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**The Teacher and the
Alabama Public Schools:
A Resource for the Beginning Teacher**

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Alabama Public Schools: A Resource
for the Beginning Teacher**

BY

Nathan L. Essex
Curtis P. Sellers
Hugh H. Stegall
J. Foster Watkins

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CHAPTER IV

The Role of the Teacher as Teacher

J. Foster Watkins

This chapter will be developed from a dual perspective. Initially, consideration will be given to the development of an entry role definition for the beginning teachers giving consideration to the organizational settings (school/system). Attention in this initial section will be given to a general examination of the teacher's role as teacher, multiple roles occupied by the teacher concurrently with the acceptance of a teaching position, and the crucial importance of role relationships which influence the success or lack of success of a beginning teacher in a significant manner.

The second major thrust of the chapter will embody an effort to integrate these generic considerations relative to the teacher's role into the reality of the working teacher in the classroom/school settings in terms of what must be done. Particular attention is given in this section to point of departure concerns which should be considered as a means of increasing the probability that first-year teachers' experiences are mutually satisfying to themselves as developing professionals, to the employing systems and schools, and most importantly, to the students and parents who are touched most directly by the teachers' performance in the classrooms and schools of Alabama.

Beginning teachers in Alabama have had opportunities as students to observe "teachers at work" as they have moved through their educational experiences from elementary school through the completion of teacher preparation programs in institutions of higher education. Acknowledging that taking detailed advantage of all these observational opportunities was not uppermost in their minds as eager young elementary students or even as developing adolescents in secondary classrooms, it is assumed that the general college experience and the impact of participation in a professional teacher education program have provided meaningful opportunities for beginning teachers to develop entry definitions of their roles as teachers. The impact of a recently completed internship/student teaching experience as the culminating activity of the undergraduate program along with the signifi-

cant influence of the cooperating teacher provides a point of departure for the development of an initial professional role which each teacher brings to the first employment setting.

Moving from this initial role definition, beginning teachers should avail themselves of multiple sources of information and assistance which are available within the local school/system as they move from a preservice to an inservice stage in their development as practicing professionals. Most systems, as part of their personnel selection procedures, will have available position guides or job descriptions which set forth in a general way the role expectations for teachers. These should have been shared during the interviewing/selection process. The nature of the questions asked and the concerns expressed by system-level and school-level personnel, particularly the principal, should provide valuable insights to the beginning teacher of role expectations in the school/system. Faculty handbooks and system-level policy manuals as additional information sources which focus upon the important operational and logistical dimensions of the teaching role should be studied thoroughly by the first-year teacher. Supporting information of the philosophy, objectives, and commitments of the school and the system should be accessible in recent self-study reports which are normally available in the library or from the building administrators.

Beginning teachers should receive helpful information from the system/school's orientation process for new employees. In many situations a "buddy teacher system" is employed where a beginning teacher is paired with a more experienced colleague usually within the same teaching field or grade level of assignment as a source of continuing and immediate information and support. The influence of such an approach specifically, and the impact of the remainder of the faculty upon the developing role performance of beginning teachers, are documented in the literature as significant variables in the process of becoming a "working teacher."

From this multiplicity of background opportunities to observe teachers at work over the years, the impact of a professional preparation experience, and the several new sources of information and influence which emerge as the beginning teacher assumes the full responsibility of that first classroom, the professional teacher must begin to develop a viable concept of the role as teacher with which he/she is comfortable and which seems to be compatible with the demands and expectations of the local situation. References have been made in the literature to multiple internal roles of the teacher such as the teacher as an information source, the teacher as a disseminator of knowledge, the teacher as advisor or counselor, the teacher as a guide to learning, the teacher as disciplinarian, etc., which might introduce

useful insights to beginning teachers in their efforts to develop a role definition which will provide directions to their work as teachers. A four-dimensional role definition focusing upon what teachers actually do has proved helpful to this writer through the years and is shared with the reader of this section. It will be cross-referenced in subsequent discussions of the working life of the teacher.

The teacher as Diagnostician performs functions such as the following:

1. selects suitable techniques for informal observation of pupils,
2. determines desired behavior to be observed,
3. makes interpretations and decisions based on observation of pupil behavior,
4. constructs diagnostic instruments applicable to determining individual needs,
5. selects and administers appropriate diagnostic instruments,
6. isolates common and continuing errors made in classroom work,
7. plans instruction based on analysis of pupil errors in daily classwork as well as on tests,
8. determines the extent to which necessary prerequisite skills have been accomplished,
9. determines the appropriate instructional level for each pupil,
10. determines when to proceed to the next instructional level,
11. adapts curriculum content when diagnosis indicates change is needed, and
12. assesses own and pupil's self-concept.

The teacher as Facilitator performs the following functions:

1. plans cooperatively with pupils in setting realistic learning goals;
2. writes educational behavioral objectives;
3. designs and implements learning activities in the classroom;
4. reviews and evaluates curriculum material;
5. selects and organizes material to be used in classroom;
6. uses appropriate media in teaching to accommodate different learning styles;
7. operates necessary equipment such as projectors and tape recorders;
8. establishes instructional groups according to individual needs;

9. uses a variety of teaching strategies; for example, problem-solving, discovery, questioning, simulation, gaming, role-playing, and discussion;
10. evaluates and uses community resources when appropriate;
11. manages a flexible learning environment utilizing available facilities; and
12. makes plans that will encourage the pupil to be more responsible for his/her own learning.

The teacher as Interactor performs the following functions:

1. communicates clearly with his/her colleagues and pupils through the use of verbal and nonverbal communication;
2. makes his/her nonverbal communication consistent with his/her verbal message;
3. responds to pupils in a constructive fashion;
4. communicates understanding and respect for others' feelings and opinions;
5. responds with empathy to pupils, colleagues and parents;
6. communicates with parents in an open and honest manner;
7. guides the pupil toward clearer and more open expression of experiences and feelings;
8. assists pupils in communicating with peers and adults;
9. assists pupils in solving problems in small group settings;
10. exhibits leadership in group activities;
11. exhibits skills in solving problems in group settings; and
12. assumes responsibilities in team efforts with colleagues.

The teacher as Innovator performs functions such as the following:

1. defends new ideas and/or new plans with clear and well-developed data from appropriate sources;
2. demonstrates an understanding of educational changes and how they have occurred;
3. devises ways to effect change in education when change is desirable;
4. examines research to see what theories exist;
5. generates practical application of known theories;
6. devises alternative ways of solving given problems;
7. takes risks, if necessary to bring about needed changes;
8. examines and evaluates new materials and new programs;
9. implements new ideas and/or programs in a local situation;
10. uses materials and equipment in creative ways;
11. alters activities as a result of unforeseen pupil reaction and problems; and

12. plans and implements activities which foster creativity and discovery on the part of pupils.¹

It is recognized that the teacher as Innovator may not be as readily understood or accepted by beginning teachers or administrators as are the other three roles. The probability is also very real that the preparation programs may not be addressing these change-oriented, leadership, creative dimensions in an adequate manner. This may be particularly true if one extends the sphere of these initiation/questioning concerns beyond the realm of the teacher's role in the classroom.

Beginning teachers as new participants on the educational scene have unique opportunities and responsibilities to raise the appropriate "Why?" questions as they become an integrated part of an ongoing faculty team. Unwillingness to accept this role responsibility by new teachers and the failure of administrators to acknowledge it and to respond in the appropriate supportive ways cut off one source of input which generates the possibility that schools will be self-renewing organizations.

Multiple Roles of the Teacher as an Individual

Discussions with students who are completing their internship/student teaching experiences and with first-year teachers indicate that a significant problem for beginning teachers as they make the transition from a student/preservice role to an inservice role is the recognition of and ability to deal with the multiple-role conflicts which confront them and vie for their time, attention, and loyalty. As a minimum, each beginning teacher may be operating in the role(s) of spouse, potential spouse, parent, graduate student, church, civic, social, or professional organization member, etc., concurrently. The problem created by the demands of these many roles runs a close second to the major problem which confronts beginning teachers: the realization that teaching is a demanding and time-consuming occupation which, if done well, competes heavily for their time, body, and soul.

In addition to these multiple-role demands with their potential conflicts which are external to the employment situation in the schools, the beginning teachers must also contend with multiple-role expectations which vie for their time and energies within the school/classroom settings. Despite continuing efforts by most administrators to protect teachers from numerous tasks such as nonclass student monitoring, record keeping and other quasi-administrative functions, demands of these types continue to be made. These demands detract from the teacher's primary role—the systematic preparation for and delivery of quality teaching-learning experiences within the classroom.

Little attention in preservice preparation programs has been given to these multiple-role, time-consuming, conflict-generating, stress-producing aspects of teaching. Hence, the nearly disarming impact of the effects of these aspects comes as no surprise to persons close to the teacher preparation process. It is hoped that attention to these realities in preservice programs will more effectively equip beginning teachers to make the satisfactory transition into the "working world of the teacher."

As a minimum, teachers need to give specific attention to such time management techniques as

1. setting realistic personal and professional goals and updating them on a regular basis,
2. prioritizing and allocating time in light of identified goals,
3. developing systematic planning procedures such as weekly plans and daily to-do lists,
4. learning how to "handle each piece of paper only once,"
5. asking the key question "What is the best use of my time right now?"
6. doing it now and not delaying.²

Attention to such time management techniques should allow the beginning teachers to cope more effectively with the multiple demands of their new position. Such success should allow appropriate time for stress reduction strategies like attention to physical health and body needs, leisure time activities, and creative thought and renewal time, which combat the potential for teacher burnout and dropout which are so costly to educational efforts at all levels.

The beginning teachers should also be sensitive to the expectations of individuals living in the community in which they perform their multiple roles. Significant variations in the expected lifestyles of teachers will obviously be present as one moves from a rural county school or a small city system to a suburban, bedroom community school setting or to a school situated in the middle of a thriving metropolitan area. Things have certainly loosened somewhat since the time when teachers in some settings were instructed to be Bible-based models of virtue who did not smoke, drink or contemplate marriage. Beginning teachers must be cognizant that they will not be able to keep their personal and professional roles completely separate; efforts to do so probably may be unwise and could contribute to early "burnout symptoms."

Role Relationships of the Teacher

Beginning teachers rapidly become aware of the fact that they must deal with multiple-role relationships as they assume full teaching

responsibilities. Obviously, one of the most important relationships is the teacher-student relationship which is so crucial to the ultimate success of a teacher. Detailed concern for that relationship was embedded in the previous discussion of the role of the teacher as Interactor. In this section, attention will be given to teacher-administrator relationships, teacher-teacher relationships, teacher-supporting personnel relationships, and teacher-parent relationships. Subsequent paragraphs address each of these key relationships in a limited manner.

Teacher-Administrator Relationships

Administrators in school systems, from the superintendent and other central office personnel to the building level principals, assistant principals, and department heads/lead teachers, who may have, in some instances, quasi-administrative/supervisory responsibilities have organizational maintenance and organizational development responsibilities. Beginning teachers should be aware of and attempt to relate to these dual responsibilities of administrative personnel as teachers move to establish effective working relationships with them. The organizational maintenance dimensions of administrative positions require that administrators be concerned about operational and logistical needs of the organization and the responsibilities of teachers to assist in meeting these organizational expectations. Teachers should view administrative personnel as sources of information and assistance for meeting the maintenance needs of their classroom/school situation.

Recent emphasis on human resource development in administrative preparation has increased the abilities of system and school-level administrators to function more effectively with the organizational development dimension of their responsibilities. The bedrock of organizational development in the school is the continuing professional development of staff members as individuals and as contributing members of a school faculty. Administrators are increasingly being required to provide such continuing professional growth assistance for faculty members, especially for beginning teachers. Beginning teachers should approach the development of teacher-administrator relationships with the understanding that administrators have dual responsibilities and should view them as a source of support and assistance in their efforts to make the successful transition into the working world of the classroom. Specific attention is given to the provision of professional growth opportunities and the responsibilities of teachers for their continuing professional development in Chapter VII.

Teacher-Teacher Relationships

The crucial influence of teacher-teacher relationships in the successful transition of a beginning teacher into the world of the classroom is well documented in the teacher preparation literature. Beginning teachers most often identify their teacher colleagues as their most important source of transitional support. Whether through a formal "buddy system" or through more informal role relationships which emerge over time in a school setting, beginning teachers need to be strongly aware of the potential strengths and resources which exist in their colleagues. They are encouraged to utilize this rich resource which, in most cases, is readily available for those willing to turn to it for assistance.

A word of caution must be shared, however, at this juncture. The significant norming effects and influence which colleagues have on beginning teachers have potential for being both positive and negative. A beginning teacher must assume responsibility for ferreting out the positive from the negative in light of his/her responsibility for developing a viable personal role in the new employment setting. Care must be taken to avoid the "Lounge Lizards" and other such cliques or informal power subgroupings within the school whose negative orientations and controlling tendencies may hinder rather than assist a developing young professional teacher. Beginning teachers should be aware of the informal organizational structure of schools. They soon will discover the basis for these informal subgroupings within the school, e.g., proximity of classrooms, common planning or lunch periods, carpools, etc., and of the important role these informal groups play in most schools.

Teacher-Supporting Personnel Relationships

There is a tendency for many teachers, especially beginning teachers, to develop a total reliance upon self as a source of assistance. This inclination not only tends to limit the development of positive supportive relationships with administrators and teacher colleagues, but also seems to limit decidedly the development of fully functioning relationships with specialized supporting services which are found in most schools/systems. Within the individual school, the closest, and potentially most helpful, human resource from the standpoint of curriculum planning and instructional delivery is the school's library/media specialist.

Similar assistance is available normally on either a school or system-wide basis from the several pupil personnel areas such as attendance, psychological services, guidance, social work, and health. Personnel in these services may be of yeoman assistance as the teacher attempts to deal with the learning and developmental needs of students. Addition-

ally, supporting personnel in their positions should be able to provide valuable assistance as the schools continue to broaden the responsibility/accountability base for student progress to include on a regular basis not only the parents but also other governmental agencies with quasi-educational and developmental responsibilities such as the Public Health Department, the Department of Pensions and Securities, and the Juvenile Court. Failure to have knowledge of certain public agencies, their functions, and responsibilities to act in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect does not absolve teachers from legal liability.

Teacher-Parent Relationship

A key relationship which must receive immediate attention from a beginning teacher is that relationship between the teacher and the parents which emerges from, and which is decidedly influenced by, the teacher-student relationship in the classroom. Special attention should be given to the nature of the first contacts with parents, whether such contacts come on the first day of school in elementary schools or during the back-to-school, class visitation activities associated with most middle/secondary level schools in our state. The teacher must put the proverbial "good foot forward" during that initial contact in the interest of establishing an informed, involved, and "in control" image for the parents.

Subsequent, continuing contacts with parents are normally associated with the reporting of pupil progress/evaluation responsibilities of the classroom teachers. Beginning teachers should keep in mind that parents have a right to, and do, expect teachers to be specific when they meet to discuss the progress of their children. The ability of teachers to deal with these expectations is enhanced by the accumulation of adequate student evaluation data over time, including the maintenance of cumulative evidence of student progress through samples of work as well as score data from teacher-made and standardized tests. Beginning teachers are advised to assert their position that parents are expected to assist and support the teachers and the school in dealing with the learning and developmental needs of their children. They are encouraged to remind parents that the schools and the teachers cannot work effectively alone, and that the teachers' efforts will be more effective if they are reinforced by parents and guardians.

The Working Life of the Teacher

Thus far in this chapter the discussion of the teacher at work has been developed from the generic perspective of role theory within the organizational settings of the school and the school system. An effort

will be made in subsequent paragraphs to focus more specifically on the working life of the teachers in the classroom/school which, however, should be viewed in the larger contextual perspective which has been presented.

The teacher is a manager with the organizational, administrative, and decision-making responsibilities required for the successful operation of a temporary organization—a collection of students in a classroom situation—which has student growth over time as the intended product. This desired student growth must be viewed within the framework of the total growth needs of the students rather than within the narrow perspective which emphasizes basic skills and cognitive growth—the flagships of the recent accountability and back-to-the basics movements.

Two topics are highlighted for special attention in this section because of their perceived importance: (a) teacher expectations and student success, and (b) organization of the classroom as a physical and a learning space. Consideration is given also to topics such as clarification of assignment, assessment of available curriculum support materials, use of instructional supply funds, academic year-weekly-daily instructional planning, instructional time allocations and development of an information base for instructional decision making, individualization of student progress including reporting to parents, and organizational memberships.

Teacher Expectations and Student Success

Major strides have been made in most classrooms in recent years in meeting the individual needs of learners. Probably the most significant factor in making these strides has been the acceptance by most teachers of the research-based belief that all children are capable of further learning and development and that the role of teacher, and particularly the expectations of the teacher, in making such learning possible is crucial. It has been not too far in our educational past that one could find a row of students in the back of the room or away from the window who were just *kept busy* and were not *expected* to demonstrate much learner progress. This indefensible situation has been attacked in most school systems by the provision of compensatory and special education programs including the mainstreaming movement, as well as by renewed beliefs of teachers that they can reach all of their students and they are making the necessary operational commitments to do so. Obviously, the emphasis upon the basic skills and the minimal competency movement has encouraged teachers and administrators to expect growth from all students. The ability to utilize teacher expectations in an effective manner is certainly enhanced by growth in effectiveness of

teachers as helping professionals as described in the previously shared role of the teacher as Interactor.

Beginning teachers must be aware of the diversity of learners' needs which will confront them. They further must be aware of the significant impact of reasonable teacher expectations when supported by exacting and focused learning experiences in aiding even the most disadvantaged learners. Attention must be directed in passing to the modifier *reasonable* in the last sentence. Teachers should realize the necessity of having *reasonable* expectations of student achievement. Expectations which are *too* high for certain students, especially those with handicapping conditions, may result in disappointment for both the teacher and the student. Teacher stress and burnout could occur if the expectations exceed the learning limitations of the student.

Organization of the Classroom as a Physical and Learning Space

Special attention by all teachers should focus upon their classroom, not only as physical space, but as an inviting space where interesting learning and growth experiences occur. When considering the classroom's physical space, attention should be given to student traffic patterns, communications procedures, and instructional strategies which are to be utilized in the classroom when arranging furniture and equipment such as student desks, the teacher's desk, the pencil sharpener, learning centers, etc.

Some rather significant research-based guidelines for elementary and secondary classroom rules and procedures have been produced by the Classroom Organization and Effective Teaching Project of the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education at the University of Texas.³ Subcategories of concern addressed by their problems/procedures checklist which deserve attention in any effort to develop a classroom as an effective learning space include room areas, interface procedures with the larger school, whole class activities/seat-work procedures, small group activities, and other procedures such as beginning and ending of the school day/class period, student conduct during interruptions, fire drills, and housekeeping chores.

The classroom as an inviting place for learning is certainly enhanced by the organizational and procedural concerns discussed in the previous paragraph. The classroom from that desired perspective is also strengthened through the creative use of bulletin board and display spaces, the utilization of products of students' efforts, and appropriate learning aides which bring a degree of vitality and potential excitement into what could be a rather drab setting. Beginning teachers should keep in mind and accept the reality of the fact that they personally are the most significant *one item* in the classroom which contributes to the development of an inviting learning environment.

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In focusing upon the classroom as a learning space and the teacher's role in making it an inviting and inspiring place, the opportunities to bring rich human resources into that space must be mentioned. Fellow teachers, the media specialist who more than likely has a human resource file in process, and the students are ready sources of information in this key area. Similarly, the appropriate selection of field trips as a means of expanding the walls of the classroom beyond the brick walls of the school should be explored. Attention to the legal aspects of conducting such activities have been addressed in Chapter V.

It must be noted that itinerant and roving teachers who do not have their own classrooms are limited in their abilities to develop supportive instructional settings in their assigned classrooms. Administrative consideration of these limitations should result in assistance for these teachers by the media center's movement of instructional materials and by access to limited storage and support spaces in those classrooms visited during the course of the day.

Departure Points for the Beginning Teacher

Focus in this section will be upon initial planning and preparation concerns which must be considered by beginning teachers if they desire to assume a facilitator role within the classroom setting. Previous attention has been given to the organization of the classroom as a physical space for teacher control purposes.

The Assignment

Beginning teachers should receive a clear definition of their assignments including any extra-class or co-curriculum requirements expected of them. It is recognized that funding questions and pupil enrollment questions may delay the timing in defining the assignment in some situations beyond a reasonable point. Some teachers may receive introductions to an assignment as they "walk down the hall to begin," but these situations should be rare and administrative support in handling them should be intensified.

An assignment reality which beginning teachers must be prepared to face is the fact that in many instances new teachers are given the least desirable, most demanding assignments. Such being the case, it is doubly important that beginning teachers work especially hard during the first year to be sure their "planning foundation" is well laid. They must not be hesitant to call for and accept the supporting assistance which is readily available from multiple sources as discussed elsewhere in this section.

The Available Curriculum/Instructional Resources

Of immediate concern to a beginning teacher or any teacher entering a new teaching assignment is the question, "What resources are available?" It is hoped that there are few, if any, "textbooks, chalkboard, eraser, and away we go" assignments remaining in Alabama schools; assignments which have been known to exist in the not too distant past. In the absence of adequate closure during the recruitment, selection, and orientation phases, the beginning teacher must take the initiative to determine the status of textbooks, teachers' guides, curriculum scope and sequence materials, and supplementary curricular and media-related materials available from administrative personnel, colleagues, or the media specialist. A basic determination for instructional materials available as a point of departure for instructional planning must be made.

In light of that determination, some attention might be given to the use of available teacher supply funds in filling some of the gaps which may have been identified in this initial assignment. The beginning teacher needs to become familiar immediately with sources of instructional supplies and equipment so that he/she may participate effectively in individual or group purchases of materials. In most school settings, at least a portion of the allotment of instructional supply funds from the state flows through on a per teacher basis for individual use with some group decisions made relative to expenditures at the grade, pod, department, or school levels. The ability to identify needed resources with vendors and to recognize reasonable costs will score an initial point for the beginning teacher with building level administrators. Beginning teachers must become aware of school requisitioning/purchasing procedures in order to avoid any personal liability for unauthorized purchases.

Instructional Planning and Delivery

After determining what is to be taught in general terms at the subject, grade, textbook levels and determining the availability of instructional resources, the beginning teacher must develop an initial picture for the academic year from the perspective of "What is to be taught when?" Scope and sequence materials tied to the calendar if available should prove helpful in this important planning step. Discussions with administrative personnel and colleagues with parallel or similar teaching responsibilities should be valuable toward this end also.

With such a broadly based, academic planning framework in place, the teacher must then deal with the weekly and daily planning procedures which really provide the day-to-day direction to what occurs in the classroom. Attention in these regular planning cycles should be

given not only to content to be covered and objectives to be met but to grouping procedures to be utilized, teaching strategies to be employed, resources to be incorporated in the lesson, and evaluation/assessment techniques. In short, the beginning teacher must put into practice on a daily and weekly basis the curricular planning and instructional delivery techniques and strategies (see the Diagnostician and Facilitator roles) which were covered in the recently completed preparation program.

This time, however, the beginning teacher is in a real situation with total responsibility. While it is natural for the beginning teacher to feel somewhat lonely at this stage, he/she should be encouraged to draw upon the multiple resources for developmental assistance which were discussed in a previous section of this chapter. The beginning teacher at this stage may receive the most valuable assistance from teacher colleagues, building level administrators, central office supervisory personnel, and especially from a competent library/media specialist within the school.

The emerging body of literature under the time-to-learn descriptor and related topics such as time-on-task, academic learning time, engaged and nonengaged time should be familiar to the beginning teachers. Findings that nearly one-fifth of the instructional day is given over to noninstructional activities such as transitions between activities and class business and that even in allocated academic learning situations students were not engaged an average of about 16 minutes an hour should impress upon all teachers the need for viable planning which takes fullest advantage of the limited hours devoted to schooling in Alabama. The question comes to all of us in considering such findings, "Do we really have a six-hour school day in Alabama?" Obviously not, hence the real pressure on teachers to make the most effective use of the limited time that we do have.⁴

A key element in focusing the instructional planning process is the development of an information base on the students who are being taught. Early efforts should be made by the beginning teacher to gain as much knowledge about the academic and performance capabilities of the students to be taught both as a collected group and as unique individuals. Attention is directed to the previously shared role of the teacher as Diagnostician in this important initial and continuing responsibility of the teacher. Some educators take the position that teachers should not know what past records say about student performance lest such knowledge limit teacher expectations. Teachers are reminded of this possibility as they consider the materials contained in the cumulative folders and other organized student records that should receive careful attention. Focus in the beginning classroom activities

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should be influenced by this need to develop an extended understanding of the actual performance levels and capabilities of the assigned students.

The discussions which surround the idealized concept of individualized instruction are being reconsidered by professional educators. The goal of individualizing instructional offerings to meet the varying learning needs of students as stressed in the foundational role of the teacher as Diagnostician remains. There seems to be beginning concern that efforts to individualize may have resulted in too much isolated learning on the part of students when heavy reliance upon learning packets and worksheets have dominated the delivery strategies.

Such trends seemingly have lost sight of the reality that students learn from each other and that the teacher's role in processing individual learning and development in small groups and as a total-class grouping remains a valuable strategy. Research-based data seem to be indicating that a combination of total class, teacher-directed activities supported by group-oriented, small-group sessions and extended to a supervised seatwork/independent application format should receive close attention by practicing teachers. Beginning teachers are encouraged to participate in these dialogues and to develop a delivery system over time which best fits their teaching style, taking into consideration the continuous need for the grouping and regrouping of students for instructional experiences.

In such a system of instructional delivery, the physical location and movement of the teacher in the classroom while attending to and responding to individual and group activities becomes a crucial variable. This is particularly true during seatwork/independent application activities to insure adequate on-task participation by the students.

Early organizational attention should be given to the importance of record keeping and other administrative paperwork responsibilities of beginning teachers. Recent changes in attendance-recording procedures in Alabama have simplified this process and removed the "horri-fying problem" for some teachers of keeping the former attendance register with its monthly day of "accountability."

Particular care should be exercised by teachers when handling funds of any kind. Internal accounting procedures which provide direction for new teachers should be available in this crucial area. Receipt procedures and immediate transfer of funds to administrators should be described in such internal accounting procedures. Teachers are cautioned to be especially careful when handling cash and never to leave funds overnight in unsecured places.

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A most crucial type of record keeping is for evaluative purposes: providing feedback to students regarding their continuing progress and reporting this progress to parents. If beginning teachers are not especially sensitive to this need as they begin the year, they may be overwhelmed by the volume of paperwork which emerges naturally from regular and ongoing instructional involvement with class-size groups. Specific recording and record-keeping techniques such as the old-fashioned grade book, student profile sheets, individual student folders for the retention of selected items, among others might be considered. Being systematic and well-organized in this area will provide a degree of comfort and assistance for beginning teachers as they deal with the demanding dimensions of student evaluation and communication with parents. As noted earlier, parents have a right to expect teachers to be able to discuss the performance or lack of performance of their students in an informed manner.

Organizational Memberships and Participation

Professional organizational membership in school-based organizations such as the Parent Teacher Association and memberships which extend within their discipline-preparation backgrounds should be considered by beginning teachers. Such participation opens up lines of communication and professionally related interactions which may become a vital part of the continuing growth dimensions of the teacher. Associations representative of efforts to organize the teaching professions in Alabama (AEA, in particular) in recent years have been significant participants in the political decision-making processes which directly effect the working teachers of Alabama.

Beginning teachers, as a part of their professional responsibilities, should give careful consideration to the role of such organizations and make individual decisions as to the implications they hold for their continuing development and for the future of public education in Alabama. The recent move by the Alabama PTA to employ an Executive Director and to become more active as a grassroots political force in this state appropriately underscores the reality for all of us that decisions which influence education at the funding level are ultimately political decisions. The era of allowing somebody else to influence those decisions to the exclusion of the practicing professional seems to be rapidly departing from the Alabama scene. Beginning teachers need to be cognizant of these moves and to give appropriate individual attention to them.

Summary

A list of "Ten Prescriptions for Success in the Classroom" is shared as a means of drawing this classroom operational aspect of the chapter.

toward a summary position. These prescriptions emerged from longitudinal observations in classrooms where students were learning and in similarly matched classrooms where the students were not developing to the same degree academically. Teachers in the high performance classrooms distinguished themselves to the point of statistical significance relative to classroom organization, management, and instructional behaviors embedded in the list. A heavy consideration in the list focuses upon what many are advancing as the contemporary way of addressing the perennial problem of student discipline. Many will say that all teachers do those types of things in their classrooms. The actual research-based, observational data gathered over six years do not support that response. Some teachers do not perform according to some rather straight-forward procedure which most would classify as good teaching practice. It is recognized that there is a degree of overlapping in the list and some of the concepts previously addressed in this chapter. That is by design from a summary perspective and from the belief that exposure to information and concepts in multiple contexts increases the probability that it will be considered and possibly utilized.

Ten Prescriptions for Success in the Classroom

1. Plan the use of your classroom space and material carefully. Consider traffic patterns, sources of distraction to students, visibility (for students and teachers), space for group work, storage of teacher's materials and equipment, and storage for students' belongings.
2. Decide what behaviors are really acceptable or unacceptable in your classroom. Then, think about what procedures students must follow during the school day. Develop a list of these rules and procedures.
3. Decide on consequences of appropriate and inappropriate behavior in your classroom, communicate these to your students, then follow through consistently when a student behaves appropriately or inappropriately.
4. Be sure your students understand your rules and procedures. As appropriate, teach your students your rules and procedures systematically. Use explanation, rehearsal, and feedback.
5. Develop activities *for the first few days of school* that will involve the students, maintain a whole group focus, and prevent anything from interfering with your active, constant leadership of all of your students.
6. Monitor student behavior closely.
7. Stop inappropriate, disruptive behavior as quickly as you can. *Don't* ignore it; it won't go away.

8. Be clear and precise in your directions and in your presentation of information.
9. Plan ahead for smooth-running instructional activities.
10. Develop procedures that keep students responsible for their work.⁵

Caution should be exercised in reviewing and responding to the above list or any other list which carry "how to do it" implications for teachers. Just as the intended impact of schooling and teaching should not be narrowed to cognitive growth of students as assessed by performance on standardized tests, the complexities of teaching may not be captured by any one list of "things to do." The position offered for consideration by beginning teachers is that the scientific base/knowledge base of the art of teaching as discussed by Gage and others is increasing.⁶ Responding to this increasing information relative to teaching behaviors and planning and organizational considerations such as those covered in the list of ten principles, should increase the probability that teachers, particularly beginning teachers, may be able to continue to develop a uniqueness as "helping professionals" with a concern for the total development of their students.

Beginning teachers are reminded as they reflect upon their responsibilities that "Those who can, *teach*?"⁷ Those who do *teach*, in the fullest sense of the word, make a significant impact on the development of their students.

Endnotes

¹Kenneth Cadehead, *Trainers of Teachers of Teachers Project* (Auburn, AL: Auburn University, School of Education, 1969-71).

²Alain Lakein, *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life* (Bergenfield, NJ: New American Library, 1973).

³University of Texas—Austin, *Classroom Organization and Effective Teaching Project* (Austin, TX: University of Texas, The Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, 1980).

⁴Carolyn Denham and Ann Lieberman, Editors, *Time to Learn* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Education, May 1980).

⁵University of Texas—Austin, *Classroom Organization and Effective Teaching Project* (Austin, TX: University of Texas, The Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, 1980).

⁶N. L. Gage, *The Scientific Base of the Art of Teaching* (New York: Columbia University, Teachers College Press, 1977).

⁷Kevin Ryan and James M. Cooper, *Those Who Can Teach* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1972).