CENGAGE

TEACHING FOR STUDENT LEARNING: BECOMING A MASTER TEACHER

THIRD EDITION

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Preface

America needs teachers and it needs them now. Demand for teachers (especially at middle and high school levels) is greatest in inner cities and outlying rural areas of the country and in the fields of mathematics, science, and special education. This critical teacher shortage has resulted across the county in the appearance and growth of a new breed of alternative teacher education programs and alternative licensure programs. Universities, school districts, and state educational agencies sometimes alone, and often in collaboration, have developed a wide variety of innovative programs to prepare new teachers for the realities of the American classroom.

According to the National Center for Education Information, there are some 600 alternative licensure programs graduating approximately 60,000 new teachers a year. The Center also reports that every state in the nation is now facing the challenge of creating alternatives to the traditional college route for licensing teachers. States, cities, and even private groups are scrambling to develop intensive, school-based workshops and short courses to prepare new teacher recruits for their classroom responsibilities. Also, traditional college and university teacher education programs are now streamlining their programs to get candidates out into the classrooms as efficiently as possible.

Teaching for Student Learning: Becoming a Master Teacher grew out of a conversation between one publisher and two of this text's authors, who had been discussing the revision of another book. That text, *Those Who Can, Teach,* is geared toward students who are beginning their traditional teacher education programs. We realized that the new alternative teacher licensure population needed options to the traditional textbook. Current publications, including *Those Who Can, Teach* and most introductory education and general teaching methods texts, do not address the immediate problems faced by students in alternative licensure programs who are more likely to enter classrooms after a shorter preparation period. We set out to fill those needs.

Purpose and Audience

This innovative text is for those who are already teaching or about to teach, not those who are just thinking about perhaps teaching someday! It is also for student teachers at the end of their traditional program or new in-service teachers who are part of an alternative licensure program. These students may be more experienced than traditional "introduction to education" students (for whom we still maintain *Those Who Can, Teach* is the ideal choice). These "fast track" students require materials that will help them be competent in the classroom—immediately.

We created *Teaching for Student Learning* to help our users meet their goals through the following features:

- **Focus on the essential tasks of teaching.** Topics such as instruction, assessment, and classroom management are coupled with get-the-job-done problem-solving skills a new teacher needs. We aim to immerse soon-to-be or early-career teachers in the sometimes challenging realities of teaching. We give them focused advice that will help them avoid common pitfalls and will directly lead to classroom competence. It is our hope that this "classroom-based" issue and problem focus will help make the theory-to-practice connection much more explicit for both students and instructors.

- **Flexibility in content coverage and content presentation.** We have distilled the fundamental information and professional insights that all teachers need for the demanding requirements of today's schools, and we present them in a series of easy-to-read and easy-to-reference modules. This series of modules allows

instructors to put together a course of study that fits their course and the needs of their students. By offering these modules in a perforated, three-hole-punched format, instructors can select and sequence the materials in a ready-to-reference binder to suit their different needs. The flexible format also allows instructors to add school- or state-specific materials to their personal reference collection.

- **Clear connection to standards.** The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, the Model Core Teaching Standards, and the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium standards, updated and reissued in May 2011, have gone a long way toward delineating what a new teacher should know and be able to do. They also have had a guiding impact on the new teacher licensing process in many states. As we wrote the various modules for this text, we had these new standards and requirements firmly in mind.

Content

Teaching for Student Learning was selected as this book's title to emphasize that teaching should have a "results orientation."

Effective teachers bring about intended learning outcomes. They manage students' behavior in the classroom, organize instruction, assess student learning, and adjust learning activities in response to students' needs and abilities. The goal of these activities is to ensure that all students learn what is expected of them.

The core goal of an effective teacher, helping students learn, is enmeshed in several layers of relationships such as those with students and students' families, colleagues and administrators, and even with the laws of our country. A successful teacher must manage all of these relationships effectively.

The modules of this book are designed to help new teachers thrive in their first years of teaching and to assist them on their way to becoming master teachers who are adept at all of these tasks:

- Understanding your students, a key foundation for all other characteristics of effective teaching: Modules 1–3
- Mastering the essentials of establishing and maintaining a positive classroom environment: Module 4.
- Preparing for the core work of your profession, teaching for student learning: Modules 5-6.
- Determining how well your students are learning: Module 7.
- Understanding the key professional relationships that you will need to maintain: Modules 8-10.
- Preparing for your first year teaching: Module 11.

Design Features

We have made this text interactive to provide many opportunities for readers to test their knowledge, respond to questions, and engage with the text. To accomplish this engagement, the modules have a number of different features.

- **InTASC Standards,** which are the focus of individual modules, appear at the start and finish of each module. The end-of-module *Standards in Action* exercise references one particular standard, and the reader is presented with an actual teaching issue that involves that particular standard.
- **Learning objectives** list the key tasks you should be able to do upon completing the module.
- **Opening scenarios** illustrate some of the issues discussed in the module and are referred to often throughout the module.
- **Preview** provides an overview of the major points addressed in the module.
- **Key Terms** appear in boldface, and the definitions for these terms are found at the end of each module for easy reference.

- **Now You Do It** features are designed to prompt and allow opportunities for readers to consolidate the knowledge and to reflect more on key topics. Each feature asks the reader to respond to questions or suggestions.
- **In Your Classroom** boxes provide practical ideas and application tips for use in classrooms.
- **Let's Sum Up** gives a summation of the major points of the module, along with reassuring parting words of advice.
- **Further Resources** provide a set of additional readings and websites to further investigate the major ideas of the module.

Accompanying Teaching and Learning Resources

MindTap™: The Personal Learning Experience

MindTap Education for *Teaching for Student Learning, Third Edition* represents a new approach to teaching and learning. A highly personalized, fully customizable learning platform with an integrated eportfolio, MindTap helps students to elevate thinking by guiding them to:

- Know, remember, and understand concepts critical to becoming a great practitioner;
- Apply concepts, create curriculum and tools, and demonstrate performance and competency in key areas in the course, including national and state education standards;
- Prepare artifacts for the portfolio and eventual state licensure, to launch a successful professional career; and
- Develop the habits to become a reflective practitioner.

As students move through each chapter's Learning Path, they engage in a scaffolded learning experience, designed to move them up Bloom's Taxonomy, from lower- to higher-order thinking skills. The Learning Path enables preservice students to develop these skills and gain confidence by:

- Engaging them with chapter topics and activating their prior knowledge by watching and answering questions about authentic videos of teachers teaching and children learning in real classrooms;
- Checking their comprehension and understanding through Did You Get It? assessments, with varied question types that are autograded for instant feedback;
- Applying concepts through mini-case scenarios—students analyze typical teaching and learning situations, and then create a reasoned response to the issue(s) presented in the scenario; and
- Reflecting about and justifying the choices they made within the teaching scenario problem.

MindTap helps instructors facilitate better outcomes by evaluating how future teachers plan and teach lessons in ways that make content clear and help diverse students learn, assessing the effectiveness of their teaching practice, and adjusting teaching as needed. MindTap enables instructors to facilitate better outcomes by:

- Making grades visible in real time through the Student Progress App so students and instructors always have access to current standings in the class.
- Using the Outcome Library to embed national education standards and align them to student learning activities, and also allowing instructors to add their state's standards or any other desired outcome.
- Allowing instructors to generate reports on students' performance with the click of a mouse against any standards or outcomes that are in their MindTap course.
- Giving instructors the ability to assess students on state standards or other local outcomes by editing existing or creating their own MindTap activities, and then by aligning those activities to any state or other outcomes that the instructor has added to the MindTap Outcome Library.

MindTap Education for *Teaching for Student Learning, Third Edition* helps instructors easily set their course since it integrates into the existing Learning Management System and

saves instructors time by allowing them to fully customize any aspect of the learning path. Instructors can change the order of the student learning activities, hide activities they don't want for the course, and—most importantly—create custom assessments and add any standards, outcomes, or content they do want (e.g., YouTube videos, Google docs). Learn more at www.cengage.com/mindtap.

Online Instructor's Manual

The instructor's manual contains a variety of resources to aid instructors in preparing and presenting text material in a manner that meets their personal preferences and course needs. It presents chapter-by-chapter suggestions and resources to enhance and facilitate learning.

Online Test Bank

The Test Bank contains multiple choice and essay questions to challenge your students and assess their learning.

Cengage Learning Testing Powered by Cognero

The Test Bank also is available through Cognero, a flexible, online system that allows you to author, edit, and manage test bank content as well as create multiple test versions in an instant. You can deliver tests from your school's learning management system, your classroom, or wherever you want.

Online 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!

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Kevin Ryan
James M. Cooper
Susan Tauer
Cory Callahan

Reflective Teaching for Student Learning

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this module, you will be able to:

1-1 Describe the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of effective teachers that will enable you to improve more and more over time.

1-2 Demonstrate the important elements of reflection in teaching.

1-3 Explain how state and federal governments, through the Every Student Succeeds Act, are holding schools and teachers accountable for ensuring all students are learning.

1-4 Analyze major learning theories, recognizing the strengths and limitations of each for explaining how people learn.

InTASC STANDARDS 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, AND 10

SCENARIO

It was late at night, *and Richard Yee hadn't been this nervous since his wedding day. Tomorrow was the start of school and his first day as a teacher. After being a computer engineer for ten years, Richard had gradually come to realize that his heart wasn't in it. After a lengthy period of soul-searching, he had finally decided that what he really wanted to do was teach high school mathematics. Following that deci-sion, Richard had spent the past year working through an alternative licensure program for people, like himself, who were entering teaching after some time in another career. Now, he was about to become a teacher in an urban high school.*

Richard had always been good at mathematics, so he wasn't worried about understanding the subject he was going to teach. What made him nervous was whether he would be able to organize and run a classroom full of sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds, many of whom came from backgrounds that were very different from his own. Would they like him? Would they even listen to him? What about his colleagues—how would he get along with them? What if he needed help—who could he approach for assistance? Would his teacher's salary be enough for him and his family to live on? But most of all, Richard worried that he would not be able to teach the students what they needed to know to pass the state standards of learning. Would he be a good teacher? New questions and new worries kept popping into his head as he tossed and turned. Looking at the clock, Richard realized he would soon have the answers to many of his questions; it was already almost tomorrow.

PREVIEW

Like Richard Yee, most teachers choose *to enter teaching because they want to work with young people and believe they can make a dif-ference in students' lives. They also recognize teaching as important work that contributes significantly to society. The potential for these intrinsic rewards tends to attract people to the profession more strongly than extrinsic rewards, such as salary.*

Upon entering the profession, many teachers do, in fact, find the intrinsic satisfactions they sought. Nearly all new teachers agree, for instance, that teaching is work they love to do, and about 60 percent report they get a lot of satisfaction from teaching.[1] But even so, approximately 30–50 percent of America's new teachers leave the classroom within the first five years. Why?

The reasons for leaving teaching are often related to the reasons for entering the field. Although salaries are important in retaining teachers, most of those who leave teaching report doing so because of intrinsic factors. The most common complaints include lack of adminis-trative and parental support, problems with student motivation and

discipline, and limited teacher input into and influence over school policies.[2] Some teachers, it seems, find they do not enjoy working with young people as much as they thought they would, or they discover the work of teaching is not what they thought it would be.

We hope this book will give you a start in developing the understanding and skills to overcome the problems that plague many beginning teachers. There is no doubt that teachers who possess the knowledge and skills to be effective enjoy teaching more than those who struggle to develop these competencies. And, as their competencies develop and become more sophisticated, the satisfaction they derive from teaching increases.

1-1 Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions You Need to Be an Effective Teacher

Richard's concerns are shared by many teachers as they prepare for the start of the school year. Whether in their first year or much later in their careers, teachers often wonder at the start of a new school year whether they will be able to teach students effectively.

Let's look more closely at what we mean by "effective teaching." Effective teachers bring about intended learning outcomes. They manage students' behavior in the classroom, organize instruction, assess student learning, and adjust learning activities in response to students' needs, interests, and abilities. The goal of these activities is to ensure all students learn what is expected of them. The core work of an effective teacher, helping students learn, is enmeshed in several layers of relationships—with students, with their families, with colleagues and administrators, and even with the nation's laws—and you must function successfully in all of these relationships if you are to be an effective teacher. Excelling in them also enables you to avoid some of the disillusionment common among new teachers, so you are more likely to experience the satisfactions at the center of the job. Because if teaching isn't personally satisfying, why not just stay a software engineer?

The modules of this text are designed to help you thrive in your first years of teaching and to assist you on your way to becoming a master teacher who can handle all of these tasks:

- Modules 1–3 will help you to understand your students, a key foundation for all other characteristics of effective teaching.
- Module 4 is designed to help you master the essentials of establishing and maintaining a positive classroom environment.
- Modules 5 and 6 are intended to prepare you for the core work of your profession, teaching for student learning.
- Module 7 provides background on the essential task of determining how well your students are learning.
- Modules 8–10 will get you up to speed quickly with professional information about the key relationships you will need to maintain.
- Module 11 is designed to better prepare you for your first year teaching.

NOW YOU DO IT

Take a moment to page through this book while considering your current level of preparation and competency. Target the modules of most interest to you, those you expect to fill some of the key gaps in your current knowledge and skills. Plan to pay special attention when you are assigned to study these modules, and if they happen to not be assigned to you, plan to study them on your own.

1-2 Reflective Teaching

One characteristic of professional career teachers is the ability to grow and develop on the job. A key element in continued growth is reflection on the problems and issues of practice. New teachers are like learning sponges, soaking up information, skills, and experience. Everything is new, and you will be eager to learn so you can be an effective teacher. After a few years, however, there is a danger that you may fall into a "comfort zone." You may stop being open to learning new methods and instead rely on patterns of teaching that seem to have worked in the past. Before you know it, you may find yourself resembling one of the drab, dull teachers Hollywood likes to characterize in movies.

How can you avoid complacency and stagnation? An important element is to develop the habits of inquiry and reflection. You need to become a lifelong student of teaching by continually examining your assumptions, attitudes, practices, effectiveness, and accomplishments. This process of examination and evaluation is often called **reflective teaching**, and it is the key to becoming a master teacher.

Teachers, like many other professional practitioners, make assumptions that undergird their actions. By reflecting on their actions, teachers can bring to the surface some of these assumptions that might otherwise go unrecognized. The accompanying "In Your Classroom" feature suggests several techniques you might use to kickstart your own reflection process. Once aware of their assumptions, reflective teachers can critique and examine these tacit understandings and can make adjustments to them as they become more knowledgeable about the students and the subjects they teach as well as the school setting. Such continuing reflection and improvement establish a self-reinforcing habit of being thoughtful about your teaching.

IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Tools for Reflective Teachers

Reflection on the practice of teaching can take many forms.

- *Teaching journal.* Some teachers keep a journal to record their thoughts and reactions to the events of the day. Writing about events that occur in your classroom gives you the opportunity to re-examine these events in a calmer and less distracting setting (after school hours, for example) and to propose solutions to problems that may have arisen. A journal can also provide you, as a new teacher, with a potentially rewarding record of growth in your thinking and problem-solving ability.

- *Video recordings.* Videos provide a visual and aural reminder of what happened in the classroom and act as triggers for recalling feelings, events, and intentions. They also seem to "objectify" the teaching, allowing teachers to feel less defensive and more willing to consider alternatives. Viewing a video of your own teaching nearly always reveals patterns of behavior that you didn't know existed. Some patterns you'll like and others you'll want to change.

- *Teaching portfolios.* **Teaching portfolios** consist of artifacts (videos, tests, lesson plans, student work, and other teacher-created materials) that provide a record of a teacher's professional growth and development. You can choose what items you want to include in your portfolio, justifying to yourself why you want to include particular items and what they say about you and your teaching. Reviewing their portfolios enables teachers to reflect on their teaching practices, see where they need to make changes, and recognize areas in which they are performing well. Teaching portfolios can be digitized or in hard copy.

- *Colleagues.* Reflection is easier when you work with a colleague to obtain another's perspective and to get new ideas. By revealing your teaching to another teacher, you make your ideas explicit and open for examination. Observe your colleagues, too, if you can. Watching others can spur reflection about your own practices, as well as provide you with new ideas.

❯❯ Professional Resource Download

1-3 Every Student Succeeds Act

We selected *Teaching for Student Learning* as this book's title to emphasize that teaching should have a "results orientation." A few decades ago, the relationship between teaching and student learning was less often examined. Teachers taught, and some students learned while others did not. Although reflective teachers have always been concerned about their effectiveness, there was less official recognition of the teacher's central role in student learning. The teacher's effectiveness was not really considered, because learning was seen as primarily the responsibility of the student, not the teacher.

Photo 1-1 Our nation needs teachers with energy, commitment, and professional knowledge.

Today, this expectation has changed. In 1983, a highly influential report titled *A Nation at Risk* highlighted the "mediocrity" of American schooling and called for raising both expectations and learning standards in U.S. schools. Since then, the nation has been engaged in numerous attempts to reform education. States increased graduation requirements for high school students, required more time in school, and expected more of their teachers. A federal educational reform act called Goals 2000: Educate America Act was signed into law in 1994; it provided states with funding to develop comprehensive plans to improve the educational outcomes of their students.

Then there was the federal **No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act**. Signed into law in 2002, NCLB greatly increased the federal government's presence in education by putting into place requirements that reached into just about every public school in the country. In order for states to receive federal dollars for their schools, they were required to ensure a highly qualified teacher in every classroom, conduct annual testing in reading and mathematics for all students in grades three to eight, and administer a high school exit exam that students needed to pass in order to earn their diplomas. The law also applied pressure to school districts to turn around low-performing schools by specifying a series of consequences for schools that persistently failed to demonstrate "adequate yearly progress" toward having all students meet state content standards.

The most recent federal educational reform, building from and replacing NCLB, is the 2015 **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**. The law is a reauthorization and revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the federal government's largest

K–12 education investment. ESSA emphasizes that schools should prepare "all students for success in college and career." Below are some of the key provisions of ESSA:

- Each state must develop its own student performance targets that focus on college and career readiness.
- Students in pre-K programs are included in the reform.
- Students must take standardized exams for reading/language arts and mathematics each year from grades three through eight, and once more in high school.
- States must develop their own accountability system: ways of identifying and supporting low-performing schools.
- Students must take standardized exams for science once between grades three and five, another exam between grades six and nine, and another exam between grades ten and twelve.
- States must publicly report the academic outcomes of all schools and groups of students.

These and other important ESSA concerns for teachers are summarized in Table 1-1. Through ESSA, the federal government provides what it calls "guardrails"; however, schools and teachers are ultimately accountable to their state governments for the success of their students.

TABLE 1-1   Key Provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act

	Every Student Succeeds Act	No Child Left Behind
College- and Career-Ready Standards	Yes	No. The Common Core State Standards were developed after NCLB was passed
Student Performance Targets and School Ratings	Yes. Set by states and based on multiple measures	Yes. Set by the federal government and based on standardized tests
Accountability System	Yes. States develop systematic ways to identify and improve low-performing schools	Yes. The federal government identified and set interventions for low-performing schools
Teacher evaluation to include student learning outcomes and observations	No	No
Includes Pre-K	Yes	No
Annual Assessment of All Students' Learning	Yes	Yes

Source: **The Every Student Succeeds Act**—Report (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Available at https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rn

1-3a Related Initiatives

A state-led initiative, the Common Core State Standards Initiative, aimed to develop a set of common standards that states would voluntarily adopt *in toto* with the option of supplementing them with some additional standards. As of August 2015, forty-two states, the Department of Defense Education Activity, Washington DC, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands had formally adopted these standards. The Common Core State Standards meet ESSA's requirement that states adopt "career and college readiness standards."

A second initiative, the 2009 Race to the Top Assessment Program, is a federally funded competitive grant program to encourage the development of next generation assessment systems based on the Common Core State Standards. From its inception, nineteen states have received grants to build "data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction." With these assessments, states will be able to compare their students' performance to that of students across the nation.

1-4 Learning Theories for the Reflective Teacher

Being a reflective teacher includes thinking deeply about the process of making sense of information. In other words, reflective teachers often *think about thinking*. Over the centuries, various thinkers have advanced a number of theories to try to unravel the mysteries of the learning process, and a reflective teacher should be familiar with major learning theories, recognizing that each has strengths and limitations for explaining how people learn.

In the rest of this module, we'll explore several theories from two main schools of thought that have been influential in American schools and describe some instructional activities grounded in each school of thought. One school of thought is *behaviorism*, which focuses on learners' observable behaviors. The other school, *cognitive theories*, focuses on learners' mental activities.

1-4a Behaviorist Theories

Behaviorists believe learning is a result of past experiences. Behaviorists often refer to learning as **conditioning**, the development of a link between some stimulus in an environ-ment and a response, or a particular behavior. **Classical conditioning** consists of automatic associations between certain stimuli in our environment and our responses, whereas **operant conditioning** accounts for behaviors we acquire as the result of past successes and failures. As we'll see, both types of conditioning can operate in your classroom.

Behaviorist Influences in the Classroom   For a behaviorist, the environment is the key to learning, and it is the teacher's responsibility to set up and maintain an environment condu-cive to learning. Indeed, many teachers rely heavily on behaviorist techniques for classroom management, implementing behavior modification programs designed to reinforce appro-priate behaviors and eliminate inappropriate ones. Depriving students of their recess time if they fail to complete work during class is a common approach to helping students develop the appropriate classroom habits and behaviors.

Photo 1-2 Praise and attention can serve as reinforcers for desired student behaviors. Be careful, however, that you do not accidentally reinforce undesired behavior.

Behaviorism can also be applied to instruction. Learning activities based on behaviorist theories have several key features, including the following:

- *Repetition*. Behaviorists believe that learners learn best through repetition. A common behaviorist teaching technique, therefore, is "drill and practice," used more often perhaps at the younger grades, but still found throughout the K–12 curriculum.

On any given day in almost any school, students may be heard reciting their "times tables," reading a passage in unison, reciting foreign-language words, or repeating definitions of certain concepts. Other versions of drill and practice include completing worksheets and using computer-based drill software.

- *Specific, measurable (and measured) learning objectives.* Behaviorists recommend dividing the curriculum into discrete units of study, organized sequentially. Each unit of study is further divided into topics with specific and measurable learning objectives. Learning is measured primarily through objective, multiple-choice tests that allow for clear and quick feedback. The learner is rewarded in the form of high grades for remembering information that has been presented and is punished with low grades for not remembering.

NOW YOU DO IT

Because learning theories can be very abstract, we suggest you make a special effort to think about possible real-life uses of these theories. As you read about each learning theory presented in this module, plan an instructional activity based on that theory. Try to think of an activity that takes advantage of the strengths of the theory and avoids its limitations.

Evaluation of Behaviorism   Like all other educational theories, behaviorism has its proponents and opponents. Proponents insist that behaviorism is the most efficient approach to developing important and foundational skills and concepts. Because students practice a skill until they achieve a level of mastery, they have truly "learned" the skills.

Opponents argue that behaviorism's system of rewards and punishments can backfire. Instead of mastery learning of skills and concepts, students quickly lose interest in learning and focus only on the rewards. On tests, students figure out how to *select* the right answer without necessarily *knowing* the right answer; they "game the system."

An even more basic criticism of behaviorism questions the very premise of the theory. These critics insist human behavior cannot be explained only in terms of responses to external stimuli and that learning cannot be reduced to drills practice. They argue consideration must be given to mental activity—remembering and thinking—as well. We discuss this cognitive viewpoint next.

1-4b Cognitive Theories

Behaviorists focus principally on external and visible responses to stimuli. In contrast, *cognitivists* focus on understanding the role of the brain—that is, one's cognitive functions—in the learning process. They are interested in how learners process the stimuli they receive and in what thought processes learners use to decide on and execute their responses. Two of the more influential early cognitive theorists were the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1896–1980) and the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934). We'll summarize each of these major theories and discuss the cognitivist education movement known as constructivism.

Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development   Jean Piaget's theory[3] suggests that humans have two inherent intellectual tendencies:

1. *Organization*. People tend to organize their knowledge using cognitive structures that Piaget called **schemes** (sometimes called schemas). This organizational system enables a person to recall information and events.
2. *Acquisition of new information*. People add new information to their existing schemes throughout their lives, and as they do so, these schemes expand and become more complex.

Piaget also suggested that, just as the body adjusts to any change in body temperature to return it to normal, the brain also looks to reestablish **equilibration**, or balance and

harmony, when new information is introduced. Piaget labeled this process of finding equilibration **adaptation**. His theory proposes two methods of adaptation:

1. *Assimilation*. In some instances, the new information presented creates only minimal, if any, disruption to a learner's schemes, and the learner is able to easily add, or assimilate, that information to the existing schemes.
2. *Accommodation*. In other instances, when the new information conflicts with existing knowledge, it creates considerable disruption. In this situation, the learner has to find some way to change his or her schemes to accommodate the new information.

IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Applying Piaget's Stages to Lesson Planning

Piaget's theory suggests that tasks assigned to learners should match their developmental stage, an idea known as *developmentally appropriate learning*.

- Most elementary learners function in the concrete operational stage, so learning tasks should involve working with concrete objects and concepts as much as possible. For example, teachers who encourage elementary students to use manipulatives in mathematics or who plan hands-on science lessons are looking to address the developmental needs of learners in the concrete operational stage.

- Secondary learners have begun to move into the formal operational stage, so instructional activities should be designed to help learners hone their developing logical and abstract thinking skills. For example, a compare-and-contrast essay in English requires that students generalize behaviors, characteristics, or events in two or more pieces of literature in such a way as to examine *the form* rather than the specific *content*.

According to Piaget, the learning process consists of the continual adaptation of new information into one's schemes by either assimilating the new information or making accommodations to the new information, to one's schemes, or both. All learners have these tendencies of organization and adaptation, but Piaget noted differences in the learning process depending on the age of the learner. Piaget proposed that all learners pass through four distinct stages of cognitive development.[4]

1. *Sensorimotor stage*. Piaget suggested that for the first two years of life, we receive most new information through our senses—what we can see, hear, touch, or pick up and taste—or by trying out different physical, or motor, activities.
2. *Preoperational[*] stage*. In Piaget's second stage, preoperational learners (from age 3 to 7) have more developed schemes and are able to store in their minds images and symbols (such as letters and words). Sources of new information can also be more symbolic than they are for babies. It is in this period, for example, that children usually begin to read. Although learners start to develop organizational patterns in their schemes, the organization tends to be largely illogical, at least from an adult's perspective.
3. *Concrete operational stage*. Piaget suggested that the concrete operational stage lasts from age 7 to 11, a period when most learners are in elementary school. During this third stage, learners' schemes continue to become more complex and their organization starts to take on an adult-like logic. The most readily accessible source of new information, however, is still actual experiences or concrete objects. In addition, Piaget believed that concrete operational learners are not quite ready to engage in abstract reasoning, such as drawing conclusions or making inferences from specific events or information.

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[*]Piaget used the word *operational* to mean "logical." The preoperational stage can be understood as being pre-logical, the stage before logical thinking has developed in the learner.

4. *Formal operational stage.* The fourth stage is that of formal operations, which is characteristic of teens and young adults aged 11–18. During this stage, schemes grow progressively more complex and take on a more logical organization of information that allows for efficient recall of knowledge. Piaget described the learner's thinking at this stage as "formal" because the learner can look at the *form of* the problem, not just the *content* of the problem. This focus on form means that learners can begin to abstract from a specific problem to make generalizations, inferences, and conclusions, skills that are frequently encouraged in high school courses.

Piaget noted that the age spans he suggested are, at best, approximations, and that individual development varies greatly. Some learners at the middle school age range may still need to work with concrete models, whereas others will be ready to engage in more abstract thinking and reasoning. Further, he cautioned that people's schemes become progressively more complex at a relatively slow pace. It may be more appropriate to say that learner's schemes generally show the characteristics described for a particular stage by the end of the stage, rather than at the beginning.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Perspective The Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, a contemporary of Piaget, describes the process of cognitive development as dependent on and defined by two principal variables.[5]

1. *Cultural context.* The ways in which people organize their knowledge and how they think are defined and determined by their culture. Americans categorize knowledge in a particular way because that organizational structure is valued in the American culture and modeled to young learners. Other cultures value different ways of organizing knowledge and will teach these ways to their youth.

   Consider, for example, how people tell stories. American stories are most often linear; the story has a clear beginning, middle, and end. In societies with stronger oral traditions, including many Native American and African cultures, stories more often exhibit a cyclical organization, in which events may recur and the story does not necessarily have a beginning or an end. Students in these cultures are taught this story structure throughout their elementary school career.

2. *Social interaction.* We learn and develop our thinking through social interaction: engaging in conversation with others. Interacting with a more knowledgeable person, such as an adult or even a more knowledgeable peer, helps learners make sense of the events and actions around them. This interaction also helps learners know what information or knowledge is valued by the culture and begin to organize their cognitive structures in culturally appropriate ways.

Photo 1-3 Students work collaboratively to explore concepts and gain understanding.

Language is key to this learning process. Vygotsky suggests language, which serves an obvious social function of communication, also reflects a culture's patterns of thinking and ways of organizing knowledge, which then influence how we learn. Vygotsky maintains language actually becomes thinking, as we engage in what he called "inner speech," or talking to ourselves. In young learners, inner speech is often verbalized; they may talk aloud to themselves as a way of making the transition from the purely social use of language to using it for thinking.

NOW YOU DO IT

How might one of the constructivist instructional approaches or practices be implemented in your classroom? Explain how this activity would embody the principles of constructivism. What would be the pros and cons of the activity, in terms of time and materials needed, compared with the quality of student learning?

Vygotsky's Influence in the Classroom   Vygotsky believed learning occurs when the learner is given tasks that fall within the **zone of proximal development**, the difference between what learners can do on their own and what they can do with the guidance or collaboration of another. If a learner can already do a task on her own, no new learning takes place. If the task given the learner is too complex or beyond the intellectual capacity of the learner, no learning takes place. When the learner can complete the task with the assistance of a more capable peer or an adult, then learning will occur. To plan assignments within their students' zone of proximal development, teachers must know the current status of the students' skills and have a good idea about their capacities.

In keeping with the theory's emphasis on social interaction, teachers who use a Vygotskian instructional approach provide frequent opportunities for students to interact with others using such strategies as

- *Scaffolding*. At first, the teacher provides the learner with structured support for a task. The support is gradually reduced as the learner becomes more proficient with a skill or concept and is able to do the work with less help.
- *Reciprocal learning*. In reciprocal learning, which is also called reciprocal teaching, the teacher and students take turns leading small-group discussions. First, the teacher models questioning strategies, and then the students gradually assume the teaching role, following the model of the teacher.
- *Peer collaboration / cooperative learning*. As students interact with one another to complete a task, they develop their communication and thinking skills.

Photo 1-4 Teachers can model questioning strategies.

Constructivism: Applying Cognitive Theories These cognitive theories on how we learn have merged into a kind of umbrella theory called **constructivism**. As the name implies, this theory states that when learners encounter new information, they use it to make, or "construct," new knowledge, which they add to their existing knowledge base. According to constructivists, knowledge is not simply passed from teacher to learner. Instead, learners have to take this new information, make sense of it, and then attach it in some way to what they already know.

Constructivist Influence in the Classroom Constructivist ideas have been very influential in recent decades in American education. Because the theory combines elements of several cognitive learning theories, constructivists also use several of the methods that stem from those theories. The accompanying "In Your Classroom" feature describes two approaches, **discovery learning** and **project–based learning**.

IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Constructivist Instructional Approaches

Two teaching and learning approaches popular among educators who take a constructivist approach are discovery learning and project-based learning.

1. ***Discovery Learning.*** Developed by American psychologist Jerome Bruner (1915–2016), discovery learning is based on the idea that learners learn best when they have the opportunity to discover new information, classify that information, and store it appropriately.[6] In this approach, teachers set up investigative activities and students engage in methodical inquiry to find answers or solutions to the problem presented.

    The moon investigation presented at the beginning of this module is an example of discovery learning. Students were given a question to investigate: "Why does the moon seem to have these different shapes?" They used information they had already learned about the different phases of the

moon to formulate hypotheses to explain the phases. Then they could use the different materials and resources that Franklin Jones had supplied them to test their hypotheses.

2. ***Project-Based Learning.*** Originally the brainchild of William Heard Kilpatrick (1871–1955), the goal of project-based learning (PBL) is to make the process of education "worthy living itself."[7] Instead of being presented with discrete topics of study, students undertake a purposeful project. Students may or may not decide on the project itself, but in all cases, it should be something meaningful to them. Project-based learning integrates elements of Piaget's theory and Vygotsky's approach. In the course of carrying out their projects, students encounter new information, interact with it, and adapt it to their current schemata. In addition, students work on their projects in groups and later share their new knowledge with their peers.

Evaluation of Cognitive Theories In recent years, cognitive theories have gained a more pronounced following among teachers and educators. Proponents of these theories notice students show greater interest in learning when they are more interactively involved in it. They also find that with constructivist tasks, students often take more ownership in and responsibility for learning the content. Because students are more interested and more engaged, constructivist educators argue they are also learning more.

Some educators disagree with the core idea of constructivism, that all learners construct their own meaning from information presented. Others are concerned that if students are encouraged to make their own meaning, they may misunderstand or misinterpret the information, and the meaning they make could be inaccurate. Many critics argue instead for a more "transmittal" form of instruction so that the key concepts are presented clearly and specifically to students, reducing the possibility of students' misinterpretations.

From a practical standpoint, constructing new knowledge often takes a lot of time. Students need time to explore, hypothesize, and test ideas. Teachers may feel unable to make

such a time commitment when they are under pressure to cover a great deal of material so students will meet state standards or score well on high-stakes exams.

LET'S SUM UP

You may be asking yourself why we have summarized so many theories in this module. Well, it is because there is no "one right way," no single "one-size-fits-all" learning theory that fits all students in all subjects. Just as people come in a variety of shapes and forms, they also tend to learn in a variety of ways. As reflective teachers, we need to be able to draw on our knowledge of many learning theories in order to plan the right activities at the right time to help each student learn what she or he needs to know. As abstract as the various theories may seem, they have fundamental importance and usefulness in our classrooms. We need to develop the habit of mentally moving back and forth between "what" we are trying to teach and "how" our students learn. Perhaps our greatest gift to students is not the subject matter we teach them, but the help we give them in becoming more skillful learners. Most of us have found our preferred approach to learning and have been successful in making that approach work for us. Keep in mind, however, that just because your way works best for you, it may not work best for others. Don't be fooled into thinking that your way is *the* way.

Finally, policy makers have become increasingly convinced the single most important element in educational reform is the individual teacher. They have come to believe all policy innovations will fall short of their goals if the classroom teacher isn't doing a good job of teaching for student learning. As a result of this insight, policy makers have promoted higher and higher expectations for teachers. To help you meet these high expectations, we have prepared this book, which contains essential knowledge for the novice teacher. We hope you will find the information it contains useful as you begin your teaching career. But your continued success as a professional career teacher depends on the quality of your reflection, growth, and willingness to work at being the best teacher you can imagine. The work is difficult, but the reward is great.

STANDARDS IN ACTION

InTASC STANDARD 10: Leadership and Collaboration

The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

Interview five classroom teachers and ask them if they've heard of the Every Student Succeeds Act

(ESSA). If they have, ask them how it has affected them and their classroom practices. If they haven't heard of ESSA, brief them with its key provisions. Then, determine whether or not they think ESSA, is a positive piece of legislation. What, if any, changes would they recommend making in the act?

Further Resources

- Charlotte Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*, 2nd ed. (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2007). A useful book, organized around a framework of professional practice and based on the PRAXIS III criteria, including planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities.
- Linda Darling-Hammond, Nicole Ramos-Beban, Rebecca Padnos Altamirano, and Maria E. Hyler, *Be the Change: Reinventing School for Student Success.* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2015). The authors describe how an innovative school in a low-income community promoted student success through engaging delivery of authentic instruction.
- National Institute for Direct Instruction. Available at http://www.nifdi.org. Insights from a group interested in this behaviorist technique.

- Jerome Bruner, *Toward a Theory of Instruction*, new ed. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004). Bruner presents his views on learning and teaching.
- Clare R. Kilbane and Natalie B. Milman, *What Every Teacher Should Know About: Creating Digital Teaching Portfolios.* (Boston, MA: Merrill, 2009). An excellent guide to creating a digital teaching portfolio.
- *Teaching for Student Learning* companion website. Be sure to include visits to your companion website as part of your study of each module. You can find links to Further Resources not listed in the book, and access many other resources that will help prepare you to be a master teacher.
- Kenneth M. Zeichner and Daniel P. Liston, *Reflective Teaching: An Introduction*. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996). An excellent introduction to the concept and practice of teacher reflection.
- Ann Lieberman, Carol Campbell, and Anna Yashkina, *Teacher Learning and Leadership: Of, By, and For Teachers*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016). The authors describe how teachers can be at the center of school improvement as they collaboratively create, organize, and implement professional knowledge.
- Thomas L. Good and Jere E. Brophy, *Looking in Classrooms*, 10th ed. (Boston,: Allyn & Bacon, 2008). This excellent book provides teachers with skills that will enable them to observe and interpret the classroom behavior of both teachers and students.

Key Terms and Definitions

Accommodation Piaget's term for changes in mental schemes made when new information conflicts with existing knowledge.

Adaptation Piaget's term for incorporating new information into our mental organizational schemes.

Assimilation Piaget's term for adding new information to existing mental schemes.

Classical conditioning the process of creating automatic associations between certain stimuli in the environment and our responses.

Conditioning developing a link between some stimulus in our environment and a behavior or other response.

Constructivism a cognitive-based educational theory suggesting that learners must "construct" their own interpretations of new knowledge from information they encounter in order to add it to their existing knowledge base.

Discovery learning an instructional approach in which teachers set up investigative activities, and students engage in methodical inquiry to find answers or solutions to the problems presented.

Equilibration Piaget's term for a state of mental balance and harmony.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) the name of the 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and replaces the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. ESSA has added many new requirements for states and school.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act the name of the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. NCLB has added many new requirements for states and school districts.

Operant conditioning the process of making behaviors more or less likely to recur, based on the consequences, reinforcing or punishing, that follow the behavior.

Peer collaboration/cooperative learning an instructional approach in which students work together, or collaborate, to complete tasks or assignments.

Project-based learning a pedagogical approach in which students work on an open-ended project that allows for the integration of information from various disciplines.

Reciprocal learning (also known as **reciprocal teaching**) an instructional technique in which the teacher and students take turns leading small–group discussions. First the teacher models questioning strategies, and then the students gradually assume the teaching role, fol–lowing the model of the teacher.

Reflective teaching a teacher's habit of examining and evaluating his or her teaching on a regular basis.

Scaffolding an instructional technique in which the teacher at first provides the learner with structured support for a task and then gradually reduces the support as the learner becomes more proficient.

Schemes cognitive structures for organizing knowledge.

Teaching portfolios collections of items (such as research papers, pupil evaluations, teaching units, and videos of lessons) that reflect the quality of a teacher's teaching. Portfolios can be used to illustrate to employers the teacher's proficiency or to obtain national board certification.

Zone of proximal development the gap between what learners can do on their own and what they can do with the guidance or collaboration of another.

Understanding Student Differences

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this module, you will be able to:

2-1 Describe the importance of teachers understanding the racial and cultural backgrounds of their students if they are to teach them effectively.

2-2 Explain how teachers need to treat both male and female students fairly in the classroom, and how teachers must also create a safe climate for students (and their family members) of all sexual orientations.

2-3 Compare and contrast the effectiveness and appropriateness of multicultural education in general, as well as specific multicultural education programs.

2-4 Discuss how culturally responsive teaching is grounded in the belief that culture affects not just values and beliefs but also ways of thinking and processing information.

InTASC STANDARDS 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, AND 10

SCENARIO ONE

The day has come! *It's the first day of school. Sporting your new school clothes and clean, crisp, and nearly empty school pack, you disembark from the school bus and march off confidently toward your new classroom. You know where it is because you visited the building at the end of the last school year. From behind, you hear your name being called by your best friend, who wants to spend some time hanging out before the bell rings. You smile, adjust your pack, and head off with your friend to the start of a great new year.*

This scenario may be a lot like one that you experienced. Or you may have experienced a first day more like the next scenario.

SCENARIO TWO

As you get off the school bus, *the hordes of people overwhelm you. You stop and stare, uncertain where to go or whom to ask for directions. You remain frozen in anxiety until you feel a push from behind. As you turn, a group of young people go rushing past you, shouting something. You think they are yelling at you, but you don't know what they are saying. You shuffle along in the general direction of the crowd of people, but you still have no idea where you are supposed to go. You hear a lot of voices, laughter, and shouts of excitement—all of which makes you feel even more alone and isolated. You look around and, after a while, realize an adult seems to be talking to you. The adult moves toward you, still talking, although you understand none of what is being said to you. The adult takes your elbow and leads you into the building. Your fear intensifies.*

PREVIEW

Just as *your* first day in the classroom *as a teacher may fill you with feelings ranging from nervous anticipation to fear and dread, many of your students are going through much the same ordeal. It is important to keep in mind the range of feelings your students are experiencing. That range is emblematic of the many different personalities and abilities you will encounter on a daily basis in the classroom. All of your students are unique, quirky, capricious, and (at times) problematic individuals. In this module, we will take a look at some of the variables that contribute to the uniqueness of each of your students. These variables include their cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, their socioeconomic status, their languages, their gender and sexual orientation, their physical abilities and disabilities, and their intellectual strengths and learning styles.*

2-1 Cultural Diversity in the United States

Throughout the history of the United States, people from many different countries have come to the United States for a host of reasons. Some came willingly, including many European immigrants who were seeking adventure, economic prosperity, or escape from famine. Others were forced, as was the case for many African Americans. Still others came to escape an

oppressive government or threats of genocide. Whatever the reason, tens of millions of people from scores of countries have immigrated to the United States. The most recent wave of immigration began in the tumultuous period of the 1960s and 1970s, when nearly every aspect of American culture was called into question, and American social priorities became oriented toward self-fulfillment of the individual. Many schools reflected this change by loosening their graduation requirements and broadening curriculum offerings. The combination of fewer graduation requirements and a new range of courses, in fields such as arts and literary genres, allowed high school students to craft a course of studies that appealed to their unique interests.

2-1a Inclusivity in Education

This period also saw demands for greater inclusiveness of all Americans, especially those whose cultural traditions were not grounded in the dominant—white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant (WASP)—culture. Schools have been a key arena for extending inclusivity to several key groups, including low-income students, members of racial and ethnic minority groups, English language learners, and students with disabilities.

Low-Income Students   In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson launched a far-reaching program called the War on Poverty. One of its cornerstones, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, was a law that became the major vehicle for federal funding of schools. ESEA was reauthorized in 2015 and is now known as the Every Child Succeeds Act (see Module 1, "Reflective Teaching for Student Learning," for further description). ESEA provided funding for extra, **compensatory education** services for "educationally deprived" children, predominantly children from low-income families. Another compensatory education program, Head Start, offered its first summer program in 1965 to increase the school readiness of children from low-income families. It has since expanded into a full-year program for preschool children.

Racial and Ethnic Minorities   The ESEA, along with the landmark ***Brown* v. *Board of Education of Topeka*** Supreme Court decision, also aimed to address racial inequities and to protect and promote the constitutional rights of all Americans, especially African Americans. The most visible of these programs were the forced integration of all-white schools and the forced busing of African Americans to these schools. After an intensive effort to integrate schools during the 1970s and 1980s, the effort lost steam during the 1990s and early twenty-first century. Today, the average African American student attends a school that is 70 percent minority.[1]

English Language Learners   In 1968, a reauthorization of the ESEA included Title VII, the Bilingual Education Act, a law that provided federal money to school districts for teaching students with **limited English proficiency (LEP)** in their native languages. A 1974 Supreme Court ruling, in the case *Lau* v. *Nichols*, went even further. The Court declared it unconstitutional to deprive any student of equal access to education as a consequence of language barriers. The ruling required schools to provide equal opportunities for **English language learners (ELL)** either by helping students develop proficiency in the language of instruction (English) or by providing instruction in the students' dominant language. As we'll see later in this module, schools have responded in a range of ways to this directive.

Students with Disabilities   A 1975 federal law known as **P.L. 94–142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act**, began a revolution in the treatment of students with disabilities. Before that time, students with disabilities were typically segregated from the rest of the school population. This law and several subsequent ones have led to full **inclusion** of students with disabilities in many schools. The change has been costly and disruptive, but it has also been one of the truly noble moments in the history of American education. And, as we will see later in this module, as well as in Module 3, "Teaching Every Student in Your Classroom," this revolution is still going on, as administrators, teachers, and students struggle to work out the most effective and just procedures to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities.

The demands and requirements placed on schools to provide equal educational opportunities to all students have changed and expanded over the years, but the expectation that schools will provide equal educational opportunities has not. The actual delivery of "equal educational opportunities" is your job as a teacher. It is therefore a teacher's special professional responsibility to first be sensitive to and then be responsive to the conditions and special situations of your students. The rest of the module summarizes some of those situations.

NOW YOU DO IT

Have you personally benefited from any of these efforts to expand educational opportunities? Do you have any friends or family members who have benefited? If so, in what ways? What problems or difficulties still remain?

2-1b Diversity in Today's Classrooms

You can see the direct results of the increasing cultural diversity of the population in your classroom today, where you will find a wide range of differences among the students in your class. Every student is an individual, with his or her own personality and characteristics, and we urge you to get to know all of the students in your class.

Cultural differences (sometimes related to racial or ethnic backgrounds), socioeconomic differences, gender differences, and differences in physical and mental abilities all can influence student learning, and you must be prepared to respond to these differences in learning.

2-1c Racial and Ethnic Diversity

The population of the United States continues to become more and more diverse. About 34 percent of the entire U.S. population are members of racial or ethnic minority groups, and the number of school-age children who are members of minority groups is even greater, estimated to be about 44 percent.[2] As a result, your classroom is very likely to have students of various races and ethnic origins.

Race is a physiological descriptor for people with a common ancestry and physical characteristics. **Ethnicity**, in contrast, refers to a group of people who share such characteristics as language, customs, political and economic interests, and (often) religion—in other words, people who share a common **culture**. Tied into one's ethnicity are ways of perceiving and interacting with the world. Such perceptions are manifested in language expression and thinking processes and have a significant impact on how an individual learns.

Photo 2-1 Students from many different ethnicities and cultures can be found in our nation's classrooms.

Teacher–Student Disparity Women constitute about 76 percent of all public school teachers. Furthermore, almost 84 percent of public school teachers are white, and most are from middle-class backgrounds.[3] About 44 percent of students in public schools are from racial and ethnic minorities, and many of them live in poverty. Thus, the typical teacher, a white female, comes from a very different background than many of the students she teaches. There is an achievement gap between white students and students of African American and Hispanic background in the United States, and at least some of that gap can be attributed to disparities between school and home cultures.

It is easier for most teachers to work with students who share a similar background. The more alike students and teachers are in social and cultural characteristics, the more they share tacit, unspoken expectations about behavior and academic performance, which greatly streamlines and enhances teacher-student communications. When social and cultural characteristics of the teacher and students differ, however, teacher and student expectations at school may not match as well. The teacher in this situation needs training to be able to understand her students—and to help them understand her expectations—in order to help the students achieve and succeed. One way teachers can acknowledge and accommodate cultural diversity in the classroom is through culturally responsive teaching (which we will address later in this module).

The "In Your Classroom" feature provides suggestions for beginning to bridge cultural gaps between you and your students. Knowing and understanding your students' cultural backgrounds can help you make your classroom more inviting and increase student achievement.

IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Embracing Cultural Differences

Prospective Teachers

Seeking to broaden your own cultural background will help you understand more of your students.

- Seek experiences to broaden your understanding of societal and cultural commonalities and differences (for example, travel to foreign countries).

- Volunteer in organizations and clubs located in communities that differ from those in which you grew up.

- Volunteer in schools that differ from those you attended.

Practicing Teachers

Here are some suggestions to help you address diversity once you have your own classroom:

- Learn about and appreciate the values and backgrounds of your students.

- Try to use culturally responsive teaching by incorporating elements of the students' culture into your learning activities.

- Focus on students' strengths, rather than weaknesses, and teach to those strengths rather than making the students feel incapable or deficient. Find ways for all students to receive recognition from you and their peers for being good at something.

- Differentiate your instruction so that students with different approaches to learning can find suitable ways to learn.

- Recognize that school's middle-class values, such as individual learning and competition, may clash with the values of some students' cultures. Teachers need to help students learn to bridge the gaps between the two worlds.

⊻ Professional Resource Download

2-1d Linguistic Diversity

Whereas cultural differences may be enigmatic and unseen, linguistic differences are generally quite prominent. More than 5.3 million of the 50 million students enrolled in public K–12 schools in the United States are English language learners.[4] That means that about

one in ten students in the K–12 student population faces the scary first day of school described in Scenario Two at the beginning of this module. Across the United States, ELL students speak more than 400 different languages. About three-fourths of English language learners speak Spanish as their primary language. Other languages represented in American schools include Vietnamese, Hmong, Korean, Arabic, Haitian Creole, Cantonese, Tagalog, Russian, Navajo, and Khmer (Cambodian).

You might think these non-English-speaking students are new to the United States, and some of them are. However, 80 percent of the children of immigrants were born in the United States, and approximately three-fourths of the ELLs were born in the United States, are U.S. citizens, and began school in kindergarten and first grade, the same as their English-speaking peers.[5] The remaining one-quarter of the ELLs were immigrant children and youth born in a country other than the United States. These data indicate the predominant need for English language development instruction in U.S. school systems is for a large native-born population that does not speak English proficiently. But *all* English language learners have the double task of learning not just a new language but also at least some new ways of thinking, acting, and behaving that correspond to the social and linguistic norms of the dominant American culture.

Schools have responded to these needs in a variety of ways. Language programs for ELLs are of two types: those that focus on developing literacy in two languages (**bilingual education**) and those that focus on developing literacy in only English (**English immersion**). Among the bilingual models that focus on developing literacy in two languages are the *transitional model* and the *maintenance*, or *developmental, model*.

The *transitional model* provides intensive English-language instruction, but students get some portion of their academic instruction in their native language. The goal is to prepare students for regular classes in English without letting them fall behind in subject areas. In theory, students should transition out of these programs within a few years. *Maintenance*, or *developmental*, bilingual education aims to preserve and build on students' native-language skills as they continue to acquire English as a second language.

In the *English immersion model,* students learn everything in English. Teachers using immersion programs generally strive to deliver lessons in simple and understandable language that allows students to internalize English while learning academic subjects. These programs are more likely to be found in elementary schools, because younger learners tend to acquire new languages with more ease than older ones.

The extreme case of immersion is called *submersion*, wherein students must "sink or swim" until they learn English. Sometimes students are pulled out for **English as a second language (ESL)** programs, which provide them with instruction in English geared toward language acquisition.

In recent years, however, bilingual education programs have become controversial. Many parents, students, and lawmakers were dissatisfied with programs in which transitions to English occurred very slowly, or sometimes not at all. As a result, voters in several states (including California, Arizona, and Massachusetts) have approved the elimination of bilingual education programs in favor of English immersion.

Your school may have some type of bilingual education program to help ELL students become more fluent in English—or it may not. In either case, you are very likely to have in your classroom, for at least part of the day, students whose first language is not English. The accompanying "In Your Classroom" feature offers some guidelines that may help you work more effectively with these students.

2-1e Socioeconomic Diversity

Socioeconomic status (SES) is a term the U.S. Bureau of the Census uses to describe a person's occupational status, income, and (often) educational attainment. It is probably not a surprise to you that people of high socioeconomic status usually have well-paying jobs and high levels of education. People of low socioeconomic status often have low-paying jobs and may not have very much education.

IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Working with Students Whose First Language Is Not English

- *Students may understand more than they can say*. Students' *receptive* skills, listening and reading, are often more advanced than their *productive* skills, speaking and writing. ELL students may be in the preproduction phase of their language development; they understand what they hear, but are not yet ready to respond. Therefore, if a student does not respond to directions or answer a question posed, you should refrain from assuming the student does not understand. Instead, look for another indicator that will tell you whether students understand, such as a sample of their work.

- *As with other students, talking in class is not the same as doing the work*. Understanding academic language and instructional materials is generally harder than understanding an everyday conversation. Second language learners often develop basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) before they develop cognitive/ academic language proficiency (CALP).[6] Remember, even students who are very competent communicators may still need support to help them develop appropriate academic language.

- *Show, don't just tell*. Just as much as, and perhaps more than, other students, ELL students need visual or nonverbal cues to help them understand words and concepts. Provide information using visuals as often as possible.

- *Focus on reading comprehension, not just pronunciation*. Reading a text aloud is not necessarily an indication the student understands what he or she is reading. Decoding—associating a sound with a particular symbol (letter)—is a mechanical skill in which ELL students may develop fluency quite readily. Comprehension is a separate reading skill that needs to be fostered and developed among ELL students.

∨ Professional Resource Download

Many sociologists insist that socioeconomic class is as much a cultural group as is ethnicity. They suggest, like other cultural groups, different SES groups have distinct customs, beliefs, and values. For example, people of high socioeconomic status often consider high educational attainment a worthwhile goal, whereas people of low socioeconomic status may not place as much value on educational attainment. Other differences may include variations in work ethic, family structure, or norms of interacting between the young and adults.

One researcher, Shirley Brice Heath, has documented differences among families from different SES groups in the ways that adults speak to children and in the importance the families place on helping preschool children develop literacy skills.[7] In lower-SES families, Heath found there was less verbal interaction, overall, between adults and children than in middle-SES families. The nature of the interactions differed, too. In a low-SES family, the purpose of conversation between parents and children was more often knowledge gathering. In middle-SES families, the verbal interaction between parents and children was often knowledge building, a type of communication that more closely resembles school discourse. These are the kinds of students who seem to fit in effortlessly on the first day of school, as described in Scenario One at the beginning of this module.

Ruby Payne has written about mismatches that often occur between children from impoverished backgrounds and schools. Payne asserts that whereas schools value academic learning, delayed gratification, and other middle-class values, children from poverty tend to value survival, entertainment, and relationships. Unless educators understand these "hidden rules" that tend to govern the behavior of children of poverty, they will not be effective in educating them.[8]

Teachers who find themselves teaching in a school district with students from a range of SES groups need to keep in mind that students from different socioeconomic groups may

not share the same practices or values. Heath's research, for example, suggests that young students from lower-SES groups may need more explicit explanation of how the school environment works than will those from middle-SES backgrounds.

2-2 Gender and Sexual Orientation

Another important difference in students is related to their gender. Although debate still rages about whether differences between males and females are biological or socially created, it is agreed that there are different expectations for males and females in our society, despite the evolving gender roles of recent decades. For our purposes here, we will acknowledge that differences in learning, motivation, and attitude can often be related to gender. In addition, a number of sociolinguists claim there are distinct differences in discourse patterns between genders.

Some research from the 1980s indicates teachers tend to treat boys and girls differently.[9] Whereas there was great concern during the 1980s and early 1990s that schools were favoring boys over girls, in recent years more concern is being expressed that boys are falling behind. Although boys continue to outperform girls in computer science and physics, girls outperform boys in reading and writing, take more credits in academic subjects, and are more likely to attend college. Boys also constitute two-thirds of the students receiving special education services.

Teachers need to ensure they treat boys and girls equitably by not stereotyping gender roles, by providing equal opportunity to participate in classroom discussions, by eliminating the assignment of sex-stereotyped tasks, and by modeling sex-equitable behavior.

One clinical psychologist researcher at Harvard University argues schools don't accommodate boys' learning styles and classroom needs. Boys perform best, he reports, when they have frequent recess breaks and are able to move freely around the classroom. Boys are also more likely to enjoy argument and lively classroom debate, which is often discouraged.[10]

If you are teaching in middle school or high school, you are likely to encounter students who are still struggling to figure out their sexual identity. As many middle school youth begin to explore attractions to classmates of the opposite sex, some will begin to wonder about their lack of attraction to these classmates or their stronger attraction to classmates of the same sex. By the time these students reach high school, many have begun to realize they do not think, feel, or act like their same-sex classmates.

The issue of gender orientation is extremely controversial in our society. There is considerable evidence that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students often face a hostile environment in school, as well as in the larger society. As educators, however, we have the responsibility to avoid promoting any particular social agenda in favor of promoting the emotional well-being of all of our students. This means that all your students, regardless of sexual orientation, have the right to a safe and supportive learning environment.

2-3 Cultural Pluralism

As we briefly discussed earlier in this module, at one time the United States was considered a "melting pot" of different people and cultures. Immigrants were expected to give up the language and customs of their homelands and adopt the language and customs of their new country. Schools were expected to socialize and acculturate immigrant children to American ways. This process of incorporating an immigrant group into the mainstream culture is called **assimilation**. Many European immigrant groups were easily assimilated, but people of color were often prevented from doing so.

The concept of the melting pot has generally been replaced by notions of **cultural pluralism**. Cultural pluralism calls for an understanding and appreciation of the cultural differences and languages among the nation's citizens. The goal is to create a sense of society's wholeness based on the unique strengths of each of its parts. The cultural pluralist understands that America has provided a home for many different groups and honors the contributions each group has made to our common American culture. Cultural pluralism rejects both

assimilation and **separatism**, the idea that each group should maintain its own identity without trying to fit into an overall American culture. The pluralist looks for a richer, common culture, whereas the separatist believes that a common culture is neither possible nor desirable.

NOW YOU DO IT

Choose a particular topic you would teach in your subject area. Plan a learning activity that would include both competitive and cooperative aspects. Did you find it easier to plan competitive or cooperative activities? What does that tell you?

Although many people advocate cultural pluralism as a desirable goal, it remains an elusive target. Although racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity exists, equality among the various groups does not. In general, racial and ethnic minorities do not share equal political, economic, or educational opportunities with those of the dominant culture. Schools are the primary institution charged with promoting and supporting cultural pluralism, but too often minority groups have failed to receive the full range of benefits.

Schools committed to cultural pluralism try to promote diversity and to avoid the dominance of a single culture. These schools infuse curricula with the contributions and histories of diverse groups. They use instructional activities that incorporate the cultural patterns of the students. They may use the multicultural education approaches described below. Students in these schools are expected to be comfortable within their own cultures and in others as well. Students from all groups are expected to participate in the school's various academic, social, governmental, and athletic activities. Disparities in academic achievement among the various racial, ethnic, and cultural groups are addressed, and attempts are made to eradicate them. In short, the goal for schools aspiring to cultural pluralism is that no group dominate the school's activities and that no group be excluded from them.

2-3a Multicultural Education

Multicultural education has become an umbrella term for a host of programs, practices, and philosophies. Spurred by the civil rights movement of the 1960s, multicultural education is a response to economic inequality, racism, and sexism in American culture. Originally used in conjunction with improving conditions for people of color, particularly African Americans, the term has expanded to include gender, disability, and other forms of diversity. Its goals include reducing prejudice and fostering tolerance, improving the academic achievement of minority students, building commitment to the American ideals of pluralism and democracy, and incorporating minority groups' perspectives into the curricula of the schools. It charges schools and people working in them to be active participants in creating a more just, unbiased, and equitable American society. Multiculturalists insist that schools are the most appropriate and effective venue for bringing about large-scale social change to right the social injustices of our society, because schools themselves are a creation of the society the multiculturalists wish to reform.

Many proponents of multicultural education believe the dominant model of schools in the United States is biased to favor students from white, middle-class upbringings. They cite the following evidence to support their argument that changes need to be made in our schools:

- The gap in academic achievement between white students and students of color remains wide in spite of recent gains by African American and Hispanic students.
- Only about 50 percent of African American, Native American, and Hispanic students graduate from high school, compared to 75–80 percent of whites and Asian Americans.

- African American, Hispanic, low-income, and disabled students are very under-represented in gifted and talented programs, relative to their proportions in the total school population.
- African American students are almost three times as likely as white students to be suspended or expelled from schools.
- African American students are overrepresented in special education classes.

Proponents of multicultural education call for redesigning historically and currently biased curriculum materials, instructional activities, and school policies to eliminate any content or practices that favor one racial or social group of students over another and perpetuate social inequities. Thus, multicultural education has also become an aspect of educational reform.

Approaches to Multicultural Education   Some multiculturalists insist all students need greater knowledge and understanding of cultures other than their own. Others argue that minority students can achieve greater academic success if instructional activities are designed to address their particular learning preferences. From these two perspectives have emerged a range of approaches to multicultural education.

One of the leading figures in multicultural education, James A. Banks, describes four common approaches to multicultural education:

1. *Contributions.* In this "add-on" approach, students celebrate the contributions of culturally different groups and individuals at opportune moments during the academic year (for example, during Black History Month), while most activities and curriculum materials remain unchanged.
2. *Additive.* The teacher adds units of study on nondominant groups to the basic curriculum (for example, the role of African American soldiers during the various world wars). Although it adds content beyond the dominant culture, this approach remains a supplemental one.
3. *Transformation.* This approach requires a change in the curriculum and instructional activities to weave in new content and perspectives that reflect the cultural background of the students being taught. For example, in studying the Mexican–American War of 1846–48, the teacher might try to incorporate the Mexican perspective and the resentments that existed as a result of Mexico's losing much of its territory to the United States.
4. *Social action and awareness.* Educators who take a social action approach seek to bring about significant long-term change not just to the school environment but eventually to the greater society as well. Social issues such as racism, sexism, and classism are directly addressed through the curriculum.[11]

In the first two approaches, teachers promote the inclusion in the curriculum of content about different cultural groups in order to increase all students' knowledge and understanding of these different groups. Some schools or districts add to the standard curriculum the study of cultural heroes or holidays with events during Black History Month and Women's History Month or with annual multicultural festivals featuring different foods, games, or songs from a range of countries. In the additive approach, teachers may integrate a series of multicultural materials and themes into the curriculum, offering, for example, a unit on Latino literature as part of a world literature course or one on African history in a world history course. The contributions and additive approaches, however, have little power to change or reform education. The transformation and social action approaches, proponents believe, possess much greater potential to change thinking, attitudes, and actions.

The transformation approach changes the basic assumptions of the curriculum by enabling students to see issues, themes, and problems from several ethnic/cultural perspectives and points of view. The social action approach includes all the elements of the transformation approach but also gives students an opportunity to make decisions and take actions related to the issue or problem they have been studying. For example, if students were studying prejudice and discrimination in American history, they might undertake a study of these constructs in their own school by gathering data, analyzing the data collected, and discussing what the

data suggest. They might then follow up with some actions designed to explain the discovery of any prejudices or inequities that emerged from the data and ultimately to reduce them.

Photo 2-2 *"Add-on" approaches to multicultural education, such as festivals, do not change the basic assumptions of the curriculum.*

DayOwl/Shutterstock.com

MODULE 2

Evaluating Multicultural Education   Although not much research has yet been done to assess the results of multicultural education, preliminary findings suggest students reap real benefits from some multicultural programs. Some researchers have reported improved self-images, positive racial attitudes, and increased academic achievement among students exposed to multicultural education.[12] One program in particular, the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP), was found to have very positive effects on the reading abilities of native Hawaiian children. Teachers in this program adapted their communication and teaching styles to the learning styles of young native Hawaiians. As a result, the students showed significant improvements in social and academic skills, and their average reading scores jumped significantly.[13]

Like nearly all educational practices and policies, multicultural education has critics as well as supporters. Among the criticisms of multicultural education are the following:

- It may undermine any sense of common traditions, values, purposes, and obligations in our country.
- It may divert schools from focusing on their basic purposes of educating for civic, economic, and personal effectiveness.
- It addresses minority student underachievement by focusing on increasing minority students' self-esteem rather than on encouraging hard work.
- Separatist multicultural programs that focus on a single cultural group, such as Afro-centric schools, can create reverse discrimination and can lead to greater misunderstandings among different social groups.

Some critics of multicultural education accept the need to preserve and value the achievements of different groups in our country but reject the idea that everything is of equal value. These critics argue there are limits to pluralism and school leaders need to articulate what the core curriculum is and what is not in the curriculum. Other critics of multiculturalism completely reject the concept of cultural pluralism, preferring an assimilationist perspective whereby schools are charged with creating one dominant American culture in which English is the only acceptable language.

The battles between proponents and critics of multicultural education can be read in newspapers, heard on radio talk shows, and even in faculty lounges as issues related to immigration, bilingual education, and "English only" are discussed and debated. In all these debates, however, it is clear that schools need to accommodate larger minority populations in a way that removes barriers while preserving the basic purposes of schooling.

2-4 Culturally Responsive Teaching

One form of the transformational approach to multicultural education is **culturally responsive teaching**. This approach to instruction is grounded in the belief that culture affects not just values and beliefs but also ways of thinking and processing information. Supporters suggest that students can learn better if their ways of thinking and seeing the world are taken into consideration in the teaching/learning process.[14]

They also suggest culturally responsive teachers integrate information about their students' cultural perspectives into the curriculum and into classroom activities. For instance, in a unit on voting rights, students can trace the history of voting privileges in the United States for their own gender or racial/ethnic group. They can study what the barriers were to "universal suffrage" at various points in our nation's history and can determine what forces finally enabled their particular group to acquire voting privileges. Supporters of this approach say that, by grounding instruction in students' cultural backgrounds, teachers create more productive learning environments for their students. In addition to letting students know that their own cultures are valued, this approach helps students understand the dominant culture and see comparisons to their own cultures.

To help them recognize students' culturally based ways of learning, and to successfully integrate the cultures of their students into the curriculum, culturally responsive teachers must learn about their students' cultures. Take the time to ask your students or their families about their background, or use the Internet or library to learn more about the cultural heritages of your students.

If your goal is to become a culturally responsive teacher, you must also consider your own attitudes about different cultures and about your students. Teachers who are successful in this approach have an appreciation and respect for cultural diversity. They have clarified their attitudes and beliefs about culture and learning, and they can look objectively at the heritages of different cultures. They see students from different cultures not as possessing deficiencies to be overcome but, rather, as exhibiting different styles of learning and knowledge that can contribute to the whole class. Culturally responsive teachers also communicate high expectations for all students. These teachers are able to create caring, respectful, and inclusive classrooms. They seek, listen to, and use student voices and life experiences in the classroom, rather than just expecting students to parrot answers the teacher would like to hear.

They also reach beyond the classroom, striving to develop positive relationships with the parents and families of their students and to actively involve them in the schooling process. Furthermore, many of these teachers believe that by promoting a socially conscious environment in the classroom, they can help bring about positive social changes in society at large.

LET'S SUM UP

Most beginning teachers express concerns about their ability to address the various kinds of diversity discussed in this module. "How can I, as a beginning teacher, meet the needs of my students who possess these various characteristics, when I'm just learning how to teach?" This is a legitimate concern, but it should not be discouraging to you. Learning to teach is a gradual process, and it will take you both time and reflection to become effective with most of your students. In the beginning, be aware these differences do exist and affect how children will learn. Try to incorporate student differences into your lesson plans, in the activities you provide, and in how you assess student learning. Give students choices that enable them to learn in ways that play to their strengths, rather than demonstrate their shortcomings.

Pragmatically, then, how does a teacher respond to the different cultures in a classroom? How does a teacher teach effectively, knowing that there may be as many as ten different ethnic, linguistic, and/or cultural heritages represented in the classroom? We offer the following suggestions as guiding principles for your classroom:

- Find out as much as you can about all of your students. Students' behaviors and responses to situations and questions will be affected by many variables, one of which is their culture. The better you know each person in your room, the more you will understand his or her behavior and how you can best help your students to learn.

- Create in your students the mindset that your classroom has its own way of doing things. When you correct behavior, for example, use the classroom as a context: "In this classroom, we . . ." or "In this classroom, we do not. . . .". This strategy can help students from other cultures understand the behavior they must adopt in your classroom, and appreciate the cultural differences underlying it, without thinking that the behaviors and beliefs they brought with them from their dominant cultures are in any way inferior.
- Focus on the similarities among cultural groups rather than on the differences. Avoid highlighting what is different about a child from a particular heritage. Instead, make note of how students are all similar to one another.

STANDARDS IN ACTION

InTASC STANDARD 2: Learning Differences

The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

Spend time in communities whose residents differ from you in terms of ethnicity, culture, or language. Volunteer in a school that differs from those you attended. How do teachers in that school instruct the students differently from how you were taught? What can you learn from this experience?

Further Resources

- Stephen Cary, *Working with English Language Learners: Answers to Teachers' Top Ten Questions*, 2nd ed. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2007). Responding to teachers' ten most frequent and problematic questions about teaching ELL students, the author provides essential information, ready-to-use ideas, and helpful professional development supports.
- James A. Banks, *Cultural Diversity and Education: Foundations, Curriculum, and Teaching*, 5th ed. (Boston, MA: Pearson Education, 2006). One of the major scholars in multicultural education provides an excellent overview of the various forms of multicultural education.
- Jason G. Irizarry, "Culturally Responsive Teaching," in James M. Cooper (ed.), *Classroom Teaching Skills*, 9th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2011). A useful chapter that provides a conceptual basis for why culturally responsive teaching is so important, as well as providing general strategies to make teaching more culturally responsive.
- Multicultural Pavilion. Available at http://edchange.org/multicultural/ This site also provides excellent resources for teachers, research, and articles on multicultural education.
- Lisa Delpit, *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom.* (New York, NY: The New Press, 2006). The author asserts that most classrooms are dominated by a white perspective and that too few teachers acknowledge that children of color have perspectives of their own.
- *National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition*. Available at http://www.ncela.us. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, this site contains hundreds of articles, links, databases, and online assistance in the area of English language acquisition.
- Carol Ann Tomlinson and Marcia B. Imbeau, *Leading and Managing a Differentiated Classroom.* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2010). This book tackles the issue of how to address student differences. The first part of the book focuses on how to lead a differentiated classroom, and the second half focuses on the mechanics of managing a differentiated classroom.

Key Terms and Definitions

Assimilation the absorption of an individual or a group into the cultural tradition of a population or another group.

Bilingual education educational programs in which students of limited English proficiency attend classes taught in English as well as in their native language.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 1954 holding that segregated schools are inherently unequal.

Compensatory education educational support to provide a more nearly equal educational opportunity for disadvantaged students through such activities as remedial instruction and early learning.

Cultural pluralism an approach to the diversity of individuals that calls for understanding and appreciating cultural differences.

Culturally responsive teaching a method of embracing students' cultural backgrounds by modifying classroom conditions or activities to include elements related to the students' culture.

Culture shared characteristics among a group of people, such as language, customs, political and economic interests, and often religion, that affect how they perceive and interact with the world.

English as a second language (ESL) a program in which English language learners are assigned to a mainstream classroom and then given specialized instruction in English, usually in a resource room with a specially trained teacher.

English immersion programs for English language learners in which the students are placed in language-rich, mainstream classrooms with their fluent-English-speaking classmates. Through this maximum exposure to the English language, they are expected to learn it.

English language learners (ELL) students whose first language is other than English and who must learn English at school.

Ethnicity shared history, traits, and customs.

Inclusion the commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the regular school and classroom, rather than moving children with disabilities to separate classes or institutions.

Limited English proficiency (LEP) a term used to describe students whose native language is not English and who have difficulty understanding and using English.

Multicultural education a philosophy of teaching and learning that aims to ensure that all students, regardless of their race, gender, or ethnic origin, are provided equal educational opportunities to achieve their full potential.

P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act a federal law that guaranteed a "free and appropriate public education" for all students with disabilities. In 1990, the name of the act was changed to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Race a physiological descriptor for people with a common ancestry and physical characteristics.

Separatism the philosophical position that each cultural group should maintain its own identity without trying to fit into an overall American culture.

Socioeconomic status (SES) a term used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census to describe a person's occupational status, income, and (often) educational attainment.

Teaching Every Student in Your Classroom

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this module, you will be able to:

3-1 Identify the federal and state laws that require schools to identify students with disabilities and prepare an individualized education program (IEP) to provide them with support they need.

3-2 Summarize the responsibilities schools have to accommodate students with a variety of disabilities in regular classrooms.

3-3 Describe how, although tests designed to measure general intelligence have been used for more than a century, researchers and theorists are still exploring the nature of intelligence.

3-4 Recognize how individual students approach learning in different ways, and identify teaching techniques that work well with students' varying learning styles.

3-5 Explain the difference between a gifted student and a talented student.

3-6 Discuss why teachers should hold all students accountable for the same content but provide them with a range of options for mastering that content by differentiating instruction.

InTASC STANDARDS 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, AND 10

SCENARIO

"And to think I was looking forward to this school year," Chelsea said to herself with a sigh. *"I don't know why I thought this year would be so much easier. I kept hearing about the challenges teachers had with this group last year."* Chelsea was in her fifth year of teaching in a K–8 school in an upper-middle-class community. She had always taught a few students with individualized education programs (IEPs), the documents required for a student to receive special education services, but this year it was nearly half her class! Nine of the 19 students in her fifth-grade class had IEPs, for a whole host of reasons. Four students had specific learning disabilities. Two had such severe attention deficit disorders that they had IEPs and received services, as well as psychological counseling. Then there was a student who had Asperger syndrome, another student who suffered from severe anxiety, and still another student who had been diagnosed with something called oppositional defiant disorder. Chelsea thought to herself, *"I need support to meet the needs of all these students, not to mention those who do* not *have IEPs. I'd better start sending 'gentle reminders' to the Learning Resource Room and the principal to make sure I get the assistance I'll need. And I'd better check that I have the most recent IEPs for all of these students."*

PREVIEW

Chelsea's situation may seem a bit extreme, *but more and more, it is becoming the norm as classroom teachers are being asked to rise to new challenges and to share the tasks of educating students with a host of disabilities. Only a few decades ago, millions of American students who did not fit the standard profile of "normal learners" were treated in our schools as second-class citizens. In extreme cases, such as students who were blind or deaf, schools were created specifically for them. Students with very different disabilities, from intellectual disability to emotional disturbance, who attended traditional schools were often placed together in "special classes," given only cursory instruction, and kept in isolation from the rest of the students in the school.*

Things have changed, and they continue to change. The revolution in special education began with the federal P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, passed in 1975. Since that time, the act has been reauthorized many times, most recently in 2004. It has also been renamed the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)***. The original law stated that public schools must provide all students with disabilities a "free and appropriate public education" in the* **least restrictive environment (LRE)***. Over the years since this law was written, schools have refined their definitions of these terms. A free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities has been understood to mean one in which students are provided special educational services that help them compensate for their identified disabilities. The LRE is most often understood to be the regular classroom; this means teachers such as Chelsea—and you—can expect to have students with a variety of disabilities in their*

rooms for a large part of each day. As you will see, teachers receive aid and support from disability specialists, but you undoubtedly will need to understand and be able to respond to a range of physical, mental, and emotional challenges that students will bring to your classroom.

3-1 Learners with Disabilities

With over 6 million students age six to twenty-one being served under IDEA, these students represent about 9.2 percent of the total population for that age range. Almost 700,000 additional children, ages three to five, are also being served under IDEA for their disabilities.[1] In fiscal year 2010, the federal government distributed more than $11.5 billion to the states for students with disabilities, but the bulk of special education funding comes from the states and localities.[2]

The IDEA law specifies a number of disabilities that qualify a student for special education services. Table 3-1 summarizes the approximate numbers of students receiving services

TABLE 3-1   Specific Disabilities Among Children Age Six to Twenty-One: Percentage for Each Category for the Fifty States, the District of Columbia, and the Bureau of Indian Education Schools (2014)

	Approximate Number	Percentage[*]
Specific learning disabilities (otherwise mentally fit students who have disorders in one or more basic psychological processes)	2,283,597	39.2%
Speech or language impairments (problems in communication, including inability to use or understand language)	1,025,288	17.6%
Intellectual disability (limitations in intellectual functioning, causing a child to learn and develop more slowly than a child without disabilities)	407,785	7.0%
Emotional disturbance (includes inappropriate behavior, pervasive mood of unhappiness, or depression)	343,704	5.9%
Other health impairments (includes such disabilities as cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and epilepsy)	838,872	14.4%
Multiple disabilities (includes severe intellectual disability along with movement difficulty or sensory loss)	122,335	2.1%
Autism (neurological disorder affecting ability to play, communicate, and relate to others)	500,993	8.6%
Orthopedic impairments (motor difficulty affecting a child's educational performance)	46,604	0.8%
Hearing impairments (impairment in hearing that affects a child's educational performance)	64,080	1.1%
Developmental delay (any condition or disorder that interferes with a child's normal development when compared to children of the same age)	139,812	2.4%
Visual impairments (partially sighted, low vision, legally blind, and totally blind)	23,302	0.4%
Traumatic brain injury (an injury to the brain caused by the head being hit or shaken)	23,302	0.4%
Deaf–blindness (children suffering from both hearing and vision loss)	2,912	0.05%
All Disabilities	**5,825,505**	**100%**

[*]Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Office of Special Education Programs, *38th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2016*, Washington, D.C. 2016. *https://www2.ed.gov/about/reports /annual/osep/2016/parts-b-c/38th-arc-for-idea.pdf* (see Exhibits 18 and 20)

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for different *qualifying disabilities*, and we also describe several of the most common disabilities. For more complete descriptions of these disabilities, visit the website of the Council for Exceptional Children, http://www.cec.sped.org.

3-1a Specific Learning Disabilities

As in Chelsea's class, nearly half of the students who receive special education services have a **specific learning disability**, which is defined as a neurologically based disorder that affects the student's ability to access and produce language, either oral or written or both. These disabilities generally are not curable and persist throughout a person's lifetime. Among the most common learning disabilities are

- **Dyslexia**, a language-based disability that causes the student difficulties decoding and understanding words and sentences. Between 2 percent and 8 percent of elementary students are diagnosed with some form of dyslexia.
- **Dyscalculia**, a mathematical disability that impairs an individual's ability to solve arithmetic problems.
- **Dysgraphia**, a writing disability in which a person finds it hard to form letters or write within a defined space.

Specific learning disabilities are often linked to perceptual processing disorders, such as auditory or visual processing disorders, which are described next. As a teacher, it is important for you to remember, however, that a learning disability does not affect a student's overall intellectual or thinking abilities, nor is it an indicator of an individual's cognitive or intellectual ability.

3-1b Visual or Auditory Processing Disorders

Learners with **perceptual processing disorders** have difficulty properly receiving or transmitting information through the key senses of vision and/or hearing. These disorders are not physical disabilities; they do not indicate how well a person can see or hear. They are psychological disabilities that affect how the brain processes the information received and how well the brain can produce language, either orally or in writing, or both.

Visual processing disorders involve difficulty with information received through the eyes. They can manifest themselves in a host of ways. You may notice students who have the following problems:

- *Difficulty "seeing" symbols correctly or reproducing them accurately.* These students may reverse letters and see *b* as *d*, for example, or write the number 3 as a capital *E*.
- *Problems with direction.* Students may reverse entire words or may instinctively begin reading from right to left rather than from left to right.
- *Difficulty differentiating between similar letters.* Students may have difficulty with letters such as *n* and *m*, or between similar objects, such as squares and rectangles.
- *Poor visual recognition or visual memory.* Students who learn letters or numbers one day may not be able to recognize them the next day or the next week.
- *Motor coordination problems.* Some individuals will have an impaired sense of distance or depth, causing them to misjudge distances between themselves and objects, or they may have difficulty with fine motor skills.

Auditory processing disorders interfere with a person's ability to make sense of information received through the ears. Auditory processing difficulties can directly affect an individual's speech and language, as well as her or his ability to read, write, and spell. Some learners with an auditory processing disability may have difficulty recognizing differences in *phonemes*, the sounds that are put together to make words. Other learners may have problems with auditory memory, not being able to recall things they hear (such as directions or a story read aloud), just minutes after hearing it.

Because most of school learning relies on information that is seen and heard, visual and auditory processing disorders can seriously compromise a learner's progress. Special education services generally help learners develop compensatory strategies so they can function effectively in spite of the disorder.

3-1c Speech or Language Impairments

Speech or language impairments impede students' ability to communicate effectively. The cause of the impairment can be neurological, cognitive, or physical. **Speech impairments** are disabilities that affect spoken language. Common speech disorders include stuttering and chronic mispronunciation of certain sounds or syllables. Voice disorders, which may be caused by irregularities in the vocal cords, are also considered speech impairments. A **language impairment** can affect any phase of the communication process, from receiving messages to the production of language. In some young children, both receptive and expressive abilities are affected, causing delays in the child's development of language.

Learners in your class who have speech and language impairments may receive specialized services from speech and language pathologists. They will probably leave class regularly for private, one-on-one sessions devoted to helping them overcome their specific speech or language impairments.

IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Adapting to Students with Disabilities

There are very likely to be students with disabilities in your classroom. How will you deal with their different needs? Here are some guiding principles and actions.

- *Do not stereotype these students.* For example, consider two students identified as having learning disabilities. One may have below-average intelligence and have difficulty in mathematics; the other may have high intelligence and have trouble reading. Although each has learning disabilities, you would need to provide different instruction for each.

- *Get to know your students.* Learn all you can about each student's limitations and potential and about what instructional approaches and technologies might be particularly effective.

- *Consult the special education teachers in your school.* The more you and the special education teacher can coordinate instruction and services for your students with disabilities, the better the students' educational experiences will be.

- *Try co-teaching with a special education teacher* whenever feasible.

- *Insist that any needed services be provided.* After all, it is the law.

- *Pair students who have disabilities with students without disabilities who can help them.* Both students should benefit from their interactions.

- *Use a variety of teaching strategies,* including hands-on activities, peer tutoring, and cooperative learning strategies.

⌄⌄ **Professional Resource Download**

3-1d Developmental Disabilities

About 2 percent of all children under eighteen years old have a **developmental disability**. These children have mental or physical impairments, sometimes severe, that limit their ability to participate fully in major life activities, such as communication, mobility, learning, and independent living as an adult. A developmental disability can be present at birth, caused perhaps by genetic irregularities, or it can begin at any time during an individual's life as a consequence of an accident or illness. Developmental disabilities

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include intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, orthopedic disorders, and hearing loss or vision impairment.

Intellectual disability is the most common developmental disability. One common cause of intellectual disability is Down syndrome, a disorder resulting from a genetic problem that originates at conception. An individual with an intellectual disability has an IQ, or general intelligence score, that is significantly below average. The low IQ contributes to a slow learning pace and a limited ability to develop cognitively. As a result, a person with an intellectual disability may have difficulty performing key life functions. The individual may have limited ability to communicate, to reason and remember, or to live independently or even within a community.

The services provided for students with intellectual disabilities depend in large part on the degree of intellectual disability and the age of the student. A student with an intellectual disability may require full-time educational support in a traditional classroom. Services provided to high school students with intellectual disabilities often focus on preparing students for the transition to independent living, including vocational training that would enable the student eventually to be self-supporting.

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are caused by unusual brain development and most often affect an individual's social and communication skills, including both verbal and nonverbal communication. Under the umbrella of ASD are autism, Asperger syndrome, Rett syndrome, and pervasive developmental disorder.

Symptoms of ASD can vary significantly, and rarely do two individuals with ASD exhibit the same symptoms. Most will, however, have some problems in the following general areas:

- *Speech and language.* About 40 percent of individuals with ASD do not talk at all. Others may have *echolalia*, in which they habitually repeat something said to them. Some speak with no intonation in their voices, or they may speak more loudly than needed.
- *Social skills.* Individuals with ASD often have underdeveloped or impaired social skills and may not interact with others well. People with Asperger syndrome, a kind of autism, have difficulty reading social cues or understanding nonverbal communications.
- *Need for routines or repeated behaviors.* Some children with severe difficulties may repeat behaviors that actually hurt themselves, such as banging their head against things. In addition, any change to a routine is often deeply unsettling and may be met with anxiety attacks or even violence.

Treatments of students with ASD vary as much as the symptoms of the disorders. Your students may be receiving various dietary or biomedical treatments. Often, treatment is focused on modifying problematic behaviors and improving communication skills. Depending on the severity of the student's autism, he or she may require a full-time educational assistant who can constantly enforce and reinforce the behavior therapy established. Students with autism have also responded positively to complementary therapies involving the arts or interaction with animals, such as dogs or horses.

Orthopedic impairments include physical malformations or malfunctions of limbs or other body parts. These problems may have been present since birth or may have arisen as a result of accidents or diseases.

Perhaps the most common orthopedic impairment is **cerebral palsy (CP)**, a disorder that affects body and muscle coordination and afflicts approximately half a million people in the United States. Symptoms of CP generally include difficulty with motor skills. The condition can affect gross motor skills, such as keeping one's balance, walking, or running, or fine motor skills, such as writing or using small tools. Other complications may include specific learning disabilities, speech and language impairments, or even intellectual disabilities, depending on the degree and location of damage to the brain.

Learners with orthopedic impairments need varying degrees of help, depending on their impairment and its severity. Some may require only certain accommodations to address their limited mobility; others may need a full-time educational assistant. Treatment of CP often includes physical therapy to address the weakened muscles and improve motor

coordination, occupational therapy to help the student learn to do specific daily functions, and speech and language pathology if speech is affected.

3-1e Other Health Impairments

Over 9 percent of students receiving special education services have what federal laws refer to as "other health impairments." These are defined as problems that cause an individual to have "limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that result in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that**…** adversely affects a child's educational performance."[*] Among the most common conditions in this category are **attention deficit disorder** and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, neurological disorders caused by deficiencies of a certain neurotransmitter in the brain. This deficiency affects an individual's ability to control impulses, both verbal and behavioral, or to remain focused for normal periods of time. Students with these attention disorders may have a hard time sitting still during school or keeping themselves from calling out or misbehaving in class.

The most common treatment for attention deficit disorders is medication to adjust neurotransmitter levels. In addition, many students with these disorders are involved in behavior modification programs to help them recognize and adjust problem behaviors. As is the case with emotional disturbances, you may need to tailor your classroom treatment of students with attention deficit disorders to fit into a comprehensive program that involves both school and home.

NOW YOU DO IT

Think of a person (e.g., peer, colleague, relative, or acquaintance) who has one of the disabilities described here. Does that person manifest the characteristics/symptoms described or some other characteristics?

If you had that person as a student in your class, how would you go about trying to accommodate his or her disability? What challenges would you face?

3-2 Educating Students with Disabilities: Responsibilities of Schools

The education of students with disabilities has been mandated and regulated by federal legislation since the mid-1970s. In addition, many states have guidelines for the education of these students.[†] Currently, public schools are responsible for identifying students with disabilities and providing them with special education services that meet their individual needs, while including them in regular classes to the greatest extent possible. As you will see, schools also have to find ways to pay for these services.

3-2a Identifying Learners with Disabilities

Back in 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act made school districts responsible for identifying students from as young as three years of age who may have disabilities and may need special education services. Classroom or specialist teachers, social workers, school counselors, or even parents who notice that a student is struggling in school can request that the student be evaluated to see whether he or she has a disability that may require special education services. Teachers must refer students for testing when their educational progress lags behind that of their classmates.

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[*]34 Code of Federal Regulations § 300.7(c)(9) (hereinafter C.F.R.).
[†]We are not able to discuss all the state laws here, but you should find out, through your state department of education or local school district, which laws will affect you as a teacher in your state.

School districts must carry out relevant and appropriate testing of these students. An evaluation team, including a specialist in the area of the suspected disability, will test the student and examine his or her records before making a recommendation about special services. Schools are also required to evaluate annually the academic, physical, or social progress being made by the students who are already receiving special services, and to adjust these services as needed.

3-2b Providing Special Education Services

If testing shows the student has one (or more) of the qualifying disabilities listed in IDEA, a team of people involved with the student's education draft an **individualized education program (IEP)** that specifies the services the school and its agents will provide, sets measurable benchmarks the student will be expected to achieve, and explains how the student's progress will be assessed. The IEP is a legally binding document. Once it is signed by the student's parents or guardian, as well as by an agent of the school, the school is legally responsible for meeting its obligation to provide the services that the IEP describes.

Because regular education teachers may be responsible for implementing some of the services specified in the IEP, their participation in the development of the IEP is essential. The team that develops the IEP must also include several other people:

- The parents or guardian of the student
- The student, if appropriate
- At least one of the student's special education teachers
- Other services providers, as appropriate
- One representative of the school or school district
- Any other person who may have knowledge of the student's disability or who may be an expert on the student's disability

A sample IEP template developed by the New York State Education Department can be found at http://www.p12.nysed.gov/spe-cialed/formsnotices/IEP/home.html. The content of IEPs is mandated by IDEA, so your school or school district will probably use a similar template when you are involved in preparing IEPs. You can receive help in preparing IEPs from special educators or school psychologists. An IEP must contain the following information:

- *Current performance.* The IEP must describe how the student is doing academically at the time the IEP is being developed or revised. It should also address how the student's disability affects his or her participation in the general curriculum.
- *Annual goals.* The IEP must specify goals the student can reasonably be expected to achieve within a year. These goals, which may be academic, social, or behavioral, are further broken down into short-term measurable objectives.
- *Services.* The IEP must list all the services that the student will receive. The description of services must specify where the services will be provided, how often these services will be provided, and how long each interaction will last.
- *Exceptions to participation with students without disabilities.* The IEP must explain any school-related or school-sponsored activities the student will not participate in with his or her classmates without disabilities.
- *Statewide testing.* Federal law requires states to periodically administer standardized tests to students. The IEP must indicate what modifications, if any, to the state-mandated tests will be made for the student. If the state-mandated test is not an appropriate tool to assess the student, the IEP must justify that position and explain what alternative testing will be used to assess the student's learning.
- *Transition service.* If the student is in high school, the IEP must include a plan to help the student transition from high school to the next phase of education or the world of work.
- *Progress.* The IEP will state how the student's progress will be monitored and measured, as well as how parents will be notified of the progress being made.

Photo 3-1 Learners with different disabilities require assistance specific to their needs. Technology may help you meet the needs of some learners, whereas others need different kinds of modifications.

IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Complying with Special Education Law

- *Attend all IEP meetings that concern students in your classroom.* At the IEP meeting, you can find out what services the student will receive, who will provide these services, and what accommodations need to be made for the student. You can also voice any concerns you have about the feasibility of providing proposed services. This meeting may help you get to know the specialists who will be working with you as they provide services for the student, especially if you teach a content area that has a mandated state assessment at the end of the school year.

- *Get copies of current IEPs of the students in your classroom.* Make sure you know what services these students are to receive, not just in your classroom, but from specialists as well. Like Chelsea, you may have to send "gentle reminders" to the special education

department to make sure the services from specialists are, in fact, delivered.

- *Maintain frequent and open contact with parents or legal guardians of students with IEPs.* Keep them abreast of their children's progress and alert them to any changes. You want to work in collaboration with these parents and to keep them as allies in educating students with disabilities.

- *Keep written records of meetings with parents.* Your records do not need to be "official" in any sense; they should serve primarily as reminders for you of these meetings. Jotting down the substance of conversations with parents and family members of your students can help you recall important information later, as you plan activities and accommodations.

⌄⌄ Professional Resource Download

3-2c Response to Intervention

In the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA, a new term and concept, "**Response to Intervention**," or RTI, was introduced. The purpose of RTI is to catch struggling children early, provide appropriate instruction, and prevent the need to refer the child for special education. The U.S. Department of Education permits school districts to use up to 15 percent of their IDEA funding for early intervention services in regular education.

RTI is a tiered process of instruction that allows for more intense instruction, depending on the student's response to intervention. By intervening early, students will

experience a greater chance for success and less need for special education services. Although there are several models of intervention, typically a child will move from tier one general education (class-wide intervention) to a tier two (more targeted small group interventions) and, if necessary, to a tier three (where the student receives additional support and individualized attention). RTI is designed to increase the percentage of children who can pass state-mandated tests in reading and mathematics.

3-2d Including Students with Disabilities

Prior to 1997, it was not uncommon for students with moderate to severe disabilities to be placed in a special education classroom where they would receive most of their educational services. Depending on the severity of their disabilities, these students would be mainstreamed in the regular education classroom for certain periods of the school day. These students might join their classmates without disabilities for electives, lunch and recess, or instruction in some disciplines. Decisions for **mainstreaming** were generally based on the academic and social abilities and needs of the students with disabilities. Many parents and educators argued, however, that students with disabilities were often stigmatized by the segregated placements, leading to even lower academic progress and underdeveloped social skills.

Their concerns were addressed by the U.S. Congress when it reauthorized IDEA in 1997. The law was changed to state that "Schools may place children with disabilities in separate classrooms or schools only when supports and services are not enough to help the child learn in a regular classroom."** It discouraged the "pulling out" of students with disabilities to send them to another room or school for specialized services. The new practice of inclusion became the standard for educating students with disabilities.

Inclusion places all students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. Some inclusion classrooms are still combined with pull-out services, when students leave the classroom for specialized services. Other schools practice **full inclusion**, in which students receive all of their educational services in the classroom, with the help of specialists who come into the room as needed. Some schools assign two teachers, a regular education teacher and a special education teacher, to teach in the same full-inclusion classroom. These **co-teaching** situations combine the subject-matter expertise of the regular education teacher with the special education teacher's strengths in adapting content and pedagogy to meet the educational needs of the students with disabilities.

As a practice, inclusion has been steeped in controversy. Advocates of inclusion point to benefits for both students with disabilities and their classmates without disabilities. According to this view, students with disabilities who are placed in the regular classroom no longer feel marginalized or stigmatized as being less of a participant in the educational process or less of a member of the school community. They also develop social skills through interactions with all their classmates. And classmates without disabilities gain a greater understanding of students with disabilities and become more accepting of these students and more appreciative of them as people.

Opponents argue the academic and educational needs of students with disabilities risk being compromised in an inclusion classroom and there is little gain in social development to compensate for this risk. These critics maintain the distractions in the regular classroom make the special education services delivered there less effective than they would be in a separate special education classroom. Furthermore, they point out the stigma of requiring specialized services can persist when the specialist comes into a regular classroom.

In spite of the controversy, including students with disabilities in the regular classroom, except under special circumstances, is the law of the land. Administrators, teachers, students, and parents must embrace this requirement and ensure that effective learning occurs for *all* students. It's our duty as educators.

**Section 614(d)(1)(A)(3).