

Introduction

The focus of this book is the teacher. The content is presented within the context of a person—the teacher—as opposed to viewing teaching skills as isolated processes. The book is research-based, and the style and format are designed to be user-friendly, providing easy-to-use summaries and tools for teacher effectiveness. In building on the framework provided in the first edition, this new edition provides an update on research related to effective teaching. Added features in the second edition include a focus in each chapter on the qualities to emphasize when working with both at-risk and high-ability students.

If finding or becoming an effective teacher were simple, this book would not be needed. If a single method for developing an effective teacher existed, such a teacher would be in every classroom. Nonetheless, there are common attributes that characterize effective teachers.

Teachers have a powerful, long-lasting influence on their students. They directly affect how students learn, what they learn, how much they learn, and the ways they interact with one another and the world around them. Considering the degree of the teacher's influence, we must understand what teachers should do to promote positive results in the lives of students with regard to school achievement, positive attitudes toward school, interest in learning, and other desirable outcomes. This understanding should be based both on what experts and stakeholders think teachers should do and on what education research has shown to be significant in the preparation and practice of effective teachers.

The second edition of *Qualities of Effective Teachers* chronicles the common background and identifies the common behaviors that characterize effectiveness in the classroom. Although most of what we know about effective teachers in general applies to teachers of at-risk children and children who are identified as gifted in some way, additional teacher qualities, dispositions, and behaviors emerged in a careful review of the extant literature. Based on a comprehensive review and synthesis of research related to effective teaching, this book serves as a resource for teachers, administrators, and others interested in improving the quality of teaching and learning in our schools.

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Prerequisites for Effective Teaching

For several years, Miriam worked as a paraeducator in a self-contained special education classroom. Everyone who encountered her knew she was an asset to the school, based on the way she worked with students and the professionalism she demonstrated every day in the school. She dressed for the role of teacher, offered thoughtful and informed comments about students, and took an active interest in the school. She was encouraged to complete coursework to earn her special education endorsement. When she did complete her degree a few years later, her principal offered her a teaching contract for the next school year. Miriam is well respected for her knowledge of students with special needs and of how to make appropriate accommodations for them. Most important, she uses her knowledge and expertise daily to benefit the students with whom she works and serves as a resource to the school's administration on issues related to special education.

There is a major educational debate today about how to recruit and prepare teachers. Many educators, policymakers, and taxpayers question whether traditional preservice programs prepare teachers who can maintain excellent instructional programs that increase student achievement. Alternative programs for recruiting and preparing teachers have been devised, giving rise to research comparing the effectiveness of teachers from different types of preparation backgrounds. Beyond the issue of pedagogical preparation, the question of content knowledge and its relevance to effective teaching remains a legitimate concern.

This chapter explores the research on teacher preparation and reviews what has been learned through extensive studies and research regarding the background of effective teachers. Each section of the chapter summarizes research findings related to a specific aspect of a teacher's background. Figure 1.1, located at the end of the chapter, summarizes the relationships among each of the background aspects described in the chapter and provides the related references.

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Classroom Management and Organization

The students walked in the door and picked up a pencil from the basket as they passed by it. On their way to their seats, the 3rd graders moved a magnet with their name on it to a section of the chalkboard labeled “Present.” They put away their materials, took out paper, and began working on the opening task that was printed on the board. Matthew, a fifth-year teacher, moved around the room, inquired about missing homework, and wrote some notes during the first few minutes of class. When most of the students were done, the class went over the morning starter activity together. The signs of organization were everywhere, right down to the effortless way that materials were distributed with just the mention of the word “baskets,” which signaled six children to go and get baskets containing glue, crayons, and scissors for their fellow classmates.

An effective teacher plans and prepares for the organization of the classroom with the same care and precision used to design a high-quality lesson. Components of the organizational plan of a classroom include room arrangement, discipline, creating routines, and a plan to teach students how their learning environment is organized. To the extent possible, effective teachers envision what is needed to make the classroom run smoothly. A key difference between beginning and experienced educators is that the novice tends to leap into the content the first week of school, while the senior teacher focuses on creating a positive classroom climate and then works academics into that objective.

One survey of superintendents and principals indicated that a major challenge faced by new teachers is their inability to maintain control in the classroom (Johnson, 2004). All teachers—novice and experienced alike—recognize the challenges of classroom management and understand that this aspect of quality teaching is vital (Sokal, Smith, & Mowat, 2003). Experienced teachers, however, understand the dividends paid by attending to classroom rules and procedures early on in the school year (Emmer, Evertson, & Worsham, 2003).

The effective teacher is not just someone who knows how to support student learning through instructional techniques, strong curricular materials, and rapport with the class. The effective teacher must create an overall environment conducive to learning. Orchestrating this supportive learning environment requires that a teacher practice skills in classroom organization and management. It also requires consistency in behavioral expectations and responses. The effective educator attends to these elements in a proactive way to establish a positive classroom climate oriented toward learning. Figure 3.1, at the end of this chapter, summarizes specific elements of the effective learning environment and links these elements to key references.

Figure 5.1
Key References for Implementing Instruction

Reference	Instructional Strategies	Adapting Instruction	Content and Expectations	Complexity	Questioning	Student Engagement	Teachers of At-Risk Students	Teachers of High-Ability Students
Allington, 2002	•		•					
Australian Council for Educational Research, 2002						•		
Bain & Jacobs, 1990	•	•	•					
Bennett et al., 2004	•				•		•	
Berliner & Rosenshine, 1977			•	•	•			
Bernard, 2003			•				•	
Blair, 2000	•	•	•	•				
Bloom, 1984	•					•		
Bridgall & Gordon, 2003			•				•	
Brookhart & Loadman, 1992	•	•						
Brophy & Good, 1986	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Cawelti, 1999			•		•			
Cawelti, 2004	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Corbett & Wilson, 2002			•				•	
Cotton, 1999	•	•	•		•			
Cotton, 2000	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Covino & Iwanicki, 1996	•	•	•		•	•		
Cruikshank & Haefele, 2001						•		
Csikszentmihalyi et al., 1993	•			•				•
Cunningham & Allington, 1999						•		
Darling-Hammond, 2000		•			•			
Darling-Hammond, 2001	•							
Day, 2002			•					
Demmon-Berger, 1986			•	•		•		
Doyle, 1986					•			
ERS, 2000				•				
Education USA Special Report, n.d.	•							
Emmer et al., 1980			•			•		
Feldhusen, 1991	•			•			•	
Ford & Trotman, 2001					•	•		•

Checklist 1 – Teacher Skills Checklist						
The Teacher as a Person						
Quality	Indicators	Not Observed	Ineffective	Apprentice	Professional	Master
Caring	Exhibits active listening.					
	Shows concern for students' emotional and physical well-being.					
	Displays interest in and concern about the students' lives outside school.					
	Creates a supportive and warm classroom climate.					
Shows Fairness and Respect	Responds to misbehavior on an individual level.					
	Prevents situations in which a student loses peer respect.					
	Treats students equally.					
	Creates situations for all students to succeed.					
	Shows respect to all students.					
Interactions with Students	Maintains professional role while being friendly.					
	Gives students responsibility.					
	Knows students' interests both in and out of school.					
	Values what students say.					
	Interacts in a fun, playful manner; jokes when appropriate.					
Enthusiasm	Shows joy for the content material.					
	Takes pleasure in teaching.					
	Demonstrates involvement in learning activities outside school.					
Motivation	Maintains high-quality work.					
	Returns student work in a timely manner.					
	Provides students with meaningful feedback.					
Dedication to Teaching	Possesses a positive attitude about life and teaching.					
	Spends time outside of school to prepare.					
	Participates in collegial activities.					
	Accepts responsibility for student outcomes.					
	Seeks professional development.					
	Finds, implements, and shares new instructional strategies.					
Reflective Practice	Knows areas of personal strengths and weaknesses.					
	Uses reflection to improve teaching.					
	Sets high expectations for personal classroom performance.					
	Demonstrates high efficacy.					