

CHAPTER 2

The Teaching Profession

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- I. Is Teaching a Profession?
 - A. A Defined Body of Knowledge
 - B. Controlling Requirements for Entry and Licensing
 - C. Autonomy in Deciding About Spheres of Work
 - D. High Prestige and Economic Standing
- II. Trends Toward Professionalism
 - A. The Scope of Collective Bargaining
 - B. Professional Practice Boards
 - C. Mediated Entry
 - D. Staff Development
 - E. Merit Pay
 - F. School-Based Management
- III. Teacher Organizations
 - A. National Education Association (NEA)
 - B. American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
 - C. Specialized Professional Organizations
 - D. Religious Education Organizations
 - E. Parent-Teacher Groups
 - F. Organizations for Prospective Teachers

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 2 consists of three sections: (1) is teaching a profession? (2) trends toward professionalism, and (3) teacher organizations.

The first section examines the characteristics of a profession and analyzes the degree to which teaching fits those characteristics. Some of the criteria for a profession that may not fully apply to teaching include the possession of a defined body of knowledge, control over licensing standards and entry requirements, autonomy in work decisions, and high prestige and economic standing. On the basis of these criteria, critics claim that teaching is not yet a full profession and instead might be considered an emerging or semi- profession. In this section the accreditation standards set by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) are considered with regard to teacher preparation programs.

The second section explores trends toward greater professionalism in teaching. These trends include the use of collective bargaining as a way to influence the status of the profession, the creation of professional practice boards, the practice of inducting persons into teaching through mediated entry, the use of staff development to facilitate professional growth, the movement toward teachers' remuneration through merit pay and incentive plans, and school-based management.

The final section describes the two major teacher organizations in the United States: the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Comparisons between the two organizations are discussed in terms of eligibility, membership figures and strategies utilized in

the work of these organizations. Also examined are specialized professional organizations, religious education groups, parent-teacher associations, and a variety of organizations for prospective teachers.

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, students will be able to do the following:

1. Identify the characteristics of a full profession
2. Describe why teaching may not be considered a full profession and is sometimes referred to as a semiprofession or an emerging profession
3. Explain why it is essential for teachers to (a) develop a body of knowledge for education, (b) gain control over entry and licensing requirements, (c) increase autonomy in their work, (d) develop a self governing organization composed of members of the profession, and (e) require higher economic status in order for teaching to be considered a full profession
4. Discuss the role of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) with regard to the profession of teaching
5. Identify current trends in education that enhance the professionalization of teaching
6. Analyze how staff development, merit pay, and school-based management help or hinder the professionalization of teaching
7. Compare and contrast the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers
8. Explain the role of collective bargaining in connection with teacher unions
9. List several professional organizations and choose (tentatively) which ones coincide with their interests as a prospective teacher
10. Identify issues associated with the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)

DISCUSSION TOPICS, CLASS ACTIVITIES, AND ASSIGNMENTS

1. *Teaching profession.* Arrange an in-class panel discussion with an attorney, physician, or other professional, along with a current teacher, to discuss why their fields are or are not “professions.” Before the discussion, provide invited guests with the ten characteristics of a profession given in the beginning of the chapter.
2. *Toward greater professionalism.* In small groups, ask students to analyze the six categories included in the section on trends toward professionalism and list the top three categories they see as most significant in moving teaching toward professional status.

Have students interview two or more experienced teachers to find out what changes the teachers believe are most needed to enhance professionalism among teachers. A list of interview questions can be generated in class with the interviews taking place as an out-of-class assignment. The findings from the interviews can be compared to the in-class activity and can be reported in a summary paper.

Divide the class into two groups. Present each group with a list of the characteristics that describes a profession. Tell each group they will be assigned a position regarding whether teaching is a profession. One group will be assigned the perspective that teaching is a profession, while the other group will be assigned the position that it is not yet a profession. Tell each group that they need to assume their assigned position, though they may not support it. Each group should then develop arguments to support their point of view. Engage in a classroom debate regarding whether teaching is a profession. Following the debate, discuss the process and the points that were raised.

3. *Autonomy in decision making.* During a brainstorming activity, ask students to generate a list of the types of decisions that need to be made during the course of a school year for a school to function efficiently. Next, ask students to identify for which decisions school-based management teams should assume responsibility. Describe the pros and cons of such responsibilities.
4. *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).* Have students examine the NBPTS website (provided below) and present a flow chart that illustrates the necessary steps for a teacher to receive national certification from the NBPTS. Have students describe the strengths and weaknesses of the process to achieve national certification from a national board.

Utilizing the NBPTS website, identify how many Nationally Board Certified teachers there are in your state. From list of those teachers, invite one to class for a discussion on the teacher's perception of the benefits and drawbacks of national certification.

5. *Collective bargaining.* After verifying that area school districts participate in collective bargaining, have students research local papers to find articles that report on the issues that have been points of contention in past collective bargaining negotiations. Another option could be to invite representatives from local teachers' organizations and school boards to discuss these issues during class or as an outside panel discussion. Students should create charts that highlight the issues and the positions taken by the board of education and the teacher's organization and then identify their own perspectives on the various issues.
6. *NEA and AFT.* Invite a representative from the NEA and/or the AFT to talk about the merits of joining a teacher organization. This person could be a teacher who is the current president of the teacher's association in an area school district. Also discuss how the two teacher organizations have helped improve the status of the profession.

Write a position paper that focuses on unions and teacher strikes. Define key terms, such as teacher strikes. Discuss reasons to support/not support teacher strikes. Discuss contextual information that would be needed in the development of your position.

7. *Specialized professional organizations.* Conduct an in-class survey to determine which professional organizations students belong to. Share the results with students by creating an information list that includes benefits of membership of the various organizations. If students have yet to join groups, assign students the responsibility of researching one or more of the groups listed in the Internet Resources section. Another option might be to have students survey faculty in the education department as their recommendations for which professional groups to join.

Have a representative from each educational-related campus organization come to class to discuss the purposes and benefits of membership. These organizations might include the Student-National Education Association (S-NEA), Kappa Delta Pi, the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, and any other student education group.

Have students write to a number of specialized professional organizations requesting information about dues and benefits. They will chart their findings and discuss them with the class.

8. *Parent-teacher organizations.* Have the presidents of the PTA from several area schools come to class to discuss their purpose and activities in local schools.

VIDEO CASES

Mentoring First Year Teachers: Keys to Professional Success

Watch “Mentoring First Year Teachers: Keys to Professional Success.” In this video, you’ll see new teacher, Dania Diaz, working with her mentor teacher, Abdi Ali. How can you relate to Dania and her experiences as a new teacher? After watching the video, answer the following questions:

1. How does this video case illustrate the concept of “mediated entry” described in the chapter?
2. In your opinion, what insights has Dania gained about teaching as a result of being mentored by a group of experienced teachers?

Bonus Questions:

3. In this video case, Dania discusses the benefits of writing a reflective journal, particularly during one’s first year of teaching. List potential benefits of writing a reflective journal. Have you previously written a reflective journal? How would you describe the process of writing this journal?
4. Abdi Ali discusses the connections between strong mentoring programs and teacher retention. For what reasons are connections between mentoring programs and teacher retention seen?

Teaching as a Profession: Collaboration with Colleagues

Watch “Teaching as a Profession: Collaboration with Colleagues” and think about what collaboration as a teacher means to you. What do you think are the challenges and rewards associated with collaboration? After watching the video, answer the following questions:

1. Explain how the teachers in this video case exemplify the concepts of *teacher empowerment* and *site-based decision making* that are described in this chapter.
2. In this video case, we meet a group of teachers who are trying to address an important issue related to the school’s math curriculum. Is their collaboration successful? Why or why not?

Bonus Questions:

3. How would you define *collaboration*? What are unique features that are needed for successful collaboration?
4. How does collaboration broaden one’s perspectives?
5. What are the different ways that collaborating with colleagues informs one’s practice?

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INTERNET RESOURCES

- American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance <http://www.aahperd.org/>
- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education <http://www.aacte.org/>
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages <http://www.actfl.org/>
- American Educational Research Association <http://www.aera.net/>
- American Federation of Teachers <http://www.aft.org/>
- Association for Childhood Education International <http://www.udel.edu/bateman/acei/>
- American School Health Association <http://www.ashaweb.org/>
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development <http://www.ascd.org/>
- Council for Exceptional Children <http://www.cec.sped.org/>
- International Reading Association <http://www.reading.org/>
- Kappa Delta Pi <http://www.kdp.org/>

Music Teachers National Association <http://www.mtna.org/>
National Art Education Association <http://www.naea-reston.org/>
National Association for the Education of Young Children <http://www.naeyc.org/>
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards <http://www.nbpts.org/>
National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education <http://www.ncate.org>
National Council for the Social Studies <http://www.ncss.org>
National Council for Teachers of English <http://www.ncte.org>
National Council for Teachers of Mathematics <http://www.nctm.org>
National Education Association <http://www.nea.org/>
National Middle Schools Association <http://www.nmsa.org/>
National Science Teachers Association <http://www.nsta.org/>
Parent Teacher Association <http://www.pta.org/>
Phi Delta Kappa <http://www.pdkintl.org/>
Teacher Education Accreditation Council <http://www.teac.org/>
Teacher Talk <http://education.indiana.edu/cas/tt/tthmpg.html>