 20 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE FOR TEACHERS 2010), video making and online discussions (Ozcinar and Deryakulu, 2011), working with the Zen Buddhist notion of ‘mindfulness’ (Tremmel, 1993), using frameworks and strategies as developed here and elsewhere (Tsangaridou and O’Sullivan, 1994), and developing digital portfolios (Wade and Yarbrough, 1996). The opportunities are endless. In the following chapters you will find discussions of some of the most critical, foundational issues that have the capacity to impact on your thinking, professional perspectives and classroom interactions. You will also find invitations to reflect on these as a means of developing your professional learning.

References Burrows, D. (1995) The nurse teacher’s role in the promotion of reflective practice. *Nurse Education Today*, 15 (5): 346–50. Calderhead, J. (1989) Reflective teaching and teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 5 (1): 43–51. Conway, P. (2001) Anticipatory reflection while learning to teach: from a temporally truncated to a temporally distributed model of reflection in teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17 (1): 89–106. Cruickshank, D.R. (1985) Uses and benefits of reflective teaching. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 66 (10): 704–6. Dewey, J. (1933) *How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process*. Boston, MA: DC Heath. Dinkelman, T. (2003) Self-study in teacher education – a means and ends tool for promoting reflective teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 54 (1): 6–18. Francis, D. (1995) The reflective journal – a window to preservice teachers practical knowledge. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 11 (3): 229–41. Gardner, H. (1993) *Frames of Mind*. Tenth Anniversary Edition. New York: Basic Books. Gore, J. (1987) Reflecting on reflective teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 38 (2): 33–9. Gore, J. and Zeichner, K. (1991) Action research and reflective teaching in preservice teacher education – a case study from the United States. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 7 (2): 119–36. Grushka, K. (2005) Artists as reflective self-learners and cultural communicators: an exploration of the qualitative aesthetic dimension of knowing self through reflective practice in art-making. *Reflective Practice*, 6 (3): 353–66. Habermas, J. (1974) *Theory and Practice*. London: Heinemann. Hatton, N. and Smith, D. (1995) Reflection in teacher education: towards definition and implementation. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 11 (1): 33–49. Heydon, R. and Hibbert, K. (2010) ‘Relocating the personal’ to engender critically reflective practice in pre-service literacy teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26 (4): 796–804. Hoover, L. (1994) Reflective writing as a window on preservice teachers thought processes. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 10 (1): 83–93. Jay, J.K. and Johnson, K.L. (2002) Capturing complexity: a typology of reflective practice for teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18 (1): 73–85. Kemmis, S. (2011) ‘A self-reflective practitioner and a new definition of critical participatory action research.’ In N. Mockler and J. Sachs (eds), *Rethinking Educational Practice through Reflexive Inquiry*, vol. 7. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. pp. 11–29. Killeavy, M. and Moloney, A. (2010) Reflection in a social space: can blogging support reflective practice for beginning teachers? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26 (4): 1070–6. 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 20 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 PM REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 21 Kinsella, E. (2001) Reflections on reflective practice. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 68 (3): 195–8. Kolb, D. (1994) *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. Liston, D.P. and Zeichner, K.M. (1990) Reflective teaching and action research in preservice teacher-education. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 16 (3): 235–54. Mayer, D. (1999) Building teaching identities: implications for preservice teacher education. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Melbourne, Australia. McGovern, D. (2012) Learning serving reflecting. Paper presented at the International Conference Future of Education, Florence. Nisbett, R. (2005) *The Geography of Thought*. London: Nicholas Brearley. Noffke, S. and Brennan, M. (1988) The dimensions of reflection: a conceptual and contextual analysis. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans. Nyaumwe, L.J. and Mtetwa, D.K. (2011) Developing a cognitive theory from student teachers’ post-lesson reflective dialogues on secondary school mathematics. *South African Journal of Education*, 31 (1): 145–59. Ozcinar, H. and Deryakulu, D. (2011) The effects of reflection points in video-cases and teacher participation in online

discussion groups on reflective thinking. Hacettepe Universitesi Egitim Fakultesi Dergisi-Hacettepe University Journal of Education, 40: 321–31. Richardson, V. (1990). The Evolution of Reflective Teaching and Teacher-Education. New York: Teachers College Press. Robins, A., Ashbaker, B., Enriquez, J. and Morgan, J. (2003) Learning to reflect: professional practice for professionals and paraprofessionals. International Journal of Learning, 10: 2555–65. Schon, D. (1983) The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action. New York: Basic Books. Schon, D. (1987) Educating the Reflective Practitioner. San Francisco: Jossey Bass. Schon, D. (1991) The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think and Act. Oxford: Avebury. Tremmel, R. (1993) Zen and the art of reflective practice in teacher-education. Harvard Educational Review, 63 (4): 434–58. Tsangaridou, N. and OSullivan, M. (1994) Using pedagogical reflective strategies to enhance reflection amongst preservice physical education teachers. Journal of Teaching in Physical Education, 14 (1): 13–33. Valli, L. (1992) Reflective Teacher Education. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. Valli, L. (1997) Listening to other voices: a description of teacher reflection in the United States. Peabody Journal of Education, 72 (1): 67–88. Van Manen, M. (1977) Linking ways of knowing with ways of being practical. Curriculum inquiry, 6 (3): 205–28. Wade, R.C. and Yarbrough, D B. (1996. Portfolios: a tool for reflective thinking in teacher education? Teaching and Teacher Education, 12 (1): 63–79. White, D. (2004) Reflective practice: wishful thinking or a practical leadership tool? Practising Administrator, 26 (3): 41–4. Wieringa, N. (2011) Teachers' educational design as a process of reflection-in-action: the lessons we can learn from Donald Schon's The Reflective Practitioner when studying the professional practice of teachers as educational designers. Curriculum Inquiry, 41 (1): 167–74. Zeichner, K. (1981) Reflective teaching and field-based experience in teacher education. Interchange, 12 (4): 1–22. 01_Sellars_Ch-01.indd 21 17-Oct-13 5:57:13 P

This page titled [5.5: Reflective Practice](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

5.6: Reflective Teaching- an Element of Life-Long Learning



This page titled [5.6: Reflective Teaching- an Element of Life-Long Learning](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

5.7: Reviewing and Reflecting on Documentation

Looking Back

“Reflection is a time to slow down, to see what can be learned if we take the time to carefully look at and listen to ourselves, and those with whom we work.” (Parlakian, 2001, p. 16)

Once caregivers have observed and documented facts about each infant and toddler, they must do something with those facts. As part of ongoing infant and toddler assessment, caregivers review the facts and reflect on what they mean. When caregivers review anecdotal notes, photos, videos, or other samples, they piece together stories that portray the development of the infants and toddlers in their care. Caregivers may review multiple pieces of documentation (video recordings, notes, photographs, and so forth) to deepen their understanding of an individual infant or toddler. Observation notes might clarify why an infant or toddler is making rapid progress in one developmental domain while continuing to practice at about the same level of competency in another domain.

[1] Caregivers consider what the information says about an infant or toddler's development, interests, and needs. The answers to these questions lead to individualized care and a supportive curriculum. [2]

Questions caregivers ask while reflecting on documentation might include:

- What developmental skill or activity does the infant or toddler appear to be working on?
- What strategies does the infant or toddler use to play with different toys?
- Does the infant or toddler engage with objects or people differently than he did a month ago? What has changed? What has not changed?
- Do my actions and the actions of other adults who interact with the infant or toddler affect the outcomes of the infant or toddler's experience? If so, how so?
- How does the information relate to goals for the infant or toddler? How does it relate to the family's goals?
- What other information do I need?
- What questions do I have for the infant or toddler's family? [3]

Caregivers who take time to reflect on the documentation created by their observations uncover infant or toddler's likes and dislikes, discover what makes the infant or toddler comfortable or uncomfortable, and notice how the infant or toddler approaches familiar and unfamiliar tasks and situations. This information enables caregivers to see and track trends in an infant or toddler's growth and development.

During the reflective process, interpreting the meaning of infant and toddler behaviors and interactions becomes essential. Ongoing observation and reflection on documentation offer insights into each infant and toddler, which deepen caregivers' understanding of each infant and toddler's development.

Reflecting Together

Caregivers share documentation with others to deepen understanding of infant/toddler thinking and learning. Interpreting an infant or toddler's thoughts, feelings, or ideas is vital for reflection and often most effective in partnership with co-teachers.[2] When caregivers interpret documentation, learning becomes explicit. Since documentation makes learning visible, caregivers need to work together to interpret that learning (Cagliari, 2004).

[1] [The California Infant/Toddler Curriculum Framework](#) by the [California Department of Education](#) is used with permission

[2] Early Education and Support. [Best Practices for Planning Curriculum for Young Children: The integrated nature of learning](#) is in the public domain

[3] [The California Infant/Toddler Curriculum Framework](#) by the [California Department of Education](#) is used with permission

This page titled [5.7: Reviewing and Reflecting on Documentation](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

5.8: How to be a More Reflective Teacher

Teaching isn't easy.

It will challenge your content knowledge, pedagogical skills, charisma, diplomacy, communication, statistical analysis skills, and a dozen other strands you didn't know where strands. Some teachers may try to tell you that being happy doesn't matter. That it's about results. Data. Performance. Or more rhetorically, the students.

Teaching is about the students, but guess what? If you can't take care of yourself, you can't help the students—not in a way that's sustainable. We've talked before about [surviving teaching](#). But what about setting the bar higher? What about [being happy](#)? And further, can you be happy and be a good teacher at the same time?

A key factor in happiness can be perspective, and a factor in effectiveness can be reflection. Below are 10 ways to be a more reflective teacher.

1. Record yourself teaching

This used to require awkward VHS systems and tripods that students would knock over—and that would distract them endlessly.

Today, it can be a matter of casually propping up your smartphone out of sight, setting it to record, and getting on with the lesson. In fact, you can even create a time-lapse (there are many apps that do this with ease) to track your movement around the room. You can watch the video with and without sound. You can even look for specific things—who talks the most, average wait time, clarity of instructions, etc.

And it doesn't have to be video—just audio can be revealing, too.

2. Share that video with your PLN

And ask them to help you do the above, and offer feedback of their own. (Just be sure that students' faces are blurred if you're making the video public.) Every teacher needs a high-functioning [Professional Learning Network](#).

3. Invite colleagues to observe your class

Not just the same few teachers, either. Ask them to be 'critical friends' and then thicken your skin. It's not about you, it's about your craft.

4. Ask the students for feedback

You might be surprised how good they are at guiding you in your work.

5. Ask yourself daily, "How did it go and how do you know?"

This is a question from Cognitive Coaching training, and it's a useful tool to frame reflection. What are your general impressions, and what evidence do you have to support those impressions? Think of something right now that you believe to be effective. A literacy strategy, for example. Or a favorite unit. Maybe a [no-zero grading policy](#).

You say it 'works.' How do you know? What can you point to as evidence? What would others say? What metrics are you using? (See #10 below.)

6. Keep a minimalist blog or journal

This doesn't have to be anything ambitious—the point is reflection, not web design. Make it as basic as possible and try to blog at least twice a week—and don't skip it if you're feeling too tired or stressed to reflect. These can be the best times and writing about it can be therapeutic. You can even limit yourself to five minutes per entry.

The only goal here is to reflect—maybe create a list of sample prompts or stems to support the reflection. Then go back and read previous entries every now and then to see what you were thinking, when, and why.

7. Be honest with—but not critical of—yourself

So many potentially great teachers are blind to their shortcomings.

This is probably a kind of defense mechanism. That, or they really can't see their hangups. No teacher is perfect, but reflection can help you identify those barriers that are keeping you from improving. This will require you to be honest with yourself; don't

rationalize your own mediocrity, but don't tear yourself apart, either.

Reflect, iterate, and improve.

8. Surround yourself with enthusiasm

The more potential you see around you, the more you'll observe, analyze, and design to try to fit some of those ideas in.

9. Look for what's working

Don't become addicted to fixing the broken bits in your teaching; celebrate what you do well. Identify your own strengths, and use them to transform your teaching. If you're good at tinkering, use that in your teaching no matter the content area. If you thrive through interpersonal connections, use that to drive your work.

By looking for what's working, we can see how that affects everything else, tracing cause/effect patterns to understand how to reflect and grow.

10. Diversify your metrics

It's tempting to have 'stuff you like,' but have a diverse set of measures of the effectiveness of what you do: Talk to students. Get feedback from parents. Have colleagues watch you. Record it and share with your PLN. Use a variety of [types of assessments](#).

And that's just the content part. You also need to know if your manner of interacting with colleagues is working for both you and them. Your tone, body language, quantity and quality of conversation, and so on.

The same with how you grade papers, store unit materials, call the class to attention, manage your time, and on and on. Of all the ways to be a more reflective teacher, there is no single best approach. Just make sure you know what's working and what's not. So often, teachers spin their wheels wildly without knowing it.

This page titled [5.8: How to be a More Reflective Teacher](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

5.9: Activity- Write a My Future Self

<https://www.futureme.org/>

This page titled [5.9: Activity- Write a My Future Self](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Teacher as a Proactive Practitioner

6.1: Teacher as a Proactive Practitioner

6.2: The Teacher's Role - Build and Maintain Positive Relationships with Children

6.3: Building Environments that Encourage Positive Behavior- The Preschool behavior Support Self-Assessment

6.4: Factors that Influence Behavior

6.5: Redirecting Behavior- A Proactive Approach

6.6: Proactive versus Reactive Classroom Management

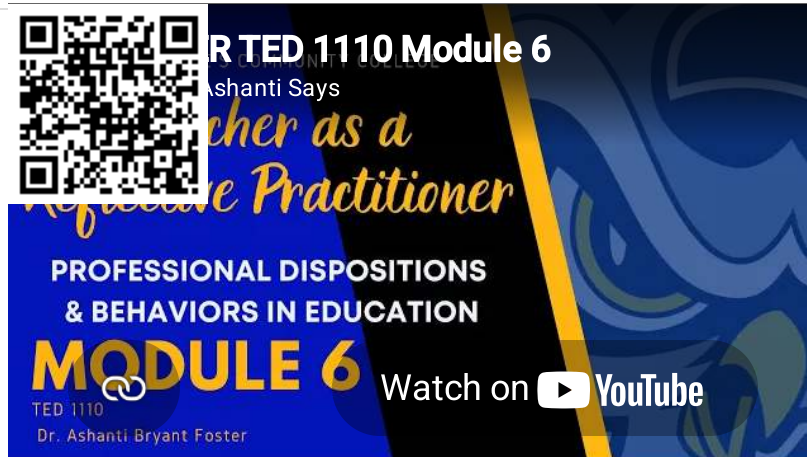
6.7: Are You Reactive or Proactive?

6.8: Social-Emotional Learning- What is SEL and Why SEL Matters

6.9: Positive Behavior Support

This page titled [6: Teacher as a Proactive Practitioner](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

6.1: Teacher as a Proactive Practitioner



This page titled [6.1: Teacher as a Proactive Practitioner](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

6.2: The Teacher's Role - Build and Maintain Positive Relationships with Children

Teachers build meaningful relationships with children during day-to-day interactions with them. Since relationships are central to young children's learning and development, effective preschool teachers engage in consistent efforts to develop positive and nurturing relationships with each child they serve. Preschool teachers understand the importance of consistency, continuity, and responsiveness in supporting children's healthy social and emotional development (adapted from California Department of Education and First 5 California 2012, 121). In cases in which children display challenging behaviors, teachers can focus even more directly on cultivating a relationship with the children during less stressful times (when children behave appropriately) and rely on additional support through ongoing mentoring and coaching (e.g., reflective supervision, early childhood mental health consultation) to put in place effective strategies to establish and sustain positive relationships with young children. When teachers engage in positive, nurturing relationships with young children, children feel safe and confident to engage deeply in exploration and learning. For those children who come to the classroom displaying challenging behaviors, nurturing, stable, and positive relationships with teachers often help to provide them with the emotional support needed to develop future positive relationships with teachers and peers (Buyse et al. 2008).[1]

Development is often referred to as a journey, not a race. Children navigate their journey through individual rates of development. Along the journey, there are many milestones and developmental successes to celebrate, but alongside these celebrations there are behavioral considerations that challenge children and their caregivers. Teaching young children is not just about creating an environment and a curriculum, but also providing limits, clear expectations and applying developmentally appropriate strategies to guide young children in navigating their journey. Most importantly, teachers must also demonstrate a sensitivity to a variety of children's needs, temperaments and learning styles.[2]

References

[1] [California Preschool Program Guidelines](#) by the [California Department of Education](#) is used with permission (pg. 39-40)

[2] Content by Kristin Beeve is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)

This page titled [6.2: The Teacher's Role - Build and Maintain Positive Relationships with Children](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

6.3: Building Environments that Encourage Positive Behavior- The Preschool behavior Support Self-Assessment

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/mar2016/building-environments-encourage-positive-behavior-preschool>

This page titled 6.3: Building Environments that Encourage Positive Behavior- The Preschool behavior Support Self-Assessment is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

6.4: Factors that Influence Behavior

There are many factors that influence the behaviors of children. It's important for teachers to keep these in mind as they observe, interpret, and respond to children's behaviors.^[1]

Developmental Factors by Age

While each child develops at their own rate and in their own time and may not match every listed item, here are some general descriptions of children by age:

1-2 Year Olds

- Like to explore their environment
- Like to open and take things apart
- Like to dump things over
- Can play alone for short periods of time
- Still in oral stage, may use biting, or hitting to express their feelings or ideas

2-3 Year Olds

- Need to run, climb, push and pull
- Are not capable of sharing, waiting or taking turns
- Want to do things on their own
- Work well with routine
- Like to follow adults around
- Prolong bedtime
- Say "no"
- Understand more than he/she can say

3-4 year Olds

- Like to run, jump, climb
- May grow out of naps
- Want approval from adults
- Want to be included "me too"
- Are curious about everything
- May have new fears and anxieties
- Have little patience, but can wait their turn
- Can take some responsibility
- Can clean up after themselves

4-5 Year Olds

- Are very active
- Start things but don't necessarily finish them
- Are bossy and boastful
- Tell stories, exaggerate
- Use "toilet" words in a "silly" way
- Have active imaginations

5-6 Year Olds

- Want everything to be fair
- Able to understand responsibility
- Able to solve problems on their own
- Try to negotiate^[2]

Table 6.1: Positive Approaches for Developmental Factors^[3]

Ages/Stages	Developmental Factors	Examples of a Positive Approach to developmental factors to manage behavior
Infant/Toddler	Children this age: • Actively explore environments • Like to take things apart • Have limited verbal ability, so biting or hitting to express feelings is common • Like to dump things over	Children in this stage tend to dump and run, so plan games to enhance this behavior in a positive way. Have large wide-mouth bins for children to practice “dumping items” into and out of. This strategy redirects the behavior of creating a mess into a structured activity to match the development.
Older Toddlers	Children this age: • Need to run, climb, push and pull • Are incapable of sharing; waiting or taking turns • Express beginning independence • Work well with routines • Say “no” often • Comprehend more than they can verbally express	Teachers of this age often find children trying to climb up on tables, chairs and shelves. Incorporate developmentally climbing equipment and create obstacle courses to redirect activity into positive behaviors. Avoid using the word “no” and create expressions that teach what to do instead of what not to do.
Young Preschool (3-4 years)	Children this age: • Like to be active • Are curious and ask many questions • Express new fears and anxieties • Have little patience • Can clean up after themselves • Can take some responsibility • Seek adult approval	Young preschoolers become curious and create many misconceptions as they create new schemas for understanding concepts. Listen to ideas sensitively address them quickly and honestly. Model exploration and engagement in new activities (especially ones they may be fearful of engaging in)
Older Preschool (4-5 years)	Children this age: • Are highly active • Can be “bossy” • Have an active imagination • Exaggerate stories • Often use “toilet words” in silly ways • Start things but don’t always finish	Ask the children to create new silly, but appropriate words to represent emotions rather than focusing on the “bad” words they use.
Young School-Age	Children this age: • Are able to problem solve on their own • Begin to understand responsibility • Think in terms of fairness • Attempt to negotiate	Fairness is a big issue for this group so working with this age group, a teacher should sit with children to develop “rules” and “consequences” so they can take ownership of behavioral expectations

Environmental Factors

- Weather
- Adequate Play Space
- Room Arrangement
- Materials Available (not enough)
- Peers they interact with
- Parent/child relationship
- Sibling Relationship
- Relationships with friends

- Daily Routine (Rushed, busy, not enough time to play, run or exercise)
- T.V. Exposure (screen time- amount and quality)
- Lack of Sleep
- Nutrition[4]

Table 6.2: Positive Approaches for Environmental Factors[5]

Area	Approach
Weather	Plan for alternate gross motor experiences during inclement weather Provide flexibility in the daily routine to accommodate weather extremes
Adequate Play Space	Ensure the space provided for each center/learning area is adequate If there is crowding, look at the messages the space is giving the children about how many can play there Make sure you are using all the spaces of the classroom effectively (is the unused space in the center of the room?)
Room Arrangement	Separate active/boisterous spaces from those that are quiet Watch that you don't create "runways" and "islands" to run around Provide protection for children's creations (try to avoid creating walkways through spaces where children are engaged) Put messy spaces where it is easier to clean up (near sinks and on flooring that can be easily cleaned)
Materials	Especially for younger children, have duplicates of popular toys Make sure that there are enough materials to ensure that children always have new choices available (without waiting) Ensure that they are stored in an organized way Make them accessible to children to get out and put away independently
Relationships	Support children's relationships and attachment to their families/parents Support relationships between children in the classroom Build a strong sense of classroom community Facilitate problem-solving and conflict-resolution
Technology	Create a policy on the use of screen media in which technology is used as a learning tool (rather than entertainment)
Basic Needs (sleep, nutrition, etc.)	Schedule adequate rest time for children and create a peaceful environment for resting Serve nutritious snacks and meals for children that are offered every couple of hours Consider how to provide for children who are sleepy and hungry at other times of the day

Individual Factors/Personal Styles

- Temperament (Easy, Difficult, Slow to Warm)
- Learning styles/personal uniqueness

Social Emotional Needs

- To feel loved

- To be included
- To feel important
- To be heard
- To feel valued
- To feel safe
- To have friends[6]

Positive Approaches for Individual Factors, Personal Styles, and Social/Emotional Needs

Young children communicate their needs and wants through behaviors. Educators and parents can observe children's behavior and look for clues about what it means. Since families know their children best, early childhood educators can ask families about their children's behaviors and what they notice at home. Sometimes, the behavior's meaning is clear to adults. Other times, educators and parents need to try different responses and watch the child's reactions. Over time, adults will likely improve in responding effectively to a particular child's communications.[7]

Motivation behind Behavior

In order to respond effectively to children's behaviors and to extend positive relationships with children, it's important to understand the motivation behind children's behaviors and then match your approach.[8]

Table 6.3: Motivation[9]

Motivation	Approach
Attention - Positive or Negative	Provide positive attention
Power - To be the "boss"	Provide many opportunities for choice making (choices you can live with) and practice decision-making
Revenge - Children that are hurt want to hurt others to feel important	Acknowledge intense feelings and stay positive
Inadequacy - Children don't want others to expect anything from them for fear of failure	Provide opportunities for positive success

Having Appropriate Expectations for Behavior

It is really important that we realize that often what adults consider to be challenging behaviors are entirely age-appropriate responses from children. So it is important that teachers:

- Respond adaptively to individual children, considering each child's age, temperament, language, communication skills, culture, interests, and abilities.
- Examine their own expectations of "appropriate" and "safe" behavior, looking for potential bias toward gender or developmental skills.[10]

[11]

Challenging behavior can often be addressed through prevention strategies. For children with disabilities who have challenging behavior, the process is the same as for all children, but the strategies might differ depending on children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and their specific needs and strengths. The following strategies can be individualized as needed.

Classroom schedules and routines:

- Have consistent schedules and routines
- Make sure the content and length of activities are developmentally appropriate
- Be intentional about using visuals to teach routines
- Give consistent feedback
- Provide more individualized support for children with disabilities who have challenging behavior during routines. They may need an individualized visual schedule or a peer buddy, for example.

Transitions:

- Try to minimize the number of transitions
- Teach expectations
- Model or provide visual examples of appropriate things to do while waiting (counting, singing a group song, playing Simon Says)
- Allow children to transition at separate times or in smaller groups as needed

Large Group Activities:

- Consider the length of the activity (especially circle time). Is it age appropriate?
- For children who are working on expanding their attention, shorten wait times and allow breaks.
- Use visuals to make rules clear and to break tasks into smaller steps
- Provide ongoing feedback to expand children's understanding, participation, and learning

Types of Supports

- Visuals
 - To help children communicate their needs
 - To break down tasks
 - To clarify expectations
- Timer
 - To provide a safety signal so children know when something is coming to an end
- Adult support
 - To facilitate large group and small group activities
 - To model and provide examples, and help children who need more intensive support
 - To provide choices
- Peer support
 - To model, think-pair-share, or be a buddy
- Child preferences
 - To increase children's motivation and engagement in tasks that can trigger challenging behavior

Involving Children in Guidance Curriculum

It is a valuable learning experience to involve children in creating/defining the classroom rules. They become invested in those expectations. Teachers should use the following umbrella when creating classroom rules:

- Keep self safe: (walk inside, feet on the floor, etc...)
- Keep others safe: (keep hands to themselves)
- Keep materials/environment safe: (keep books on the shelf to prevent tearing, throw balls, dig with shovels, etc...)

[10]

Classroom Teaching Strategies for Positive Interactions and Prosocial Behavior^[12]

Instruction is more effective when it is embedded in the meaningful activities and contexts that occur throughout a child's day (Katz & McClellan 1997). Here are suggestions and examples for teaching social skills within classroom activities.

Modeling. Demonstrate the skill while explaining what you are doing. As you pass a block to a child, say, "Look, I am sharing my blocks with my friend."

Modeling with puppets. Use puppets to model the skill while interacting with a child, an adult, or another puppet. A puppet can explain to the teacher and the class how she became angry and hit her brother to get a toy. You can ask the puppet to consider other solutions and then discuss what a child might do when he or she wants a toy that another child is using.

Preparing peer partners. Ask one child to show another child the skill or to help the child use the target skill. You can prompt the peer by saying, "Carmen, Justin is still learning how to wait and take turns. Since you know what to do, can you help him? Show

him the line-up picture while you wait for a drink at the water fountain.”

Singing. Introduce a new skill through a song. To teach children to trade toys, pass out small toys during a large group activity, then sing the following song to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb” and practice trading:

I can be a problem solver, problem solver, problem solver, I can be a problem solver, let me show you how.
Maybe I can trade with you, trade with you, trade with you, Maybe I can trade with you; let me show you how.

Children then practice trading toys with each other.

Doing fingerplays. Introduce the skill with a finger- play, then follow up with a discussion or story. While showing fingers, have children recite this rhyme:

One little friend cried, “Boo-hoo”; a friend gives a hug and then there are two.

Two little friends share with me; we play together and that makes three.

Three little friends ask for more; they all say “Please,” and then comes four.

Four little friends take turns down the slide; another comes to play, and that makes five.

Five little friends have fun at school, because they follow every rule.

Using a flannel board. Introduce a new skill using flannel board activities and stories. For example, to teach turn taking you could have flannel pieces for Humpty Dumpty and change the rhyme so that “All the king’s horses and all the king’s friends / Work as a team to put Humpty together again.” As you say the rhyme, have the children take turns putting the pieces (castle, bricks, Humpty Dumpty pieces, horses, and friends) on the flannel board. When you finish the rhyme, extend the activity by talking about how Humpty felt when he sat on the wall; when he fell; and when his friends helped put him back together.

Using prompts. Give a child verbal, visual, or physical prompts to use a skill during interactions and activities. When a child who has difficulty with initiating play interactions moves toward a group playing together, you might say privately, “Remember to use your words and ask to play.”

Giving encouragement. Provide specific feedback when the child uses the skill. For example, describe what the child did: “You asked Joey for a turn. I saw that you two had a good time playing together.” Encouragement can be verbal or a signal (a thumbs-up or high five).

Using incidental teaching. Guide the child to use the skill during interactions and activities. Quietly say to the child, “Quan, I see that you are very angry that all the trucks are being used. What can you do when you are angry? Let’s go over the steps.”

Playing games. Use games to teach problem solving, words that express feelings, identification of others’ feelings, friendship skills, and so on. Place photographs of each child in a bag. Have the children take turns pulling a photo out of the bag and offering a compliment to the child in the photo.

Discussing children’s literature. Read books to help teach friendship skills, feeling words, problem solving, and so on. While reading a story, pause and ask the children how a character in the story might feel or ask them to suggest ideas for solving the character’s problem.

Stating Behavior Expectations

Behavioral expectations are the appropriate behaviors expected from children during specific activities and routines. By stating behavioral expectations in advance of activities, routines and transitions, we allow children more opportunities to be successful. When children clearly understand what we expect of them, they can more securely play and work within a set of parameters. Other benefits of teaching behavioral expectations are that it:

- Maximizes children’s learning time. When we tell children our expectations ahead of time, we spend less time playing catch-up during the activity.
- Builds a common language. When we outline behavioral expectations for activities, routines and transitions, we help build a common language among the teachers and children. Using the same phrases during the same activities, help children to understand the meaning of the expectations (i.e., walking feet and putting breakfast dishes in the brown bucket).

- Provides a consistent message to children. Giving children mixed messages about what is okay and not okay detracts from learning and engagement over time. When we say, write, and model our message consistently to children, they are more likely to get it.
- Sets the stage for learning. Developing behavioral expectations before activities begin creates an atmosphere ripe for engagement and learning.
- Helps prevent behavior problems before they happen. When we tell children in positive ways what is expected of them before they act, we can more readily reinforce the behaviors we want to see, based on our stated expectations.[\[13\]](#)

Tips for Teachers – Stating Behavioral Expectations

Anticipate – Think through activities, routines, and expectations

Plan – Develop a plan to support appropriate behaviors by determining which behaviors you want children to use and which behaviors you do not want to see

Prepare children

- State expected behaviors in advance.
- Post expectations.
- Provide demonstrations.
- Use role play.
- Lead discussions.

Recognize appropriate behavior – give recognition and feedback

- Catch children following the expected behaviors.
- Make a statement about their effort.

Encourage them to keep it up![\[14\]](#)

State What Children Should Do

1. Tell a child what to do instead of what not to do.
2. Show the child by modeling or using a picture of the action.
3. Clearly and simply state what you expect the child to do.
4. Remember that young children may use inappropriate behavior because they do not understand the social rules and/or because they are unable to consistently apply what they are in the process of learning.
5. Talk to young children using language they understand. Young children may not understand a word like “don’t” because it is a short word for “do not” and he/she may not know what the “negation” of a word means.
6. Encourage the child in a way that lets him/her know that he/she is exhibiting the desired behavior. Use positive, descriptive acknowledgement while the child is making an effort or is doing the desired behavior.
7. Some children will respond better to more subdued expressions, and acknowledging them in a “matter of fact” way might be more effective.
8. For the most part, be enthusiastic and generous with encouragement. Most children can never get enough!

Here are some examples:

Table 6.4: Stating What Children Should Do[\[15\]](#)

Avoid	Say/Model	Positive Descriptive Acknowledgement
Don't run!	• Walk • Use walking feet • Stay with me • Hold my hand	• You're holding my hand. That is so respectful. • You walked across the classroom. You made a safe choice. • You are walking beside me and keeping me company. That is so friendly!
Stop climbing!	• Do you need something up high? Let's find a safe way to reach it.	• Wow! You have both feet on the floor! You are being safe. • You asked for help to get something, you are being careful.
Don't touch!	• Look with your eyes • Keep your hands down	• You were really listening; you are looking with your eyes! • You kept your hands down. That is respectful.
No yelling!	• Use a calm voice • Use an inside voice • Turn the volume down	• You are using a calm voice! You look happy. • You are using a soft voice inside the classroom. How respectful.
Stop whining!	• Use a calm voice • Talk so that I can understand you	• You are talking so clearly! That is so helpful. • You told me with your words what was wrong. That is respectful. • You used your words. How respectful!
Don't stand on the chair!	• Sit on the chair • Chairs are for sitting • Do you need something up high?	• Let's find a safe way to reach it. • You are sitting on the chair. What a careful girl. • You were responsible when you sat in the chair. • You stood on the ladder. You chose to be safe.
Don't hit!	• Gentle hands • Hands are for playing, eating, and hugging.	• When you used gentle hands you were being respectful. • You used your hands for clapping! You like being safe. • You are hugging her. What a friendly girl.
No coloring on the wall!!	• Color on the paper • Put the paper on the easel if you want to color standing up	• You put the paper on the easel. That is being responsible. • Wow. You are coloring so carefully. You are focused. • You are an artist standing at the easel.
Don't throw your toys!	• Play with the toys on the floor • Toys stay close to the ground • Please keep the toys on the table	• You are playing with the toys on the floor. So safe. • You decided to keep the toys on the table. You are respectful.
Stop playing with your food!	• Food goes on the spoon and then in your mouth	• You're using your spoon. You're being careful.

Avoid	Say/Model	Positive Descriptive Acknowledgement
	Say “all done” when you are finished eating	- You said “all done.” That is helpful. - You are eating your food using your spoon and fork. That is practicing manners.
Don’t play in the water/sink!	- Wash your hands - If you’re finished washing your hands, please dry them	- You washed your hands. What a healthy guy! - You followed the hand washing steps! You try hard.

[16]

The concept of time is very abstract for young children thus stating, “Clean up in five minutes” is not meaningful in terms of time. Suggested alternatives for directing clean up actions can include statements, “When the lights go off it will be time to clean up, “When you hear the ringing of the timer, it will be time to...”

To further gain cooperation in transitioning from one activity to another consider,

- Talking individually to children at their level so they can hear you and know you are addressing them in particular
- Allow them a space to place unfinished work to revisit at a later time
- Provide choices for cleaning up areas

Assign jobs each day for clean-up (book collectors, snack helper, etc...)

References

[1] Content by Jennifer Paris is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)

[2] Factors influencing Behavior by Age by Wendy Ruiz is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)

[3] Content by Kristin Beeve is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)

[4] Factors influencing Behavior by Age by Wendy Ruiz is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)

[5] Content by Jennifer Paris is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)

[6] Factors influencing Behavior by Age by Wendy Ruiz is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)

[7] [Understanding Children’s Behavior as Communication Presenter Notes](#) by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is in the public domain

[8] Content by Jennifer Paris is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)

[9] Factors influencing Behavior by Age by Wendy Ruiz is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)

[10] Content by Jennifer Paris is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#);

[California Preschool Program Guidelines](#) by the [California Department of Education](#) is used with permission (pg. 126-127)

[11] [Presentation Summary for Challenging Behavior: Prevention Strategies for Children With Disabilities](#) by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is in the public domain

[12] [You Got It by Supporting Inclusive Early Learning](#) is used with permission

[13] [Presenter Notes for Stating Behavioral Expectations](#) by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is in the public domain

[14] [Tip for Teachers Stating Behavioral Expectations](#) by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is in the public domain

[15] [Tell Me What to do Instead](#) by [Supporting Inclusive Early Learning](#) is used with permission;

Adapted in 2013 by Laura Fish of WestEd from Lentini, R., Vaughn, B. J., & Fox, L. (2005). *Creating Teaching Tools for Young Children with Challenging Behavior* [CD- ROM]. (Early Intervention Positive Behavior Support, The Division of Applied Research and Educational Support 13301 Bruce B. Downs Tampa, FL 33612)

[16] Content by Kristin Beeve is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)

This page titled [6.4: Factors that Influence Behavior](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

6.5: Redirecting Behavior- A Proactive Approach

Redirecting is a proactive teaching strategy used to address challenging behavior (something that interferes with learning and engagement in prosocial interaction) BEFORE it escalates or continues. Redirecting:

- Allows a teacher to guide children to engage in alternative behaviors that are more acceptable.
- Consists of instruction and simple cues teachers can easily embed into teachable moments throughout the day.
- Is one of multiple proactive teaching strategies teachers use in combination with other strategies (e.g., creating classroom rules, clearly stating expectations for classroom behaviors).
- Stops a child from engaging in a challenging behavior before it escalates.
- Re-engages a child with appropriate activities which is key to maximizing learning time.
- Maximizes learning time for all children in the classroom as they will not be distracted by the challenging behavior.

Teachers redirect challenging behavior by

- Minimizing attention to the challenging behavior.
- Providing a clear description of the behavior expected from the child (e.g., “You can ask for a turn nicely,” or “We play with the trucks by driving them on the carpet.”)
- Providing positive attention and/or feedback (e.g., “That’s playing with the trucks safely, Miguel! I see you are driving them on the carpet.”), or access to the desired material as soon as it is available.

Redirection can be used when a child

- is off task to redirect attention to the task.
- uses materials inappropriately to provide a reminder of how to use the materials properly.
- talks out of turn to help the child wait for a turn.
- gets upset by a situation to guide the child away from that situation, to address the child’s feelings, and to engage the child in an alternate activity

Four types of redirecting are most commonly used in the preschool classroom:

- **Verbal redirecting:** A teacher gives an instruction which distracts the child from the challenging behavior and directs him to a more appropriate activity.
- **Physical redirecting:** A teacher physically prevents a child from engaging in a challenging behavior and redirects her to an alternative or new activity.
- **Redirecting with a cue** that is visual or gestural (e.g., a picture or gesture).
- **Redirecting attention** to a positive model in a child’s proximity (proximal attention): For example, a teacher draws attention to a nearby child who is engaged in an appropriate behavior.[1]

References

[1] [Presenter Notes Redirecting Behavior](#) by the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) is in the public domain

This page titled [6.5: Redirecting Behavior- A Proactive Approach](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

6.6: Proactive versus Reactive Classroom Management

Melissa Williams August 1, 2019



We all have *those* days ... lesson plans don't pan out the way you envisioned them, your students seem determined to drive you over the proverbial edge, the classroom is a total mess, a parent demands a meeting at the worst moment. Is it a full moon? Is this cosmic punishment for that time in fifth grade you made your teacher question their career choice? Help!

For starters, take solace in the fact that even the most seasoned teachers have these days. It really happens to everyone. But how do we keep the chaos to a minimum? And when a rough day pops up, how do we handle it? Aspirin and a hot bath are awesome, but they're waiting at home, and you need relief *now*. Lunch break is way too short for a bubble bath and a Netflix binge (but maybe work that into your next contract)! What to do?

As teachers and professionals, we have two distinct ways to navigate the day and ride those sometimes tumultuous waves of chaos. We can be proactive or reactive. How can we distinguish these two methods, and what are some proactive vs. reactive classroom management examples? Let's find out!

[Start managing your classroom proactively with Classcraft.](#)

The rundown on reactive and proactive classroom management



Photo credit: [Derek Owens](#)

Reactive classroom management

Reactive classroom management is not all bad. There's something to be said for flexibility and thinking on the fly, and at times, that is just what reactive class management is. However, in really tough situations, reactive classroom management can be tricky at best. You can deal with certain issues in the moment — no big deal. But when you have a string of problems coming at you, you may not want to be stuck making a bunch of in-the-moment judgment calls. And as the day wears you down, your quick choices may not always be the best. We're human, after all!

Photo credit: [Virgil Cayasa](#)

Proactive classroom management

Let's talk about the alternative. Even if trying days are few and far between, we want to be prepared. While reactive classroom management involves taking things as they come, [proactive classroom management](#) is the fine art of anticipating certain issues and having solid contingency plans in place.

Of course, you cannot predict every curveball, but there are plenty that you can! You will always need to have a strong reactive management skill set for those times where the madness is just unavoidable. But, if you embrace proactive classroom management, you will not need to rely on reactive teaching nearly as often and won't need to spend too many days staring at the clock — did the hands just go backward a little? How has it been 10 a.m. for three hours? They don't make enough aspirin in the world ...

Proactive vs. reactive classroom management examples

Photo credit: [Shane Hauser](#)

What does reactive classroom management look like?

Imagine this: You get to school and realize you left some important supplies at home. Now you'll have to alter or altogether scrap your big activity of the day. You do not have a solid backup plan, so you'll just have to make do. You check your day planner and realize that the recess supervision day you swapped out weeks ago has now come back to haunt you — and it's cold outside, and you do not have all the proper warm gear. You have an early meeting, during which a parent stops by without warning. They want to talk about their child's latest test score, and they're not happy. Once you're teaching, you discover that your students are not having a great day either, and there are arguments happening left and right. The class pet has tummy issues. You get the idea. *Can I just go home at noon?*

You'll have reactions to each of these problems, and, like the star teacher that you are, you'll likely find little ways to at least get through each roadblock. But at the end of the day, how will you be feeling? Exhausted perhaps — worn out, and a little disillusioned. Now, if this is just a single day and a similar one only occurs once or twice more in a school year, reactive classroom management may work for you. If this starts to happen monthly, weekly, or (oh my goodness) every other day, you'll be on the fast track to burnout city.

Photo credit: [Dmitry Ratushny](#)

What does proactive classroom management look like?

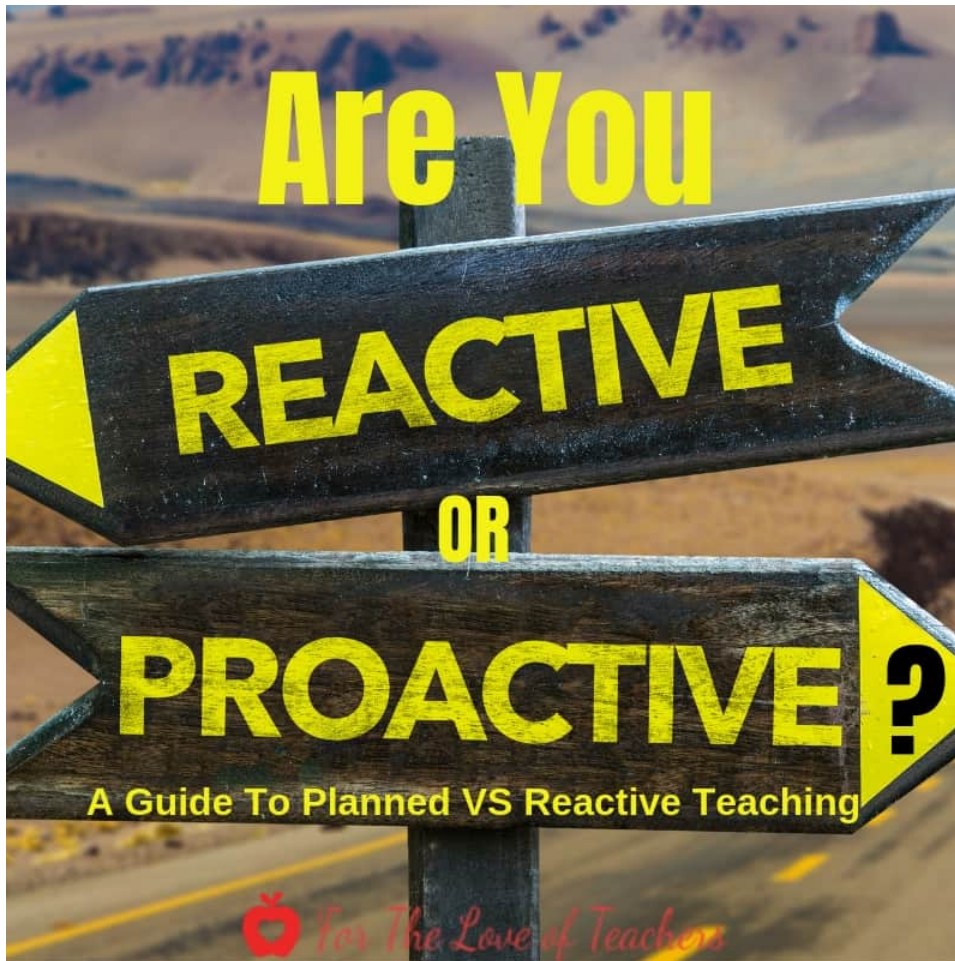
Now imagine a similar day to the one described above. You get to school and realize that you forgot your supplies. No big deal — you have five awesome just-in-case activities in a basket behind your desk. Those are handy for forgetful times, and maybe for a substitute teacher as well. You'll just fall back on one of those activities instead and put a reminder in your phone or day planner to get those other supplies for tomorrow. Phew, your proactive planning has saved you!

You check your plan for the day and also see that you have supervision duties. You may not have your A-game scarf and hat (the kind made for the Arctic Circle, because you're no longer too cool to stay warm), but you have old faithful in your drawer at all times: a decent but cheap hat and some mitts that aren't your favorite but will do in a pinch. Fantastic! No hypothermia for you today!

Your meeting begins and a parent swings by for an impromptu chat. Luckily, you have files of student work examples. You graciously set up the parent with their child's work to peruse, pass them a cup of coffee, and let them know you'll be ready for a quick talk in twenty minutes. In the meantime, they can see what their child has been doing so that they can have a clearer picture of their progress ahead of your chat. If you want to be really proactive in this situation, it works for (most) parents if you have a super clear plan laid out for meetings beforehand. Let everyone know from the outset that you are happy to set up meetings or phone calls with a little notice, and carve out time during one prep period a cycle to either meet or talk to any concerned parents. Better still, schedule regular check-ins with parents and discuss the good things happening, mixed in with an area or two that could use a little extra work. Student issues will be nipped in the bud, parents will feel informed, and you'll have to deal with fewer ambushes.

If you find that your students are not having a great day behavior-wise, what can you do proactively? You know that these days will happen, regardless of the grade level that you teach. A proactive approach is to first have very clear classroom rules and guidelines that you regularly revisit. Teach students what to do if they are feeling frustrated. Is there a quiet spot in your room for a reading break? Do they know that they can approach you with problems or write about their feelings when needed? Have strategies set up to avoid total meltdowns. If it's just one of those days, have a backup plan at the ready. Brainstorm before the school year even

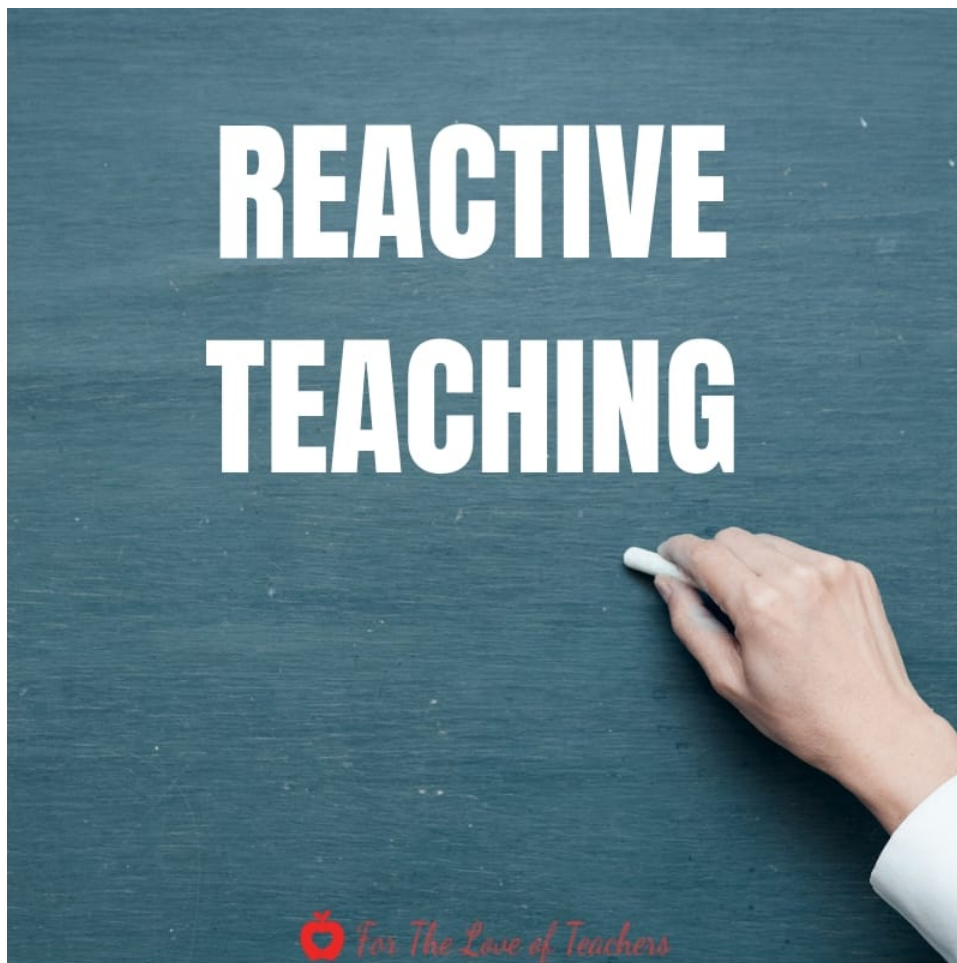
6.7: Are You Reactive or Proactive?



Each classroom is like a machine. It is made up of various parts that make the machine only as strong and reliable as its weakest link. If one of the parts fail, it begins to break down. Just like any system, defined as combined activities, tasks and/or processes to work towards a common goal, everything has a job and plays a vital part in the overall functionality and efficiency of the system. If any part breaks down, it upsets the balance of the system. The goal of teaching is to maximize quality instructional time, the “uptime,” to meet the needs of all learners and to maximize student growth, progress and success. This is dependent on planning.



Planned Teaching is a proactive strategy for creating a structured, organized learning environment that minimizes “breakdown” and downtime. It’s a classroom system that maximizes teaching and student engagement with teachers who are highly skilled classroom managers using expert strategies in classroom management. This system runs like a well-oiled machine, all parts in place, all parts running efficiently, all parts working toward the goal: maximum quality teaching and student learning. No classroom can go without interruptions but being prepared to address such matters can prevent a complete disruption to the “system.” Learning how to move forward when a part fails or when the system is thrown off is all part of proactive, planned teaching along with some good old-fashioned experience.



Reactive Teaching is just the opposite. It is a reactive strategy where “emergency repair” is needed because parts are failing. Learning cannot continue until the problem is addressed. As a result, there is a cost. The costs are decreases in student learning and increases in deficiencies and gaps. There is an unplanned “production downtime.” In a production facility, this means production is stopped and no product is being produced and dollars are lost minute by minute, it adds up exponentially. For the classroom it means the lesson plan is interrupted, teaching stops and quality educational time is lost. This is critical in education. This means that the time students have in classes, in grades, in schools is finite. It will not go on forever. Lost quality educational time cannot be regained; it is a valuable commodity. With Reactive Teaching, instructional time is at its lowest, learning is minimal to none and behaviors are on the rise. Teachers are putting out fires left and right. The system fails.



Sometimes the system seems to be working just fine but there is still a need to do a check. There are things that you can't see from the outside. And that's where preventive maintenance comes in. Preventive maintenance is based on two things: 1. Recommended maintenance 2. To prevent something "bad" that has already happened in the past from happening again. Think about your body. Do you go to the doctor for annual check-ups just to make sure that your "system" is running at its best? How about your car? Do you get regular oil changes or an annual inspection? When we do these "maintenance" checks we may be able to find underlying conditions that we weren't aware of and take action to "maintain" or to "prevent" something bad from happening in the future. Ultimately, the goal is to eliminate downtime due to unplanned interruptions by identifying problems early before they evolve into larger issues having a greater negative impact.

Check 1,2,3

1. Admins need to be completely present in the building and in all classrooms. This does not suggest that admins should be "checking up" on teachers, but rather the opposite—supporting and coaching their teachers. Admins should be aware of all the "systems" that are in place in their school and how they're functioning. One question should always be in mind, "How can I help?" Do teachers have enough support? Enough resources? Enough training? Are all the parts in place to help each system run successfully in order to meet the ultimate goal?
2. Targeted Students- School teachers are those who consider ALL students their students, not just the ones in their class(es). Are there supports in place to help and monitor targeted students? Is it a team/school effort and not just the sole responsibility of the teacher(s)?
3. School Safety- Based on previous school shootings and safety issues, are safety concerns handled and discussed seriously with staff and are the proper supports in place to make sure that all students and staff feel safe?

With planned teaching and regular preventive maintenance checks, the ultimate goal can be reached.

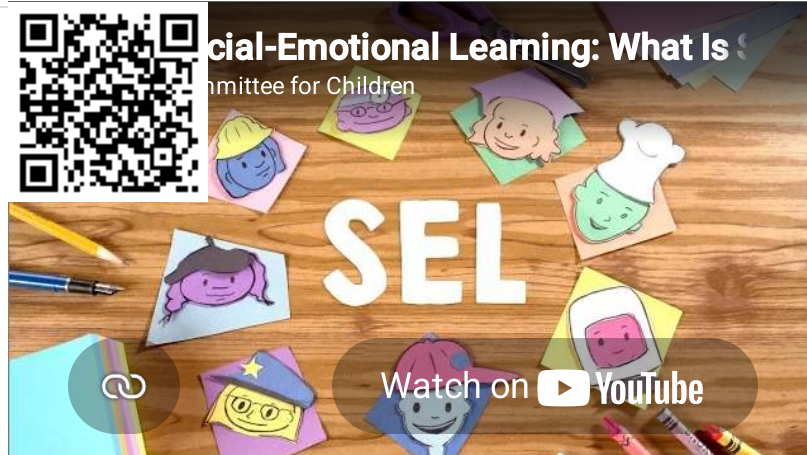


Which path are you on? Proactive and planned or reactive?

Share your best practices from the classroom so we can learn from each other.

This page titled [6.7: Are You Reactive or Proactive?](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

6.8: Social-Emotional Learning- What is SEL and Why SEL Matters



This page titled [6.8: Social-Emotional Learning- What is SEL and Why SEL Matters](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

6.9: Positive Behavior Support

Key factors and principles

When using a positive behaviour support (PBS) approach to addressing challenging behaviour, key factors and principles are drawn from ABA. The first principle is that behaviour is learned as a result of reinforcement. Reinforcement generally is perceived to originate in the environment rather than within the individual. If behaviour is learned, then problem behaviour can be changed through teaching and learning.

“The environment affects behaviour in predictable ways” (Scott, Anderson & Alter, 2012, p. 17).

Understanding that behaviour is the result of an interaction between it and the environment, is a key principle of a positive behaviour support approach. Within the environment some examples of influence on behaviour could be the space itself, the people in it, the expectations or the task. If a behaviour is followed by a positive or favourable outcome, then it is more likely to keep happening or occur again. Therefore, inappropriate student behaviour occurs because the consequences of the behaviour are reinforcing. To reduce the behaviour, a teacher must identify these consequences and alter them. This leads to the next important principle, behaviour can be changed.

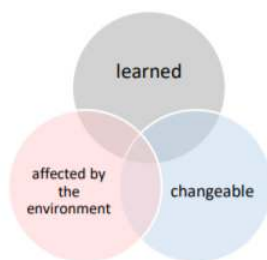


Figure 2.1 Govind Krishnamoorthy and Kay Ayre licensed under [CC BY-SA](#).

The conditions surrounding the behaviour are changed to reduce or stop the undesirable behaviour and increase appropriate behaviour. The focus is upon determining the antecedents or events that trigger the behaviour, alter the consequences maintaining the behaviour and reinforce the desired behaviours. By scrutinising the environment, looking for patterns and influences on the behaviour, the function or purpose of the behaviour can be determined, and behaviour interventions can be developed to match the function, teach and reinforce new (replacement) behaviours.

Think back to earlier in the chapter when you considered your own beliefs regarding the causes of disruptive student behaviour. Can you see that the belief that the causes of misbehaviour lie within the student are in direct contrast to the underlying ABA belief that observable behaviour is an important source of behaviour change? From a PBS perspective, the blame for the disruptive behaviour is not levelled at the individual, the family, the home life or the disability rather, it is directed at the environment and what is happening there.

Considering disruptive student behaviour from the point of view of its relationship to the environment (a behaviourist view) means that the teacher is more likely to persist in trying to discover the function of the behaviour and how to change the environment to prevent, teach and reinforce the desired student behaviour. So how can teachers do this? Teachers can embrace a positive behaviour support mindset, employing ABA methods and interventions to help reduce disruptive student behaviour. Proactive and preventative, a positive behaviour support framework uses the core principles of applied behaviour analysis to promote student discipline at the whole school, small group and individual levels (Bambara, Janney & Snell, 2015). Kincaid (2016, p. 71) states that “PBS relies on strategies that are respectful of a person’s dignity and overall well-being and that are drawn primarily from behavioral, educational, and social sciences,” in addition to other evidence-based procedures. Kincaid (2016, p. 71) notes that PBS may be applied at an individual level and a larger level (e.g., families, classrooms, schools, social service programs, and facilities).

There is an emphasis on proactive, preventative behaviour of staff and students through altering the environment and explicitly teaching students the behaviour expectations and any skills they may need to effectively participate and achieve their best at school. Using the principles of applied behaviour analysis, PBS expands upon these principles by providing a multi-tiered (tier one, tier two and tier three) structure that caters for all students across different degrees of support for behaviour.



An introduction to PBS [6 min 37 sec]

Watch this [animated video](#) which introduces the key elements of positive behaviour support.



Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Explore this [website](#) to learn more about positive behavioural interventions and supports (PBIS).

Thinking functionally to support positive behaviour

Thinking functionally about disruptive student behaviour is an important objective of positive behaviour support focussed on changing the conditions surrounding the behaviour to reduce or stop the undesirable behaviour and increase appropriate behaviour. Scrutinising the environment is key to determining why the behaviour is happening. Working from this perspective shifts the focus from something being wrong with the student (within the child that is not observable) to the actual behaviour. The focus is upon determining the antecedents or events that trigger the behaviour, altering the consequences maintaining the behaviour and reinforcing the desired behaviours. Determining the function of the disruptive behaviour is at the core of any intervention developed from a behavioural perspective. From this behaviourist perspective, there are only two functions to peoples' behaviour, to **access/get** a thing, person or event or sensory stimulation (these are examples of positive reinforcement) to **avoid/escape** something, a person or event or sensory stimulation (these are examples of negative reinforcement).

Sensory regulation/sensory stimulation is often outlined in the literature as a third function of behaviour. This is just another way of explaining the functional outcomes of behaviour where sensory stimulation is viewed as a separate category of a possible function. For our purposes here, we will remain focused on the two primary functions of access and escape. "Reinforcement always increases a behaviour, but it does so in two different ways" (Scott et al., 2012, p. 24) – positively and negatively. When a student 'gets/accesses' something as a result of their behaviour this is positive reinforcement. For example, during reading time Julie pushes another child and her peers laugh, she gets peer attention. Something is added to the behaviour of pushing – peer attention, so this is positive reinforcement. When the behaviour serves the purpose to escape or avoid something, this is called negative reinforcement. If Julie was sent to 'buddy class' when she pushed the other child, and she kept pushing the other child, we would say that the pushing behaviour (that was still happening) was negatively reinforced – Julie escaped/avoided reading groups (she pushed and was sent to buddy class).

When we are thinking functionally about behaviour the process of gathering and analysing the data is to help us to determine and understand the purpose of the challenging behaviour. We want to find out the function or what is in it for the student? Behaviour is communication. It is important to remember that challenging behaviour will often serve different functions for the student depending on the context, so looking closely at the behaviour within the context in which it happens is vital. Think for a minute about your own behaviour and how it changes depending on the context. How do you behave in the context of your own home, in your car when driving, or at a sporting event? Does your 'teacher behaviour' look and sound like your 'socialising' behaviour? Behaviour is related to the particular environment in which it happens.



Toxic stress: a story [8 min 38 sec]

This [video clip](#) provides a snapshot of behaviour management approaches across time.

References

- Bambara, L. M., Janney, R., & Snell, M. E. (2015). *Behavior support*. (3rd ed.). Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brookes.
- Kincaid, D., Dunlap, G., Kern, L., Lane, K. L., Bambara, L. M., Brown, F., Fox, L., & Knostr, T. P. (2016). Positive behavior support: A proposal for updating and refining the definition. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 18(2), 69-73. doi: 10.1177/1098300715604826

Scott, T. M., Anderson, C. M., & Alter, P. (2012). *Managing classroom behavior using positive behaviour supports*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

This page titled [6.9: Positive Behavior Support](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Teacher as a Presenter

[7.1: Teacher as a Presenter](#)

[7.2: Your Presentation Style](#)

[7.3: 10-20-30 Rule Article](#)

[7.4: Presentations](#)

[7.5: Bad Presentations- Death by PowerPoint](#)

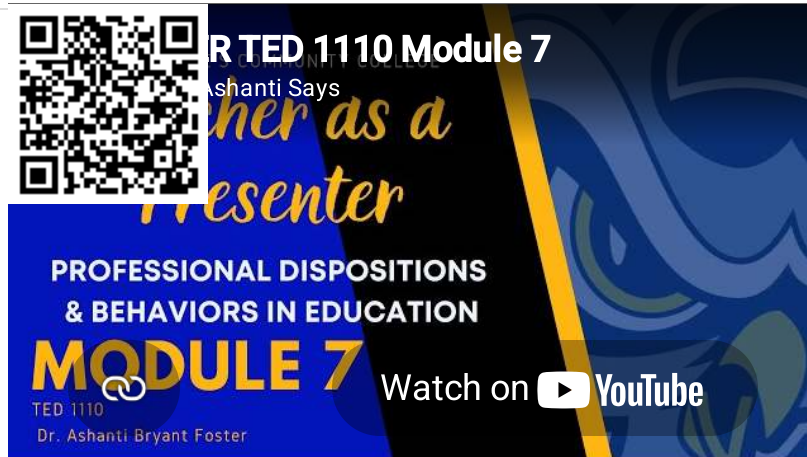
[7.6: Public Speaking and Class Presentations](#)

[7.7: Presentation Accommodations](#)

[7.8: How to Fix Your Presentation; 21 Tips](#)

This page titled [7: Teacher as a Presenter](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

7.1: Teacher as a Presenter



This page titled [7.1: Teacher as a Presenter](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

7.2: Your Presentation Style

Learning Objectives

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to

- recognize the value of self-awareness in the delivery of effective presentations,
- describe the function of active listening and feedback in verbal communication,
- describe verbal techniques used to support professional presentations, and
- describe non-verbal techniques used to support professional presentations.

Your non-verbal cues like gestures, facial expressions, and posture can punctuate and strengthen your message or do the opposite. You will learn about these non-verbal elements and have a chance to see how you use them in conjunction with your verbal cues by recording and examining a pre-selected speech or presentation.

After combining all of these elements, you will have a better understanding of who you are as a presenter and what you can bring to the table to develop your presentation strategy in the next chapter.

What Makes a Successful Speech or Presentation?



Figure 1: What Makes a Successful Presentation by Laura Underwood

A successful speech occurs when the speaker and the audience connect in a benign environment. In order to facilitate this, it helps to look at some things that typically make a successful speaker as well as the role of the audience in making a speech or presentation great.

What Makes a Successful Speaker?

According to longtime Toastmasters member Bob Kienzle, there are a few key elements that tend to make a successful speaker:

- Voice—Can the person be easily understood?
- Body Language—Does their body support what they’re saying? Are they confident?
- Coherent Structure—Does what they’re presenting make sense? Is it logical?
- Enthusiasm—Do they care about what they’re presenting?
- Expertise—Do they know what they’re talking about? Are they credible?
- Practice—If they haven’t practiced or sufficiently prepared, it will likely show up in one or more of the above.

A successful speaker can be inspired by other speeches or speakers but may fall flat if they try to copy someone else. Authenticity and passion can resonate so much with an audience that it can outweigh elements otherwise considered pitfalls. The techniques, tools, and best practices are a guideline, and it’s important to note there is no such thing as “perfection” in public speaking. “Failure” can happen in myriad ways, but it’s more helpful to see them as learning opportunities, or opportunities to make a stronger connection to your audience.

The biggest failure, according to Kienzle, is to pass up opportunities to practise your skills in presenting or public speaking.

Audience Role

One of the most anxiety-inducing areas of presenting or speech-making is being in front of the audience. Some people may feel more at ease with relatively small audiences of up to about 10 people. Others feel like 10 people is too “intimate” and actually feel more comfortable with the “impersonal” numbers in the hundreds or thousands.

People often think of hostile audiences throwing tomatoes and yelling boos if the presenter makes the slightest mistake or slip of the tongue. But the truth is most audiences desperately want you to succeed. They are overwhelmingly on your side. This means in most situations they are very forgiving; they know being up there can be tough. If you make a mistake, you can apologize or laugh it off and keep going.

The audience is at least as involved in your presentation as you are. Awareness of yourself and awareness of them is key. If you are so preoccupied with your fear of the audience that you bury your head in the podium while reading a boring list of facts your audience could read themselves, you will lose them. If you’re not interested, they’re not interested. If you are so frightened of your audience that you never look at them, you will not be able to get cues about their involvement in your presentation.

What you bring to the audience affects what they get from your presentation or speech. For that reason, it is tremendously important to develop enough self awareness so that you can be present for your audience and have the confidence to make adjustments to keep them on your side and involved in your presentation.

Self-Awareness

The connection between self-awareness and being a good presenter may not be immediately obvious. But a good presenter usually has a very good idea not just of the audience and the environment but also about themselves, their motivation, values, perception, and other elements. Without delving into a full-on psychological profile, taking some time getting to know more about you and what makes you tick is still extremely useful in the pre-strategizing stage of planning for your presentation. Oftentimes these things lie below the surface of our awareness. Imagine, for example, seeing only the tip of the iceberg, not knowing the even greater mass of ice that lies beneath the water’s surface.

We already know that your success as a presenter depends on the three factors of the presenter, the audience, and the environment. Doing a bit of self-analysis as a presenter, then, is just as important as doing an audience analysis or examining the environment. In order to become more self-aware, it’s important to first ponder a few concepts that may or may not be new to you. These include self concept, self-reflection, internal monologue, and dimensions of self. Later we’ll examine importance of knowing about your values and perceptions, active listening, as well as strengths and weaknesses.

Your self-concept is “what we perceive ourselves to be” (McLean, 2005) and involves aspects of image and esteem. How you feel about yourself influences how you communicate with others. What you are thinking now and the way you communicate influences how others treat you. For example, if you perceive yourself to be a horrible presenter, your behaviour will likely follow your thoughts. Your audience then encounters several cringeworthy moments mirroring your feelings of discomfort, and they wish you’d get off the stage as quickly as possible too! On the flipside, if you feel nervous about presenting but confident that you know your topic so well, you let your passion and expertise shine through, and your audience focuses on that and isn’t fazed by your sweaty palms or your occasional mispronunciations.

Self-reflection can be a useful tool in helping to improve or support your self-concept. Self-reflection is a trait that allows you to adapt and change to the context or environment, to accept or reject messages, to examine your concept of yourself, and to improve.

Your internal monologue is your mental self-talk. It can be a running monologue in your mind that is rational and reasonable, or disorganized and illogical. It can interfere with listening to others, impede your ability to focus, and become a barrier to effective communication. Self-reflection can be a useful tool here as well, allowing you to distinguish whether what you’re saying to yourself is constructive and honest or destructive and false.

Who are you? What are your dimensions of self? You are more than your actions and more than your communication, and the result may be greater than the sum of the parts, but how do you know yourself?

For many, answering these questions can prove challenging while trying to reconcile the self-concept you perceive with what you want others to perceive about you. Is it even possible to see yourself through interactions with others, and can you come to terms with the idea that we may not know everything there is to know about ourselves?

Joseph Luft and Harry Ingram gave considerable thought and attention to these dimensions of self, which are represented in the figure below known as the Johari Window (Luft & Ingram, 1955).

In the first quadrant of the figure, information is known to you and others, such as your height and colour. The second quadrant represents things others observe about us that we are unaware of, such as how many times we say “umm” in the space of five minutes. The third quadrant involves information that you know but do not reveal to others. It may involve actively hiding or withholding information, or may involve social tact, such as thanking your Aunt Martha for the large purple hat she’s given you that you know you will never wear. Finally, the fourth quadrant involves information that is unknown to you and to others, such as, for example, a childhood experience that has been long forgotten or repressed may still motivate you.

What you bring to the audience affects what they get from your presentation or speech. For that reason, it is tremendously important to develop enough self awareness so that you can be present for your audience and have the confidence to make adjustments to keep them on your side and involved in your presentation.

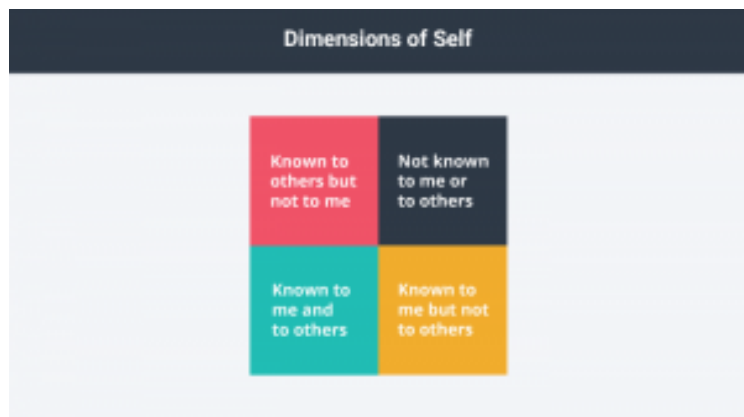


Figure 2: JOHARI Window by Laura Underwood Adapted from Luft & Ingram (1955)

These dimensions of self remind us that we are not fixed—that freedom to change combined with the ability to reflect, anticipate, plan, and predict allows us to improve, learn, and adapt to our surroundings.

In the context of business communication, the self plays a central role. How do you describe yourself? Do your career path, job responsibilities, goals, and aspirations align with your talents? How you represent “self” through your résumé, in your writing, in your articulation and presentation—these all play an important role as you negotiate the relationships and climate present in any organization.

Your Values and Perceptions

Another key element in becoming more self-aware involves understanding your values and perceptions. Your values are defined as “the principles or standards of behaviour; one’s judgement of what is important in life” (OxfordDictionaries.com, 2015). Your values are often so embedded in who you are that you probably don’t think twice about them. You could also be totally unaware of what they are if you take for granted that everyone shares your values. As a speaker it’s important for you to uncover what your values are to avoid glaring blind spots (visible to others but not to you) and know more about who you are.

Our values and life experience can also lead to our perception about ourselves and others. Perception is defined as “the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted.” The problem is that our perception or interpretation of events can go unchallenged, and we can cling to perceptions whether they are accurate or inaccurate.

If you’ve never considered your values or perceptions before, it can be helpful to monitor what issues or concerns cause you to take the following behaviours:

Judging

Judging is defined as forming an opinion or conclusion about something (OxfordDictionaries.com, 2015). If you find yourself jumping to conclusions or nitpicking minor details to condemn someone or something, it may be because the issue or person has challenged your values. Judgement in the best sense of the term leads to useful and ethical decision making; in its negative sense it

can lead to bias. Bias is the “inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair” (OxfordDictionaries.com, 2015).

Anticipating

When you anticipate, you “regard [something] as probable” or “expect or predict [something]” (OxfordDictionaries.com, 2015). Anticipating can be a by-product of judging, when you have already decided what the other person is going to say. You might even start filling in their words for them. The point is, you have stopped listening to the other person. You may be polite in letting them finish, but your mind is already formulating witty comebacks to something they said that challenged your values or perceptions. At its best, anticipating can solidify that people are on the same wavelength, like an old married couple who know each other so well they really can fill in their words meaningfully. On the other end of the spectrum, anticipating leads to shutting down true communication, often followed by a fruitless power struggle over winning an argument that neither party is listening to or learning from.

Emotional Reaction or Response

To have an emotional reaction or response means “Arousing or (being) characterized by intense feeling.” These intense feelings can be a strong indicator that your values or perceptions are being challenged. Emotional reactions can be physiological; your heartbeat quickens, palms get sweaty, you feel your face heating from the neck up. In more severe reactions it can trigger mild or violent responses, anything from walking away to arguing to physical violence. You can also have an emotional reaction that no one else notices; you may even be vocal about how much you don’t care about a particular thing or person. But if you feel emotional discomfort, follow those feelings to examine what values or perceptions may lie below the surface; in this way, you will know yourself better and understand what triggers you.

To sum up, if you find yourself judging, jumping the gun by anticipating, or having a strong emotional response, some element of your deeply held values are likely at play or have been betrayed in some way. This is very important information that can help you understand yourself in terms of what you bring to the stage or podium as a presenter. This knowledge can be used to examine whether or not your perceptions are accurate or false, and lead to approaches to help you improve in areas such as (a) active listening and (b) knowing your strengths and weaknesses—both of which are examined next.

Active Listening

Listening vs. Hearing

Hearing is an accidental and automatic brain response to sound and requires no effort. We are surrounded by sounds most of the time. For example, we are accustomed to the sounds of airplanes, lawn mowers, furnace blowers, the rattling of pots and pans, and so on. We hear those incidental sounds and, unless we have a reason to do otherwise, we train ourselves to ignore them. We learn to filter out sounds that mean little to us, just as we choose to hear our ringing cell phones and other sounds that are more important to us.

Table 1: Active Listening

Hearing	Listening
Accidental	Focused
Involuntary	Voluntary
Effortless	Intentional

Listening, on the other hand, is purposeful and focused rather than accidental. As a result, it requires motivation and effort. Listening, at its best, is active, focused, concentrated attention for the purpose of understanding the meanings expressed by a speaker. We do not always listen at our best, however.

Effective listening is about self-awareness. You must pay attention to whether or not you are only hearing, passively listening, or actively engaging. Effective listening requires concentration and a focused effort that is known as active listening. Active listening can be broken down into three main elements: attention, attitude, and adjustment.

Attention

Hoppe (2006) advises that active listening is really a state of mind requiring us to choose to focus on the moment, being present and attentive while disregarding any of our anxieties of the day.

He suggests listeners prepare themselves for active attention by creating a listening reminder. This might be to write “Listen” at the top of a page in front of you in a meeting.

We know now that attention is the fundamental difference between hearing and listening. Paying attention to what a speaker is saying requires intentional effort on your part.

Nichols (1957), credited with first researching the field of listening, observed, “Listening is hard work. It is characterized by faster heart action, quicker circulation of the blood, a small rise in bodily temperature.”

Consider that we can process information four times faster than a person speaks. Yet, tests of listening comprehension show the average person listening at only 25 percent efficiency. A typical person can speak 125 words-per-minute, yet we can process up to three times faster, reaching as much as 500 words-per-minute. The poor listener grows impatient, while the effective listener uses the extra processing time to process the speaker’s words, distinguish key points, and mentally summarize them (Nichols, 1957).

While reading a book or having a discussion with an individual, you can go back and reread or ask a question to clarify a point. This is not always true when listening. Listening is of the moment, and we often only get to hear the speaker’s words once.

The key, then, is for the listener to quickly ascertain the speaker’s central premise or controlling idea. Once this is done, it becomes easier for the listener to discern what is most important. Of course, distinguishing the speaker’s primary goal, his main points, and the structure of the speech are all easier when the listener is able to listen with an open mind.

Attitude

Even if you are paying attention, you could be doing so with the wrong attitude. Telling yourself this is all a waste of time is not going to help you to listen effectively. You’ll be better off determining an internal motivation to be attentive to the person speaking.

Approaching the task of listening with a positive attitude and an open mind will make the act of listening much easier. As mentioned earlier, bad listeners make snap judgments that justify their decision to be inattentive. Yet, since you’re already there, why not listen to see what you can learn?

Kaponya (1991) warns against such psychological deaf spots, which impair our ability to perceive and understand things counter to our convictions. It can be as little as a word or phrase that might elicit “an emotional eruption,” causing communication efficiency to drop rapidly.

For instance, someone who resolutely supports military action as the best response to a terrorist action may be unable to listen objectively to a speaker endorsing negotiation as a better tool. Even if the speaker is effectively employing logic, drawing on credible sources, and appealing to emotion with a heartrending tale of the civilian casualties caused by bombings, this listener would be unable to keep an open mind. Failing to acknowledge your deaf spots will leave you at a deficit when listening.

You will always need to make up your own mind about where you stand—whether you agree or disagree with the speaker—but it is critical to do so after listening. Adler proposes having four questions in mind while listening: “What is the whole speech about?” “What are the main or pivotal ideas, conclusions, and arguments?” “Are the speaker’s conclusions sound or mistaken?” and “What of it?”

Once you have an overall idea of the speech, determine the key points, and gauge your agreement, you can decide why it matters, how it affects you, or what you might do as a result of what you have heard. Yet, he notes it is “impossible” to answer all these questions at the same time as you are listening. Instead, you have to be ready and willing to pay attention to the speaker’s point of view and changes in direction, patiently waiting to see where she is leading you.

Adjustment

The final element to consider is adjustment. Often when we hear someone speak, we don’t know in advance what the speaker will say. So, we need to be flexible, willing to follow a speaker along what seems like a verbal detour down a rabbit hole, until we are rewarded by the speaker reaching his final destination while his audience marvels at the creative means by which he reached his important point.

If the audience members are more intent on reacting to or anticipating what is said, they will be poor listeners indeed. Having an open attitude, paying attention, and being in the moment of the speech leads to the flexibility required to adjust to the situation.

Your Strengths and Weaknesses

Are you aware of what your strengths and weaknesses are as a presenter? You may have some ideas already. For example, if you are very soft spoken, you may consider that to be a weakness if you're on stage, especially without a microphone. Soft-spoken people also sometimes keep low-key in other ways; maybe they're more plain in the way they dress or have less expressive mannerisms. Many people think that to be effective on stage you must be a rip-roaring extrovert. This is not true. No matter who you are, if you are aware of the qualities that make you a unique individual and you spend time getting to know your audience, you can convert any perceived weaknesses into a potential strength. Conversely, if you are so overconfident about your abilities that it shows itself in poor preparation and lack of concern for your audience or environment, your strengths can quite quickly become weaknesses.

Your first step in helping define what makes you you is to look at what you're good at and what you enjoy doing. At the same time, this helps you distinguish what you're not so good at and what you don't enjoy. Make a list as you go through the next sections on your verbal and non-verbal communication techniques to get a reasonable prediction about how to focus your strategy as a presenter.

What Are My Verbal Communication Techniques?

Pitch

Do you have a deep, low voice, or a high-pitched one? We all have a normal speaking pitch where we are most comfortable, but we can move our pitch up or down. Use pitch inflections to make your delivery more interesting and emphatic. If you don't change pitch at all, your delivery will be monotone, which gets boring for the audience very quickly. Some people pitch their voices up at the end of sentences, making every statement sound like a question—avoid this common but distracting habit.

Volume

Do you speak softly or loudly? Adjust the volume of your voice to your environment and audience. If you're in a large auditorium, speak up so that people in the back row can hear you. But if you're in a small room with only a few people, you don't want to alarm them by shouting! You may need to use volume to compensate for ambient noise like traffic or an air conditioner. You can use volume strategically to emphasize the most important points in your speech.

Emphasis

Stress certain words in your speech to add emphasis to them, that is, to indicate that they are particularly important. You may also use a visual aid to emphasize key points by using photographs or charts.

Pronunciation

Make sure that you know the appropriate pronunciation of the words you choose. If you mispronounce a word, it could hurt your credibility or confuse your audience. Websites such as Wiktionary contain audio files that you can play to hear standard pronunciation of many words. Your pronunciation is also influenced by your accent. If your accent is quite different from the accent you expect most members of your audience to have, practise your speech in front of someone with the same accent that your audience members will have, to ensure you are pronouncing words in a clear, understandable way.

Fillers

Avoid the use of “fillers” as placeholders for actual words (like, er, um, uh, etc.). You might get away with saying “um” two or three times in your speech before it becomes distracting, but the same cannot be said of “like”—a particularly troubling filler for many North American speakers. If you have a habit of using fillers, practise your speech thoroughly so that you remember what you want to say. This way, you are less likely to lose your place and let a filler word slip out.

Rate

Are you a fast or slow speaker? The pace that you speak at will influence how well the audience can understand you. Many people speak quickly when they are nervous. If this is a habit of yours, practice will help you here, too. Pause for breath naturally during

your speech. Your speaking rate should be appropriate for your topic. A rapid, lively rate communicates enthusiasm, urgency, or humour. A slower, moderated rate conveys respect and seriousness. By varying your rate within a speech, you can emphasize your main points and keep your audience engaged.

What Non-Verbal Cues Do I Use?

Gestures

A gesture is “a movement of part of the body, especially a hand or the head, to express an idea or meaning” (OxfordDictionaries.com, 2015). You can use these to channel nervous energy into an enhancement of your speech, reinforcing important points, but they can be distracting if overused. If the audience is busy watching your hands fly around, they will not be able to concentrate on your words.

Take a look at this article, titled “[What to Do with Your Hands When Speaking in Public](#)” (The Washington Post, 2015) for do’s and don’ts of gesturing when you are speaking.

Facial Expression

You might be unaware of how much your facial expressions say when you are speaking. Facial expression comes so naturally that we are not always in control of the story our face is telling. Rehearse your speech in front of a mirror to see what facial expressions come across. You might find that your face is saying something entirely different about your topic than your words are! Practise using facial expressions consciously. If you are speaking about an upbeat topic, smile! Conversely, if your topic is serious or solemn, avoid facial expressions that are overtly cheerful, because the audience will be confused by the mixed message.

In North American culture, the most important facial expression you can use is eye contact. Briefly catch the eye of audience members as you move through your speech. If you can’t look your audience members in the eye, they may view you as untrustworthy. Remember, though, that eye contact is a culturally sensitive gesture. In some cultures, there are certain accepted behaviours for males looking females in the eye, and vice-versa. You’ll want to avoid holding eye contact for too long with any one person, as too much can be unnerving.

Posture

It’s easy to let your posture slip when you’ve been talking for a while, but try to stay conscious of this and stand up straight. This gives the audience the perception that you are authoritative and take your position seriously. If you are slouching, hunched over, or leaning on something, this gives the impression that you are anxious, lacking in credibility, or not serious about your message. Speakers often assume more casual posture as a presentation continues, but you only get one shot at making a first impression, so make sure you begin with a strong stance.

Silence

Silence is a powerful technique if used well, but it is often overlooked. Perhaps you had a teacher in high school who would stand sternly and silently at the front of the room, expectantly waiting for the chatter to die down. His silence and stance were unnerving, so students soon became quiet, didn’t they? And some of the best comedians use the well-timed pause for a powerful and hilarious—rather than serious—effect. Either way, pauses are useful for emphasis and dramatic effect when you are speaking.

Some speakers are reluctant to pause or use silence because they become uncomfortable with the dead air, but sometimes your audience needs a moment to process information and respond to you.

Movement

You can use your body movements to communicate positively with the audience. Leaning in or moving closer to the audience helps to bridge the space of separation. Moving from one side of the room to the other in a purposeful way that supports your content is a useful way to keep your audience engaged; their eyes will track your movements. Pacing rapidly with no purpose and no support to your message may quickly distract from your message, however. Standing still without movement when you are listening or responding to a question can show interest. However, standing still without any movement for the duration of your presentation could leave the audience bored. Balance is key, as is using your body as an extension of your content that suits the context of the environment and the audience.

Conclusion

This chapter helped you focus on getting to know your presentation style by understanding yourself better. You learned that elements of the environment, the audience, and the presenter had an impact on what makes for a good speech. You examined several issues related to self-awareness, including uncovering your values, understanding your perceptions, and dealing with strengths and weaknesses. Finally, you learned about verbal and non-verbal elements of your own presentation style, including how to work with your body as an extension of your presentation content. You should now be able to take what you have learned from this chapter into the next chapter as a foundation to build your presentation strategy.

Query

What are the three A's of active listening?

- ☐ Attention, Attitude, Adjustment
- ☐ Attention, Audience, Adjustment
- ☐ Attention, Attitude, Audience
- ☐ Analyze, Audience, Adjustment
- ☐ Analyze, Attitude, Adjustment

✓ Check

 Reuse  Rights of use  Embed

H-P

Query

Excluding environmental elements, what are the three main barriers to effective listening?

- ☐ Anticipating, Judging, Reacting Emotionally
- ☐ Assumptions, Judging, Reacting Emotionally
- ☐ Attitude, Anticipating, Reacting Emotionally
- ☐ Anticipating, Assumptions, Judging

✓ Check

Query

The difference between hearing and listening is

- ☐ Hearing is mindful and intentional, but listening is effortless.
- ☐ very small; the two processes amount to about the same thing.
- ☐ Hearing is effortless, but listening is mindful and intentional.
- ☐ Hearing depends on listening, but listening does not depend on hearing.
- ☐ Hearing requires strong motivation and attention, but listening is an automatic human response to speech.

✓ Check

Query

Which of the following is a personal benefit of developing your presentation skills?

- ☐ helps you to critically evaluate other's presentations
- ☐ helps your chances of employment and/or advancing within your career
- ☐ helps you to fulfill roles in social contexts (e.g., toasts and eulogies)

✓ Check

Query

Which of the following is a professional benefit of developing your presentation skills?

- ☐ helps you build self-confidence
- ☐ helps you to critically evaluate others' presentations
- ☐ helps you to fulfill roles in social contexts (e.g., toasts and eulogies)
- ☐ helps your chances of employment and/or advancing within your career

✓ Check

Further Reading and Links

- Excerpts about the [10 greatest speeches of all time by women](#) from Marie Claire magazine, UK.
- Talks on [Technology, Education and Design from TED](#).
- Listening Effectively: Barriers to Effective Listening courses.candelalearning.com/publicspeaking1xmaster/chapter/chapter-4-barriers-to-effective-listening/

References

The Washington Post. "What To Do With Your Hands When Speaking In Public". 2015. Web. 18 Dec. 2015. Retrieved from www.washingtonpost.com/news/on-leadership/wp/2015/11/17/what-to-do-with-your-hands-when-speaking-in-public/

Attribution Statement (Your Presentation Style)

This chapter is a remix containing content from a variety of sources published under a variety of open licenses, including the following:

Chapter Content

- - Original content contributed by the Olds College OER Development Team, of Olds College to Professional Communications Open Curriculum under a [CC-BY 4.0 license](#)
 - Content created by Anonymous for Self-Concept and Dimensions of Self; in Communication for Business Success, published at <http://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/communication-for-business-success/s20-02-self-concept-and-dimensions-of.html> under a [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 license](#)
 - Listening vs. Hearing in Stand Up, Speak Out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking adapted by The Saylor Foundation, previously shared at <http://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Stand-Up-Speak-Out-The-Practice-and-Ethics-of-Public-Speaking.pdf> under a [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 license](#)
 - Content created by Jenn Q. Goddu, for Three A's of Active Listening from The Public Speaking Project, previously shared at <http://publicspeakingproject.org/listening.html> under a [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license](#)
 - Content adapted from Practicing for Successful Speech Delivery; in Public Speaking: Practice and Ethics, originally created by Anonymous, previously shared at <http://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/public-speaking-practice-and-ethics/s17-04-practicing-for-successful-speech.html> under a [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 license](#)
- Content adapted from *Movement and Gesture in Boundless Communication*, previously shared at www.boundless.com/communications/textbooks/boundless-communications-textbook/delivering-the-speech-12/effective-visual-delivery-65/movement-and-gesture-261-10649/ under a <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

Check Your Understandings

- Original assessment items contributed by the Olds College OER Development Team, of Olds College to Professional Communications Open Curriculum under a [CC-BY 4.0 license](#)
- Assessment items in Stand Up, Speak Out – The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking, Chapter 4 Exercises shared previously at <http://www.saylor.org/books> under a [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 license](#)

This page titled [7.2: Your Presentation Style](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

7.3: 10-20-30 Rule Article



The 10/20/30 Rule of PowerPoint Presentations

Former Apple-brand-evangelist-turned-venture-capitalist Guy Kawasaki has listened to hundreds of entrepreneurs pitch their ideas, hoping to get funding for their business ventures. Most of these pitches are “crap” (his words): “60 slides about patent pending”, “first mover advantage” and “all we have to do get 1% of the people in China to buy it.” After years of listening to pitches like these, he’s made it his mission to promote the 10/20/30 Rule of PowerPoint.

It’s quite simple: a PowerPoint presentation should have 10 slides, last no more than 20 minutes, and contain no font smaller than 30 points.

Ten slides, he argues, is the optimal number because no normal person can understand and retain more than 10 concepts in the course of a business meeting. How you select those 10 slides is up to you, but typically they will identify the problem, present your solution, talk about how to achieve it, who will do it, the timeline and a summary.

Twenty minutes is the amount of time it should take. Never mind that you have an hour for the presentation. Get it done in 20 minutes and you’ll have an extra 40 for discussion.

Thirty points for the font. How many times have you looked at slides filled with paragraphs and bullet points of 10 point text? It’s as much text as anyone could fit on the screen. To add insult to injury, the presenter proceeds to read the text! Of course, the audience figures this out and begins to read it too, putting them out of synch with the presenter.

Like most of you, I’ve done many presentations – business pitches, reports to clients, speeches to fellow communicators and classroom lectures – and I’ll admit I’ve broken every one of these rules. The 30 point rule I can abide by – it just makes sense to use a visual medium like PowerPoint to present visual images. Ten slides? That’s a challenge, so if it slips to 15 I don’t care.

Twenty minutes – that’s the hardest one, but it’s a great tip. Always leave them asking for more and you’ll have lots to talk about when the discussion begins.

Additional Resources

[Fix Your Presentations: 21 Quick Tips](#)

[How to Give a Killer Presentation](#)

[The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs](#) (video)

This page titled [7.3: 10-20-30 Rule Article](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

7.4: Presentations



Figure 19.1 You will likely at some point during your program be required to deliver information via a presentation. Image by fauxels used under [CC0 licence](#).

Introduction

Presentations are a common form of assessment at university. You will likely at some point during your program be required to deliver information via a presentation. This chapter provides you with the foundational knowledge, skills and tips to prepare and present your work effectively.

Types of Presentations

There are various types of presentations you may come across at university. Being aware of each type of presentation can be beneficial for you as a student. At university, most presentations will either be formal, informal or group presentations.

- **Formal presentations** are instances where you are required to prepare in advance to deliver a talk. This can be for an assessment piece, interview, conference or project. In a formal presentation, you are likely to use some form of visual tool to deliver the information.
- **Informal presentations** are occasions where you may be required to deliver an impromptu talk. This may occur in tutorials, meetings or gatherings.
- **Group presentations** are normally formal and require you to work collaboratively with your peers in delivering information. Similar to formal presentations, group presentations require prior planning and practise. Group presentations are normally done for an assessment piece, projects or conferences. Some visual tools may be used.

Regardless of the type of presentation you are asked to do, understanding the standard forms of presentations will assist with your preparation.

Preparation

Like other assessments or tasks, preparation is key to successfully delivering a presentation as it will help to ensure that you are heading in the right direction from the start. It will also likely increase your confidence in completing the presentation. Irrespective of the type of the presentation, you can use the steps shown in **Figure 19.2** for your preparation.



Figure 19.2 Steps for preparing your presentation. Image by USQ.

The steps shown in Figure 19.2 will essentially allow you to create tailored presentations which have directed content addressing a specific topic or task. This will allow you to engage your audience and deliver effectively the message that you are trying to communicate. Specific tips and tricks on how to present effectively are discussed later in this chapter.

Presentation Structure

Similar to written assignments, creating a structure is crucial to delivering your presentation. The benefits of having a structure are that your presentation will flow in logical manner and your audience will be able to follow and understand the information you are delivering. While presentation structures may vary, depending on whether you are presenting in a group, presenting informally, or presenting a poster, using some form of structure will likely be beneficial to both you and your audience. When structuring a presentation, also consider the platform, technology and setting. For example, if you are presenting informally, you may not require the use of any form of technology or visual equipment. You may just rely on hand written notes. In contrast, if you are presenting in a more formal setting, you may prefer to use technology to assist you, such as PowerPoint. **Figure 16.3** offers a sample you can use to create your structure. Be sure to check any task sheet given to you by your lecturer. They may have a particular structure they wish you to use for a specific task.



Figure 19.3 A sample structure of a presentation. Image by USQ.

Tips and Tricks

There are certain strategies you can use to help deliver a good presentation. Not every strategy is going to be applicable to all presentations and every individual. You will need to choose the strategies that work for you and meet the objectives of your presentation, relate to your audience and importantly address the overall task. Delivering your work is one of the hardest aspects of a presentation but it is achievable. Therefore, it is essential that you have the appropriate approach in your delivery. This includes prior planning, practise, and being confident.

The tips and tricks in this section will guide you in preparing and delivering effective presentations. Please note that some of these tips and tricks may be more relevant to oral than visual presentations.

Tip 1: Improve your delivery

Figure 19.4 presents five simple ways to lift the standard of your delivery.

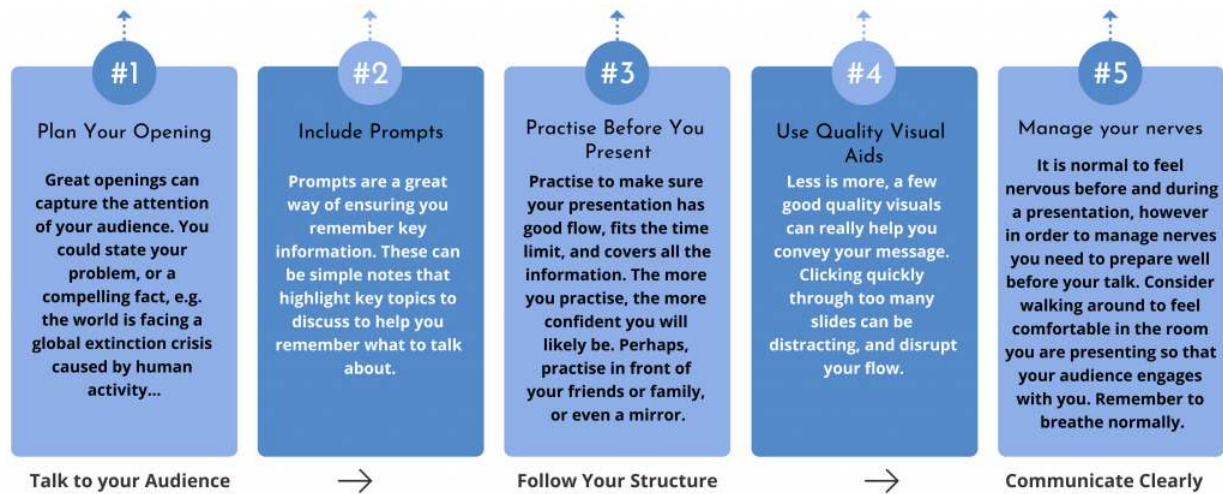


Figure 19.4 Improving your delivery. Image by USQ.

Tip 2: Stay on track with your presentation

Figure 19.5 presents reminders about your audience, structure and focus of your presentation to keep you on track.

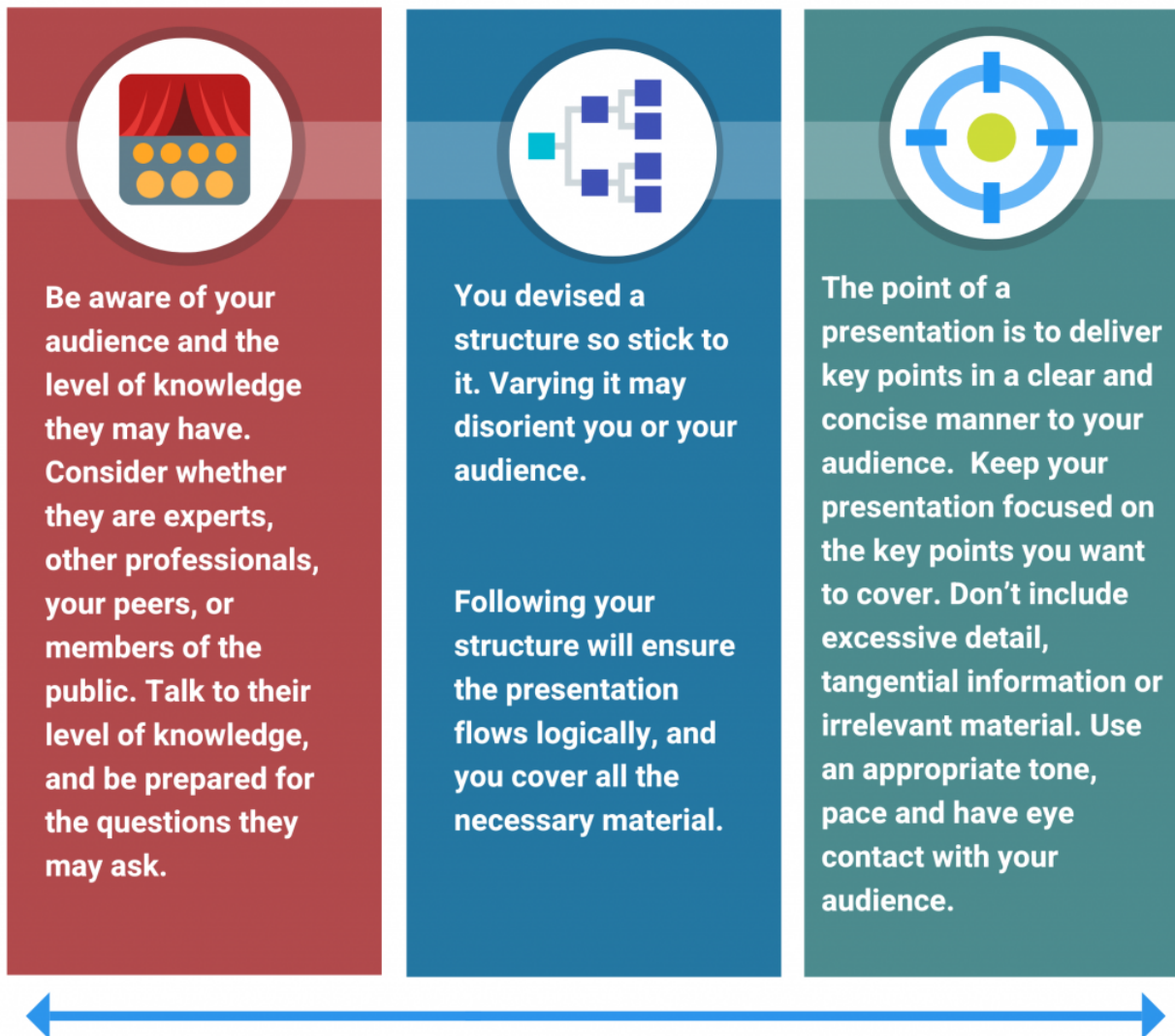


Figure 19.5 Stay on track with your presentation. Image by USQ.

Tip 3: Consider your voice and body

When giving an oral presentation, you should pay special attention to your voice and body. Voice is more than the sum of the noises you make as you speak. Pay attention to inflection, which is the change in pitch or loudness of your voice. You can deliberately use inflection to make a point, to get people's attention, or to make it very obvious that what you are saying right now is important. You can also change the volume of your voice. Speak too softly, and people will think you are shy or unwilling to share your ideas; speak too loudly, and people will think you are shouting at them. Control your volume to fit the audience and the size of the venue. If you use these tips, you should do a good job of conveying your ideas to an audience.



Figure 19.6 Take care to control the speed at which you give a presentation so that everyone can listen comfortably. Image by 祝鹤槐 used under [CC0 licence](#).

Some people have a tendency to rush through their presentations because they are feeling nervous. This means they speed up their speech, and the audience has a difficult time following along. Take care to control the speed at which you give a presentation so that everyone can listen comfortably. You can achieve this by timing yourself when preparing and practising your talk. If you are exceeding the time limit, you may either be speaking too quickly, or have too much content to cover.

Also, to add to the comfort of the listeners, it is always nice to use a conversational tone in a presentation. This includes such components as stance, gesture, and eye contact—in other words, overall body language. How do you stand when you are giving a presentation? Do you move around and fidget? Do you look down at the ground or stare at your note cards? Are you chewing gum or sticking your hands in and out of your pockets nervously? Obviously, you don't want to do any of these things. Make eye contact with your audience as often as possible. Stand in a comfortable manner, but don't fidget. Use gestures sparingly to make certain points. Most importantly, try to be as comfortable as you can knowing that you have practised the presentation beforehand and you know your topic well which will help to calm nerves.

Tip 4: Consider your attitude

Attitude is everything. Your enthusiasm for your presentation will prime the audience. If you are bored by your own words, the audience will be yawning. If you are enthused by what you have to offer, they will sit up in their seats and listen intently. Also, be interested in your audience. Let them know that you are excited to share your ideas with them because they are worth your effort.

Tip 5: Consider the visuals

You might also think about using technology to deliver your presentation. Perhaps you will deliver a slide presentation in addition to orally communicating your ideas to your audience. Keep in mind that the best presentations are those with minimal words or pictures on the screen, just enough to illustrate the information conveyed in your oral presentation. Do a search on lecture slides or presentation slides to find a myriad suggestions on how to create them effectively. You may also create videos to communicate what you found in your research. Today, there are many different ways to take the information you found and create something memorable through which to share your knowledge. When you are making a presentation that includes a visual component, pay attention to three elements: design, method, and function. The design includes such elements as size, shape, colour, scale, and contrast. You have a vast array of options for designing a background or structuring the visual part of your presentation, whether online or offline.



Figure 19.7 Consider which method to use when visually presenting your ideas. Image by ThisIsEngineering used under [CC0 licence](#).

Consider which method to use when visually presenting your ideas. Will it be better to show your ideas by drawing a picture, including a photograph, using clip art, or showing a video? Or will it be more powerful to depict your ideas through a range of colours or shapes? These decisions you make will alter the impact of your presentation. Will you present your ideas literally, as with a photograph, or in the abstract, as in some artistic rendition of an idea? For instance, if you decide to introduce your ideas symbolically, a picture of a pond surrounded by tall trees may be the best way to present the concept of a calm person. Consider also the purpose of the visuals used in your presentation. Are you telling a story? Communicating a message? Creating movement for the audience to follow? Summarising an idea? Motivating people to agree with an idea? Supporting and confirming what you are telling your audience? Knowing the purpose of including the visual element of your presentation will make your decisions about design and method more meaningful and successful.

As mentioned, not every strategy is applicable to all presentations or to every individual. Choose the strategies that are relevant to you and focus on them. Perhaps you could design a learning map of the tips you need to remember, as shown in **Figure 19.8**.

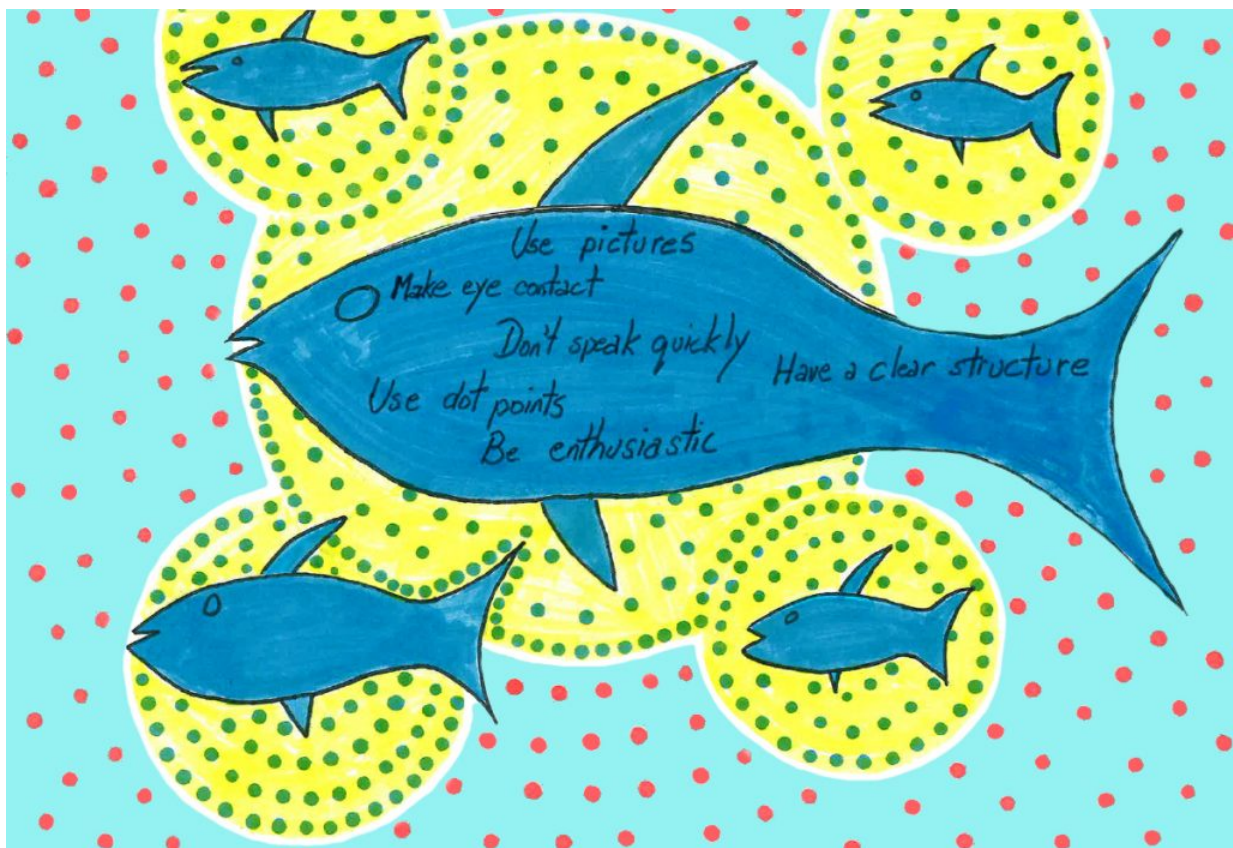


Figure 19.8 You can design a learning map of tips to remember. Image by Sam Conway.

Conclusion

Delivering a presentation may be daunting, especially if you are new to university but as we have discussed in this chapter, there are several approaches you can use to help you prepare and deliver your presentation effectively. While each individual may have their own approach, preparing, planning, structuring and practising your presentation will go a long way to help you achieve

success. Following the steps and considering the ideas in this chapter places you in a good position to deliver presentations effectively. The approaches are beneficial but ensure you are adhering to any specific requirements included in the assignment task sheet. Following the task sheet closely and applying these presentation skills will increase your likelihood of academic success.

Key points

- Understand the type of presentation you are asked to deliver.
- Start preparing in advance and adopt a structure.
- Know your topic well and your audience.
- Try and practise different strategies, tools, speaking approaches well before your presentation and ensure it is within the allocated time limit. Remember, practise, practise and practise!
- Be confident in yourself, your presentation skills and follow the plan you have developed.

This page titled [7.4: Presentations](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

7.5: Bad Presentations- Death by PowerPoint

● Learning Objectives

- Discuss common mistakes in presentations

For many, the prospect of developing and delivering a business presentation rates right up there with death and taxes. Interestingly, that same mixture of fear and loathing is often felt by audience members as well. But it doesn't have to be that way. The ability to craft a compelling story is a skill as old as the human race, and the need to communicate is as primal and potentially powerful.

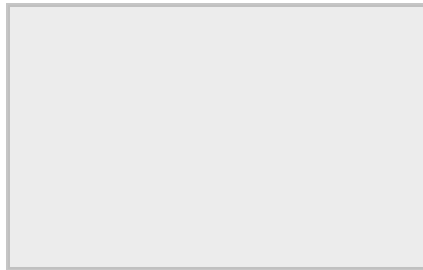


Figure 1. Akhenaten as a sphinx, and was originally found in the city of Amarna.

For millions of years before the invention of modern technology, humans used the tools available to perpetuate traditions and culture and to document—and often rewrite—history. Do a few internet searches and immerse yourself in the Egyptian tombs; the caves of Chauvet; or El Castillo, the Temple of Kukulcan. What you're experiencing is a feat of both artistry and communication. Although we don't know the full significance of these early carvings and structures, there's no doubt that these early humans captured their world view in a way that is still deeply resonant. While the tools have changed, the communication challenges—and opportunity—remain the same: to communicate an engaging and inspiring point of view.

Regardless of whether you want to change the world, build your brand, or build a billion-dollar business, effective presentation skills are essential. To quote legendary investor, philanthropist and Berkshire Hathaway chairman and CEO Warren Buffet, "If you can't communicate and talk to other people and get across your ideas, you're giving up your potential."^[1] As would be expected of a numbers person, Buffet has quantified his point in talks on student campuses and professional organizations. Speaking at his alma mater in 2009, Warren Buffett told Columbia Business School students that he believed learning effective communication skills could translate into 50 percent higher lifetime earnings.

Given our vibrant storytelling tradition and with so much at stake, why are there still so many bad presentations? Wouldn't you think that modern communication technology—considering the advances in graphics and communications software alone!—would lead to more compelling presentations? Interestingly, the problem is, to some extent, the technology. It's estimated that 30 million PowerPoint presentations are created every day, with (seemingly) a majority of presenters opting for default layouts and templates. The problem is, we're wired for story, not bullet points. A related failure is our use of available technology.

Seth Godin has a wonderful—and instructive—rant on these points: [Really Bad PowerPoint \(and how to avoid it\)](#), blaming Microsoft wizards, templates, built-in clip art and lazy presenters for ineffective presentations. In response to a question regarding "death by PowerPoint" on the TechTarget Network, Margaret Rouse provided this definition: "a phenomenon caused by the poor use of presentation software," identifying the primary contributors of this condition as "confusing graphics, slides with too much text and presenters whose idea of a good presentation is to read 40 slides out loud."^[2]

So how do we avoid causing "death by PowerPoint"—or by whatever presentation software we use? The common denominator of presentation mistakes is that they represent a failure of communication. This failure can be attributed to two errors: too much or too little. The error of too much is generally the result of trying to use slides as a teleprompter or a substitute to a report, or, it would seem, to bludgeon the audience into submission. Of course, this tends to have an alternate effect, namely, prompting audience members to walk out or tune out, turning their attention instead to doodling or their device of choice.

What bad presentations have too little of is emotion. Presentation expert and author of the classic *Presentation Zen* (and 4 related books) Gar Reynolds captures the crux of the problem: "a good presentation is a mix of logic, data, emotion, and inspiration. We are usually OK with the logic and data part, but fail on the emotional and inspirational end."^[3] There's also a hybrid too little-too

much mistake, where too little substance and/or no design sensibility is — in the mind of the presenter — offset by transitions and special effects. Heed Seth Godin's advice: "No dissolves, spins or other transitions. None."^[4]

The 10/20/30 rule, generally attributed to venture capitalist Guy Kawasaki, is a good guideline to help you achieve a "just right" balance in your presentations. Geared for entrepreneurs pitching their business, his advice is a discipline that would improve the quality—and, effectiveness—of most presentations. In brief, 10/20/30 translates to a maximum of 10 slides, a maximum of 20 minutes and a minimum of 30 point font.^[5]

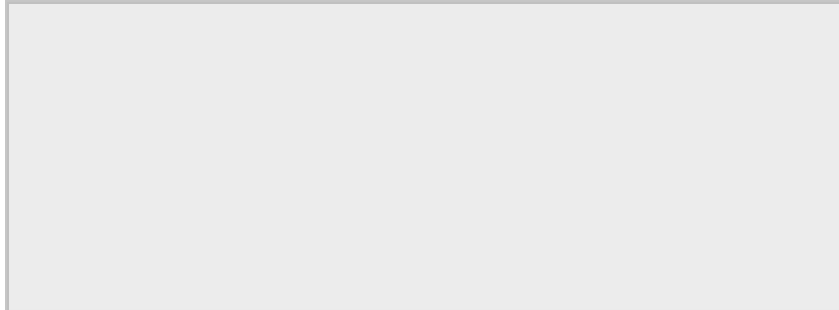


Figure 2. Your presentation should have no more than 10 slides, take no more than 20 minutes, and use type no smaller than 30 point font.

While this rule is a good starting point, it doesn't overrule your audience analysis or understanding of your purpose. Sometimes, you may need more slides or have a more involved purpose—like training people in new software or presenting the results of a research study—that takes more than 30 minutes to address. In that case, go with what your audience needs and what will make your presentation most effective. The concept behind the 10/20/30 rule—to make new learning easy for your audience to take in, process and remember—should still be your guide even if you don't follow the rule exactly.

How to Avoid Death By PowerPoint

For more on how to avoid causing death by PowerPoint, watch Swedish presentation expert and How to Avoid Death By PowerPoint author David Phillips TED Talk on the topic:

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <http://pb.libretexts.org/bcsom/?p=380>

Practice Question

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/8624>

1. Gallo, Carmine. "How Warren Buffet and Joel Osteen Conquered Their Terrifying Fear of Public Speaking," *Forbes*. May 16, 2013. [↵](#)
2. Rouse, Margaret. "What is death by PowerPoint?" *TechTarget Network*. [↵](#)
3. Reynolds, Garr. "10 tips for Improving Your Presentations Today," *Presentation Zen*. Nov 2014. [↵](#)
4. Godin, Seth. *Fix Your Really Bad PowerPoint*. Ebook, sethgodin.com, 2001. [↵](#)
5. Kawasaki, Guy. *The 10/20/30 Rule of PowerPoint*. December 2005. [↵](#)

Contributors and Attributions

CC licensed content, Original

- Bad Presentations. **Authored by:** Nina Burokas. **Provided by:** Lumen Learning. **License:** [CC BY: Attribution](#)

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Echnaton (Akhenaten) as Sphinx. **Authored by:** Hans Ollermann. **Located at:** <https://flic.kr/p/4nvAVm>. **License:** [CC BY: Attribution](#)

All rights reserved content

- How to avoid death By PowerPoint. **Authored by:** David JP Phillips. **Provided by:** TED. **Located at:** <https://youtu.be/Iwpi1Lm6dFo>. **License:** *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled [7.5: Bad Presentations- Death by PowerPoint](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

7.6: Public Speaking and Class Presentations

● Learning Objectives

1. Know how to overcome nervousness and anxiety associated with public speaking and giving class presentations.
2. Effectively use the six-step process to prepare for and deliver a class presentation.
3. Create effective visual aids for use in class presentations.
4. Work with a group to successfully plan and deliver a class presentation.

Public speaking—giving an oral presentation before a class or another group of people—is a special form of interaction common in education. You will likely be asked to give a presentation in one of your classes at some point, and your future career may also involve public speaking. It's important to develop skills for this form of communication.

Public speaking is like participating in class—sharing your thoughts, ideas, and questions with others in the group. In other ways, however, public speaking is very different. You stand in front of the class to speak, rather than from your usual seat—and for most students, that changes the psychology of the situation. You also have time outside of class to prepare your presentation, allowing you to plan it carefully—and, for many, giving more time to worry about it and experience even more anxiety!

Overcoming Anxiety

Although a few people seem to be natural public speakers, most of us feel some stage fright or anxiety about having to speak to a group, at least at first. This is completely normal. We feel like everyone is staring at us and seeing our every flaw, and we're sure we'll forget what we want to say or mess up. Take comfort from knowing that almost everyone else is dreading giving class presentations the same as you are! But you can learn to overcome your anxiety and prepare in a way that not only safely gets you through the experience but also leads to success in your presentation. The following are proven strategies for overcoming anxiety when speaking in public:

- **Understand anxiety.** Since stage fright is normal, don't try to deny that you're feeling anxious. A little anxiety can help motivate you to prepare and do your best. Accept this aspect of the process and work to overcome it. Anxiety is usually worst just before you begin and but eases up once you've begun.
- **Understand that your audience actually wants you to succeed.** They're not looking for faults or hoping you'll fail. Other students and your instructors are on your side, not your enemy. They likely won't even see your anxiety.
- **Reduce anxiety by preparing and practicing.** The next section discusses the preparation process in more detail. The more fully you prepare and the more often you have practice, the more your anxiety will go away.
- **Focus on what you're saying, not how you're saying it.** Keep in mind that you have ideas to share, and this is what your classmates and instructors are interested in. Don't obsess about speaking, but focus on the content of your presentation. Think, for example, of how easily you share your ideas with a friend or family member, as you naturally speak your mind. The same can work with public speaking if you focus on the ideas themselves.
- **Develop self-confidence.** As you prepare, you will make notes you can refer to during the presentation. You're not going to forget what you want to say. The more you practice, the more confident you'll become.

Guidelines for Presentations

Preparing and delivering a presentation in class (or in business or other settings) is a process very similar to the learning process discussed in Chapter 4 “Listening, Taking Notes, and Remembering”, Chapter 5 “Reading to Learn”, and Chapter 6 “Preparing for and Taking Tests” and the writing process discussed in Chapter 8 “Writing for Classes”. The process breaks down into these six basic steps:

1. Analyze your audience and goals
2. Plan, research, and organize your content
3. Draft and revise the presentation
4. Prepare speaking notes
5. Practice the presentation
6. Deliver the presentation

Step 1: Analyze Your Audience and Goals

Who will see and hear your presentation—and why? Obviously, other students and the instructor. But you still need to think about what they already know, and don't know, about your topic. If your topic relates to subject matter in class lectures and readings, consider what background information they already have and be careful not to give a boring recap of things they already know. It may be important, however, to show how your specific topic fits in with subjects that have been discussed already in class, especially in the beginning of your presentation, but be sure to focus on your new topic.

New terms and concepts may become familiar to you while doing your research and preparation, but remember to define and explain them to other students. Consider how much explanation or examples will be needed for your audience to grasp your points. If your topic involves anything controversial or may provoke emotion, consider your audience's attitudes and choose your words carefully. Thinking about your audience will help you find ways to get their attention and keep them interested.

Be sure you are clear about the goals for the presentation. Are you primarily presenting new information or arguing for a position? Are you giving an overview or a detailed report? Review the assignment and talk with the instructor if you're unsure. Your goals guide everything in the presentation: what you say, how much you say, what order you say it in, what visual aids you use, whether you use humor or personal examples, and so forth.

Step 2: Plan, Research, and Organize Your Content

Starting with the assignment and your goals, brainstorm your topic. Jot notes on specific topics that seem important. Often you'll do reading or research to gather more information. Take notes as you would with any reading. As you research the topic at this stage, don't worry at first about how much content you are gathering. It's better to know too much and then pick out the most important things to say than to rush ahead to drafting the presentation and then realize you don't have enough material.

Organizing a presentation is similar to organizing topics in a class paper and uses the same principles. Introduce your topic and state your main idea (thesis), go into more detail about specific ideas, and conclude your presentation. Look for a logical order for the specifics in the middle. Some topics work best in chronological (time) order or with a compare-and-contrast organization. If your goal is to persuade the audience, build up to the strongest reason. Put similar ideas together and add transitions between different ideas.

While researching your topic and outlining your main points, think about visual aids that may help the presentation.

Also start thinking about how much time you have for the presentation, but don't limit yourself yet in the outline stage.

Step 3: Draft and Revise the Presentation

Unless required by the assignment, you don't need to actually write out the presentation in full sentences and paragraphs. How much you write depends on your own learning and speaking style. Some students speak well from brief phrases written in an outline, while other students find it easier to write sentences out completely. There's nothing wrong with writing the presentation out fully like a script if that helps you be sure you will say what you intend to—just so you don't actually get up and read from the script.

You can't know for sure how long a presentation will last until you rehearse it later, but you can estimate the time while drafting it. On the average, it takes two to three minutes to speak what can be written on a standard double-spaced page—but with visual aids, pauses, and audience interaction, it may take longer. While this is only a rough guide, you can start out thinking of a ten-minute presentation as the equivalent of a three to four-page paper.

Never wait until the last minute to draft your presentation. Arrange your time to prepare the first draft and then come back to it a day or two later to ask these questions:

- Am I going on too long about minor points? Could the audience get bored?
- Do I have good explanations and reasons for my main points? Do I need more data or better examples? Where would visual aids be most effective?
- Am I using the best words for this topic and this audience? Should I be more or less informal in the way I talk?
- Does it all hold together and flow well from one point to the next? Do I need a better introduction or transition when I shift from one idea to another?

Visual Aids in Presentations

Except for very short informal presentations, most presentations gain from visuals—and visual aids are often expected. If encouraged or allowed to include visuals in your presentation, plan to do so. Consider all possible types:

- Charts or graphs
- Maps
- Photos or other images
- Video clips
- Handouts (only when necessary—they can be distracting)

Use the available technology, whether it's an overhead projector, PowerPoint slides, a flip chart, or posters. (Talk to your instructor about resources and software for designing your visuals.) Follow these guidelines:

- Design your visuals carefully. Here are some basic rules:
 - Use a simple, neutral background. A light-colored background with text in a dark color works best for words; a dark background used like matting works best for photos.
 - Minimize the amount of text in visuals—more than eight words per slide is usually too much. Avoid simply presenting word outlines of what you are saying. Make sure text is large enough for the audience to read.
 - Don't use more than two pictures in a slide, and use two only to make a direct comparison. Montages are hard to focus on and distract the viewer from what you're saying. Use images only when they support your presentation; don't use clip art just as decoration.
 - Don't put a table of numbers in a visual aid. If you need to illustrate numerical data, use a graph. (Microsoft Excel can make them for you easily.)
 - Don't use sound effects. Use a very brief recording only if directly related to your main points.
 - Don't use visual special effects such as dissolves, spins, box-outs, or other transitions. They are distracting. Use animation sparingly and only if it helps make a point.
- Don't use so many visuals or move through them so quickly that the audience gives all its attention to them rather than to you.
- Practice your presentation using your visual aids, because they affect your timing.
- Explain visuals when needed but not when they're obvious.
- Keep your eyes on your audience, only briefly glancing at visuals to stay in synch with them.
- Don't hand out a printout of your visuals. Your audience should keep their eyes on you instead of fiddling around with paper.

Step 4: Prepare Speaking Notes

As mentioned earlier, it's not a good idea to read your presentation from a written page rather than *deliver* it. To keep your audience's attention, it's important to make eye contact with them and to use a normal speaking voice—and you can't do this if you keep your eyes on a written script.

Speaking notes are a brief outline for your presentation. You might write them on index cards or sheets of paper. Include important facts and data as well as keywords for your main ideas, but don't write too much. (If you forget things later when you start practicing, you can always add more to your outline then.) Be sure to number your cards or pages to prevent a last-minute mix-up.

Think especially about how to open and close your presentation, because these two moments have the most impact of the whole presentation. Use the opening to capture the audience's attention, but be sure it is appropriate for your audience and the goals. Here are some possibilities for your opening:

- A striking fact or example (illustrating an issue or a problem)
- A brief interesting or humorous anecdote (historical, personal, or current event)
- A question to the audience
- An interesting quotation

Then relate the opening to your topic and your main point and move into the body of the presentation.

Your closing mirrors the opening. Transition from your last point to a brief summary that pulls your ideas together. You might end with a challenge to the audience, a strong statement about your topic, or a personal reflection on what you have been saying. Just

make sure you have a final sentence planned so that you don't end up uncomfortably fumbling around at the end ("Well, I guess that ends my presentation").

Step 5: Practice the Presentation

Practice may be the most important step. It is also the best way to get over stage fright and gain confidence.

Practice first in an empty room where you imagine people sitting, so that you can move your eyes around the room to this "audience." The first time through, focus on putting your outlined notes into full sentences in your natural speaking voice. Don't read your notes aloud. Glance down at your notes only briefly and then look up immediately around the room. Practice two or three times just to find the right words to explain your points and feel more comfortable working with your notes. Time yourself, but don't obsess over your presentation being the exact length required. If your presentation is much too long, however, adjust it now in your notes so that you don't start memorizing things that you might accidentally still say later on even though you cut them from your notes.

Once you feel good speaking from your notes, practice to add some more polish to your delivery. You might want to record or videotape your presentation or ask a friend or roommate to watch your presentation. Pay attention to these aspects of how you speak:

- Try to speak in your natural voice, not in a monotone as if you were just reading aloud. If you will be presenting in a large room without a microphone, you will need to speak louder than usual, but still try to use a natural voice.
- In usual conversation, we speed up and slow down and vary the intensity of our words to show how we feel about what we're saying. Practice changes in your delivery style to emphasize key points.
- Don't keep looking at your notes. It's fine if you use words that are different from those you wrote down—the more you rehearse without looking at your notes, the more natural sounding you will be.
- Be sure you can pronounce all new words and technical terms correctly. Practice saying them slowly and clearly to yourself until you can say them naturally.
- Don't forget transitions. Listeners need a cue when you're moving to a new idea. Practice phrases such as "*Another* important reason for this is..." or "Now let's move on to *why* this is so..."
- Watch out for all those little "filler" words people use so often, such as "like," "you know," "well," and "uh." They're very distracting to most audiences. Listen to or watch your tape to see if you are using these fillers or ask your friend to point it out.
- Pay attention to body language when practicing. Stand up straight and tall in every practice session so that you become used to it. Unless you have to stand at a podium to use a fixed microphone in your presentation, practice moving around while you speak; this helps keep the audience watching you. Use hand and arm gestures if they are natural for you, but don't try to make up gestures for the presentation because they will look phony. Most important, keep your eyes moving over the audience. Practice smiling and pausing at key points.
- Finally, it's a good idea to be ready in case of an accident. Most likely your presentation will go smoothly, you'll stay on track with your notes, and your PowerPoint slides will work fine, but sometimes a mishap happens. Be ready to joke about it, rather than becoming flustered. If the computer fails and you lose your visuals, say something like, "Well, that's a shame, I had some really great photos to show you!" If you drop your index cards or notes, or accidentally skip ahead in your presentation and then have to backtrack, make a joke: "Sorry about that, I was so excited to get to my next point that I'm afraid I lost control there for a moment!" Let your audience laugh with you—they'll still be on your side, and you can defuse the incident and move on without becoming more nervous.

Step 6: Deliver the Presentation

Be sure to get enough sleep and eat a healthy breakfast. Don't drink too much caffeine or else you'll become hyper and nervous. Wear your favorite—and appropriate—clothing and comfortable shoes.

Figure 7.7



You may use computerized visual aids when you give a presentation to a class.

John Haynes Photography – [OLPC](#) – CC BY-ND 2.0.

Remember, your audience is on your side! If you're still nervous before your turn, take a few deep breaths. Rehearse your opening lines in your mind. Smile as you move to the front of the room, looking at your audience. You'll see some friendly faces smiling back encouragingly. As you start the presentation, move your eyes among those giving you a warm reception—and if you see some student looking bored or doing something else, just ignore them. But don't focus on any one person in the audience for too long, which could make them nervous or cause them to look away.

Don't keep looking at your watch or a clock: If your rehearsal times were close to your assigned time, your presentation will be also. If you do notice that you're running behind schedule, it may be that you're saying too much out of nervousness. Use your notes to get back on track and keep the pace moving. But it's better to deliver your presentation naturally and fluidly and be a bit long or short than to try to change your words and end up sounding unnatural.

At the closing, deliver your last line with confidence, sweeping your eyes over the audience. If appropriate, ask if there are any questions. When you're done, pause, smile, say "Thank you," and walk back to your seat.

Later on, ask other students and your instructor for comments. Be open minded—don't just ask for praise. If you hear a suggestion for improvement, file that in your memory for next time.

Group Presentations

You may be assigned to give a presentation in a small group. The six-step process discussed previously works for group presentations, too, although group dynamics often call for additional planning and shared responsibilities:

1. Schedule a group meeting as soon as possible to get started. Don't let another student put things off. Explain that you're too busy and won't have time at the last minute.
2. Begin by analyzing your audience and your goals together as a group to make sure everyone understands the assignment the same. Discuss who should do what. While everyone should talk about what content to include, from here onward, you will take on specialized roles. One or more may begin research and gathering information. Others who are good writers may volunteer to draft the presentation, while one or more others may develop the visual aids. Those who have public speaking experience may volunteer to do all or most of the speaking (unless the assignment requires everyone to have a speaking role). You also need a team leader to keep everyone on schedule, organize meetings, and so on. The best team leader is an even-tempered student with good social skills, who can motivate everyone to cooperate.
3. Steps 2 and 3 can likely be carried out individually with assigned tasks, but group members should stay in touch. For example, the person developing the visuals should be talking to those doing the researching and drafting to see what visuals are needed and get started finding or creating them.

4. Before preparing notes in step 4, meet again to go over the content and plan for visuals. Everyone should be comfortable with the plan so far. Make final decisions about who will do each section of the presentation. Set the time for each segment. Then speakers should prepare their own speaking notes. Let someone with strong speaking skills open or close the presentation (or both), with others doing the other parts.
5. The whole group should be present for practice sessions in step 5, even if not everyone is speaking. Those not speaking should take notes and give feedback. If one student is doing most of the presenting, an alternate should be chosen in case the first choice is sick on the scheduled day. The alternate also needs to practice.
6. During the delivery, especially if using technology for visual aids, one student should manage the visuals while others do the presenting. If several students present different segments, plan the transition from one to another so that the presentation keeps flowing without pauses.

Additional Resources

For Class Presentations

Using PowerPoint. A step-by-step illustrated tutorial for learning how to create effective visual presentations with PowerPoint. <https://www.baruch.cuny.edu/tutorials/powerpoint/>

“How to Give a Bad Talk.” A humorous look (with some very good advice) on what *not* to do when preparing for and giving a class presentation. <http://www.cs.berkeley.edu/~pattrsn/talks/BadTalk.pdf>

Class presentations on YouTube. Search YouTube with the phrase “class presentation” and look for video examples of actual students giving class presentations. Observing and critiquing the presentations of other students are good ways to get started preparing your own and learning from others. Here’s a good example of a student group presentation on a topic we can all relate to (how body language works):

(click to see video)

In this presentation, take note of

- how students make good eye contact with the audience;
- the first student’s natural speaking voice and tone, and how she did not have to use her note cards very often (obviously she practiced well);
- some differences among these students;
- the use of PowerPoint slides within the presentation (some better than others);
- the appropriate occasional use of humor;
- the division of presentation responsibilities within the student group;
- each presenter’s interaction with the audience.

Key Takeaways

- Public speaking skills are important because you will likely give presentations in class and perhaps in a future job.
- Overcome anxiety about public speaking by understanding your feelings, preparing well and practicing your delivery, and focusing on your subject.
- Follow a six-step process to prepare and deliver a presentation:
 1. Analyze your audience and goals
 2. Plan, research, and organize your content
 3. Draft and revise the presentation
 4. Prepare speaking notes
 5. Practice the presentation
 6. Deliver the presentation and seek feedback
- Use visual aids to support a presentation, creating visuals that are relevant, attractive, and powerful.
- The success of a group presentation depends on effective group meetings, successful division of roles, and repeated group practices.

Checkpoint Exercises

1. If you have given a class presentation in the past, what worked best for you? (If you have not given a presentation yet as a student, what aspect do you think will be most difficult for you?)

2. Name the two most important things you can do to reduce anxiety about a class presentation you will have to give.

3. For each of the following statements about class presentations, circle T for true or F for false:

T	F	Although you are delivering the presentation to the class, your real audience is your instructor, so you don't need to waste time defining terms and concepts he or she already knows.
T	F	Organizing a presentation or speech is similar to organizing topics in a paper you write for class.
T	F	When creating visual aids, put as many photos as you can in each PowerPoint slide to have the strongest impact.
T	F	In case your memory goes blank while giving a presentation, write the full presentation out so that you can read it aloud.

4. Describe how best to use body language (facial expressions, eye movements, gestures, etc.) when giving a presentation.

5. If you were assigned along with three other students to give a group presentation in the class using this textbook, what would be your preferred role in the preparation stages? Your least preferred role? If you had to take your least preferred role, what single thing would you want to work hardest on to make the presentation successful?

This page titled [7.6: Public Speaking and Class Presentations](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

7.7: Presentation Accommodations

https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/wp-content/uploads/modules/jj1/pdf/iris_pres_accomm_ex.pdf

This page titled [7.7: Presentation Accommodations](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

7.8: How to Fix Your Presentation; 21 Tips

Drowning in a PowerPoint swamp? Use these easy tricks to make your presentations more compelling & persuasive.



Most business presentations range from incredibly boring to, well ... just plain boring. I'm sure you have a few offenders within your own team.

It doesn't have to be this way, though.

Here are 21 ways to make certain that your presentations hold your audience's interest—and help them make the decision you want them to make.

Preparation

- **Build a story.** Presentations are boring when they present scads of information without any context or meaning. Instead, tell a story, with the audience as the main characters (and, specifically, the heroes).
- **Keep it relevant.** Audiences only pay attention to stories and ideas that are immediately relevant. Consider what decision you want them to make, then build an appropriate case.
- **Cut your intro.** A verbose introduction that describes you, your firm, your topic, how you got there, only bores people. Keep your intro down to a sentence or two, even for a long presentation.
- **Begin with an eye-opener.** Kick off your talk by revealing a shocking fact, a surprising insight, or a unique perspective that naturally leads into your message and the decision you want made.
- **Keep it short and sweet.** When was the last time you heard someone complain that a presentation was too short? Make it half as long as you originally thought it should be (or even shorter).
- **Use facts, not generalities.** Fuzzy concepts reflect fuzzy thinking. Buttress your argument, story and message with facts that are quantifiable, verifiable, memorable and dramatic.
- **Customize for every audience.** One-size-fits-all presentations are like one-size-fits-all clothes; they never fit right and usually make you look bad. Every audience is different; your presentation should be too.
- **Simplify your graphics.** People shut off their brains when confronted with complicated drawings and tables. Use very simple graphics and highlight the data points that are important.

- **Keep backgrounds in the background.** Fancy slide backgrounds only make it more difficult for the audience to focus on what's important. Use a simple, single color, neutral color background.
- **Use readable fonts.** Don't try to give your audience to get an eyestrain headache by using tiny fonts. Use large fonts in simple faces (like Arial); avoid **boldface**, *italics* and ALL-CAPS.
- **Don't get too fancy.** You want your audience to remember your message, not how many special effects and visual gimcracks you used. In almost all cases, the simpler the better.

Presentation

- **Check your equipment ... in advance.** If you must use PowerPoint, or plan on showing videos or something, check to make sure that the setup really works. Then check it again. Then one more time.
- **Speak to the audience.** Great public speakers keep their focus on the audience, not their slides or their notes. Focusing on the audience encourages them to focus on your and your message.
- **Never read from slides.** Guess what? Your audience can read. If you're reading from your slides, you're not just being boring—you're also insulting the intelligence of everyone in the room.
- **Don't skip around.** Nothing makes you look more disorganized than skipping over slides, backtracking to previous slides, or showing slides that don't really belong. If there are slides that don't fit, cut them out of the presentation *in advance*.
- **Leave humor to the professionals.** Unless you're really good at telling jokes, don't try to be a comedian. Remember: When it comes to business presentations, polite laughter is the kiss of death.
- **Avoid obvious wormholes.** Every audience has hot buttons that command immediate attention and cause every other discussion to grind to a halt. Learn what they are and avoid them.
- **Skip the jargon.** Business buzzwords make you sound like you're either pompous, crazy, or (worst case) speaking in tongues. Cut them out—both from your slides and from your vocabulary.
- **Make it timely.** Schedule presentations for a time when the audience can give you proper attention. Avoid end of day, just before lunch, and the day before a holiday.
- **Prepare some questions.** If you're going to have a Q&A at the end of your presentation, be prepared to get the ball rolling by having up a question or two up your sleeve.
- **Have a separate handout.** If there's data that you want the audience to have, put it into a separate document for distribution after your talk. Don't use your slide deck as a data repository.

This page titled [7.8: How to Fix Your Presentation; 21 Tips](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by .

Index

D

dire

Detailed Licensing

Overview

Title: TED-1110-DL01: Professional Behaviors and Dispositions in an Educational Setting (Bryant Foster)

Webpages: 77

All licenses found:

- [Undeclared](#): 100% (77 pages)

By Page

- TED-1110-DL01: Professional Behaviors and Dispositions in an Educational Setting (Bryant Foster) - *Undeclared*
 - Front Matter - *Undeclared*
 - TitlePage - *Undeclared*
 - InfoPage - *Undeclared*
 - Table of Contents - *Undeclared*
 - Licensing - *Undeclared*
 - 1: Teacher as a Professional - *Undeclared*
 - 1.1: Teacher as a Professional - *Undeclared*
 - 1.2: Education in Early Childhood - *Undeclared*
 - 1.3: InTASC Core Teaching Standards and Progressions - *Undeclared*
 - 1.4: Early Childhood Generalist - *Undeclared*
 - 1.5: NAEYC Standards - *Undeclared*
 - 1.6: What Does it Mean to be an Ethical Teacher? - *Undeclared*
 - 1.7: Development of Teachers' Identity - *Undeclared*
 - 1.8: Assessing Your Values - *Undeclared*
 - 1.9: The Ethical Implications of Teachers Using Social Networking Sites to Communicate - *Undeclared*
 - 2: Teacher as a Communicator - *Undeclared*
 - 2.1: Teacher as a Communicator - *Undeclared*
 - 2.2: Communication Skills of a Teacher and Its Role in the Development of the Students' Academic Success - *Undeclared*
 - 2.3: Verbal and Non-Verbal Communications - *Undeclared*
 - 2.4: Key Differences in Verbal and Non Verbal Communication - *Undeclared*
 - 2.5: Communication Styles in the Classroom - *Undeclared*
 - 2.6: Listening Quiz - *Undeclared*
 - 2.7: Written Communication- An Educator's Calling Card - *Undeclared*
 - 3: Teacher as a Collaborator - *Undeclared*
 - 3.1: Teacher as a Collaborator - *Undeclared*
 - 3.2: Lifelong Learning and Professional Development - *Undeclared*
 - 3.3: Assessing Your Strengths and Learning Styles - *Undeclared*
 - 3.4: Learning in Groups - *Undeclared*
 - 3.5: Building Trusting Collaborative Relationships with Families - *Undeclared*
 - 3.6: School and Community Partnerships- Communities in Schools - *Undeclared*
 - 3.7: How to Develop, Expand and Maintain Professional Relationships - *Undeclared*
 - 3.8: Remaining Professional When You're Frustrated - *Undeclared*
 - 3.9: Assessments - *Undeclared*
 - 4: Teacher as an Observer - *Undeclared*
 - 4.1: Teacher as an Observer - *Undeclared*
 - 4.2: Why We Observe - *Undeclared*
 - 4.3: Becoming a Skilled Observer - *Undeclared*
 - 4.4: Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques - *Undeclared*
 - 4.5: The Role of Observation - *Undeclared*
 - 4.6: Early Childhood Observation - *Undeclared*
 - 4.7: Observation Environments - *Undeclared*
 - 4.8: Teachers' observation, questioning, and record keeping - *Undeclared*
 - 4.9: Questions to Plan for the Next Observation - *Undeclared*
 - 5: Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner - *Undeclared*
 - 5.1: Teacher as a Reflective Practioner - *Undeclared*
 - 5.2: The Reflective Practitioner - *Undeclared*
 - 5.3: The Reflective Teacher- Professional Organizations - *Undeclared*
 - 5.4: Peer Feedback and Reflection - *Undeclared*
 - 5.5: Reflective Practice - *Undeclared*
 - 5.6: Reflective Teaching- an Element of Life-Long Learning - *Undeclared*
 - 5.7: Reviewing and Reflecting on Documentation - *Undeclared*

- 5.8: How to be a More Reflective Teacher - *Undeclared*
- 5.9: Activity- Write a My Future Self - *Undeclared*
- 6: Teacher as a Proactive Practitioner - *Undeclared*
 - 6.1: Teacher as a Proactive Practitioner - *Undeclared*
 - 6.2: The Teacher's Role - Build and Maintain Positive Relationships with Children - *Undeclared*
 - 6.3: Building Environments that Encourage Positive Behavior- The Preschool behavior Support Self-Assessment - *Undeclared*
 - 6.4: Factors that Influence Behavior - *Undeclared*
 - 6.5: Redirecting Behavior- A Proactive Approach - *Undeclared*
 - 6.6: Proactive versus Reactive Classroom Management - *Undeclared*
 - 6.7: Are You Reactive or Proactive? - *Undeclared*
 - 6.8: Social-Emotional Learning- What is SEL and Why SEL Matters - *Undeclared*
 - 6.9: Positive Behavior Support - *Undeclared*
- 7: Teacher as a Presenter - *Undeclared*
 - 7.1: Teacher as a Presenter - *Undeclared*
 - 7.2: Your Presentation Style - *Undeclared*
 - 7.3: 10-20-30 Rule Article - *Undeclared*
 - 7.4: Presentations - *Undeclared*
 - 7.5: Bad Presentations- Death by PowerPoint - *Undeclared*
 - 7.6: Public Speaking and Class Presentations - *Undeclared*
 - 7.7: Presentation Accommodations - *Undeclared*
 - 7.8: How to Fix Your Presentation; 21 Tips - *Undeclared*
- Back Matter - *Undeclared*
 - Index - *Undeclared*
 - Glossary - *Undeclared*
 - Detailed Licensing - *Undeclared*