

Q and A Guide to Entering the Teaching Profession

15



CHAPTER

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. What does the education job market look like? (or, put another way, will I be able to find a satisfying teaching position?)
2. Can I make a decent salary as a teacher?
3. How can new teachers increase their chances of working in a school of their choice?
4. What do I need in order to teach—a license or certification? (and how do I get one!)
5. What teacher competency tests do I need to take?
6. Why do teachers seek tenure? (and should I?)
7. Are there jobs in education outside of the classroom?



WHAT DO YOU THINK? What Questions Do You Have? Click on [Ask the Author](#) to submit any questions you still have. See what questions others have asked and the author's responses.

CHAPTER PREVIEW

Beyond questions concerning education as a field of study, students often have personal and practical questions about teaching, the kinds of questions that are more likely to be asked after class or during office hours. Students considering an education career want to know everything from where the jobs are to how to

land a teaching position, from how teachers are licensed to what kinds of education careers are available beyond the classroom. We trust that this chapter will answer some of the questions you are asking, and even some you never thought to raise.

CHAPTER FOCUS

When students consider a career, they often bring more questions than can be answered during a semester's coursework. This chapter is intended to offer many answers and provide a change of pace in the textbook's structure. For a chapter outline, see the IM.

Q

What Are My Chances of Finding a Teaching Position?

A

This is a practical and quite natural question for you to be asking right now. After all, you are thinking about investing time, energy, money, and talent in preparing yourself to become a teacher, so it makes sense to ask whether you will be able to land a position when you graduate. Here is a shortcut to sorting out your employment possibilities, the “**four Ws**”: *when, what, where, and who*. Let’s begin with *when*.

GRABBER: A 5TH “W”
IM

FOCUS QUESTION 1
What does the education job market look like? (or, put another way, will I be able to find a satisfying teaching position?)

Although you may not have planned when you would enter teaching, the good news is that this is a terrific time to be looking for a position in education. While there are few guarantees when it comes to predicting national labor needs, several factors suggest that there will be a significant number of teaching positions available into the next decade. Perhaps we can appreciate the current situation better if we take a look at “the bad old days.”

Historically, the demand for new teachers has resembled a roller coaster ride. In the 1950s and 1960s, a teaching shortage meant virtually anyone would be hired as a teacher, with or without the proper credentials. Back then, new graduates of teacher education programs enjoyed the view from the roller coaster as it soared. By the 1970s, the teacher employment roller coaster had begun to descend. Shrinking school budgets and the end of the baby boom had led to far more teachers than there were positions; as more teachers were licensed than positions existed, **teacher oversupply** became part of the educational lexicon, and teacher unemployment was common. By the 1980s and 1990s, the roller coaster was back on the ascent, as teacher retirements increased and student enrollments began to climb.

Strong demand for new teachers continues into the twenty-first century.¹ An increasing student population, calls for smaller class sizes, ongoing teacher retirements, and the relative attractiveness of a teaching career have increased the demand for teachers.

Let’s consider the second *W*: *what* subject and grade level you plan to teach. Teachers of certain subjects, such as science and math, are in short supply, and many school districts are being forced to hire science and math teachers who have not taken enough courses to qualify for a license in these fields. Science, computer science, and math are “hot” fields; in many districts, so are bilingual and special education.² One way to make yourself more marketable is to consider course work and school experiences in subjects and skills that are in demand.

Population shifts and political actions affect teacher demand, and they contribute to the third *w*, *where*. Recently, teacher shortages were felt in western and southwestern states (Arizona, California, Alaska, and Hawaii), while the need for new teachers was generally lower in the Northeast, Great Lakes, and Middle Atlantic areas.³ But, despite these general trends, there are notable exceptions; for example, population increases in some communities in New Jersey and New Hampshire created local teacher shortages. Large cities, one of the more challenging classroom environs, also continue to experience a shortage of new teachers. In high-poverty urban and rural districts alone, more than 700,000 new teachers will be needed in the next decade.⁴

As we discussed earlier in the text, local and state governments are experimenting with new methods of school organization, changes that may impact the job market and go beyond the traditional four *Ws*. **Privatization** (the movement to turn over school management to private companies), voucher systems, and even charter schools challenge traditional employment practices by introducing productivity measures, individual school decision making, and the participation of parents and others in personnel actions. Many schools now monitor teacher competence through tests,

and may even link pay increments to student achievement. These changes may affect teacher supply and demand in particular regions and schools in the years ahead.

States and local communities also differ in their resources and priorities. Wealthier districts are more likely to sponsor a greater variety of programs and course offerings and to establish smaller average class sizes, actions that translate into a need for more teachers, while many urban areas struggle to find qualified teachers and adequate resources. School districts from Dallas to Detroit to Washington, DC, offer an ever-increasing array of incentives, including thousands of dollars in signing bonuses. The federal government offers housing assistance and student loan forgiveness to recruit teachers to urban schools.⁵

Who Are My Teaching Colleagues? What Are the Demographics of Today's Teachers?

There are three million teachers in America, and the typical teacher is a 42-year-old white woman who has been teaching for sixteen years. Despite efforts to recruit people of color into teaching, most teachers are white and non-Hispanic. Although 17 percent of students are African American, fewer than 8 percent of all teachers are African American; while 16 percent of students are Hispanic, only 6 percent of teachers are Hispanic. About three out of four teachers are women, and recruiting men and people of color to teaching remains a challenge.⁶ (See Figure 15.1.)

You will not be alone as a new teacher: Nearly one in four of your colleagues will have begun teaching within the past five years. Your next few years may also mirror their activities, as more than half of your colleagues have earned a master's degree, and three out of four participate in annual professional development activities.⁷

What Are My Chances for Earning a Decent Salary?

The truth is that teaching offers incredible rewards, and these rewards go beyond salary. If you love teaching, as we do, it will be a joy to go to work, and a worthy way

RELATED READING

The \$100,000 Teacher: The Solution to America's Declining Public School System by Brian Crosby (2001).

Q

A

TEACHER TIP

Following each question and answer section, have students finish the following statement in the margin. "I learned . . ." and "A question I still have is . . . ?"

OVERHEAD 165

New K–12 Teachers by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

Q

A

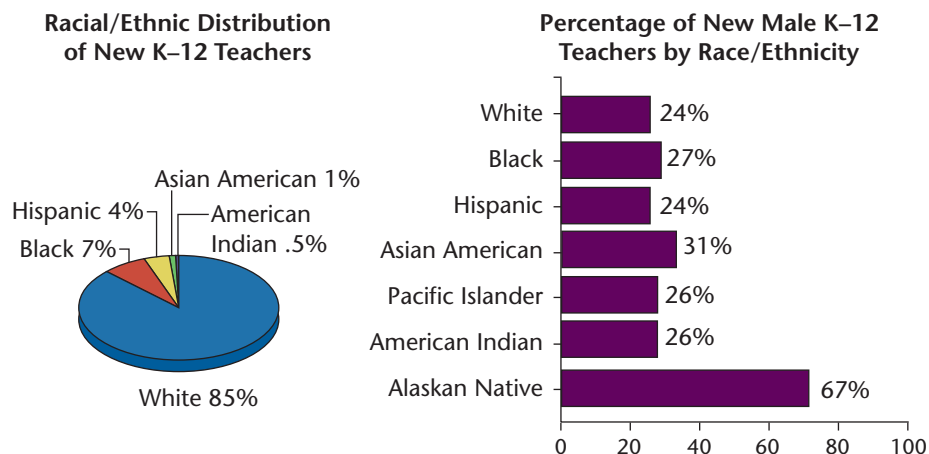


FIGURE 15.1

New K–12 teachers by race/ethnicity and by gender.

SOURCE: National Education Association (NEA), *Fact Sheet on Teacher Shortages* (Washington, DC: NEA, 2001).

REFLECTION: How can teacher education programs recruit more students of color? What might attract more men into elementary teaching?

FOCUS QUESTION 2

Can I make a decent salary as a teacher?

to invest your life. That joy, however, does not appear on your pay stub, and we are not alone in our belief that teachers are not paid what they deserve. The good news is that teachers' salaries have been improving in the last twenty years, although teachers still earn less than other white-collar workers, such as accountants, engineers, and computer systems analysts. But when state budgets are tight, teacher salaries suffer. Starting teachers now average over \$30,000 a year, and experienced teachers are paid from \$30,000 to the mid-\$50,000. But these are only averages. Some school districts pay teachers six figures, while others barely pay \$20,000 a year. It would be wise to contact specific school districts of interest for a copy of their salary schedule.⁸

Q**Do Private Schools Pay Less than Public Schools?****A**

Yes. Private or independent schools generally pay teachers lower salaries. Although many extraordinary teachers work in private schools, private school teachers as a group have less schooling, less experience, and participate less in professional development than do public school teachers—differences that are used to explain their lower salaries. But, while the salaries are lower, many private schools offer teachers a different set of benefits—smaller classes, more motivated students, more supportive parents, a greater sense of community, a greater sense of teacher autonomy, a shorter school year, a more challenging curriculum, and sometimes, housing and meals. Private schools, like their public counterparts, vary significantly in their academic standing, salaries, and employment practices. If you are interested in teaching in this arena, remember that each school needs to be evaluated on an individual basis. While some private schools are quite competitive with local public school employment benefits and are academically demanding, others do not compare as well.⁹

VIDEO SEGMENT 36

Respect for Teachers:
The History of America's
Attitudes towards Teachers

Q**How Do I Apply for a Teaching Job? Do I Need a Résumé or a Portfolio?****A**

The first step is to prepare a résumé to submit to prospective employers. When your résumé is strong, school districts will want a closer look, and that's when a portfolio or an interview will be requested. Résumés and portfolios open doors, so let's take a closer look at how best to construct them.

At the top of your résumé, list your contact information: name, address, telephone, and e-mail address. But the heart of the **résumé** is your relevant education and experience. Indicate your formal education background—your college and university, your major and your minor (if you have one), and describe your student teaching experience, as well as other educational accomplishments. Summarize relevant work experiences. If you offered private instruction, worked as a camp counselor or at a religious school, or volunteered at a day care center or in a recreation program for the elderly, include these and note dates of employment, salient responsibilities, and accomplishments. Many candidates include professional objectives and a brief educational philosophy at the beginning of a résumé. If you take this approach, you might write an employment objective that details the type of teaching position you are seeking. You could also include some of the reasons that propel you to teach and perhaps a brief statement about your educational philosophy and beliefs. Your résumé should be typed in a clear and readable format; there are software templates available to help you. Check if the school districts you are interested in prefer hard copy or e-mail.

Employers rely on references and recommendations to get a clearer picture of applicants. Remember, as you list professors, supervisors, previous employers and

FOCUS QUESTION 3

How can new teachers increase their chances of working in a school of their choice?

CLASS ACTIVITY:**RÉSUMÉ REVIEW**

IM, Activity 15:2

cooperating teachers as references, you need to ask their permission and give them a “heads up” that they may be contacted. This is not only a basic courtesy, but also a way to measure their willingness to recommend you. Consider supplying them with “talking points” to aid them in preparing your recommendation.

Today, many school districts are going beyond résumés and recommendations, and are asking for a more in-depth view of you and your skills. A **portfolio** is a collection of materials that demonstrates your knowledge, competencies, and accomplishments as a teacher candidate. A portfolio does more than document your qualifications for a prospective teaching job (as a résumé does); it is a purposeful and reflective presentation of your professional development as a teacher.

People have different views concerning portfolios. Some see them as elaborate and lengthy presentations, while others consider an enhanced résumé with a few attachments to be a portfolio. Typically, portfolios include:¹⁰

I. Statement of Teaching Philosophy

II. Teaching Credentials

- A. Résumé
- B. Transcripts
- C. Letters of Reference
- D. Teaching Certificate/License
- E. Endorsement(s)

III. Teaching-Related Experiences

- A. Student Teaching
 - 1. Evaluations by University Supervisor
 - 2. Evaluations by Cooperating/Mentor Teacher
 - 3. Letters from Students and Parents
 - 4. Sample Lesson Plans
 - 5. Sample Classroom Floor Plans/Management Plans
 - 6. Reflective Teaching Journal
 - 7. Examples of Student Work
 - 8. Photographs of Students/Classrooms
 - 9. Videotape of Teaching
- B. Employment in Child-Related Fields
- C. Volunteer Work with Children

This text is designed to start you on the road to building a portfolio. The *RAP* activities guide your portfolio development, differentiating between a working and a presentation portfolio (see page 569). The reflection questions and *You Be the Judge* features infused throughout the text are intended to help you consider relevant issues and form your own educational views and beliefs. In organizing the contents of your portfolio, consider using national standards (such as the INTASC standards identified in the *RAPs*) or the state or local standards of the school district to which you are applying for a job. Many teaching candidates rely on a loose-leaf type notebook to organize their portfolio work, allowing for flexibility incorporating and removing material. More recently, digital formats, such as a CD-ROM or a Web page, have become popular. With a digital or **e-portfolio**, you can simultaneously present your qualifications

OVERHEAD 166
General Portfolio Collection

RAP 4.8
Pruning Your Portfolio,
p. 569

and demonstrate your technological proficiency. In developing your portfolio, ask for input from university supervisors and cooperating teachers; and it is a good idea to practice presenting your portfolio to them as well.

Q

How Do I Prepare for a Successful Interview?

A

Interviews may be conducted by one or more administrators, a panel of teachers, or a combination of teachers and parents, and the average interview usually lasts thirty minutes to an hour.¹¹ So how can these precious minutes work for you?

When you walk in for your interview, the first thing that will strike an interviewer is appearance. Your prospective interviewer (or interview team) will be looking not only for appropriate professional attire, but also for such qualities as poise, enthusiasm, self-confidence, and an ability to think quickly and effectively on your feet. Appropriate grammar, a well-developed vocabulary, and clear speech and diction are important. You should be focused about your teaching philosophy and goals if you want to appear confident and purposeful in the interview. If you have developed a portfolio of teaching materials or other information that you are particularly proud of, you should take it to the interview. It cannot hurt to have it present, and it might help win the day.

It is important to be prepared for likely questions. Common interview topics include your personal philosophy of teaching, your teaching strengths and weaknesses, professional goals, employment history, teaching style, and your approach to classroom management. Interviewers commonly look for: enthusiasm, warmth, caring, leadership skills, willingness to learn new things, and confidence.¹² You may also want to note what questions cannot legally be asked—for example, questions about your religion or marital or parental status. Such questions do not relate to your qualifications as a teacher. The Office for Civil Rights is one of several agencies that you can contact if you are victimized by such queries.

Do your homework: Find out as much as possible about both the particular school and the community. Talk to friends involved in the school or community, check local newspapers, try the local library, the Internet, or, better yet, stop by the school to talk with the students and others, scour the bulletin boards, and pick up available literature. Once you obtain information about a school or school system, you can begin matching your particular interests and skills with the school district's programs and needs.

As important as such preparatory work is, the most important way of learning what an interviewer is looking for is to listen. Sometimes interviewers state their needs openly, such as "We're looking for a teacher who is fluent in both Spanish and English." In other cases, interviewers merely imply their needs—for example, "Many of the children who attend our school are Hispanic." In this case, you have first to interpret the interviewer's remark and then to check your interpretation with a statement such as "Are you looking for someone who is fluent in both Spanish and English?" Or "Are you looking for someone who has experience in working with Spanish-speaking children?"

After interviewing, it is wise to send the interviewer a brief follow-up note, reminding her or him of how your qualifications meet the school system's needs. The interviewer may have talked with dozens of candidates, and under such circumstances it is easy to be forgotten in a sea of faces—your job is to make sure you stand out.

TEACHING TIP

Initially, what else would students want to know before they *sign on* to a new teaching position? Now, what creative (legal and productive!) strategies can they propose that will yield that valuable information?

One word of caution: When a job offer comes your way, analyze the school system to make sure that you really want to teach there before signing on the dotted line. Try to find out

- If teachers in the district view it as a good place to work
- If there have been personnel problems recently and, if so, for what reasons
- What are the benefits and potential problems in the teachers' contract
- Typical class size
- What kind of support services are available
- If the school is adopting organizational changes to personalize the school climate.

If the answers do not please you, you may want to look elsewhere. It is unwise to accept a position with the notion that you will leave as soon as a better offer is made. That attitude can quickly lead to a job-hopping profile that may stigmatize you as someone who is either irresponsible or unable to work well with others. In short, do not simply jump at the first available job offer. If your credentials are good and you know how to market yourself, you will get other teaching offers.

What Do I Need in Order to Teach—a License or Certification? By the Way, What's the Difference?

Project yourself a few years into the future. You have just completed your teacher preparation program. You stop by your local public school office and make a belated inquiry into teacher openings. The school secretary looks up from a cluttered desk, smiles kindly, and says, "We may have an opening this fall. Are you certified? Do you have a license?"

Oops! Certified? License? Now I remember. It's that paperwork thing. . . . I should have filled out that application back at school. I should have gone to that teacher licensure meeting. And I definitely should have read that Sadker textbook more carefully. I knew I forgot something. Now I'm in trouble. All that work and I will not be allowed to teach. What a nightmare!

And then you wake up.

Many people use the terms *teacher certification* and *teaching license* interchangeably (as in "She has her teacher certification" while really meaning "She has her teaching license"). But it is important for you to be able to distinguish between a professional certification and a legal license, so we make the distinction in this book. **Teacher certification** confers professional standing; a **teacher's license** is a legal document. Teacher certification indicates that a professional group recognizes (certifies) that a teacher is competent and has met certain standards. A teacher's license, issued by the state government, grants the legal right to teach, not unlike a driver's license grants the legal right to drive. Both licenses mean that the "minimum" state requirements have been met. If you have been out on the roads recently, you know that meeting these minimum requirements to drive is not an indication that a person can, in fact, drive very well. It is the same with a teacher's license: Not all holders can teach well, especially if they are teaching a subject without adequate training in that field, a sad but not uncommon practice. Nevertheless, the intent of certification and licensure is to maintain high standards for teachers.

CLASS ACTIVITY:
SIMULATED INTERVIEWS
IM, Activity 15:6



FOCUS QUESTION 4
What do I need in order to teach—a license or certification? (and how do I get one!)

CLASS ACTIVITY:
FLASH CARDS
IM, Activity 15:3



CLASS ACTIVITY:
SOONER VERSUS LATER
IM, Activity 15:4

Q

Who Awards Licenses, and How Do I Get One?

A

Teaching licenses are awarded by each of the fifty states and the District of Columbia. In a similar way, states are involved with the licensure of doctors, lawyers, and other professionals and nonprofessionals. When you meet the state's requirements, you can apply for and receive your teacher's license.

RAP 4.7

Another Mini-Lesson with
Another Mini-Group,
p. 568

You should not assume that your teacher's license will automatically be issued to you when you graduate from your teacher education program, since state departments of education, not colleges and universities, issue teacher's licenses. Some colleges will apply to a designated state department in your name and request a license; others will not. In most states, filling out an application and passing the required national or state tests are all that is needed if you have graduated from an approved, accredited program. But not all teacher education programs are accredited (see the accreditation section of this chapter for more information). Regardless of your program, remember that you will probably need to apply to the state for a teacher's license. (See Appendix 2 for the contact information for the department of education in every state.)

You should also know that each state has its own requirements for teacher licensure. States have different policies concerning what courses teachers should take, what kinds of teacher's licenses should be offered, and even the length of time for which a teacher's license is valid. You may meet the standards in one state, but, if you decide to teach in another, you may find yourself unqualified for its license. Since the courses and experiences you need vary from state to state, it is useful to understand the major areas of preparation relevant to certification and licensure. Joseph Cronin, writing in the *Handbook of Teaching and Policy*, suggests three categories: knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of pedagogy, and practice teaching.¹³ Chances are that your course work will fit within these categories.

When you have questions about obtaining a license, consult immediately with your college instructor, adviser, or teacher education placement office, or contact the appropriate state department of education. Do not depend on friends, whose well-intentioned advice may not be accurate.

Q

What Type of License Do I Need? (You Mean, There's More than One?)

A

Most states issue more than one kind of license in order to differentiate among the applicants' qualifications and career goals. Although the specific names of these licenses (sometimes called certificates, now how's that for confusing!) vary from state to state, there are four common types:

1. An **initial**, or **provisional, license**—also called a *probationary certificate*—is the type frequently issued to beginning teachers and is generally nonrenewable. If you are awarded a provisional license, it means that you have completed most, but not all, of the state's legal requirements to teach. It may also mean that you need to complete some additional course work or that you need to teach for several years before you qualify for a higher or more permanent license. You may find yourself first getting a provisional license, giving you some breathing room as you work to complete all of the state's requirements for a standard, or professional, license.
2. The **standard**, or **professional, license** is issued by the state after you have completed all the requirements to teach in that state. These requirements may include a specified number of courses beyond the bachelor's degree or one or more years of teaching experience.

3. A **special license** is a nonteaching license designed for specialized educational careers, including those in administration, counseling, library science, school social work, and school psychology. If after teaching for several years you decide that you want a career in school counseling (or administration, library science, and so forth), you will have to meet the requirements for this license.
4. A **conditional, or emergency, license** is a substandard license that is issued on a temporary basis to meet the needs of communities that do not have licensed teachers available. For example, a small high school in a rural community may not be able to attract a qualified teacher in physics. Faced with the unattractive prospect of not offering its students physics courses, the community may petition the state to award an emergency license to someone who does not meet current licensure standards.

Conditional licenses become commonplace when a shortage of teachers forces states to hire uncertified teachers. Historically, this has even included people who had never completed college. It is an unfortunate fact of life that, even today, when shortages in certain fields or geographic areas arise, substandard teaching licenses are issued.

What Is an Endorsement?

In some cases, a candidate may be licensed to teach in an additional area through what is termed an **endorsement**. For many teachers, especially those teaching in areas that have a large supply of candidates, endorsements can give you the edge over other applicants. You may want to give some consideration to this option. Carefully planning your courses can help you get a second teaching area. So can practical experience. For instance, a teacher may have a standard or professional license in U.S. history but finds herself teaching biology courses as well. Or perhaps she has taken a number of college courses in biology and decides she wants to be recognized as a biology teacher as well as a history teacher. Since she already has a standard or professional license (in history), she need not apply for a new license. Instead, she applies to the state for an *endorsement* in biology. Although she did not take biology methods or student teach in biology, her teaching experience and background are considered for her endorsement in biology. The endorsement means that the state has approved her teaching both history and biology. Sometimes the subjects are more closely related than these. A teacher licensed in bilingual education, for example, with a number of courses in English as a Second Language (ESL), may seek an endorsement in ESL as well.

If I Want to Teach in Another State, Do I Need Another Teacher's License?

Each state issues its own teaching license. If you have a license in one state but want to teach in another, you must reapply for a license there. Although this sounds like a pain, states have created several procedures for making this process less onerous. Let's

IN THE NEWS

From Vienna to the Bronx

Across the region and country, school districts are grappling with teacher shortages in areas such as math, science, special education, and foreign languages. More and more, school districts are looking abroad to fill the gaps. Houston has recruited 100 teachers from the Philippines and Spain. New York has hired 125 math and science teachers from Austria. Los Angeles now recruits in the Philippines, in addition to Canada, Mexico, and Spain, and Chicago gleaned 46 teachers from 25 countries in the last year.

SOURCE: Susan Snyder, "Philadelphia, Chester Upland Look Abroad for Teachers," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 26, 2001.



What's new in education? Click on News Feeds.

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begin with your teacher education program. If your college or university has a *state-approved* teacher education program, then it has been evaluated and meets state standards. If you are in such a program (check with your college or with your state department of education to find out), then you will receive a state teacher's license when you graduate and be able to teach in that state.

But what if you are graduating from a program in one state, and want to teach in another state? If your teacher education program has also been approved by the **National Association for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)**, then it has met a set of standards widely accepted by educators and most states. If you graduate from such an NCATE-approved program, you will find that when you apply to most other states, you will receive at least a probationary license to begin teaching. You may be given a year or two while you are teaching to take additional courses or exams, but at least you can receive a teacher's license fairly quickly. So the second question you should ask: Is your teacher education program NCATE approved?

Moving beyond teacher preparation, states themselves have entered agreements in which they recognize each other's teaching licenses. State Departments of Education have such agreements with other states, which some call **reciprocity agreements** and others call **compacts**. So, for example, if you have a license in Missouri, then thirty or forty other states might say "show me" your Missouri teacher's license and we will issue you one from our state. Sometimes additional courses or tests may be required, while other times they are not. The **National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC)** is working to make such interstate compacts widely accepted.

Interested in teaching in another state? First check to see if your teacher education program is state approved or NCATE approved, and see how your new state recognizes such programs. Once you have a license from one state, you can always check to see if the new state where you want to teach has an agreement whereby it recognizes your teacher license.

Q

What Are "Alternative Routes" to Getting a Teacher's License?

A

Alternative licensing programs are gaining in popularity. Many of these programs enable college graduates to become teachers with less education training than required in traditional teacher education programs. In part, alternative licensure programs are popular due to teacher shortages, a desire to get candidates into teaching positions quickly, and a concern that traditional education programs too rarely attract teachers of color. Only eight states offered alternative routes to licensure in 1984, a movement that began in New Jersey. By 2001, forty-five states and the District of Columbia had implemented some form of alternative licensure option.¹⁴

How does alternative licensure work? Some states permit selective alternative licensing only, such as at the secondary but not the elementary level, or only in fields in which there are teacher shortages, such as math or science. Some states only allow alternate routes that are designed by higher education institutions. Most alternative programs require a bachelor's degree, and some education course work, though usually far fewer education courses than are typically required. One of the best known of these alternative approaches is Teach for America.

Teach for America recruits applicants who have little if any education background but who are motivated to make a positive contribution by teaching in areas that suffer a teacher shortage, particularly inner-city and rural areas. This program has attracted individuals whose altruistic response is reminiscent of Peace Corps volun-

teers, and whose academic background is typically quite strong.¹⁵ Alternative programs like Troops to Teachers and Teach for America have drawn a higher percentage of mathematics and science applicants than have traditional programs, and have an impressive track record in recruiting applicants of color. Studies indicate that alternative programs have produced almost five times the proportion of teachers of color as traditional programs. For example, in Texas, 41 percent of the teachers entering the profession through the alternative teacher licensure program are from non-European ancestry, compared with only 9 percent of all the teachers in the state. Advocates of alternative approaches point to these statistics as proof that there is more than one way to prepare teachers.¹⁶

Not everyone views alternative routes to teacher preparation as terrific innovations. For one, the attrition rate for these programs is quite high: Many who volunteer to join also volunteer to leave, and no wonder. With limited preparation, these rookies wade into challenging teaching situations in some of the nation's most troubled and impoverished communities.

Studies of alternative licensure preparation have indicated that graduates of alternative programs represent more of an attempt at a "quick fix" for teacher shortages than a permanent solution. In many cases, their not-yet-honed teaching skills are unlikely to be improved, since graduates of alternative programs are less committed to staying in teaching or to pursuing graduate studies than are students from traditional teacher education programs. (In fact, about 2 percent of the alternative teachers report that they did not graduate from college.) Although alternative preparation programs try to attract older, more experienced Americans to a teaching career, more than half of those enrolled are fresh out of college. Many teacher educators are concerned that this approach is a step back to times past, when anyone who wanted to teach was hired. They fear that the alternative preparation of teachers signals a retreat from efforts toward full teacher professionalism. Some also worry about the elementary and secondary students who will be in classrooms with these new and not well-prepared teachers.

Despite the attention that alternative licensure programs have received in the press, alternative programs prepare relatively few teachers; their graduates typically stay in teaching for only a brief period of time; and, when competing for a position, alternative candidates are often at a disadvantage.¹⁷ Because these programs are relatively new, studies of their effectiveness will undoubtedly continue in the years ahead.

What Are Teacher Competency Tests?

Most states require teacher competency tests, and others are experimenting with additional forms of evaluation, such as supervised internships. Why are teachers facing new hurdles and higher standards? One reason is that, during the past few decades, the public became outraged about reports of students' declining standardized test scores and illiterate high school graduates. Between the 1960s and the 1980s, average SAT scores tumbled 42 points on the verbal and 26 points on the mathematical sections of the test. In 1983, the U.S. Department of Education published *A Nation at Risk*, highlighting these depressing test scores and calling for significant school changes, including fewer electives, an increase in core course requirements, more student testing, and better paid and more qualified teachers. In response, many states required elementary and secondary students, as well as teachers, to pass **minimum competency tests**. The movement for state-required competency tests spread—or



FOCUS QUESTION 5
What teacher competency tests do I need to take?

raced—from a few states in the Southeast to the overwhelming majority of states across the nation. Since the early 1990s, most states have been using standardized tests for admission into teaching programs, for certification, and for licensure.¹⁸ (See Appendix 2 for more information about state testing requirements.) Chances are strong that you will be tested, perhaps more than once, if you decide to enter teaching. Some of these tests are sponsored by states, and applicants have been required to write essays on topics related to education, as well as to pass basic skills tests of spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Some states also test mathematical skills. In other cases, states or local districts have developed more complex, competency-based evaluation systems. But many states now use a national exam, most often the Praxis.

Praxis Assessment for Beginning Teachers is a three-part teacher assessment. The *Praxis I: Preprofessional Skills Test* consists of hour-long academic skills tests in reading, writing, and mathematics. These basic tests apply to prospective teachers in all fields and all grades, and are required in most states for admission into teacher education, or to obtain an initial teacher license.¹⁹ *Praxis I* can be taken in the standard paper-and-pencil format on specified dates around the country or by means of a more costly computer version, with far more flexible timing, widespread availability, and immediate scoring.

The *Praxis II* assesses subject area, pedagogy, and professional education knowledge, offering more than 140 exams in subjects ranging from art to social studies. *Praxis III* is a classroom performance assessment of teaching skills, covering classroom management, instructional planning, and assessment of student learning. While *Praxis III* is the most authentic assessment of beginning teachers, it is also the most challenging and costly test to implement, and it has not yet gained the widespread popularity of *Praxis I* and *II*.

Educators differ as to whether the Praxis series or other competency tests are necessary. Those who support competency exams maintain that the exams lend greater credibility and professionalism to the process of becoming a teacher. They claim that such tests identify well-educated applicants who can apply their knowledge in the classroom. They cite examples of teachers who cannot spell, write, or perform basic mathematical computations, and they plead persuasively that students must be protected from such incompetent teachers.

Some critics of the teacher exams argue that they are incredibly easy and not a real measure of competence. Other critics believe that such tests are more a political gesture than a way of improving education.²⁰ Part of the problem is the lack of evidence supporting the idea that teacher testing predicts teacher performance.²¹ Some believe that the current process of state licensure and the period of assessment prior to tenure are sufficient to filter out incompetent teachers. Still others worry that we do not really know what makes good teachers, and we know even less about how to create tests to separate the good from the bad. We don't have tests that can measure enthusiasm, dedication, caring, and sensitivity—qualities that students associate with great teachers. Test makers are constantly working to respond to these charges, and to create more effective tests.

Another provocative and controversial problem is the impact of standardized competency tests on diversity. Historically, when African American teachers were systematically paid less, such tests were used as a vehicle for teachers of color to attain salary equity with whites. More recently, however, test results in states across the nation document the problems African American and Hispanic teacher candidates are having in passing such exams, problems that have been attributed to reasons ranging from test bias to social and educational differences. The continued use of such exams

may deter people of color from becoming teachers. And the pipeline of nonwhite teaching candidates, already only a trickle, is in danger of dwindling further.²² Nevertheless, the courts have ruled that such tests are an acceptable means of screening teacher candidates.²³ And with strong public sentiment favoring such tests, they are likely to be a part of the teacher education landscape for the foreseeable future.

How Do Teaching Contracts Work?

Congratulations! You have been hired by the school system of your choice, and a contract is placed before you. Before you sign it, there are a few things you should know about teacher contracts. This contract represents a binding agreement between you and the school district. It will be signed by you as the teacher being hired and by an agent of the board of education, often the superintendent. The contract usually sets the conditions of your work, perhaps including specific language detailing your instructional duties, and, of course, your salary.

If you do not have tenure, you will receive a new contract each year. Once you earn tenure, you will be working under a continuing contract and will probably be asked to notify the school district each year as to whether you plan to teach for the district the following year.

What Are Some Advantages of Tenure?

A teacher was once asked to leave his teaching position in Kentucky because he was leading an “un-Christian” personal life. He was Jewish.

A second-grade teacher was dismissed from her teaching assignment in Utah because of her dress. She wore miniskirts.

In Massachusetts, a teacher was fired because of his physical appearance. He had grown a beard.

Fortunately, these teachers all had one thing in common: **tenure**. And tenure prevented their school districts from following through on dismissal proceedings.

A vast majority of states currently have tenure laws. A newly hired teacher is considered to be in a probationary period. The **probationary teaching period** can be two, three, or even five years for public school teachers and about six years for college professors. After demonstrating teaching competence for the specific period, the teacher is awarded tenure, which provides a substantial degree of job security. Generally, a tenured teacher can be fired only for gross incompetence, insubordination, or immoral acts or because of budget cuts stemming from declining enrollments. In practice, public schools rarely fire a tenured teacher.

Since teachers have enjoyed the protection of tenure for many years, it is easy to forget how important this protection is. To get a fresh perspective on tenure, consider what life in schools might be like without it.

Without tenure, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of financially pressed school systems could respond to pressure from taxpayers by firing their experienced teachers and replacing them with lower-paid, less experienced teachers. This would significantly reduce school budgets, usually the largest cost item in the local tax structure. After two or three more years, these teachers would also face the financial ax. In short, teachers would once again become an itinerant, poorly paid profession. Would anyone really benefit?

Without tenure, the fear of dismissal would cause thousands of teachers to avoid controversial topics, large and small. Many teachers would simply become a mirror of

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FOCUS QUESTION 6

Why do teachers seek tenure? (and should I?)

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OVERHEAD 167

Debate on Tenure

their communities, fearing to stir intellectual debate or to teach unsettling ideas because job security had become their prime objective. Classrooms would become quiet and mundane places, devoid of the excitement that comes from open discussion of controversial ideas.

Without tenure, many teachers would have to modify their personal lifestyles. In some communities, they would have to avoid places where liquor is served; in others, their clothing or hairstyles would have to be altered. Any behavior that differed from the norms of the community would be potentially dangerous, for such behavior could provide the spark that would trigger public clamor for dismissal. A conformist philosophy would spread from the classroom to teachers' personal lives.

In short, without some protection such as tenure, teaching would take a giant step backward. Tenure provides teachers with the fundamental security that allows them to develop and practice their profession without fear of undue pressure or intimidation. Unfortunately, not all teachers have respected the academic freedom provided by tenure, as we shall see in the next section.

Q What Are Some Disadvantages of Tenure?

A Over the years, it has become apparent that the protection of academic freedom through the tenure process has entailed serious drawbacks. One such drawback is the reality that ineffective teachers are protected from dismissal. Many of these ineffective teachers view tenure as a right to job security without acknowledging a corresponding responsibility to continue professional growth. Feeling that they are no longer subject to serious scrutiny, such teachers fail to keep up with new developments in their field, and each year they drag out old lesson plans and fading lecture notes for yet another outdated performance. Who pays the price for such ineffective teaching? The students, of course. Think back a moment. How many ineffective, tenure-protected teachers were you subjected to during your total school experience? How many do you face at present?

During the past few years, attempts to reform or dismantle tenure have gained momentum. Some school districts have extended the amount of time it takes to be awarded tenure. In Florida, a recent law reduced the time that poor-performing teachers are given to improve from one year to ninety days. New Hampshire's Republican lawmakers failed in their attempt to require teachers to pass tests and renew their licenses every three years, while a special Colorado task force has been formed to explore ways to limit tenure. One reason for these attempts is the cost involved in dismissing a tenured teacher. A New York School Boards Association Study showed that, in that state in the mid-1990s, it took an average of 455 days and \$177,000 to dismiss a teacher. If the teacher appealed, the average price rose to \$317,000.²⁴

As you can see, tenure is a double-edged sword. It serves the extremely important function of preserving academic freedom and protecting teachers from arbitrary and unjust dismissal. But it also provides job security for ineffective teachers, bad news for the students of these teachers or for the new and more competent teachers trying to enter the profession.

Q Are Untenured Teachers Protected?

A Many believe that, until tenure is granted, they are extremely vulnerable, virtually without security. This is not true. During the 1970s, in *Goldberg v. Kelly, Board of*

Regents v. Roth, and *Perry v. Sinderman*, the United States Supreme Court outlined several of the rights that are enjoyed by nontenured teachers. In many circumstances, these rights include advance notice of the intention to dismiss a teacher, clearly stated reasons for termination, and a fair and open hearing. In addition, teacher organizations, such as the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), provide legal assistance for teachers who might be subjected to the arbitrary and unjust action of a school system. If the AFT and the NEA ever merge, one result may be even greater legal protection for teachers.

If, during your probationary years, you feel that you have been unfairly victimized by the school administration, you should seek legal advice. Even nontenured teachers possess rights, but these rights are effective only if they are exercised.

Can Principals Be Tenured?

Although about a dozen states still grant tenure or equivalent rights to principals, this protection has all but disappeared. Historically, a satisfactory probationary period of one to five years would result in principals earning tenure, as teachers do. Not anymore. Many of the same arguments used against granting teachers tenure (a shield for mediocrity or even incompetence, a lengthy process to remove poor performers, and so on) have been successfully used to rescind tenure for principals. The crux of the argument seems to be how one views principals. Those who see them as managers believe that, if they are not managing well, they should be fired. Others view principals as master teachers (from the term “principal teacher”), who should be afforded the same protections from arbitrary political pressures and inappropriate personnel decisions as other teachers. The management view is clearly winning out.²⁵

What Kinds of Educational Careers Are Available Beyond Classroom Teaching?

The assumption that your education degree has prepared you only for a teaching career is a widespread myth. Actually, there are dozens of education-related careers, although tunnel vision often keeps them from view. (See *Frame of Reference: Education Want Ads*.) Obviously, if you are interested in school administration or a counseling career, starting as a classroom teacher makes a lot of sense and gives you an important perspective that will serve you well in these other school careers. But beyond administration and counseling lie many other options. The following list is intended to give you some idea of the less typical but potentially quite rewarding **nontraditional educational careers** available to you.²⁶

Early Childhood Education. If you want to stay in touch with teaching but prefer a climate other than the typical classroom, you may want to explore such options as **day care centers**. Early childhood education is a vital component of the nation’s educational system. Working parents seek quality options, not only for child care but for child education and development as well.

Although day care rarely offers much pay or status, a number of talented educators find early childhood education incredibly satisfying. If you are creative and flexible, you might even be able to develop your own facility. For example, some department stores advertise a day care service for shopping parents. You might consider opening a similar early childhood program and marketing your “children’s center” to other stores, shopping malls, or businesses. (Check out your state’s laws regarding operating standards, building restrictions, number of children permitted, and so on.) If you

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FOCUS QUESTION 7

Are there jobs in education outside of the classroom?

CLASS ACTIVITY:
MADISON AVENUE
IM, Activity 15:5

FRAME OF REFERENCE Education Want Ads

You may find your education niche beyond the traditional classroom. Here are some authentic employment opportunities printed in the "want ads" of newspapers.

CAN YOU TEACH?

The largest computer software and network training company in the world is looking for additional full-time instructors to teach classes. Candidates must possess excellent presentation skills. Computer experience is helpful but not necessary; we will train you.

EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT

We are seeking an experienced Education Consultant with classroom teaching background for per diem contracted and long-term assignments, with expertise in one or more of the following: dimensions of learning, performance assessments, state learning standards, early literacy, cooperative learning, differentiated instruction.

PRIVATE GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

seeks Director of Technology/Computer Teacher, Classroom Experience Necessary.

ELEMENTARY ZOO INSTRUCTOR

The Education Department of the Zoo, one of the country's foremost institutions of informal science teaching, is seeking a dynamic instructor for its elementary-level programs. A highly interactive teaching approach, creativity, and a theatrical background will be helpful. This position involves program development for parents and teachers in addition to direct instruction of children ages 4-12. Excellent oral and written communication skills required.

EDITOR/WRITER

Familiar with higher edu. issues needed for Publications Dept. Will work with campus colleagues and assoc. staff to develop a natl. quarterly newsletter for faculty & administrators. Must know curriculum development, have solid editorial and publications mgmt. skills, research aptitude, & good writing skills.

Major nonprofit YOUTH SERVICE AGENCY seeks to fill the following positions (Bilingual, Spanish/English preferred): YOUTH COUNSELOR: B.A. 2 years experience in social service setting, PROGRAM COORDINATOR: B.A. 3-5 years experience, strong supervisory/communication skills necessary.

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHER

Research and develop abstracts for www-based project about science and math education. Writing skills, attention to detail, ability to synthesize information quickly, and confident phone skills. Background in education helpful.

EDUCATIONAL COORDINATOR

The Historical Society seeks a creative, self-motivated team player to plan, implement, & promote educational programs for schools, families, & adults. Responsibilities incl.: organizing public programs & tours; coordinating National History Day, providing services for schools.

CHILD CARE DIRECTOR

Join our management team! Nonprofit corporate-sponsored child care management co., looking for a talented director to manage our state-of-the-art center. Must have ECE experience and have been through NAEYC accred. process.

LEARNING CENTERS offering individualized diagnostic and prescriptive programs are looking for dynamic PT cert. teachers to instruct students of all ages in reading, writing, math, and algebra.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION INTERVENTION SPECIALISTS

Seeking experienced professionals to provide services to students in substance abuse prevention and intervention. Will provide both group and individual counseling and conduct peer leadership groups for students at risk at various schools.

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

Seeking excellent candidates. June interview in major cities. Two years of experience reqd.

WORKSITE TEACHER

Conduct worksite visits & act as liaison between worksite & classroom instruction, BA plus 2 yrs. teaching experience with adults req'd.

LOVE TO TEACH?

Are you considering a career change where you can continue to use your teaching ability? Call.

PROGRAM ASSISTANT

New vision in schools seeks a program assistant to provide support to a major school reform initiative. Must be meticulous with details & be able to write well, handle multiple projects, & meet deadlines. Interest in public schools is preferred.

EDITOR

One of the most progressive and respected names in children's publishing is currently seeking an editor for a supplement on early childhood. In addition to a degree, editorial/publishing experience, and early childhood classroom experience, you must be highly creative and possess a strong knowledge of early childhood issues.

COLLEGE GRAD

Prestigious sports program for children seeks highly motivated coaches. Sports background & a love for children a must. Education majors a +.

EDUCATIONAL SALES REPS

See our ad in the SALES section under "Education."

VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM

(Peace Games) seeks F/T director to create curricula & resources for students, parents, & teachers.

TEACH ENGLISH ABROAD

BA/BS required. Interested in education. No exp nec.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Learning Center, a place for emotionally disturbed children, has the following possible positions: Resource Counselor, Cert. Teacher, Music Teacher, Level III Secretary, Therapist Assistant.

REFLECTION: Which of these careers do you find most appealing? Which is least appealing? Have you ever explored nonteaching education careers? Why or why not?

enjoy working with young children, you will find opportunities galore in this growing field.

Adult Education. If you prefer to work with a mature population, you might be attracted to **adult (continuing) education** programs. These programs are offered through city and county governments, local school systems, and nearby colleges and universities. In addition, some private businesses now sponsor courses that are related to their products—recreation, crafts, cooking, technical training, and so forth. As the ranks of the retired swell with baby boomers, you can expect this field to grow rapidly. Older Americans often have the time, interest, and income to pursue education in topics, skills, and hobbies that have long eluded them. Elder hostels around the world are responding to the educational demand created by retirees. Researching available programs may take time, but you are apt to discover a variety of adult learning programs that can provide nontraditional teaching opportunities.

Pupil Service Professionals. Service professionals—school social workers, counselors, and psychologists—typically work as a team, assisting teachers in creating more effective learning environments. These professionals receive special training and education to meet the unique needs that frequently emerge in schools. Social workers, for example, work to improve the relationship between home and school. School psychologists, prepared in education and mental health, are responsible for coordinating and evaluating special learning and behavior problems.

Colleges and Universities. You will find many nonteaching, yet education-related, jobs in colleges and universities. To name a few, academic advisers work primarily on a one-to-one basis with students, discussing courses of study; admissions officers respond to the needs of students; alumni relations personnel conduct fund-raising campaigns, organize alumni events, and maintain job placement services; and student services personnel do psychological and vocational counseling, advise international students, and administer residential programs. Most colleges offer their employees tuition benefits, so, if you want to pursue graduate studies, this may be a good way to gain both experience and an advanced degree.

Community Organizations. Think of a community group. Chances are, that group has an educational mission. Churches, synagogues, and nursing homes can use creative instructors and program planners. For example, a former English teacher, disturbed by the demeaning, artsy-craftsy programs in a local nursing home, inspired the residents to write their life histories, an experience they found very stimulating. Recreation and community centers hire instructors, program planners, and directors for their numerous programs. Hospitals and health clinics need people to plan and deliver training to their professional and administrative staffs. Some of the large municipal zoos conduct programs to protect endangered animal species and to interact with school groups. Libraries and media centers require personnel to maintain and catalog resources and equipment, as well as to train others in their use. Art galleries and museums hire staff to coordinate educational programs for school and civic groups and to conduct tours of their facilities.

The Media. The publishing and broadcasting industries hire people with education backgrounds to help write and promote their educational products. For example,

RELATED READING

Chain Reaction: A Call to Compassionate Revolution by Darrell Scott and Steve Rabey (2001).

large newspapers, such as *The Washington Post*, maintain staff writers whose job is to cover education, just as other reporters cover crime, politics, and finance. Some newspapers even publish a special edition of their paper for use in schools. Likewise, textbook publishers, educational journals, the Internet service providers, and television talk shows need people familiar with educational principles to help develop their programs.

Private Industry and Public Utilities. Large public and private corporations often rely on education graduates in their programs to train their staffs in areas such as organizational effectiveness, new technology training, civil rights and safety laws, and basic company policies and practices. Sometimes client needs come into play, as many of these firms need people with well-developed instructional skills to demonstrate the use of their sophisticated equipment or products to potential customers. Some education-related companies maintain permanent learning centers and seek persons with education backgrounds to plan and run them. If you like writing, you may want to work on pamphlets, brochures, curricula, and other materials describing a company's services and products, often written by education graduates.

Computer Software Development. With the dramatic increase in the use of educational software in the classroom, many companies are soliciting people with experience in education as consultants to help develop new programs. Creativity, familiarity with child psychology, and knowledge of the principles of learning are important resources for developing software that will appeal to a diverse and competitive market.

Technology. The blossoming of the computer age, with its software, email, websites, and Internet resources, has divided the population into those who are computer literate and those who are computer challenged (sometimes called technophobic). Those who are not yet citizens of cyberworld represent a ready population of potential students. If you enjoy programming, surfing the Net, or designing websites, you may want to become a tech-teacher, teaching these skills in either formal or informal settings. You may consider a position as a technology consultant for schools, helping design websites, create networks, or select software. You may choose to work outside a school organization, as a company representative providing educational services and equipment.

Educational Associations. National, state, and regional educational associations hire writers, editors, research specialists, administrators, lobbyists, and educators for a host of education-related jobs, from research and writing to public relations. There are hundreds of these associations, from the NEA to the American Association of Teachers of French. Check the *National Trade and Professional Associations of the United States and Canada* (Columbia Books, Inc.) for listings and descriptions of positions, or use the *Encyclopedia of Associations* (Gale Research) or the Internet to contact the associations directly.

Government Agencies. A host of local, state, and federal government agencies hire education graduates for training, policy planning, management, research, and so on. Various directories can help you through the maze of the federal bureaucracy. Among

these is the *United States Government Manual* (Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service), which describes the various programs within the federal government, including their purposes and top-level staffs. The Internet is another useful source for exploring career opportunities in government-related education programs.

Global Opportunities. Want an international experience? Consider Department of Defense schools, private international schools, religious and international organizations, military bases offering high school and college courses to armed forces personnel, and the Peace Corps. A number of foreign companies now hire U.S. college graduates to teach English to their workers, positions that are sometimes very well paid. No matter the wages, high or low, the excitement of teaching in another culture (while learning about that culture) is hard to match.

As we indicated (more than once!), we love classroom teaching, but you should know there are many ways that you can serve society with an education background. You may want to explore one or more of these nonclassroom careers, even as an intern or volunteer at first, to see if these career paths appeal to you.

In this chapter—and in this text—we have tried to answer your questions about teaching. (If we missed one, we invite you to submit it to the website using the OLC Ask the Author button.) We hope that you have found this text chock-full of useful and interesting information, and that you have enjoyed reading this book. In fact, we hope that you enjoyed it so much that you choose to keep the book as a useful reference in the future (and do not resell it to the used bookstore!). But more than that, we hope that you are gaining greater clarity on your decision about whether teaching is for you, and whatever that decision turns out to be, we wish you the best of luck!

**CLASS ACTIVITY:
UNANSWERED
QUESTIONS ABOUT THE
TEACHING PROFESSION**
IM, Activity 15:1

SUMMARY



CHAPTER REVIEW

Go to the Online Learning Center to take a quiz, practice with key terms, and review concepts from the chapter.



CURRENT NEWS FROM POWERWEB

To access PowerWeb, go to Chapter 15 on the Online Learning Center to read current articles and to access news feeds about:

- The Profession of Teaching

1. What does the education job market look like? (or, put another way, will I be able to find a satisfying teaching position?)

Growth in the student population, efforts to reduce class size, and ongoing teacher retirements have increased the demand for teachers, while budget shortfalls have curtailed hiring in some areas. It is predicted that more than two million teachers will be needed in the next decade, and certain areas, such as math, science, bilingual and special education are experiencing a serious teacher shortage. Urban school districts and the federal government are offering signing bonuses, housing assistance, and loan forgiveness to attract teachers, but rural areas also face a teacher shortage. While students of color constitute nearly 40 percent of the school population, only about 15 percent of new teachers are of color.

2. Can I make a decent salary as a teacher?

Teacher salaries have steadily improved in the last twenty years, although increases have been more modest in the last ten years. Beginning teachers average above \$30,000, the average teacher earns in the \$40,000, yet some school districts pay considerably more.

3. How can new teachers increase their chances of working in a school of their choice?

A strong résumé provides prospective employers with critical information. A portfolio goes beyond a résumé by providing actual artifacts of a candidate's qualifications. Some portfolios, called e-portfolios, can be constructed and transferred electronically. Exploring a teaching position takes careful planning, as do interviews. Teaching candidates need to learn about the schools and faculties they are considering joining, and give careful consideration to questions such as: Do other teachers enjoy working in this school? Are benefits satisfactory? What are the children like? What kind of support do teachers receive? Does the community support its school system?

4. What do I need in order to teach—a license or certification? (and how do I get one!)

Teacher certification indicates that a professional group recognizes or certifies that a teacher is competent and has met certain standards. A teacher's license, issued by the state government, grants the legal right to teach. Teacher certification is a professional designation; a teacher's license is a legal document. Requirements for teacher licensure differ from state to state. A teacher's license in one state may not be valid in another, unless the states have entered into a compact or reciprocity agreement. Accreditation of college-level teacher education programs can facilitate new graduates becoming eligible for multistate teacher licenses.

States issue various types of teaching licenses, from initial or probationary to special licenses for administration and counseling. Endorsements enable experienced teachers to gain additional licensure in a second subject area.

5. What teacher competency tests do I need to take?

Teacher competency tests are used for admission into teacher education programs, for certification, and for licensure. Teacher competency tests are required in most states. (See Appendix 1 for more specific details.) *Praxis I* focuses on basic literacy, *Praxis II* on pedagogy and subject area competence, and the less used *Praxis III* on classroom performance. Many states have designed their own competency tests, which they require prospective teachers to take before being licensed. The purpose, use and appropriateness of teacher tests is

intensely debated by educators and politicians. Despite these controversies, there is strong support from the public and from politicians for testing teachers and their students.

6. Why do teachers seek tenure? (and should I?)

After demonstrating teaching competence for the specified period (usually 2–5 years), a teacher may be awarded tenure, which provides a substantial degree of job security. While tenure preserves academic freedom and protects teachers from arbitrary and unjust dismissal, it can also provide job security for ineffective teachers.

7. Are there jobs in education outside of the classroom?

An education degree prepares you not only for a teaching career, but for many education-related careers as well, in areas such as early childhood education, adult education, counseling and advising, and distance learning, and in organizations such as nonprofits, educational associations, private corporations, government agencies, and the media.



WEB-TIVITIES

1. [Becoming Informed About the Job Market](#)
2. [Developing a Portfolio](#)
3. [Teacher Tenure](#)
4. [The Third W—Where?](#)

KEY TERMS AND PEOPLE

adult (continuing) education, 557

conditional (emergency) license, 549

day care centers, 555

e-portfolio, 545

endorsement, 549

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initial (provisional) license, 548

minimum competency tests, 551

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REFLECTIVE ACTIVITIES AND YOUR PORTFOLIO

Part IV: Tomorrow

INTASC PRINCIPLE 1:
Knowledge of
Subject Matter

4.1 Nontraditional Hero

Purpose: We know that students need inspiring figures—individuals who serve as role models and motivate students. Although heroes come from all backgrounds, curricular materials do not always reflect diversity. The result is a disconnect between the growing diversity of America’s students and the curriculum they study. You can enhance your curriculum by adding to the list of nontraditional champions in your texts. (Consider ethnicity, race, gender, age, class, lifestyle, disability, and circumstances as you select your hero.) You may also want to define different kinds of heroism as you tackle this project. Identifying such heroes has the additional advantage of broadening your own scholarship.

Activity: Select a unique individual or hero who has made a difference. Strive to select someone from a subject area that you will be teaching. Develop a lesson about this person. Make the language, content, and style relevant to the grade level you plan to teach. Develop visuals to enhance your presentation, perhaps a billboard or poster of this person.

Artifact: “Nontraditional Hero Lesson.” Save your lesson plan and supporting material for your portfolio, and for use when you begin teaching.

Bonus Artifact: As a way to blend technology with this activity, develop the lesson using PowerPoint software. Include ten or fewer slides in your presentation, and strive to limit text on each slide. Create a powerful presentation. Present the PowerPoint lesson to your college class. Afterward, tweak the presentation so that it is ready to be presented in your first classroom. PowerPoint software is available for both Windows and Macintosh. For more information on PowerPoint go to www.microsoft.com/office/powerpoint/default.asp.

Reflection: What has this activity taught you about nontraditional heroes? Was it easy to select a nontraditional hero? How might you plan to have your students seek out similar heroes? What was the reaction of the class to your presentation and your “hero”? Did you attempt the Bonus Artifact? If so, were you familiar with PowerPoint before this activity? What are your thoughts on using this software? Will it become a staple of your teaching? Include the reflection and artifact in your portfolio.

4.2 Getting to Know Whom?

Purpose: Chapter 12, “The Struggle for Educational Opportunity,” exposed some of life’s heritage and happenings that influence who we are. Many of us have grown up in relatively homogeneous environments, knowing individuals of similar backgrounds and cultures. Meaningful conversations about how race, nationality, gender, substance abuse, and family crisis impact our own education are rare when diverse backgrounds are missing, yet such conversations could add essence and texture to your understanding of students.

Activity: Partner with a classmate, campus colleague, or friend who comes from a different background than you. Use the issues mentioned in the chapter to conduct an interview that will uncover information, stories, and perhaps feelings. Strive to interview more than one person. Concentrate on being a good and an active listener. Some opening thoughts might include:

- How do you identify your race or ethnicity?
- How would you describe your family heritage?
- How would you describe your family structure and patterns of daily life?
- Do you have memories of bias and discrimination?
- What are your recollections of your educational experience?
- What are some things you wished your teachers knew about you that perhaps they didn’t?
- What are some things teachers could do to help all groups get along better?
- What other concerns have you experienced or witnessed that denied or impeded educational opportunity?
- Do you have recollections about friends who struggled with substance abuse (drinking, drugs, and smoking), depression and suicide, or sexuality and teen pregnancy?
- How has diversity influenced your own education or your commitment to teach?

Artifact: “Diversity Insights for My Classroom.” From your interview, cull answers that relate directly to the classroom. In about a paragraph, sum up ways that you can apply what you learned during the interview to your teaching.

Reflection: How are you and your interviewee different? How are you similar? How might this anecdotal information add to your understanding of child and human development? What aspects of your partner’s cognitive, social, and emotional growth paralleled your own schooling? All in all, what words might describe your conversation: *insightful*, *laborious*, *superficial*, *intimate*? What words do you think your partner might use as a description? Will this paragraph and the information learned during the interview be useful when you enter the classroom? Why or why not? Attach your reflection to your artifact and include in your portfolio.

INTASC PRINCIPLE 2:
Human
Development and
Learning



FORM:

Getting to
Know You

INTASC PRINCIPLE 3:
Diversity in Learning

4.3 A Novel Read

Purpose: Great teachers have an incredible ability to care, really deeply, about children. Such teachers learn about their students, hold high expectations for them, and fully appreciate their diverse cultural perspectives and learning styles. One marvelous way to understand youngsters is to read literature about the challenges they face. The right books will not only inspire you, but also will expand your awareness of diverse learners.

Activity: Maybe this is a *RAP* activity you will save for summer vacation or a beach-based holiday. Or let this be a change of pace from your textbooks and research papers. Your education faculty will probably have additions to this book list. Pick a book and dig into it:

Teacher, Sylvia Ashton-Warner

Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High, Melba Patillo Beals

Mentors, Masters and Mrs. MacGregor: Stories of Teachers Making a Difference, Jane Bluestein (Editor)

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, Dee Brown

America Is in the Heart, Carlos Bulosan

Family Values: A Lesbian Mother's Fight for Her Son, Phyllis Burke

Black Ice, Lorene Cary

House on Mango Street, Sandra Cisneros

The Water Is Wide, Patrick Conroy

Reflections of a Rock Lobster: A Story About Growing Up Gay Aaron Fricke

One Child, Torey Hayden

Up the Down Staircase, Bel Kaufman

Among Schoolchildren, Tracy Kidder

Coming of Age in Mississippi, Ann Moody

The Bluest Eye, Toni Morrison

900 Shows a Year, Stuart Palonsky

The Education of a WASP, Lois Stalvey

Native Son, Richard Wright

Artifact: "Lessons from Literature." After reading one of the selections from this list, or a book of your choice with a school/education theme, write a book review that focuses on lessons and themes from the book that can be applied to the classroom. The goal of your review is not only to inform classmates about the strengths and weaknesses, but also to extract lessons about effective teaching practices.

Reflection: What did you learn from reading this book? Did you "unlearn" or abandon any misconceptions after your reading? Can you identify implications for your classroom? Would you assign this book to your students or suggest it for a faculty book club? Include your book report and reflection in your portfolio.


4.4 If the Walls Could Speak

Purpose: It is human nature to surround oneself with items that represent our unique heritage and experiences. Teachers cannot afford to fall into this pattern. Teachers can work to ensure that their classrooms reflect the rich diversity of both their students and their country. Teachers must work to ensure that their classrooms are nonsexist and nonracist. One way to achieve this goal is through classroom bulletin boards and other displays.

INTASC PRINCIPLE 4:
Variety of
Instructional
Strategies

Activity: On a poster board or in your classroom, create a bulletin board representing diverse set of people and cultures. Use magazines, newspaper, the Internet, personal pictures, and so on. Strive to include “regular” people and events as well as famous people and events.

Artifact: “Seeing Diversity.” Take a photo of your display, and if appropriate, save it for possible use in your classroom. Then stand back and be an objective judge by rating your bulletin board for diversity and equality using the following chart:

 **FORM:**
Seeing Diversity

Seeing Diversity					
	Not at All				Very
	1	2	3	4	5
Clarity of Presentation					
Attractiveness					
Variety of Cultures Featured					
Equal Representation of Men and Women					
Mixture of Regular and Famous People					
Inclusion of Other Diversity Issues (Disability, Age, etc.)					
Overall Quality					
Overall Usefulness					

INTASC PRINCIPLE 5:
Motivation and
Management



FORM:
Class Comedy Club

Reflection: What did you learn from this experience? Was it a challenge to create such a display? What part of this activity was easy? Did you learn how to improve this activity on your next try? Include both your photograph of your “Seeing Diversity” chart and the reflection in your portfolio.

4.5 Class Comedy Club

Purpose: For all the crises in classrooms and children at risk, humor in the educational workplace survives and even thrives. Thank goodness! Healthful humor (as opposed to targeted humor and sarcasm) can motivate students to participate and learn. Student humor, often unintentional, can be a major factor in keeping you happy and in the business of teaching. While you may never aspire to be a comic, sharing a funny teaching story with your students will help you practice setting a positive and welcoming learning climate.

Activity: While there are books about kids who say and do the darnedest things, as well as e-mail and magazine features filled with funny stories, there is nothing like oral history and the stories of your peers to tickle a funny bone. Begin by freewriting answers to the following questions:

- The funniest teacher I recall from school . . .
- The funniest student happening was . . .
- It sure was funny in school when . . . and she/he/they really did (or didn't) get in trouble . . .
- A teacher walks into a staff lounge . . .
- How many teachers does it take to . . .

Practice and dramatically deliver your funny stories. Encourage your peers to help you embroider them with colorful commentary, body language, and well-timed punchlines. Hone your presentation until you have a tight 5- to 10-minute routine.

Artifact: Videotape or record your “Teaching and Humor” in a comfortable environment. If you feel emboldened, present your education comedy sketch to your classmates.

Reflection: How hard was this activity for you? Can you picture yourself using your “material” in the classroom? What did you learn about yourself from this activity? Be sure to save both your notes and taping for use in your first classroom. Include your taping and reflection in your portfolio.

4.6 Computers in the Classroom: Bane or Boon?

Purpose: You certainly have your own experience, as a student, with computer technology. Are you wired into everything or stonewalling yourself away from it all? We want you to take both sides of the technology debate and fully develop two points of view: pro and con. Researching and refining polarized opinions is a communication challenge!

INTASC PRINCIPLE 6:
Communication
Skills

Activity: Consider what you have read about and explored in educational technology and generate a balance sheet that both supports and refutes the place of technology in education. (For a model, consider any of the *You Be the Judge* features throughout the textbook that take contrasting views on timely educational topics.) Select a very specific theme, especially one that is related to your subject area or grade level. Generate a title that polarizes opinions such as the following suggestions:

- Word Processing—Helping or Hurting Writing Skills
- Computers in Kindergarten—Absolutely Not or For Sure
- Our Technology Dollars—Classes for the Arts or for Computers
- Computers—One per Classroom or One per Child
- The Internet—Amazing Research Tool or Ticket to Plagiarism

For a more challenging activity, cite research studies to support both positions.

Artifact: “You be the Judge: Technology.” Develop and present your chosen topic to your classmates in two ways. You may want to share the written “You Be the Judge,” or teach about it using an overhead projector or the chalkboard.

Bonus Artifact: Develop and present “You Be the Judge: Technology” through a PowerPoint presentation. Perhaps you could partner with a classmate for this activity. If you want, you can contrast the two approaches, with one of you teaching with a low-tech approach, while the other one presents using higher tech support.

PowerPoint software is available for both Windows and Macintosh. For more information on PowerPoint go to www.microsoft.com/office/powerpoint/default.asp.

Reflection: By constructing both sides of an issue, what did you learn about balance and fairness in communication? What side of the sheet are you on? Could a reader detect that from your end product? Did you find that your views changed as you worked to present each side convincingly? Did you venture into both the low-tech and high-tech presentations? Why or why not? Include your artifact and reflection in your portfolio.

INTASC PRINCIPLE 7:
Instructional
Planning Skills

4.7 Another Mini-Lesson with Another Mini-Group

Purpose: At this stage in your development as an educator, you simply cannot get enough experience teaching. Mirroring *RAP* 1.7, this activity will not only provide more teaching experience, it will afford you a chance to put into action what you've learned.

Activity: Develop and teach a mini-lesson (eight to twelve minutes) using content from the text's fourth section (Chapters 12 through 15) as your focus. Again, your challenge will be to choose a concise topic. While you are free to choose, possible subjects from the reading include: Black Americans—The Struggle for a Chance to Learn; Hispanics—Growing Impact on Schools; An Introduction to Virtual High School, and so on. As with *RAP* 1.7 strive to employ techniques that promote variety in process and content.

Dr. Madeline Hunter's research showed that effective teachers have a methodology when planning and presenting a lesson. She found that no matter what the teacher's style, grade level, subject matter, or economic background of the students, a properly taught lesson contained the following elements:

Dr. Madeline Hunter's Seven-Step Lesson Plan

Anticipatory Set (focus)—Focus learners' attention on the instruction that is about to begin. This could be a teacher demonstration, video, story, puzzle, or a handout prior to the actual lesson. This is also known as a "grabber" and it's a way to get your student's attention and interest.

Purpose (objective)—A clear explanation of what learners will understand and be able to do as a result of the lesson. This section should answer the question: "Why is this important to learn?"

Instructional Strategy—What content and skills need to be taught to accomplish this task? And what are the best teaching strategies needed for this instructional task (lecture, activity, video, group work, etc.)?

Modeling (show)—Provide learners with examples or demonstrations of competencies associated with the lesson.

Guided Practice—Monitor learners as they apply new information.

Check for Understanding—Evaluate whether learners have the information needed to master the objective.

Independent Practice—Assign learners to work independently, without direct teacher assistance.

For more information on Dr. Hunter visit
www.foothill.net/~moorek/lessondesign.html

Artifact: Design a "Lesson Plan: Preparing for Tomorrow's Classroom" using the Hunter format. If this is your first lesson plan, you may want to call it that. If not, come up with a title that reflects your topic or the skill you are working on.

	Need to Improve				Did this Well
	1	2	3	4	5
Anticipatory Set					
Purpose					
Instructional Input					
Modeling					
Guided Practice					
Checking for Understanding					
Independent Practice					

Reflection: You did it! You taught another mini-lesson to your peers, something that many experienced faculty find frightening. Use the following rubric to assess your success. Also record your feelings. How well do you think it went? Include both your lesson plan and the rubric in your portfolio.



FORM:
Mini-Lesson Rubric

4.8 Pruning Your Portfolio

Purpose: Earlier *RAP* activities, reflections, and artifacts helped you create a *working* portfolio. Now is the time to assess your portfolio and decide what is worth keeping or upgrading.

Activity: Evaluate your *working* portfolio. Use the following portfolio assessment rubric below to chart the status of your collection. Score your portfolio according to how well it meets the criteria listed, on a scale of 1 to 5. Provide verbal or written evidence to support your position. Select a partner (or two) and set aside ten minutes to discuss and share your *working* portfolios and the assessment charts.

INTASC PRINCIPLE 8:
Assessment

Artifact:

Item	Portfolio Assessment					Not Applicable
	Not at All 1	2	3	4	Very 5	
Purposeful:						
Selective:						
Diverse:						
Ongoing:						
Reflective:						
Collaborative:						
Other: _____						
Overall Appraisal:						

**FORM:**

Portfolio
Assessment

Reflection: What have you learned about your portfolio, including both its strengths and weaknesses, from this exercise? What did your discussion with your partners teach you? How could your portfolio be improved? How do you see this portfolio helping you become an effective instructor? How do you see this portfolio helping you attain employment? Attach this reflection to the artifact and include in your portfolio.


4.9 Website of the Month

Purpose: Websites and Internet sources may prove to be of extraordinary benefit to your professional growth. However, quality control does not exist on the Internet, so, to be a reflective and responsible practitioner, you must learn to evaluate Internet sources. Plus you will find it extremely helpful to compile a bank of useful educational websites that you can draw on at any time.

INTASC PRINCIPLE 9:
Reflection and Responsibility

Activity: Select three educational websites. (Links from our textbook site are certainly a good starting place.) Choose one that is relevant to a subject matter area; another that is interactive, featuring bulletin boards or opportunities to chat with colleagues; and a third that is monitored or sponsored by a professional organization such as the NEA or AFT. Use the rubric below to evaluate each of these sites.

Artifact: "Assessing the Internet"

 **FORM:**
Assessing the Internet

	Need to Improve				Did This Well
	1	2	3	4	5
Frequency of Updates					
Ease of Navigation					
Accuracy					
Clarity of Content					
Value of Content					

(Your criterion)					

(Your criterion)					
Overall Appraisal:					

INTASC PRINCIPLE 10:
Relationships and
Partnerships

Reflection: What other criteria can you use to decide which websites and Internet resources are reliable? Are there techniques and shortcuts to *surfing* educational sites? What web addresses might offer lesson plans, emotional support for new teachers, factual materials for curriculum planning, and colleagues for an issue-based dialogue? Attach your reflection to the artifact and include in your portfolio.

4.10 Showtime: Go on an Information Interview

Purpose: Interviewing for employment can be a daunting experience. As with all new and difficult endeavors the more experience you gain the easier the task becomes. You will find it easier to begin the interviewing process by participating in a series of information interviews. This type of interview is pretty low stress and revolves around the interviewee simply learning about the employer, job, and the employer's needs without the pressure to "land" a job.

Activity: Armed with what you have learned in this class and other education courses and experiences, set up at least one information interview with an official from a school or grade level that you could envision yourself teaching at. Use the questions below as a guide for the interview. What other questions might you add? Record both the questions and answers for future interviews.



FORM:
Information
Interview

Artifact: "Information Interview"

1. What is the school district looking for in a teacher-candidate?
2. Are there any special training or experience beyond state certification that the district looks for or requires?
3. In what subject areas and at what grade levels does the district have the greatest need?
4. What should a teacher-candidate know about the students and families in this district?
5. How are teachers evaluated in this district?
6. What emphasis does this district place on standardized tests?
7. What is the average class in this district?
8. Does the district have a mentor program for new teachers, and if so how does it work?
9. What is the process for applying to this district?
10. Are there any additional suggestions for gaining employment in this district?

Reflection: How did the interview go? Were you nervous? What did you learn? What might you do differently next time? Did anything surprise you? Would you want to work in this district? Do you now feel more comfortable about future interviews? Attach your reflection to your artifact and include in your portfolio.