American classrooms are changing. America’s public school system was founded upon the premise that all people, regardless of their cultures or special circumstances, are entitled to a free, quality education so that they can become productive, contributing citizens in our society. Modern-day educators have extended that vision to create global citizens. Education is, in a sense, a “golden door” of opportunity that enables people to transcend social, physical, economic, or cultural barriers to pursue their dreams. Increasingly diverse classrooms provide a venue for children to learn to embrace cultural differences and eliminate the barriers of racism, sexism, and prejudice. Teachers must now create culturally sensitive learning communities, develop positive teacher-student-parent relationships, design lessons that motivate all students to learn, and implement those lessons using differentiated instructional strategies to maximize student learning. The elimination of racism, sexism, and ethnic prejudice has become a challenge for our schools.

After completing your study of Chapter 2, you should be able to do the following:

1. Discuss the changing nature of American classrooms.
2. Explain why teachers need to embrace diversity and establish high expectations for all students.
3. Explain the role communication plays in culturally sensitive classrooms.
4. Describe ways to enhance home-school communication.
5. Define and describe the various dimensions of differentiated instruction and learning styles.
6. Explain the concept of multiple intelligences and describe Gardner’s eight areas of intelligence.

Everything you do in your future classroom will center upon meeting the needs of your diverse student population. Therefore, you must have some general understanding of the academic, emotional, and cultural differences of the students you will be teaching. To support a culturally sensitive learning environment, you need to design and implement lessons that address all students’ academic needs, learning styles, and multiple intelligences.

**Classroom Diversity**

Students do not look and act like they did 20 or 30 years ago, and the differences are not only the result of changes in dress and hairstyles. Modern classrooms, however, reflect the nation’s increasing cultural diversity. Presently, 37% of school-age students are minorities, a figure that will continue to increase in the coming years. Today, schools are showing major increases in non-White student populations. Moreover, the need to acculturate newly arrived immigrants is still an important part of the schooling process. But the faces of immigrant youth are no longer predominantly European faces. They are increasingly the faces of Asians, Hispanics, and others. A large percentage of the Asians are from Southeast Asia, and a large percentage of the Hispanics are from Latin America. Along with ethnic and racial diversity, we will have linguistic diversity. Increasing numbers of children are entering school from minority language backgrounds and have little or no competence in English. As might be expected, teachers will encounter more students whose ethnic and cultural backgrounds are often highly diverse.
reflect a Hispanic or Asian heritage. Also, as a result of Public Law 94–142 and its successors, students with a variety of disabilities now spend increasing amounts of time in traditional classrooms while still receiving the services they need. Another form of diversity that impacts many American classrooms is transiency. Approximately 40 million Americans move each year, causing the student populations in many classrooms to almost totally change between fall and spring (Ornstein, Behar-Horenstein, & Ornstein, 2007). As a result of these trends, more cultures are represented in today’s classrooms and more foreign languages are being spoken in our schools than ever before. Many of these languages have yet to become a part of the formal curriculum.

As a teacher, you will be required to plan very carefully to meet the needs of such a diverse student population. Failure to recognize and address the needs of these students could result in a large portion of the future adult population of this country that cannot participate successfully in the marketplace or as citizens.

During classroom interactions and instruction, teachers must keep the special cultural needs of their diverse student population in mind. Please note, however, that students’ cultures include much more than national origin or race. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) now defines diversity as differences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical area. Thus, teachers must be prepared to identify diverse students’ strengths, weaknesses, aspirations, limitations, and special needs. Today’s classrooms must celebrate diversity.

The more you know about your students, the easier will be your task of bringing about the desired learning. In short, to be an effective educator, you must identify your students’ needs—their strengths, weaknesses, aspirations, limitations, and deficiencies. These student needs can be academic or social. Some students may be lacking in reading or in mathematics, whereas others may be gifted, academically talented, or creative. An awareness of these differences is needed so you can devise ways to provide adequate instruction. In addition, you must take into account differences in social and cultural background, as well as different student abilities.

Some of your students will be academically able or even bright, whereas others will be slower, disabled, or handicapped. Student differences often require that you adapt the classroom’s physical environment and your instructional strategies to better accommodate the unique needs of mainstreamed or special students. In other words, you must learn to modify your instruction to fit the unique needs of special students.

Most classrooms include students who have documented intellectual, physical, and/or emotional exceptionalities. Under the IDEIA, children with disabilities must be educated in the least restrictive environment. This means an environment as similar as possible to the one in which children who do not have a disability are educated. The education of children with a disability in the regular classroom was referred to as mainstreaming. This term, however, has been replaced by the term inclusion, which means educating a child with special educational needs full-time in the regular classroom with other children (Idol, 1997). One recent study found that the achievement of students with learning disabilities benefited from inclusion (Karten, 2010; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002).

What does a diverse classroom community look like? Please complete Reflect and Apply Exercise 2.1, which will check your understanding of the importance of knowing your students’ backgrounds.

Video Link 2.1: Watch a video about adapting to diversity at www.sagepub.com/moore3e
Teacher Expectations

Hold high, but realistic, expectations for your students. Research has shown that a teacher’s expectations have a powerful effect on students’ performance. If you act as though you expect your students to be motivated, hardworking, and interested in your class, they are more likely to be so. Researchers have found that students who feel they have supportive, caring teachers are more strongly motivated to engage in academic work than students with unsupportive, uncaring teachers (McCombs, 2001; Newman, 2002).

Set realistic expectations for students when you make assignments, give presentations, conduct discussions, and grade examinations. “Realistic” in this context means that your standards are high enough to motivate students to do their best work but not so high that students will inevitably be frustrated in trying to meet those expectations. To develop the drive to achieve, students need to believe that achievement is possible—which means that you need to provide early opportunities for success.

Students tend to perform better and feel more personally adequate when you set high expectations and hold them to these expectations (Good & Brophy, 1987). This self-fulfilling prophecy holds important ramifications for teachers; namely, students behave and achieve in accordance with your expectations.

Help your students set achievable goals for themselves. Failure to attain unrealistic goals can disappoint and frustrate students. Encourage students to focus on their continued improvement, not just on their grade on any one test or assignment. Help students evaluate their progress by encouraging them to critique their own work, analyze their strengths, and work on their weaknesses. For example, consider asking students to submit self-evaluation forms with one or two assignments.

Classroom interaction studies suggest that teachers tend to favor students they perceive as high achievers. Indeed, high achievers often receive more time to answer questions and more positive feedback, and they have more and higher quality interaction with their teachers. In fact, Cooper and Good (1983, p. 10) offer several common ways that teachers respond differently to high-achieving students (“highs”) than to low-achieving students (“lows”).

1. Seating lows far from the teacher
2. Paying less attention to lows in academic situations (using less eye contact, nods, winks, and smiles)
3. Calling on lows less often to answer classroom questions
4. Waiting less time for lows to answer questions
5. Criticizing lows more frequently than highs for incorrect classroom responses
6. Praising lows less frequently than highs after successful classroom responses
7. Praising lows more frequently than highs for marginal or inadequate classroom responses
8. Providing lows with less accurate and less detailed feedback than highs
9. Demanding less work and effort from lows than from highs
10. Interrupting performance of lows more frequently than highs

These findings suggest that teachers tend to give more support to the students they view as more capable. As a result, the interactions between the more capable students and their teachers tend to be more positive.

Students’ motivation, aspiration, and self-concept can be affected to a considerable extent by your viewpoints and actions. When you expect students to do poorly, you may unconsciously give them less encouragement, less time to answer questions, and less attention. As this pattern continues over the year, students move closer and closer to your expectations. Be aware, then, that students are using your actions as a mirror of themselves, so challenge your students and communicate a belief in their abilities—and mean it.

"First, you have to get their attention."
Teaching Students With Special Needs

Public Law 94-142 (PL 94-142) and its successors require that an individual education plan (IEP) be written for every student with special needs. These IEPs describe the student’s abilities, educational and socioemotional needs, developmental level, and academic/behavioral expectations. They also identify required instructional modifications and accommodations (Rothstein, Rothstein, & Johnson, 2010). Teachers use this information to differentiate instruction, or customize their instructional delivery to address the needs of all students.

Teachers differentiate instruction by modifying the instructional delivery and assignments. For example, they create outlines, concept maps, and other visual aids for students who have difficulty processing complex concepts. Teachers record step-by-step instructions for students who are struggling in science labs, while using a traditional lab approach with general education students. In language arts classes, teachers use recorded books, leveled readers, or optical readers to share quality literature with challenged readers. During the writing process, students who have motor difficulties record their stories or have scribes. Primary children are encouraged to express themselves through multiple sign systems (pictures, numbers, letters, and pseudo-writing). Emergent and beginning writers create language experience stories with the teacher. In math class, struggling students use hands-on manipulatives to demonstrate mathematical concepts; they can also write math problems, one digit per square, on graph paper. Other examples of lesson modifications include modified worksheets, individualized instruction, specialized software, modified assignments, peer tutors, study guides, oral or hands-on exams, and assistive technology. Some school districts help teachers create differentiated assignments by developing classroom modification plans for school use. Figure 2.1 shows a sample plan with three categories. The teacher checks those items that will apply to a specific student.

---

Student: _________________________________ Teacher: _________________________________

School: ___________________________________ Grade/Course: ________________________

**A. Exam Modification**

____ 1. Reduce the number of exams to ________________________________

____ 2. Open-book exams

____ 3. Allow more time for regular exam

____ 4. Reduce the length of the regular exam

____ 5. Use more objective items (fewer essay items) on exams

____ 6. Give some exams orally

____ 7. Write down test items for students

____ 8. Read test items to student

____ 9. Substitute assignment for test

____ 10. Enlarge test item print

____ 11. Allow use of computer

____ 12. Other (specify) ________________________________________________
Some planning guidelines for working with students who have special needs are as follows:

1. Gather information about the nature of the exceptional student’s difference and how that difference might affect the learning process.

2. Seek assistance from district special education or resource experts.

3. Use specialized equipment (typewriters, computers, VCR, print enlarger, Braille material, etc.) to allow students to function at an optimum level.

4. Individualize the curriculum by adapting materials and teaching strategies to better meet the need of the exceptional students.

5. Remove physical and psychological barriers that limit exceptional students’ ability to succeed in your classroom.
Response to Intervention

With the 2004 reauthorization of the federal IDEIA, states and school districts were given more options for how to evaluate public school students for specific learning disabilities (LD). One new approach to evaluation that has gained increasing interest is responsiveness to intervention (RTI). RTI emphasizes “student outcomes instead of student deficits” (Kavale, Holdnack, & Mostert, 2005) and makes a clear connection between identification and instruction. This strategy improves the ability of students with disabilities to participate and progress in the general education curriculum. RTI is used to identify students with LD and to determine early intervention. This is accomplished through evaluation of student responses to targeted, higher quality instruction that has been demonstrated as effective for most students (Batsche et al., 2005). It has also been argued that RTI can be used for all students, not just those with LD. It is focused on providing early and more immediate support for student needs by screening students as early as kindergarten (Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003).

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology enables all students to be successful in the general education classroom. Through the use of specialized technology such as closed circuit monitors, Braille readers, voice-activated software, TTY telephones, and motorized wheelchairs, students are able to participate in educational activities that might have been difficult or impossible otherwise. Indeed, the latest amendments to the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA) encourage implementation and development of technology to enhance instruction in regular classrooms. In effect, Congress suggests that the effective use of technology reduces and/or eliminates many of the barriers that block instruction and improves teachers’ ability to better address the needs of all students.

Effective teachers develop learning materials and activities commensurate with the abilities of students with special needs, much as they adapt lessons to the individual differences of all students. In doing so, they work closely with available resource teachers, specialists, and other support personnel.

Limited English Proficiency

A major challenge facing many school districts in some areas of the country is students learning a second language, English. During this past decade alone, approximately 4.4 million children were English language learners (ELL) (Hancock, 2007). In many communities today, it is not uncommon for more than half the students to come from homes where the first language is not English. In the Los Angeles Unified School District, for example, more than 81 languages are spoken in the homes. Big city school districts in New York City, Miami, and Houston, as well as many smaller districts, now have populations of ethnic minorities that equal or exceed non-Hispanic students. Nationwide, the number of students whose first language is not English is expected to increase during the next couple of decades. By 2026, it is projected that about one fourth of all students will come from homes in which the primary language is not English. Yet Standard English will continue to be a necessity for success in school and society. Thus, because of the large number of non-English-speaking students in our schools, all teachers are teachers of English.
Learning to communicate reasonably well in English will be a major task for many limited English students. They will need your encouragement and help. The terms limited English proficient (LEP) and English language learners (ELL) are used for students who have not yet attained an adequate level of English to succeed in an English-only program. These students are learning English as a second language (ESL) and may attend special classes for English language learners. Some schools use a pullout system, in which part of the student’s day is spent in special bilingual classes and part in the regular classroom. Students in these special programs usually receive anywhere from 30 minutes to several hours of instruction per week in their primary language, but at least half of their instruction is generally in English. Other schools place students in sheltered classes consisting of specific cultural groups where the teacher is specially trained to work with LEP students. Whatever system is used, teaching students who have limited proficiency in English should include the use of hands-on learning activities and cooperative learning (see Chapter 12). At the elementary level, these hands-on learning activities may include playing action games at recess, drawing and painting, and viewing displays and demonstrations. At the secondary level, the hands-on learning activities may include almost all aspects of physical education class or some vocational classes and viewing displays and demonstrations in other areas.

Although LEP students may be able to understand the content of lessons, you may need to vary the delivery of the content to make it comprehensible to them. For students learning English, it is necessary to offer contextualized learning experiences—lessons that provide context clues using props, visuals, graphic organizers, and real objects. You may need to speak more slowly and enunciate more clearly while encouraging classmates to do the same. Other specific techniques for teaching LEP students include the following (Kellough & Jarolimek, 2008):

- Allowing more time for learning activities
- Avoiding jargon or idioms
- Building on what the students already have experienced and know
- Dividing complex discourse into smaller, more manageable units
- Encouraging student writing, such as journals, blogs, or writing projects
- Giving directions in a variety of ways
- Helping students learn the vocabulary
- Presenting instruction that is concrete (least abstract) and that includes the most direct experiences
- Using books translated to their native language
- Using dual language dictionaries and other resources
- Recording important lessons or lectures on DVD for use by students
- Involving parents, guardians, or siblings
- Planning and using all learning modalities
- Using a variety of examples and models
- Incorporating the home language into lectures, class activities, and learning centers
- Allowing students who share the same language to work in pairs or small groups
- Using technology

You should attempt to communicate with LEP students through gestures, pictures, and any words you know from their language. At a minimum, learn some of the basic words and
phrases from their language (greetings, numbers, days of the week, months, and so on), or better yet, have the students teach these terms to the whole class. Whatever you do, even though attempting to communicate with LEP students may be frustrating, always be positive. Also, encourage other students to include LEP students in their activities, explaining that they can make the new students comfortable by helping them learn the standard procedures and popular activities.

Assessment represents another problem when teaching LEP students. They may know the content on which they are being assessed but have difficulty demonstrating their knowledge on standard assessments. Given this, teachers must adapt assessments to determine the learning of LEPs. Possible adaptations could include (a) reducing the number of items; (b) increasing the assessment time; (c) modifying the skill level, type of problem, or task; (d) modifying the type of response; (e) arranging for testing in the native language; and (f) if possible, using satisfactory/unsatisfactory grading until students can successfully complete assignments.

Teaching the Gifted and Talented Student

Some of the students in most regular classrooms will be gifted and talented (G/T) students with exceptional general intellect, specific academic ability, creative productive thinking, leadership ability, or visual and performing art talents (Tomlinson, 1999). G/T students also are entitled to be served by teachers who are prepared to differentiate instructional content and methods and who possess personal and professional traits that promote successful learning for G/T students in their classroom. Many of the suggestions in Figure 2.1 can be adapted to the gifted and talented.

G/T students often progress through their education with insufficient levels of challenge due to myths and controversy surrounding gifted education. Table 2.1 presents some of these myths.

Characteristics of Gifted and Talented Students

How will you know when you have an exceptionally gifted or talented learner in your class? Look for characteristics that distinguish students in your class, such as the following:

1. **Advanced intellect.** Curious; asks intriguing questions; reads avidly; understands abstract concepts and ideas; learns rapidly; memorizes easily; reads rapidly; follows and completes multiple and complex instructions; focuses on problem solving, processes, and explanations; retains information; has interests, knowledge, or hobbies different from peers of similar age; has advanced understanding of mathematical reasoning

2. **High verbal skills.** Has a keen sense of humor; uses advanced vocabulary; explains complex ideas in unique and creative ways; fluently exchanges ideas and information; easily completes word games and puzzles; influences thinking of others

3. **Keen power of concentration.** Engages in activities for long periods of time; pays attention to novelty and complexity; becomes totally absorbed in an activity; is quickly observant and responsive; maintains interests and activities different from peers
### Table 2.1 Gifted and Talented Student Myths and Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myth</th>
<th>Fact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gifted learners can “make it on their own” because they are bright.</td>
<td>Gifted students need specific interventions and educational programs designed to meet their complex learning needs. Without special considerations, gifted students are unlikely to reach their full potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other students need teacher attention more than gifted and talented (G/T) students.</td>
<td>Each student is a special person. Some are, however, distinguishably different in talent, ability, or motivation. Some kids are measurably higher (gifted) in one or more areas in comparison to their age peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All kids are gifted.</td>
<td>All students need appropriate levels of challenge and should receive educational programming suitable for their needs and abilities. To provide G/T students with inadequate curriculum or low levels of support from teachers or administration is unjust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is undemocratic or “elitist” to give special attention to the gifted learner.</td>
<td>On the contrary, gifted students are often keenly aware of their differences from others. They may hide their talents to escape peer ridicule. Many seek older friends with advanced vocabulary and similar intellectual interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifted students are unaware of their differences unless they are identified in special programs.</td>
<td>Unfortunately, some gifted students do not participate because they go unnoticed or unidentified in school. Others avoid extra work that comes with challenge. Some have never experienced demanding work and may confront such opportunities negatively. Teachers, administrators, and parents can encourage success in programs commensurate with student needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All gifted students want to participate in special gifted programs with high levels of challenge for which they have been identified.</td>
<td>The opposite of this myth is more often accurate. If gifted students do not receive essential enrichment and/or accelerated learning opportunities, then poor study habits, social-emotional discontent, or behavioral problems often result.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifted students placed in special programs will have adjustment or social-emotional problems.</td>
<td>Initially, it is time-consuming for teachers to differentiate instruction or plan specifically for gifted learners. Ultimately, many teachers find results worth the effort for both the G/T learners and their peers (Renzulli &amp; Reis, 1997).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is too much work for regular classroom teachers to plan instruction for gifted learners.</td>
<td>On the contrary, most G/T students thrive with goals of their own, rather than setting examples for others. Gifted students may be “introverts” who prefer an environment with internal, not public thinking and reasoning (Silverman, 1986). Many G/T students find cooperative learning tasks, with high-medium-low ability groupings, exasperating (Kulik &amp; Kulik, 1992). They need opportunities to share ideas with intellectual peers, not necessarily in the role as tutor or teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifted students take pleasure in being good examples for other students.</td>
<td>Mediocre education is inappropriate whenever excellence is necessary to compete in an ever-changing world, where bright minds contribute ideas and solve problems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Atypical response behaviors.** May be more sensitive or creative than his or her peers regarding issues or concerns; may take high-level risks; comes up with original ideas and relationships often missed by others; may exhibit perfectionism or procrastination.
behaviors (or both); displays a strong sense of self; influences behavior of others; identifies with adults or older peers; can display advanced inter- and intrapersonal skills along with leadership and motivational ability

5. **Performance ability.** Displays high-level mastery in visual, physical, and performing arts; masters physical and artistic skills beyond his or her peers

Not all gifted students possess each one of these characteristics. They vary widely in characteristics and potential, just as special education students are different. Some G/T students are well-balanced, personable school leaders, whereas others are socially awkward or have serious emotional problems. Not all G/T students enjoy learning at school. Finally, many students from diverse backgrounds have been historically underrepresented in gifted education programs. Therefore, regular classroom strategies are critical for G/T learners.

**Strategies for Teaching Gifted Students**

What can you do with gifted and talented learners who exhibit one or more of these characteristics? Numerous strategies (Beisser, 1998) can be employed in the regular classroom where students spend the majority of school time.

*Differentiated Instruction.* As noted earlier, differentiation refers to instruction or curriculum that has been modified from a standard approach to meet the needs of particular students (Tomlinson, 1999). Although often used to accommodate special-needs students, this approach also works well for gifted students. This means the teacher modifies the lesson or unit to address the needs of G/T students by variation of the process, content, or product required.

*Varied Instructional and Grouping Strategies.* An effective whole-class strategy is to use problem solving, inquiry-based lessons, or group investigation where G/T learners can thrive in their ability to think, reason, and do research independently. Use flexible grouping such as small cluster groups (Renzulli, Gentry, & Reis, 2003) to provide bright students with opportunities to learn and work together within the structure of whole-class or cooperative learning group assignments. Advanced use of technology (e.g., multimedia and website design) for instruction and communication is another technique that motivates and challenges gifted learners.

*Varied Questioning.* Use higher levels of questioning at various times for gifted students so they can provide fluent or elaborate explanations, can learn to think abstractly, and are not able to get by with quick answers.

*Compacted Curriculum.* Why make the G/T students review material or complete tasks they have already accomplished? If they have a sound grasp of skills and content, provide opportunities to demonstrate proficiency (e.g., assign the most difficult problems first or allow completion of the end-of-chapter test in advance) and then move on to more complex concepts and skills (Winebrenner, 2002).

*Acceleration.* Gifted students require faster paced instruction for content, skills, and processes so they can move rapidly through the curriculum. Perhaps they can read above grade-level materials (e.g., supplying chapter books for a kindergarten child), leave the class to work
with an upper grade level (e.g., a second grader going to fourth-grade math), or take classes earlier than their peers (e.g., taking college algebra while in high school). Many high school students take college-level courses through local institutions or online offerings.

*Independent Study.* Challenge gifted students to explore individual topics of interest. Let them investigate a central question, gather multiple and varied resources, make inferences, provide a hypothesis, explain findings, and cite the sources. An important step in independent study is to share results with an appropriate audience that will appreciate the work they have completed (e.g., a research project on the extinction of the Siberian tiger should be shared with a naturalist or environmentalist).

*Tiered Activities.* Tomlinson (1999) suggests that teachers can focus on the same understanding and skills but at different levels of abstraction and complexity. For example, all students may be reading books with “chocolate” as a central theme but will use texts with a variety of reading levels and engage in tasks differing in complexity associated with each book level.

*Interest Centers.* Renzulli and Reis (1997) suggest that students don’t know what interests them until they explore various topics. Establish classroom interest centers with frequently changing themes that may focus on timely events, such as presidential elections or the Olympics, as well as diverse themes derived from students, such as exploring Stonehenge, techniques of playing chess, or serving people in poverty.

*Apprenticeships.* Because gifted learners may have interest and skill areas outside of your classroom curriculum, you may find community resource personnel a valuable asset. For example, arrange for a stockbroker to work with a small group of students interested in investing in the stock market, or encourage students to be mentored by field area specialists at a local university after school hours.

*Teacher Advocacy.* If nothing else, provide educational and emotional support for the gifted student within a rich classroom environment with advanced activities, resources, technology, and choices (Beisser, 1998). Hold high standards that help bright students reach their potential. Accept gifted learners in your class, as they have individual needs for challenge and support. The power of a positive, supportive teacher is immense. Learn through the parents of gifted students. They have lived many years with the gifted child who has been placed in your classroom. Speak out on behalf of gifted and talented students at educational meetings and programs. Become informed of local and state curriculum planning decisions or budget allotments for gifted learners. It is easier to have an impact on key decisions before they are made, rather than trying to undo unfavorable determinations. Seek professional information from your state and national gifted education organizations, such as the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC). They have numerous materials and professional growth opportunities such as conferences and workshops. NAGC has a Curriculum Studies Division that focuses on issues, models, and practices related to the development, implementation, and evaluation of curricula for the gifted (see www.nagc.org).

Gifted learners are entitled to be served by teachers with expertise in appropriate differentiated content and instructional methods, with involvement in ongoing professional
development, and who possess personal and professional traits that promote successful learning for gifted students in their classroom.

**Multiculturally Sensitive Communication**

Of all the knowledge and skills teachers possess, being able to communicate effectively is perhaps the most significant and the most useful. Through communication, teachers teach, colleagues collaborate, and students learn. Without communication, teaching does not occur, children do not learn, and schools do not function.

Ultimately, educators must find ways to open and support culturally responsive communication between parents and schools. Too often, low-income and minority families face sustained isolation from the school culture. Such isolation can result in an “us” versus “them” mentality. Teachers then often blame parents for student academic failures.

**REFLECTIONS ON TEACHER PRACTICE 2.1 Working With Parents**

1. What benefit would be gained from extending the school year and student time in school?
2. How are parents unrealistic about the function of schools and what schools can accomplish?

As an educator, I am familiar with the old “boredom” tale from parents. I listen politely without comment. Then I ask them nicely what I can do to make my class more interesting for their child. Usually, they don’t have an answer. The real problem is that in this age of instant results, many parents today expect their child’s entire education to occur within the 6-hour school day. And they expect it to be individually tailored to their child. Whereas teachers should consider individual needs, it is unrealistic to individualize instruction for all students.

I think many parents and educators have lost sight of the original intent of public education in the United States. Public education was set up to provide students with a foundation of skills and opportunities for education. It was assumed that truly interested students would continue learning at home. Now, with most parents working to make ends meet, I believe they have an absolute right to expect more from their child’s school. But because most kids are only in school for about 1,200 hours per year, it is unrealistic to expect schools to work miracles. So much has changed in society, but our country’s educational system has not yet caught up.

Perhaps we need to restructure our country’s educational system to better address the needs of today’s parents, who, just trying to survive, are often spread too thin to educate their children at home. If individualized instruction is what we need to have, then perhaps all students should be designated for “special education,” with smaller classes of students working toward individual goals. After all, every student has his or her own special needs. As our system works now, only certain “identified” students are having their “special” needs met. Is that really fair?

Perhaps students should be in school for more hours. I feel like I have so much to “cover” for standardized tests that my students don’t get the opportunity to practice newly learned skills as much as research says they need to. Of course, changes in our educational system will not happen until teachers are seen (and ultimately paid) as the highly specialized professionals that we are.

—Mary, elementary school teacher

Please visit the student study site at www.sagepub.com/moore3e for additional discussion questions and assignments.

SOURCE: Reprinted with permission from ProTeacher, a professional community for elementary school teachers (http://www.proteacher.net).
Communicating With Parents

In today’s complex society, the African adage “it takes a village to raise a child” is truer than ever. Parents are children’s first teachers. They have the right and need to be our educational partners as we explore ways to prepare their children to become contributing members to our global society. Effective teachers know that quality home-school communication doesn’t just happen—it requires hard work, active listening, tact, kindness, consideration, empathy, enthusiasm, and an understanding of parent-student relationships.

You should not wait for parent-teacher conferences to begin communicating with parents or caregivers. Effective teachers start communicating with parents at the beginning of the school year. This will be a major investment of time, but one that will pay off in the long run. Begin by mailing personalized letters to your students’ parents that introduces you and your vision for the semester or school year and invites parents to be involved in your classroom (see Figure 2.2). It doesn’t need to be personal, just an overview of what you think the semester or year will look like, an introduction of yourself, and a general invitation to the parents to be involved in your classroom. Make sure to include how parents can best get in contact with you, and encourage them to feel free to do so. If you can find out from the students (this is something you should include on their information sheets) what their parents’ last names are, it is nice to use a computer to put “Dear Ms. Alvarez” at the top instead of “Dear Parent or Guardian.” It is also a good idea to send these letters through the mail rather than via the black holes of students’ backpacks and lockers. Complete Expansion Activity 2.1: Introductory Letter to Parents, which will give you the opportunity to draft an introductory letter to the parents of your future students.

Invite parents to your classroom. In most schools, there is an open house near the beginning of each year or semester. On that special night, share your expectations, describe the major topics you’ll teach, discuss classroom procedures, and respond to parents’ questions. Have students give parents a “tour” of the classroom. Invite parents into your classroom throughout the school year to see student presentations or performances, celebrate holidays, participate in special art or cooking projects, and accompany students on field trips. Have students organize a night at the end of the year to showcase their work and have a little party for their parents.

If your school district supports it, plan to visit your students’ homes. Home visits are an amazing way to gain insight into the dynamics and general atmosphere of your students’ home situations. At the beginning of the year, invite parents to make an appointment. If possible, schedule these 15- to 30-minute home visits immediately before or after school. In “neighborhood school”-oriented districts you might even be able to walk to the homes. Clearly state that your purpose is to become better acquainted with the students and their parents. Be a gracious guest. Do not expect to be fed. Introduce yourself and your vision, share some prepared positive remarks about the student, and field questions. For those students whose parents don’t participate, set aside a special time to visit privately and take a “virtual tour” of their home.

Keep parents informed of classroom events and their children’s progress through periodic phone calls, class newsletters, a class website, and progress reports. In addition to assigning formal grades, include a few sentences describing students’ academic efforts. Emphasize the students’ strengths and be honest about areas for growth. For example, “Mike has turned in
Figure 2.2
Sample Letter to Parents

Miller Elementary School
2004 Elementary School Road
Lawton, OK
September 5, 2011

John and Mary Miller
5555 Springdale Drive
Lawton, OK

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Miller:

I am Larry's new [fourth grade] teacher. I am excited about this year and look forward to working with you to accomplish your child's academic needs. I will use several methods to give feedback to you and your child about his progress. Please note that I use the following:

1. quarterly grade reports will give your child's progress to date
2. graded homework assignments weekly
3. graded quizzes and tests
4. our [fourth grade] Internet school site

I hope you will ask Larry about his homework and weekly grades. Please have him share his work with you. I do schedule parent conferences as needed. If you wish to schedule an appointment with me, please call 471-1234. I am available before and immediately after school. Those hours are 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

So you will be able to talk with your child about his work this first 9 weeks, the objectives we will cover include the following:

[List objectives here]

I look forward to meeting you at the open house on September 11 at 7:00 p.m. My room number is 28, and I am located in the north wing.

I look forward to the opportunity of working with you and your child this year. Together we will make a terrific team.

Sincerely,
Jane Zimmerman
Teacher
almost every assignment and is making good progress, but he did not do quite enough to prepare for his presentation on Mexico. We will be working on research skills before we begin our next unit.”

Language and Culture

Language and culture will affect the lens through which parents view school in general, and your class. Therefore, it is essential that you have a good understanding of the language differences and the culture of your students’ families. In many instances, language cannot be translated (word for word) because meanings can be different. Cultural values must be taken into account as well as how a culture communicates within its own society. For example, different cultures can have different concepts about time (e.g., punctuality), authority, tone of voice, or competition. Likewise, nonverbal messages expressed through touch or gestures, facial expressions, and personal space can have different meanings in different cultures.

When communicating with parents from other cultures, you must try to be more aware of your own automatic responses so that you can learn to keep them in check. Remember always to give parents the benefit of the doubt and assume that their intentions are not unkind.

Each school district that receives Title I, Part A funds must develop a written parental involvement policy that must include a parental involvement plan. The plan must provide opportunities for participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, parents of migratory children, economically disadvantaged parents, parents of children with limited literacy, and racial or ethnic minorities. These plans shall put into operation activities and procedures for the involvement of parents in all of its schools. These programs, activities, and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents, teachers, administrators, and community representatives. The plan must be updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and schools, as well as be in a format and language readily understood by parents and school personnel. The plan must

a. hold an annual meeting to inform parents of the school’s involvement in Title I, explain Title I requirements, and explain parents’ rights to be involved;

b. offer, whenever practicable, a number of meetings;

c. involve parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of the parent involvement plan;

d. invite parents to attend informational sessions regarding the curriculum, forms of assessment used in the school, and student proficiency level expectations;

e. give parents opportunities to make suggestions and to participate as appropriate in decisions relating to the education of their children.

As more and more school districts across the United States implement school-based management, teachers communicating with school administrators and community leaders will assume greater importance. Indeed, teachers are now finding themselves with the power to be involved in making decisions about how money should be spent at school sites, what
the staff mix should be, and what should be taught in classrooms and how. School-based management decentralized control from the central district office to individual schools as a way to give school constituents—principals, teachers, parents, and community members—more control over what happens in schools.

**Dealing With Difficult Parents**

Sometime during your teaching career, you will have to deal with difficult parents. To prepare yourself, become familiar with your school’s and district’s policies for dealing with parent conflict. What are the approved steps to take when a resolution cannot be reached? What are the policies related to specific situations? Make sure you follow the district’s policies, guidelines, and procedures.

When parents contact you with a concern or problem, respond quickly with a phone call or meeting to resolve the situation. Inaction on your part is frequently perceived as lack of interest or caring about the students’ and/or parents’ concern or problem. Even the shortest delays often fuel parents’ anger and frustration.

When conferencing with a difficult parent, remain at eye level with them and never sit behind your desk. Move your chair out from behind the desk and place it close to and in front of the parent. This sends a strong assertive message to the parent. It says, “I am comfortable and confident in this situation.” Actively listen to what parents are saying and do not interrupt them. If they are angry, give them time to vent some of their frustrations. However, always keep in mind that you are not anyone’s doormat. You should be an active listener so you fully understand their side of the story. Active listening is often difficult when the parents’ side of the story is full of misinformation and possible lies. Never underestimate the power of a stern, disapproving look. It can give parents a loud and clear “BACK OFF.” Often, intimidating or bullying parents are less aggressive if you make eye contact with them throughout the meeting. Selective silence is also one of the most effective ways of dealing with difficult parents. It is easy to use and is a very low threat. You must at all times remain calm and retain your composure. If the parents’ side seems to be going on and on with no end in sight after a lengthy discussion, ask them what their bottom line is. Ask, “What do you want to happen because of this conference?”

During any meeting with difficult parents, you must remain professional. There is no need to argue with them. Parents often have a way of sliding the blame away from their own child toward other students or you. It is important to listen to what parents have to say, but remember to keep the parents’ focus on their child. Do not be defensive. Act confidently and look in their eyes as you speak throughout the conference. Some difficult parents are inclined to twist the truth, or they may have a reputation for being volatile. In these cases, it is beneficial to have a third party join you for the meeting. Doing so could prevent a “he said/she said” conflict from occurring after the meeting. Indeed, some parents are not as boisterous or judgmental with a third party present. If the difficult parent tries to verbally bully you, just say, “Mr./Mrs. Smith, I don’t allow people to treat me this way. Perhaps we can continue this when you have calmed down.” Then slowly and calmly walk away.

This completes our brief discussion on communicating with parents and dealing with difficult parents. Complete Reflect and Apply Exercise 2.2 to review the major concepts in this section. In the next section, we will consider another very important topic: student differences.
Student Differences

Historically, teachers used a one-size-fits-all approach to deliver instruction. Every student heard and did the exact same thing. They hadn’t yet realized the importance of customizing their instruction to address the full spectrum of students’ abilities, interests, and cultures. Today’s classrooms are becoming increasingly diversified through the assimilation of immigrant populations and the inclusion of students with special needs. Furthermore, in this information age, students need to be able to use information as independent, reflective decision makers and problem solvers. Therefore, the traditional, teacher-centered direct instructional approach no longer meets today’s students’ needs.

Students are different and often have unique needs.
Effective teachers adjust the curriculum to address student differences rather than expect students to modify themselves for the curriculum. They use a variety of instructional techniques suitable for diverse learners, such as peer group learning, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, community problem solving, and self-directed learning. When appropriate, they employ assistive technology to facilitate students’ efforts to accomplish instructional goals. Above all, effective teachers help students make personal connections between their current cultural and academic experiences and the world outside the classroom. Lifestyle, gender, religious, language, and socioeconomic status differences should be discussed and respected in an intellectually honest way. Teachers need to individually and collectively value all students and challenge them to reach their highest potential.

Preassessment

For most teachers, the first and most important step in dealing with diversity and providing for student differences is determining what students already know so as not to cover material they have already mastered, or use methods that would be ineffective for students. This information can be obtained through a formal school diagnostic assessment system. However, if a formal assessment system is not available, tests, games, observations, discussions, probing questions, portfolios, or other activity that asks students to answer questions that would be used to evaluate their performance at the end of an upcoming unit or lesson can be used.

The most common form of preassessment is a pencil-and-paper test or quiz. In these situations, the teacher does not grade the test, but instead uses the information to determine whether teaching of prerequisite skills is needed or additional degrees of challenge. For example, a student in a high school physics class who has already mastered all the end-of-unit skills may be given the opportunity to step out of the traditional learning sequence while the other students focus on the subject-level concepts and skills.

The first days of school should include effective preassessments designed to determine how to plan for students’ academic needs. Indeed, the initial planning of instructional approaches and choice of content should be driven by the preassessment screening information. Moreover, assessment should be continued throughout instruction to guide teacher decisions when making instructional adjustments.

Differentiated Instruction

Not all students are alike. As such, teachers need to be flexible in their approach to teaching and adjust the curriculum and presentation of content to learners rather than expecting students to modify themselves for the curriculum. Differentiated instruction is a teaching theory based on the premise that instructional approaches should vary and be adapted in relation to individual and diverse students in the classroom. The goal of differentiated instruction is to develop challenging and engaging tasks for each learner. Differentiated instruction means that classroom teachers make vigorous attempts to meet students where they are in the learning process and move them along as quickly and as far as possible in the context of a mixed-ability classroom (Tomlinson, 1995).

To differentiate instruction is to recognize students’ varying background knowledge, readiness, language, preferences in learning, and interests and to react responsively. Differentiated instruction is a way to approach teaching and learning for students of differing abilities in the
same class. Teachers can differentiate by individuals, small groups, or even the whole class. The intent of differentiating instruction is to maximize each student's growth and individual success by meeting each student where he or she is and assisting in the learning process. This is not an easy task. It takes careful and systematic planning. The new technologies can often help (see Chapter 4).

In differentiated classrooms, teachers are able to reach students by appealing to differing interests and by using varied rates of instruction along with varied degrees of complexity. Teachers in differentiated classes use time flexibly and use a range of instructional strategies. Teachers can differentiate at least four classroom elements based on students' readiness, interest, or learning profile.

1. **Content.** What the student needs to learn or how the student will get access to the information. Teachers can use reading materials at varying readability levels, put text on DVDs, use computers, present ideas through both auditory and visual means, and reteach an idea or skill in small groups to struggling learners or extend the thinking or skills of advanced learners. For students who learn more slowly, one modification that is needed is to reduce the volume of material in a lesson. The focus should be on essential understandings and skills.

2. **Process.** Activities in which the students engage to make sense of or master the content. Teachers can provide interest centers; offer different activities with different levels of support, challenge, or complexity; offer manipulatives or other hands-on supports; and vary the length of time a student may take to complete an activity. All students should be engaged in differentiated meaningful activities related to instructional goals. As noted earlier, ongoing assessment must be an integral part of the instructional process. Assessment provides the teacher with the necessary information for making sound decisions on the total instructional process for all students.

3. **Products.** Culminating projects that ask the students to rehearse, apply, and extend what they have learned in a unit. Teachers can give students options on how to express required learning (e.g., write a letter or use a computer), use rubrics that match and extend students’ varied skill levels, allow students to work alone or in small groups on projects, and encourage students to create their own product assignments.

4. **Learning Environment.** The way the classroom works and feels. Teachers can make sure there are quiet places in the room to work, provide materials that reflect a variety of cultures and home settings, set clear guidelines for independent work, and help students understand that some students have to be active to learn.

There is ample evidence that students are more successful in school, and find it more satisfying, if they are taught in ways that are responsive to their readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. In response to student differences, teachers should provide broad access to a wide variety of materials and technology.

Differentiation means the curriculum must often be modified for some students. The curriculum found in most textbooks doesn't always meet the needs of all students. This may mean compacting the grade-level curriculum for some students while extending it for others. It may mean providing some students with more time to develop understanding, while accelerating learning time and providing enrichment for others.
Managing differentiated classrooms requires some adjustment in the way classrooms are managed. The management of an environment with multiple learning tasks taking place simultaneously requires that students be taught to work both independently and together in groups. Students must understand that responsibility for their own learning is an important component of the differentiated classroom. Another complex management problem with multiple tasks is that students working on an array of learning activities will not finish at the same time. Some will finish earlier than expected; others will need additional time. Activities and procedures must be developed for both early and late finishers. For example, early finishers can be provided high-interest, challenging enrichment activities and educational games while those needing more time finish.

Students who are gifted and talented also need an appropriately differentiated curriculum designed to address their individual characteristics, needs, abilities, and interests. An effective curriculum for students who are gifted is essentially a basic curriculum that has been modified to meet their needs. Developing a curriculum that is sufficiently rigorous, challenging, and coherent for students who are gifted can be a challenging task. A class is not differentiated when assignments are the same for all learners and the adjustments consist of varying the level of difficulty of questions for certain students, grading some students harder than others, or letting students who finish early play games for enrichment. It is not appropriate to have more advanced learners do extra math problems or book reports, or be given extension assignments after completing their “regular” work. Karnes and Bean (2000) suggest several ways in which the learning environment should be modified for gifted students in order to facilitate effective teaching and learning:

• Create a learner-centered environment that allows for student choice, flexibility, and independence.
• Focus on complexity rather than simplicity.
• Provide for high mobility within the classroom and various grouping arrangements.
• Express openness to innovation and exploration.

There is no recipe for differentiation. Rather, it is a way of thinking about teaching and learning that values the individual and can be translated into classroom practice in many ways.

**REFLECTIONS ON TEACHER PRACTICE 2.2**

**Teacher Teams**

1. Is the establishment of “school building teams” a good idea? If at all, how should they be used?
2. How should “school building teams” be involved in school and/or district policy decisions?

One of the most important aspects of “school building teams” is continual communication with the team leaders from the administration of the building. There has to be an open trust and the administration has to be willing to listen to all, while the team leaders have to be willing to provide solutions and suggestions along with their “venting.”

Three years ago, we made the conscious decision to look to our team leaders as instructional leaders, and we modeled for them at our team leader meetings open dialogue around instructional issues, not business issues. We then asked them to do this twice a week with their teams. We provided them support by listening, giving
Learning Styles

Students learn more and retain it longer when the material they are learning is taught in a manner that is comfortable to them. Thus, students learn through different channels; that is, they have different learning styles. Some are visual learners, or those who learn best by seeing or reading; some are auditory learners, or those who learn best by hearing; and some are physical learners, or those who learn best through the manipulation of concrete materials. Some students learn quickly, others rather slowly. Some require substantial teacher help; others are able to learn independently. Most of us have taken on each of these learning styles at one time or another, depending on the circumstances; however, we tend to favor one style over another. Differences in learning styles are often due in part to differences in our cognitive style—that is, differences in how we respond to the environment and differences in the way information is processed and organized (Green, 1999; Riding & Rayner, 1998).

Researchers have produced vital information for teachers regarding the relationship between learning and learner characteristics. Dunn and Dunn (1993) describe learning styles as a person’s preference in four main areas:

1. Environmental: the light, sound, temperature, and physical room preferences when learning
2. Emotional: the responsibility and persistence shown and the level of structure and supervision needed when involved in learning
3. Sociological: preference for a large or small group, for being alone, or for adult assistance when learning
4. Physical: sensory mode preference (e.g., visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic) in learning and the need for movement, food intake, and a specific time of day

Factors in these four areas have a major impact on student learning. For example, some students prefer dim lighting, whereas others prefer brightly lit environments. Frequently, room temperature and noise level are the first learning style preferences communicated by students. Teachers who are unaware of the environmental effects on learning may interpret this communication as simple complaining. Informed teachers have come to realize that, just as students are unique, each learns in a unique way.
Sensitive teachers can sometimes identify the learning preferences of students through careful observations. However, a learning styles record form, such as the four-category form shown in Figure 2.3, can be helpful for this purpose. Interviews are an excellent way to have students talk about their experiences as learners and often will provide more accurate information regarding their learning styles. Teachers, however, sometimes have difficulty identifying students' learning styles accurately without some type of instrumentation. Some characteristics simply are not observable, even to the experienced teacher. Moreover, teachers can misinterpret students' behaviors and misunderstand their symptoms. An instrument often used to determine learning style that has high reliability and validity is the Dunn, Dunn, and Price Learning Style Inventory (LSI), with subtests for students in Grades 3 to 12. Teachers can have students take the LSI and receive a formal report on their styles. According to Dunn (Shaughnessy, 1998), the LSI does the following:

1. Allows students to identify how they prefer to learn.
2. Recommends a classroom environment that will complement students’ learning styles.
3. Provides the group arrangement in which each student is likely to learn most effectively (e.g., alone, with two or more classmates, with a teacher, or, depending on the task, with students with similar interests or talents; it also describes whether all or none of those combinations is acceptable for a particular student).
4. Tells which students need direction and high structure and which students should be given options and alternatives.
5. Sequences and then reinforces the perceptual strengths individuals use to begin studying new and difficult information.
6. Tells how each student should study and do homework.
7. Outlines methods through which individuals are most likely to achieve (e.g., programmed learning, contracts, tactual manipulatives, multisensory resources, kinaesthetic games, or any combination of these).
8. Tells which children are conforming and which are nonconforming and explains how to work with both types.
9. Provides information relative to the best time of day for each student to be scheduled for difficult subjects (thus, it shows how to group students for instruction based on their learning-style energy-highs).
10. Indicates those students for whom movement or snacks, while the students are learning, may accelerate learning.
11. Provides information regarding those students for whom analytic versus global approaches are likely to be important.

Some student differences in learning styles can be accommodated; others are more problematic. The number of different learning styles often is too varied to make it practical for teachers to accommodate every student’s learning style. As much as possible, however, you should see that students’ learning needs are met. If sound is needed, you can allow
### Learning Styles Record Form

**Directions:** For each student, record your observations regarding the following items related to the student's preferred style of learning.

**Student's name:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Style Attribute</th>
<th>Findings (check when applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Style of working:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefers to work alone</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefers to work with others</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Learning modality:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Need for structure:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Details versus generalities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

students to use a CD player. When classroom resources fail, use personalized computer software packages. If verbal interaction is important, block off a portion of the room for conversation. If complete silence is needed, provide noise filters. For unmotivated students, make sure you work with them, check on them, and give them encouragement. For motivated students, leave them alone and monitor as needed. Finally, work with the administration and schedule students' toughest classes when they are in their prime. Some students will be morning learners, whereas others will learn better in the late afternoon. Teacher flexibility and willingness to experiment with different techniques will provide opportunities to maximize learning.

### Multiple Intelligences

Intelligence is usually defined as the ability to answer items on a traditional IQ test. Howard Gardner has argued that humans have at least eight distinct intelligences. According to Gardner, individuals differ in their strengths in the various intelligences.
Gardner (Armstrong, 1994; Checkley, 1997) has shown not only insight but also compassion with the development of the concept of **multiple intelligences**. These eight areas of intelligence relate to the individual’s abilities linguistically, mathematically, spatially, kinesthetically, musically, interpersonally, intrapersonally, and naturally (see Figure 2.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intelligence</th>
<th>Core Components</th>
<th>Teaching Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic</td>
<td>Ability to use language, either oral or written. Sensitivity to the sounds, structure, meanings, and functions of words and language.</td>
<td>Activities related to word games, e-mail discussions, choral reading, card games, journal writing, Internet searches, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical-mathematical</td>
<td>Ability to use mathematics and numbers. Sensitivity to and capacity to discern logical or numerical patterns; ability to handle long chains of reasoning.</td>
<td>Activities related to problem solving, mental calculations, classification, number games, critical thinking, solve puzzles, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial</td>
<td>Ability to perceive the spatial world. Capacity to perceive the visual-spatial world accurately and to perform transformations on one’s initial perceptions.</td>
<td>Visual activities related to graphic art, mind mapping, visualization, maps, pictures, imagination games, models, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily-kinesthetic</td>
<td>Ability to use one’s body movement. Ability to control one’s body movements and to handle objects skillfully.</td>
<td>Hands-on activities, drama, pantomime, dance, sports that teach, tactile activities, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>Ability to undertake musical endeavors. Ability to produce and appreciate rhythm, pitch, and timbre; appreciation of the forms of musical expressiveness.</td>
<td>Songs that teach, rapping, learn tunes, create rhymes, superlearning, enhance ability to learn, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Ability to understand other people. Capacity to discern and respond appropriately to the moods, temperaments, motivations, and desires of other people.</td>
<td>Cooperative learning activities, lead discussions, community involvement, dramatic activities, social activities, simulations, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>Ability to understand oneself. Access to one’s own feelings and the ability to discriminate among one’s emotions; knowledge of one’s own strengths and weaknesses.</td>
<td>Individual instruction, read books, journal writing, independent study, self-esteem activities, play activities, cooperative groups, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalist</td>
<td>Ability to understand nature. Ability to make distinctions in the natural world; capacity to recognize flora and fauna.</td>
<td>Activities related to the natural world and the biological sciences, exploration of nature, find origins, study nature objects, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gardner (2003) also is investigating whether a spiritual or existential intelligence may satisfy his criteria for individual intelligences. Gardner's multiple intelligence theory gives classroom teachers two extremely valuable tools that will make learning more focused on individual abilities. First, it gives teachers assistance in assessing where students' abilities and strengths lie. Second, it is a guide for teachers in the design of classroom activities that will give students an opportunity to experience working in different areas of intelligence. This will help students discover talents that may otherwise have gone unnoticed or untapped. The teachers of younger children function in a vulnerable position because these young children are experiencing a bombardment of developmental changes. Thus, many times, Gardner's multiple intelligences approach is especially important when assessing these younger children to attempt to discover who they are, where their strengths lie, and what talents might be able to help them develop a greater concept of self. Teachers must avoid thinking about children as smart or not smart because there are many ways to be smart.

Traditionally, schools have reinforced a learning profile emphasizing verbal/linguistic and logical mathematical abilities and de-emphasizing or excluding other possible intelligences. However, to address these other intelligences, Gardner emphasizes learning in context, particularly through apprenticeships. For example, student development in an area of nature should be fostered through hands-on experiences with nature. However, even traditional subjects should be taught in a variety of ways to address the varied intelligences of both students and teachers. For example, state history might be taught through a number of media and methods, ranging from field trips to biographies to films to art and architecture to reenactments of state events. Table 2.2 offers example teaching strategies that focus on Gardner's eight areas of intelligence.

This completes our look at making modifications for student differences. However, before we leave this section, complete Reflect and Apply Exercise 2.3, which will let you further explore the strategies for making modifications for student differences.

### REFLECT AND APPLY EXERCISE 2.3  Student Learning Differences

**REFLECT**
- Some educators suggest that teachers match instruction to individual learning styles and individual intelligences. Would this be beneficial to all students? Why or why not?

**APPLY**
- What strategies will you use to address the learning styles in your future classroom?
- Choose a topic you might teach one day. Describe how you could teach that topic using all eight multiple intelligences.
- How can you arrange your classroom setting and schedule to meet all students' needs?
### Table 2.2 Teaching Strategies to Address the Multiple Intelligences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual/Spatial</th>
<th>Verbal/Linguistic</th>
<th>Musical/Rhythmic</th>
<th>Bodily/Kinesthetic</th>
<th>Logical/Mathematical</th>
<th>Naturalist</th>
<th>Intrapersonal</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These children use charts, graphs, and visual representations</td>
<td>These children learn through reading, writing, and speaking</td>
<td>These children learn through songs and rhythms</td>
<td>These children enjoy physical activities</td>
<td>These children enjoy numbers, logic, and problem solving</td>
<td>These children are in tune with nature</td>
<td>These children ponder their feelings and ideas</td>
<td>These children enjoy interacting with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use graphic organizers (Venn diagrams, webs)</td>
<td>- Use quality literature throughout the curriculum</td>
<td>- Include music activities in each instructional unit</td>
<td>- Physically demonstrate the lesson objective</td>
<td>- Use hands-on materials to teach new concepts</td>
<td>- Explore what it means to be “green”</td>
<td>- Invite students to keep personal journals</td>
<td>- Create a classroom learning community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Include visual projects (dioramas, posters, artwork)</td>
<td>- Read aloud to your students</td>
<td>- Play background music during independent work time</td>
<td>- Have students care for classroom pets and plants</td>
<td>- Provide outlines and agendas to structure your lessons</td>
<td>- Have students study birds and nature</td>
<td>- Allow wait-time for serious reflection</td>
<td>- Take time for “class talks” about current issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use manipulatives to teach math/science concepts</td>
<td>- Have independent reading time each day</td>
<td>- Use windchimes as an attention-getting signal</td>
<td>- Integrate nature themes into each instructional unit</td>
<td>- Share instructional goals and objectives</td>
<td>- Create a student recycling center</td>
<td>- Use open-ended questions that invite students’ opinions</td>
<td>- Use cooperative learning activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Include art projects in each instructional unit</td>
<td>- Use cooperative group activities to promote speaking</td>
<td>- Use music to open and close lessons</td>
<td>- Create a student recycling center</td>
<td>- Challenge children through critical thinking activities</td>
<td>- Discuss conservation of natural resources</td>
<td>- Individualize instruction matched to students’ interests</td>
<td>- Engage in class discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have students visualize specific situations</td>
<td>- Encourage students to make presentations</td>
<td>- Have students write songs, raps, poems, and jingles</td>
<td>- Use problem-solving activities</td>
<td>- Create listening and music centers</td>
<td>- Keep a weather chart</td>
<td>- Create a quiet area in the room for reflection</td>
<td>- Arrange desks in small groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Create a colorful classroom atmosphere</td>
<td>- Have students write regularly</td>
<td>- Make homemade instruments</td>
<td>- Use graphic organizers</td>
<td>- Make mind puzzles and games</td>
<td>- Write nature-focused poems</td>
<td>- Display the music of other cultures</td>
<td>- Teach students different group roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use videos and YouTube clips</td>
<td>- Display students’ creative use of language</td>
<td>- Use music to open and close lessons</td>
<td>- Encourage pattern awareness</td>
<td>- Provide mind puzzles and games</td>
<td>- Design environmental posters and commercials</td>
<td>- Integrate nature themes into each instructional unit</td>
<td>- Create learning centers so they can work with peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have students use sketch journals</td>
<td>- Add a variety of books to the class library</td>
<td>- Provide time to dance, sing, listen, and move to music</td>
<td>- Provide a computer center with graphic design software</td>
<td>- Provide multiple opportunities to reflect</td>
<td>- Interview park rangers or environmentalists</td>
<td>- Use goal setting</td>
<td>- Teach social and conflict resolution skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provide a computer center with graphic design software</td>
<td>- Incorporate playful language during your instruction</td>
<td>- Share the music of other cultures</td>
<td>- Use music and science learning centers</td>
<td>- Conduct surveys</td>
<td>- Create group problem-solving activities</td>
<td>- Provide opportunities for student choice</td>
<td>- Create group problem-solving activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use video demonstrations</td>
<td>- Use choral reading and poetry</td>
<td>- Create listening and music centers</td>
<td>- Use songs or raps to help students memorize facts</td>
<td>- Use goal setting</td>
<td>- Use peer tutoring, study groups, and share pairs</td>
<td>- Have students record responses on the whiteboard</td>
<td>- Use peer tutoring, study groups, and share pairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It was Frank’s planning period. He sat at his desk reflecting on the class interruption earlier in the day. Ms. Dora Campbell, the school counselor at Westchester High School, interrupted his second period biology class to introduce Jose Esteban, who would be joining the class. Jose and his five siblings would be entering the Westchester School District. The family were migrant workers from Honduras and spoke only Spanish. Frank welcomed Jose warmly, found a desk and class materials for him to use, and continued with his class. Now, as he reflects upon Jose’s academic participation and social interactions, reviews his academic records, and ponders ways to facilitate his educational efforts, Frank has some decisions to make.

1. Should he seek assistance from the special resources teacher?
2. What special needs does Jose bring to the classroom?
3. How can he address these needs before the harvest ends?
4. How can he help Jose become an accepted member of an already-established class?

**Summary**

This chapter focused on the diverse student populations in our classrooms. The main points associated with specific objectives were as follows:

Learning Objective 1: Discuss the changing nature of American classrooms.
- Children have changed and more foreign languages are being spoken in our schools.
- Teachers must be sensitive to the changes in our schools.
- Teachers must plan to meet the needs of diverse school populations.

Learning Objective 2: Explain why teachers need to embrace diversity and establish high expectations for all students.
- Hold high but realistic expectations for all students because students often view themselves as the teacher views them.
- Instructional plans must be modified for special needs students and G/T students.
- LEP is a major challenge in some parts of the country. In some schools, more than half the students have a first language other than English.

Learning Objectives 3 and 4: Explain the role communication plays in culturally sensitive classrooms and ways to enhance home-school communication.
- Teachers need to develop better communication and listening skills so they can better communicate with students and parents from different cultures.
- Effective teachers communicate with parents, school administrators, and community leaders.
- Language and cultural differences tend to make accurate communication with students and parents difficult at times.

Learning Objective 5: Define and describe the various dimensions of differentiated instruction and learning styles.
- Students are not all alike.
- A one-size-fits-all approach to instruction is no longer applicable to today’s classrooms.
- Teachers must be sensitive to and accommodate students’ learning styles and focus instruction on students’ learning preferences.

Learning Objective 6: Explain the concept of multiple intelligences and describe Gardner's eight areas of intelligence.
- Gardner suggests that humans have eight different intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist. Teachers need to focus instruction on these different abilities.

**Discussion Questions and Activities**

1. **Teaching All Students.** Remember that a teacher’s job is to teach all students and assume an attitude that all students can learn. Research techniques and strategies that can be used to accomplish this task. Sources of information include the library, the Internet, current journals, and recent books.

2. **Diversity.** What other elements of diversity will you find in your students that have not been discussed in the chapter? How will you be sensitive to these differences?

3. **Student Needs.** Students bring particular needs to the classroom, in part because of different racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Based on the geographic area where you plan to teach, what area of need do you need to learn about most? How will you tailor your approaches to teaching to respond to the unique needs in your future classroom?

4. **Parent Involvement.** Research shows that parent involvement greatly influences students’ school attitudes, interest, attendance, and academic achievement. Develop an action plan for involving parents in your classroom in a variety of ways. What are some barriers you must overcome to involve parents? How are you going to overcome those barriers? Why should parents, families, and community members be recognized and encouraged to participate in the elementary school programs? Secondary school programs?

5. **Intelligence Profile.** Evaluate your own intelligence profile according to Gardner. In what frames of mind (intelligence areas) do you come out strongest?

**Technology Connection**

Technology can be an effective support and resource when planning for students with special needs. Complete the following two application activities that use technology as a resource in planning for students with special needs.
Use one of the Internet search engines to search for “sample individualized education plans.” Review sample IEPs that would be appropriate for the grade level you expect to teach. Form groups of four or five and discuss how all students could benefit from receiving the type of feedback present in an IEP. Share your findings with classmates.

Access lesson plans on sites such as http://www.lessonplanet.com (Lesson Planet), http://atozteacherstuff.com (A to Z Teacher Stuff), or a site of your choice. Select a lesson plan that addresses at least two different learning styles and a lesson plan to address at least two different multiple intelligences. Work with your classmates to identify related activities that would address the remaining multiple intelligences.

**Connection With the Field**

1. **Classroom Observation.** Complete several observations at the grade level you expect to teach. Collect data related to the following:
   a. The student differences
   b. The effectiveness of the communication process
   c. The teacher's nonverbal behaviors
   d. The teacher's listening skills

2. **Parent and Community Involvement.** Interview several teachers from local schools about how they foster parent and community involvement. Try to visit with a kindergarten teacher, an elementary school teacher, a middle school teacher, and a high school teacher. Are they successful in promoting parent involvement? How do these teachers work with parents who resist involvement? Summarize your discoveries.

**Student Study Site**

Visit the student study site at www.sagepub.com/moore3e for these additional learning tools:

- Video clips
- Web resources
- Self-quizzes
- E-flashcards
- Full-text journal articles
- Portfolio Connections
- Licensing preparation
- Praxis Connections
- Part I: View From the Classroom
- Part I: Public View of Education