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BECOMING A TEACHER



Luis Zaldaña

TEACHER INTERVIEW

Mr. Luis Zaldaña

Meet Mr. Luis Zaldaña, an English teacher at Sunrise Mountain High School. Mr. Zaldaña teaches English 10, English 10 Pre-AP, and Advanced Placement English Language and Composition for 11th- and 12th-grade students. His class sizes range from 30 to 40 students, and he has been teaching for 10 years; he taught in private schools for the first five years and has been teaching in the public school context over the last five years. Prior

to this, he was a teacher's assistant for six years in various special education middle school programs. He decided to invest in teaching because he believes the aim of education is enabling humans to flourish. He tries his best to do his part to make the world a little better.

The School Community

Sunrise Mountain High School (SMHS) is located in East Las Vegas, Nevada. The school community is a highly transient one (over 35% transiency rate in 2015–2016), with almost all of the students eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch services. There are over 2,500 students enrolled, mostly from minority communities. SMHS also has the highest population of English Language Learners in the Clark County School District. Yet, for all its challenges, SMHS boasts of an award-winning robotics program, the top student newspaper in the district, and a graduation rate of over 90% for the class of 2017. When we consider that not very long ago (2012) only 36% of the students were graduating, there is much to be proud of at SMHS.

Q: What brings you joy in teaching?

A: With a vision for education as a means of human flourishing, I find the greatest joy when students discover that education is a powerful tool they themselves are responsible for wielding, and what they do with it can change their lives and the lives of others. My experience has been that the more students are challenged to cultivate a habit of excellence, with a safe and positive classroom culture, the more likely they are to see the value in what school can offer as it applies to their particular contexts. All students, at heart, want to live in the fun of learning new things, and it's our job to give them that without losing the rigor and authenticity of gaining knowledge that causes us—students and teachers—to grow into better people.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

1. Identify the range of variables that influence teachers and teaching.
2. Know the steps one can take to earn a teaching license.
3. List reasons educators consider teaching a profession similar to law and medicine.
4. Look at the ways to find a job and assess which one will work best for you.
5. Develop patterns of behavior that will contribute to a successful career as a teacher.
6. Track your personal and professional growth as a teacher and the directions that growth can lead.

Q: How do you know that each student is learning?

A: There are certainly a variety of ways to measure learning as it happens in a day's lesson. Yet I have found one of the most effective ways to know how students are progressing is to lead them to establish their own goals for learning and guide them in metacognitive practices to continually refine and reflect on their efforts toward attaining these goals. This avoids the danger of having students simply repeat information, equipping students, rather, to demonstrate their knowledge in more meaningful ways. Creating this kind of learning community paves the way for students to assert themselves and object, as one of my students recently did, "Mr. Zaldaña, no one wants to take a multiple-choice quiz! Can we have a Socratic Seminar about this?" As I see it, this approach more closely reflects the dynamic and complex nature of teaching and learning, which, after all, is a process, not an event. There is a self-evident quality about students who are really "getting it." They want to keep learning. They want to show you what they know. There's a hunger in their eyes.

Q: How do you as a teacher learn? What are you learning at this time?

A: My learning begins with realizing that knowing or not knowing certain things shapes me as a person. So, what I'm learning, if it's not incidental, has to really matter; it must make a difference. I also need to know that what I seek to learn is realistic for me to accomplish. If I were to summarize it, I would say that my learning begins with a vision for the end goal, a genuine desire to reach it, and the means by which I may do so. Presently, my focus on learning to be more effective as a teacher than I have been in the past has led me to engage with current research on the topic more regularly. I've asked my colleagues if I can observe them as they teach to glean what I can. I've invited others to observe me in the classroom and provide feedback to spur me on. I ask my students to take my pulse so I can see what needs to change throughout the year. I reflect, I plan, I experiment. Teaching is an art; it is deliberate; it is recursive; and there is always the gnawing awareness that there's so much more to learn up ahead.

Q: What advice do you have for those who are studying to become teachers?

A: Determine, as you step into this profession, what kind of teacher you will be! Teach the way you would love to learn and be the kind of teacher you would love to learn from. There are certainly difficulties on the horizon, and it will be easy to get lost in them, but I believe the great responsibility of teachers is to shape human lives for the good. That outweighs it all, and we have to recognize that it does not happen accidentally. There will surely be students for whom you wish you could have done more. But, with perseverance, with a transparency about your craft, with an intentionality to continue to excel, with a teachable spirit, you can find yourself free to reap the reward of a student who returns and says, "Thank you. You changed my life." And you'll know if you have done your job well when you can say to that student with sincerity, "Thank you. You changed mine."

Questions to Consider

1. Mr. Zaldaña's experience tutoring students and a desire to make the world a better place led him to teaching. What other experiences or beliefs that people have or hold might lead them toward choosing teaching as a career?
2. What are some of the joyful images that come to mind when you think about being a teacher?
3. Would teaching in a rural area be much different from teaching in a large urban area like the one where Sunrise Mountain High School is located? Why? Why not?
4. Do high school teachers usually get hired to teach the content in which they are experts? Why? Why not?

INTRODUCTION

Starting out on any journey requires a certain amount of anticipation, hope for a successful outcome, and a sense of adventure. James H. Duke Jr. (1982) relates the journeys in life to climbing mountains ever upwards toward self-discovery and realization of attained wisdom and maturity. The journey you are about to embark upon is of unknown length and often characterized by uncharted territory, so your earliest decisions regarding this journey should be thoughtfully considered.

There are probably as many reasons to become a teacher as there are teachers. Every teacher has a personal story that served as the beginning of the journey toward a professional career as a teacher. The major steps you will take on this journey are varied, rigorous, and amazing. Since your journey will be both personal and professional, it will be shaped by your personality, by your life experiences (present and past), and by the professional learning and growth of your knowledge (pedagogical and content), the skills you have acquired, and your attitudes. In most ways, who you become as a teacher is up to you. And you are not alone. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011, as cited in Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014, p. 6), PreK–12 teachers form one of largest occupational groups in the nation.

Teaching is a noble **profession**. It is a joyful profession. Teaching is also hard work. Teaching is a demanding profession that requires making hundreds of decisions during a school day, managing 20 to 40 students or more hour after hour, analyzing data about learning, and interacting with parents and colleagues. Teaching has never been easy even in earlier times when the classroom was a one-room schoolhouse. In addition to making sure all of their students were learning, teachers in former times had to build the fire to keep the school warm and sweep up after the students went home. Teaching requires high levels of sustained energy, effort, and motivation. Since you are reading this text, you are no doubt thinking about teaching as a career.

Is teaching the right choice for you? Some candidates in teaching have started along this career path because they enjoyed going to school. Some follow in the footsteps of parents, aunts, or uncles. Others want to be part of kids' lives, to advocate for children, and to give children exciting, meaningful experiences to help them become educated adults. Many remember a favorite teacher and want to have the same influence on others that that teacher had on them. Teaching seems familiar because we have all spent so much of our lives in classrooms. It is possible to think that teaching can't be too difficult because many of our teachers made it seem easy. We saw teaching through the eyes of the students, not the teachers. Teachers have a very different view of classrooms. This text will help you explore the profession of teaching and help you decide if it is the right profession for you.

WHY TEACH?

Mr. Zaldaña probably always had a desire to learn and to help others learn. His experiences as a tutor helping special education students achieve success brought him a sense of worth and a conviction that he should complete his journey to becoming a teacher. What brought you to consider a career in teaching? Most teachers say they want to teach because they believe they can make a difference in the lives of their students. Many secondary teachers report they chose teaching because they love the subject they are teaching. Some chose teaching because they love to learn. Some chose teaching because of the personal interactions teaching affords. Teachers are generally happy with their work, and teachers in the United States rate their lives better than all other occupation groups, trailing only physicians (S. Lopez & Sidhu, 2013). Most of us are happy to be doing something we love, that allows us time to be with and support our families, to be a part of something larger than ourselves, and that gives us a sense of personal worth. We can find all of this through teaching.

The Joy of Teaching

In a Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index (Rich, 2013), teachers ranked above all other professions in answers to questions as to whether they had “smiled or laughed yesterday.” Teachers have to be able to



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Teachers get to work with people of all sizes, and every day brings something to be happy about.

The joy and rewards of teaching vary from teacher to teacher. The best teachers truly enjoy working with children and youth. They find a challenge in ensuring that underserved students learn at high levels and take joy in the academic success of all students. Former teacher and author Jonathan Kozol shares ideas about how to put the fun back into learning in his latest book, *Letters to a Young Teacher*. Francesca, the first-grade teacher Kozol shares teaching stories with, finds joy amid her struggles to reach the most recalcitrant of students. Kozol tells Francesca, “I think teaching is a beautiful profession and that teachers of young children do one of the best things that there is to do in life; bring joy and beauty, mystery and mischievous delight into the hearts of little people in their years of greatest curiosity” (Kozol, 2007, p. 8). Every teacher has a story about the joy he or she finds in teaching. Teachers treasure these moments and are always willing to share them.

One of most joyful parts of teaching is to see students achieve at high levels. This achievement could be physical, social, or creative as well as intellectual. All are important in the development of the whole person. During your teacher education program, you will learn how to develop **lesson plans** and deliver instruction to meet the needs of all students. You will be expected to be creative in developing rigorous and engaging lessons that draw on the cultural background and prior experiences of all of your students. Your joy and success as a teacher will be expressed when students learn the concepts you are trying to teach.

laugh, to get their students to laugh, and to laugh with their students. Learning should be fun. Smiles and laughter can brighten up any situation, relieve stress, and possibly make whatever difficult task is at hand less daunting. The joy that bubbles up when a group of students are pleasantly surprised or excited should never be squelched. New teachers may be admonished, “Don’t smile until Christmas,” but hopefully you’ll never find yourself in such dire circumstances. A bit of silliness now and then does not exclude the serious aspects of teaching.

A favorite science methods professor of one of our authors (Linda) made every class a delight. He would laugh, joke, and tease us into learning complex concepts. He often reminded us that he was serious but not somber about science education, and then he would smile. It is the playfulness and spirit of teachers that endears them to students. And it is what students remember of their teachers. There is funny stuff about what happens between students and their teachers on the Internet. One of our favorite websites for silliness about teaching is www.rd.com/funny-stuff/funny-teacher-stories. It’s easy to laugh along with the students and the teachers when you read what the students said and what they did. As you read through this book, check out the Teachers’ Lounge features for more humorous and heartwarming stories teachers have to tell.

It is through the sharing of stories that teachers become aware of the strong ties they have to their professional community. Sharing stories also provides a venue for understanding the mysteries of teaching and why it is so rare and marvelous to be a teacher. Ask teachers you know to tell you a story about something funny that happened to them while they were teaching. As their stories unfold, watch their faces, and you will see the joy in teaching.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards

Mr. Zaldaña finds joy in teaching when his students discover that education can be a powerful tool for improving their own lives. The joy in teaching can be found in a variety of ways. Most teachers experience **intrinsic rewards** when students grasp the concept or task they have been teaching. Students are as different as night and day. Some students are successful in everything they pursue. Some are not. Some students are involved. Others are not. Some students actually resist learning. When teachers can engage students, they are rewarded for their efforts. The more teachers are able to bring students together in a learning community, the more they are rewarded. It is a positive cycle that excellent teachers strive to perpetuate. It is challenging to try to meet the needs of each individual student, and it is genuinely exciting when teachers can accomplish this. Teaching is never boring. It is different from minute to minute, and there is no single formula that works for everyone.

Intrinsic rewards can also result in what teachers do for themselves. When Mr. Zaldaña reads current research on his practice or invites colleagues to exchange classroom visits with him, he is helping himself learn. When he asks his students to “take my pulse,” he is constantly aware of what he might change in his approach to teaching and what is going well. Mr. Zaldaña definitely reflects on his teaching and how his students are learning.

Extrinsic rewards for teachers come in the form of acknowledgments from students, from other teachers, from parents, and from prestigious awards such as Teacher of the Year. It is interesting to learn how the extrinsic reward of becoming a Teacher of the Year also provides intrinsic rewards through reflection on professional growth. Search for Sydney Chaffee, 2017 National Teacher of the Year, on YouTube and watch her express her compassion for teaching and her courage for taking risks.

Teachers receive visits and letters from former students thanking them for inspiration, comfort, and happiness. Sometimes teachers are surprised at the influence they have had on certain students. When that mischievous student who made them want to tear their hair out, day after day, shows up in later years with a smile and a thank-you, the reward is clear. Parents write thank-you notes, volunteer to be a teacher’s aide, and bake treats for special occasions. Other teachers ask for help with a specific problem, or ask to use a lesson that you have developed. Their appreciation of your skill as a teacher is rewarding. Teachers of the Year receive public accolades and have the opportunity to share their expertise with others through speeches and demonstrations. Some awards are even accompanied by money. Receiving payment for going an extra distance is rewarding, but most teachers will tell you it is not the money that brings them joy in teaching.

Making a Difference

Can you think of a teacher who made a difference in your life? It may be one who really cared about you, persuaded you to apply for college, challenged you to learn, or helped you develop self-esteem.



Teachers enjoy seeing their students be successful.



The rewards of teaching can come from a variety of sources.

Professional athletes, presidents of companies, and national leaders often attribute their success to a teacher. Teachers may not know until years after a student has left their classrooms that they had such an impact.

Parents believe that teachers make a difference in their children's lives, especially when it comes to learning. Many parents know who the good teachers are in their schools and do everything they can to ensure their children are in those teachers' classrooms. According to an August 2017 Gallup Poll of the public's attitudes toward the public schools, 79% of Americans were completely or somewhat satisfied with the state of their own child's education. However, only 47% were completely or somewhat satisfied with K–12 education in the United States. It is clear that when parents know the teachers at their children's schools and see the direct impact the teachers have on their children's lives, they are more likely to view the education their children are receiving as positive.

Research validates parents' beliefs that effective teachers do make a difference in student learning. In fact, teachers have been shown to have the greatest influence over student academic growth (Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004). In 1996, Sanders and Rivers, along with their colleagues at the University of Tennessee, compiled achievement data from standardized tests for students in Tennessee schools and followed the data through successive years of school. They found that two students who performed at the same level in the second grade could be separated by as many as 50 percentile points by the fifth grade if one of them had an effective teacher and the other an ineffective teacher for the next three years. Gladwell (2009) estimated that the difference between a very good teacher and a very bad one is "a year's worth of learning in a single year" (p. 318). Effective teachers do make a substantial difference in student achievement (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollack, 2001), and teacher effectiveness also increases across the first several years (Henry, Bastian, & Fortner, 2011). Other researchers have found that the influence of teachers on student achievement is greater than any other observable factor such as small class sizes (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 1998). These are very good reasons for you to strive to be an effective teacher. Excellent teachers hardly ever stop thinking about the subjects they teach. When you discover a subject that you love, the best way to enjoy it for the rest of your life is to teach it to others.

Teaching as Practice and Research

When you become a teacher, you will spend every day of the school year, and some days when you are not actually teaching, using the knowledge and practicing the skills that you gained during your teacher education program. You will also be researching the practice of other teachers and reading research studies to improve your knowledge and skills just as Mr. Zaldaña is doing. What you may not be aware of is that you will also be conducting research on a regular basis. Teachers are considered to be practitioners while others, usually academics, conduct research on what teachers do, think, and practice. Teachers are actually research practitioners. Every lesson, every encounter with students, every paper corrected becomes a source of data for teacher reflection and decision making. Teachers naturally compile data over time to judge the effectiveness of a lesson or student growth in learning. Learning is a process, and keeping track of how it occurs and evolves is a part of teaching. Change is intrinsic to schooling. Understanding how any of us learn and how teachers think, learn, and develop skill in practice is becoming of greater interest to policy makers and academic researchers. In 2017, the James S. McDonnell Foundation announced a new program to fund educational research on the science of teaching and expand the understanding of teachers as learners and as agents of change in education. Teachers will definitely play a huge part in research in this area. For you as a future teacher, it will be important to document your growth and to track changes that may have meaningful results for you and for your students.

How will you know that students are learning at the expected levels? One of the most superficial measures will be performance on standardized tests, which are required annually in most schools. Of course, you will want students to perform well on those tests, but they measure only a narrow slice of the knowledge that students should be acquiring. And they don't measure student development in areas other than knowledge and comprehension. Teachers are also helping students develop skills to use the knowledge they have learned in real-life situations. Teachers provide opportunities for students

THINKING DIFFERENTLY

THE POWER OF REFLECTION

Most teacher education programs encourage the teacher candidates to spend some time reflecting on teaching practices—to contemplate the success of lessons that have been planned and taught. Reflection is a powerful tool and necessary if teachers wish to grow professionally. Reflecting on the fun times you’ve had with students is probably not something you’ve been asked to do on a regular basis, but it can certainly remind you of why you teach. In a discussion thread in one of Linda’s courses, a teacher working on her master’s degree commented that the things she loved about teaching she never ended up writing about. She talked about a magical fall day with her students being engulfed in a windstorm of fall leaves, stopping to make piles of the leaves, and then throwing them in the air and running through them. Another teacher in the class responded to this story with the following:

The more classes I take, the more I overreflect and the more complicated everything becomes. I start to see the words, algorithms, data, research, numbers, statistics, and strategies and get so overwhelmed. But it is when I strip away all of these things and enjoy a simple moment sitting on the carpet with three students using play spatulas to pick up letter-shaped cookies or when I hang up the “I miss you” notes from previous students or taking last-day-of-school selfies with my first-year class that I am reminded why I am here and what keeps us all coming back each day and each year. Thanks for sharing your leaf story! It made me smile and think of my own stories like that I have had with my students!

to analyze and think critically about the subject. They help students develop **dispositions**, or attitudes and behaviors, that will show they value learning. Joy is seeing examples of student learning in multiple forms that convince you that a student is ready for the next grade.

The Teaching Profession

Most teachers consider themselves professionals. However, all too often teaching is identified by many as a semiprofession as compared with the professions of law, medicine, architecture, engineering, and accountancy. One reason is that teaching does not provide the same monetary advantages or prestige as the traditional professional fields. Another reason is that teachers appear to have relatively little control over the policies defining their work. Other professionals or policy makers select the curricula, set rules, and develop learning standards. Most teachers have limited access to an office, telephone, and secretary. The structure of a teacher’s day leaves little time to interact with colleagues to plan or challenge each other intellectually.

Merriam-Webster defines *profession* as “a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation.” All states require at least a bachelor’s degree to be eligible for an initial license to teach. Traditionally, states have required some specialized preparation in education that includes student teaching or an internship. A growing number of universities are requiring teacher candidates to have a bachelor’s degree in a content area before they begin graduate work in education. Thus, over time, teachers can receive their specialized preparation for teaching at the graduate level. Many teachers today have a master’s degree and continue to participate in Professional Development activities throughout their careers.

Being a Professional

A profession sets standards for entry into the profession. In addition, its members apply standards and codes of ethics to themselves and others, disciplining one another when necessary by removing licenses



Teachers collect data on student growth to make decisions about instruction.

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from offenders. Professionals provide services to clients. Their work is intellectual, requiring specialized knowledge and skills. They are bound by an ethical code that guides their relationships with clients and colleagues. They also have an obligation to practice their profession in ways the public would find acceptable. In professions other than teaching, standards and rules are set by the professionals themselves. These standards often include codes of ethics as well as standards for practice. However, in teaching, standards and rules for teachers are usually established by school administrators, members of the school board, and state legislators.

Teachers as Leaders

To be a teacher leader, teachers must become involved in the teaching profession beyond their own classrooms. Teacher unions provide an opportunity for teachers to negotiate contracts that outline salary and working conditions. Teacher organizations in most states conduct annual or semiannual statewide meetings for their members. These meetings provide Professional Development opportunities, a chance to network with other teachers, and a mechanism for becoming involved at the state level. You can stay engaged with your subject area and other educational interests by joining national organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) or the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Many of the national organizations have state affiliates of which you could become a member or even a leader. Through teacher organizations, teachers can serve on **accreditation** teams that evaluate schools and universities in their state or across the country. One sign of a true professional is active and continued involvement in professional organizations at local, state, and national levels.

Two of the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards and Learning Progressions for Teachers 1.0 (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013) include professional learning and leadership and collaboration components. Standard 9 states that “the teacher engages in ongoing professional learning,” and Standard 10 states that “the teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles . . . and to advance the profession.” You will read more about these InTASC standards later in the chapter.

Experienced teachers are being asked to become leaders in their school communities and to help novice teachers become expert practitioners. They are often considered the onsite teacher educators to support university and college programs that require field experience for the candidates. They serve as **mentors** and coaches disseminating best practices for colleagues. They demonstrate credibility and accountability in their actions and are willing to take on the additional responsibility leadership requires.

Setting and Upholding Standards

Teachers work with professors, parents, and the general public to set standards for students and teachers in their school districts, states, and national organizations. In some states, teachers have the majority control of professional standards boards that have the responsibility for developing licensure standards for teachers and other school professionals. When necessary, these boards withdraw licenses from teachers whose behaviors have led to malpractice. In states without professional standards boards, these functions are usually provided by a state board of education, whose members have been elected or appointed by the governor.

Accreditation

Colleges and schools of education and specific teacher education programs are held to professional standards. Most other professions require their members to graduate from an accredited program before they can take the state licensure examination. In the past, some states required teacher education programs to be nationally accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) or the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). Now these two accrediting agencies have merged into one accrediting body with the new name Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Once you begin teaching, you are likely to be involved every few years in an accreditation visit by the state and/or regional accrediting agency such as the Northwest Accreditation Commission (now part of AdvancED).

When a college of education hosts an accreditation visit by a Board of Examiners (BOE), team members will want to talk to the teacher education candidates and ask questions about specific

programs and field experiences. The team may ask you about your portfolio and what you have learned about working with students from diverse populations. They may ask how you know that the students you teach are learning. They are also likely to ask you about the quality of teaching at the university, particularly by education faculty members. Accreditation teams want to make certain that the teacher candidates are prepared to meet the challenges of the profession and to meet the needs of all students.

A visiting accreditation team expects the educator preparation program to have a system in place that provides assessment data on what teacher candidates are learning and how well they are demonstrating this knowledge. Teacher preparation programs can create an assessment system tied to the mission and goals of the institution, or they can implement educational programs designed to assess teacher candidate learning. Taskstream, Tk20, and edTPA are all such assessment systems, and in fact you may be asked to use one of these systems as you begin your teacher education program. Teaching is a profession where the first-year teacher is expected to be capable of the same job as someone who already has some experience as a teacher. Software programs and assessment systems can help you catch up to your more experienced peers even before having a classroom of your own.

Licensure

To teach in a public school, teachers must be licensed by a state agency to teach a specific subject (e.g., mathematics or social studies) at the middle or high school levels. Early childhood, elementary, special education, physical education, music, and art teachers are licensed to teach children in specific grades such as preschool, primary, K–6, or K–12. If you graduate from a state-approved program, which is connected to national accreditation, you have usually met the requirements for a state license. You also will be required to pass a state licensure test in most states. Some states will grant a provisional license that allows you to teach for three to five years before meeting all of the requirements for licensure. Several years of successful practice and possibly completion of a master's degree is normally required to attain a professional license to continue teaching. Requirements are different when you apply for a license in a state other than the one in which you graduated. The second state may have additional requirements that you must meet and may have higher cutoff, or qualifying, scores on the required licensure tests such as the *Praxis*[®] Core exam or content exams. If you plan to move to a different state to teach, check the requirements for a license so that you can take the appropriate courses during your program.

National Board Certification

Teachers with three years of experience are eligible to apply for national certification by the **National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)**. Applicants provide evidence in the collection of documents that are compiled in a portfolio to demonstrate meeting standards for their subject area at a specific age level. Each portfolio must include a videotape of the teacher teaching a lesson, **reflections** on teaching, and an analysis of student work. In addition, the teacher must complete assessment exercises at a testing center. Teaching performance is judged by experienced teachers using **rubrics** aligned with standards. Many states and school districts cover the costs for teachers to participate in this process.

What are the advantages of seeking national board certification? Most applicants report that the process helped improve their teaching and the performance of their students. They learned to reflect on their practice and make changes to improve student learning. A 2004 research study (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004) of student test scores in North Carolina supports the perceptions of these teachers. The study found that the students of national-board-certified teachers are far more likely to improve their scores on state tests than students of non-national-board-certified teachers. In addition, many national-board-certified teachers receive annual bonuses or pay raises.

Specialized Knowledge

Teachers must know the subjects they will be teaching. The knowledge and related skills for teaching the subject are described in the standards of the national organizations that represent teachers in that field. You will be expected to understand the subject well enough to help young people know it and apply it to the world in which they live. If students are not learning a concept or skills, teachers must be able to relate the content to the experiences of students to provide meaning and purpose.

The professional and pedagogical knowledge needed by teachers is outlined in the widely accepted standards of the InTASC, established by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). In 2010, an updated version of the standards was vetted to educational organizations for public comment, and in April 2011, the new standards were adopted. The InTASC standards are used by most states as a framework for individual state standards. The InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards and Learning Progressions for Teachers 1.0 (CCSSO, 2013) are available online at <https://ccsso.org>. The effort behind the development and adoption of the new InTASC standards makes clear that teaching requires a great deal of specialized knowledge and skill. Teachers have to be some of the brightest people on the planet. Teaching may not be rocket science, but it is close.

Code of Ethics

Like members of other professions, teachers as a group have developed a code of ethics to guide their work and relationships with students and colleagues. Professional standards boards and other state bodies investigate teachers for infractions against the code of ethics adopted by the state. Ethics statements address issues such as discrimination against students, restraint of students, protecting students from harm, personal relationships with students, and misrepresenting one's credentials.

Being a member of a profession is more than showing up for work by 7:30 and not leaving before 4:00. The parents of students in your classroom expect that you will help their children learn. They expect their children to score at acceptable or better levels on achievement tests. They are counting on you to contribute to their children's literacy and to push them beyond minimal standards. Good teachers manage their classrooms so that students can focus on learning. The public and parents become very concerned when classrooms and schools appear out of control. As a teacher, you will have an obligation to model acceptable behavior based on the norms of the profession.

WHAT DO TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW?

When you watch teachers at work, you may wonder why they do things in a certain way, or what motivates them to address one student's behavior differently from the way they might address another student's behavior. Since you can't get inside teachers' heads and they can't stop what they are doing to explain to you the reasons behind their actions, you have to accept the fact that they do know what they are doing and why they are doing it. Understanding and being able to articulate teaching practices is something that you will learn to do in your teacher education program. Becoming familiar with the teaching standards developed by InTASC will also help you understand the specialized knowledge, skills, and dispositions specific to the teaching profession.

Teacher Education Programs

Since teachers have to be well educated, the first step in getting into a teacher education program is to demonstrate your brightness by completing university core requirements with a Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 2.5 or higher. The advising centers at most colleges of education have complete information on what is required before anyone can be admitted to a traditional teacher education program. Visit the website of your local institution of higher education and check out the steps you must take to be admitted to one of its licensure programs for teachers.

The college of education website (www.csulb.edu/college-of-education) at California State University, Long Beach, presents a range of links to different programs and different levels of professional work, and provides numerous links to career services and advising. It is easy to find out what you must do to earn a teaching degree. All the information you need to have a successful beginning is right at your fingertips.

Ways Programs Are Organized and Why

Teacher education programs are traditionally designed to move candidates along a path of acquiring knowledge of human development and behaviors, learning about laws affecting practice in schools,

gaining understanding of counseling practices as well as the impact of cultural diversity on schools and classrooms, and gathering an understanding of working with children with disabilities in regular school classrooms. Candidates who are seeking a secondary license to teach in middle schools or high schools must, in addition to the general university core, complete a specified number of courses in their elected field.

There is a great deal of debate in political and educational groups regarding the type of training necessary for teachers to receive a license. Some believe it is only necessary that a teacher know the content to be taught. Others believe knowing how to teach is as important as, and perhaps more important than, content during the early grades (Shulman, 1986). It is quite possible that future programs in teacher education will be entirely school based and candidates will learn as apprentices alongside an expert mentor. The path to becoming a teacher will offer many opportunities and novel approaches. Some will fit you to a T. Find the right path, stay the course, and you will discover a very rewarding future.

The Importance of Clinical Practice

Many teacher education programs include early clinical experience to provide the candidates with opportunities to begin to learn what teaching involves (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005). A policy brief on the clinical preparation of teachers by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (2010) stresses the importance of clinical experiences as a key factor in candidates' success. Lortie (1975) made it clear that observing teaching wasn't the ideal way to learn how to teach—that teacher education candidates had to be actively involved in the daily work of teachers. Now, more than 40 years after Lortie's conclusions, university teacher education programs work to align university course work with practice in the field. Field-based teacher education programs place cohorts of candidates in partnership or Professional Development schools, assign them site-based mentors and supervisors, and require evidence of reflection on practice to help the candidates develop cognitive frameworks for teaching. One such field-based program is the 21st Century Schools partnership between the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), College of Education and the Clark County School District in Nevada.

Different Pathways to Licensure

The majority of teachers have completed bachelor's programs that prepared them for a license to teach. Most often, they began their preparation soon after high school. Although some education courses may be taken in the first two years of college, candidates are usually not admitted to education programs until they are juniors. Many education courses require candidates to complete field experiences in schools as a component of the course. Some programs require candidates to observe and work in schools several days a week. Candidates in traditional programs may student-teach under the supervision of a teacher and college supervisor during the final year of their bachelor's program.

You can study to become a teacher through many routes. Programs are delivered in college classrooms and schools. Some programs can be completed via distance learning without stepping on campus. A growing number of candidates begin exploring teaching as a career in community colleges, initially developing portfolios and working with children and youth in schools and community projects.

Most colleges and universities offer a number of pathways for becoming a teacher. Not all teacher education programs are traditional four-year undergraduate programs. Many colleges of education offer postbaccalaureate courses to meet state licensure requirements. School districts may negotiate Professional Development course work with state licensing agencies to provide on-the-job credit for individuals who have the expertise to fill high-need positions but do not have a degree in teaching or a state license to teach. A national debate regarding the credibility of differing routes to licensure is hotly contested in educational journals and the popular media.

The U.S. Department of Education provides funding incentives to colleges of education and local school districts for creating specialized routes to licensure for high-need areas of teaching. In 2011, the DOE awarded approximately \$90 million to 30 grant applicants from across the United States. Many of these applications were to provide an Alternative Route to Licensure and increase the number of teachers in specialized areas.

The Five-Year Teaching Degree

Some teacher education programs are five-year programs that begin at the undergraduate level and end with a master's degree or eligibility for a license after completing a sequence of graduate courses. These programs allow more time for candidates to study the art and science of teaching and learning. They sometimes require a yearlong internship in schools, allowing candidates to practice under the guidance of professionals who provide feedback and support throughout the internship.

Many colleges of education offer teacher education course work once a student has completed an undergraduate program in a specific content area. The final or fifth year of a teacher education program generally places the candidate in a school as a teacher or co-teacher under the supervision of college faculty and school personnel. The fifth-year student gains practical experience during the day and attends classes in the evening. Once students finish their fifth year, they are eligible for licensure and are also awarded a master's degree.

Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) or Certificate Programs

College graduates who decide that they want to become teachers after they have completed a bachelor's degree in another area have several options for pursuing a teaching career. They could choose a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program that offers courses in **pedagogy**, human growth and development, assessment practices, and some form of internship. Schools in Georgia, Oregon, and Hawaii, to mention just a few, offer MAT programs to qualified candidates. You might also be interested in checking out some of the MAT programs offered in other countries, such as Canada and Australia. Many colleges and universities have certificate or licensure programs in which candidates can complete the courses and field experience required for a state license. Some of these programs are offered entirely online. Most MAT or certificate programs require observation time and supervised student teaching, giving credit to the belief that before candidates are eligible to be teachers of record, they should have some practical experience in classrooms under the tutelage of an experienced teacher.

A web search of fifth-year and MAT programs will provide you with a robust list of colleges and universities where you can enroll in a program that will lead to a teaching license and a master's degree. There is some criticism that MAT and certificate licensure programs may not offer the value that should be expected of a master's degree (Robinson, 2011). As a professional and a technology native, you will be able to search the Internet to find the program that best suits your intent.

Alternative Licensure Programs

A number of new teachers are entering the profession through alternative routes that allow them to begin teaching without any specialized preparation in teaching and learning course work or field experiences in schools. This is something that other professions such as medicine and engineering would find unacceptable. Opening the entry to teaching to anyone with a bachelor's degree challenges the status of a profession because doing so requires no specialized training. However, most states require these alternative-route teachers to take education courses and to be mentored by experienced teachers while they are teaching and completing the course work required for licensure.

Many of these alternative routes to licensure (ARL) programs are designed for adults beyond the traditional college age of 18 to 24. They build on the experience and background of candidates who often have worked for a number of years in a nonteaching field. These programs may be similar to traditional undergraduate and graduate programs, but they offer greater flexibility in scheduling courses through distance education and prompting candidates to schedule their own field observations. Many candidates in these programs are working full-time in schools or other jobs. Not all teachers complete programs at colleges and universities. School districts, state departments of education, and other organizations are also preparing teachers. The Utah Department of Education welcomes individuals who have a disposition toward teaching who don't want to go back to college, and Michigan and South Carolina allow teachers to start working while gaining certification online (Zalaznick, 2017).

Military personnel may participate in Troops to Teachers, a program to assist men and women who have completed their military service in becoming teachers. When the U.S. military organizations are downsized, many well-trained individuals must seek employment in other fields. According to Martin

(2014), “Troops to Teachers is a U.S. Department of Defense program that helps eligible military personnel begin a new career as teachers in public schools where their skills, knowledge and experience are most needed.” Military personnel who sign on to this program can receive financial assistance in tuition costs and in some cases are reimbursed for the expenses of moving to a new location. Purdue University Global offers a MAT degree that is completely online and accommodates individuals who are transitioning out of the military.

Teach For America (TFA), founded in 1990, recruits outstanding students from some of the nation’s most prestigious universities to teach for two or more years in low-income communities throughout the United States. The TFA candidates spend a month in intensive preparation for their initial placement. During their years of teaching, they attend monthly Professional Development meetings conducted by TFA mentors and may also attend courses at a local college of education that will lead to a master’s degree. In 2016, TFA reported 53,000 alumni, 19,000 classroom teachers, and 1,000 principals in 280 school systems and 53 regions of the United States. The TFA organization receives financial support from the federal government, state departments of education, and private donors.

Graduate Licensure

Graduate licensure programs are generally limited to persons holding an undergraduate and/or graduate degree in a field other than education. Licensure programs lead to an elementary or secondary teaching license and a master of education degree. Candidates in this type of program are required to complete courses that mirror the undergraduate teacher education courses and must complete all of the clinical practice required of undergraduates.

Trends in the Teaching Force

A projected 58 million students will be enrolled in U.S. public PreK–12 schools by the year 2022 (U.S. Department of Education, 2014), and a projected 367,000 new teachers will be hired by 2022 (Hussar & Bailey, 2014, p. 13). It would appear that in the near future there will be a need for your talent. Teaching jobs become available as current teachers retire, move to other schools, or leave the profession. Over the next decade, around 700,000 teachers—almost one of four current teachers—are projected to retire. Teachers leave the profession and move from school to school for a variety of reasons. The primary reasons for moving are layoffs, school closings, and other organizational changes in a school or district. Personal reasons include family responsibilities, moving to a new location, and health problems. Perda (2013) reported that more than 41% of new teachers leave teaching in the first five years.

The teacher turnover rate in urban high-priority schools is almost one-third higher than in other schools (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 2003), but the largest turnover rate is in small private schools. While the rate of teachers leaving large private schools is fairly low, small private schools suffer from an annual turnover that is often one-fourth of the staff. Although teachers in private schools report greater satisfaction and that their environments are more positive than public schools, they are much more likely to transfer to a public school than their public school counterparts are to transfer to a private school (Ingersoll, 2003).

Not all new hires in a school district are recent graduates. About half of them are teachers returning to the classroom or moving from another district. A growing number of new teachers are not recent college graduates. They are military retirees or people switching from business or other careers. They often complete alternative pathways into teaching in school-based graduate programs that build on their prior experiences.

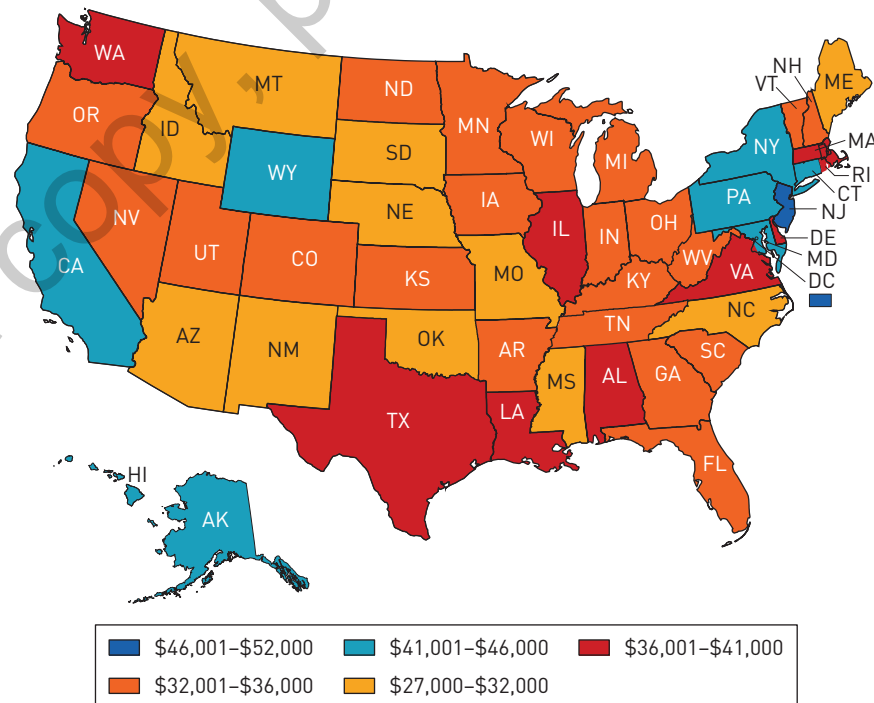
You may not be able to find a teaching job in the community in which you grew up or near the university you are attending because the schools have few openings. However, jobs do exist if you are willing to move to a part of the country where there are shortages because of high turnover, a growing student population, or a move to reduce the teacher-to-student ratio in classes. For instance, Nevada recently mandated a class size reduction for all kindergarten classrooms. This mandate has resulted in the need for nearly double the number of existing kindergarten teachers.

Opportunities to get a teaching job are greater in urban high-poverty areas where high turnover exists. Generally, urban and rural areas have more openings than suburban areas, although acute

shortages exist in high-poverty suburban areas as well. If you are willing to move to another state, your job opportunities will grow. Alaska, western states, and southern states are actively recruiting new teachers to staff the schools for a growing school-age population (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003). West Virginia has reported a shortage of teachers in all areas of learning, and six additional states reported shortages in 11 areas of learning: Washington, DC; Nevada; Oklahoma; Rhode Island; California; and American Samoa (Shepherd University, 2016). All states except Louisiana, New Mexico, and New York reported a shortage in special education, and math and science were noted as shortage areas in more than 45 states. Striking out on a journey to unknown territory at the same time you are beginning a new career can certainly be daunting. Both take courage, something all teachers have, and you will be welcomed wherever you decide to go. Use technology to find your new job through a geographic information system, and locate the place that most needs you.

Where you decide to teach might be determined by the salary that you can receive. However, buyer beware: Some states offer higher salaries because the cost of living is also higher in that state. Figure 1.1 presents a list of the average starting salary for beginning teachers from school districts around the nation, as reported by the National Education Association (NEA). There is variation in beginning salaries within states due to dense population areas and need. For example, in Georgia, beginning teachers in Atlanta are likely to be paid more than beginning teachers in Savannah. Most states also offer incremental increases for longevity and course work and degrees earned. The average public school teacher salary for 2015–2016 was \$58,353. Salaries in the high range were in New York, California, and Massachusetts, with South Dakota and Mississippi in the low range. For 2017–2018, starting salaries in New York range from \$54,000 (bachelor's degree, no prior teaching experience) to \$81,694 (master's degree, eight years of teaching experience, plus additional course work). New teachers with a master's degree but no prior teaching experience earn \$60,704. Strangely enough, over the decade leading up

FIGURE 1.1 ■ Average Starting Salary for Beginning Teachers by State: 2016–2017



Source: NEA Collective Bargaining/Member Advocacy's Teacher Salary Database, based on affiliate reporting as of December 2017. Adapted from <http://www.nea.org/home/2016-2017-average-starting-teacher-salary.html>.

Note: National Average Starting Teacher Salary = \$38,617.

to 2015–2016, the average classroom teacher salary increased by 15.2%, but after inflation adjustment, the average salary actually decreased by 3%.

Most teacher contracts are for less than 12 months, but teachers can earn additional income within the school year or during the summer by having second jobs outside the school. Teachers can also supplement their base salaries when they engage in the following activities related to schools or their education:

- Serving as a mentor or staff developer
- Achieving additional teaching licenses or certifications
- Becoming national board certified
- Teaching in a subject area where there is a teacher shortage
- Working in a school more challenging to staff than other schools in the district

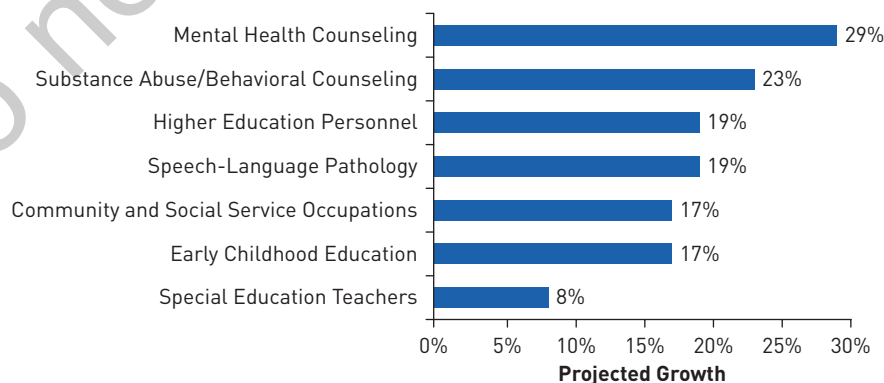
Teachers also may receive supplemental income for chairing departments, being team leaders, sponsoring extracurricular activities, and coaching.

Teaching Fields

The first time the idea of teaching crosses our minds, we hold an image of teaching a certain age group of children or a certain subject. One person will imagine a kindergarten room full of brightly colored centers, another will visualize herself at a board working equations with a group of serious high school seniors, another will imagine helping a group of students construct a model of the planets in Earth's solar system, and yet others might see themselves using technology to deliver distance education. Teaching is an endless array of possibilities, and for each aspiring teacher, its attraction is to a different reality.

Have you decided what subjects you would like to teach? Math? Art? History? Writing? Technology? Or all of the above? Urban and rural schools are likely to have openings for all subjects, from elementary through high school. However, not enough teachers are being prepared or retained in schools to teach mathematics and science classes, **English Language Learners (ELLs)**, and students with disabilities. Your chances of finding a job improve if you qualify for one of these high-need areas. The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015) projects above-average national growth in demand for professionals in key disciplines currently served by or aligned with programs in colleges or schools of education. A few of these programs are listed in Figure 1.2.

FIGURE 1.2 Projected Growth in Demand for Professionals 2012–2022



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

The increase in federal funding for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs is the result of data showing that fewer than 50% of U.S. high school students are ready to take college-level math and fewer than 40% are ready for college-level science. Since it is anticipated that many of the job opportunities in the twenty-first century will require math skills and scientific knowledge, the federal government has made it a priority to fund educational programs that focus on STEM. There is also a concern that Latino and black U.S. students have not had equal opportunities for instruction in STEM-content learning during high school.

Many secondary schools report they have had to hire teachers who did not major in mathematics or science to teach their courses. These **out-of-field teachers** sometimes have not even minored in these fields and lack the knowledge and skills to help students learn these core subjects. The lack of qualified mathematics and science teachers in urban high schools has contributed to not offering Advanced Placement classes in these subjects and to the poor test performance of students in these schools. Many large urban school districts have an immediate need for qualified STEM teachers.

Special Education

Another major shortage area is special education teachers for all grades, from preschool through high school. These teachers may work with a classroom of special education students, but often work as resource teachers with regular teachers in inclusive classrooms. They teach students with mental, behavioral, sensory, physical, and learning disabilities. These jobs are usually very demanding, sometimes physically so, but they can lead to a great deal of joy as students become academically successful or learn to be independent. Many large urban school districts desperately need highly qualified special education teachers.

English Language Learners (ELLs)/Bilingual Students

School districts report a shortage of culturally and linguistically diverse educators, especially in areas of the country with large numbers of Latino and immigrant students. Over the past decade, the schools with these needs have expanded to smaller cities and communities in the Midwest and South where immigrants are employed and migrant workers have settled. Knowledge and skills in English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual education will give a new teacher an advantage in many urban and rural areas today. Large urban school districts have an immediate need for ELL/bilingual teachers. This is certainly true for Clark County School District in Nevada, where the Latino school population is now over 50% of the total school population.

As mentioned earlier, beginning teachers often want to teach in the same community where they grew up and went to school. However, the types of communities that most beginning teachers have grown up in are not always the places that need the most teachers. If you want to be sure of beginning your teaching career when you graduate, you must go where the jobs are. Highly qualified teachers are always in demand. Make certain you meet the highest requirements for any job, and you will likely end up where you want to be. In real estate, the three major areas of concern are location, location, location. In teaching, location might have some influence, but good teachers can teach anywhere and discover the joy of helping students learn.

WHAT ROLE DOES TECHNOLOGY PLAY IN THE LIVES OF TEACHERS?

In this digital age, technology makes information, fact or not, myth or marketing, as close as a finger tap or voice command. You all know how to use various forms of technology for personal purposes—to discover that new restaurant, find out what time the movie starts, pay a bill, be a fan, check up on friends, and let your circle of loved ones know where you've been and what you've been up to. It's hard to imagine life without the ease of connecting to the world that technology affords us today. As you develop your teaching persona, you will have to think about how to use technology in a professional manner and of course how to use it to help your students learn.

Technology has always provided tools for teaching and has been part of education in America since the first student in Massachusetts etched a numeral or letter on a slate. From stones for etching softer rocks, to styluses for making marks in soft clay, to shaved brushes for painting icons, teachers have used tools to enhance their practice. Chalk and blackboards made it possible for teachers to invent their own text in classrooms. Imagine where Albert Einstein would have been without a chalkboard. The science of photographic reproduction in the 19th century made it possible for teachers to show students photographs of famous art objects and historical sites in faraway places. The first Kodak slide projector, produced in 1937, offered another piece of technology for teachers to enhance instruction. Teachers also learned to use movie projectors to show select 8-millimeter and 16-millimeter films to their students. Nearly anyone graduating from a teacher education program in the 1950s had to take a course on audiovisual aids, and today's teacher candidates are often required to complete a course in technology for teachers.

When television was introduced in schools, there was a consensus among educators that the small screens installed in many classrooms would revolutionize teaching and learning. Televisions did not revolutionize teaching and learning. Unfortunately, typical television programming puts the viewer in passive mode, except maybe for programs like *Dora the Explorer*. (Three-year-olds are known to stand up during one of Dora's silences and yell, "Backpack!") Technology available to teachers today is fantastically improved, and interactive modes of programming are readily available.

Much of what happens when you begin teaching is a mystery. In many ways, what happens from day to day in any classroom can be surprising. You might be prepared for the worst and find the best. You might discover something wonderful that you weren't quite prepared for that stretches your knowledge and skills in ways that are new and occasionally frightening. Teaching with the technology available to teachers today adds a dimension of magic to the art and science of teaching. It poses challenges that can leave your head spinning and surprises that make you and your students go, "Wow!" Teachers today must consider technology as a tool for student learning that can foster critical thinking, and must learn to use the virtual interactive tools that their students use in their personal lives (McGrail, Sachs, Many, Myrick, & Sackor, 2011).

Educational Technology Standards for Teachers

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has developed a set of standards for teachers. These standards define the fundamental concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that teachers should exhibit. Candidates seeking certification or endorsements in teacher licensure should meet these standards. The instructors at your institution are responsible for making sure that you have knowledge of the standards and that you have had the opportunity to meet some of the performance indicators. Table 1.1 lists ISTE's five standards areas with the main objective for the performance indicators. The standards are specific enough to define the broad goals of using technology in educational settings, yet general enough to allow for a comfortable fit with local circumstances. Visit www.iste.org/ standards to learn more about the performance indicators for teachers. These performance indicators will give you a better understanding of what will be expected of you once you begin teaching.

WHAT DO TEACHER EDUCATION CANDIDATES NEED TO DO?

The previous section of this chapter provided information regarding jobs, salaries, and expectations for being part of the teaching profession. This section will help clarify the purpose of teacher education



Teachers can use the ever-growing varieties of technology to teach online courses.

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TABLE 1.1 ■ International Society for Technology in Education Standards for Teachers

Standard	Example
1. Facilitate and inspire student learning and creativity	Teachers use technology to advance student learning, creativity, and innovation in both face-to-face and virtual environments.
2. Design and develop digital age learning experiences and assessments	Teachers design, develop, and evaluate authentic learning experiences and assessments to maximize learning.
3. Model digital age work and learning	Teachers exhibit knowledge, skills, and work processes representative of an innovative professional in a global and digital society.
4. Promote and model digital citizenship and responsibility	Teachers understand local and global societal issues and responsibilities in an evolving digital culture.
5. Engage in professional growth and leadership	Teachers improve professional practice, and become lifelong learners and leaders in their schools and professional community through use of digital tools and resources.

Source: Adapted from the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) website, <http://www.iste.org/standards/for-educators> © 2008, ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education), 800.336.5191 (U.S. & Canada) or 541.302.3777 (International), iste@iste.org, www.iste.org. All rights reserved.

programs and what you can do when you are enrolled. Knowing what is expected of you is one of the best ways to feel confident and to ensure you get the most out of your classes and the clinical experiences you will have to complete. Learning to teach in an actual classroom is called a “practicum.” It is practice. Practice is just as valuable for a teacher as it is for a pianist learning a new piece of music. In your teacher education program, you will have to practice, test yourself, practice again, test yourself again, and most important of all reflect on your practice and how well it went. Nothing will help you quite as much as learning to reflect on your practice. All expert teachers have learned to be reflective practitioners.

How to Get Off to a Good Start in Your Teacher Education Program

Usually, people spend some time planning and charting a path before they embark on a long journey. There are maps to read and places of interest to check out to see if a side trip is warranted. Some folks even develop strategies for getting the most out of every mile. Not much planning is required for a trip to the supermarket, though a list is always helpful. But when committing to something that might be a benchmark in your life goal of becoming a teacher, planning is certainly essential.

Test of Basic Skills

Teacher candidates are usually required to pass a basic skills test before they are admitted to a teacher education program. Every teacher should be competent in the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. These tests are designed to determine that future teachers have the basic knowledge and skills in these areas. In order to be admitted to the professional course work in a teacher education program, most states require that you demonstrate aptitude by achieving passing scores on basic skills tests. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) website at www.ets.org/praxis offers detailed information about taking a basic skills test. The ETS website also contains a drop-down menu for individual state testing requirements for licensure. The Pearson National Evaluation Series website provides detailed information about its test services and how you can take exams at its test centers. Some states have developed their own tests of basic skills and other tests required for teacher licensure. The California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST) is a standardized test administered throughout the state of

California and Oregon for individuals who want to teach at public schools. Individual state test requirements and passing scores can also be found at state departments of education websites.

Learn About Assessment Practices

Teacher candidates are not expected to be passive learners during the course work in a teacher education program to be eligible for a license to teach. You will be required to show evidence that you meet professional and state standards through a number of **performance assessments** throughout your program that demonstrate that you know your subject matter and can teach. These assessments are usually administered at three major transition points within a program: (1) before admission to the program, (2) before you can student-teach, and (3) at completion of student teaching and the program. The assessments can include standardized paper-and-pencil tests, portfolios, case studies, evaluations of your student teaching or internship, comprehensive examinations at the end of the program, and projects. You will also be expected to show that you can help all students learn. Earlier in this chapter, you read about companies that provide software and guidelines for candidates to keep track of their progress. However, even without professional software support, you will be able to track your professional growth toward becoming a teacher.

Your professors and **field-based supervisors** will evaluate your performance in the classroom on assessment rubrics that describe the areas you must reach to show you are proficient in the skills and knowledge to help all students learn. When you receive the feedback from the supervisors and professors, you will know where you need to improve your practice to meet the standards.

Pass Licensure Tests

Potential teachers in most states must pass one or more tests to be eligible for a license to teach. States either develop their own licensure tests or contract with a major test company such as the ETS or Pearson National Evaluation Series. A state board of education or standards board determines the **cut score** that test takers must achieve to pass the test. The score required to pass the same or similar tests varies from state to state. Your score could be high enough to be licensed in one state, but not in another. Ohio, Virginia, and Connecticut have set higher cut scores than other states as part of their effort to raise the quality of teachers in the state. Check with the state in which you plan to work to determine the tests you will be required to pass before you receive a license.

Content Tests. Content tests assess candidates' knowledge of the subject or subjects they will be teaching or the field in which they will be working (e.g., ESL, algebra, or special education). These tests generally assess the knowledge outlined in the state and professional standards for the field, which is another reason to be familiar with the standards. You should develop the knowledge bases for your field in the courses you have taken in the sciences, humanities, arts, psychology, and social sciences. Secondary and middle-level teacher candidates often major in the academic discipline they plan to teach. Some states require elementary teacher candidates to major or have a concentration in one or more academic



Teachers must demonstrate their knowledge of basic skills and their readiness to teach. Standardized tests provide states with evidence of a teacher's qualifications.

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fields such as social sciences, mathematics, science, a foreign language, or English. Are you required to have an academic, rather than education, major to be licensed in your state? Check out the state department of education website for this information.

Most states require new teachers to pass content tests before they receive the first license to teach. Many institutions require candidates to pass this test before they are eligible to student-teach. Knowledge of the subject you teach and how you teach it may seem like different sides of the same coin, but they are truly quite different. It is possible to be an expert in a field and not be able to explain one bit of it to a group of students in a classroom. Because of this, many states require that teachers pass tests in pedagogy.

Knowledge, Skills, Dispositions, and Student Learning. Knowledge is one of the easier areas to assess. The most popular assessment of knowledge is a standardized, pencil-and-paper test, which now is often completed on a computer. Teacher-developed quizzes and tests provide information on what is known or understood. Grades and your performance on papers, projects, presentations, and case studies contribute to the overall evaluation of the knowledge needed to teach.

Skills or performances are usually demonstrated as you collaborate with your peers, interact with your professors, and work with teachers and students in schools. Your skills can be observed and measured by how successful you are in helping students achieve on tests and other assessments. Field experiences and student teaching provide opportunities for you to apply your knowledge about a subject and pedagogy. You and others will assess your effectiveness in these settings. Although standardized assessments exist, they are relatively expensive to implement.

A few states require beginning teachers to complete Praxis III, in which trained assessors evaluate their performance as a first-year teacher against standards using a scoring rubric. Teacher education programs in those states emphasize the development of the skills assessed by Praxis III. Other states, including Connecticut, require their new teachers to submit a portfolio after their first year of teaching as evidence they are meeting state standards. At UNLV, at the end of student teaching education, candidates present a digital portfolio to an audience of their peers and professors. Artifacts collected for the portfolio are tied to the InTASC standards.

Many teacher education programs have identified the dispositions that you should demonstrate before you become a teacher. They might include **proficiencies** such as these:

- Believing that all children can learn at high levels, which requires persistence in helping all children be successful
- Appreciating and valuing human diversity, showing respect for students' varied talents and perspectives, and commitment to the pursuit of individually configured excellence
- Respecting students as individuals with differing personal and family backgrounds and various skills, talents, and interests

These proficiencies cannot be easily measured on a test. They come across in the papers you write, the presentations you make, the lessons you teach, and the interactions you have with students and parents in schools. Over time and in multiple ways, your dispositions are demonstrated and assessed.

In most teacher education programs, you are expected to learn how to assess student learning and how to respond when a student is not learning. During your field-based practica, you most likely will be required to collect data on student learning, analyze those data, and determine next steps if one or more students are not learning. Figure 1.3 provides an example of an assessment exercise you may be asked to complete during student teaching. See Figure 1.4 for an example of a rubric that accompanies the student learning assessment.

You might be asked to design an assessment that will help you know whether students are learning. You might be given a sample of student work and asked to analyze it and describe any concerns raised by the student's work. By the time you finish your program, you should be familiar with a number of assessments besides a test. You should also know that students learn in different ways, requiring that you teach using strategies that build on their prior experiences and cultures.

FIGURE 1.3 ■ Assessment for the Analysis of Student Learning in a Teacher Work Sample

Teacher Work Sample Standard: The teacher candidate uses assessment data to profile student learning and communicate information about student progress and achievement.

Task: Analyze your assessment data, including pre-/postassessments and formative assessments to determine students' progress related to the unit learning goals. Use visual representations and narrative to communicate the performance of the whole class, subgroups, and two individual students. Conclusions drawn from this analysis should be provided in the "Reflection and Self-Evaluation" section.

Prompt: In this section you will analyze data to explain progress and achievement toward learning goals demonstrated by your whole class, subgroups of students, and individual students.

Whole class. To analyze the progress of your whole class, create a table that shows pre- and postassessment data on every student on every learning goal. Then, create a graphic summary that shows the extent to which your students made progress (from pre- to postassessment) toward the learning criterion that you identified for each learning goal (identified in your Assessment Plan section). Summarize what the graph tells you about your students' learning in this unit (i.e., the number of students who met the criterion).

Subgroups. Select a group characteristic (e.g., gender, performance level, socioeconomic status, language proficiency) to analyze in terms of one learning goal. Provide a rationale for your selection of this characteristic to form subgroups (e.g., girls vs. boys, high vs. middle vs. low performers). Create a graphic representation that compares pre- and postassessment results for the subgroups on this learning goal. Summarize what these data show about student learning.

Individuals. Select two students who demonstrated different levels of performance. Explain why it is important to understand the learning of these particular students. Use preformative and postassessment data with examples of the students' work to draw conclusions about the extent to which these students attained the two learning goals. Graphic representations are not necessary for this subsection.

Suggested Page Length: 4 + charts and student work examples

Source: Hussar, W. J., & Bailey, T. M. (2011). *Projections of Education Statistics to 2020* (NCES 2011-026). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

FIGURE 1.4 ■ A Scoring Guide to Assess Student Learning

Teacher Work Sample Standard: The teacher candidate uses assessment data to profile student learning and communicate information about student progress and achievement.

Rating → Indicator ↓	1 Indicator Not Met	2 Indicator Partially Met	3 Indicator Met	Score
Clarity and Accuracy of Presentation	Presentation is not clear and accurate; it does not accurately reflect the data.	Presentation is understandable and contains few errors.	Presentation is easy to understand and contains no errors of representation.	
Evidence of Impact on Student Learning	Analysis of student learning fails to include evidence of impact on student learning in terms of numbers of students who achieved and made progress toward learning goals.	Analysis of student learning includes incomplete evidence of the impact on student learning in terms of numbers of students who achieved and made progress toward learning goals.	Analysis of student learning includes evidence of the impact on student learning in terms of numbers of students who achieved and made progress toward each learning goal.	

Source: Elliott, E. (2003). *Assessing education candidate performance: A look at changing practices*. Washington, DC: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. Reprinted with permission of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

Pedagogical and Professional Knowledge Tests. Some states also require new teachers to pass a test that assesses general pedagogical and professional knowledge that teachers should have to manage instruction and students. This information is taught in courses such as educational foundations, educational psychology, multicultural education, tests and measurement, teaching methods, and the course that requires you to read this book. Your specialized knowledge about teaching and learning is assessed in this group of tests. They require you to know theories in education, the critical research that guides how to teach your subject, instructional strategies, the impact of diversity on learning, and the use of technology in teaching.

Spend Time in Schools

Most teacher education programs require candidates to observe and work in schools, often beginning with the first education course. You want to make sure you really like working with young children if you are planning to teach at the primary level or older adolescents if you are planning to teach high school. You can also learn whether you have the temperament to work with 30 students at a time or to maintain a schedule that requires you to be in a classroom with students for hours at a time without talking on your cell phone, texting, or having a snack. Field experiences confirm for most candidates that they really do want to teach. Others discover that teaching is not the job for them.

Learn to Be Comfortable in Schools. Most of us found the time we spent as students in school enjoyable, and we liked going to school. That was probably one reason we were drawn to teaching. Most times, we got along well with our classmates and with our teachers. Teachers must be at school most days of the school year. The teachers we remember fondly are the ones that appeared to enjoy being at school. They were the ones who greeted everyone with a smile and shared a kind word or two with everyone they came in contact with. They appeared generally happy and happy to be sharing their days with others in a school.

The people who work in schools alongside teachers also appreciate friendly greetings and encouraging words. It is important to know the people who support your role as a teacher because they are often the ones you call for help when something nonacademic goes amiss. When you are comfortable in the schools you are assigned to, when you know the people who work at the school and what their jobs are, when you show a positive regard for each member of the school team and exude a happy character, you will be comfortable in schools and help the people who work with you feel comfortable too.

Professional Development Schools

You may be assigned to a Professional Development School (PDS) for your field experiences and clinical practice. Teachers, teacher candidates, and college professors in a PDS collaborate to support student learning. They may team-teach and take turns teaching, planning together, and supporting each other. After a few weeks of working together, students and parents often are not able to distinguish between the teacher, professor, and teacher candidate. One or more professors may spend most of their time in a PDS, working with the teacher and candidate in the classroom and providing Professional Development for faculty as needed.

School District/University Partnership Schools

These partnerships may appear similar to Professional Development Schools, given the collaboration that takes place between personnel in both institutions. The aim of a partnership between a university and a school district is to seek reform at all levels. This means that both members



iStock/Steve Debenport

Schools are busy places full of happy people helping one another. New teachers should make a point of knowing and respecting all the support staff at their school.

of the partnership have to learn to work in new ways. Institutional cultures may have to change, and while change is inevitable, it is not always welcomed. Forming a partnership is labor-intensive and not always perceived in the same way by all members of the partnership. The university teacher education curriculum may have to be revised to meet the specific needs of schools and students in a district. School structures may have to be redesigned to meet the goals of the partnership and the inclusion of teacher education candidates into the daily functions of the school. The achievement of K–12 students remains at the center of any reform effort of partnership schools, as does the Professional Development of teachers and teacher candidates.

Shadow a Student or a Teacher for a Day

Before you receive your first clinical assignment, make a concerted effort to spend a day in a school shadowing a student or a teacher. Shadowing students will help you see the school day through their perspective. Observe what work they are engaged in and how they negotiate the physical, mental, and social demands of being members of a class group. Take note of the kinds of interactions they have with other students and with the teacher. Learn how they keep track of all that is expected of them.

Shadowing a teacher will help you begin to understand what will be expected of you during a typical school day. Make an effort to keep track of the number of decisions teachers make, and what those decisions entail. Note the special routines and management strategies they have in place to keep track of the students, student work, and class and school schedules. Listen to the conversations they have with the students and with other teachers. Watch their work with an eye toward the roles you will perform when you begin teaching. It could be an eye-opening experience. If you hear students, parents, other teachers, and administrators refer to effective teachers, ask if you can visit their class to observe their interactions with the subject matter and with students.

Volunteer as a Teacher's Aide or as a Tutor

To learn more about the work of teachers, volunteer to help out in a classroom or school. Teachers have scores of duties to address, before, during, and after class, and an offer of help from a well-meaning individual is always welcomed. Visit a school near your home, meet with the principal, and explain that you are studying to be a teacher and would like to have some experience working in a school as a volunteer. Your offer of help will certainly be met with enthusiasm.

There are many ways that you can develop skills when working with students. When starting out in your teacher education program, it is good to have experience working closely with one or two children. Tutoring is a great way to become familiar with students' learning styles and to understand the difficulties some students have learning specific content. Tutoring programs at reading centers in colleges of education or in public libraries seek tutors for a variety of programs. Working as a tutor can help build your confidence and competence as a teacher.

Become a Member of a Teaching and Learning Team

You will have ample opportunity to discuss educational issues in your teacher education courses. You will learn of the theories underlying practice and discuss ways theories are demonstrated through teachers' actions. While you are involved in your clinical practice, make an effort to join a teacher group and listen when teachers discuss teaching and learning issues and develop strategies for serving students. Take advantage of the expertise that can be gained from experienced teachers. Ask questions. When you visit schools as part of your field experience requirements, note effective teaching practices that you could incorporate into your own repertoire as you student-teach and later when you have your own classroom.

To become effective teachers, we learn as we observe and practice. We test theories and strategies, expanding our repertoire of ways to help students learn. With time, we become more familiar with the subjects we teach and the students with whom we work. We become more comfortable in the classroom as we understand the bureaucratic requirements of a school and become better managers of the classroom and learning.

TEACHERS' LOUNGE

IS IT MR. OR MRS.?



Lloyd J. Goldberg

Having already completed my master's degree in elementary education, and not finding a permanent position in the previous summer, I turned my attention to working as much as possible in the schools of Johnson City as a substitute. In an attempt to meet and be known by as many people as possible, I accepted a several-day position as a kindergarten teacher. My teaching license covered Grades 1–6, but I thought my experience and

general training could be easily adapted to kindergarten. In addition, I thought that the small class sizes and presence of a teacher assistant could alleviate any potential problems that might arise.

For context, Johnson City had recently constructed one building to house its K–8 classes, eliminating the middle school and several aging neighborhood elementary schools. Within the school there were no male teachers in the 30+ sections of K–3, nor were there any male administrators or office staff. Additionally, Johnson City sits on the confluence of the Susquehanna and

Chenango rivers in central New York. During the winter, temperatures can easily dip below zero, and wind chills can cause dangerous situations if anyone is outside too long. As a self-preservation technique, I used to grow a full, black beard each winter.

On my first day, I was immediately ushered into the world of the little ones. Having a substitute immediately gets them into hyper-mode, and having a male teacher creates some form of irreconcilable conflict in their minds. As the day progressed, we were having a productive experience, but one little boy kept referring to me as Mrs. G, instead of Mr. G. Normally, this isn't a big deal, but he was a smart kid and was the only student to seem to have difficulty with the concept of his teacher being a man. The fact I was wearing a tie and had a full beard was of little consequence to him.

Finally, I pulled him aside and gently said, "Buddy, I don't know about your family, but in mine it is the men who have beards and we call them mister." After a few seconds of intense thought, he motioned for me to come closer to him and responded with "But my grandma has a mustache." Out of sheer respect, I let him call me Mrs. G for the rest of the time I was in the class.

—Mr. Lloyd J. Goldberg, Teacher
Third Grade, Schorr Elementary
Las Vegas, Nevada

CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS

Do the kinds and amounts of preservice education and preparation that teacher candidates receive before they begin teaching have any impact on whether they leave the profession after their first year on the job?

The Assumption

Some policy makers believe that teachers who enter the teaching force through an Alternative Route to Licensure with little or no supervised field experience in a school setting are just as likely to stay in teaching as those candidates who have course work related to teaching and learning and have had practice teaching experiences.

The Research

Ingersoll, Merrill, and May (2014) examined measures of teachers' subject-matter education and pedagogical preparation from data provided by two National Center for Education Statistics surveys. Their analyses demonstrated that "the type of college, degree, entry route or certificate mattered little. What did matter was the substance and content of new

teachers' pedagogical preparation. Those with more training in teaching methods and pedagogy—especially practice teaching, observation of other classroom teaching and feedback on their own teaching—were far less likely to leave teaching after their first year on the job" (p. 29).

These study results suggest that what keeps teachers in the classroom beyond the first year has much to do with their pedagogical preparation apart from their other qualifications and experiences.

1. Do you know what the legislators in your state think about teacher preparation?
2. What experiences do you think are most important in learning to teach?
3. Can you cite any evidence for either of the perspectives on teacher preparation mentioned above?

Source: Ingersoll, R., Merrill, L., & May, H. (2014). *What are the effects of teacher education and preparation on beginning teacher attrition?* CPRE Research Report (#RR-82). Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania.

UNDERSTANDING AND USING DATA

LICENSURE TEST SCORES

Each state sets the qualifying or cut score that test takers must achieve before they can receive a license to teach in the state. These scores differ across states as shown below:

Test	AR	CT	LA	MS	NV	OH	PA	VA
Biology: Content Knowledge	—	152	150	135	154	148	147	155
Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	—	163	—	135	158	—	168	—
Elementary Education: Content Knowledge	—	—	150	—	—	—	—	143
English Language, Literature, & Composition: Content Knowledge	159	172	160	157	150	167	160	172
Mathematics: Content Knowledge	116	137	125	123	144	139	136	147
Social Studies: Content Knowledge	155	162	149	143	152	157	157	161

Your Task

Respond to the following questions:

1. What does this table tell you about becoming qualified in these eight states?
2. Why are scores not indicated for some states?
3. Why do some states require higher scores than others?

One way to analyze test scores across states is to look for patterns. In the table below, the red highlights indicate the state(s) with the highest qualifying score, and the blue highlights indicate the state with the lowest qualifying score. In some cases, states have qualifying scores that are close, but the range between high and low scores can be as much as 33 for elementary education for the states shown below.

Test	AR	CT	LA	MS	NV	OH	PA	VA
Biology: Content Knowledge	—	152	150	135	154	148	147	155
Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	—	163	—	135	158	—	168	—
Elementary Education: Content Knowledge	—	—	150	—	—	—	—	143
English Language, Literature, & Composition: Content Knowledge	159	172	160	157	150	167	160	172
Mathematics: Content Knowledge	116	137	125	123	144	139	136	147
Social Studies: Content Knowledge	155	162	149	143	152	157	157	161

The Power of a Support Group During Clinical Practice. Even though teaching involves being with groups of students every day, it can be a lonely profession if teachers don't make time to interact with one another in professional and personal settings. Sharing what works with colleagues and having them react and provide advice should be part of the culture of being a teacher. Other professions such as medicine and architecture require new graduates to practice as interns under the tutelage of experienced doctors or architects during their first years of practice. In many regards, field experiences and student teaching are intended to serve this purpose. Teachers who welcome teacher education candidates into their classrooms as co-teachers represent a special group who are not only experts in their profession but also eager to give back to their profession by helping others succeed. These teachers will guide you through the myriad dimensions of teaching. They will give you feedback on your teaching assignments and actively listen to your concerns. They become your colleagues in learning to laugh when the unexpected happens and to cheer you onward when your steps may not be so sure. They are also responsible for making sure that you meet standards for clinical experience, so they will expect your best effort and may admonish you when your performance is not acceptable. Be ready to accept constructive criticism as well as the praise that will certainly be yours to enjoy.

Understand the Role of Your Mentor or Cooperating Teacher

Many years ago, the *Harvard Business Review* let the business community know that “Everyone Who Makes It Has a Mentor.” The article went on to advise new members of business that if they didn't have a mentor, they should go find one (Collins & Scott, 1978). Soon after this pronouncement, the teaching profession began to look at what support mentors to new teachers could provide, and a formal construct for mentoring in teaching was developed. Of course, experienced teachers who serve as mentors to beginning teachers have always been around even without being called mentors. Your cooperating teacher is one of the mentors you will encounter on your journey to becoming a teacher. Other mentors may come in the form of professors, relatives, colleagues, and friends. If you don't seem to have a mentor, ask questions, and one will magically appear.

How to Set the Stage for Success in Your First Teaching Job. There is so much you need to know before you enter the classroom that first day. It has been said that if you desire a perfect ending, then the beginning must also be perfect. Your teacher education course work and clinical experience will program you for success in your first teaching job, but the guarantee that you will be more than ready rests solely on your shoulders. To paraphrase Eleanor Duckworth, an emeritus professor of education at Harvard, to truly understand a thing you have to learn it for yourself. All the lectures, all the assignments, and all the visits to schools will not have prepared you at all if you have merely gone through your program with your eyes on the degree at the end of the line. The best way to be prepared for that first teaching job is to develop the habit of asking questions, reflecting on each new step you take, collaborating with others, and always trying to broaden the horizon ahead by looking at it through perspectives different from your own.

HOW DO YOU KEEP TRACK OF YOUR GROWTH AS A TEACHER?

As humans, we are strangely programmed to keep track of changes in our environment and in ourselves. We track the weather, our weight, the stock market, and the standing of our favorite football team. We even use almanacs to help us track events that will happen in the future. Teachers use **benchmarks** such as “surviving the first year,” “successfully completing a round of parent–teacher conferences,” and “having students make Adequate Yearly Progress on standardized exams” to track their progress and to set personal standards for their continuous Professional Development. Teaching is replete with standards of all types. In addition to setting personal standards, it is a teacher's responsibility to be familiar with school district, state, and national standards at all levels.

Know the Standards

You may feel overwhelmed with standards, but if you can't talk about standards during your job interview, you will not be the top candidate for the job. Most schools have adopted a **standards-based curriculum** and provide their teachers with power standards and Common Core State Standards (you'll find more about the Common Core in Chapter 10). It is not only the standards for the students you will be teaching that affect your work: The teacher education program in which you are enrolled should be standards based. Your program should be preparing you to meet the InTASC standards mentioned earlier in this chapter. You are also expected to know the professional standards for your field (e.g., mathematics or early childhood education). Are you familiar with any of these standards?

Student Standards

New teachers should know the student standards for the subject they will be teaching. All states have developed student standards that indicate what students at different grade levels should know and be able to do in a subject area. The tests that students are required to take annually in mathematics, reading, writing, science, and social studies are based on the state standards. Many state standards are based on national standards developed by national organizations such as the International Literacy Association (ILA), National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), and American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). These standards provide a guide for what you should be teaching in those core curriculum areas. They can be used to develop your own performance assessments to determine what students are learning. The state tests also provide feedback, although limited, on what students have learned. State standards can be accessed on the website of your state department of education.

Teacher Standards

National professional associations have also developed standards that describe what teachers should know and be able to do to teach a specific group of students (e.g., ELLs or students with disabilities) or a specific subject such as physical education. If teachers meet these standards, they should be able to help students meet the student standards.

After you have taught for three or more years, you may decide to apply for national board certification. The NBPTS standards expect accomplished teachers to do the following:

- Be committed to students and their learning.
- Know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Be responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Think systematically about their practice, and learn from experience.
- Be members of learning communities.

In addition to these general expectations, the NBPTS has standards for teaching each subject area for specific age levels such as early childhood, middle childhood, early adolescence, and young adulthood. Your teacher education program will help you develop the foundation to meet these standards later in your career. A number of colleges and universities have redesigned their master's degrees to reflect these standards and help teachers become nationally certified.

There is no time like the present to start down the path toward successful teaching. Take advantage of the assignments and experiences you are required to complete, always thinking about how they relate to the subject or students you will be teaching next week or in a few years. In the activities at the end of each chapter in this book, you are provided opportunities to apply your knowledge to the realities of classrooms and schools. These activities can be incorporated into a portfolio of your work that will show your growth as you learn how to teach over the next year or two, and can be used later during your interview for a job.

Begin a Portfolio

A **portfolio** is a collection of your work, including papers, projects, lesson plans, and assessments. It serves many purposes. During your program, the artifacts (i.e., the documents and presentations) in your portfolio show your growth as a teacher from the first education course you take to completion of the program. Your written papers may have been submitted as part of your course work, or they may be written reflections of your experiences working with students. They show that you understand a particular topic in your field as well as your writing skills, and demonstrate your ability to analyze issues and classroom situations.

Lesson plans, which you will develop later in the program as a detailed guide for your instruction of a topic, show that you understand the subject that you are teaching and that you can select appropriate instructional strategies for helping students learn. Evaluations of your field experiences and student teaching by your school and university supervisors provide evidence of your effectiveness in the classroom. Samples of student work related to the lessons you teach, along with your analysis of the student work, and reflections on how effective your teaching was and what you would do differently the next time, provide evidence that you have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions critical to a teacher's work. The artifacts in your portfolio can serve as evidence that you meet state and professional standards that were discussed earlier in this chapter.

Like architects and artists, new teachers select examples of their best work for portfolios to be presented at job interviews. These portfolios should also include demographic information that presents your credentials: a résumé, transcripts, child abuse clearance, criminal background clearance, and teaching license. Any awards or honors that you have received should be added to this portfolio. Letters of recommendation from faculty and/or your supervising teachers should be included along with any letters of appreciation or commendations from parents or students.

You may not be asked to present a portfolio until you are further along in your program. However, the task of compiling a portfolio will be much easier if you begin now to collect and organize your papers, projects, evaluations, and student work. You may be surprised to see your own growth over time. Technological advances have made the creation of digital portfolios commonplace. One advantage to the electronic portfolio is that it provides you the opportunity to highlight your technology skills—one of the requirements of many standards. To assist you in beginning your portfolio, each chapter in this book suggests one or two tasks for that purpose.

Reflect on Your Observations and Practice in Schools

Reflection, a valued skill in teaching, allows you to think about the effects of your choices and actions on students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community. According to Kottler, Zehm, and Kottler (2005), reflection is among the most important missions of a teacher. It is an extremely complex and demanding process that requires a lifetime of dedication. Others have found that reflection improves the professional knowledge of teachers and serves as a powerful tool for individual learning (Oner & Adadan, 2011). Teachers can achieve Professional Development through continuous reflection (Ayan & Seferoglu, 2011), and reflection can be promoted through documentation of actions. Creating a portfolio is one way you can keep track of what you do and record how well it seems to play out. Once you



Maintaining a digital record of professional growth and achievements is one way teachers can document their careers and share information with others.

have the documentation, you can revisit specific events or actions over time and reflect on what might be improved. Reflective teachers are able to articulate why they chose one instructional method over another, analyze the effectiveness of the approach when they use it, and choose another approach for a student who did not learn.

Early in your program, you will be observing teachers and working with small groups of students rather than teaching. However, you can begin to develop your reflection skills in both these school settings and activities in your college classroom. One popular process is the maintenance of **journals** in which you summarize your thoughts about and reactions to the major things you observed or experienced in a class or school. Journal entries should be brief, candid, and personal. You should record how you were affected by the events and why. You may be surprised, angry, puzzled, delighted, or apathetic. You may not believe what you are reading or seeing. You may want to step in and change something. You may have learned a new strategy for accommodating the needs of a student with disabilities. The journal allows you to regularly record (usually daily or weekly) your reflections on what you are learning. As you read your journal later, you will see how your thoughtful reflections helped you define your own teaching.

Begin Collaborating With Peers and Professors

One way to help you determine whether you want to teach is to talk and work with teachers and other school professionals. You will begin to get a better sense of what it is like to be a teacher rather than a student. Ask them why they chose a particular lesson, responded to one student in one way and in a different way to all of the others, and used a particular assessment. Be helpful to the teachers you are observing when they ask for assistance and sometimes even when they don't seem to need your help.

You should begin to develop your collaborative skills as you work with other candidates and professors on campus. You are likely to be assigned to work with your peers on group activities. These activities provide you the opportunity to be a leader in planning and delivering papers and presentations. To be successful, you will have to work with people with whom you have many common experiences and others with whom you have little in common. You may have to assist others, and sometimes do some of their work for the good of the team. When you are in the classroom, you will find similar dilemmas as you work with other teachers. You may also have a better understanding of the group dynamics of students when you assign them to group work in the classroom. It is wise to begin now to learn to collaborate with professional colleagues. In a year or two or three, you will be amazed at where your journey to become a teacher has taken you.

CONNECTING TO THE CLASSROOM

This chapter has provided you with some basic information about the need for qualified teachers, where the jobs are, how to become licensed, and some of the circumstances you might encounter during your first few years of teaching. Below are some key principles for applying the information in this chapter to the classroom.

1. Effective teachers make a difference in student learning.
2. Professional teachers are responsible for the well-being of their clients (students).
3. New teachers have a better chance of success at the start of their careers if they receive support from teachers with more experience.
4. A school's curricula will be guided by the state or school district's standards for students.
5. Teacher standards identify the key knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teachers should demonstrate in the classroom.
6. The collection of your work in a portfolio should provide evidence that you have met standards and that you can help students in your classroom learn.

SUMMARY

Five major points were discussed in this chapter.

- Teaching is a challenging profession that requires its members to be very knowledgeable, skillful, and in possession of the necessary disposition for working with students.
- The rewards of teaching can be both intrinsic and extrinsic, as teachers help students acquire knowledge and develop skills.
- Teacher education candidates need to become familiar with standards for PreK–12 students and standards for teachers, and to demonstrate competency in content areas through performance on standardized tests.
- Teacher education candidates need to spend time in schools observing experienced teachers and working with students.
- Activities that contribute to a teacher's development include the initiation of a portfolio, reflection on one's practice, and collaboration with colleagues.

KEY TERMS

accreditation 10	journals 31	portfolio 30
benchmarks 28	lesson plans 6	profession 5
cut score 21	mentors 10	proficiencies 22
dispositions 9	National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) 11	reflections 11
English Language Learner (ELL) 17	out-of-field teachers 18	rubrics 11
extrinsic rewards 7	pedagogy 14	standards-based curriculum 29
field-based supervisors 21	performance assessments 21	
intrinsic rewards 7		

CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Some teachers believe that the accountability measures imposed by policy makers stifle their creative abilities as teachers. In what ways do you think teacher creativity might be hampered by having to administer Norm-Referenced Tests of student achievement under district or state mandates?
2. What are some of the ways you learned about the teaching profession even before beginning your teacher education program?
3. This chapter suggests that teacher education candidates should be able to show evidence that they meet the InTASC standards. Why is it necessary for teachers to possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified in these standards? Which of the InTASC standards do you personally find most important? Why?
4. Do you consider teaching a profession similar to law and medicine? Why? Why not?
5. Why is it important to track your professional growth during your teacher education program? How can tracking your growth as a professional help you in the future?

SELF-ASSESSMENT

What Is Your Current Level of Understanding and Thinking About Becoming a Teacher?

One of the indicators of understanding is to examine how complex your thinking is when asked questions that require you to use the concepts and facts introduced in this chapter.

Answer the following questions as fully as you can. Then use the Assessing Your Learning rubric below to self-assess the degree to which you understand the complexities of becoming a teacher.

1. How would you explain to someone who was not an educator why teaching is a profession?
2. Why is it important for teachers to possess specific knowledge and skills?
3. How can a teacher's competency in a content area be assessed?
4. When should someone who is a teacher candidate begin collecting artifacts about his or her professional growth? Why?

Assessing Your Learning Rubric

	Parts & Pieces	Unidimensional	Organized	Integrated	Extensions
Indicators	Elements/concepts are talked about as isolated and independent entities. Some important names are provided in isolation.	One or a few concepts are addressed, while others are underdeveloped, or not mentioned.	Deliberate and structured consideration of all key concepts/elements.	All key concepts/elements are included in a view that addresses interconnections.	Integration of all elements and dimensions, with extrapolation to new situations.
Becoming a teacher	Some reasons and necessary skills are provided with little or no connection between or among them.	Teaching is described in relation to knowledge of content and classroom instruction.	Multiple roles that teachers perform are described.	A holistic view of the many facets of becoming a teacher is provided.	Teaching and becoming a teacher is described as professional growth.

FIELD GUIDE

FOR LEARNING MORE ABOUT . . .

Becoming a Teacher

A field guide is a book or pamphlet people can bring along when exploring their surroundings. The term *field guide* is generally used to help people identify wildlife or other objects in nature. In biology, field guides are designed to help the reader identify specific birds, plants, or fish by studying their features and characteristics. Field guides can help people distinguish one object from another that might look similar but is not.

In this text, the term *field guide* is a metaphor. The activities described at the end of each chapter will help guide you through your investigations of the foundations and purposes of schooling in America. In a sense, you will be creating your own field guide of evidence of teaching and student learning. As a field biologist would do, you should take field notes as you complete the activities outlined for you at the end of each chapter. These notes should include facts and descriptions of your observations. Your field notes should also include date, time of day, the grade or group you are observing, and your reflections and “Aha!” moments. Keeping such detailed data is a form of journaling.

Persons engaged in field work also collect artifacts such as pictures and samples of what they are studying. John James Audubon (1785–1851), an American naturalist, completed more than 400 life-size paintings of birds in his expeditions into the field. You will not be expected to collect a specific number of items or even attempt paintings of the classrooms you visit, but you should have evidence of teaching behavior, student responses, and school organization and culture.

Once you have become comfortable in schools and in the classroom, you should begin to compile your field notes into a portfolio—a collection of evidence of your growth toward becoming a teacher. Each chapter in this text will introduce field guide activities such as observation of the school and classroom environments, specific portfolio tasks, and the practice of journaling. When you complete each of the suggested activities, you will have ample evidence that you have a thorough understanding of schooling in America.

Ask a Teacher or Principal

Ask one new and one experienced teacher to recall their first year of teaching. If they could start over, what would they do differently? What had they been well prepared to handle when they first entered the classroom? What were their greatest challenges? What recommendations do they have for making your first year successful? What amusing stories do they have to tell?

Make Your Own Observations

Both teachers and students are expected to meet standards in today’s schools. The NBPTS states that teachers should be (1) “committed to students and their learning,” (2) “know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students,” (3) be “responsible for managing and monitoring student learning,” (4) “think systematically about their practice and learn from experience,” and (5) be “members of learning communities” (NBPTS, 2002). For one of your next visits to a school, select one of these five expectations and record evidence that you see of teachers in the school demonstrating it.

(Continued)

(Continued)

Reflect Through Journaling	Begin an entry in your journal about why you want to teach. Why do you want to teach a specific subject? Why do you want to teach at the preschool, elementary, middle, or high school level? Where would you like to teach when you complete your program? Why do you want to teach in a specific location? What adult, if any, had an influence on your decision to teach? As you observe and work in schools over the next few years, you may want to revisit your reasons for teaching and update them based on your new experiences.
Build Your Portfolio	<p>Many people report that a teacher has made a great difference in their lives. Write a short paper on the influence one or more teachers have made on your life. Describe what the teacher did in the classroom that impressed you. Begin to develop a list of characteristics of teachers who are making a difference. Later you can return to this paper and list to determine if you are developing the same characteristics in yourself as you saw in the teachers you admired.</p> <p>Learn the standards for teaching in your state. Make a list of the proficiencies related to knowledge, skills, and dispositions that you are expected to demonstrate in the classroom. During your field experiences, when you achieve one of these standards, place a checkmark by the standard and indicate how you know that you have achieved the proficiency (e.g., the assessment used and your score). As you progress through your teacher education program, continue to add checkmarks until you have met all the standards. This exercise will help you become very familiar with the standards and will also be tangible proof of how much you have learned.</p>
Read a Book	<p>In <i>Those Who Can</i>, by Neil Bright (2013), you will read about master teachers and what they do to encourage, inspire, and promote student learning. You will also read about ways teachers express their professionalism both in and out of the classroom. This book is one that you should talk about with other teachers. Bright's comments should be discussed and implemented whenever possible. The book can serve as a guide and a comfort zone when your first forays into teaching do not turn out as you would like.</p> <p>In a fresh look at what teachers and administrators can do to make schools places where teacher and students want to be, Nancy Atwell's <i>Systems to Transform Your Classroom and School</i> (2013) provides a detailed look at what engaging teachers do to establish environments in which all students can learn. As you read this book, talk and think about ways you will implement some of the practices in your own future classroom.</p>
Search the Web	<p>National Teachers of the Year: Visit www.ccsso.org/national-teacher-of-the-year to see examples of National Teachers of the Year.</p> <p>State Licensure Requirements: State licensure requirements can be accessed from the state agency in which you are interested or from the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (www.nasdtc.org), where you can access information on licensure requirements and state agencies responsible for teacher licensing.</p> <p>National Education Association: See the website of the NEA (www.nea.org/home/30442.htm) for an example of a code of ethics. You should become familiar with the code of ethics in your state and school district.</p> <p>Licensure Tests and Study Guides: For additional information on the licensure tests and study guides, visit the websites of the two major testing companies (www.ets.org and http://home.pearsonvue.com/Test-Owner/Deliver-your-exam/Pearson-VUE-test-center-network.aspx). You will need to check with your state to determine which tests you will be required to pass.</p>
Additional Web Resources	<i>Education Week</i> : The website of <i>Education Week</i> at www.edweek.org includes statistics on education and the latest news on educational practices and issues in schools and universities.

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