"I do not believe that teaching is a role we play in front of students or that to be a good teacher we must develop a special persona. I do not think we should strive to be someone different in the classroom or faculty meeting from the person we are in real life. The same values and strategies should guide us in all spheres of our lives. Our students and colleagues should not be surprised when they encounter us in an unfamiliar setting—the behavior they observe there should be consistent with their impression of us. In fact, I believe that the most important teaching we do is that which is often called modeling—the unconscious messages we send merely by acting the way we act."

Mark A. Clarke
A Place to Stand: Essays for Educators
in Troubled Times (2003, p. 4)

Chapter 1

An Introduction

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Teaching has afforded us livelihoods that have been personally rewarding in terms of the interactions we have had with our students and colleagues and in terms of the opportunities we have had to learn and grow as individuals. In fact, we believe that teaching is the best profession and work there is! Like many teachers, however, we have had some bumpy rides on occasion, and at times the road has been difficult. Nevertheless, we persevered and have been rewarded beyond our wildest dreams.

We don't believe our experience as teachers to be unique because all teachers struggle from time to time, especially in the beginning and especially in response to change. However, we have often wondered why we have stayed with teaching as a profession while other colleagues—some we have known over the years whom we thought to be inspirational and talented teachers—decided to leave teaching to pursue other careers altogether.

The answer to the question as to why some teachers stay with teaching while others do not is one that troubles citizens, elected officials, institutions, and governments. Teacher attrition has become a major concern in many countries and for many institutions from public schools to universities in both public and private sectors. In the United States alone, at least 2 million new teachers will be needed in the next decade. That's about 200,000 new teachers a year.[*] In addition, recruiting and retaining teachers has reached a crisis in many other counties with more than 50 percent of new teachers today choosing to leave the profession within five years.[**] We recognize that the reasons teachers decide to leave teaching are complex and varied: Some have to do with problems inherent in the educational system, such as low salaries, crowded classrooms, or lack of public support, while others clearly reside within individuals. If the problems associated with teaching are not resolved over time, the stress associated with these problems will take its toll on performance and on the sense of well-being that teaching can afford us as individuals. It seems that in order to remain in teaching over the long haul and experience the ways that teaching can be both personally and professionally rewarding, each of us must be able to routinely access the positive feelings and experiences that drew us to teaching in the first place. Just how to do this successfully is a major question for many teachers.

We believe that at least part of the answer to the question about longevity in teaching (i.e., why some teachers remain in the profession while

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[*]Hussar, W. J. (2000). Predicting the need for newly-hired teachers in the United States to 2008–09. *Education Statistics Quarterly, 1*(4). Retrieved February 8, 2007, from the National Center for Educational Statistics website, *http://nces.ed.gov/programs/quarterly/vol_1/1_4/3-esq14-g.asp#top*

[**]Data from the National Education Association website, "A better beginning: Helping new teachers survive and thrive," February 10, 2003. *www.nea.org/teachershortage/better-overview.html*

others leave) has to do with being able to seek and find what is at the heart of teaching. This process statement is not the same for each individual; in fact, quite the opposite is true. Both the process and the destination are unique for each person. Nevertheless, there are some commonalities. For most teachers the process of seeking the heart of teaching begins with mastering the outward trappings of teaching, such as implementing instructional tasks, designing and planning lessons, and managing classrooms. However, this is only part of the process. We believe that the more difficult part of the journey awaits us in the exploration of the inner world of teaching, such as learning about oneself in terms of personal values and beliefs, learning to interact effectively with the external world, and realizing that how one sees the world influences the choices one makes about teaching. We also believe that without an exploration of this inner world of teaching, it is difficult to maintain a positive experience of teaching over the long term.

Seeking the heart of teaching is both a journey and a destination. It is a journey because we are continually growing and changing in our roles as teachers and in our experience of teaching. The journey involves continuous reflection on the experiences we have of teaching and the use of strategies to maximize the positive impact these experiences can have on our lives. Seeking the heart of teaching is also a destination in that it can be described in terms of specific kinds of positive experiences that we seek for and desire from teaching. We want to reach a point in our professional lives in which the positive experiences of teaching predominate and the problems we may have had in the journey seem to arise much less frequently. In this book, we will share with you some practical ways to approach the journey and provide you with some ways to characterize your experience of the destination when you reach it.

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL LIVES

Teaching can tell us about ourselves if we are willing to recognize it as a catalyst for our own personal growth and development. We are not alone in the realization that teaching can contribute to our personal growth. Other scholars in the field also acknowledge this point of view.

And beyond a desire to increase the effectiveness of your teaching in technical or procedural terms, you are probably also attracted by the idea that there is a potential for connection between professional development and personal development. If you can become more aware of your own aptitudes, preferences, and strengths and use them in your teaching, you might not only develop your own best style of teaching, you might also develop as the type of person that you want to be. (Edge, 2002, p. 7)

Unfortunately, many teachers are not able to see teaching as an opportunity for personal growth and development. As Clarke noted at the beginning of the chapter, many teachers compartmentalize their lives as teachers, assuming a teacher persona in the classroom that may be strikingly different from the real persona used in daily life outside the classroom. We believe this tendency to compartmentalize is a typical response to the stress of teaching and working within educational systems. Teaching can be a frightening endeavor, and it can seem safer to be one person in the classroom—someone who may be less engaged, somewhat distant, and in control—and quite another person outside the classroom with people whom we know well. However, unless teachers can make the connection between their personal and professional lives, they will have difficulty exploring the inner world of teaching and in discovering what is at the heart of teaching for them.

Christison writes about her early experiences as a teacher in learning about the relationship between her personal and professional lives.

I think I had always wanted to be a teacher. As a young child I used to line up all of my dolls and stuffed animals in a row and pretend they were my students. In these pretend interactions, I was, of course, the perfect teacher and my dolls and stuffed animals were the perfect students. These pretend students were eager to learn whatever I chose to teach them. They were well behaved, learned everything quickly and easily, and were immensely respectful and grateful for the information I had to share. Naturally, it came as somewhat of a disappointment that teaching in my early days was not as highly rewarding as my pretend teaching situations had been. Part

of my disappointment came from the idea that I could compartmentalize my life. I wanted everything to be perfect in the classroom. I was really two people: me the teacher and me everywhere else. I did not think that the two MEs were related or needed to be integrated in any way.

There was a reason for this. In the early 1980s, I went through a very unhappy time in my personal life. As a result, interaction with me was often inconsistent. It was during this time that I began to lose interest in teaching and found it difficult. I began to have conflicts with my students and found my interactions with colleagues stressful and unrewarding. When my students would ask me if I was all right, it would annoy me greatly. *Of course I was all right! I come to class on time; I'm always prepared, and papers are always returned promptly; I never (miss office hours, etc., etc.).* I believed then that my personal life and my personal development as an individual had no bearing on my teaching. Externally, I was manifesting the behaviors of what I thought a good teacher should be, but I did not feel very successful as a teacher. I thought seriously about leaving teaching altogether. It was a frustrating time for me.

I look back on this time in my professional life now and can clearly see the relationship between my personal and professional lives, but I could not see it then. I was not able to compartmentalize my life in the way that I imagined. I was unhappy and discouraged in my personal life, and no matter how hard I tried to do otherwise, and no matter how well I prepared or how creative my lessons were, this unhappiness and discouragement came through in my teaching and my interactions with my students and colleagues.

The process of making the connection between our personal and professional lives does not happen overnight. For us, the catalyst for recognizing that our personal lives could be so intimately connected to our professional lives came first from reading the ideas of others in education. In the mid 1970s and '80s we were fortunate enough to become acquainted with the works of some teacher educators (such as Stevick, 1976, 1980, 1982; Schön, 1983) who cast a broad net on teacher education, extending the vision of teaching beyond notions of theory and practice. In other words, these were educators who considered the relationship between the profes-
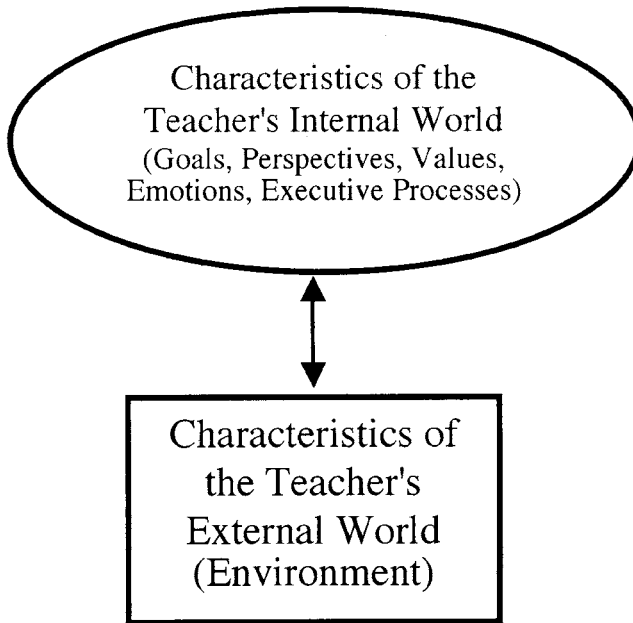
sional and personal lives of teachers and considered the whole person in teacher development. Their ideas started our thinking on this topic. Gradually we developed a view of our development as teachers that tied our professional lives to our personal lives as parents, as children, as friends, as partners, and as community activists.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL WORLDS OF TEACHING

For most teachers, the early years of teaching are focused on the external world of teaching—that is, developing a knowledge base and a set of instructional strategies necessary to meet basic classroom and professional obligations. Teachers typically receive formal training in the external world of teaching: the information, skills, and systems that form the procedures for teaching in a classroom, such as learning how to write a syllabus, how to organize and present a lesson, how to deliver course content, how to test, how to grade, how to maintain a supportive learning environment, how to implement specific strategies for classroom management, and similar activities. However, as previously mentioned, we typically receive little, if any, formal training about the internal world of teaching: understanding ourselves and working effectively with this self-understanding. This quote from Jersild in Earl Stevick's groundbreaking book, *Memory, Meaning, and Method* (1976), makes exactly this point.

> A teacher cannot make much headway in understanding others or in helping others to understand themselves unless he is endeavoring to understand himself. If he is not engaged in this endeavor, he will continue to see those whom he teaches through the bias and distortions of his own unrecognized needs, fears, desires, anxieties, and hostile impulses. Jersild (1955, p. 4).

Figure 1.1 expresses our view of the connection between our internal and external worlds.

Figure 1.1   The Teacher's Internal and External Worlds

Characteristics of the
Teacher's Internal World
(Goals, Perspectives, Values,
Emotions, Executive Processes)

Characteristics of
the Teacher's
External World
(Environment)

The characteristics of the internal world is the circle at the top. These characteristics, such as our true emotions, values, and goals, are often not directly observable. The characteristics of the external world is the box below the circle, and these characteristics represent anything in our environment that we can perceive through our senses, including people. The characteristics of the internal world interact with the characteristics of the external world, resulting in our experiences: how we perceive our relationship to the environment or how we feel about our teaching. To use a simple example, if a teacher tends to like outgoing people (a characteristic of the teacher's internal world) and ends up teaching a class full of extroverts (a characteristic of the teacher's external world), the interaction of these characteristics might result in the teacher's experience of enjoyment.

Palmer shares a brief example of how the internal and external worlds of teaching are interwoven.

A number of years ago, I taught a class that I had previously had enormous success with, but which had suddenly become a disaster. My course evaluations were about as bad as they could be, and I felt sad,

disappointed, and angry in almost all parts of my life. A gray cloud hung over me. The first thing I did was to talk with some expert teachers about what had gone wrong. Clearly, part of the problem was that I had not responded to some changes in my external teaching environment. I had proceeded to teach my courses as I had done in the past while my teaching environment changed around me. For example, the composition of the student body had changed significantly—the student backgrounds and goals were different from past groups of students; yet, I had not responded to those changes. With the help of my advisors, we developed a new course with more cooperative learning, more group work, less material covered, more interactive activities and experiential learning, fewer lectures, and different evaluation procedures (e.g., portfolios versus formal tests). Implementing these changes made a huge difference. In my external world, my course evaluations improved greatly, and my students even expressed their appreciation for the course in its revised format. Internally, my anger and negativity subsided. I felt much better about my teaching and about life in general.

This story illustrates how the internal and external worlds work together or interact. The teacher had a difficult experience in the external world of teaching (i.e., receiving poor course evaluations). Naturally, this situation affected him internally (i.e., he felt sad, depressed, and angry as a result of his low student evaluations). It shows how working on his external world (i.e., the characteristics of his instruction) impacted his internal world (i.e., his thoughts and feelings about his teaching). The teacher also devoted considerable energy to working on changing specific (internal) attitudes that were affecting interaction with his students, and his students noticed a marked change as a result of this teacher's internal work.

THREE EXPERIENCES OF THE DESTINATION

We believe there are three types of interactions that result in three different positive experiences that are at the heart of teaching. Each experience involves a different kind of interaction between characteristics of our internal world (what goes on inside us) and the characteristics of our

external world (what happens around us). Most teachers have experienced these types of interactions at various times in their teaching. The goal is to experience teaching from one of these positive experiences as often as possible. We introduce the three types of experiences here, but we will return to them in subsequent chapters.

• *Type 1, Pleasure.* We experience pleasure when what is going on in our external world provides us with what we enjoy. So pleasurable teaching might provide the teacher with a comfortable working environment, interesting coworkers, a livable salary, decent working hours, and exciting travel. Therefore, pleasure is essentially enjoying what comes to us, what we receive.

• *Type 2, Satisfaction.* We experience satisfaction when we give to others a part of ourselves (i.e., we give what some people might call our personal talents or gifts) and receive appreciation for what we give. Satisfying work for a teacher might be giving his or her special abilities as a teacher and receiving the appreciation of the students. Thus, satisfaction is a two-way exchange: giving and receiving.

• *Type 3, Privilege.* We experience privilege when participating in our work feels like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in which we are lucky to be able to take part in. This type of experience is created entirely from within our internal world and is independent of any feedback from the external world. For example, a teacher might feel that it is a privilege just to know and interact with students. Thus, what distinguishes privilege from pleasure and satisfaction is that it derives only from giving.

OVERVIEW OF MAIN TOPICS

The chapters of this book provide more detailed information on the possible connections between your personal and professional lives and between your internal and external worlds. We will focus on the different ways of responding to the external world so that you might predominantly

experience teaching as one of the three types of positive experiences and ultimately find what is at the heart of teaching for you.

Chapter 2 provides a framework for organizing our thinking about the internal world by breaking it into a limited number of components. Subsequent chapters elaborate on the components by describing each one in detail and suggesting specific ways for developing and working with them. Chapter 3 addresses the role that affective schemata play and includes a discussion on the importance of managing emotions. Chapter 4 provides an overview of some basic communication principles and provides an introduction to the notion of internal perspectives. Chapter 5 operationalizes the communication principles in terms of specific communication strategies. Chapter 6 introduces the concept of teacher specialties: habitual ways of relating to the world that can either promote or interfere with the different types of experiences we may have. Chapters 7–9 focus on the roles of the higher-order executive processes in seeking the heart of teaching. Chapter 7 specifically addresses the use of the processes of reflection and goal setting, as well as values clarification, while Chapter 8 describes the role of planning to achieve goals. Chapter 9 provides specific strategies for implementing and evaluating one's plan. Finally, Chapter 10 explores ways to create harmony in a teacher's internal and external worlds.

We hope these chapters bring you closer to finding the heart of teaching for you.