

FOURTH EDITION

# Teachers, Schools, and Society

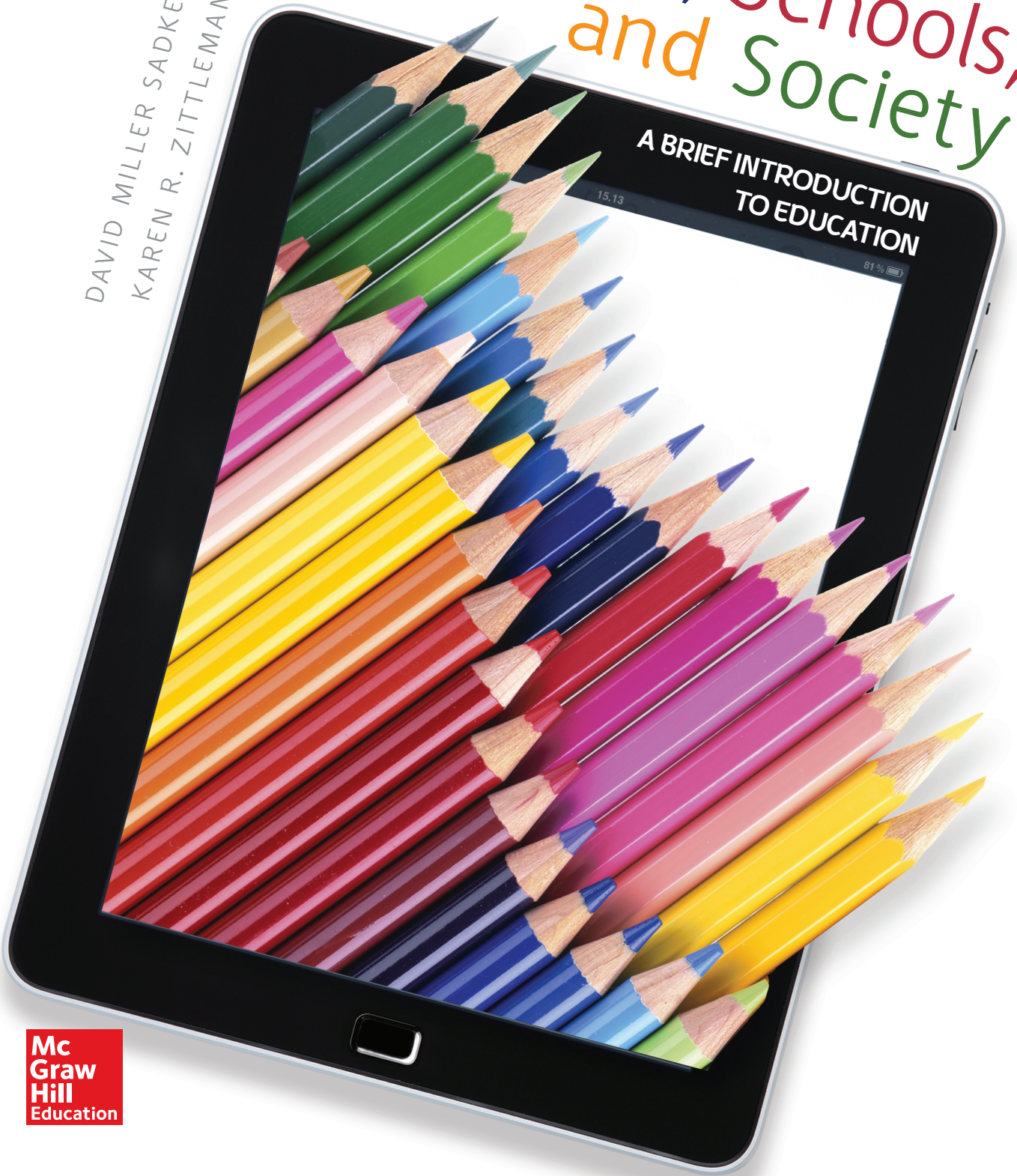
DAVID MILLER SADKER  
KAREN R. ZITTELMAN

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION  
TO EDUCATION

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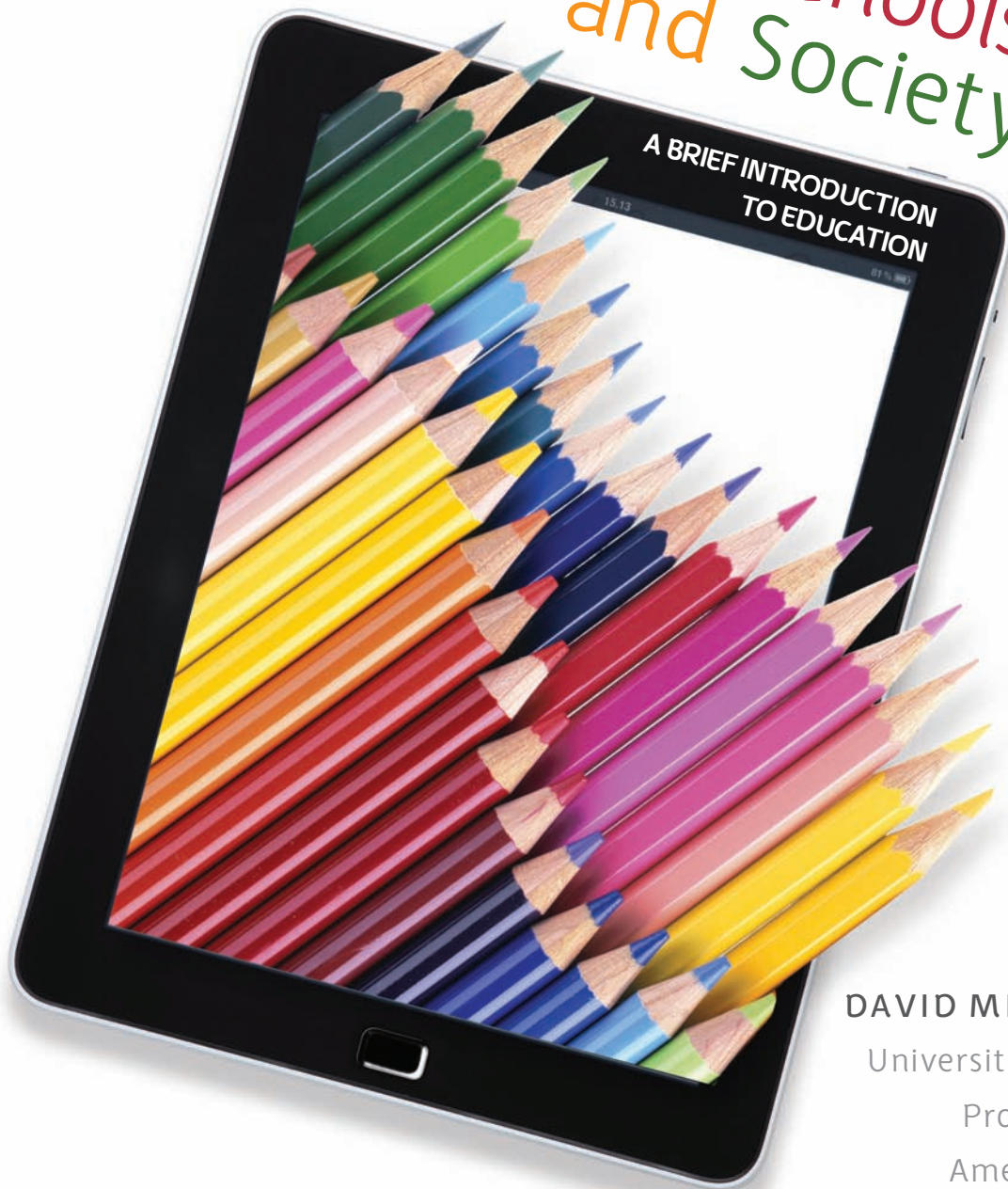
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FOURTH EDITION

# Teachers, Schools, and Society



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Education



TEACHERS, SCHOOLS, AND SOCIETY: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATION, FOURTH EDITION

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# About the Authors



## DAVID SADKER

Dr. Sadker has taught at the junior and senior high school levels, as well as at universities in Wisconsin, Virginia, Arizona, the District of Columbia and Thailand. He is professor emeritus at American University (Washington, DC), and now teaches and writes in Tucson, Arizona. Along with his late wife Myra Sadker, he gained a national reputation for work in confronting gender bias and sexual harassment. The Sadkers' book, *Failing at Fairness: How Our Schools Cheat Girls*, was published by Charles Scribner and, with Karen Zittleman, updated and retitled *Still Failing at Fairness: How Gender Bias Cheats Girls and Boys and What We Can Do About It*. David Sadker co-edited *Gender in the Classroom: Foundations, Skills, Methods and Strategies Across the Curriculum* and was on the editorial board of *The Encyclopedia of Diversity in Education*.

David Sadker is a Courage & Renewal facilitator who works with educators, physicians, patients, social workers, lawyers, political and business leaders, as well as spiritual communities. David employs poetry, storytelling, music, art, reflection, and mindfulness to create a circle of trust, a place where individuals can explore their inner landscape. (Visit [www.courageaz.com](http://www.courageaz.com))

He has directed more than a dozen federal education grants and has written seven books and more than seventy-five chapters and articles in journals including the *Harvard Educational Review* and *Psychology Today*. The Sadkers' work has been reported in hundreds of newspapers and magazines, from *The London Times* to *The New York Times*. The Sadkers appeared on radio and television, including *The Today Show*, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *Dateline: NBC* with Jane Pauley and *All Things Considered*. The American Educational Research Association (AERA) recognized the Sadkers' work with several national awards, including the best review of research published in the United States, their service to the profession, and for "scholarship, activism, and community building on behalf of women and education." The American Association of University Women awarded the Sadkers their Eleanor Roosevelt Award, and the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education recognized their work with the Gender Architect Award. In 2012, David was selected as one of "Nine Most Influential Actors in Title IX History" by The American Civil Liberties Union. David Sadker was selected as a Torchbearer by the U.S. Olympic Committee and has been awarded two honorary doctorates.



## KAREN R. ZITTELMAN

Dr. Zittleman attended the University of Wisconsin for her bachelor's degree and American University for her master's degree and doctorate. Karen loves teaching and has taught in elementary and middle schools. She was also a Ropes course instructor, focusing on self-empowerment, team building, and communication skills. At the collegiate level, she has taught both introductory and methodology courses, as well as online teacher professional development courses. Her articles about educational equity and teacher education appear in the *Journal of Teacher Education*, *Educational Leadership*, *Phi Delta Kappan*, *Principal*, and other professional journals. Dr. Zittleman is the co-author of *Still Failing at Fairness*, which documents gender bias against girls and boys in school. She also wrote *Making Public Schools Great for Every Girl and Boy*, a guide for promoting equity in math and science instruction for the National Educational Association and educational film guides for *A Hero for Daisy* and *Apple Pie: Raising Champions*. Her academic interests focused on educational equity, effective teaching, and contemplative practices in education. She also facilitates workshops on entrepreneurship, conscious aging, and purposeful living. Dr. Zittleman teaches and writes in Tucson, Arizona. You are invited to visit her Web site at [www.sadker.org/zittleman.html](http://www.sadker.org/zittleman.html).







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# Preface

If you think that *Teachers, Schools, and Society: A Brief Introduction to Education* was written to introduce you to the world of teaching, you are only half right. This book also reflects our excitement about a life in the classroom and is intended to spark your own fascination about working with children. We wrote this book to share with you the joys and the challenges we feel about teaching, as well as the importance of fairness and justice in school and society. With this fourth edition, our goals are unchanged. We work hard to provide you with information that is both current and concise, and we work even harder to create an engaging book—one that will give you a sense of the wonderful possibilities found in a career in the classroom.

The primary intent of *Teachers, Schools, and Society: A Brief Introduction to Education* is to provide a broad yet precise exposure to the realities of teaching and the role of education in our society. The text will help you answer important questions such as: Do I want to become a teacher? How do I become the best teacher possible? What should a professional in the field of education know? How are schools and teaching changing? To help you answer those questions, we offer a panoramic, diverse, and (we hope) stimulating view of education.

The text views education from several vantage points. In Part I, *Teachers and Students*, we present the world of schools, teachers, and students from the teacher's side of the desk. Part II, *Foundations*, examines the broad forces—historical, philosophical, financial and legal—that shape the underpinning of our educational system. In Part III, *Schools and Classrooms*, we explore the purposes of schools, daily life in and beyond school, and the obvious, and not so obvious, curriculum taught in school. In this last section, we also provide an overview and analysis of the reform movement and the many curricular changes now so much a part of America's schools. We conclude the text with a variety of effective teaching strategies and practical suggestions to make your first year in the classroom a success.

The fourth edition of Sadker/Zittleman's brief *Teachers, Schools, and Society* retains and builds upon the hallmark characteristics that made the third edition a best seller.

- **Brevity of a Streamlined Introduction to Education.** The eleven essential chapters are organized for balanced coverage of foundational, curricular, and professional topics; the brief edition provides maximum teaching flexibility while assuring coverage of crucial content areas.
- **Contemporary Focus.** Current issues and topics are presented in a balanced and exciting reading style. A few of the contemporary topics in this edition include greater attention

to global and international education, a Connect site with video links to TED talks, relevant YouTube, and other video segments related to concepts in the text (see pg. xiii for more information about Connect), a greatly expanded section on the Common Core, as well as the arguments surrounding the Core. The text updates topics from the role of business in educational reform to the myths surrounding our public schools. *Contemporary Issues* provides a chapter focus on a specific issue in today's schools, from the notion of merit pay to the reintroduction of single-sex public schools. Students are also given practical, current instructional strategies in the *Teaching Tips* feature. We view this text as a living and changing narrative of today's educational issues.



## CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

### A View from the Field: Greening Schools

Sidwell Friends Middle School in Washington, D.C., is one of a growing number of green schools. Guided by its Quaker values, Sidwell Friends is committed to practicing responsible environmental stewardship. The building itself has achieved a LEED Platinum green certification, the highest level awarded.

Every aspect of the building has been constructed or remodeled with an eye toward conservation and sustainability. Photovoltaic panels on the roof provide 5 percent of the school's energy, which helps power the computer lab. On the rooftop garden, students grow herbs and vegetables for their school lunches. A constructed wetland in front of the school looks like an attractive, sloping landscape with a variety of plants, but it is much more. The school's wastewater flows below, filtered and cleaned by the plants and microorganisms, and then is recycled and used in the school's toilets. Skylights and reflective panels maximize the natural light in classrooms, a renovation that has been shown to improve academic performance. The windows, with their light-filtering shades, are the single most energy-efficient step employed in the building. Sidwell uses 10 to 15 percent of the energy of a comparable building to light the school. Even the siding on the building is green; the wood cladding is made from reclaimed cedar wine casks. Sidwell Friends represents an amazing institutional commitment to environmental sustainability. Educators use these building innovations as teaching tools, to help students understand the importance of protecting our planet. More and more, teachers across the nation are also promoting green living. Take, for example, Andy Stephens.

Andy Stephens, 26, is a science teacher at CALS Early College High School in Los Angeles. Andy's school is not a certified green school but he incorporates environmental education into his curriculum.

We focus on the impacts we have at our school in terms of energy usage, transportation, waste, recycling, and indoor air quality. In a culminating project, I work with a team of teachers to create an interdisciplinary (math, science, history, English) action project that includes a research paper, civic action, presentation, and reflection. Students look at the science behind an issue, mathematically analyze data, write about the history of the issue, and take action.

Andy also leads the school's environmental club, the Mean Green Team. The club's many activities include beach cleanups and peer education.

Andy was actively interested in the environment before becoming a teacher. He was an avid hiker, hunter, and fisherman growing up in Washington. "I was galvanized towards action at a young age thanks to many outdoor experiences and my connection to the land."

More information about Sidwell Friends School and its green building can be found at [www.sidwell.org](http://www.sidwell.org).

Andy Stephens has a BA in economics from Occidental College and completed his master's in science education at California State University, Northridge in 2008.



## TEACHING TIP

### First, You Get Their Attention

I entered teaching through the back door and did not have the advantage of an effective classroom management mentor. What I would have loved in retrospect was to have someone say to me: One of the first things you need to establish is a simple and effective method of getting your students' attention. For example, in working with elementary-age children, I experimented with holding up an object. "Hey, look at this magic marker." I would say. All eyes would automatically look up because I had given them a task to perform. And with a note of wonder in my voice perhaps there was a good reason to look up. "Hey, look at this remarkable paper clip I just found and look what I can do with it."

This method was less effective as I started to work with middle schoolers. Some colleagues used the counting down method with this age group. "By the time I get to one, starting from five everyone should be quiet." It didn't work as well for me. Then I was attending an adult workshop one weekend and the facilitator said right at the start, "When you hear me say 'Focus up!' please repeat it and stop what you are doing." Well, it worked for a roomful of two hundred adults and it worked wonders with middle schoolers as well. To repeat the words required that they interrupt what they were doing, whether it was deep engagement with their work or more likely chatting with a neighbor.

Sometimes I would have to repeat it again, but rarely did it take three times to quiet them down.

Most recently, I learned from a colleague who teaches kindergarten that a few simple rhythmic claps that in turn needed to be repeated by the class would achieve the same effect—simpler and easier on the voice, and a little less militaristic than the abrupt "focus up."

It is the nature of children's minds to wander, and it is the task of the teacher to gather and hold their attention when necessary instructions or other words are being spoken. What I gleaned from these experiments over the years was that the response that I needed from them was best achieved by having them perform a simple concrete action.

ERIC Baylin, an art teacher for more than 40 years, currently teaches high school art at Packer Collegiate Institute in Brooklyn, NY.

**REFLECTION:** Do any of Eric Baylin's techniques appeal to you? Are there other techniques that you are considering to encourage your students to focus and stay on task?

- **Social Justice and Equity.** The text stresses the importance of fairness and justice in school and society, focuses on the most crucial topic areas, and integrates the most current issues in education.
- **Focus on Fairness:** Issues of social justice and equity are at the core of this text. These pages examine the racial, economic, social, and gender issues that too often erect barriers to equal opportunity.
- **Diverse Voices and Experiences:** Issues of multicultural education and diversity in learning are treated as fundamental and are infused from the very first chapter (“The Teaching Profession and You”) to the very last one (“Becoming an Effective Teacher”). The authors argue that only through recognizing and appreciating diversity can teaching be both effective and joyful.
- **Standards and Testing.** Important legislation and policies are thoroughly addressed, including the arrival of national standards, the proponents and critics of the testing culture, and the new federal programs of the Obama administration. There is also a section analyzing the problems of high-stakes testing and discussing some of the alternatives to high-stakes testing.
- **Connections to INTASC Principles.** Online INTASC Reflective Activities and Your Portfolio (RAPs) activities offer readers ways to apply text content and develop portfolio artifacts that demonstrate their understanding of INTASC principles. McGraw-Hill also offers a LearnSmart Praxis Study Tool, using adaptive technology to help with Praxis exam preparation.
- **Research Updated and Expanded to Reflect Education in America Today.** As with previous editions, the goal of the fourth edition is to expose you to the issues facing education today; to ensure its currency, many new references have been added. This new edition also provides updated discussions of school reform, Common Core and national standards, the success of educational reform in Finland, and a new discussion exploring the root of the word “vocation” as it applies to a teaching career. Readers will also note the revised discussions of Carol Dweck’s work on fixed and growth mindset theories, the impact of male and female brains on learning. There is a new look at the influence of wealth and the business community on school reform, what Diane Ravitch refers to as “the corporate reform movement.”

## New in the Fourth Edition

In addition to the updated statistics, charts, and graphs that you would expect in a new edition, we have made some other interesting changes. This edition includes greater attention to global

and international education, providing marginal notes that highlight facts and insights about education around the world. We give special attention to Finland, a nation that successfully reformed its educational system. Also, each chapter begins with an opening quote, to set the tone for that chapter. Connect now has video links to TED talks, relevant YouTube, and other video segments related to concepts in the text. Connect also has an expanded collection of portfolio and reflective activities reflecting the revised INTASC: Core Teaching Standards. These activities can add depth to your learning. Here is a brief, chapter-by-chapter description of the revisions in the fourth edition:

### Chapter 1: Becoming a Teacher

There is a new discussion exploring the root of the word “vocation” as it applies generally, and to a teaching career. The You Be the Judge feature has been updated and shortened, and there is an added discussion on profit goals versus purpose goals, as well as a new discussion of the place of salary in the profession. We have included an update of Teach for America along with the medical profession comparisons sometimes made to teacher preparation. There is an additional description of another urban legend—*Teaching is like other academic majors in college, just easier*. In American Schools: Better than We Think? section, we have included recent criticisms from educators like Diane Ravitch about schooling in the United States, and why the nation’s schools are doing a better job than we are led to believe. The last section of this chapter is new, offering additional information on preparing for a career in teaching, including teacher license and portfolios.

### Chapter 2: Different Ways of Knowing

The research on the nature of intelligence now includes Carol Dweck’s work on fixed and growth mindset theories. There is a new discussion on learning styles, and a more in-depth look at the impact of male and female brains on learning. We have revised the discussion on gifted and talented students, and added new research on the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

### Chapter 3: Teaching Your Diverse Students

There is an expanded discussion on poverty, as well as more information on the general behaviors and attributes that can assist students from a variety of backgrounds to do well in school.

### Chapter 4: Student Life in School and at Home

In addition to the updated research and statistics throughout chapter, particular attention has been paid to revising student

engagement, tracking, cyberbullying, family patterns, parental involvement, poverty, and obesity/eating disorders.

### **Chapter 5: The Multicultural History of American Education**

The chapter now includes a section on the history of educational reform. Two new Educational Hall of Famers—Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois—have also been added to Connect.

### **Chapter 6: Philosophy of Education**

This chapter now includes a new section on digital activism, as well as a new “A Closer Look” feature reflecting how one teacher’s philosophy changed during his thirty-year career.

### **Chapter 7: Financing and Governing America’s Schools**

As part of the added global dimension of this edition, we include a discussion of how Finland approached educational reform. Finland’s approach was both successful and radically different from the U.S. approach. Another update includes the impact of the recent recession and many new state laws reducing school funding. This has led to court and state legislature conflicts on the meaning of “adequate education” in state constitutions. There is additional discussion on the critical role of the school principal.

### **Chapter 8: School Law and Ethics**

A new “A Closer Look” feature describes how school laws are created. Legal updates include fair use, zero-tolerance policies, students’ freedom of speech rights, and issues related to religion in schools. The section on ethical issues in the classroom has been updated.

### **Chapter 9: Purpose of America’s Schools and the Current Reform Movement**

The new chapter title reflects the changes in chapter organization. The chapter begins with the purposes of schools, effective school research, and today’s reform movement, including school choice. There is additional coverage on parent–teacher relationships. The chapter now provides a greater analytical dimension of the reform movement, and a closer look at some of its underlying assumptions and criticisms of educational reform. There is a new section on the influence of wealth and the business community on school reform, what Diane Ravitch refers to as “the corporate reform movement.” New information on green ribbon schools and the pros and cons of the value-added concept are explored.

### **Chapter 10: Curriculum, Standards, and Testing**

Greater discussion is given to the Common Core. Included in this expanded section is a brief history of how the Core was developed, the purpose of the Common Core, and the growing opposition to implementing the Core. A new Closer Look feature on the “Myths and Maybes” differentiates fact from fiction, but also pointing out current Core trends, not all of which are positive. There is also a new section on how standardized student test scores are being used to evaluate teachers, as well as some of the unfortunate consequences of this approach. (Included in this discussion is Campbell’s law.) The technology section now includes more information on the impact of race, ethnicity, and economics on home use of the Internet.


### **Chapter 11: Becoming an Effective Teacher**

This chapter has been updated to include new discussions on the flipped classroom. Additional insights are included for the effective uses of praise as feedback, effective questioning strategies, and how to use the revised Bloom’s taxonomy to improve classroom interactions. Technology’s role in effective instruction is also expanded.



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Joe Kelly did a great job summarizing the many new readings as well as creating new questions. Classroom teachers like David Saifer, Eric Baylin, Diane Pette way, and Amie Kemberling add practical insights to our *Teaching Tips*. Sean Miller keeps our green school section ripe with updates. Scott Grubbs, from Valdosta State College, worked to ensure that the material available to instructors using this text is first rate. Of course, last and far from least is a force of nature, S. J. Miller, who added depth, clarity, and the spark of life to our writing.

*Teachers, Schools, and Society* was originally inspired by a wonderful woman and bright academic star—Myra Pollack Sadker. David’s late wife co-wrote the text through several editions over a fifteen-year period. She was always the major force behind providing a student-friendly introduction to teaching. In March 1995, Myra died under going treatment for breast cancer. Yet her insights and passion for teaching still guide our efforts. Even when her name is no longer on the cover, her heart and mind shine through the book. We know that she will always be the primary author of this book. To learn more about Myra and her work, visit the Myra Sadker Foundation at [www.sadker.org](http://www.sadker.org).

Managing Editor Penina Braffman has been the editorial godmother of this text. Her integrity and caring kept our spirits high, and we hold her support close to our hearts. We appreciate the effort of Melissa Leick, content production manager, in moving this publication process forward in a smooth and efficient manner. Our development team, **ansrsource**, led by editors Emily Nesheim and Erin Guendelsberger have done an amazing job of taking on this challenging assignment and keeping the pages, footnotes, and authors all on track. We are lucky to have their services. **ansrsource** was responsible for assembling the many supplements that accompany the book, including the online video album, and we appreciate their efforts both in assembling and directing development. Adina Lonn and Chantelle Williams were the brand coordinators on this project and worked on coordinating manuscript and information as it passes from one set of hands to another. Alexandra Schultz worked on the marketing and sales

of this edition. The previous editors who have nursed this text through many editions are Allison McNamara and Cara Labell, whose insights and talents are still reflected in the book. The McGraw-Hill team continually makes us feel that this text could not have better publishing allies and friends, and we are proud to have them as our publishers.

We also thank the following reviewers of *Teachers, Schools, and Society: A Brief Introduction to Education* for generously sharing with us their experiences in teaching the book:

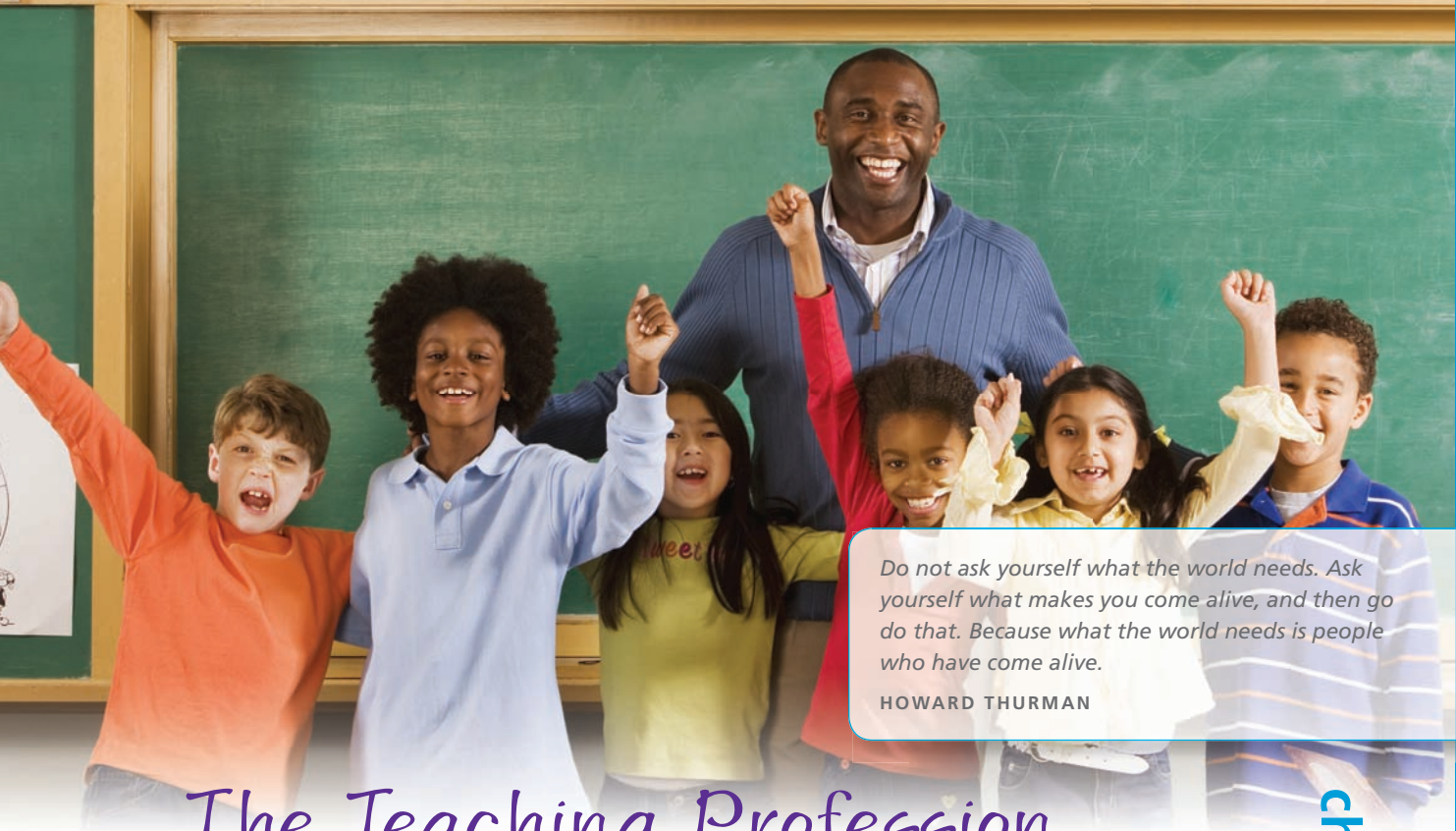
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Susan Brandt, Volunteer State Community College  
Theresa Capra, Mercer County Community College  
Pamela Chibucos, Owens Community College  
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Finally, we thank our students for keeping us honest, on track, and motivated. They are our inspiration.

*David M. Sadker*  
*Karen R. Zittleman*  
*Tucson, Arizona*





*Do not ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and then go do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.*  
HOWARD THURMAN

# The Teaching Profession and You

chapter

1



### Focus Questions

1. What are the advantages and the disadvantages of being a teacher?
2. What are the satisfactions—and the complaints—of today’s teachers?
3. Is teaching a “good fit” for you?
4. Can we consider teaching to be a profession?
5. How has teacher preparation changed over the years?
6. What are the differences between the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers?
7. Are America’s schools a secret success story?
8. What steps can you take now on the road to becoming a teacher?



## Chapter Preview

This chapter looks at classroom life through the teacher's eyes. You may be thinking: I have spent years in a classroom, watching teachers and what they do. If there is one thing I know, it is teachers and teaching! But during your years in the classroom, you have looked at teaching through "student-colored glasses," a unique but somewhat distorted view, like looking through a telescope from the lens that makes everything tiny instead of large. In this chapter, we will view the classroom from the teacher's side of the desk, a very different way of looking at school.

Some of you are taking this course because you want to learn more about schools and teaching. This text will answer many of your questions and offer useful information. We know that many of you taking this course are considering a major decision: Do I want to be a teacher? This first chapter is especially designed to help you answer that question.

The chapter is also about "us." Yes, us. We are now a team, this textbook, the authors, and you. When your authors were students, we did not much like our textbooks. They were far from exciting to read. By extension, we feared that we might not like teaching. In the end, we loved teaching—but still hated our textbooks. We want this textbook to be different—to be not only informative but also enjoyable. This first chapter offers us the opportunity to introduce the textbook and, in a sense, to introduce ourselves.

Welcome to our classroom.

## A Teaching Career—Is It Right for You?

In this text, we will try mightily to include relevant information, witty insights, useful studies, and engaging chapters about teaching, school law, student diversity, and educational history—all kinds of topics that offer you a balanced view of teaching. We want you to understand the fundamentals of teaching and schooling in the United States, and we will present the information in as exciting a way as we can. To do this, we have created several features that encourage you to reflect and focus on key points. You will learn about both the positive and the negative aspects of many educational issues as you consider a possible career in teaching.

At some point, you will need to figure out if teaching is right for you. (And here's the hard part: Only you can do that.) Consider your friends' and relatives' advice, but realize that in the final analysis, it is your life, not theirs. You undoubtedly have met people who are doing work they love, and they are joyful and fulfilled. You have also met people who have made an unhappy choice, perhaps followed someone's advice that sounded good at the time—but wasn't. For them, every day is "a grind." Your goal is to find the career that puts you in that first group, a career that brings you joy and meaning. Where do you find such a vocation?

People think "vocation" is all about choosing and preparing for a career: learn about different careers, consider the external rewards and downsides of each career, weigh the pros and cons, and finally choose the one that makes the most sense. But if you haven't discovered this yet, life often defies such logic and planning. The clue about choosing the right vocation is hidden in plain sight, in the word itself. *Vocation* comes from the Latin root for *voice*; your voice. What career is your inner voice telling you to pursue? What, you don't hear an inner voice? Not surprising. In our society, schools teach us early on to be quiet and listen to others, to take the notes on what others say, to study hard, and to do well on the test. But finding the vocation that is right for you is not about knowing what others believe; it is about learning about yourself. Theologian and

Pulitzer Prize winner Frederick Buechner put it nicely when he said that finding your vocation in life is discovering the place “. . . where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”<sup>1</sup> We hope you find reflective, quiet times in this course so you can listen to your heart and discover where your deep gladness leads you.

As you read through this text, stop every now and then and ask yourself: “Does this speak to my heart? Am I enjoying what I am reading? Does teaching feel right for me?” We know, this heart talk is not what you typically read about in textbooks, but this is not a typical textbook.

In a *Peanuts* cartoon, Linus comments that “no problem is so big or complicated that it can’t be run a way from.” Charles Schulz succinctly highlighted a human frailty shared by most of us—the tendency to put aside our problems or critical questions in favor of day-to-day routine. In fact, it is amazing how little care and consideration many of us give to choosing a career. It is always easier to catch a movie, surf the net, or even study for the next exam than it is to reflect on and plan for the future. That may be one reason why questions such as “What are you going to be when you grow up?” and “What’s your next career move?” make so many of us uneasy. The big question facing many of you: Is teaching right for me? Some of you are in college or university programs and will be teaching in the next few years. Others of you may already be in a classroom, teaching as you work toward your license in one of several alternative teacher certification programs. For some of you, teaching may become a decades-long career filled with joy and satisfaction. For others, teaching may be limited to only a few years spent in the classroom, one of several careers you explore during your working years. And still others may reach an equally useful and important realization: Teaching is not the ideal match for your interests or skills. We’d like to help you decide whether you and teaching are a good fit.

Throughout this text, we pose a variety of questions for you to consider. We have devised a feature called *You Be the Judge*, which presents several sides of an issue and encourages you to sort out where you stand. When the authors have a strong opinion about these or any of the issues in the text, we will not hide it from you. But our opinion is just our opinion, and we want you to form your own ideas. To that end, we will work hard to be fair, to present more than one side of the issue, and to help you form an independent point of view. *You Be the Judge* is one way that we hope to spark your interest and thinking on critical issues.

In the first *You Be the Judge*, where we highlight the joys and the concerns of a career in the classroom (see pp. 6–7), we include comments by teachers themselves that reveal their perceptions and feelings about their work. A more structured attempt to assess teachers’ views on their careers was carried out by the National Education Association (NEA). Teachers from around the nation were asked why they decided to become teachers, and why they choose to stay in teaching.<sup>2</sup> Teachers elect a career in the classroom for the intrinsic rewards that make teaching unique, including a desire to work with young people, the significance of education generally, and even the love of a particular subject—not a bad bunch to have as colleagues. (See Figures 1.1 and 1.2.)

Metropolitan Life has been surveying American teachers for a quarter of a century and reports that many teachers are more positive than they have been in decades. Their 2008 survey indicated that two-thirds of teachers feel that they are well prepared for their profession and better prepared for classroom challenges such as poverty, limited English proficiency, and lack of parental support. Nine out of ten teachers believe that their school curriculum is excellent or good. And while salaries remain a problem for many teachers, especially during times of tight budgets, about two out of three teachers felt they were paid a decent salary. The 2013 MetLife Survey was less optimistic. The impact of a struggling national economy



Like this perspective? In this chapter, you will look at classrooms from the teacher’s side of the desk.

#### RAP 1.3

Why Teach?

#### FOCUS QUESTION 1

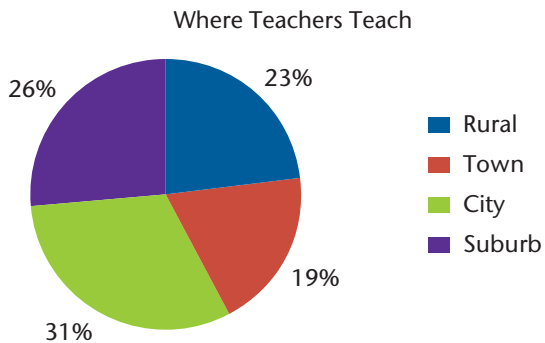
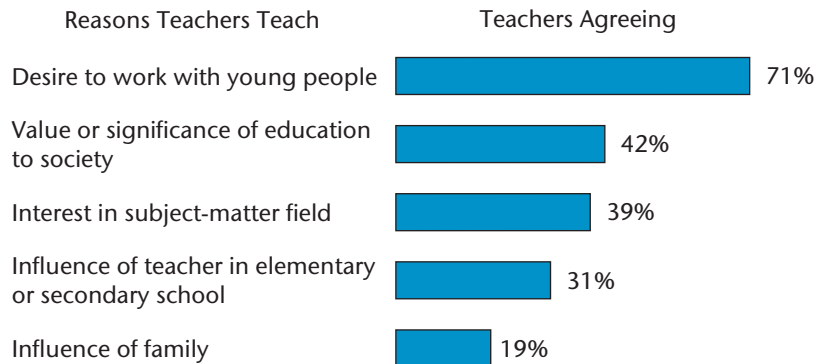
What are the advantages and the disadvantages of being a teacher?

**FIGURE 1.1**

Why teach?

SOURCE: National Education Association, *Status of the American Public School Teacher*, 2006.

**REFLECTION:** Which of these reasons for teaching speak to you? Can you suggest others?

**FIGURE 1.2**

Where teachers teach?

SOURCE: C. Emily Feistritzer, *Profile of Teachers in the U.S.*, National Center for Education Information, 2011, [www.ncei.com/Profile\\_Teachers\\_US\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ncei.com/Profile_Teachers_US_2011.pdf), chart 6, p. 16.

**REFLECTION:** Which of these geographic regions speak to you? Why?

**FOCUS QUESTION 2**

What are the satisfactions—and the complaints—of today's teachers?

**FOCUS QUESTION 3**

Is teaching a “good fit” for you?

led to the loss of many teaching positions, and as teachers' job security fell, little surprise that job satisfaction fell as well. But the survey also revealed that when teachers were treated as professionals, their job satisfaction increased. What exactly does being treated as a professional mean? Glad you asked, because we will revisit the concept of professionalism a bit later in this chapter.

But while most teachers feel better about their jobs than they did in the past, not all do. A Public Agenda survey (2009) described four in ten teachers as “disheartened” and almost the same ratio as “content.” One reason for this mixed picture is the economic downturn that began in 2008 and affected many school budgets. Another has been the direction of the education reform

movement. As people work to improve schools, some have decided that ineffective teachers are the problem with American education. Teachers in too many communities feel pressured by shrinking school budgets and public criticism. But even under these pressures, it is helpful to remember that almost one in four reported feeling great satisfaction in their work. They were described as “idealists,”<sup>3</sup> whose dedication makes a difference in people's lives; perhaps this is one reason Americans respect teachers more than they do scientists, judges, or television newscasters. Only doctors are more respected. And that is quite a compliment. (See Figure 1.3.)

Many believe that the path to improving education is monetarily rewarding good teachers and removing weak ones, so it is not surprising that pay-for-performance has gained popularity. **Pay-for-performance**, sometimes called **merit pay**, attempts to make teaching more accountable by linking teacher and student performance to teacher salary. Simply put: Better teachers earn more money. While this sounds like a pretty good idea, it has its problems. Although many of us feel we know a good teacher when we see one, being objective can be difficult. For example, many evaluations use student test scores to decide which teachers are most effective. But does a test score measure teaching, or student attendance, or the family situation? Perhaps teachers who teach challenging subjects like physics or math should earn more money than first-grade teachers? (Or do we have that backward?) Perhaps teachers who work at under-resourced schools in high-poverty areas should be paid more. (Does that mean we pay less to those who teach the gifted?) It is not unusual for school politics and personality issues to influence people's judgment about who is a terrific teacher. And schools can be very political places. (See Contemporary Issues: A View from the Field: Merit Pay.) Sometimes a plan that sounds fairly easy, like paying strong teachers more, is actually pretty difficult. Pay-for-performance has its challenges, but it is popular among many, and it is part of the current reform movement that we will talk more about later.<sup>4</sup>



## A View from the Field: Merit Pay

Danielle Price, 23, is finishing her first year of teaching seventh- and eighth-grade math at Merrill Middle School in Denver, Colorado. As a new teacher in the Denver Public School (DPS) system, Danielle was automatically enrolled in a merit pay program called Professional Compensation, or ProComp. In the ProComp program, a teacher's starting salary is based on years of experience. Teachers can add to their base salary by meeting Student Growth Objectives, completing Professional Development Units (PDU), and receiving a satisfactory evaluation. "I'm used to putting together evidence for my supervisor, having just completed my degree not long ago," Danielle says, "The PDU is a lot less work than I did in college; however, it's very time consuming collecting the evidence needed to pass the final evaluation." Teachers can earn bonuses if they fill Hard to Staff positions, such as math/science teachers, or teach in Hard to Serve Schools. As a math teacher at a Hard to Serve School, Danielle currently receives both of those bonuses, but that can change.

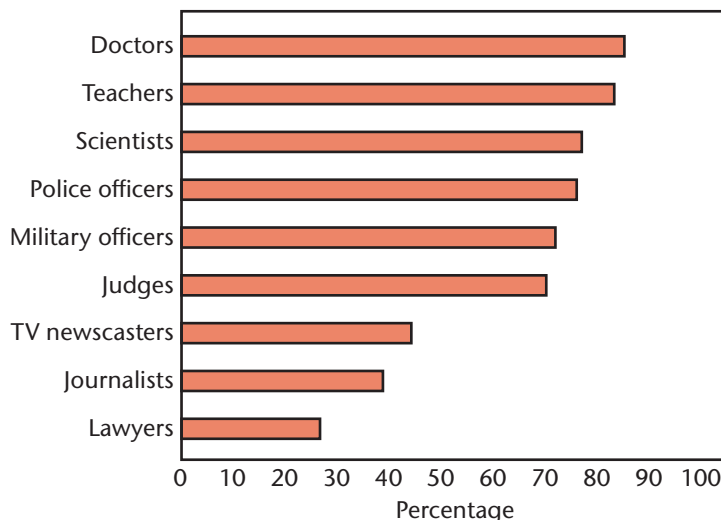
It has been decided that next year we are no longer going to be classified as a Hard to Serve School, which will remove a part of my bonus. As a first-year teacher, I'm disappointed in the merit system because it adds more stress and pressure to first-year teachers in earning their bonuses. We have to meet the induction process requirements to obtain the professional license, meet ProComp requirements to get a raise, and worry about raising test scores as an inner city school district. I have worked intensely as a first-year teacher, and the compensation isn't nearly what it should be. However,

I'm making more money at the end of my first year teaching in ProComp than a few of my friends who are in their fourth and fifth years of teaching and not enrolled in ProComp. I don't think they are being rewarded fairly either on the traditional step-pay scale.

Before becoming a teacher, Danielle voted to implement ProComp in the Denver Public School system.

As a voter, I didn't know how much work it would be for teachers. ProComp didn't change my decision about applying for and accepting a position with DPS, but it is starting to influence my decision about whether to stay in the school system or not. It is difficult to work this hard for such small rewards. I know that merit pay doesn't change the way I teach; I want to set obtainable goals that challenge me as a teacher and person and my students. If I don't meet my objectives, I don't meet them; I will try again the following year, and continue to challenge myself. I don't think that teachers work harder in their classrooms to get the pay raises, but I do think we do a lot more busy work outside of class in order to earn the raises in ProComp. ProComp doesn't make better teachers, it challenges us to meet our goals we set and then be rewarded a little more than typical pay scales do for our work and dedication.

Danielle Price graduated with a BS in Mathematics and a double minor in Secondary Mathematics Education and Linguistically Diverse Learners Education from Regis University.



**FIGURE 1.3**

Public trust in various professions. "Would you generally trust each of the following types of people to tell the truth, or not?"

SOURCE: Statistics from *The Harris Poll #61*, August 8, 2006.

**REFLECTION:** Why do you think doctors and teachers garner so much trust? Why is there a significant drop in trust for TV newscasters, journalists, and lawyers?



## A Teaching Career

### THE GOOD NEWS...

#### YOU ARE NOT WORKING ALONE, STARING AT A COMPUTER SCREEN OR SHUFFLING PAPERS

If you enjoy being in contact with others, particularly young people, teaching could be the right job for you. Young people are so often funny, fresh, and spontaneous. As America's students become increasingly diverse, you will find yourself learning about different cultures and different life experiences. The children will make you laugh and make you cry. "I still can't get used to how much my heart soars with every student's success, and how a piece of my heart is plucked away when any student slips away."<sup>1</sup>

#### THE SMELL OF THE CHALKBOARD, THE ROAR OF THE CROWD

You carefully plan your social protest lesson. You bring your favorite CDs and DVDs of social protest songs, and prepare an excellent PowerPoint presentation to highlight key historical figures and issues. Thoughtful discussion follows, and students are spellbound. Wow, what a lesson!

When you have taught well, your students will let you know it. On special occasions, they will come up to you after class or at the end of the year to tell you "This class is awesome." At younger grade levels, they may write you notes (often anonymous), thanking you for a good class or a good year.

#### I'M PROUD TO BE A TEACHER

When you become a teacher, many people will accord you respect, because they admire teachers. You will be someone whose specialized training and skills are used to benefit others. Mark Twain once wrote, "To be good is noble, but to teach others how to be good is nobler." Which would have summed up this point perfectly, except, being Mark Twain, he added: "—and less trouble."

#### AS A TEACHER, YOU ARE CONSTANTLY INVOLVED IN INTELLECTUAL MATTERS

You may have become very interested in a particular subject. Perhaps you love a foreign language or mathematics, or maybe you are intrigued by contemporary social issues. If you decide you want to share that excitement and stimulation with others, teaching offers a natural channel for doing so. As one teacher put it: "I want them to be exposed to what I love and what I teach. I want them to know somebody, even if they think I'm crazy, who's genuinely excited about history."<sup>4</sup>

#### PORTRAIT OF THE TEACHER AS AN ARTIST

Some people draw clear parallels between teachers and artists and highlight the creativity that is essential to both:

### ...THE BAD NEWS

#### STOP THE CROWD—I WANT TO GET AWAY

Right in the middle of a language arts lesson, when fifteen kids have their hands in the air, you may feel like saying, "Stop, everybody. I feel like being alone for the next fifteen minutes. I'm going to Starbucks." For the major part of each day, your job demands that you be involved with children in a fast-paced and intense way, which could affect behavior beyond school. One kindergarten teacher warned her 40-year-old brother "to be sure and put on his galoshes. Wow! Did he give me a strange look."<sup>2</sup>

#### IS ANYBODY THERE?

After teaching your fantastic lesson on social protest literature, you want to share your elation with your colleagues, but it is hard to capture the magic of what went on in the classroom. It is rare to have another adult spend even ten minutes observing you at work in your classroom. Once you have obtained tenure, classroom observation becomes incredibly infrequent. The word may leak out—through students, parents, or even the custodian—if you are doing a really fine job; however, on the whole, when you call out, "Hello, I'm here, I'm a teacher. How am I doing?" there will be little cheering from anyone outside your classroom.

#### I DON'T GET NO RESPECT

Many are quick to blame teachers, and only teachers. When students test poorly, teachers, not poverty, parents, or students are blamed. Sexist attitudes compound the problem, as majority female occupations, like teaching, are held in lower esteem. And for those who see the world through a money lens, teaching does not stack up well.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE SAME MATTERS YEAR AFTER YEAR AFTER YEAR

Teaching, like most other jobs, entails a lot of repetition. You may tire of teaching the same subject matter to a new crop of students every September. If this happens, boredom and a feeling that you are getting intellectually stale may replace excitement. Because you are just embarking on your teaching career, you may find it difficult to imagine yourself becoming bored with the world of education. However, as you teach class after class on the same subject, interest can wane.

#### THE BOG OF MINDLESS ROUTINE

Although there is opportunity for ingenuity and inventiveness, most of the day is spent in the three Rs of ritual, repetition, and routine. As one disgruntled sixth-grade teacher in Los Angeles said,



## The Good News... ..The Bad News

I love to teach as a painter loves to paint, as a musician loves to play, as a singer loves to sing, as a strong man rejoices to run a race. Teaching is an art—an art so great and so difficult to master that a man [or woman] can spend a long life at it without realizing much more than his [or her] limitations and mistakes, and his [or her] distance from the ideal. But the main aim of my happy days has been to become a good teacher. Just as every architect wishes to be a good architect and every professional poet strives toward perfection.<sup>5</sup>

### TO TOUCH A LIFE, TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Teaching is more than helping a child master a subject; each classroom is a composite of the anguish and the joy of all its students. You can feel the pain of the child in the fourth seat who is too shy to speak or the student who struggles to focus on any one task or project. You can be the one who makes a difference in their lives:

I am happy that I found a profession that combines my belief in social justice with my zeal for intellectual excellence. My career choice has meant much anxiety, anger, and disappointment. But it has also produced profound joy. I have spent my work life committed to a just cause: the education of Boston high school students. Welcome to our noble teaching profession and our enduring cause.<sup>7</sup>

### BETTER SALARIES, LONGER VACATIONS

Salaries vary enormously from one community to another. Additional salary can be earned by working in the summer or accepting extra faculty responsibilities. Occupational benefits, such as health and retirement, are generally excellent, and you will enjoy long vacations. All these considerations make for a more relaxed and varied lifestyle, one that gives you time for yourself as well as your family. Whether you use your “free time” to be with your family, to travel, or to make extra money, time flexibility is a definite plus.<sup>8</sup>

“Paper work, paper work. The nurse wants the health cards, so you have to stop and get them. Another teacher wants one of your report cards. The principal wants to know how many social science books you have. Somebody else wants to know if you can come to a meeting on such and such a day. Forms to fill out, those crazy forms: Would you please give a breakdown of boys and girls in the class; would you please say how many children you have in reading grade such and such. Forms, messengers—all day long.”<sup>6</sup>

### THE TARNISHED IDEALIST

We all hope to be that special teacher, the one students remember and talk about long after they graduate. But too often, idealistic goals give way to survival—simply making it through from one day to the next. New teachers find themselves judged on their ability to maintain a quiet, orderly room. Idealistic young teachers find the worship of control incompatible with their humanistic goals. Likewise, they feel betrayed if a student naively mistakes their offer of friendship as a sign of weakness or vulnerability. As a result, many learn the trade secret—“don’t smile until Christmas” (or Chanukah, Kwanzaa, or Ramadan, depending on your community)—and adopt it quickly. Even veteran teachers often throw up their hands in despair. Trying to make a difference may result in more frustration than satisfaction.

### BUT SALARIES STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO

Although teachers’ salaries have improved, they still lag behind what most people would call a good income. Teachers would need a 30 percent pay increase to become competitive with other college-educated careers. Compared with teachers in other countries, U.S. teachers work longer hours for less pay. A history teacher says, “It’s really difficult to maintain a family . . . I’m not sure I could have done it then except for a wife who’s not demanding or pushy. She’s completely comfortable with the things we have, and we don’t have a great deal.”<sup>9</sup>



### connect YOU DECIDE...


Which of these arguments and issues are most influential in determining if teaching is a good fit for you? Is there a particular point that is most persuasive, pro or con? What does

that tell you about yourself? On a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is “really committed” to teaching, and 1 is “I want no part of that job,” what number are you? Remember that number as you read the text and go through this course—and see if you change that rating in the pages and weeks ahead.

# Classroom Observation

## Teachers Discuss the Pros and Cons of Teaching

Deciding whether to enter the teaching profession is an important decision. As you've read in this chapter, there are many things to take into consideration when exploring teaching as a career. In this observation, you will observe experienced and new teachers as they discuss both the joys of teaching and their concerns with the profession, some of the surprises they discovered, and the advice they have for those considering a career in the classroom.

 **connect** Check out Connect to view this video.



### GLOBAL VIEW

If there are international students in your class (or students who have been schooled abroad), perhaps they will be willing to discuss their experiences with teacher satisfaction in other cultures. Visit the Institute for International Education ([www.iie.org](http://www.iie.org)) for information on teacher experiences in different countries. The site also describes opportunities to teach abroad, including the Fulbright scholarship program.

### GLOBAL VIEW

Research teacher wages internationally. How might salary affect status and lifestyle issues abroad?

In addition to identifying and rewarding superior teachers, the recent reform effort focuses on identifying and removing weak teachers, even those with tenure. What is tenure? After teaching satisfactorily during a probationary period (usually two to four years), teachers typically receive **tenure**, an expectancy of continued employment. Tenure is not an iron-clad guarantee of job security. It does not protect teachers who break the law, are debilitated by alcoholism, or theoretically have become terrible teachers. Tenure is intended to protect teachers from arbitrary and unfair dismissal. Unfortunately, in too many school districts, it has had the unintended effect of insulating some weak teachers from dismissal. (Did you ever have an awful teacher protected by tenure? Not much fun.) But many teachers worry that without tenure, it may not be just the weak teachers who are removed. Teachers may be fired because of personality conflicts, disputes with administrators, or other reasons unrelated to teaching skills. So although tenure protections are still in place in most school districts, much consideration is being given to the best ways to identify and remove incompetent teachers—and to possibly eliminating tenure entirely.<sup>5</sup> How do you feel about these possible tenure changes and the introduction of pay-for-performance? Both these modifications may well influence your life in the classroom.

## Professionalism at the Crossroads

What noble employment is more valuable to the state than that of the man who instructs the rising generation?

(Cicero)

Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern but impossible to enslave.

(Lord Brougham)

I should think it as glorious [sic] employment to instruct poor children as to teach the children of the greatest monarch.

(Elizabeth Elstob)

We must view young people not as empty bottles to be filled, but as candles to be lit.  
(Robert Schaffer)

I touch the future; I teach.

(Christa McAuliffe)

#### RAP 1.5

Creating a Career Information Document

Literature, philosophy, and history are replete with such flowery tributes to teaching. In many minds, in some of our greatest minds, teaching is considered the noblest of professions. But the realities of the job do not always mesh with such admirable appraisals, resulting in a painful clash between noble ideals and practical realities.

Many teachers feel that the satisfaction they realize inside the classroom is too often jeopardized by forces beyond the classroom: politicians mandating numerous standardized tests, demanding parents offering little support, and textbook publishers or state officials deciding what should be taught and what topics are off-limits to teachers. Teachers desire more autonomy and control over their careers and, like all of us, want to be treated with more respect. Teachers increasingly see themselves as reflective decision makers, selecting objectives and teaching procedures to meet the needs of different learners.<sup>6</sup> They must know their subject matter, learning theory, research on various teaching methodologies, and techniques for curriculum development.<sup>7</sup> Some believe that the problems confronting teachers stem from the more pervasive issue of professional status and competence. Are teachers professionals? Are they treated like professionals? What does it take to be a professional, anyway? *Educating a Profession*, a publication of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), lists twelve criteria for a *profession*.

We have shortened these criteria here, and ask you to consider each one and decide if you believe that teaching meets these criteria. After marking your reactions in the appropriate column, compare your reactions with those of your classmates.

Do not be surprised if you find some criteria that do not apply to teaching. In fact, even the occupations that spring to mind when you hear the word *professional*—doctor, lawyer, clergy, college professor—do not completely measure up to all these criteria.

Where do you place teaching? If you had a tough time deciding, you are not alone. Many people feel that teaching falls somewhere between professional and semiprofessional in status. Perhaps we should think of it as an “emerging” profession. Or perhaps teaching is, and will remain, a “submerged” profession. Either way, teachers find themselves in a career with both potential and frustration.

Why does all this “profession talk” matter? You may be more concerned with *real* questions: Will I be good at teaching? Do I want to work with children? What age level is best for me? Will the salary be enough to give me the quality of life that I want for myself and my family? You may be thinking: Why should I split hairs over whether I belong to a profession? Who cares? The issue of professionalism may not matter to you now or even during your first year or two of teaching, when classroom survival has top priority. But if you stay in teaching, this idea of professionalism will grow in significance, perhaps becoming one of the most important issues you face. Even now, as a student, you can become more reflective in your views

#### FOCUS QUESTION 4

Can we consider teaching to be a profession?



Collectively, teachers struggle to empower their profession; individually, they struggle to empower their students.