CENGAGE

Fifteenth Edition

Those Who Can, TEACH

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James M. Cooper
Cheryl Mason Bolick
Cory Callahan

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***Those Who Can, Teach,* Fifteenth Edition**
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Cheryl Mason Bolick, and Cory Callahan

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Cover Image Source: S292930121
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Library of Congress Control Number: 2020925720

ISBN: 978-0-357-51844-1

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200 Pier 4 Boulevard
Boston, MA 02210
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Printed in the United States of America
Print Number: 01 Print Year: 2021

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Preface

Before we set out to write this text, we had taught in public schools and for many years taught aspiring teachers in their very first education course. Therefore, instructors teaching the introductory course in education were very much on our minds. As we saw it, instructors want to:

- **Help students examine their motives for teaching** so they can determine whether teaching is right for them.
- **Inspire these future teachers to form and sustain a commitment to teaching**—a commitment that is grounded in a realistic understanding of the teaching profession.
- **Offer instructional activities** that incorporate the way today's students learn, particularly with regard to their use of technology.
- **Prepare aspiring teachers to teach students whose cultural complexities**—such as race, socioeconomic status, and orientation to learning—may differ from their own.
- **Provide course experiences** that help prospective teachers bridge the "theory-to-practice" divide.
- **Make the history and philosophies of education relevant** to the lives and careers of future teachers.
- **Help prospective teachers develop the habits and skills of** reflective practitioners.
- **Prepare all students to do well on mandatory, high-stakes standardized tests** based on national, state, and local standards.
- **Provide honest information and context** for future teachers about the profession they are considering entering.

Another reality that we have kept in mind as we have revised this text is that today's college students are part of a fresh, new generation, which has grown up in this era of rapid technological and social change. For these students, **technology is a way of life**. They are both connected and insulated through technology, and are accustomed to processing information differently than the generations before them:

- They are **team oriented** due to the significant time spent on social networking sites and on instant messaging platforms.
- Many of today's students are **unaccustomed to academic difficulty**. Rather, they are used to rewards and accolades, and have high expectations for achievement and little tolerance for failure.
- The lives of today's students **are often quite programmed**. They suffer more stress and often feel more overwhelmed compared to those in past generations.

How Does *Those Who Can, Teach* Meet the Needs of Today's Learners?

How have we addressed the challenges of teaching today's students while meeting the goals of an introduction to education course in this 15th edition of *Those Who Can, Teach?*

We know that students who will use this text are facing many challenges. Many are at the beginning of their college experience and are still getting accustomed to their independence. There are almost certainly many activities—other courses, social events, and jobs, to name a few—competing for their time and attention. They, like all of us, struggle to balance all that is on their plate. Still, we believe that exploring what might be their life's work requires that they fully engage in the course and with the questions posed in this text. To help them do this, we have used a number of instructional tools, described as follows, to gain and keep the readers' attention and to inspire them to carefully consider all aspects of becoming one of Those Who *Can:*

- **Examining motives for teaching.** We begin and end the book with chapters that focus on examining "Why Teach?" Two or three times in each chapter, students are asked to **"Pause and Reflect"** on questions of self-examination and understanding. We have made a major commitment to help your future teachers become *reflective practitioners*. Thus, at the end of each chapter, we provide readers opportunities to consider and reflect in the sections entitled, **"Why Teach? Your Final Word."** In addition, two "bookend" sections, **"Let's Get Started"** and **"Before You Close This Book,"** offer important reflection questions before and after students read the text. **"Let's Get Started,"** in particular, was written to make clear to student-readers what we hope they get out of *Those Who Can, Teach,* and what we believe is the most productive way to engage the book.
- **Developing a realistic understanding of teaching.** A frequent complaint of beginning teachers is "that no one ever told us what it would *really* be like in the classroom." Although these complaints are sometimes unfair (people tried to tell them but they may not have been ready to listen), we have tried to capture the real world of schooling. Throughout the book, we have presented many case studies both within the text and in the **"Preservice to Practice"** boxes that portray the realities (both the good and bad) of teaching. The **"Voices from the Classroom"** feature is a reflection or comment on one of each chapter's key topics from actual classroom teachers. The classroom voices bring a fresh and realistic perspective to these topics and issues. The **"TeachSource Videos"** feature footage from in and out of the classroom to help students relate key chapter content to real-life scenarios. Critical-thinking questions, artifacts, and bonus videos help students reflect on the content in the video.
- **Learning through technology.** Because today's students learn so much through technology, we have integrated technology throughout the book. One whole chapter, "What Should Teachers Know about Technology and Its Impact on Teaching and Learning?" addresses the many uses of technology to increase and enhance learning for all students, including those with disabilities. The **"TeachSource Videos,"** mentioned previously, also provide multimedia ways of observing and studying teaching, and at the end of each chapter, there are three or four **websites** for students to explore in greater depth the topics and issues discussed in the chapter.
- **Understanding cultural complexities.** Women and whites predominate in both teacher education programs and in the teaching force, whereas over 50 percent of students in public schools are students of color. Many education students have had few interactions with students who differ from them in terms of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. The chapter "Who Are Today's Students in a Diverse Society?" describes various diversities and implications for teachers. Throughout the book, we provide multiple examples of the diversities that teachers will encounter, and discuss implications for teachers and schools.

- **Bridging the "theory-to-practice" divide.** The book assists students to bridge this gap by providing realistic **case studies, "TeachSource Videos," Reflection Questions, "Voices from the Classroom" features, "Up Close" boxes,** and many **"Pause and Reflect"** questions throughout the book.
- **Bringing history and philosophy alive to students.** We try to enliven the history of American education through a lively writing style and by focusing on the people who have made or are making educational history. Our **"Leaders in Education"** feature presents biographical sketches of both historical (e.g., Horace Mann, John Dewey, and Anne Sullivan), as well as contemporary educational leaders (e.g., Robert Moses, Erin Gruwell, and Ron Berger). In discussing educational philosophies, we have developed statements by teachers who embrace each philosophy, so readers can see how those individual philosophies guide teachers' actions and behavior in classrooms. Chapter 9 includes **"Your Philosophy of Education Self-Inventory"** to help students bring their educational views to greater consciousness.
- **Reflective practice.** Throughout the book, we ask readers to stop and think: to reflect. We are convinced that our readers, like ourselves, live in a noisy world of words and pictures that is continually demanding and competing for our attention. We have tried to make a case for reflection but have also built into the text requests that readers stop and reflect what particular content means personally. Using a variety of devices throughout the book, such as cartoons and boxed inserts on research findings, we are unabashedly committed to helping students start on the road to become reflective practitioners. One such effort is our special feature, **"Truth or Fiction?"** which appears at the beginning each chapter. To quickly engage the readers in the chapter's subject, we present them with three or more statements having to do with the subject of the chapter and ask them to make a judgment as to whether each statement is true or false. Later in the chapter, they will encounter the subject of each statement (marked in yellow) and discover whether the statement was "truth" or "fiction."
- **Informal writing style.** Although there are many changes in this 15th edition, key qualities have been retained. Chief among them is the book's informal writing style. We have tried to communicate the seriousness surrounding professional topics and at the same time reflect the humor and humanity that is part of a teacher's professional life. We are helped in this "experiential" aspect of our book by the presence in the text of the actual words of practicing classroom teachers. We believe (and hope) that this writing style and heavy use of narrative give the text a greater sense of reality.
- **Standards testing for teachers.** Recognizing that virtually all prospective teachers must meet state and national standards to be licensed, *Those Who Can, Teach* tries to make the connection between standards and content crystal clear by including a correlation chart in the inside of the front and back covers of the book. The 10 core principles of InTASC are correlated to the chapters and pages in our 15th edition (see inside cover), and at the beginning of each chapter we identify the principles addressed in that chapter.
- **Educational currency.** The field of education is in a particularly dynamic state. The federal government has initiated the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Most of the states have embraced the idea and reality of Common Core State Standards. At the same time, state and local educational authorities are deeply involved in a variety of educational reform efforts. The policies of key players such as teachers' unions, as well as foundations such as the Gates Foundation, are

changing. New groups and organizations are influencing the lives of teachers. All this and the ever-increasing research base in education need to be brought to the attention of those considering becoming teachers.

New and Improved for the 15th Edition

We have reviewed past editions of *Those Who Can, Teach*, and received some excellent suggestions from the teacher educators using the text with future teachers. As a result we have made a number of overall changes in this 15th edition. Among the major ones are the following:

1. **Learning Objectives:** The learning objectives correlated to the main sections in each chapter show students what they need to know to process and understand the information in the chapter. After completing the chapter, students should be able to demonstrate how they can use and apply their new knowledge and skills.
2. **Standards:** New and improved coverage of InTASC standards includes a chapter-opening list to help students identify where key standards are addressed in the chapter. These callouts and the standards correlation chart help students make connections between what they are learning in the textbook and the standards.
3. **Digital Downloads:** Downloadable and often customizable, these practical and professional resources allow students to immediately implement and apply this textbook's content in the field. The students download these tools and keep them forever, enabling preservice teachers to begin to build their library of practical, professional resources. Look for the TeachSource Digital Downloads label that identifies these items.
4. The **TeachSource videos** feature footage from the classroom to help students relate key chapter content to real-life scenarios. Critical-thinking questions provide opportunities for in-class or online discussion and reflection.

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER REVISIONS AND UPDATES

- Chapter 1 contains new survey findings from the Center for Educational Policy on the question of why teachers chose their profession and fresh research on what teachers find most satisfying about working with students. The section on vicarious ways readers can learn about teaching from the experiences of others has been greatly revised.
- Chapter 2's major section on the four basic purposes of school has been revised, especially Thomas Jefferson's views on the political and civic purpose, and the re-casting of the social purposes drawing on the work of educational theorist Linda Darling Hammond. Also added is the new, tongue-in-cheek view that posits that the key value of schooling is for social "signaling." In addition, the chapter addresses educators' concern that school cultures are changing as a result of social media and how schools are responding.
- Chapter 3 contains new information that reflects the growing diversity of our nation. In particular, sections focused on immigration, religious diversity, and LGBTQ students and teachers have been included. The chapter includes a new "Voices from the Classroom."

- Chapter 4 has been revised to include updated data and statistics. Discussions centered on critical contemporary issues such as mental health, gun violence, and student activism have been added to the chapter, as well as a new "Voices from the Classroom."
- Chapter 5 contains updated information on the Common Core State Standards, as well as the newest development and trends in each subject matter area. The newest results of NAEP, TIMSS, and PISA assessments are also discussed, as well as implications for student learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic school shutdowns in spring 2020. Several popular instructional approaches are also covered.
- In Chapter 6, a model for effective teaching is discussed, including a new section on what research tells us about principles of effective instruction. Classroom management, questioning, and planning skills are reviewed.
- Chapter 7 includes new information about technology's impact in schools, degrees of its application in classrooms, and how schools tend to respond to concerns associated with technology (i.e., privacy, cyberbullying). It also includes many new specific examples of technological tasks and tools for classroom use and all new print resources.
- Chapter 8 has new material on the increase in teacher liability and legal vulnerability. A new feature is a list if eight practical steps to "keep teachers in their classrooms and out of the courtrooms." Specific attention is given to the need for teachers to document any and all activities what could possibly have legal consequences.
- Chapter 9's content, the major philosophical perspectives underlying American schools, is somewhat timeless. However, since the material is demanding, efforts have been made to clarify difficult concepts and their application to life in classrooms. In addition, new information on changes in policy in E. D. Hirsch Jr.'s Core Curriculum program making materials more available to teachers is reported.
- Chapter 10, the history of American education chapter, contains updated information on the education of African American, Hispanic American, Native American, and Asian American students.
- In Chapter 11, the profile of American administrators and school board members has been updated, along with local, state, and federal school spending data.
- Chapter 12 contains a thorough description of the Every Student Succeeds Act, the most recent national education reform initiative. The authors share key provisions in the legislation and discuss the various levels of responsibility from the federal, state, and local levels. It also includes updated information regarding forms of school choice, evaluation, and character in the curriculum.
- Chapter 13 contains updated information on the job markets in education, updated teacher salary data both nationally and by state, information on teaching in private schools, and suggestions on how to land a teaching job.
- Chapter 14 provides updated information regarding expectations novice teachers can have for entering the classroom as the instructional leader. There are also additional data about the trend for schools to provide induction and mentor programs to support new teachers. The authors also share new online and print resources.
- Chapter 15 contains updated information regarding the levels of professionalism that often characterize teachers. The chapter also contains new information about professional associations and professional development. The authors also share new resources for further exploration.

Accompanying Teaching and Learning Resources

The 15th edition of *Those Who Can, Teach* is accompanied by an extensive package of instructor and student resources.

POWERPOINT® LECTURE SLIDES

These vibrant Microsoft® PowerPoint lecture slides for each chapter assist you with your lecture by providing concept coverage using images, figures, and tables directly from the textbook!

ONLINE INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

An online Instructor's Manual accompanies this book. It contains information to assist instructors in designing the course, including sample syllabi, discussion questions, teaching and learning activities, field experiences, learning objectives, and additional online resources. Additional online resources and assessments include:

- TeachSource videos of teachers teaching and children learning in real classrooms, accompanied by case study questions to assess students' understanding of the video concepts.
- Case scenarios requiring students to analyze typical teaching and learning situations and create a reasoned response to the issue(s) presented in the scenario, reflecting about and justifying the choices they made within the teaching scenario problem.
- TeachSource Digital Download resources

COGNERO

Cengage Learning Testing Powered by Cognero is a flexible online system that allows you to author, edit, and manage test bank content from multiple Cengage Learning solutions; create multiple test versions in an instant; and deliver tests from your LMS, your classroom, or wherever you want. The updated test bank includes true/false, multiple-choice, matching, short-answer, and essay questions for each chapter.

Acknowledgments

Whenever any of us puts pen to paper or fingers to the keyboard, we stand on the shoulders of others. This is certainly true of this book. We are indebted to many people. In writing this book, we are especially appreciative of the help given by the following individuals, most notably, Matt Durant, for his revision of the chapter entitled "What Should Teachers Know about Technology and Its Impact on Teaching and Learning?" Special thanks go to our colleagues and students for their many good ideas and continuing support, in particular, the teacher contributors to the "Voices from the Classroom" feature. An advisory board of reviewers also made key contributions to the organization and content of this and the previous edition, most notably:

Elyse Adler, Liberty University
Jing Babb, Los Angeles Trade Technical College
Douglas Carothers, Florida Gulf Coast University
Erin Counihan, Washington College
Kathy Finkle, Black Hills State University
Kathleen Fite, Texas State University—San Marcos
Renee Funke, Jamestown Community College
Pam Green, Southwestern College
Sherry Green, Georgia Highlands College
Rhonda Gregory, Greenville College
Keicia Hawkins, Northwestern State University
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Lois Paretti, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
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Terrie Poehl, Northwestern State University
Karen Porfiri, Bakersfield College
Jessica Purvis, State University of New York at Buffalo
Carol Ramsay, Lake Erie College
Michelle Reiff, Walla Walla Community College
David Sloan, Brandman University
Melissa Szymczak, Joliet Junior College
Rita Verma, Adelphi University
Betsy Werre, Pensacola State College
Eleanor Wilson, University of Virginia
Joanne Yantz, Colorado Mountain College

A special acknowledgment is due to Marilyn Ryan for the substantial intellectual and psychological contributions she made to the several editions of this book. Writing and revising a textbook is a multifaceted process, particularly today with the addition of ancillary supports such as video cases and our website. Many people provide advice—some solicited and some not. We believe, however, that our best source of advice on this book has been the team we've worked with at Cengage Learning. We are appreciative of the support and leadership from our senior product manager, Jenny Zigler. She offered perspective and guidance from the inception of this work. Her enthusiastic commitment was significant in every aspect of this project. Our product manager, Lauren Whalen, has been a staunch advocate and supporter throughout the revision of this edition. We are grateful for her vision and

encouragement surrounding all aspects of this project. Charu Verma, senior vendor content manager has meticulously managed the copyediting process and all of the final stages of production. Her attention to detail was essential in the final stages of the revision process. Finally, we acknowledge the thousands of students for whom this book is written. Your new learning as you become teachers is central to our work as authors.

Kevin Ryan
James M. Cooper
Cheryl Mason Bolick
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So Let's Get Started . . .

And get to what this book is all about: students and teachers, schools and subject matter, ideas about learning, and the fascinating challenges of education today. If you take a look at the chapter titles, you can see that we have built the book around questions—questions you should try to answer if you are thinking about becoming a teacher. Questions such as, "What makes a teacher effective?" and "How should our schools be reformed?" The *most important question*, however, is the first chapter's question, "Why teach?" This question—and its potential answers—is the focus not only of the initial chapter, but it captures the purpose of the entire book.

One of life's most important questions is this: "What am I going to do with my life?" How you spend most of your time and energy—what *work* you decide to do—will determine, more than anything else, how content you are in life. Ideally, a career decision should be based on the best information available about the chosen field and on a deep understanding of *exactly who you are*.

Knowing Your Own Motives

Centuries ago, Francis Bacon told us, "Knowledge is power." Much earlier, Socrates (one of civilization's great teachers, whom we discuss in the chapter entitled "What Are the Philosophical Foundations of American Education?") recognized the enormous power of self-knowledge when he urged his students to "know thyself." Understanding yourself and your motives, especially in something as important as a career choice, is crucial to good decision making. Becoming a teacher without taking the time to carefully consider whether you're truly meant to teach, or without examining *the reasons you want to teach*, can lead to disappointment. For instance, let's say your fifth-grade teacher had an enormous influence on you. She took the time to get to know you, taught you new and interesting subjects, had loads of patience, and was just plain fun. In fact, you have considered becoming a teacher since fifth grade. You get to college and declare yourself an education major, without ever analyzing precisely why you want to teach or whether you have the ability, skills, attitudes, or drive to become a teacher.

Equally as important as knowing *who you are* is clarifying your motives for teaching. Why is knowing *why* you want to teach so important? Because understanding the reasons you want to teach will help you determine whether teaching is right for you. It will also help you uncover and plan for the unique challenges you may face as a teacher. Let's say your desire to teach stems from a passion for a particular subject. Someone whose desire to teach grows out of a passion for history, for example, will have to prepare for the reality that not all of his students will share that passion. How will such a teacher motivate students who would rather be learning math? Or playing basketball?

We have written this book to help you to uncover whether you have what it takes to become a successful, fulfilled teacher and to help you uncover the reasons you are considering teaching as a profession. We hope that you will use this book to gain a greater understanding of how you and a career in education might fit together.

The Habit of Reflection

As you will see throughout this book, we believe that effective teachers, indeed effective people in many areas of life, succeed in part because they are mindful of what they are doing. Always looking for ways to improve, they reflect on their performance and on what they are engaged in. Having acquired the habit of reflection, these people are called *reflective practitioners.* This is a fancy way of describing a person who is habitually thoughtful about what he or she does in life.

Everyone has experiences. We meet new people. Someone sends us a fascinating Web link. We encounter a truly wise person or a destitute, homeless person on the street. We have an unexpected and deeply personal conversation with a roommate. We all have special experiences. Truly effective people, however, *use* their experiences to understand their past and to chart their future. This very crucial practice of *reflection* is a habit you can start developing even now, as part of your career choice process. The way you use this book can help you on the path to be a reflective person. We think that recording what you think today, revisiting your thoughts throughout the term, and then noting what you think at the end of your course work will help solidify any choice you make about teaching.

Everyone can develop the habit of reflection. Begin right now by answering four questions. Take time to write your answers to these questions. By doing so, you will take your first steps to becoming a reflective practitioner, which, in turn, will help you in your life and in your career, whatever that may be.

Your Motives

The following questions will help you get in touch with your true motives for considering teaching as a career path and your personal thoughts about teaching. In this exercise, we ask you to think about four main questions:

Why do you want to become a teacher?

Which teachers have you admired most, and what made them so admirable?

What strengths or qualities do you have that will make you a successful teacher?

What concerns do you have about either becoming a teacher or about the teaching field itself?

First, list all of the reasons to become a teacher, and all of the reasons to choose another profession (or why *not* to become a teacher). Be sure to list not only the altruistic reasons you may want to teach—to help others or to inspire children, for example—but also the more selfish motives you may have, such as having the summers off to travel or finishing work at 3:00 in the afternoon. Do the same for choosing another profession in the second column. For this exercise to be valuable, you need to paint a full, complete picture of how you feel and what you think about teaching as well as possible other professions you may consider. As teacher Elida Laski asks in the "Voices from the Classroom" feature in Chapter 1, "Do you have to be born with that certain something in order to be a good teacher? If you are born with *it,* do you always know that teaching is the profession for you?"

(1) Why do you want to become a teacher?

Motives for becoming a teacher	*Motives for choosing another profession*

Now, think about some of the people—your teachers—who may have inspired you to consider teaching as a profession.

(2) Who are three teachers you had in your elementary and secondary education whom you admire most? What made them so admirable?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Next, take an initial look at yourself.

(3) What are your strengths? List at least five qualities you have that will make you a successful teacher.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

Lastly, think about what concerns you have. Do you see any blocks or barriers that might keep you from being a successful teacher?

(4) What concerns do you have about either becoming a teacher or the teaching field itself? List three questions about teaching and education that you want to know more about by reading this book.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

If you did not stop reading to think about your motives for becoming a teacher or if you failed to commit yourself in writing, please stop now and think about what kept you from seriously engaging one or more of the questions. Your answer may tell you a good deal about yourself as a learner, about the educational system of which you are a product, and possibly about how you will behave as a teacher. Have you been trained to devour pages and pages of textbook reading without really confronting the issues conveyed by the words? Have you learned to disregard your own views, even about issues quite central to you, such as how you are going to spend the bulk of your life? If your answers to these questions are *yes,* you are like many, many other students. But take heart. With practice, everyone can develop the habit of reflection.

We sincerely hope that this will be a different kind of book and a different kind of reading-questioning-thinking experience for you. Precisely because we are teachers, we want this book to have a very special impact on you. We want to help you make good decisions about whether you want to be a teacher and about what kind of teacher you want to become. For these reasons, you need to read this book in a different way. Take the book on fully. Encounter it. Fight with it! Improve it by adding yourself to it. The truism you probably heard from your parents, "You get out of things what you put into them," truly applies here.

Our hope is that by the end of the course, when you have finished reading this text, you will have acquired the habit of reflection and have developed a greater understanding of what it means to teach, of what teachers do, of how schools operate within their communities and society, and of several other issues you will need to consider as you think through the question, "Why teach?"

1

Why Teach?

Ariel Skelley/Getty Images

InTASC Standard 9

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1-1 List your motives for becoming a teacher.

1-2 Explain the rewards that come with a career in teaching.

1-3 Describe several sources that expand your understanding of teaching.

1-4 Assess two case studies of teacher motivations.

1-5 Recount the views of others about teachers and teaching.

1-6 State the major reasons why teachers teach and the primary sources of satisfaction.

Truth OR Fiction?

T F American teens claim teachers contribute most to our society's well-being.

T F The majority of school superintendents and principals claim that the quality of new teachers entering the field has declined.

T F Of all the characteristics that contribute to teachers' satisfaction, new teachers rate highest "involves work you love to do."

People take education courses for many reasons, but three are particularly common: First, as citizens, people need to know how a major institution like the school system works so that they can make informed choices within their communities and at the voting booth. Second, as parents or potential parents, they need to know a great deal to be intelligent partners with the schools in their children's education. Third, those who consider a career in teaching need to understand the profession they may be entering.

This text is written with this third group in mind. And this chapter, more than any other, focuses on those people who are exploring the teaching profession. Its purpose is to help you answer a fundamental question: Why should you become a teacher? As you read about the following teachers, we hope you come to understand more fully your own motivations for teaching.

1-1 Examining Your Motives for Teaching

If you teach, it is quite likely that by the end of your second year of teaching, you will have had the following experiences:

1. Someone at a party or other social gathering will ask you what you do and how you like teaching. Soon the person will tell you that he or she has always wanted to be a teacher and regrets having become a stockbroker/bookkeeper/sales representative/flight attendant/disk jockey, and that he or she may still give it all up and become a teacher.
2. You will get to know an experienced teacher who confides that he or she deeply regrets having become a teacher. While in college, the person felt cut out for teaching and actually enjoyed it initially. But gradually, he or she became fed up with the whole thing—bratty kids, pushy administrators, the same old faces in the teachers' lounge, the instant expert parents, and the overemphasis on standards and high-stakes testing. Now the person feels trapped in teaching and sees no way out.

The purpose of this chapter is to keep you from becoming "the other person" in either of these situations. It is intended to help you make a well-thought-out decision about what to do with your life, particularly if you are still undecided about becoming a teacher.

1-1a COMPARING YOUR MOTIVES TO OTHERS

At this point, you have likely answered the question "What are my motives for wanting to become a teacher?" (and we surely hope you have). Here are a few motives you might check against your own list:

- I really like the idea of having a positive influence on 25 (or 150) kids every day.
- I can't think of anything else to do with my major.
- Teaching seems to be a fairly secure, low-risk occupation with many attractive benefits, including lots of vacation time and time to raise a family.
- I always loved history (or mathematics or science or literature), and teaching seems to be a career that will allow me to work with a subject matter that I love.
- I can't imagine anything more important to do with my life than helping children with disabilities learn to cope with, and even overcome, their barriers.

- The instruction I had in school was incredibly bad, and I want to correct that situation.
- My parents would really be pleased and proud if I were a teacher.
- Quite simply, I love children and love being around them.
- I enjoy being in charge and being a positive influence on students.
- I really don't know what else I could do. I know about teaching, and I think I could do it.
- I'm concerned that society is falling apart, and I want to look out for the kids.
- Education seems as if it's going to be the action field of the future, and I want to be part of it.
- One of my students might become a famous painter, or the president of a major foundation, or who knows what. It would be great to have a strong impact on just one significant life.
- I really want to become a principal/coach/guidance counselor/college professor/educational researcher, and teaching seems to be the way to start.
- I have strong religious beliefs and see teaching as a good and useful way to live my life goals.
- Businesses are increasingly interested in training and educating their employees, and I want a career as a private-sector educator working in corporate America.
- I come from a family of teachers and teaching just seems to be the natural thing to do.
- I want to have fun in life, and as a teacher, I'll have fun and get paid for it!
- America's students of color often start out life with barriers and severe disadvantages. As a teacher I can do something about that.
- I have always felt I have a calling—a vocation—to be a teacher.[1]

Pause *and* Reflect

1. Which three of the motives come closest to your thoughts about a career in teaching?
2. Thinking about these three motives, what does this tell you about yourself?

You may be interested to see others' answers to the question "Why teach?" The data in Table 1.1 come from a recent study conducted by The Center on Education Policy. Notice how over two-thirds of respondents cite "to make a difference in students' lives" as a prime motivation. As we'll see, the rewards often match the desires of those who teach.

TABLE 1.1 Most Significant Reasons Why Teachers Joined the Profession

To make a difference in students' lives	68%
To help students reach their full potential	45%
A teacher inspired me when I was young	37%
To be a part of those "aha" moments when things just click for a student	32%
To share my enthusiasm for the subject I teach	31%
To make a difference in the larger community	24%
For the earning potential	1%

Source: Adapted from Figure 1-A (page 14) of *Listen to Us: Teacher Views and Voices*, a 2016 national survey from The Center on Education Policy (https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED568172.pdf).
Note: Teachers could select three responses.

1-2 The Rewards of Teaching

As we have seen, responses to the question "Why teach?" run the gamut from "to help students reach their full potential" to I want "to make a difference in the larger community." Our individual motivations can change and may be quite different at different times and when we are in different moods. As social psychologist Peter Drucker quipped, "We know nothing about motivation. All we can do is write books about it."

> *At twenty-two, I graduated Phi Beta Kappa. I had choices at my fingertips: law school, grad school . . . corporate America, here I come! Adults swelled their chests in pride. My peers practiced the "on my way to a Lexus" shuffle. Then the question: "And what are your plans after graduation?" Answer: "I'm moving to New York to teach elementary school in the South Bronx." As a twenty-three-year-old teacher with sore feet and twenty-eight incredible kids, my explanation reminds me of a song. I had a choice to sit it out or dance. I chose to dance.*
>
> **—THALIA THEODORE,**
> *Washington Post* (December 2, 2001), p. F1

At the same time, the motivational *factors*—those qualities that reside within teaching—are clearer and relatively constant. Researchers have identified a set of occupational rewards that can help us sort out both the attractive and unattractive qualities of a teaching career.[2] These rewards are classified into two broad categories: extrinsic and intrinsic. **Extrinsic rewards** are the public, external attractions of an occupation, such as money, prestige, and power. The **intrinsic rewards** of an occupation are the internal psychic or spiritual satisfaction one receives from one's work, such as a personal sense of accomplishment or an enjoyment of the work itself. It will come as no surprise that, comparatively speaking, teaching is somewhat out of balance, receiving generally high marks on one set of rewards and low marks on the other.

1-2a EXTRINSIC REWARDS

Teaching has rarely been cited for its abundance of extrinsic rewards. Although it offers more extrinsic rewards than many other occupations, such as law enforcement and coal mining, when compared with other professions, teaching ranks low in extrinsic compensations.

Salaries and Benefits

Teachers' salaries and benefits, as you will see in Chapter 13, "What Are Your Job Options in Education?," is a complex and fluid issue. Relative to salaries in occupational fields with similar educational requirements (e.g., a college degree and specialized training), teachers' salaries do not compare favorably. On the other hand, teachers have benefits, such as health plans and retirement plans and job security that is lacking in those other fields.[3] Also, there is a growing specialization within teaching that is reflected in pay checks.

Further, the issue is clouded by the fact teachers' salaries vary significantly from one geographical location to the next, as you will also see in Chapter 13. Finally, the importance of salary, like the whole issue of monetary needs, varies enormously from one person to the next.

Status

Status refers to one's position in a group, that is, where one stands in relation to others. The status of a doctor or a beggar is rather clear, but the status of a teacher is more difficult to gauge. To young parents entrusting their child to school for the first time, the status of the teacher is quite high. To the same parents 12 or 15 years later, on hearing that their child wants to become a teacher, the status may be somewhat diminished . . . or not! The United States' current commitment to massively reform its educational system is, however, having a positive effect on the status of teaching.

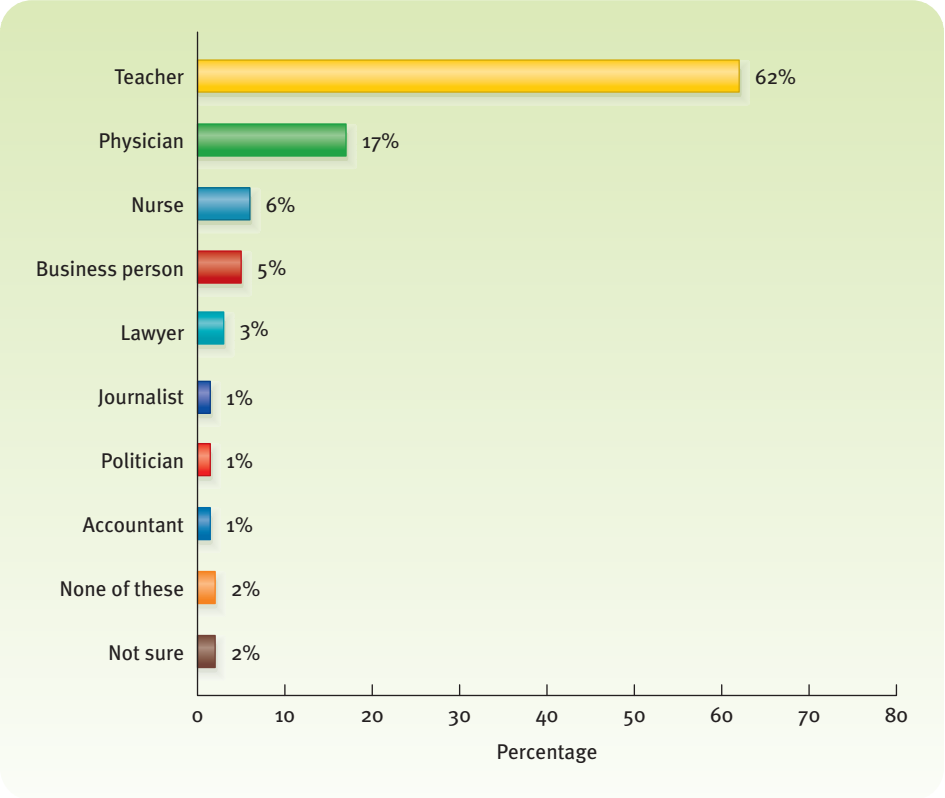


FIGURE 1.1 **Profession That Provides the Most Benefit to Society**

Source: David Haselkorn and Louis Harris, "The Essential Profession: A National Survey of Public Attitudes toward Teaching, Educational Opportunity, and School Reform." Reprinted with permission of Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., 1998.

Figure 1.1 shows the results of a turn-of-the-century public opinion survey that asked which of eight professions (including physician, lawyer, nurse, and journalist) "provides the most important benefit to society." Respondents put teaching first by close to a four-to-one margin over physicians (62% vs. 17%). This was a big improvement over a poll taken a decade earlier, in which only 35 percent of respondents put teaching first.[4] In more recent research looking at the public's attitude toward teachers, 71 percent reported that they had trust and confidence in the men and women who are teaching children in the public schools.

Power

Power is not usually seen as a reward of teaching, but it nevertheless is a quality that "resides in the office." Anyone who claims that teachers do not have power has forgotten what it was like to go to school without having done the homework and to sit in fear of being called on by Mrs. Gotcha. The power of the teacher is not a dollars-and-cents power, like that of a corporate chief executive officer, but any person who can make another's day or ruin another's year has power. Although, as sociologist Dan Lortie once observed, "Teachers are not supposed to *enjoy* exercising power per se,"[5] the public opinion survey discussed earlier clearly indicates that the public sees the quality of teachers as the greatest influence on student learning.[6]

A recent study by Harvard economists, coined by the press as "The $320,000 Kindergarten Teacher," should significantly boost the power and prestige of teachers. The study focused on the impact of early education on the lifetime earnings of people who attended and did not attend kindergarten. The cumulative financial impact on a

single class of early school attendees over their working lives was a staggering $320,000! Compared with students of similar backgrounds who did not attend, the kindergarten "attendees" not only earned significantly more, but also were more likely to go to college, more likely to be saving for retirement, and less likely to become single parents.[7]

Work Schedule

There is an old joke about a student in an education course being stumped on an exam by the question "What are the three best things about a career in teaching?" Finally, in desperation, he writes, "June, July, and August."

That student probably flunked, but he did have a point. Compared with other workers, teachers spend much less time at their work sites. If we ignore what teachers do at home by way of preparing lessons, correcting papers, and checking homework, we can say they work six or seven hours a day for fewer than half the days of the year. Compared with those in power-and-status occupations, such as corporate finance or law, teachers have less demanding work schedules. Also, teachers have much more flexibility and personal control over how they use their time. For many men and women, family life is a top priority, and the time spent close to home and on summer vacations is a major plus associated with a teaching career. These teachers see sharing a schedule with their children or friends as a significant benefit. Teachers' work schedules, therefore, are one extrinsic reward that carries a great deal of weight.

1-2b INTRINSIC REWARDS

Extrinsic rewards, like company stock options or year-end bonuses, are tangible. Intrinsic rewards are, by their very nature, "in the eye of the beholder." What might be one person's intrinsic reward, such as taking a busload of students on an overnight field trip to the state capital, is another's living nightmare. However, the most satisfied teachers are usually those attracted to such intrinsic rewards.

Students

The attraction of working with students has long been one of the strongest rewards perceived by teachers. The daily contacts, the conversations and exchanges, and even the struggles to motivate students are a deep source of satisfaction for many teachers. Seeing children learn, grow, and develop—seeing them able to do things in May that they were unable to do at the beginning of the school year—is a genuinely fulfilling experience. Being important to others satisfies profound human needs, and teachers know about and appreciate this potential to affect the lives of others. And this does not go unnoticed. Nearly three out of five (58% of) teenagers surveyed mentioned teachers when asked by researchers who or what had influenced them to become the kinds of people they are.[8]

This reward is particularly meaningful to elementary school teachers, who spend so much time with the same group of 15 to 30 children. Secondary school teachers, who focus on a particular subject matter and may see as many as 150 students in a day, identify working with students as an important attraction, but not always to the same degree as their elementary school counterparts. On the other hand, middle and high school teachers are often heavily involved with their schools' clubs, intermural activities, and sports programs. As such they have deeply satisfying out-of-class experiences with maturing students.

> *"To hear lessons and control restless children six hours a day through thirty-six weeks in a year is wretched drudgery, but to train and develop human minds and characters is the most inspiring work in the world.*
>
> **—ELLEN HYDE,**
> to the graduating class of the Framington Normal School, 1886

Performance of a Significant Social Service

In the award-winning film about early Renaissance England, *A Man for All Seasons,* Sir Thomas More says to Richard Rich, the man who eventually betrayed him but who at the time was seeking a cushy job at court, "Why not be a teacher, Rich? You'd be a fine teacher. Perhaps a great one." Disappointed, Rich replies, "And if I were, who would know it?" Thomas More then says, "You . . . your pupils . . . your friends . . . God—not a bad public, that."[9]

To many teachers, their greatest satisfaction is the sense that they are doing important work for the common good. This realization buoys them up and helps them tolerate the less attractive aspects of teaching. As we saw in Figure 1.1, the general public seems to agree that teaching provides valuable benefits for society. Whereas workers in government and business are aware in an abstract sense that they are contributing to the social good, teachers have daily flesh-and-blood testaments to the importance of their service right before them. Many college professors report that they see more college students not only seriously considering teaching as a career but also selecting teaching specifically because they see it as service to the nation and a way to pay back the country. For some students, the deeper motive behind this service for others is a religious one; that is, they see teaching as a way to serve God by serving the young.

Stimulation and Support from Fellow Teachers

When describing the work of teaching, researchers used to report on the sense of isolation many teachers reported they were experiencing.[10] As will be discussed in Chapter 15, "What Does It Mean to Be a Professional?," this is changing as more and more teachers are working in groups and sharing in-school leadership roles. This trend aside, for many teachers, their contacts and interactions with colleagues are an important intrinsic reward. Teachers enjoy the shoptalk and camaraderie that are a natural part of school life. Because teachers are not always rewarded for their individual job performance or for their individual expertise, feelings of competition are less prevalent than among such occupational groups as salespeople or lawyers who must compete for customers and grow their clientele. Teachers know they are part of a highly and increasingly cooperative venture. (The Video Case, *Teaching as a Profession: Collaboration with Colleagues,* provides a more in-depth look at how teachers can work together.)

TeachSource Video Case

Teaching as a Profession: Collaboration with Colleagues

Watch the video clips, study the artifacts in the case, and reflect on the following questions:

1. Were you aware that the collaborative process shown in this case goes on among teachers? In your own education, have you seen evidence of this collaborative planning process?
2. Does the planning process these teachers engaged in look like something you would enjoy as part of your career?

The Work of Teaching

For many teachers, the process of teaching is a significant reward in itself. Whether they are explaining an idea, working with small groups, or designing instructional units, the actual work itself is highly gratifying. Like a pianist moving through a favorite sonata or a lawyer cross-examining a witness, teachers often draw their deepest satisfactions from the act of applying their craft. One teacher describes this feeling in this chapter's "Voices from the Classroom" feature. Of course, teachers vary in which activities they find rewarding. Some draw their rewards from establishing a nurturing, cooperative environment;

There is real joy when a student "gets it!"

Pressmaster/Shutterstock.com

Pause *and* Reflect

1. Which of the extrinsic rewards discussed in this section apply to you most? Which of the intrinsic rewards? Are there other rewards not mentioned here?
2. As you probe your own motives for considering teaching, what have you learned about yourself?

some from unraveling complicated problems for students; and some from seeing students work and learn independently. For many teachers, all else pales before their deep sense of fulfillment in simply doing the work of teaching.

As you continue reading and doing the work of this course, we urge you to keep in mind the issues of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, personal satisfactions, and the "fit" between you and the work of a teacher. Begin now with some quiet reflection.

VOICES from the Classroom

Are You Born with It?

Elida Laski taught kindergarten for three years in Chula Vista, California, was a literacy coach in the Boston public school system, and is now an associate professor at Boston College School of Education.

In my second year of teaching, a colleague told me, "Good teachers are born, not made, and you were born with it." After four years of teaching, I still wonder about this comment. What is it?—That certain something that distinguishes excellent teachers? Do you have to be born with that certain something to be a good teacher? If you are born with it, do you always know that teaching is the profession for you? Is it true that some people are just not made for teaching, or can anyone learn what it takes? How do you know whether you are meant to be a teacher?

I never intended to be a teacher. In fact, it was not until my senior year of college that, as a frustrated premed student, I entertained the idea of teaching and took two education courses. Immediately, I knew that teaching was for me! I had done very well in the premed track, but I never felt invested in what I was studying. Education courses required just as much, if not more, time and thought, and they were exciting in a way premed had never been. Education offered the academic rigor of the sciences but also appealed to my heart.

Teaching demands systematic thought and reflection to deliver instruction and analyze situations. It requires a solid understanding of content and pedagogy to be critical of new trends and develop curriculum. However, I believe it is instincts that humanize teaching—the gut feeling of what will work or not, the sense of how to connect with each child, and the ability to juggle 10 things at once and be fired up rather than stressed out, and so much more. Being in the classroom is still an adrenaline rush. I put in 12-hour days without thinking twice. I cannot go to a store, museum, or park without thinking how I might apply what I see to my classroom. The joy of teaching, itself, drives me. That, I think, is the *it*. Whether you can learn *it* or must be born with *it*, I still cannot say.

1-3 Sources of Useful Experience

One of the major educational insights applied to schooling in recent years concerns differentiating instruction to help each student maximize his or her potential.[11] There is a new appreciation for the unique learning preferences and learning problems of children and youth. As a result, the "one true way" approach to education is gradually slipping by the boards. The same insight about individual differences applies to making an intelligent career choice. Because people learn in such diverse ways and differ so much in what they already know and need to learn, we can offer only sketchy guidelines here. We consider four categories of experience, however, that may help you answer the question "Should I teach?" You should use the four sources in whatever combination best fits your present stage of life and career decision making.

1-3a REAL ENCOUNTERS

Students who aspire to be teachers should test their commitment by putting themselves in actual school situations. As much as possible, students of teaching should observe in schools and participate in various activities that give them **real encounters** with students. Some teaching candidates avoid contact with the young until they begin student teaching, only to find that young people are much different from the romantic images they have manufactured. "Those nasty little fifth-graders are so disgustingly . . . juvenile!" one shocked student teacher told us. Further, and all too frequently, teaching candidates limit their encounters to typical elementary and secondary school students. They do not consider teaching children with mental or physical disabilities or even becoming a specialist such as a reading teacher. As a result of limited experiences, they may have been exposed to only a narrow segment of the opportunities and challenges of teaching.

Increasingly, school districts are using college students as teacher aides and assistant teachers, both during the school year and in summer school. Also, a large number of teacher education programs have cooperative arrangements with schools that give college students opportunities to play various roles within the school, usually as part of their coursework in teacher education. In addition, we urge prospective teachers to explore opportunities to be substitute teachers in nearby schools. Although the work is demanding, much can be learned from it. Besides the valuable experience and the money earned, these substitute teaching stints often lead to regular teaching positions. School districts typically are more interested in hiring someone they have seen "in action" and who is a "known quantity" rather than strangers they only know from résumés and references. If your schedule doesn't permit substitute teaching, many schools will gratefully accept part-time volunteer help from education students.

Schools, however, do not exhaust the opportunities. There is much to be said for non-school contact with children, such as camp counseling, coaching sports, playground work, after-school recreation projects, work in orphanages and settlement houses, and youth-related church work. Other possibilities include coaching a team or sponsoring a youth club. The most important thing is to get your feet wet—to get the feel of working with young people in a helping relationship.

Vicarious Experiences

Not all learning has to take place in the school of hard knocks. In fact, civilization itself requires that we be able to capitalize on the experiences of others. Artists and other talented people can make others' experiences accessible to us for enjoyment, edification, or both.

One-to-one teaching is often the most satisfying.

iStock.com/Christopher Futcher

Over the years, a number of films, documentaries, and television series have featured teachers and schools and can be sources of **vicarious experiences**. Among them are *Akeelah and the Bee, Boston Public, The Breakfast Club, Dangerous Minds, Dead Poets Society, Ferris Bueller's Day Off, Freedom Writers, Glee, Lean on Me, Pay It Forward, The Ron Clark Story, Stand and Deliver,* and *Waiting for Superman.* The sources cited above may help us both relive our own school experiences and see them in a different light. However, a caveat: We need to keep in mind that cinematic portrayals of teachers and classrooms often represent school life at its extremes, featuring heightened situations well beyond the typical experiences of most teachers. And there are other distortions. Many popular media representations of teachers and schools depict contexts that overrepresent men as teachers, secondary schools, teachers of color, and urban schools. Other distortions are that classes are small; teaching typically means the adult is talking (often with the skill and humor of Steve Harvey or Stephen Colbert!), and when the class finally gets around to it, learning is fun, fun, fun.[12]

Great fictional classics such as *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* by James Hilton and *The Corn Is Green* by Emlyn Williams portray teachers and schools well, as do somewhat more contemporary novels like Bel Kaufman's *Up the Down Staircase* and Evan Hunter's *The Blackboard Jungle.* (All four of these books have been made into films.) There have also been some fine nonfiction accounts of teaching; among the best are Rafe Esquith's *Teach Like Your Hair's on Fire*, Tracy Kidder's *Among Schoolchildren,* Samuel G. Freedman's *Small Victories,* Frank McCourt's *Teacher Man*, and Esmé Raji Codell's *Educating Esmé*.

Despite their occasional inaccuracies, a careful analysis of these works can prepare us for certain aspects of teaching and school life. Again, we must remember that books, films, and television often portray school life at its extremes.

1-3b GUIDANCE

Another aid in determining whether teaching is right for you is the advice and counsel gained from those who know you. Besides parents and friends (who may be too close to you to be completely objective), you can consult former teachers, career

placement counselors, and your college professors. The latter can be particularly helpful because, besides knowing you, they are familiar with the realities of teaching.

You should use caution when seeking guidance from others, however. First, choose people who know you well rather than those who have seen you just at your better moments. Second, do not expect a comprehensive computer printout of hard data with a firm decision at the bottom line. If you get a few glimpses of insight from the advice given, be satisfied. Third, be wary from whom you seek advice. Many people are simply compulsive advice givers. People often generalize on the basis of too little knowledge, and they are sometimes just plain wrong. To be open to advice may be quite useful, but follow it cautiously.

Pause *and* Reflect

1. Are you really and truly using all the resources available to you to help you make a conscious, clearly thought-out decision about your future career? What can you do to enhance your chances of making a good decision?
2. Have you *really* acquired the mental habit of reflecting on your experiences?

1-3c REFLECTION

The most important aspect of real school encounters, guidance, and vicarious experiences you collect is that they provide you with data for **reflection**. Indeed, the value of these experiences will be lost if you do not think hard about them. People are often so busy experiencing things that they fail to reflect on what they have done or heard to ensure that they get the most from the experience.

Reflection goes to the very heart of why we have written this book. We are convinced that many people make sloppy decisions about becoming teachers. Often, they have not asked fundamental or hard questions about themselves and about schools. This is precisely why we have organized this book around questions such as "Why teach?" and "What is a school and what is it for?"

As we wrote in the initial section, "So Let's Get Started," probably the greatest value of this text is to aid you in becoming a "reflective practitioner." If you didn't read or have forgotten this important idea, we urge you to go back to page xxii and capture it. (Okay. Your authors are nags, but we sincerely mean it!)

Getting Started as a Reflective Practitioner

All of us "reflect" in some way on what we experience. Typically, our reflections are brief and unsystematic. The *reflective practitioner* thinks more thoroughly and more systematically about experiences. The next time you visit a school or view a Video Case of classroom life, use these questions to stimulate your thinking:

1. What surprised you about what you observed? What was unexpected?
2. What were the teacher's goals? From what you could tell, were they achieved?
3. If you had the same goals, what would you have done?
4. How did the students appear to be responding during the class? Were they all involved? Most of them? Just a few? What could have been done to improve their involvement?
5. What, if anything, was different about these students from the way you and your classmates were at their age? Were there striking similarities?

1-4 Case Studies in the Motivation to Teach

This section offers two case studies illustrating common motives for going into teaching. Each case study is followed by a set of questions and a comment that raises important issues about the nature of teaching. The cases provide examples of how particular abstract motives take shape in teachers' lives. You may want to discuss

the cases and the accompanying questions with other people. The shared experience of reading the cases and responding to the questions should help you probe and understand your own motivations.

1-4a CASE ONE: THE DESIRE TO TEACH A PARTICULAR SUBJECT

Julia Tucker had been a star science student since junior high school. She received a partial scholarship to study chemistry in college and earned high marks in everything connected with science. She also derived a good deal of personal satisfaction from quietly showing her mostly male teachers and fellow students that a female could excel at science.

When she graduated from college, Julia was heavily recruited by a chemical engineering firm and immediately fell in love with her job. It took a little longer—two years—but she fell even more in love with Nicholas, a chemist, who was working on the same project. They got married, and a year and a day later, Justin was born. Julia was back at work in six weeks. Both Nicholas and she hoped to have four children, but it didn't work out that way. There was no second pregnancy.

Julia was disappointed, but she took it philosophically. After all, she had a wonderful job, a loving husband, and a son who was the joy of her life. Everything was fine until Justin went off to middle school and began taking science courses. Julia couldn't wait to help him with his science homework. She stayed up late reading his science textbooks. She found all sorts of excuses to talk to Justin's teachers about science education. She found herself daydreaming at work about how to teach scientific concepts to children. Somewhere along the way, Julia also began losing interest in the highly specialized type of chemistry she was doing. So, after a great deal of soul searching and several late-night conversations with Nicholas, she quit her job and went back to school to get a teaching license in chemistry.

That was more than a year ago. Now Julia has a job—but it is hardly the job she fantasized about in her old lab or the teaching position for which she prepared. To her surprise, when she obtained her teaching license, the only available position (other than ones that would force her to move the family) was at the elementary level, as a fifth-grade teacher. The school superintendent realized that Julia would be a real asset to his school district but did not have an opening in the high school for two more years, when the chemistry teacher was scheduled to retire. So he presented Julia with a proposition: She could take some methods courses over the summer (at district expense), then teach fifth grade for two years, helping establish a new elementary science curriculum, and be the coordinator of the annual science fair.

At first, Julia was wary. She thought it would mean throwing away a good deal of her specialized knowledge and risking failure as an elementary school teacher, although the fifth-grade job would last only two years. But after talking it over with Nicholas and getting great support from her son, she reluctantly agreed.

A funny thing happened during the summer as Julia took the methods courses and prepared herself for her fifth-graders. She became more enthused about teaching children who she believed were "just becoming interested in the outer world." When Julia actually started working with her fifth-graders, she was hooked. They were so alive, responsive, and hungry to know about the world. What a challenge! Thoughts of ever becoming a chemistry teacher took a backseat to the elementary classroom.

By November, however, Julia had begun to have misgivings. A certain flatness in her class worries her. Much of the September curiosity has turned into an early case

There is no science-phobia in this classroom.

michaeljung/Shutterstock.com

of midwinter blahs. Her supervisor has conducted the first formal observation of her teaching, and Julia is curious about the supervisor's opinion.

"So, Suzanne," Julia says at their post-observation conference. "How did I do? You were writing up such a storm, I thought you would need another notebook!"

"Oh, I hope you didn't find that distracting. I probably should have warned you that I would be scribbling away."

"No, that's fine. I'm just curious to know how I did."

"I'd much rather hear what *you* think, Julia. How do you think the class went?"

"Well, I think pretty much as usual. They were a little quieter, perhaps because you were in there, but in general it was an average class."

"I did notice it being quiet, Julia. How do you feel about that?"

"As a matter of fact, I'm confused by it. Since September, the decibel level has been steadily falling in all my classes, but particularly when we are doing science. I couldn't get them to shut up in September. They ate up everything I presented, especially science. They just seem to have lost interest."

"From what I just saw, and from what I have observed passing by your door these weeks, I'd agree. Interest looks low."

"Suzanne, I've really worked to find topics that will interest them. I built a whole unit on pollution last month, with writing assignments and mathematics worked in. They said they were interested in heredity, so next month we're going to do family histories with interviews and collections of family facts and artifacts. They were all excited about this project in September, but now I'm stumped. What's the matter?"

"Quite honestly, Julia, I had a feeling this would happen."

"What do you mean?"

"When you came to interview last June, we were thrilled at the possibility of getting someone so knowledgeable and experienced, and particularly someone who loves science so much. But those same qualities made us hesitate too."

"I'm not getting you, Suzanne. I know we were all concerned that I didn't have traditional preparation for elementary teaching. You're not saying I know too much and I like science too much, are you?"

"Yes and no. No, you don't know too much. And yes, your love of science is a terrific asset. But at the same time, these qualities are keeping you from being the

Pause *and* Reflect

1. How would you characterize Julia's motivation to teach?
2. What do you think her students were thinking and feeling about her classes?
3. Julia is clearly an outstanding resource to the school. What are her liabilities?
4. Which clues should Julia have been picking up on?
5. What are some things Julia might do to stimulate romance for science in her students?

potentially fine teacher you can become. Julia, let me be honest. You are drowning these kids with information—and not just in science. You seem to be doing all the work. What worked so well for you during your student teaching with high school juniors and seniors just doesn't work with these elementary school wigglers."

"Honestly, Suzanne, I'm not giving them high school material. This work is within their range. I don't mean to sound defensive, but really . . ."

"Julia, think 'romance.'"

"Romance? I thought you told me to do health and human sexuality in the spring!"

"No, no. Romance. Like in 'the romance of science' and 'the romance of writing.' Do you remember telling us during your interview how you fell in love—your words, Julia—fell in love with science in the fifth grade when you had to do a project for the science fair? Well, I think you ought to do a little time traveling and think about what caused *your* romance with science. Was it a fascinating question? An unsolved problem? The excitement of maybe solving a problem the adults couldn't? Or was it a teacher pumping facts and theories into you?"

"Uh-oh. I think the dawn is breaking. I've been too busy talking at them and trying to teach them some basic information."

"Right. You've been so busy telling them about what you love that you forgot that romance is a two-way street. It's a classic mistake of rookie teachers, even ancient ones like you. Sometimes you can get away with it in high schools, but not in elementary schools."

"So what do I do now?"

"Well, let me put aside these notes, and let's see whether you and I can put a little romance into the rest of the week's lessons."

"A little pedagogical seduction! Suzanne, I think you found the key!"

Comment

All of us have had teachers whose excitement and enthusiasm for their subject were contagious. Love for a particular subject matter or content is an important and commendable motive for teaching. A major purpose of school is to pass on the best of society's knowledge. Another important purpose is to help young people develop basic skills and attitudes, especially a love for learning. A teacher who has a passion to convey the subject matter is effective at both of these goals. Such teachers may push students hard, but they are frequently the ones who have the greatest impact on students.

But carrying love for a particular subject to an extreme can cause trouble. Real learning is usually built on students' interest. Their interest in or love of learning can be blunted when the lover (the teacher) is too overpowering or insistent. The great teacher, like the great lover, knows how to draw out others' interests and help students "fall in love."

Another danger awaits the teacher who is "blinded" by love of a subject. This teacher may be so busy teaching what she or he enjoys that the rest of the curriculum gets shortchanged. For example, an English teacher who loves interpreting literature often finds it easy to avoid slugging it out with grammar, punctuation, and other essential writing skills. The elementary school teacher who loves science, like Julia, may fail to give the other subjects their due. Although this tendency to focus on what we know and love—and to avoid what we do not know or like—is understandable, it is also irresponsible. It is unfair to both the students and their later teachers, who will expect students to have a command over the avoided or neglected content.

Neither Julia's motive nor her problem is uncommon. Teachers who are strongly motivated by the desire to teach a particular subject matter have to be somewhat cross-eyed. While keeping one eye on what they want to teach, they need to keep the other eye on the students and their day-to-day progress and needs.

1-4b CASE TWO: THE DESIRE TO AID IN THE RENEWAL OF SOCIETY

Fred Harvey was in his late 30s. His disposition was so pleasant, and a smile came so readily to his face, that one of the other teachers in the large metropolitan high school referred to him as "everybody's uncle." Fred had a remarkable ability to remain relaxed when everyone else was tense, and he often broke up emotionally charged faculty-room situations and staff meetings with an appropriate quip or humorous question.

Each year, Fred asked to teach the Curriculum II freshman history class. Of course, his request was always granted because the Curriculum II classes were considered the dumping ground for slow students and students who had given up. Some of the other teachers regarded the Curriculum II classes as "punishment." Yet, year after year, Fred worked happily with students nobody else really wanted.

Fred's freshman history class was one of the most active in the school. He often took his students beyond the walls of the school on expeditions to day court, the police station, jail, and industrial plants in the area—and he also managed to sneak a baseball game into the field-trip lineup. Yet his classes were not characterized by fun and games: students worked hard to interpret sources, weigh contrastive evidence, make and support arguments answering persistent issues, and take informed action.

One year, Fred invited another teacher to speak to the class about shipbuilding in the eighteenth century. The talk went well, and after the session the other teacher, Todd Vincent, commented to Fred that the discussion following his talk had been very different from what he had anticipated: the questions were thoughtful and displayed observation of detail that the guest speaker had not expected from a "bunch of Curriculum IIs."

Fred laughed. "You know, Todd," he said, "they amaze me too sometimes. Most of these kids really have behavior problems, not intellectual ones. If you looked at their case histories, you'd find that the majority of them were 'dropped through the ranks.'"

"What do you mean?" asked Todd.

"They were in regular classes a good bit of their scholastic lives, but when they became problems in class, their teachers decided that the cause of their poor behavior was that the work was too hard for them. Most of the children in this class really represent the nonconformists, the 'antisocials'—the kids who some teachers claim 'won't go along with the system.' They're the kids about whom many teachers say, 'I don't care whether they learn history as long as they become good citizens.'"

"Yes, but you must admit that very few of them will go to college. Most Curriculum IIs just drop out," said Todd.

"Maybe you're missing my point," replied Fred. "I guess I'm saying that people can't be 'good citizens' unless they are contributing members of society, and that they should contribute something they think is worth contributing. If they can't get the basic tools that make a person productive, how can they be good citizens? It's a lot more than getting a job or making a decent living. In fact, I believe these kids are much more capable than so many of the kids we send to the university."

"In what sense?"

"In the sense that they are the least accepting of society as it exists now," replied Fred. "If you talked to some of them for an hour or so, you'd find that they really feel the school is hypocritical in many ways, and they aren't afraid to point out the hypocrisies. They'll tell you, for instance, that there are two sets of rules in the school, two sets of discipline procedures, two sets of privileges, and all the rest."

> *"Those who educate children well are more to be honored than they who produce them; for these only gave them life, those the art of living well.*
>
> **—ARISTOTLE (384–322 BC),** Greek philosopher

"But I hear the same thing from my 'honors' classes," Todd protested. "Those kids know about the double standard too. They often tell me that an honors student here can get away with anything from cutting class to smoking weed in the parking lot."

"You've got me wrong again, Todd. What these kids are saying is not that we expect too much of them, but rather that we expect too little. For instance, if a kid dropped from an A to a C in your honors history course, what would happen?"

"The kid would probably get a 'request' to go in and see the counselor," Todd replied.

"That's right," Fred continued. "When a kid everyone believes is bound for college does poorly, bells go off and people get concerned. They try to help the kid take a look at what's wrong. If one of these students goes from a C to an F, though, everyone says, 'Well, what more do you expect? The kid's only a Curriculum II and doesn't have the ability to sustain a C.' And they get all the inexperienced teachers and martinets in the school. Oh, they know that if they become real problems, they'll get counseling and possibly even better teaching. But that isn't their complaint. They know that the system isn't out to punish them; they know the system would rather they just float along and not bother anyone. That's the double standard in this school: those who are cared about and those who aren't."

"You know," said Todd, "you're not just talking about the Curriculum II classes. I think the same thing is generally true of Curriculum I classes. It seems that a kid who's really bright gets a lot of attention, and so does the kid who is really slow, but it's that kid in the middle. . . ."

"Right," said Fred. "The kids in this class are the bottom of that middle group in terms of the concern they arouse from the system—and they know it. Yet, as you saw today, they are capable. We owe them a decent set of expectations. I've maintained high expectations for the kids. I would prefer to slightly overmatch them intellectually than undermatch them, because no development is possible when you're being undermatched constantly."

"Don't they complain about being pushed too hard?" asked Todd.

"Oh, sure! There's always a good deal of moaning, particularly in the early weeks, until they realize I don't dance to that tune. Pretty soon they settle in and decide to go along with the program. But then they realize that they are actually learning. At that point, they're hooked. They're mine, and I wouldn't trade teaching them for anything!"

"Well, Fred, this has been most instructive. I came to teach and I ended up learning."

"Me too. That's what keeps me going. And Todd, please come back next semester."

Pause *and* Reflect

1. How is Fred's commitment to social renewal specifically shown in his classroom teaching?
2. According to Fred, what is the criterion for assignment to Curriculum II classes in his school? Was this true of your high school?
3. What is the double standard Todd spoke of, and how do you explain it? What is the double standard Fred spoke of, and how do you explain it? Did either of these double standards exist in your school?
4. How do Fred's expectations for his students differ from those of most teachers you have known? In what other ways is he different from most of the teachers you have known?
5. What do you think were Todd's major misconceptions as a teacher?
6. What does Fred see as the role of academic disciplines in education? If you had to, how would you argue against his position?

Comment

In addition to the serious educational injustice of underchallenging many students, Fred was reacting against the perversion of an important idea: teaching good citizenship. In Fred's school, as in many others, the idea of teaching good citizenship has been badly distorted.

During the 1930s, in a reform started by U.S. educator and philosopher John Dewey, many schools adopted the policy of awarding a grade for citizenship. Dewey and many of his followers envisioned training for citizenship as a process of working out in class actual problems that arise in a democracy. They saw the schools as an appropriate place to teach students about democratic decisions and to give them low-risk but real practice in such decision making in a context where mistakes were not "for keeps."

As sometimes happens with reforms, educational and otherwise, the processes introduced to the classroom by these reformers gradually degenerated into empty forms. Good citizenship came to mean docility, doing what one is told. Students could earn "good citizenship" grades by "playing the game" and not bothering anyone. Citizenship became a code word among teachers. A teacher who was given a class of "low achievers" or "discipline problems" was sometimes told, "Don't worry about academic concerns with these children. Just make them good citizens." Parents were told that their child wasn't a very good student but was "an excellent citizen." This euphemism meant that even though he or she didn't learn anything, the child did without questioning everything that students were supposed to do.

> *"The role of the teacher remains the highest calling of a free people. To the teacher, America entrusts her most precious resource, her children.*
>
> **—SHIRLEY HUFSTEDLER,**
> former U.S. secretary of education

The use of a citizenship grade as a conduct mark is an absolute travesty of the system Dewey and the reformers designed. As Fred noted, in reality, good citizens are not docile sheep who can be "conned" with impunity. The long-term effect of the misinterpretation of citizenship as conformity and docility has been to discredit it as an appropriate goal for schooling. Yet, in Fred we see a person consciously attempting to develop educated citizens. His class visits to courthouses, legislative sessions, and factories, as well as the classroom study of major social problems, are very much in keeping with what Dewey—and, indeed, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison—had in mind when they spoke of educating for freedom.

LEADERS in Education

Erin Gruwell (b. 1969)

Nothing could have prepared Erin Gruwell for her first day of teaching at Wilson High School in Long Beach, California. A recent college graduate, Erin landed her first job in Room 203, only to discover that many of her students had been written off by the education system and deemed "unteachable." As teenagers living in a racially divided urban community, they were already hardened by firsthand exposure to gang violence, juvenile detention, and drugs.

Courtesy of Erin Gruwell

Enter Erin Gruwell. By fostering an educational philosophy that valued and promoted diversity, she transformed her students' lives. She encouraged her students to rethink their rigidly held beliefs about themselves and others, reconsider their daily decisions, and rechart their futures. With Erin's steadfast support, her students shattered stereotypes to become critical thinkers, aspiring college students, and

(*Continued*)

citizens for change. They even dubbed themselves the "Freedom Writers"—in homage to the civil rights activists known as "Freedom Riders"—and published a book.

Inspired by Anne Frank and Zlata Filipovic (who lived through the chaos of war-torn Sarajevo), Erin and her students captured their collective journey in *The Freedom Writers Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them.* Through poignant student entries and Erin's narrative text, the book chronicles their "eye-opening, spirit-raising odyssey against intolerance and misunderstanding."

Although Erin has been credited with giving her students a "second chance," it was perhaps she who changed the most during her tenure at Wilson High. Today, her impact as a "teacher" extends well beyond Room 203. Currently, Erin serves as president of the Freedom Writers Foundation (www.freedomwritersfoundation.org), and raises awareness by traveling across the United States to speak inside large corporations, government institutions, and community associations. But Erin's capacity to convert apathy into action matters most at schools and juvenile halls, where any observer can watch the expressions of troubled teens shift from guarded cynicism to unabashed hopefulness.

Erin and her students have appeared on numerous television shows, including *Oprah, The Rosie O'Donnell Show, PrimeTime Live with Connie Chung, The View, Good Morning America*, and CSPAN's *Book TV*. Her class has been featured on National Public Radio and in national newspapers and *People* magazine. In January 2007, Paramount Pictures released *Freedom Writers*, a film based on this remarkable story, featuring Hilary Swank as Erin. That same year, her personal account of becoming a teacher, *Teach with Your Heart: Lessons I Learned from the Freedom Writers*, was published.

Erin is a graduate of the University of California, Irvine, where she received the Lauds and Laurels Distinguished Alumni Award. She earned her master's degree and teaching credentials from California State University, Long Beach, where she was honored as Distinguished Alumna by the School of Education.

1-5 Opinions about Teachers and Teaching

The "Why teach?" question and the decision about whether teaching is the right career for you is intensely personal. Although what you think about teaching and whether it is a "good fit" for you is of primary importance, it may be useful to know what others think about teachers too. Here we'll consider the views of the general public, students, and administrators, and what teachers who are new to the field have to say about their work.

1-5a WHAT DOES THE PUBLIC SAY ABOUT TEACHERS AND TEACHING?

The education of America's children regularly tops the list of the public's social concerns. Particularly now, in the start of the third decade of the twenty-first century, our educational system is receiving major attention from social critics and politicians. Americans are relying on their teachers to instruct, guide, inspire, motivate, and occasionally prod their children to learn more than ever before.

The public—that is, the people whose taxes pay the salaries of public school teachers—overwhelmingly acknowledges and supports the nation's teachers. When asked to select which group provided "the most benefit to society," 62 percent selected teachers, whereas only 17 percent selected physicians (the second choice). Only 5 percent chose people in business, 3 percent chose lawyers, and only 1 percent chose journalists and politicians.[13] When asked to rate which factors have the greatest impact on student learning, 44 percent selected the qualifications of a teacher over other factors such as class size, socioeconomic status of the family, or the family's involvement and support.[14]

Finally, the public has a great deal of trust in teachers. According to the *National Credibility Index,* when asked which people were "the most believable when speaking out on public issues," teachers were rated the highest, above members of the armed forces, national experts, and community activists.[15]

1-5b WHAT DO STUDENTS THINK ABOUT TEACHERS?

The old ditty sung by generations of students, "No more pencils. No more books. No more teachers' dirty looks!" may be giving way to a new appreciation. As shown in Figure 1.2, in a 2010 survey of students ages 12 to 17, high school students, often thought to be somewhat cool toward their teachers, view them as the top contributors (32%) to society's well-being, ahead of the next two contributors, doctors (23%) and scientists (19%). Although many students may fail to show it in their daily dealings with their teachers, this survey shows the deep wellsprings of their appreciation for the work of teachers.

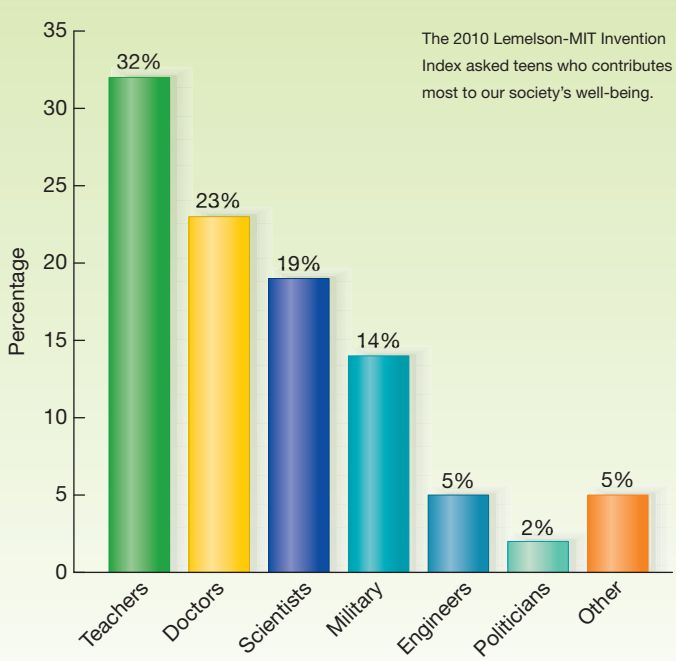
T F
American teens claim teachers contribute most to our society's well-being.

1-5c WHAT DO ADMINISTRATORS SAY ABOUT *NEW* TEACHERS?

The high regard the public and students have for teachers is encouraging. But what about new teachers, those who have recently entered the field? What do the administrators who work with new teachers and supervise them on a daily basis say about them?

Pause *and* Reflect

1. Does this information about students' high regard for teachers surprise you?
2. What are your personal reactions to this endorsement of teachers and does it fit with your experience?



*The 2010 Lemelson-MIT Invention Index includes a nationally representative survey sample size of 500 teens.

FIGURE 1.2 The Lemelson-MIT Invention Index of American Youth Ages 12 through 17

Source: Available at http://web.mit.edu/invent/n-pressreleases/n-press-10index.html

The opinions of principals and superintendents support those of the general public. A stunning 98 percent of superintendents and principals surveyed agreed with the descriptions of their new teachers as "motivated" and "energetic."[16]

T (F)
The majority of school superintendents and principals claim that the quality of new teachers entering the field has declined.

Rumors that the quality of new teachers has deteriorated are hardly borne out by those who do the hiring. A majority (52%) of these frontline administrators believe that the quality of those entering the profession has improved; only 9 percent of these educators believe it is declining.[17] We suspect that there are few professions or occupations where supervisors have such high regard for newcomers.

Pause *and* Reflect

1. Do the opinions of one of these groups—the public, students, administrators, other new teachers—matter more to you than the opinions of the others? Why?
2. How important is it to you to know what other people will think about you as a teacher?

1-5d WHAT DO NEW TEACHERS THINK ABOUT TEACHING?

An in-depth study, conducted at the beginning of the twenty-first century with 664 public school teachers and 250 private teachers who had all taught for five or fewer years, paints a picture of how today's newest teachers feel about their work. The researchers aptly titled their report *A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why,* and they concluded that "most new teachers are highly motivated professionals who bring a strong sense of commitment and high morale to their work."[18] New teachers see themselves as talented and dedicated professionals.

Reflecting the title of the report, 86 percent of new teachers affirmed the notion that only those "with a true sense of calling" should teach.[19] Nine out of ten claimed that the teaching profession demands a high level of energy and effort, requiring more talent and hard work than many other professions. The teachers in this study continually commented on the need for enthusiasm to do the job well. An overwhelming 98 percent described other new teachers with whom they work as sharing in their sense of commitment and enthusiasm. This is hardly the portrait of a disappointed and disgruntled group of newcomers.

American educators are making a major push to get more girls involved in science.

Andersen Ross/Stockbyte/Getty Images

1-6 Why Teachers Teach

Let's get back to the question "Why teach?" by considering those already in the field. First, are teachers personally satisfied with their career choice, and second, why do they teach? The answer to the satisfaction question revealed what up until recently has been a dramatic and encouraging increase in teacher satisfaction in the last half century, going from a low in 1986 of 33 percent reporting being "very satisfied" to the most recent figure of 59 percent in 2009 (see Table 1.2).[20] However, the most recent version of this survey shows that teacher satisfaction has dropped precipitously in the last few years: from a high of 62 percent reporting "very satisfied" in 2008 to 39 percent in 2012. We need to consider, however, that this surprising 23 percentage point drop occurred during the difficult years of the 2007–2008 economic recession, a period that put particular stress on teachers' salaries and school budgets.[21]

Next, "*Why Teachers Teach*": *Attitudes about Teaching,* a somewhat dated 2003 study, reveals that nearly all new teachers (96%) reported that teaching is the work they love to do. Four out of five claimed that they would choose teaching again if starting over. Three out of four insisted that "teaching is a lifelong choice," and two out of three reported that they get a great deal of satisfaction out of teaching. Contrary to the rumor that many people simply drift into teaching, a mere 12 percent said that they "fell into teaching by chance." All but a handful had very altruistic attitudes about their work, telling the researchers that teaching offers them an opportunity for "contributing to society."

In another national survey of teachers, the 2016 *Listen to Us: Teacher Views and Voices,* teachers were asked about the most rewarding aspects of being a teacher. Table 1.3 shows that the response "making a difference in students' lives" was listed by 82 percent of teachers. Twenty-two percent of teachers cited "making a difference in my school community," while 17 percent responded with the "non-traditional work schedule."

TABLE 1.2 Teachers' Perceptions of Their School, Colleagues, and Job

Q. Teachers at this school like being here: I would describe us as a satisfied group.	
Strongly or somewhat agree	64%
Strongly or somewhat disagree	36%

Source: Adapted from Figure 1-C (page 19) of *Listen to Us: Teacher Views and Voices*, a 2016 national survey from The Center on Education Policy (https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED568172.pdf)

TABLE 1.3 The Most Rewarding Aspects of Being a Teacher

Making a difference in students' lives	82%
Seeing my students succeed academically	69%
Making a difference in my school community	26%
Making a difference in the larger community	22%
Non-traditional work schedule	17%

Source: Adapted from Table 1-A (page 15) of *Listen to Us: Teacher Views and Voices*, a 2016 national survey from The Center on Education Policy (https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED568172.pdf). Note: Teachers could select three responses.

Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.

—ARISTOTLE (384–322 BC), Greek philosopher

For some teachers, teaching is clearly a short-term career. One in five respondents in the *A Sense of Calling* survey indicated that they would probably change careers at some point. Although this figure contrasts sharply with the 50 percent of young college graduates in other fields who say that they expect to change careers at least once,[22] the reference to teaching as a short-term career brings up an important point. The desire to teach for a few years and then to move on to another career or to raise a family is both common and to be respected. Also, our schools are filled with people who "dropped in" on teaching and stayed to make it their professional home.

Judging from this study, new teachers show a remarkable certainty that they made the right choice in pursuing a teaching career. It also appears that most of today's new teachers have taken the time to reflect on whether teaching is the right career choice for them.

T F
Of all the characteristics that contribute to teachers' satisfaction, new teachers rate highest "involves work you love to do."

The *Voices from the Classroom* study also asked early career teachers, "How valued do you personally feel as a teacher?" Table 1.4 summarizes the teachers' responses. An impressive 81 percent reported that they felt either "Somewhat valued" or "Very valued." Only 4 percent felt "Not valued at all." Clearly, today's new teachers, although not painting a perfect picture, seem personally valued in their work.

Teachers' widespread satisfaction and love for their work is largely unknown, even among teachers. This "good news" has been lost in the headlines focusing on students' cyberbullying, low test scores, and other educational problems. The reality is that most teachers love the job of teaching. Consider the following:

- Seventy-nine percent of teachers agree "strongly" with the following statement: "involves work you love to do."
- Seventy-four percent of teachers say that teaching is a lifelong career choice.
- Ninety-one percent of new teachers believe that teaching matches their skills and interests very well.[23]

1-6a A SPECIAL INTRINSIC REWARD

It is certainly encouraging news that others apparently are happy and satisfied as teachers. Nevertheless, it is your life—and your choice to enter the teaching field. Clearly, selecting a career is a personal decision and involves answering many questions: "Will I be happy?" "Will this career provide me with a satisfying lifestyle?"

TABLE 1.4 Survey of America's Educators

Q. How valued do you personally feel as a teacher?

	Responses from all teachers	Responses from early career teachers
Very valued	27%	34%
Somewhat valued	46%	47%
Not very valued	23%	16%
Not valued at all	4%	3%

Source: Adapted from Question 65 from *Voices from the Classroom: A Survey of America's Educators*, a 2019 nationally representative survey conducted by Educators for Excellence. (https://e4e.org/sites/default/files/voices_from_the_classroom_2020.pdf)

"Will I be up to the challenge, and will I find the work satisfying?" "Will I grow in the experience?" People who are considering teaching as a life's work should grapple with these questions, which relate to the motives for their choice, but they must also scrutinize other, deeper motives.

Teaching, like nursing, the ministry, and social work, is a service occupation. More correctly, teaching is a **vocation**. Built into teaching is the idea of contributing to the lives of others. For many people, the root of their decision to teach is deeper than a love of subject matter or an attraction to the life of a teacher. Many men and women select teaching for reasons that are, at heart, religious or humanitarian. They see themselves as *called* to the work.

> ***vo.ca.tion*** n. *2. An inclination, as if in response to a summons, to undertake a certain kind of work.*
>
> —AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY

OUR FINAL WORD

We have said much in this chapter about the extrinsic and intrinsic rewards that come with teaching. One of the intrinsic rewards mentioned was the knowledge that you as a teacher would be involved in crucially important work. This particular **psychic reward** is captured by the story of a U.S. television reporter who was filming a documentary on the work of the late Mother Teresa and her community of nuns in the slums of Calcutta, India. The reporter came upon a young American nun cleaning the running sores, filth, and infections covering the body of a dying beggar. After filming the young woman as she carefully cleansed the ruined body of this near-death man, the reporter looked down at the nun and declared, "Sister, I wouldn't do that for a million dollars!" Without taking her eyes off her dying patient, the young nun quietly replied, "Neither would I."

One of the great intrinsic benefits of a career in teaching—and one not shared by the vast number of other occupations—is the inner certainty that you are doing important work and that you are spending your life well. *Those who can, teach.*

WHY TEACH? YOUR FINAL WORD

1. As a result of reading this initial chapter and participating in the activities, you may be closer to clarifying your answer to the question "Why teach?" Describe what you discovered as you read this chapter and what you intend to do as a result.
2. Which of the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations cited in this chapter do you think most closely match your current motivations to teach?
3. This chapter includes several sources for experiences to gain greater understanding of teaching and its "fit" with your own motivations and values. Specifically, which of these do you think you will pursue?

KEY TERMS

extrinsic reward (4)
intrinsic reward (4)
psychic reward (23)
real encounter (9)
reflection (11)
vicarious experience (10)
vocation (23)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Web Resources

Teaching Community: Where Teachers Meet and Learn

This site has multiple sources of information and support for teachers, from job openings to interviewing techniques, lessons plans, and disciplinary tips.

TeachersFirst

This all-purpose website is devoted to empowering and helping new teachers. It has multiple references to helpful and practical material from how to prepare for your first day of class to strategies for handling discipline problems.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

This site of a major educational organization has many different features and supports for those exploring careers in education and for new teachers.

Print Resources

Rafe Esquith, *Teach Like Your Hair's on Fire* (New York: Viking Adult/Penguin Group USA, 2007).

The title captures the intensity and excitement of this inspired teacher's approach to teaching. Rafe Esquith's Los Angeles fifth-grade classroom is the scene of poor, immigrant children being exposed to Shakespeare, classical music, and the world of ideas—and loving it.

Erin Gruwell, *Teach with Your Heart: Lessons I Learned from the Freedom Writers* (New York: Broadway Books, 2008).

Erin Gruwell, featured in this chapter's "Leaders in Education" section, has written a personal, poignant account of her struggles as a beginning teacher and of finally reaching her goal of inspiring young students to become powerful writers.

Tracy Kidder, *Among Schoolchildren* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989).

The author spent an entire school year observing a fifth-grade teacher and produced a rich, fascinating account of a teacher's year that shows how one teacher shaped and moved the lives of her students.

Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007).

In this moving reflection on the teacher's life and work, Parker Palmer proves to be one of the wise voices reflecting on American schools.

Taylor Mali, *What Teachers Make: In Praise of the Greatest Job in the World* (Penguin Publishing, 2012).

This short book by slam poet, Taylor Mali, makes a powerful case for the work of teachers.

2

What Is a School and What Is It For?

Prostock-studio/Shutterstock.com

InTASC Standards 2, 4, and 9

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

2-1 Describe several different understandings of the concept "school."

2-2 Explain the important distinctions between "education" and "schooling."

2-3 Analyze the ideas of schools as distinctive cultures and the role of schools in socialization.

2-4 Compare the two different views of schools as transmitters or re-creators of culture.

2-5 Describe four basic purposes of school.

2-6 Identify at least two research findings about the nature of schools for each level: elementary, middle, and high schools.

2-7 Summarize what researchers claim is a "good school."

2-8 Describe the challenge of improving our schools.

Truth OR Fiction?

T F Although our schools have many purposes, all agree that developing intellectual skills is the clear, primary purpose.

T F Part of being a student in an elementary classroom is having to experience "denial of desire," which is frustrating, unnecessary, and detrimental.

T F Research shows that academically effective schools are good at remaining independent of parental involvement.

In this chapter, we explore with you two related and fundamental questions: What is a school? And what is it for? We pose and discuss these questions to aid you in forming your ideas about the underlying issues. It is unlikely that you can make a good career choice if you lack a fundamental understanding of the institution in which your career is centered. Also, if you hope to thrive and be happy within an institution, you have to know how it is put together and how it works. For example, you must know what the institution says it is doing and what, in fact, it actually does. If you are considering a job in a particular school, you need to know what the leadership of the school *really* expects of their teachers to know whether you want to work there. Finally, if you hope to improve the schools—that is, make them better because of your involvement with them, you must have a realistic view of what is going on in the schools now and develop your vision of what the schools can and should become in the future.

2-1 What Is a School?

We wouldn't blame you for reacting to the question, "What is a school?" with something like, "What a dumb question! I've spent a huge chunk of my life in and around schools. What's to learn?" Our answer is, "Yes, but..." Sometimes our most intimate experiences blind us to a lager reality. The late U.S. senator and linguist S. I. Hayakawa once wrote, "If fish were scientists, the last thing they would study would be water." Our point is that schools have been so much of your life that what they *actually* are may have become almost invisible to you. Again, we ask you to stop reading and seriously to reflect: What, actually, is a school?

Your reaction to this question reflects who you are and what your experience with school has been. Perhaps you responded in one of the following ways:

- A school is an agency that weans children from the protective warmth of the family and trains them for what society has decided is useful work.
- A school is a place where "they" fix your mind so you think like everyone else.
- A school is where children fall in love with learning.
- A school is a tax-supported babysitting agency.
- A school is a place where young savages have a chance to become civilized by engaging in the world's most precious wisdom.
- A school is a place where we explore who we really are and how we can become full, creative human beings.
- A school is an institution where the dead wisdom and worn-out skills of the past are force-fed to the young.
- A school is where *real* education takes place.

Each of these descriptions says a great deal about the school experience of the person who formulated it. Our conviction is that your definition of *school* is a crucial cognitive map that greatly affects how you put together information and impressions of schools. And, perhaps, how you will approach the work of a teacher.

Pause *and* Reflect

1. Before you read on, how would you answer the question "What is a school?"
2. Which of the previous descriptions best describes your understanding of schools? Which least describes your understanding? If none of them fit, write your own one-sentence description.

2-2 Education and Schooling

Before we burrow into schools, we need to clarify an important distinction—namely, the difference between *education* and *schooling*. In simpler, premodern societies, when a boy could learn to be a man by following his father around and imitating him and the other men of the village, and a girl could learn to be a woman by doing the same with her mother and the other women, schools were not necessary. Formal schooling became a social necessity when the home and the community were no longer effective or competent at preparing the young through informal contacts.

Most modern societies have realized for some time that education is too important to be left to chance. Whereas important things are sometimes learned on street corners, and grandparents often are excellent teachers, the informal educative process is simply too unreliable. Still, there are nagging and growing doubts about the way we are currently doing it in many communities. That is, is herding youngsters into school buildings for six or seven hours a day, five days a week, the most effective way to prepare our children for life in our modern world? More on that topic later.

It has been jokingly suggested that in today's society, children interrupt their education when they go to school. The distinction between schooling and education implied by this remark is important. Both schooling and education have myriad definitions. We have sprinkled a few such definitions here and there throughout the book for you to sample. Before we go further, though, we should look at these two related but distinct concepts in greater detail.

2-2a EDUCATION

For the moment, let us say that **education** is a process of human growth by which one gains greater understanding and control over oneself and one's world. It involves our minds, our bodies, and our relations with the people and the world around us. Ideally education is also characterized by continuous development and change.

> *"All of us have two educations: one which we receive from others; another, and the most valuable, which we give ourselves.*
>
> —JOHN RANDOLPH (1773–1833), U.S. congressman

Education is much more open-ended and all-inclusive than schooling and knows few boundaries. It includes both the formal learning that takes place in schools and the entire universe of informal learning, from how to hook a worm on a line to how to burp a baby.

The agents of education can range from a revered grandparent to the guests on a late-night television talk show, from a child with a disability to a distinguished scientist. Whereas schooling follows a routine and has a certain predictability, education quite often takes us by surprise. We go to the movies to relax—and come home with a vivid sense of the human misery that results from warfare. We get into a casual conversation with a stranger and discover how little we know about other religions. Education is a lifelong process: it starts long before we begin school and should be ongoing our entire lives.

2-2b SCHOOLING

In contrast to education, **schooling** is a specific, formalized process, usually focused on the young. This general pattern has varied little from one setting to the next. Despite minor variations in teaching practices among schools, schooling remains a rather uniform practice throughout the United States. Children arrive at school at