# Chapter 1

# Teaching: Your Chosen Profession

### Chapter Overview

Effective teachers know why they want to teach, so a good portion of Chapter 1 and the related activities are designed to help students explore teaching as a career and examine the reasons they and others choose to teach including the desire to work with children and young people, having a passion for teaching, understanding the influence of teachers, and having a desire to serve. Students are encouraged to gain a realistic picture of teaching, its challenges and realities, and to begin to picture themselves as teachers. As they reflect on past experiences with good/effective teachers, students should be encouraged to begin to identify those characteristics that make these teachers stand out in their minds, an important first step in cultivating one’s own understanding of good teaching. Students also examine the benefits of teaching including salaries and benefits along with a look at job security and job outlooks.

The challenges of teaching in the new millennium are not minimized, and the discussion presents both the challenges and the positive and rewarding aspects of the profession, thereby reflecting the complexity of teaching. Issues explored include the necessity of working long hours, participating in high-stakes testing and increased accountability, and teaching tech-savvy students. The chapter discussions often foreshadow the content presented in later chapters where the work of teachers is more fully examined.

Throughout, the chapter emphasizes the connections of teachers and teaching to society, children, parents, and the nation. Society holds high expectations for teachers; they are held accountable for student achievement, for helping all learners succeed, and for maintaining high standards of conduct. The job outlook for teachers is also an important component of the content, and students are given information to guide them as they examine demands for teachers of color, teachers with disabilities, and teachers needed by geographic region and specialty area.

The chapter concludes with a section devoted to how one becomes a highly-qualified teacher through fulfillment of such requirements as meeting professional standards and certification requirements.

**For Course Instructor reflection**

1. What qualities do you look for in students who express a desire to enter the field of teaching? What role does identification of “predispositions” play in your identification of these qualities?

2. Why did you decide to become an educator?

3. What are two of the greatest challenges that faced you in the K–12 classroom or as an educator? How have they changed over the course of your teaching?

**Annotated Lecture Outline**

***Strategies for Introducing the Chapter***

1. People go into the teaching profession for many different reasons. Ask students to take the survey “Why Do I Want to Teach,” where they will rate twelve characteristics and experiences in relation to their motivation for choosing a career in teaching. After they have completed this exercise, tally up the class results and rank them from most applicable to least applicable.

2. For a writing assignment or an in-class writing exercise, have members of the class write a profile of a teacher using positive stereotypes based on either real-life experiences or memorable teachers from movies. Students will share their profiles in small groups and select one they want to share with the class as a whole. Use the profiles selected to launch a discussion on how teachers are regarded by their students, by parents, by people in the community, and by government officials who enact laws that influence teachers and their working conditions.

3. Divide the class into groups and have each member orally complete the following sentence: “During this term, I would like to learn the following about teachers and their work: . . . .” Ask a recorder to write the items on a pad of easel paper so the students can see the responses. Or, if you have access to a computer, have someone type the responses on a PowerPoint slide (one slide per student). Reconvene as a large group and discuss the items, indicating, when appropriate, the topics that will be addressed later in the term. To maintain the group’s focus on the questions and/or issues students have raised throughout the term, distribute a printed copy of the responses at the next class meeting. Bring the students back to revisit this list at the end of the term to debrief the items with which they are now familiar.

**1.1 Why Do I Want to Teach?**

***Key Terms and Concepts***

**Student variability**⎯differences among students in regard to their developmental needs, interests, abilities, and disabilities.

**Student diversity**⎯differences among students in regard to gender, race, ethnicity, culture, and socioeconomic status.

**Teach for America**⎯a program that enables recent college graduates without a teaching certificate to teach in districts with critical shortages of teachers and, after taking professional development courses and undergoing supervision by state and school authorities, to earn a teaching certificate.

***PowerPoint Slides***

Share the following slides with students as you introduce this section of the chapter:

#1, “Chapter 1”

#2, “Focus Questions”

#3–#5, “Why Do I Want to Teach?”

***Strategies***

1. Ask students to read the reasons that teachers have given for entering the teaching profession. Ask them to decide if each reason listed is (1) very important, (2) somewhat important, (3) not too important, or (4) not important at all for them. Have them pair up with another person and share what they learned. What are the three main reasons people choose to teach? Do they think any other reasons should be added to the “top three list”?

2. Divide students into small groups according to the grade level at which they plan to teach, and have them share their reasons for deciding to teach children at that level along with their experiences in actually working with those age groups. Ask students to write a short paper about their experiences working with children of different ages, describing what they enjoyed and what they found challenging about them. What did they learn about themselves, their interests and challenges, as they worked with children in different stages of development and in different settings? If they haven’t worked with children, ask them to describe the age group with which they would most like to work with and its general developmental characteristics and challenges.

3. Ask students to look up information on nontraditional school settings and come to class prepared to share their findings (e.g., online high schools, court-sponsored programs, home-schooling, and programs for children at risk).

**1.2 What Are the Benefits of Teaching?**

***Key Terms and Concepts***

**fringe benefits**—benefits provided to workers in addition to base salary such as medical insurance and

retirement plans.

***Background***

1. The desire to work with young people is the most frequently cited reason teachers give for choosing their profession. Though teaching may be challenging and teachers’ salaries modest, most teach simply because they care about students. Teachers derive great satisfaction when their students learn—when they “make a difference” in students’ lives. Fifty-nine percent of

teachers in a national survey reported that they are “very satisfied” with teaching as a

career, and 75 percent said they planned to continue working in education after retirement

(Harris Interactive, 2010, p. 45).

2. As a result of the public’s support for higher teacher salaries, teachers’ salaries have increased steadily since the 1990s. The average salary of all teachers in 1999–2000 was $41,807 and for 2013–2014, the average salary was $56,689.

3. There will be many job opportunities for teachers in the near future. In spite of the nation’s lingering economic woes, there will be many job opportunities for teachers in the near future. Currently, many school districts are luring teachers from other states and districts with bonuses and higher pay. In addition, increasing enrollments of students from minority groups and a shortage of teachers from minority groups are leading to increased efforts to recruit minority teachers.

***PowerPoint Slides***

Share the following slides with students as you introduce this section of the chapter:

#6–#7, “What Are the Benefits of Teaching?”

###### Strategies

1. Ask students to brainstorm individually the benefits of teaching before they work in small groups to expand their lists begun in Section 1.1. Finally, ask them to research these additional benefits to share their identified factors with the class.

2. Have students bring in salary and recruiting information from district websites or by visiting a district in person. As a class, compile this information into categories that will serve as a basis for discussion (e.g., list areas of need as indicated by positions advertised for hiring).

3. Ask students to research beginning teacher salaries for districts in different counties or states. How do years of teaching add to teacher payments? Does completion of a master’s degree or other certification improve a teacher’s salary base? How might teachers boost their earnings?

4. Assign students the task of interviewing a mentor teacher or teacher-of-the-year to learn what contributed to their success and what recommendations they have for candidates considering teaching as a profession.

5. Invite a school-district representative to speak about the professional characteristics they consider in hiring new teachers.

**1.3 What Are the Challenges of Teaching?**

***Key Terms and Concepts***

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)**—Under the accountability provisions in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, all public school campuses, school districts, and the state are evaluated for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Districts, campuses, and the state are required to meet AYP criteria on three measures: Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, and either Graduation Rate (for high schools and districts) or Attendance Rate (for elementary and middle/junior high schools).

If a campus, district, or state that is receiving Title I, Part A, funds fails to meet AYP for two consecutive years, that campus, district, or state is subject to certain requirements, such as offering supplemental education services, offering school choice, and/or taking corrective actions.

**High-stakes testing—**Tests are called “high-stakes” when they are used to make major decisions about a student, such as high school graduation or grade promotion. To be high stakes, a test has to be very important in the decision process or be able to override other information.

**No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act—**Federal legislation that mandates statewide testing in mathematics and reading in grades 3–8 and holds schools accountable for progress.

***Background***

1. The length of a teacher’s workday may appear attractive, but teachers’ actual working hours are another matter. Teachers’ contracts do not include additional hours for les­son planning and evaluating students’ work, nor do they include noninstructional as­signments found at all levels of teaching—from recess duty to club sponsorship and coaching. On average, teachers devote 50 hours a week to their jobs, with approxi­mately 37 hours devoted to required duties, and 12 hours devoted to uncompensated teaching tasks (National Education Association 2003).

2. Schools have not kept up with the rapid changes in technology. Innovative uses of technology happen within classrooms and through programs, but system-wide innovations are still lacking.

***PowerPoint Slide***

Share the following slide with students as you introduce this section of the chapter:

#8, “What Are the Challenges of Teaching?”

***Strategies***

1. Ask students to brainstorm in pairs and then as a class what they believe are the biggest problems with which communities deal in relation to public schools. After developing a list, ask them to describe the trends they have identified.

2. Ask students to search online for articles related to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Average Yearly Progress (AYP) and bring them to class to share as they discuss the benefits and challenges of this act and its provisions.

3. Ask students to find online articles about A Blueprint for Reform and Race to the top and compare this to NCLB.

4. Teachers must be prepared to invest time and energy in their profession. Explore with students the definition of teacher stress and burnout, and brainstorm causes that lead to teacher burnout. Some burnout causes include problems with administrators (number one complaint of teachers), problems with students, fear, and too much paperwork. Assign each cause to a group. Each group is to list and describe ways to minimize its assigned cause of burnout.

4. Have students list five challenges teachers face with accompanying suggestions.

**1.4 What Will Society Expect of Me as a Teacher?**

***Background***

1. Parents have begun to demand that their children be taught by well-prepared and highly qualified teachers. “The creation of new and more rigorous standards for teachers is one sign of progress to ensure that teachers will know the subjects they teach and how to teach them to children; that they will understand how children learn and what to do when they are having difficulty; and that they will be able to use effective teaching methods for those who are learning easily, as well as those who have special needs.” (Darling-Hammond, L. *How can we ensure a caring, competent, qualified teacher for every child*. Presented at the AFT/NEA Conference on Teacher Quality, Sept. 26, 1998, Washington, DC.)

2. Although promoting students’ academic progress has al­ways been their primary responsibility, teachers are also expected to further students’ social, emotional, and moral development and to safeguard students’ health and well­-being. Increasingly, the public calls on teachers and schools to address the social problems and risk factors that affect student success.

3. Teachers must “be mindful of the social ethic—their public duties and obligations embodied in the practice of teaching” (Hansen 1995, 143).

4. S. F. Heck and C. Ray Williams, the authors of *The complex roles of the teacher: An ecological perspective* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1984), state that teachers must be able to develop a “tuning-in relationship” with students: “Without the ability to enter a mutual tuning-in relationship, the teacher is in some manner incapacitated since teaching is, in so many of its dimensions, a mode of encounter and of communication” (p. 4).

5. Several authors point out that there is a special phenomenon in this country that everybody thinks he or she knows what’s wrong with education and serves as a vocal, uninformed critic. (Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., & Hyde, A. [1998]*. Best practice: New standards for teaching and learning in America’s schools,* 2nd ed*.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.)

***PowerPoint Slide***

Share the following slide with students as you introduce this section of the chapter:

#9, “What Will Society Expect of Me as a Teacher?”

###### Strategies

1. Before beginning this section, have students characterize their views of teaching by meeting in small groups and developing their own lists of the realities of teaching. Ask each group to put its list on a flipchart or in a presentation software package (e.g., PowerPoint) and then present it to the rest of the class. Discuss similarities and differences between the students’ lists and the list presented in this chapter.

2. Ask students to discuss the following questions: “What aspects of teaching are predictable?” and “What aspects are within the teacher’s ability to control?” Brainstorm a list of to answer both of these questions. Next, use the list of unexpected events that might disrupt the flow of teaching but for which one might be able to prepare (e.g., fire drills, lice checks by the nurse, visits by the principal) as a basis for a discussion on how to prepare for these types of events. For example, teachers can establish and practice routines for drills ahead of their occurrences.

3. As a class, brainstorm questions that students could use to interview parents about their expectations of their children’s schools and teachers. As a follow-up, have them each interview a parent of a school age child and come to class prepared to discuss their findings.

**1.5 What Is the Job Outlook for Teachers?**

### Key Terms and Concepts

**Tenure-**job security granted to teachers usually after 2 – 5 years of satisfactory work

**Teacher supply and demand**—the number of school-age students compared to the number of available teachers; may also be projected based on estimated numbers of students and teachers.

#### Background

1. The U.S. Department of Education projects that the number of elementary through secondary teachers will increase from 3.7 million in 2013 to more than 4.1 million by 2021, an 11 percent increase Enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools is projected to increase from 49.5 million students in 2010–2011 to53.1 million by 2021–202, an increase of 7 percent.

2. Nearly 48 percent of public school students were considered part of a minority group

during 2011 (Keaton, 2012a). Before the middle of this century, more than half of the

nation’s students will be minority-group members (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a). In the

nation’s 25 largest cities, students of color represent half or more of the student population

(National Center for Education Statistics, July 2012).

***PowerPoint Slide***

Share the following slide with students as you introduce this section of the chapter:

#10, “What Is the Job Outlook for Teachers?”

***Strategies***

1. Using Web-based tools, ask students to locate current data for teacher supply and demand trends and to determine the estimated need for teachers in the fields that interest them. Have them share their findings with the class. Take a survey of class members to see what fields of teaching they are preparing to enter.

2. Have the students design one-page flyers (a newspaper ad, or an editorial) that are intended to attract new and current teachers to a school district. How would the district “sell” itself? What are the characteristics the students find potentially attractive to employees? Encourage them to use electronic tools such as those in Adobe’s Creative Media Suite: Illustrator, InDesign, and Photoshop.

3. Assign students to work in pairs to identify procedures for investigating the current job market for teachers in different specialty areas and in different regions of the country. Bring the class together to review their strategies and findings.

**1.6 How Will I Become a Highly Qualified Teacher?**

### Key Terms and Concepts

**Alternative certification—**a provision allowing people who have completed college but not a

teacher education program to become certified teachers.

**Highly-qualified teachers (HQT)—** teachers who have the following qualifications as contained in the No Child Left Behind legislation: bachelor’s degree, full state certification, and knowledge of the subject(s) they teach.

**Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC)** —an organization

of states established in 1987 to develop performance-based standards for what beginning teachers

should know and be able to do.

**National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certifications (NASDTEC) Interstate Agreement—**a reciprocity agreement whereby a certificate obtained in

one state will be honored in another.

**National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)**—a board established in 1987

that began issuing professional certificates in 1994–1995 to teachers who possess extensive

professional knowledge and the ability to perform at a high level.

**Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)—** The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) consolidated and launched in July 2013to accredit, schools on a voluntary basis.

**Praxis Series: Professional Assessments for Beginning Teachers—**a battery of tests available

to states for the initial certification of teachers. Consists of assessments in three areas: academic

skills, knowledge of subject, and classroom performance.

**Teaching certificate—**a license to teach issued by a state or, in a few cases, a large city.

***Background***

1. The department of education for each of the fifty states and the District of Columbia sets the requirements for cer­tification. A certificate usually indicates at what level and in what content areas one may teach. One might, for example, be certified for all-level (K–12) physical educa­tion or art, secondary English, elementary education, or middle-level education. In addition, a certificate may list other areas of specializa­tion, such as driver’s training, coaching, or journalism.

2. More than 464,000 teachers, many of whom are noncertified, teach in the United States’ growing system of private, parochial, for-profit, and charter schools. Private and parochial schools supported largely by tuition and gifts, and for-profit schools operated by private educational corporations, usually have no certification requirements for teachers. Also, teacher-­created and teacher-operated charter schools, though they are public, are often free of state certification requirements. A school’s charter (an agreement between the school’s founders and its sponsor—usually a local school board) may waive certifica­tion requirements if the school guarantees that students will attain a specified level of achievement.

3. Despite the national movement to make certification requirements more stringent, concern about meeting the demand for 2 million new public school teachers during the next decade (National Education Association 2008) and attracting minority-group members into the teaching profession has resulted in increasing use of alternative teacher certification programs. Alternative certification programs are designed for people who already have at least a bachelor’s degree in a field other than education and want to become licensed to teach. In 2006, more than 50,000 people were licensed through alter­native certification programs (Feistritzer 2008).

***PowerPoint Slides***

Share the following slides with students as you introduce this section of the chapter:

#11–#13, “How Will I Become a Highly Qualified Teacher?”

***Strategies***

1. Ask students to read Figure 1.9 in the text to compare the standards of INTASC, TEAC, NCATE, and NBPTS, and ask them to identify commonalities.

2. Ask students to contact a local school district to determine the requirements needed to become a substitute teacher.

3. Ask students to attend an information meeting for a credential program (or invite a representative to address your class). What requirements do future teacher candidates have to meet to be accepted into a credential program? Consider such factors as subject matter competency, previous experience with children, passage of examinations and/or coursework, predisposition alignment, health standards, and recommendations.

4. Ask a credentialed teacher or administrator to talk to the class about how K–12 teachers are evaluated each year. What kind of goals do they set? How are they evaluated? Who evaluates them?