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**Learning, Teaching, and Educational Psychology**

**Cluster Objectives**

After studying this cluster, students should be able to achieve the following:

**Module 1: Learning and Teaching Today**

1.1: Describe the key elements and requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

1.2: Discuss the essential features of effective teaching.

**Module 2: Research and Theory in Educational Psychology**

1.3: Describe the methods used to conduct research in the field of educational psychology.

1.4: Recognize key theories of development and learning that influence educational practice.

**Module 1: Learning and Teaching Today**

**Learning and Teaching Today**

***Activities***

Learning about NCLB

Many students have heard about the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), but they have never examined the impact of NCLB on everyday education. This activity may be used to help illustrate both Objective I and Objective VII. Ask students to collect two or three scholarly articles related to NCLB and summarize their findings in three main points. During the next class period, invite students to break out into groups of three to four to discuss their findings. They should be able to identify whether their findings matched their beliefs about NCLB and how they might use educational research to be informed policy consumers.

National Board of Professional Teaching Standards

Shulman’s characterization of expertise is described in the textbook. The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards has developed standards for what teachers should know and do. Have your students visit the Companion Website, Cluster 1, eConnect and Extend, “National Board of Professional Teaching Standards” (www.nbpts.org/standards/stds.cfm#downloadpdfs). Select a subject area and age range and download the standards for that group. How does the characterization of expert teaching seen here compare to that of Shulman?

***Discussion Questions***

The *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 has been the center of a great deal of controversy. What have you heard about this piece of legislation? Have you developed an opinion? If so, what is your opinion and how did you develop it? If not, what more do you think you should know about NCLB?

We hear a lot from educators and politicians today about accountability. Should teachers’ jobs and salaries depend on how much their students learn? What would happen to curricula and attention to students’ differences?

Despite the length of service or expertise, the job of teaching is often the same. Should this be the case? What changes in a teacher’s job might occur as a function of increased experience or expertise?

Some students seem to perform well regardless of their teachers, while others seem to perform poorly even with excellent teachers. Do you think teachers make a difference for all students? Why or why not? How can you be sure you meet the needs of all students, regardless of ability?

Students often identify teachers who were not very personable or approachable as among their most effective teachers. Is it possible to be personable, caring, and effective? When would it be a liability to be personable or approachable? When would it be an advantage?

What is good teaching? How do you know what good teaching is? Do you have a plan for ensuring that your teaching is good? How will you know if you are successful? What could you do to get better?

Does good teaching make a difference? Has it made a difference in your learning, or perhaps in your life outside the classroom or in a career choice? How should effective teaching be assessed by administrators?

***Other Resources***

Anita talks about NCLB: anitatalks.wordpress.com/2006/09/08/3-no-child-left-behind/

The National Center for Research on Teacher Learning: Disseminates research on teacher learning. ncrtl.msu.edu/

The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards: The goal of this organization is to raise teaching standards. www.nbpts.org/

National Center for Educational Statistics. Predicting the Need for Newly Hired Teachers in the United States to 2008–09: nces.ed.gov.

**What Is Good Teaching?**

***Activities***

What Is Good Teaching? I

Objectives

* Students will recall their own teaching and learning experiences.
* Students will discuss what inspired them to become teachers.
* Students will discuss what made their own teachers good or bad and why.

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| **Activity** | **Participants** | **Time** | **Materials** |
| Ask students to divide into pairs and describe to each other what inspired them to become teachers (if relevant). If they are not planning to teach, ask them to discuss their intended profession. | Student pairs | 5 minutes |  |
| Ask students to think about their own teachers and discuss what made them good or bad and why. | Student pairs | 5 minutes |  |
| Ask students to consider what type of teacher they wish to be and how they intend to become that kind of teacher. | Student pairs | 5 minutes |  |
| Return to the full group and ask students to describe characteristics of good and bad teachers. Look for commonalities and discuss them. | All students | 15–20 minutes |  |

Survey of Teacher Role

Have students rate each of the seven roles of teaching—motivator, manager, instructional expert, counselor, model, leader, and reflective professional—according to the degree of importance and strength in each role. Tabulate and summarize the findings for your sample. Have your students critique the interpretations that might be made of this summary. What could be misleading? Then have your students consider each of the seven roles of teaching in relation to their own perceptions of their teaching goals and abilities. Ask students who scored themselves high or low why they perceived themselves that way.

Differentiated Instruction

1. Have students identify the group they expect to teach.
2. Students then generate a list of the ways individuals in this group may differ from one another. Encourage students to consider such factors as cultural and ethnic background, SES, interests, ability level, and the type of instruction or learning activities individuals may prefer.
3. Have students generate a list of strengths associated with each item on their lists in terms of what individuals in this group bring to the classroom.
4. Have students form groups of three to four based on the groups they expect to teach.
5. In groups, students share their lists and discuss ways in which these strengths can be used in classrooms.

Beginning Teachers

1. Ask students to imagine that they will begin their first teaching assignment in a week. Does this make them anxious? What are some of their primary concerns?