



Becoming a Teacher

By Logan Strain

Teachers are key in determining the future prospects of their students as well as helping to foster the intellectual and social development of children during their formative years. From preschool through high school, in public schools and private schools, people with teaching jobs are responsible for providing the tools and environment for students to develop into responsible adults.



The Responsibilities of a Teacher

Through either classroom presentations or individual instruction, teachers act as facilitators to help students learn and apply concepts in all of their school subjects. In addition to

classroom work, the teacher is also involved in such tasks as planning, evaluating, and assigning lessons. Someone with a teaching career must also prepare, administer, and grade papers while maintaining classroom discipline.

The teacher is responsible for observing and evaluating the performance of students and must keep up with the latest assessment methods in order to properly assess student performance. The teacher is also responsible for preparing report cards and meeting with parents and other school staff in order to discuss students' progress or to address personal problems.

Preschool, kindergarten, and elementary school teachers are perhaps the most important when it comes to the development of children. What and how children learn in these formative years will affect their views of themselves and the world. It will also influence their later successes or failures in school and at work as well as in their personal lives. It is at this age that students are introduced to mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies. Teachers at this level generally have the same students for the entire day and cover all of the above subjects. Other people with teaching jobs are usually responsible for teaching specialized areas such as music, art, and PE.

Middle school and secondary school teachers work in a more specialized manner, normally teaching one (or two) subjects to various classes of students throughout the day and delving more deeply into the subjects for which the earlier education

laid the groundwork. Some people with secondary teaching careers focus on career-oriented, or vocational, studies. These can include studies in such topics as healthcare, business, auto repair, and technology. These subjects are often taught with local opportunities in mind. Secondary educators are also often involved in career guidance and job placement for graduating students. In addition, they are responsible for conducting out-of-classroom activities, such as extracurricular activities and field trips.

Educational Requirements to Become a Teacher

Traditionally, to pursue a teaching career, one had to earn a relevant bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and then obtain a license. Most states, however, now offer alternative accreditation programs for those who hold degrees in other fields.

For those who still choose to go the more traditional route, college programs in education have different branches of study for primary and secondary educators. This is because the two levels have different tasks and take different approaches to teaching. All 50 states and the District of Columbia require public school teachers to be licensed. Most state license requirements include competency in basic skills such as reading and writing and proficiency in one's subject. In addition, the teacher must complete continuing education coursework in order to maintain his or her licensure.

One who holds a teaching job must be able to work with students from varied ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. Therefore, part of teacher job training includes taking classes and seminars that help to enhance awareness and understanding of different cultures. This multicultural learning is often incorporated into lesson plans in order to address the needs of all students, regardless of their cultural background.

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