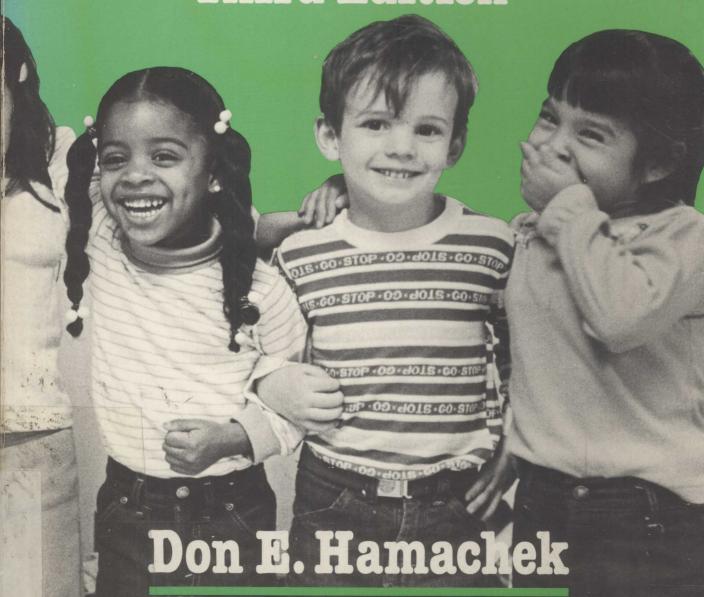
## Psychology in Teaching, Learning, and Growth

Third Edition



## THIRD EDITION

# Psychology in Teaching, Learning, and Growth

Don E. Hamachek

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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This book addresses some of the psychological aspects of human behavior reflected in teaching, learning, and growth. It focuses on ideas, research findings, issues, theories, and different points of view about such things as growth processes and self-concept changes that occur over time; about what constitutes "good" or effective teaching; about what learning is, how it occurs, and how achievement outcomes can be enhanced; about how the social psychology of a classroom influences interpersonal dynamics; and about how, as teachers, we can work toward positive classroom discipline.

Throughout this volume, the ongoing focus is on the *human* understandings, *human* meanings, and *human* experiences that are involved in growth, teaching, and learning. For me, classroom instruction and teacher-student relationships—at any level—are highly personal and individualized activities that demand not only that we know our subject areas, but also that we have a solid grasp of the basic principles related to effective teaching practices and that we are willing to work on understanding our own interpersonal dynamics.

This volume was written with the idea that educational and social science research is an ongoing process of constantly revealing fresh ways and new knowledge. Knowing this to be true, I wanted the organizational framework to be one that reflected the notion that the ideas, or concepts, or theories, treated here are seen primarily as starting points rather than as final conclusions—there is more, much more, to know and think about than one book can offer. Hence, each of the five major parts on "Toward Developing . . ." or "Toward Understanding . . ." or "Toward Becoming . . .," I hope, puts the emphasis where it properly should be, namely, on "we are moving toward," rather than on "we have arrived."

As far as the actual writing of the text is concerned, I set five specific goals for myself that I hope are reflected in the finished product. I wanted the book (1) to reflect a strong theoretical-philosophical overlay that was both adaptive and flexible within a developmentally eclectic framework; (2) to have a solid informational base buttressed by psychological and educational research; (3) to have a fluid explanatory tone which clarified ideas and concepts by both illustration (verbal and visual) and example; (4) to have a prescriptive core that offered possible solutions to a variety of classroom problems and teacher dilemmas; and (5) to include opportunities for reflective self-examination and self-discovery exercises. I am not sure that each goal has been achieved equally well, but I did strive for a reasonable balance.

I struggled with how to accomplish goal number five because I really wanted the exercises to be evident and explicit expressions of this volume's human orientation and emphasis on human behavior and human experiences that can best be understood, I feel, in personal terms. Thus, throughout the text there are what you might call personal involvement exercises that invite you to think about an idea or experience in relation to yourself or to do a specific exercise or task that

is related to the material being discussed or to experiment with a particular problem in a way to make it more personal to you.

Research has shown learning is enchanced when we are given what are called *advance organizers*, which are usually in the form of short expository paragraphs, sentences, or labels that provide a general overview or introduction to new material. I have tried to put this advance organizer into practice in four ways:

- 1. I have divided the book into five separate but interrelated parts, each of which deals with different ideas, issues, and concerns associated with the field of educational psychology. Each of the five major parts of this volume is preceded by an overview statement designed to help you anticipate what is coming and to help you relate each part to the other divisions of the book.
- 2. Each chapter is preceded by a chapter outline, which consists of the major headings and subheadings contained within the chapter. At a glance, you know the content flow and idea coverage included in any given chapter.
- 3. Each chapter is also preceded by a summation of what I consider to be the important ideas or major theme contained within any given chapter. I realize there may be differences about what is and what is not important, so if you will consider my listing of important chapter ideas as reading guidelines and study organizers rather than as final conclusions, it may make it more possible to accept them in the spirit in which they are offered.
- 4. I have deliberately used many descriptive headings and subheadings in each chapter to give you a reasonably good "headline notice" of what is immediately ahead.

I have no illusions that this volume covers all there is to know that is functional, useful information in the field of educational psychology. There is much to know and learn about—too much for one book possibly to include. I have, however, attempted to include a fair sampling of the research growing out of the various theoretical stances in educational psychology. Thus, this volume has an extensive research base, because it is only through continuing research that our best or worst hunches can be validly used or rejected.

I see teaching as an enormously complex professional activity. Neither research nor common sense allows us to believe there is one particular way to be a good teacher—or, for the matter, a good learner. Rather, there are many different ways to be "good" at those things, and each has merit depending on the person, the moment, and, surely, the subject matter. I would be pleased indeed if this volume is at all successful in stimulating questions and discussion among and between students and instructors, and in helping you to appreciate deeply the idea that teaching and learning are challenging, complex, and intensely "human" activities.

I would like to say a very sincere thank-you to professors Elizabeth Brady of California State University/Northridge, Joel Dill of the University of Evansville,

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D.E.H.

## **Brief Contents**

I	Toward Developing a Psychological Framework for Understanding Behavior and Educational Processes		
	1 2	Three Major Theoretical Positions about Human Psychology 3 Psychological Models for Understanding and Interpreting Behavior 33	
П		vard Understanding Growth Processes, Behavioral nsequences, and Intellectual Development	67
	3 4 5	Elementary School Youth: Age-Level Characteristics 69 High School Youth: Age-Level Characteristics 91 Intellectual and Cognitive Development 120	
111	Tov and	vard Understanding Learning Processes, Enhancing Motivation,  I Measuring Learning Outcomes	157
	6 7 8 9	Approaches to Learning and Learning Processes 159 Motivational Processes and Human Learning 194 Self-Concept Variables and the Learning Process 232 Measurement and Evaluation of Learning Outcomes 267	*
IV	Tow Beh	vard Becoming a Good Teacher and Developing Healthy Teacher lavior	307
	10 11 12	Psychology and Behaviors of Effective Teachers 308 Self-Understanding: A Key to Becoming a Good Teacher 331 Toward Making Teaching Meaningful, Relevant, and Lasting 359	
V	Tow Cla	vard Understanding the Psychology of Group Behavior, ssroom Dynamics, and Using Positive Approaches to Discipline	397
	13	Psychology and Development of Healthy Classroom Dynamics 399	
	14	Understandings and Strategies for Positive Classroom Management 427	

## Contents

TOWARD DEVELOPING A PSYCHOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOR AND EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES  1 Three Major Theoretical Positions about Human Psychology IMPORTANT CHAPTER IDEAS 4 PROLOGUE 5	<b>1</b> 3
PSYCHOANALYTIC PSYCHOLOGY: KEY IDEAS AND CONCEPTS 7 How Personality Is Organized: Levels of Consciousness 8 Anatomy of Personality: Id, Ego, and Superego 9 The First Five Years—Most Critical 10 Some Criticisms of Psychoanalytic Theory 12 Examples of Neo-Psychoanalytic Thinking: Jung and Adler 13 Implications for Teaching and Learning 15 BEHAVIORISTIC PSYCHOLOGY: KEY IDEAS AND CONCEPTS 16 The Myth of Freedom 17 Reinforcement and Conditioning: Basic Processes 18 Two Kinds of Reinforcement—Positive and Negative 20 Some Criticisms of Behavioristic Theory 22 Implications for Teaching and Learning 23 HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY: KEY IDEAS AND CONCEPTS 25 Humanistic Principles About the Nature of Human Behavior 26 Role of the Self and Self-Concept 27 Some Criticisms of Humanistic Psychology 28 Implications for Teaching and Learning 29 EPILOGUE 30 REFERENCES 31 REFERENCES OF RELATED INTEREST 32	
2 Psychological Models for Understanding and Interpreting Behavior IMPORTANT CHAPTER IDEAS 35 PROLOGUE 35 PSYCHOLOGICAL STAGES MODEL (Erik Erikson) 36 Stage I: Trust versus Mistrust (Birth to Eighteen Months) 37 Stage II: Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt (Eighteen Months to Three Years) 37 Stage III: Initiative versus Guilt (Three to Six Years) 38 Stage IV: Industry versus Inferiority (Six to Twelve Years) 39 Stage V: Identity versus Identity Confusion (Twelve to Eighteen Years) 40 Stage VI: Intimacy versus Isolation (Eighteen to Thirty-Five Years) 40 Stage VII: Generativity versus Self-Absorption (Thirty-Five Years to Retirement) 41 Stage VIII: Integrity versus Despair (Retirement Years) 41 DEVELOPMENTAL TASK MOPEL (Robert Havighurst) 41 CONCEPT OF COMPETENCE MODEL (Robert W. White) 43 Competence and Self-Esteem 45 Competence and the Early Years 46 Competence and Psychological Health 48	33

SELF-ACTUALIZATION MODEL (Abiaham Masiow) 46			
The Basic Needs Hierarchy 50 Influence of Needs on			
Behavior 51 Degrees of Satisfaction in the Basic Needs			
Hierarchy 52 Examples of Self-Actualized			
Persons 53 Characteristics of Self-Actualized People 53			
Self-Actualization and Psychological Health 54			
FULLY FUNCTIONING PERSON MODEL (Carl Rogers) 55			
Basic Propositions Related to the Model 56 The Fully Functioning			
Person and Psychological Health 57			
WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO TO ENCOURAGE HEALTHY			
DEVELOPMENT? 58			
Provide Opportunities for Classroom Interaction 60 Give Students a			
Chance to Express Their Feelings 60 Work on Developing an			
Accepting—Rather Than Rejecting—Attitude 61 Be Sure Your Rules			
Are Firmly Established 61 Provide Ample Opportunity for Each			
Student to Be Successful at Something 62			
EPILOGUE 62			
REFERENCES 63			
REFERENCES OF RELATED INTEREST 64			

CELE ACTUALIZATION ACODEL (Abusham Maslam) 40

## II TOWARD UNDERSTANDING GROWTH PROCESSES, BEHAVIORAL CONSEQUENCES, AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

**Elementary School Youth: Age-Level Characteristics** 

67

69

IMPORTANT CHAPTER IDEAS 70
PROLOGUE 71
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT: BASIC CHARACTERISTICS 72
Caution: Stereotypes May Emerge from Certain Body
Types 74 Overview of Physical Growth Outcomes and Implications for Teachers 75
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: BASIC CHARACTERISTICS 77
Overview of Social Development Outcomes and Implications for Teachers 77

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: BASIC CHARACTERISTICS 79
Overview of Emotional Development Outcomes and Implications for Teachers 80
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT: BASIC CHARACTERISTICS 81

The Ability to Conceptualize Develops Rapidly 83 Conceptual Rules Increase in Number 84 Overview of Cognitive Development Outcomes and Implications for Teachers 84 UNDERSTANDING MIDDLE CHILDHOOD FOR WHAT IT IS 86 EPILOGUE 87

REFERENCES 88

REFERENCES OF RELATED INTEREST 90

Contents

#### 4 High School Youth: Age-Level Characteristics

IMPORTANT CHAPTER IDEAS 92

PROLOGUE 93

WHAT IS ADOLESCENCE? 94

Psychological Adolescence 95 Physical Adolescence 96

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT: BASIC CHARACTERISTICS 96

Growth Is Rapid in Adolescence 97 Hormonal Activity

Accelerates 97 Adolescents Are Bigger These Days 99 Early versus

Late Maturation: Effects on Boys 99 Early versus Late Maturation:

Effects on Girls 101 Overview of Physical Development Outcomes

and Implications for Teachers 103

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: BASIC CHARACTERISTICS 106

Overview of Social Development Outcomes and Implications for

Teachers 106

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: BASIC CHARACTERISTICS 109

Overview of Emotional Development Outcomes and Implications for

Teachers 109

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT: BASIC CHARACTERISTICS 112

Overview of Cognitive Development Outcomes and Implications for

Teachers 114

**EPILOGUE 116** 

REFERENCES 117

REFERENCES OF RELATED INTEREST 117

## 5 Intellectual and Cognitive Development

IMPORTANT CHAPTER IDEAS 122

PROLOGUE 123

THE NATURE OF INTELLIGENCE 123

General Intelligence and Specific Intelligence 124 Intelligence

Determined by the Quantity of Neural Connections 125 Intelligence Consisting of Seven Primary Abilities 125 Intelligence as a Complex

Three-Dimensional Structure 127 Intelligence as the Capacity to

Process Information 128

STAGES OF INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT (Piaget) 129

The Sensorimotor Stage (Birth-2 Years) 131 Intellectual characteristics of the sensorimotor stage 131 Toward facilitating cognitive development in the sensorimotor stage 132 The Preoperational Stage (2-7 Years) 133 Intellectual characteristics of the preoperational

stage 134 Toward facilitating cognitive development in the

preoperational stage 136 The Concrete Operational Stage (7–11

Years) 137 Intellectual characteristics of the concrete operational stage 137 Toward facilitating cognitive development in the concrete operational stage 138 The Formal Operational Stage (11 Years and

91

120

Up) 139 Intellectual characteristics of the formal operational stage 140 Toward facilitating cognitive development in the formal operational stage 141 DOES INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT REALLY OCCUR IN STAGES OR IS IT CONTINUOUS? 141 THE ROLE OF HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT IN INTELLECTUAL **DEVELOPMENT 142** On the Side of Heredity 143 Twin studies 143 Adoption studies 143 On the Side of Environment 144 Heredity and Environment Both Make a Difference 145 GROWTH AND DECLINE OF INTELLIGENCE OVER TIME 146 Crystallized and Fluid Intelligence Differ in Rate of Decline 148 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INTELLIGENCE AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 148 Limitations to What an IQ Test Can Predict 149 IQ, School Achievement, and Minority Groups: A Note of Caution 149 EPILOGUE 150 REFERENCES 152 REFERENCES OF RELATED INTEREST 155

## III TOWARD UNDERSTANDING LEARNING PROCESSES, ENHANCING MOTIVATION, AND MEASURING LEARNING OUTCOMES

Approaches to Learning and Learning Processes

IMPORTANT CHAPTER IDEAS 161
PROLOGUE 162
WHAT IS LEARNING? 162
TWO MAJOR THEORETICAL VIEWS ABOUT HOW LEARNING
OCCURS 163

157

159

Both Approaches Help Us Understand Learning Processes 164 A COGNITIVE THEORY APPROACH: LEARNING BY DISCOVERY 165 Learning by Doing Is Emphasized 165 Intuitive Thinking Is Encouraged and Stressed 166 A Certain Amount of Structure Is Needed and Necessary 166 An Example of How Discovery Learning Works 167 Discovering One's Own Errors Is Important 168 Enhancing Discovery Learning: Suggestions for Teachers 168 Advantages of Discovery Learning 169 POSSIBLE SHORTCOMINGS OF DISCOVERY METHODS 170 Sometimes Wrong Answers Are Mistaken for "Right" Ones 170 Discovery Learning Too Seriously Negates Teaching 171 Learning by Discovery Not Appropriate for All Students 171 Discovery Learning Can Be Time Consuming 171 Not All Subjects Fit the Discovery Mode 172 ENCOURAGING LEARNING VIA REINFORCEMENT: A STIMULUS-RESPONSE THEORY APPROACH 172

Identifying and Reinforcing Operant Behaviors Is Important 172 The Use of Punishment Is Deemphasized 174 Negative Reinforcement Is Not Recommended 174 Using a Variety of Positive Reinforcements Is Encouraged 175 Intermittent Reinforcement/Reward Works Best 176 Reinforcement a Built-in Feature of Programmed Instruction 177 POSSIBLE SHORTCOMINGS OF REINFORCEMENT METHODS 178 Extrinsic Motivation Is Overemphasized 178 The Teacher May Exert Too Much Control 179 Reinforcement Methods Produce Different Effects on Different Students 179 DISCOVERY AND REINFORCEMENT METHODS ARE NOT MUTUALLY **EXCLUSIVE 180** DIFFERENT STYLES AND PATTERNS OF LEARNING 181 Three Basic Learning Styles: Visual, Aural, Physical 182 Four Characteristic Learning Patterns 183 The rigid-inhibited pattern 183 The undisciplined pattern 183 The acceptance-anxious pattern 183 The creative pattern 184 Some Students Are Impulsive Thinkers; Others Are Reflective 185 Some Students Conceptualize Analytically, Others Thematically 186 Implications for Teachers 186 THE SQ3R SYSTEM: AN APPROACH TO ENHANCING LEARNING 186 SUGGESTIONS FOR ENHANCING MEMORY 187 **EPILOGUE 189** REFERENCES 190 REFERENCES OF RELATED INTEREST 193

## 7 Motivational Processes and Human Learning

IMPORTANT CHAPTER IDEAS 196 PROLOGUE 196 WHAT IS MOTIVATION? 197 Motives Trigger Motivation 197 We Are Never Unmotivated 198 Motivation Can Be Either toward Something or away from It 199 Two Kinds of Motivation: Extrinsic and Intrinsic 199 Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Are Both Important 201 MOTIVATIONAL EFFECTS OF PRAISE AND CRITICISM 202 Caution: Not All Students Respond in the Same Way 203 Praise Given Indiscriminately and Inappropriately Is Not Very Meaningful 205 How Praise and Criticism Are Given Makes a Difference 205 As a General Rule, Praise Is Best 206 THE EFFECTS OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE ON MOTIVATION 207 Success Enhances Motivation and Failure Depresses It-But Not Always 207 Implications for teachers 210 Too Much Failure May Lead to Unrealistic Levels of Aspiration 210 Risk-Taking Behavior Influenced by Expectations for Success 211 Implications for

194

teachers 211 The Inner Tug-of-War: Fear of Failure and Desire for Success 212 Expectations of Success or Failure Related to Self-Esteem 213 How Self-Esteem Certainty Affects Motivation 214 Implications for teachers 215 MOTIVATIONAL EFFECTS OF COMPETITION AND COOPERATION 217

Advantages and Disadvantages Associated with Competition and Cooperation 219 Implications for Teachers 220 Examples of destructive competition in the classroom 221 Examples of constructive competition in the classroom 222

IS MOTIVATION ENHANCED WHEN STUDENTS ARE FREE TO LEARN WHAT THEY WANT? 223

Summerhill: An Example of Total Freedom 223 The Summerhill Experience as Former Students See It 224 Open Education as a Motivation for Learning 225 Implications for Teachers 226 EPILOGUE 226 REFERENCES 227

REFERENCES OF RELATED INTEREST 231

#### 8 Self-Concept Variables and the Learning Process

IMPORTANT CHAPTER IDEAS 234 PROLOGUE 234

SELF, SELF-CONCEPT, SELF-ESTEEM, AND PERSONALITY 235
Self-Concept and Behavior Are Reciprocally Related 235 Each Person
Has Multiple Self-Concepts 236 Self-Esteem and Self-Concept
Influenced by Comparisons with Others 237 Self-Esteem and Level of

Aspiration Are Interrelated 239 Level of Self-Esteem Influenced by Past Successes and Failures 240

EFFECT OF EARLY SCHOOL FAILURE EXPERIENCES ON SELF-CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT 240

Prerequisites to Dropping Out: Excessive Failure and Low Self-Esteem 241 Not All Drop Out—Many Stay but Suffer 241 Why Elementary School Success or Failure Is So Impactful 242 Early School Difficulties Related to Later School Problems 243 SELF-CONSISTENCY: RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL

ACHIEVEMENT 245

Behavior Tends to Be Consistent with Self-Perceptions 245 New Self-Perceptions May Lead to New and Improved Behavior 246 Positive Self-Concept or High Achievement: Which Comes First? 247 SELF-CONCEPT AND RELATIONSHIP TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT 249

Reading: A Specific Skill Adversely Affected by a Low Selflmage 250 Success: The Best Antidote for a Poor Self-Concept 250 A Positive Self-Concept Is Necessary, But Not 232

Enough 251 A Positive Self-Concept Does Not Guarantee High Achievement 252 WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO TO ENHANCE SELF-CONCEPT AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT 253 Point to Specific Abilities and Skills 253 Communicate Positive Expectations 254 WHAT IS THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND TEACHER EXPECTATIONS? 257 Four Factors Influencing Positive Expectations 257 Specific Teacher Behaviors That Communicate Low Expectations 258 DO TEACHER EXPECTATIONS REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE? 259 A Note of Caution about Expectations 261 EPILOGUE 261 REFERENCES 262

## Measurement and Evaluation of Learning Outcomes

REFERENCES OF RELATED INTEREST 266

267

IMPORTANT CHAPTER IDEAS 269

PROLOGUE 270

MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION: MEANING, FUNCTION, AND USE 271

ASSESSMENT PREREQUISITE: DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVES AND GOALS 272

How Specific Should Objectives Be? 272 Cognitive, Affective, and Psychomotor: The Three Domains of Objectives 274 BASIC CONCEPTS RELATED TO SOUND MEASUREMENT PRACTICES 276

A Good Test Must Be Valid 276 Content validity reflects content coverage 277 Construct validity reflects adherence to objectives 277 A Good Test Must Be Reliable 278 Longer tests are more reliable 278 Three Common Indices of Central Tendency 279 The arithmetic mean 279 The median 279 The mode 279 Distribution of Scores Determines Which Central Tendency Measure to Use 279 Helpful Score Interpreters: Range, Percentile Rank, and Standard Deviation 282 No Test Is Perfect—Each Has Its Standard Error of Measurement 284 CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTING—EVERY STUDENT CAN PASS 285 How Does Criterion-Referenced Testing Work? 285 Criterion-Referenced Measurement as Related to Mastery Learning 286 Criterion-Referenced Testing and the Mastery Approach: For and Against 287 NORM-REFERENCED TESTING—THERE ARE DEGREES OF

SUCCESS 288

WHICH TO USE—NORM-REFERENCED OR CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS? 289

TOWARD PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTING GOOD CLASSROOM TESTS 290

Choose the Exam That Best Measures Your Objectives 290 Factors to Consider When Preparing and Using Essay Exams 291 Suggestions for scoring essay exams 292 Factors to Consider When Preparing and Using Objective Exams 293 Four Commonly Used Types of Objective Exams 293 Multiple-choice tests 293 True-false tests 295 Matching tests 296 Completion tests 297 Essay or Objective—Which Test Is Best? 297

ISSUES AND PROBLEMS RELATED TO GRADING AND REPORTING 298

To Grade or Not to Grade? 299 Alternative Grading System Possibilities 300 Use written evaluations 300 Use self-evaluation procedures 300 Give grades, but do not tell the students 300 Use the contract system 300 Use the mastery approach or performance curriculum 301 Use pass/fail grading 301 Use credit—no-credit grading 301 Use blanket grading 301 Some Kind of Grading System Is Necessary 301 EPILOGUE 302

EPILOGUE 302 REFERENCES 303 REFERENCES OF RELATED INTEREST 304

## IV TOWARD BECOMING A GOOD TEACHER AND DEVELOPING HEALTHY TEACHER BEHAVIOR

307 308

#### 10 Psychology and Behaviors of Effective Teachers

IMPORTANT CHAPTER IDEAS 309

PROLOGUE 310

GOOD TEACHING IS DONE IN MORE THAN ONE WAY 311 PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD TEACHERS 312

Caring, Warmth, and Friendliness Are Evident Behaviors 313 Enthusiasm Is a Dominant Feature 314 Good Teachers Are by No Means "Perfect" Teachers 315 The Capacity to Be "Human" Is Well Developed 315

INTELLECTUAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD TEACHERS 316 Subject-Matter Competency Is Blended with Broad

Interests 316 Thorough Preparation Is an Earmark 316 Knowledge about Students Is Valued Highly 317 Ability to Prepare Students for New Learning Is Well Developed 317

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND INTERACTION STYLES OF GOOD TEACHERS 318

Good Teachers Challenge and Encourage 318 Good Teachers Personalize Their Feedback 319 Positive Rapport and High Expectations Are Valued and Practiced 321 Whether Teaching Is Direct or Indirect Depends on Situation 322 Flexibility—A Key to Successful Instruction and Interaction 325 EPILOGUE 326 REFERENCES 327 REFERENCES OF RELATED INTEREST 330

#### 11 Self-Understanding: A Key to Becoming a Good Teacher

331

IMPORTANT CHAPTER IDEAS 333

PROLOGUE 333

WHAT ARE THE MEANINGS AND IMPLICATIONS OF SELF-

UNDERSTANDING? 334

HOW CAN SELF-UNDERSTANDING BE ACQUIRED? 335

Observe and Study the Behavior of Others 336 Practice

Empathy 337 Try a Little Honesty 337 Self-Disclosure Can

Help 337 Cultivate Friends Who Give You Honest

Feedback 339 Take Some Risks Now and Then 339 Be Aware of

the Defense Mechanisms You Use 340 Rationalization (excuses.

excuses) 341 Denial of reality (the old head-in-the-sand

trick) 341 Projection (not my fault, yours; not in me, in

you) 342 Reaction formation (behavior is different from the

feelings) 343 Fantasy (construct a more congenial

reality) 344 Displacement (someone safer becomes the

target) 344 Compensation (building other strengths to short-circuit the

weaknesses) 345 Look at Your Current Feelings and

Behaviors 346 Take Advantage of Opportunities for Counseling 348

HOW CAN SELF-UNDERSTANDING HELP US TO BE BETTER

TEACHERS? 350

It Can Help Us Understand Transference Phenomena 350 It Can Help Us Understand Countertransference Possibilities 350 It Can Help Us Reduce Unhealthy Student-Teacher Relationships 351 It Can Help Us Avoid Unnecessary Personalization 351 It Can Help Us Understand Relationships Between Self-Perceptions and Perceptions of Others 352 It Can Help Us to Be at Peace with Ourselves 354

A TEACHER'S SELF-UNDERSTANDING DOFS MAKE A

DIFFERENCE 354

EPILOGUE 355

REFERENCES 356

REFERENCES OF RELATED INTEREST 357

#### 12 Toward Making Teaching Meaningful, Relevant, and Lasting

359

IMPORTANT CHAPTER IDEAS 361

PROLOGUE 362

BE SENSITIVE TO YOUR STUDENTS' READINESS TO LEARN 363

Be on the Lookout for Those "Teachable Moments" 365 The

Developmental Task Model Can Help You Assess

Readiness 366 Piaget's Intellectual Development Model Can Help You Assess Readiness 366 Caution: There Are Opposing Views about the Readiness Idea 367 The "natural" view 368 The "guidedexperience" view 368

TEACH FOR TRANSFER OF LEARNING 369

Transfer of Learning Is Not Automatic 369 Be Alert to the Positive and Negative Aspects of Transfer 370

SUGGESTIONS FOR MAXIMIZING TRANSFER 371

Strive for Similarity Between In-School Learning and Out-of-School Experiences 371 Teach for a Greater Understanding of the "Whys" 372 Actively Encourage the Intent to Learn and Remember 373 Provide Opportunities for Students to Experience Early Success 373 Encourage the Learning of Principles, Generalizations, and Applications 374 Provide Opportunities for Sequential, Cumulative Learning 375

ASK BOTH CONVERGENT AND DIVERGENT QUESTIONS 375
Differences Between Divergent and Convergent Questions 376 Both
Forms of Inquiry Are Important Teaching Tools 376
TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTENT OF A
CURRICULUM 377

Keep Students' Personal Concerns in Mind When Planning Your Teaching 377 Some Possibilities for Social Studies 378 Some Possibilities for History and English 378 Biographies and Autobiographies Can Be Useful 379 Possibilities in Physical Education 379 Exploit Those Unplanned Moments 379 IDEAS FOR MAKING THE RESULTS OF TEACHING MORE LASTING 380

Provide the Appropriate Mental Set 381 Different mental sets produce different results 381 Utilize the Advantages of "Part" and "Whole" Teaching and Learning 382 When the whole method is best 382 When the part method is best 383 Utilize both methods in combination 383 How Work and Study Are Distributed Makes a Difference 383 Four variables to consider when distributing work and study 384 Encourage Overlearning When Appropriate 385 When overlearning is most efficient 385 When to encourage overlearning 386 When not to encourage overlearning 386 Provide Knowledge of Results and Progress 386 Why knowledge of results is important 387 Motivation is enhanced 387 Provide Ample Review Time 387

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN TEACHING STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT SOCIAL AND ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS 388

Develop Realistic Perceptions 388 Be Sensitive to How Ethnic Group Membership Influences Self-Image 389 Allow for Language Differences 389 Understand a Student's Background 389 Realize