VALERIE HILL-JACKSON | NICHOLAS D. HARTLEP | DELIA STAFFORD

WHAT MAKES a STAR TEACHER

7 Dispositions That Support Student Learning

WHAT MAKES a STAR TEACHER

Introduction

Star Teachers can be found in every school, regardless of bureaucratic teaching environments or the negative social forces set in motion against learners. Many of us, whether as students or colleagues, have been fortunate enough to see how these effective teachers behave. These are teachers who do "the small things" with great effect, such as finding innovative ways to encourage students on a spelling test, sharing their passion for the great mathematicians of the Enlightenment period, or inspiring even the most underperforming students to reach their personal best. This book describes the seven dispositions (i.e., beliefs and behaviors) of Star Teachers along with examples and strategies for acquiring stardom in teaching.

We believe that these dispositions are the reasons that some teachers are successful and others are not. These are seven things that Star Teachers believe in and carry out in their classrooms, every day. Consider the following scenario at a failing middle school. It is first period and a class of 7th graders is falling apart. One student tears a blank sheet of paper from his notebook and crumples it up just so he has an excuse to walk to the trashcan. Another student gets up to retrieve a book from the bookshelf that she doesn't need. Several students are busy texting—part of an unspoken deal with the teacher, where they don't make trouble and she does not make them do work. This respected fourth-year teacher graduated at the top of her teacher preparation class and her diploma is

prominently framed on the wall, but there is no joy in her class and students are not learning.

After first period, these same students go to a science class where their behavior is completely different. Though it is not a quiet class, the students are working independently except for a group collaborating on a team project. After a few minutes, the serious but approachable fourth-year teacher makes his way to the front of the class, and the students know, almost instinctively, to bring their work to a close to join a class discussion. In this class, there is a beautiful chaotic order and a sense that curiosity is nurtured. In the far corner near the door is a framed letter from the teacher to his students, congratulating his co-learners for their recent honor of being selected to participate in the county science fair. Although student scores in this class exceed those of other science classes in the district year after year, metrics of Adequate Yearly Progress are the furthest concerns from the teacher's mind.

What explains the observable differences in these two teachers? Martin Haberman's writings offer a nuanced way to interpret them. His Star Teacher framework was derived from five decades of research, including countless hours spent observing what teachers do and what motivates them to do it.

Haberman believes that mindset (ideology or beliefs) shapes behavior (practice).[1] The first educator described above is a pre-Star Teacher: she has not developed the personal traits that may contribute to being effective with learners. The second educator is a Star Teacher who has acquired the expertise and the dispositions to be successful. Although the pre-Star and the Star both teach in a failing school with harsh bureaucratic school and district policies, only the Star successfully meets the needs of *all* his students. The good news is that anyone who truly desires to be a Star Teacher can become one.

Haberman defines the merger of mindset and behavior for Star Teachers as midrange functions or dispositions ("midrange" because they represent chunks of teaching behavior that embody interconnected actions that constitute the beliefs that predispose the teachers to act).[2] He notes that Star Teachers can readily be identified by

> their persistence, their physical and emotional stamina, their caring relationships with students, their commitment to acknowledging and

appreciating student effort, their willingness to admit mistakes, their focus on deep learning, their commitment to inclusion, and their organization skills. They also protect student learning, translate theory and research into practice, cope with the bureaucracy, create student ownership, engage parents and caregivers as partners in student learning, and support accountability for at-risk students.[3]

Teacher Dispositions

Early research on teacher dispositions focused on teachers' character, honesty, and habits. At the start of the 20th century, education icon John Dewey discussed the idea of teacher conduct as manifestations of their routine thinking, which he famously referred to as "habits of the mind."[4] Dewey made the argument that not all teacher conduct is well informed, but that poor teacher habits can be disrupted when educators deliberately and critically reflect on their practice. Behavior informed by examination and open-mindedness can displace deep-rooted habits that are faulty. In *Disposition as Habits of Mind: Making Professional Conduct More Intelligent,* Erskine Dottin defines dispositions as "a tendency toward a general type of action in pedagogical situations," with "the teacher and learner tending to approach situations in a certain way and displaying a general set of actions associated with the disposition. Pedagogical dispositions should lead to better and more powerful pedagogy."[5]

There are too many definitions of the term *dispositions* to count, but they usually involve one or more of the following:

- Teacher characteristics: Attributes or tendencies that are persistently demonstrated, such as tolerance of differences, open-mindedness, patience, enthusiasm, critical thinking, and so on.
- Teacher behaviors: Observable actions during class, such as speaking Standard English, being punctual, smiling, presenting a neat and orderly appearance, and so on.
- Teacher perceptions: The attitudes, values, and belief systems that undergird characteristics and behaviors.[6]

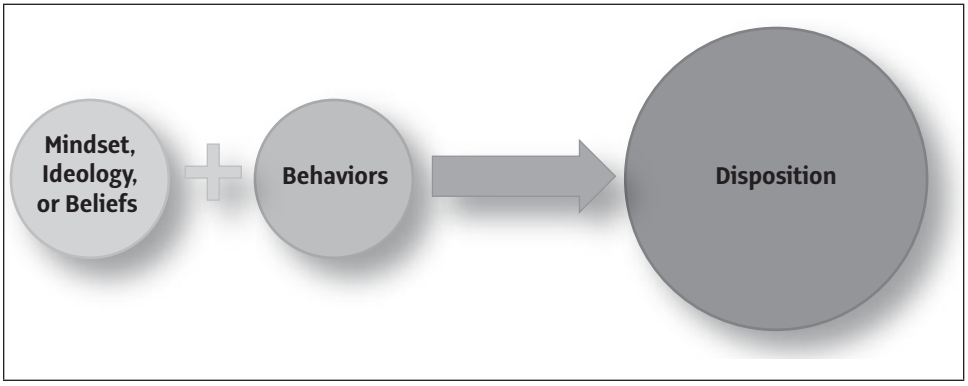
To Haberman, all three of the above elements work to form dispositions. The characteristics and beliefs (mindset) of Stars cannot be detached from their behavior (classroom practices)—"they are of a piece."[7]

The Seven Dispositions of Star Teachers

The seven dispositions that Haberman outlines and that are the focus of this book are as follows: (1) persistence, (2) positive values about student learning, (3) the ability to adapt general theories into pedagogical practices, (4) an encouraging approach to at-risk students, (5) a professional versus a personal orientation, (6) the ability to avoid burnout, and (7) the tendency to be vulnerable and to admit one's shortcomings.[8] These dispositions are highly symbiotic: like links in a chain, each acts upon and is affected by the other. A Star Teacher is likely to embody most or all of Haberman's seven dispositions to varying degrees and at different points in his or her career.

If you closely examine the individual dispositions (see Figure 1), you will discover that each has two components: (1) a belief or mindset and (2) a set of behaviors. Haberman's seven dispositions help us understand how teachers' ways of thinking connect to their performance in the classroom. As Haberman writes, "teachers' behaviors and the mindset that undergirds their behaviors cannot be unwrapped."[9] Put simply: as a teacher thinks, so she or he does.

Figure 1 **Understanding the Source of Teachers' Dispositions**

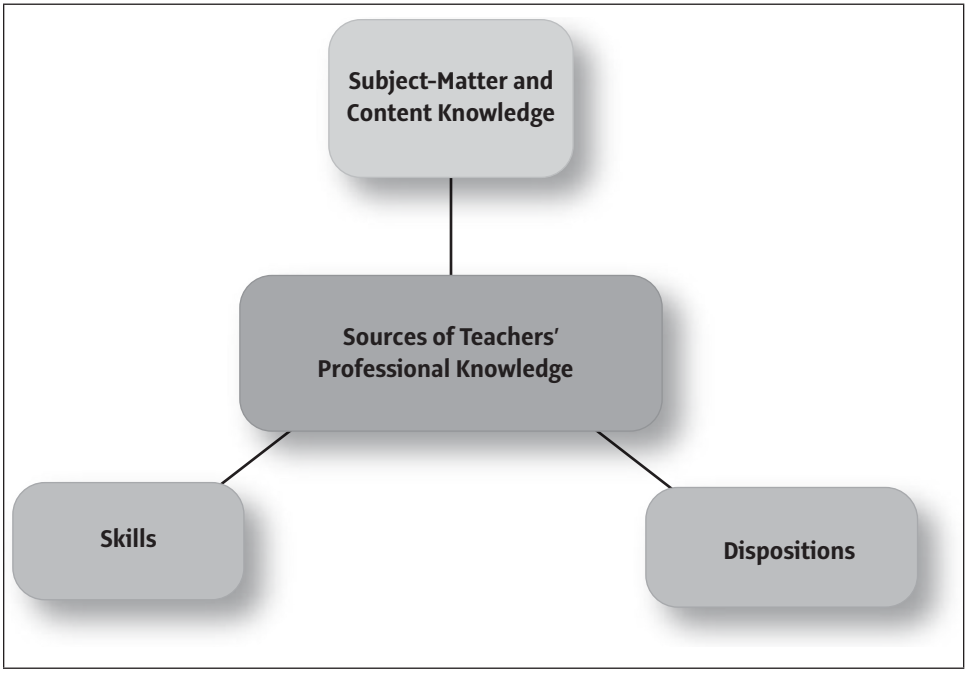


Source: From *Better Teachers, Better Schools: What Star Teachers Know, Believe, and Do* (p. xvii), by V. Hill-Jackson & D. Stafford, Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. Copyright 2017. Used with permission.

Developing Effective Teacher Practice: Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

In the field of teacher education, effective teacher practice is determined by the professional triad of knowledge, skills, and dispositions (see Figure 2). Although the domains of teacher knowledge and skills are generally understood, the domain of dispositions is undervalued, underresearched, and fails to attract the same attention when it comes to identifying and selecting teacher candidates or training inservice teachers.

Figure 2 **The Professional Triad of Teacher Education**



Dispositions are integral elements of teacher preparation programs, professional teaching standards, and teacher evaluation in K–12 schools. The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) outlines 10 standards for effective teaching aligned to the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions of effective teachers, noting that "habits of professional action and moral

commitments that underlie the performances play a key role in how teachers do, in fact, act in practice."[10] The Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation notes that

> candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other school professionals know and demonstrate the content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and skills, pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards.[11]

Similarly, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards outlines five propositions based on dispositions for developing and expert teachers. Professional organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Association for Childhood Education International also emphasize professional dispositions as being equally important to effective teaching as knowledge and skills.

Despite being such important characteristics of educators, dispositions are very difficult to assess.[12] Often they are reduced to such matters as enthusiasm, punctuality and good attendance, professional attire, initiative, strong oral and written communication, and collegiality. Teacher evaluation systems rely heavily on these visibly technical dispositions. For its part, the teacher accountability movement tends to focus more on observable or cognitive aspects of quality teaching such as licensing, subject-matter knowledge, and grade-point averages than on the types of dispositions Haberman espouses. In "Examining the Relationship Between Student Achievement and Observable Teacher Characteristics," Anna Jacob surmises that "educational outcomes depend more on the quality of the teacher a student is assigned to than on any other factor outside of the home, yet only a small proportion of the variation in teacher effectiveness is explained by the types of observable characteristics that are most commonly found in administrative data sets."[13]

One of the biggest challenges facing the educational community is how to measure the impact of teacher dispositions on learners and whether it is possible to factor them into hiring considerations. State and federal initiatives like the Every Student Succeeds Act, Common Core State Standards, and Race to the

Top have forced teacher preparation programs and school districts to primarily focus upon teachers' subject-matter knowledge and pedagogical skills, both of which can be easily measured. Indeed, teacher education has traditionally paid little attention to nonobservable characteristics. Given the need to retain effective teachers, however, educators should consider the value of taking nonobservable traits into consideration. What is missing most from the discussion of dispositions in teacher education is a focus on the *core* of the teacher—that which is invisible, intangible, and speaks to the personal or moral dimensions of the educator's character.

Teaching as a Moral Craft

Teaching is dynamic, deliberative, value-laden work. By virtue of their leadership role in the classroom, teachers are traditionally held to an elevated moral standard. As a human enterprise and as a profession, teaching is inherently moral. Because there are many perspectives on what constitutes morality, teacher education programs have stayed away from engaging in these discussions and, instead, have focused on the technical (i.e., nonpersonal) dimensions of teacher dispositions.

Richard D. Osguthorpe argues that teacher education should promote teachers with moral dispositions. This type of educator, he writes, teaches with fairness, respect, magnificence, honesty, compassion and "addresses multiple learning styles, gives appropriate and relevant homework, and does not favor one student or group over another." He continues:

> Teaching respectfully requires a teacher to give due attention to individual students, show consideration for different viewpoints and opinions, and refrain from embarrassing or humiliating students. A teacher who teaches magnificently exceeds students' highest expectations and impresses colleagues, administrators, and parents with the greatness of her practice. Honest teaching demands that a teacher present controversial issues in an impartial way, be truthful in giving feedback to students, and refrain from cheating students out of worthwhile learning experiences. Finally, a teacher who teaches compassionately shows sympathy for students' inability to comprehend difficult problems, exhibits concern for students who fall behind in their work, and spends time after school helping students.[14]

Similarly, Peter C. Murrell Jr., Mary E. Diez, Sharon Feiman-Nemser, and Deborah L. argue that teaching involves ethical decisions and that disposition standards should focus on moral or relational attributes of teachers.[15]

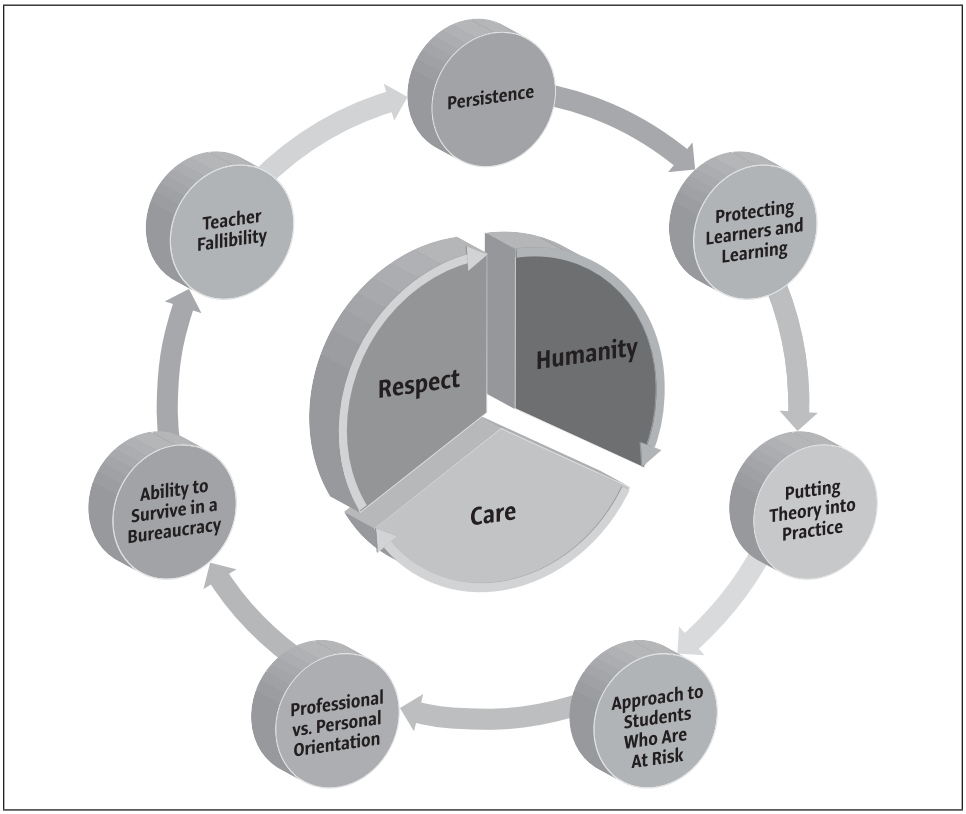
Star Teachers embody the essential technical dispositions of effective teachers while also emphasizing teaching as a moral enterprise. Haberman writes that Star Teachers are moral and decent without being moralistic or judgmental,[16] and proposes the seven dispositions of Star Teachers as reflecting teachers' moral center. Pre-Stars and Star Teachers respond differently in the classroom because they have fundamentally different belief systems. Stars also express their dispositions more sharply than Pre-Stars in the classroom as deep-rooted beliefs put into action.

Relational Dispositions: Humanity, Respect, and Care

The dispositions of Star Teachers are best defined as *relational*—that is, speaking to the personal or human aspects of teaching and learning. Although each relational disposition has a unique mindset associated with it, the unifying ideology is a "humane, respectful, caring, and nonviolent form of gentle teaching."[17] Humanity, respect, and care can thus be said to distinguish the beliefs and behaviors of Star Teachers from those of Pre-Stars (see Figures 3 and 4):

- **Humanity:** The *human* dimension of teaching is related to the teacher's heart and philosophy of teaching, which should position the students' needs above all else. Star Teachers see children's success "in school as a matter of life and death for the students and a matter of survival of society."[18]
- **Care:** Teaching is the *caring* profession. Scholars advocate the importance of developing caring relationships in the classroom because it supports students' social, emotional, and academic learning. Behavioral scientists maintain that teaching should be compassionate and honor the social interactions and relationships of the classroom. The work of Haberman and Valerie Hill-Jackson confirms that Star Teachers are adept at various forms of gentle teaching.[19]

Figure 3 **Respect, Humanity, and Care: The Unifying Themes of Haberman's Dimensions**



- **Respect:** The level of *respect* for the teacher and students increases when a supportive community is developed in the classroom. Haberman argues that respect in the Star Teacher's classroom goes both ways; the student gives respect to the teacher and the teacher gives respect to the student. Star Teachers do not wait until the Christmas holiday to smile at students or for students to earn their respect, they empower students and give them respect beginning on day one.[20]

Figure 4 **Star Teachers' Beliefs and Behaviors Using Haberman's Disposition Framework**

Pre-Star Teachers	Dispositions: Beliefs and Behaviors	Star Teachers
Have a one-size-fits-all approach to passive learners. If students fail to get the content the first time, then they quickly fall behind or fail.	Persistence	Possess the propensity to work with children who present learning and behavioral problems without giving up on them for the entire 180-day work year.
See protecting their career or just getting through the material as their highest priorities.	Protects and Values Student Learning	Believe that student learning is the teacher's highest priority.
Understand educational theories but fall short of adapting them into practical lessons for their classrooms.	Theory into Practice	See the implications of generalizing theory and the wherewithal to bring theory into practical applications in the classroom.
Cannot relate to, or teach, learners from diverse backgrounds.	Approach to Children in Poverty or Students at Risk	Connect with and teach students of all backgrounds and levels.
Wear their hearts on their sleeves and are easily bruised by the normal behavioral problems or classroom challenges that will arise in underserved classrooms. Their responses are often unprofessional and inappropriate for learners.	Professional vs. Personal Orientation to Students	Expect students to misbehave and attempt to relate to students as an experienced and consummate professional: resist the urge to "take it personally" in difficult classroom interactions.
Are unable to function or thrive in a large depersonalized organization; these teachers often leave the profession by year five or relegate students to impoverished learning experiences.	Survival in a Bureaucracy	Function or thrive in a large depersonalized organization.
Never acknowledge when they're wrong because they see mistakes as a form of weakness.	Fallibility	Readily admit mistakes and create 'teachable moments' from their mistakes for students' benefit.

Source: From *Better Teachers, Better Schools: What Star Teachers Know, Believe, and Do* (p. xix), by V. Hill-Jackson & D. Stafford, Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. Copyright 2017. Adapted and used with permission.

In an essay titled "The Lifeguard: Confessions of a Novice Star Teacher of Children in Poverty," Lauren Williams shares how she applied Haberman's seven dispositions to her teaching. She worked hard to "put the strong focus of content on the backburner," writing that "building relationships with my students was the first and most important part of becoming an effective educator."[21] This investment in the learners on a personal level was returned with academic gains on state tests.

Williams's experience affirms the research on the effects of teacher-student relationships on students' social functioning,[22] engagement in learning,[23] and academic achievement.[24] They are also in line with the findings of Jeffrey Cornelius-White, whose in-depth meta-analysis points to a credible link between person-centered teaching (i.e., empathy and warmth) and student outcomes.[25]

Haberman's Star Teacher framework demonstrates that the personal dimensions of teacher dispositions, once thought of as ethereal and difficult to discern, can be assessed and quantified. Star Teachers are not smarter, more educated, or more caring than pre-Star Teachers; they are merely more conscious of how their belief systems are inextricably connected to what they do and clear-eyed about the ways in which their practice affects students' academic and emotional development.

Characteristics of Effective Teachers

Teaching effectiveness is often associated with experience, teacher training, ongoing professional development, cumulative grade point averages, teacher examination scores, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores, and high school rankings, but there is no single attribute that defines an effective teacher. In their book *The Teacher Quality Index: A Protocol for Teacher Selection,* James H. Stronge and Jennifer L. Hindman suggest that effective teaching is composed of the following six areas:

1. Impressive oral and written communication skills, prior teaching experience, and a high command of the content area;
2. Caring teacher-student relationships with high expectations for learners and themselves;
3. Engaging learning environment;
4. Remarkable organization and planning astuteness;

5. Exciting learning experiences for learners that provide a medium for critical thinking, problem solving, and high-level questions;
6. Formative and summative assessment that adjusts to meet the needs of all learners.[26]

Other scholars define effective teachers as those who can increase student performance,[27] teach a variety of learning styles,[28] and assess and adjust instruction.[29] Many advocate knowledge of subject matter as the best criteria for predicting teacher effectiveness.[30] But if command over content and pedagogy were enough, then university math professors and school of education faculty would be able to teach successfully for sustained periods of time in urban middle schools. We recognize that such an idea is preposterous because more than knowledge of content and pedagogy is required.

In an article titled "Teachers Need Affective Competencies," Carl Olson and Jerry Wyett propose that teachers should be equally as capable in relational matters as they are in matters related to content.[31] An impressive volume of studies proposes that teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning affect their teaching practices.[32] If a teacher believes that all students can learn, she or he will move heaven and earth to ensure that the learners on his or her watch will experience academic success. However, if a teacher feels in his or her heart that there is no hope for learners, then he or she is unlikely to implement practices that support student learning to the detriment of their performance, aspirations, and self-concepts.

Development of the Star Teacher Framework

Since 1959, Haberman has completed hundreds of research trials to confirm the dispositions of pre-Stars and Stars, including thousands of hours of classroom observations. After five decades of research, the Star Teacher dispositions are now highly developed and extremely predictive of highly effective teachers.[33] Haberman's contributions to understanding teacher dispositions become meaningful when results are measurable student achievement.

In a book chapter titled "Victory at Buffalo Creek: What Makes a School Serving Low-Income Hispanic Children Successful?" Haberman discusses 29 teachers and a principal who were all selected by using the Star Teacher framework. Several years later, most of the staff was still employed at Buffalo Creek Elementary

School (BCES) and the students continued to receive state recognition on mandated tests:

> What these teachers (and principal) have in addition to subject matter knowledge [is] teaching know-how. The Buffalo Creek staff's special expertise has three themes. First, every one of the success indicators is primarily a function of the staff's ability to relate to the children, the parents and each other. Second, the staff shares a common ideology of why the school exists, what is supposed to happen to the children, and their role as teachers (principal) to make it happen. Third, the Buffalo Creek staff is gifted at relationship skills and this is key. Studying Buffalo Creek leads to the conclusion that children in poverty must have teachers who can connect with them. The teachers' desire—and ability, to want to live with the children all day, every day, is prerequisite to children learning.[34]

In his study, Haberman identified all seven relational dispositions among the 29 teachers. By the end of the first year of operation, BCES was designated by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as "recognized" and 97 percent of the school's low-income English language learners had passed the state test.

Nicholas D. Hartlep, Christopher M. Hansen, Sara A. McCubbins, Guy J. Banicki, and Grant B. Morgan completed a 2017 study, "Teaching in the "Windy" City: A Mixed Method Case Study of Seven Star Teachers in Chicago," using Haberman's Star Teacher framework.[35] The objective of the study was to determine whether the diverse elementary, middle, and high school teachers identified by the district as effective displayed the ideologies and core beliefs of Star Teachers. The seven Star Teachers in the study were persistent, demonstrated fallibility, and tended to blame themselves rather than their at-risk students for any underachievement. The researchers concluded that dispositional information strengthens the teaching staff by helping them understand their strengths and weaknesses and to guide professional development needs.[36]

Although additional research is needed to understand the role relational dispositions play in teacher quality, Haberman's groundbreaking research does point out that only teachers can positively affect student achievement, suggesting that professional development on dispositions should be offered to novice and in-

service teachers. Understanding the beliefs or mindsets of Star Teachers may be the linchpin for identifying effective teaching behavior in the classroom.

How This Book Is Organized

Each of the seven main chapters of *What Makes a Star Teacher* focuses on one of Haberman's seven dispositions of Star Teachers, exploring the mindsets and behaviors of Star Teachers in depth. Every chapter includes the following elements:

- **Learning Outcomes:** Learning goals are clearly introduced at the beginning and revisited at the end of each chapter.
- **InTASC Standards:** Relevant InTASC standards for teacher practice are highlighted. Haberman's relational dispositions are not meant to replace technical dispositions such as those outlined in these standards but to fully address the moral dimension of teacher ideology and behavior. Star Teachers possess both technical and relational dispositions.
- **Key Words:** Readers are introduced to important terms that are boldfaced and defined in the body of each chapter.
- **Extension Exercises:** Additional questions and activities related to the disposition in question.
- **Going Further:** A list of resources such as internet sites, videos, and readings for more advanced study.

Chapter 1, **Teacher Persistence,** is about Star Teachers' never-ending pursuit of instructional strategies to support struggling learners. Persistence is driven by two major actions: problem solving and inventive effort. The goal is for no student's academic needs to be overlooked. Star Teachers never give up on trying to engage every student.[37]

Chapter 2, **Protecting Learners and Learning,** discusses how to ensure that students' active participation in meaningful learning experiences outweigh inflexible school curricula and policies. Star Teachers realize all the ways in which large school organizations encroach on teachers and students but find strategies to preserve learning above all else.[38]

Chapter 3, **Putting Theory into Practice,** explains how Star Teachers transform theory and research into commonsense instructional habits. This dimension

foretells an educator's receptiveness to professional development activities and likelihood to grow in the profession.[39]

Chapter 4, **Approaching Learners Who Are at Risk,** explores Star Teachers' beliefs about and behaviors toward students categorized as being at risk for failure. Star Teachers point to inadequate teaching and curricula as the chief reasons for students' underachievement. They also shoulder the responsibility for student learning, despite the fact that they cannot control all in-school and out-of-school influences on their students.[40]

Chapter 5, **Orienting to Learners: Professional Versus Personal,** examines the ways in which Star Teachers rely on preparation rather than personal feelings to meet their students' academic or emotional needs. Unlike Pre-Stars, Star Teachers expect students to misbehave and to have bad days but remember to maintain respect and care for them when they do.[41]

Chapter 6, **Surviving in a Bureaucracy,** discusses Star Teachers' skills at navigating burdensome school systems without burning out or leaving the profession. Teachers who hold naïve expectations of working in school systems are most likely to become the victims of those systems.[42]

Chapter 7, **Accepting and Admitting Fallibility,** is about Star Teachers' willingness to admit mistakes and correct them in front of students, thus modeling and setting expectations for how students should respond to their mistakes in the process of learning.[43]

Chapter 8, **Am I a Star Teacher? Developing Dispositions That Support Student Learning,** offers a step-by-step guide to identifying goals and action steps for developing the dispositions of Star Teachers.

Were he alive today, Haberman would be thrilled to see his research converted into practical strategies to help new and seasoned teachers become better at their craft. Haberman had an unbridled passion for all teachers; he was the biggest cheerleader for those who went the extra mile and shined. We give him the last words in this introduction:

> Because one must have a strong commitment to this undergirding ideology it is not possible to translate what [S]tars do into 10 easy steps for anyone to follow. To do what [S]tars do requires sharing the beliefs and values they use as guidelines for making the countless decisions

> they make daily. To try to imitate what [S]tars do, without believing as they do, leads to merely going through the motions of teaching and having very little influence on students' learning. For those who accept [S]tars' ideology, these functions can be brought to life; they can become a source of insight and a guide to effective teaching.[44]

Endnotes

1. Haberman, M. (2010). *Star Teachers: The ideology and best practice of effective teachers of diverse children and youth in poverty* (1st ed.). Houston, TX: Haberman Educational Foundation.
2. Haberman, M. (2002). Selecting Star Teachers for children and youth in poverty. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*(10), 777–781.
3. Haberman, M. (2004). Can Star Teachers create learning communities? *Educational Leadership, 61*(8), 52–56. (p. 53)
4. Dewey, J. (1997). *How we think*: *A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process.* Mineola, NY: Dover.
5. Dottin, E. S. (2010). *Dispositions as habits of mind: Making professional conduct more intelligent.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America. (p. 4)
6. Wasicsko, M. M., Callahan, C. J., & Wirtz, P. (2004). Integrating dispositions into the conceptual framework: Four a priori questions. *KCA Journal*, *23*(1), 1–8. Retrieved from http://mynkuhelp.nku.edu/content/dam/coehs/docs/dispositions/resources/four_a_priori_questions.pdf
7. Haberman (2002, p. 777).
8. Haberman (2002, p. 777).
9. Haberman (2002, p. 777).
10. Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). (2011). *InTASC Model core teaching standards: A resource for state dialogue.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from www.ccsso.org/Documents/2011/InTASC_Model_Core_Teaching_Standards_2011.pdf
11. Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). (2013). *CAEP Commission on Standards and Performance Reporting.* Retrieved from http://www.caepnet.org/~/media/Files/caep/standards/caep-standards-one-pager-061716.pdf?la=en
12. Diez, M. (2006). Assessing dispositions: Five principles to guide practice. In H. Sockett (Ed.), *Teacher dispositions: Building a teacher education framework of moral standard* (pp.49–60). Washington, DC: AACTE Publications.
13. Jacob, A. (2012). Examining the relationship between student achievement and observable teacher characteristics: Implications for school leaders. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, *7*(3), 1–13. (p. 11)
14. Osguthorpe, R. D. (2008). On the reasons we want teachers of good disposition and moral character. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *59*(4), 288–299. (p. 296)

15. Diez, M., & Murrell, P. (2010). Dispositions in teacher education: Starting points for consideration. In P. C. Murrell, Jr., M. E. Diez, S. Feiman-Nemser, & D. L. Schussler (Eds.), Teaching as a moral practice: Defining, developing, and assessing professional dispositions in teacher education (pp. 7-26). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
16. Haberman (2010).
17. Haberman (2002, p. 777).
18. Haberman (2010).
19. Haberman, M., & Hill-Jackson, V. (2017). Gentle teaching in a violent society: A postscript for the 21st century. In V. Hill-Jackson & D. Stafford (Eds.), *Better teachers, better schools: What Star Teachers know, believe, and do* (pp. 13–30). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
20. Haberman, M. (2002, p. 780).
21. Williams, L. A. (2017). The lifeguard: Confessions of a novice Star Teacher of children in poverty. In V. Hill-Jackson & D. Stafford (p. 110).
22. Ahnert, L., Harwardt-Heinecke, E., Kappler, G., Eckstein-Madry, T., & Milatz, A. (2012). Student-teacher relationships and classroom climate in first grade: How do they relate to students' stress regulation? *Attachment & Human Development*, *14*(3), 249–263.
23. Christenson, S. L., Reschly, A. L., & Wylie, C. (Eds.). (2012). *Handbook of research on student engagement*. New York: Springer.
24. Sabol, T. J., & Pianta, R. C. (2012). Recent trends in research on teacher-child relationships. *Attachment & Human Development*, *14*(3), 213–231.
25. Cornelius-White, J. (2007). Learner-centered teacher-student relationships are effective: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, *77*(1), 113–143.
26. Stronge, J. H., & Hindman, J. L. (2006). *The teacher quality index: A protocol for teacher selection*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
27. Clark, D. (1993). *Teacher evaluation: A review of the literature with implications for educators.* [Unpublished manuscript]. Long Beach: California State University at Long Beach.
28. Vogt, W. (1984). Developing a teacher evaluation system. *Spectrum, 2*(1), 41–46.
29. Orlich, D. C., Harder, R. J., Trevisan, M. S., Brown, A. H., & Miller, D. E. (2016). *Teaching strategies: A guide to effective instruction*. Boston: Cengage Learning.
30. Darling-Hammond, L. (1990). Teaching and knowledge: Policy issues posed by alternate certification for teachers. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *67*(3), 123–154.; Ferguson, P., & T. Womack, S. (1993). The impact of subject matter and education coursework on teaching performance. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *44*(1), 55–63.; Scheerens, J., & Blömeke, S. (2016). Integrating teacher education effectiveness research into educational effectiveness models. *Educational Research Review*, *18*, 70–87.
31. Olson, C. O., & Wyett, J. L. (2000). Teachers need affective competencies. *Education, 120*(4), 741.
32. Nespor, J. (1987). The role of beliefs in the practice of teaching. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *19*(4), 317–328.

33. Baskin, M., & Ross, S. (1992). *Selecting teacher candidates via structured interviews: A validation study of the urban teacher interview*. Memphis, TN: Memphis State University.; Baskin, M. K., Ross, S. M., & Smith, D. L. (1996). Selecting successful teachers: The predictive validity of the urban teacher selection interview. *Teacher Educator, 32*(1), 1–21.; Haberman, M. (1993). Predicting the success of urban teachers: The Milwaukee trials. *Action in Teacher Education, 15*(3), 1–5.; Rockoff, J. E., Jacob, B. A., Kane, T. J., & Staiger, D. O. (2008). *Can you recognize an effective teacher when you recruit one?* Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
34. Haberman, M. (2017). Victory at Buffalo Creek: What makes a school serving low-income Hispanic children successful? In V. Hill-Jackson & D. Stafford (Eds.), *Better teachers, better schools: What star teachers know, believe, and do* (pp. 137–160). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
35. Hartlep, N. D., Hansen, C. M., McCubbins, S. A., Banicki, G.J., & Morgan, G. B. (2017). Teaching in the "Windy" City: A mixed method case study of seven Star Teachers in Chicago. In Hill-Jackson & Stafford (pp. 160–176).
36. Ibid.
37. Hill-Jackson & Stafford (2017).
38. Hill-Jackson & Stafford (2017).
39. Hill-Jackson & Stafford (2017).
40. Hill-Jackson & Stafford (2017).
41. Hill-Jackson & Stafford (2017).
42. Haberman (2002). For more on these specific dispositions, please refer to page 780.
43. Haberman (2002). For more on these specific dispositions, please refer to page 780.
44. Haberman (2010, p. 131.).

1

Teacher Persistence

Persistence is reflected in an endless search for what works best with each student. Indeed, Star Teachers define their jobs as asking themselves constantly, "How might this activity have been better—for the class or for a particular individual?"

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this chapter, you will be able to

- Define *teacher persistence.*
- Explain why teacher persistence is the key disposition of Star Teachers.
- Analyze the ways in which Star Teachers think about their commitment to learners and their efficacy as teachers.
- Explore the classroom environments and problem-solving approaches of Star Teachers.

Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards

Standard #2: Learning Differences

The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

Standard #4: Content Knowledge
The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.
Standard #5: Application of Content
The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.
Standard #6: Assessment
The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.
Standard #8: Instructional Strategies
The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Defining *Persistence*

What pushes some people to keep trying, to never give up, even when the conditions suggest defeat? **Persistence**, also known as tenacity or **grit**, is defined as continuing to strive toward a goal in the face of challenges. It is perseverance with a passion for attaining long-term goals. Persistence is a noncognitive dimension of a person's character, a disposition or a habit of mind operationalized through problem solving.

Though the terms *resilience* and *persistence* are often used interchangeably, they in fact have different meanings. As Grotberg explains, *resilience* is the "human capacity to face, overcome, and even be strengthened by experiences of adversity."[1] Highly resilient individuals are reactive to setbacks in their personal or everyday life, but come out of them as more efficacious people. By contrast, persistence is a *proactive* personal attribute linked to professional action and goal setting. (We will delve more into teacher resilience in Chapter 6: Surviving in a Bureaucracy.)

We need only look at the inspirational quotes plastered on so many office walls—"Patience, persistence, and perspiration make an unbeatable combination for success" (Napoleon Hill); "Success is the result of perfection, hard work, learning from failure, loyalty, and persistence" (Colin Powell)—to understand how desirable a quality persistence is. Most of us can point to instances in our everyday lives of skilled individuals who seem to have an especially high level of *stick-with-it-ness* in their chosen field, exercising persistence to achieve goals despite extraordinary odds.

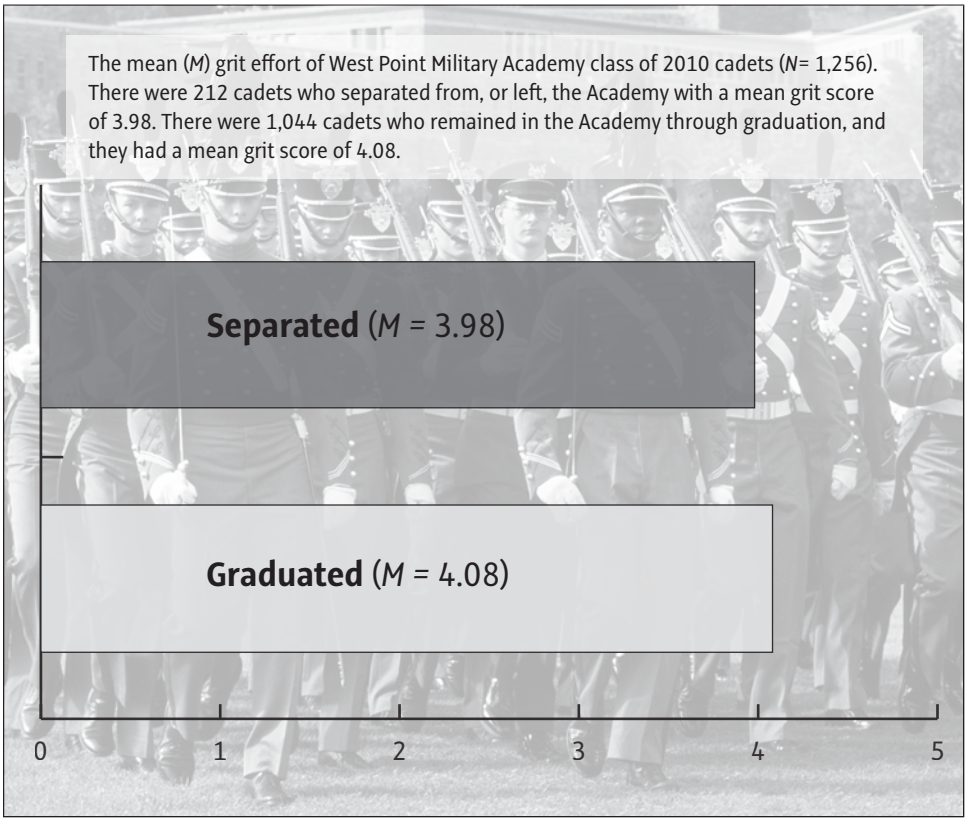
Persistence has long been tied to success in the workplace. Business literature with titles like *Executive Toughness* and *Stick with It* highlight persistence as key to professional success. It takes persistence to evolve, acquire competencies, and explore opportunities that develop over time. In comparison with individuals who give up easily when they face hardships, people who persist at any effort further refine their skills and develop expertise.

Kelley, Matthews, and Bartone examined the predictive power of grit and hardiness among a cohort of 1,558 West Point cadets, finding these noncognitive characteristics to be major factors in attrition: the less gritty and hardy the cadets, the likelier they were to drop out. Specifically, the authors found grit to be a differentiating factor between cadets who left West Point early (M = 3.98) and those who persisted through graduation (M = 4.08) (see Figure 1.1). "Conceptually, grit has an obvious link with the demands required for successful performance at West Point," they wrote. "Grit, or 'firmness of character,' is synonymous with fortitude or courage and is the essence of what the Academy sustains and builds in its cadets and graduates."[2] These findings suggest that cadet officers, who develop as professionals through trial and error, may be readily identified by their grit scores.

Teacher Persistence

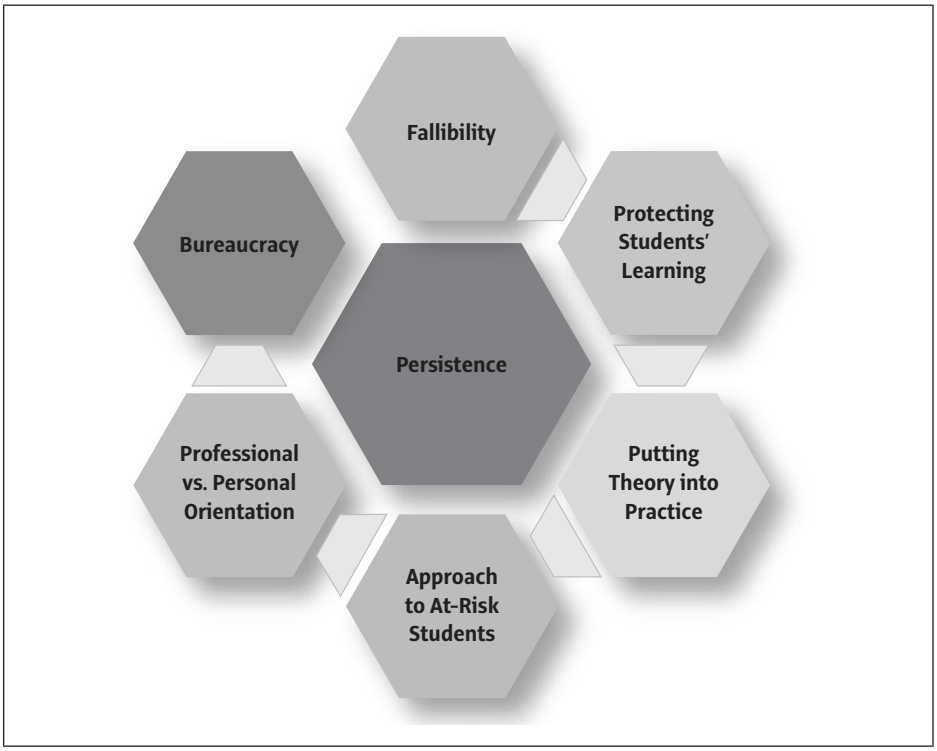
An online search of the phrase *teacher persistence* leads to innumerable studies on teacher attrition, teacher retention, and job satisfaction—but few studies on teacher persistence. We define *teacher persistence* as a disposition manifested in the day-to-day actions of a teacher pursuing an outcome directly related to improving student achievement. This is in line with Haberman's definition of *persistence in teaching* as the mindset and behavior of a teacher who continues to support learners in a committed way through creative problem solving.[3] For Haberman, persistence is at the heart of the seven dispositions of Star Teachers, helping to maintain and actualize the other six

Figure 1.1 **Grit as a Predictor of Graduation Among West Point Cadets**



(see Figure 1.2). Persistence determines whether the teacher can sustain fallibility and be vulnerable with students; protect student learning regardless of cost; retain practices that reflect sound theory; preserve a healthy approach to students identified as being at risk; maintain a professional orientation toward student-teacher relationships; and avoid burnout. If learners are to achieve their full potential, teachers must exhibit persistence even in the face of repeated instructional failures, never giving up on their learners.

Figure 1.2 **Haberman's 7 Dispositions of Star Teachers**



★ 1-1

Are you a persistent teacher? Complete Angela Duckworth's online survey at https://angeladuckworth.com/grit-scale/. Complete the survey before moving on to the next section.

Persistence and Teacher Quality

According to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA),[4] all children in the United States are to be taught in the core academic subjects by "effective" teachers. Among many others, Wheatley suggests that persistence is crucial to teacher effectiveness because it "may promote high expectations for students,

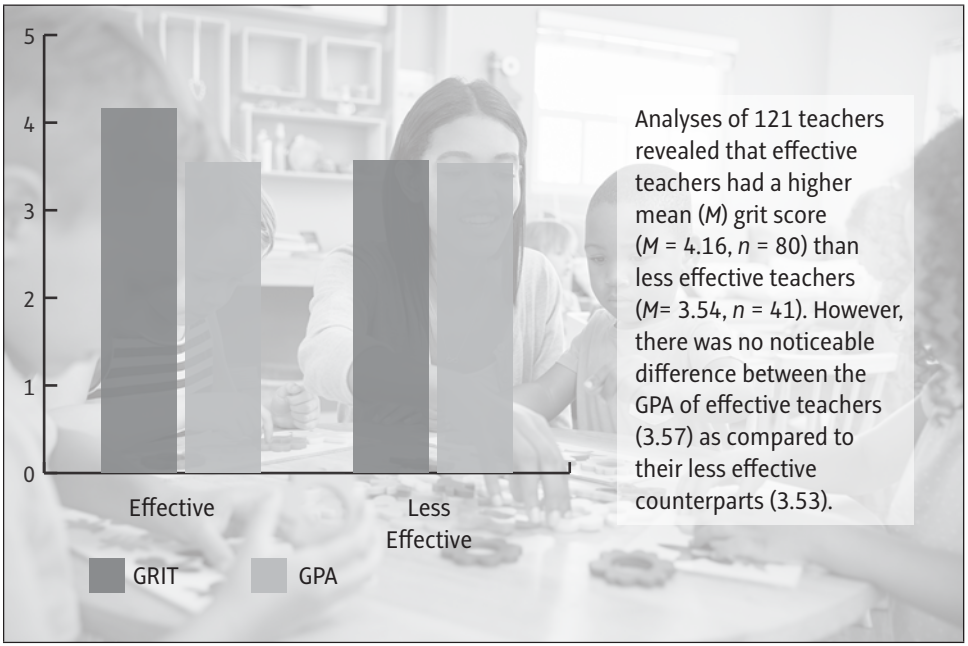
development of teaching skills, teachers' reflectiveness, responsiveness to diversity, teaching efficacy, effective responses to setbacks, and successful use of reformed teaching methods."[5]

Substituting *grit* for *persistence,* Robertson-Kraft and Duckworth[6] analyzed two longitudinal studies of nearly 500 novice teachers assigned to elementary, middle, and high schools in low-income districts, measuring factors such as grit, leadership, academic credentials, and teacher performance. Their findings show that novices who demonstrated sustained passion and perseverance in activities prior to becoming teachers were more likely to stay in the profession and prove effective during their first year on the job. The authors defined effective teachers as those who make, on average, "a year's worth of progress according to published norms" and less effective teachers as those for whom "student progress falls short of the target."[7] In their study, the mean grade-point average (GPA) of students with effective teachers (3.59) was nearly identical to that of students with less effective teachers (3.60). Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores were also close to equivalent, with an average of 1332.78 for students of effective teachers compared to 1327.65 for those with less effective teachers. Similar variables such as "interview ratings of leadership potential and demographics failed to predict retention or effectiveness."[8]

The effective teachers in this study were most readily identified by their grit ratings rather than by the GPA or SAT scores of students. Effective middle school teachers (i.e., those most likely to stay in their jobs) possessed a significantly higher mean grit rating (3.98) than their less effective counterparts (2.79). As Figure 1.3 shows, differences between effective and less effective teachers are more evident when noncognitive characteristics are evaluated.

In another study, Duckworth, Quinn, and Seligman[9] asked 390 novice teachers in low-income districts to complete questionnaires assessing their grit, optimism, and satisfaction with life prior to the first day of school. All three of these characteristics individually predicted some measure of teacher effectiveness for student academic gains over the school year. Further, when the three characteristics were measured collectively, only the combination of grit and life satisfaction was determined to be highly predictive of teacher effectiveness. For this reason, Haberman[10] advises administrators to examine observable and measurable

Figure 1.3 **Grit and GPA as Predictors of Teacher Effectiveness**



Source: Data from "True Grit: Trait-Level Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals Predicts Effectiveness and Retention Among Novice Teachers," by C. Robertson-Kraft and A. L. Duckworth, 2014, *Teachers College Record, 116*(3), pp. 1–27.

personality factors like persistence among teacher candidates—before they are hired as teachers.

The Mindset of Persistent Star Teachers

We can best understand Star Teachers by appreciating how they (1) perceive the nature of the learner and (2) comprehend their personal sense of efficacy. Haberman notes that Star Teachers express deep and abiding beliefs about the potential of diverse learners, the nature of the teaching role, and the reasons they and their students are in school. They are relentless in their efforts to ensure that every learner, regardless of ability, gender, ethnicity, or social class, experiences success. Star Teachers exhibit determination in seeking instructional methods to support all learners as well as optimism that the methods will succeed.

Star Teachers take their roles as educators seriously. They have an uncommon belief about the abilities of their learners, for whom they hold high expectations, and feel a deep responsibility for helping learners to do their best. Haberman states that this mindset is "a clear reflection of what they believe the daily work of the teacher should be."[11] Star Teachers who exhibit persistence doggedly communicate through their actions that students are

- Central to their work as educators.
- Growing both cognitively and affectively and may require individualized attention.
- Not allowed to fail—no excuses.
- Preparing for lifelong learning.
- Held to very high standards.

Tomlinson offers additional insight into the convictions of persistent teachers:

> The persistent teacher also models the steady but relentless quest for excellence. The persistent teacher generously acknowledges the distance a student has come academically, but also makes clear the distance each student has yet to go. That teacher helps students realize that the quest for quality never ends. If the quest ends, quality ends with it—and so does the growth of the individual. . . . The persistent teacher not only points out that learning has no finish line for students but lives according to that principle as well. That teacher fights "success ego," never succumbing to the sense that she is "good enough" to be exempt from the need to change. "We're all on a journey," the persistent teacher believes, "none of us is ever through striving."[12]

Persistent teachers convey these messages daily to students because they feel responsible for creating an engaging learning environment and helping their students to develop mastery over content. Their mindset prevents them from being overwhelmed by challenges or buckling under setbacks. Persistent teachers' "students first" philosophy is mirrored in their classrooms, which typically enjoy a strong spirit of community, positive teacher-student relationships built on trust, and ample student affirmation. Learners in such classrooms feel supported and

often think of their teachers as among the few adults in their lives with their own best interests at heart.

Teacher Efficacy

The concept of **self-efficacy** was originally developed by Albert Bandura and has been defined as the personal belief that one is capable of performing in an appropriate and effective manner to attain certain goals. As such, self-efficacy is a system that controls most personal activity, including suitable use of professional knowledge and skills.[13] **Teacher efficacy** is a similar idea with significant implications for learner achievement. It is a teacher's judgment of his or her capability to promote student engagement and learning even among challenging or unmotivated students. As Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy note,

> Efficacy affects the effort [teachers] invest in teaching, the goals they set, and their level of aspiration. Teachers with a strong sense of efficacy tend to exhibit greater levels of planning and organization. They also are more open to new ideas and are more willing to experiment with new methods to better meet the needs of their students. . . . Efficacy beliefs influence teachers' persistence when things do not go smoothly and their resilience in the face of setbacks. Greater efficacy enables teachers to be less critical of students when they make errors and to work longer with a student.[14]

In a large-scale analysis of 43 studies representing 9,216 teachers, Klassen and colleagues[15] explored the connections among teachers' senses of competence, personality, and effectiveness. Their findings revealed a significant positive relationship between a teacher's sense of competence (i.e., self-efficacy) and effectiveness in the classroom. In another study, Jerald[16] noted persistence among the characteristics of teachers with a stronger sense of efficacy. Teachers who have high expectations for learners and who try a new approach when an old one is not working are more likely to have students who learn. Further, Guo and colleagues studied the impact of teacher efficacy, educational level, and teaching experience on the reading outcomes of 1,043 5th grade students.[17] The researchers concluded that teacher efficacy is not positively related to years of experience

but that "teacher efficacy was a significant and positive predictor of fifth grade literacy outcomes."[18]

Teachers who set ambitious goals and have a high sense of efficacy are more likely to persist in helping learners to achieve desired outcomes. These teachers model persistence not only in their interactions with students, but also in their own professional development. Research confirms that persistent teachers are curious learners who take professional learning into their own hands.

Teachers with a low sense of efficacy make comments like "When you have students from that part of town, there is nothing you can do as a teacher to help improve their scores on the state exam. What does the district expect from us when the parents are missing in action?" Such teachers are complacent, believing there is nothing they can do to change academic outcomes for learners. They don't feel they have the wherewithal to develop strategies to support learners on their own; their teaching toolbox is empty. When faced with student setbacks, teachers with low efficacy do not exert any additional effort or develop the skills needed to support learners.

By contrast, teachers with a high sense of efficacy do not make excuses for student failure and place the prospect for improved student achievement squarely on their own shoulders: "It will require more effort and coaching, but if I try really hard I can find a way to support the students who are struggling." These optimistic and persistent teachers do not believe inadequate efforts to support learners are necessarily permanent. As Carol Dweck reminds us, it is a teacher's sense of efficacy, not his or her teaching skills, that best predicts whether he or she will become a gritty teacher during tough times who sticks with established learning goals.[19] Persistent teachers will go to the ends of the Earth to make learning happen for all learners; their motto could be "What do I do next?"

Robert Klassen and colleagues explored the connection among teachers' sense of competence, personality, and effectiveness in a large-scale analysis of 43 studies representing 9,216 teachers.[20] The results of their comprehensive evaluation revealed a significant positive relationship between a teacher's sense of competence, or self-efficacy, and effectiveness in the classroom. In a report for the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, Craig Jerald[21] noted several behaviors common to teachers with a stronger sense of efficacy, including persistence: teachers who have high expectations for learners and who try

another approach when the one they're using is not working are more likely to have students who learn.

In a 2012 study, Guo and colleagues reported that teacher efficacy had a greater influence on the reading outcomes of 5th grade students than teacher experience or teacher education.[22] The study examined teachers' classroom practices to understand whether student outcomes were directly or indirectly associated with teacher characteristics. The investigators found that teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy provided more support for student learning and created a more positive classroom environment. They noted that their study "establishes that teacher self-efficacy predicts teachers' practices, which in turn predict student literacy outcome over and above the influence of teachers' experience and teachers' education, when controlling for students' previous literacy skills and their social and economic status."[23] The results indicate clearly that teacher efficacy is predicated as much on teacher characteristics and behaviors as on their qualifications.

Star Teachers understand that a small amount of student underachievement may seem insignificant, but over time, curricular content not met in one subject or grade has a cumulative negative effect on individual learners. A Tennessee study titled *Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Academic Achievement* found that teachers have an aggregate effect on student achievement.[24] After three years of ineffective teachers, students scored less than half as well as their peers who had benefited from more effective teachers. When pre-Star Teachers boast a 70 percent pass rate for learners, the persistent teacher wonders, "What happened to the other 30 percent?" Stars are never content when students do not grasp the content. "What do I do next?" is not a passive quip, but the foundation for a professional and personal model of instructional inquiry. Therefore, Star Teachers who are persistent will try another teaching strategy when one strategy is not working.

The Behaviors of Star Teachers Who Are Persistent

Star Teachers who are persistent make extraordinary instructional efforts; they are doers and find creative strategies for acting on their beliefs about supporting student learning. Star Teachers think deeply about the instructional experiences in their classroom and use innovative techniques to bring their ideas to life. The

behavior of persistent teachers is best manifested in the ways in which they make the classroom an interesting place to learn and seek to resolve instructional setbacks to find "what works" for their learners.

Persistent Teachers Create Stimulating Classroom Environments

Star Teachers view the classroom as a student-centered environment that inspires creativity, and they work as purposely at maintaining an inviting atmosphere for learning as they do at designing curriculum or implementing instruction.[25] The classroom of a Star Teacher is a wonderland most learners long to visit, with murals and learning centers setting the stage for joyful learning. Steven Wolk captures the convictions of persistent teachers about stimulating spaces when he notes that "the hearts and minds of children and young adults are wide open to the wonders of learning and the fascinating complexities of life"[26] and that "as educators, we have the responsibility to educate and inspire the whole child—mind, heart, and soul."[27]

The classroom of a Star Teacher is designed to embrace the following fundamentals:

Climate: It is ideal to provide an atmosphere for learners with images and sounds that invite creative thinking, such as by placing inspirational quotes around the room or sharing music that excites, winds down, or transitions learners from one activity to the next. A teacher providing a warm welcome to each student sets a positive vibe for the day. It is important to greet learners at the door using their names and with a smile. We all have seen the viral video in which the young male teacher greeted each student with a personalized handshake. A simple gesture like this one sends a message that each learner is a valued member of the classroom and lets them know you "see" them and cannot wait to learn with them.

Organization: Learners should be able to easily move around the various parts of the classroom. Teachers should think through sight lines for items of interest, and traffic flow around the room. The reading nook and class library, the literacy center, the computer area, small- and large-group areas, and so on should be thoughtfully planned out. It is critical to avoid visual clutter and to provide blank or visually quiet spaces that give the eye a place to rest. Supplies, tools, furniture, and books should be stored, not left in full display.

Community: Because Star Teachers believe that learning is highly social, they employ tables to make collaborative learning easy. Students should be able to quickly work with a small group simply by turning their seats. The "simple act of positioning desks can promote positive interpersonal interactions."[28] Learners should feel like they are co-owners of the classroom.

Environmental Conditions: Star Teachers pay attention to air quality and lighting, fully aware that environmental conditions can affect student behaviors and academic performance.[29] Studies have shown that when temperatures are too low or high, the brain will send endless messages to do something about it. Because of the endless intrusions, it then becomes difficult for learners to focus on learning as the body seeks to find a balance in temperature. For example, a 2018 study on grade 9 students demonstrated a direct relationship of classroom temperature to aptitude and attention span of the learners. In regulated temperatures, students performed well. But when the classroom temperature was too hot or too cold, the students' scores were negatively impacted.[30] Since many classroom teachers do not have the ability to control the temperature in their classrooms, it is important to consider how extreme or uncomfortable temperatures affect students' ability to learn, as well as the teacher's ability to teach.[31]

Volume Control: Noise levels can affect learning by prompting students' bodies to release extra cortisol, which weakens the brain's capacity to store short-term memories. Comprehension can be jeopardized, too: The **café effect** is a phenomenon in which the noise of a swirling, bustling classroom compromises the learner's ability to clearly understand speech, especially among elementary-age students.[32] Star Teachers seek to mitigate acoustical problems and increase student focus by installing low-cost sound-absorbing materials like insulation panels in their classrooms.

Seating Arrangement: Does your classroom seating arrangement mirror the rigid columns and rows of the 19th century, or is it flexible and designed to encourage student creativity and engagement? Star Teachers reject the implied hierarchy of traditional seating arrangements that place the teacher at the front of the class, embracing instead formats that flatten the authoritarian order. Their seating arrangements send the message that everyone has a voice and that learning is communal.

Bulletin Boards as Teaching Tools: The classroom walls and bulletin boards of Star Teachers are important learning real estate waiting to be filled with content-related posters, banners, learning centers, and vocabulary word walls. Bulletin boards are opportunities to reinforce concepts, skills, rules, and routines; present exemplary work; and showcase students' photos and awards. The classroom bulletin boards of many pre-Star Teachers often have interesting and eye-catching material that offer little connection to course content or state-mandated teaching standards. By contrast, Star Teachers think of bulletin boards as teaching tools—another chance to visually communicate standards-based content. The best of these bulletin boards also introduce concepts, provide a place for daily review, and offer information about seasonal topics or events that extend lessons in novel and interesting ways.[33] Many Star Teachers will create a concept map on a bulletin board in front of students while introducing a new idea, then invite students to expand the concept map as a way of flexing their critical thinking. The concept map thus becomes a measure of students' comprehension (with the teacher correcting any misconceptions or punctuation errors).

Patricia Marshall offers sound advice: "Whether the students in a class are from the same background or represent a diverse array of racial/ethnic groups, bulletin board displays should include positive and realistic images of individuals from various backgrounds."[34] Marshall adds that bulletin boards can boost students' self-image, advance **cross-cultural competence** and respect, enhance critical and analytical thinking skills, encourage appreciation for different worldviews, and promote diverse orientations to learning.

Persistent Teachers Are Problem Solvers

Student underachievement does not sit well with the persistent teacher, who recognizes that student failure may be a symptom of poor instruction. Star Teachers continually look for ways to find what works and refuse to condemn a student's inability to grasp a concept. When their students are not reaching their benchmarks, persistent teachers don't assume that they cannot learn, but rather that their instructional method is ineffective, and they seek another way to hold the learners' attention. Persistent teachers locate resources to meet individual students' instructional goals by exploiting the latest technology and visiting local libraries, or in some cases establishing connections with social and health

services. These educators continually ask themselves, "What do *I* do next to help students learn?"

To make sure that students meet their learning goals, Star Teachers must become problem solvers willing to deeply examine the complexities of learning. **Problem solving** is the process of finding solutions to challenging or complex issues. It is also the mechanism by which persistence becomes operationalized—Star Teachers are not just thinkers, but doers. *Persistence* refers to Star Teachers' tireless and creative pursuit to find instructional solutions to learning problems, whether for the whole class or for a single learner. These highly successful teachers never give up on students and always seek answers when challenges hinder academic progress.

Persistent Teachers Adopt Strategies to Surmount Instructional Setbacks

Instructional setbacks occur when student mastery of course content is hindered or delayed. Every educator will face instructional setbacks in his or her professional career, and persistent teachers assemble a repertoire of strategies to surmount them. Here are some common examples:

- **Flipped classrooms,** which offer learning experiences like lectures and discussions outside the classroom and devote class time to exploring what is learned.
- **Project-based learning,** a highly experiential strategy whereby students initiate projects that are connected to course content.
- **Learning communities** where students collaborate in small groups to meet shared academic goals.
- **Simulated learning and games** that engage and motivate players through direct experiences exploring phenomena, testing hypotheses, and constructing objects.[35]
- **Field trips and guest speakers,** including virtual field trips and online visits with experts or special guests.

Robert J. Marzano, Debra J. Pickering, and Tammy Heflebower propose initiating friendly controversy, presenting unusual information, and questioning to increase responses and student interest.[36] Haberman suggests "project method, peer

tutoring, independent study, inquiry training, demonstrations, creative activities, and scientific experimentation"[37] to make classrooms more engaging for learners.

Problem-solving teachers are constantly refining a vast range of strategies that will reach every type of learner they encounter, employing a nimble pedagogical style to find what works for learners in ways that are equitable and meet their students where they are in that moment.

Differentiated Instruction

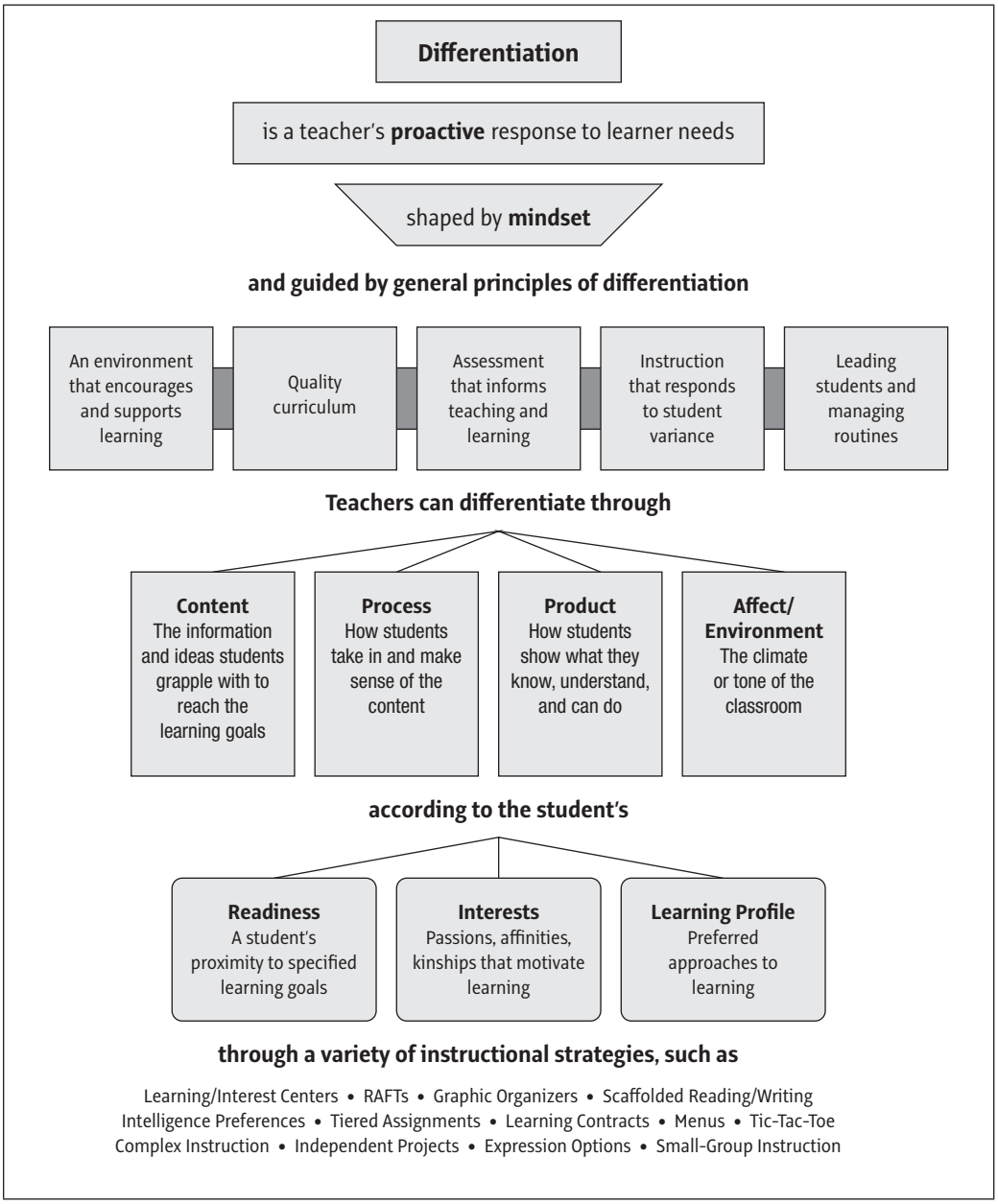
Because persistent teachers do not believe the myth that students are all the same due to their chronological age, many of them employ **differentiated instruction** (see Figure 1.4) to tailor their teaching to the specific talents and learning styles of individual students. Though a great deal of effort is necessary for a differentiated approach to work, the return—comprehension and mastery of a lesson's content by every student in the class—is worth it.

An extensive inventory of differentiated teaching strategies exists, appealing to a wide array of learners. As Parsons, Dodman, and Burrowbridge note, effective teachers carefully revise their instruction to meet the diversity of needs for their students.[38] Teaching more challenging content to more diverse learners requires K–12 teachers to deeply understand the effects of context and learner variability on teaching and learning.

Differentiated instruction is a set of unique instructional choices that bring learning to life for all students who are working at, below, or above grade level by providing them with multiple paths for accessing new information. Differentiation also allows learners to process and express ideas in ways that makes sense for their individual needs. As Haberman notes, "This form of teaching requires a high level of teacher with-it-ness, i.e. the teacher's ability to sense what is going on everywhere in the classroom, with all of the children, at all times."[39] Practices such as meaningful or respectful tasks, flexible grouping, and ongoing assessments help to guide the process.

Persistent teachers engaged in differentiated instruction consider it to be a mindful and explicit exercise during which they continually ask themselves the following questions:

Figure 1.4 **Differentiation of Instruction**



- How are my efforts advancing or hindering student learning?
- What did I learn about my students' individual learning styles that can help me refine my lessons now and in the future?
- How can I vary my teaching strategies to meet the needs of individual learners?
- What can I do next?

Star Teachers believe that it is their obligation to seek multiple ways to engage all their students in learning. To them, "using only direct instruction would be like having a tool belt with only a hammer in it."[40] This type of heterogeneous teaching can be carried out by adapting content (materials), changing the process (manner or approach), altering the products or outcome of instruction, or modifying the learning environment.

★ 1-2

Divide your professional learning community (PLC) into smaller subject-matter or grade-level groups. In each small group, teachers share different techniques for teaching the same type of lesson or content, explaining where and how they learned each one, and collaborate to answer the following question: "What is the value of teachers collaborating in small groups on instructional matters?" Each group elects a spokesperson to report findings to the larger PLC.

Differentiating Content: Adapting Lessons for Levels of Understanding

A well-designed lesson is composed of learning objectives that should be explicitly conveyed to learners. Simply saying the objectives aloud or writing them on your board will not guarantee learning. How often do teachers hear the question "Do we need to know this for the test?" Students with diverse learning styles and talents need to have learning experiences that both meet them where they are and engender higher forms of thinking by way of creating, investigating, and analyzing. Instructional instruments for accessing depth of comprehension such as Bloom's taxonomy can help teachers create learning objectives and experiences that promote elevated modes of thinking over rote memorization.

Adapting content objectives to suit diverse learning needs is one proven differentiation strategy. Tiered performance levels allow learners to link learning

to specific indicators or behaviors. Figure 1.5 shows an 8th grade earth science objective taken from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) Standards that is tiered in such a way. Adapted content objectives should be made visible for learners so they can be empowered to improve their own learning.

Star Teachers take great pains to explain these ladders of comprehension to students. "Too often, students want to know how many points they need to get the next letter grade," notes Stephens. "These clearly defined levels of understanding shift the focus from point chasing to knowledge seeking. Without gaining understanding, student learning plateaus or plummets."[41]

Differentiating Process: Adapting Independent Practice for Levels of Understanding

After students' individual levels of proficiency have been ascertained, it is appropriate to identify opportunities for them to demonstrate various levels of comprehension and help them to grow in proficiency. Here are some resources Star Teachers put in place that allow students to choose the learning strategies that suit them best:

Learning Centers: Learning centers are areas of the classroom that are designed for students to interact with instructional materials in an exciting way, individually or alongside peers, as they practice meeting the learning objectives presented in the classroom. Centers are designed for students to deepen their comprehension of content, hone related skills, or develop positive attitudes. They are useful when introducing course material but especially helpful when learners need additional practice with course concepts. Imagine a literacy learning center in a 4th grade class that offers several opportunities for students to practice the concept of idioms and features several activities for each level of performance. Jack, who is struggling academically, may begin his practice at the developing stage and progress to higher levels, while Kerra, a precocious learner who has already achieved some success at the advanced stage, is working toward mastery.

Learning Menus: A list of learning options offers students various selections for learning through purposeful practice. Also known as *choice boards*, **learning menus** present students with several options for producing a final product. Each selection should be rigorous and take approximately the same amount of time to complete. Some teachers literally present the options in the form of restaurant

Figure 1.5 **Example of Differentiating Content by Performance Levels**

8th Grade Science Objective: The student knows that climatic interactions exist among Earth, ocean, and weather systems.

Level: Basic

Indicator:

- Recognize that the Sun provides the energy that drives convection within the atmosphere and oceans, producing winds and ocean currents.

Level: Developing

Indicators:

- Investigate the role of oceans in the formation of weather systems including hurricanes.
- Label the gyres: Indian Ocean, North Pacific, South Pacific, North Atlantic, and South Atlantic.

Level: Proficient

Indicator:

- Use a three-dimensional model to represent the energy that drives convection within the atmosphere and oceans, producing winds and ocean currents.

Level: Advanced

Indicators:

- Relate the interactions of the Earth, ocean, and weather systems to our climate.
- Connect today's climate to the political discussions on climate change, coal jobs, and renewable energy.

Level: Mastery

Indicators:

- Create a booklet to show how the Sun provides energy that drives convection within the atmosphere and oceans.
- Show the role of the oceans in the formation of weather systems such as hurricanes.

Source: From "Levels of Understanding: Learning That Fits All," by C. Stephens, 2015. *Edutopia*. Copyright 2015 by Charity Stephens. Adapted with permission.

menus (i.e., students must select one "entrée" and two "side-dish" experiences, with an option to complete the enriching "dessert").[42]

Anchor Activities: These are exercises that are accessible to learners once they have completed all their classwork. Teachers can offer goal-aligned **anchor**

activities at selected learning centers in the classroom. To encourage deliberation and introspection, Star Teachers require students to articulate their choice of activities.[43] Some teachers curate digital files with hyperlinks for students to practice navigating the internet, and several sophisticated platforms use adaptive analytics to meet individual students' specific academic needs. For example, a teacher creates pre-tests that determine students' background knowledge. As the student engages the online assessments, this adaptive analytic scaffolds the content to become more rigorous and relevant in order to meet the specific needs of the student. These innovative technology solutions "allow learning to be personalized to students' interests, abilities, and preferences in order to provide assistance when needed, and present instruction that is understandable, engaging, and situated in the context of what is important to learners."[44]

Differentiating Products: Adapting Formative and Summative Assessments

Student appraisals can also be tiered for levels of understanding. **Formative assessments** are low-stakes ways to measure performance and provide feedback while students are engaged in learning and should build from basic to advanced levels of understanding to guide instruction and practice. These types of assessments can be either formal (quizzes) or informal (discussion groups, exit slips, thumbs up or down) and allow teachers to assess where students are in the learning process and make attendant instructional choices.

Summative assessments are used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement at the conclusion of a specific instructional period (e.g., a project, unit, course, semester, program, or school year). These types of assessments should embrace all levels of understanding to present a clear picture of student performance. Figure 1.6 shows examples of product choices for learners that teachers can include in a learning center, learning menu, or anchor activity.

Star Teachers build creative rubrics that can be adapted to effectively and efficiently assess student learning regardless of the final product. It is the responsibility of Star Teachers to continually search for "what works" by tailoring learning experiences to students' needs.

Figure 1.6 **Examples of Product Choices**

• Video • Demonstration • Reenactment • Diagram • Advertising campaign • Photo essay • Play • Creative writing project	• Slideshow presentation • Travel brochure • Song • Poem • Puppet Show • Map • Poster • Webpage	• Mock trial • Letter to the editor • Exhibit • News Report • Written Report • Diorama • Skit

Source: Adapted with permission from the IRIS Center (2010). All rights reserved. Retrieved from https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/di/cresource/q2/p07/di_07_link_menus/#content

Data-Driven Instruction

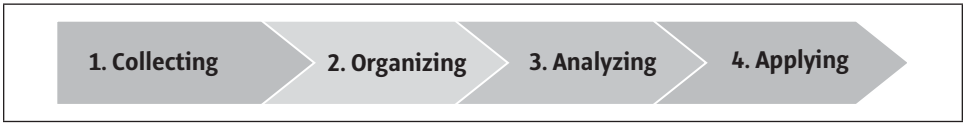
Data from classroom and state-level assessments reveal students' proficiency levels, showing who is on target and who may need extra support. While Star Teachers appreciate these methods for taking the academic temperature of students, they also are not overly obsessed by them. What they are is **data literate,** able to read, comprehend, and interpret data to support instruction.[45] Star Teachers approach student data strategically, using the information to better understand student learning, find solutions to problems, and reflect on teaching practices. In *Why Teachers Must Become Data Experts,* Jennifer Morrison explains that effective teachers undergo three attitude shifts that help them to appreciate data. They

1. Realize that data include more than end-of-year standardized test scores.
2. View data collection as a way to investigate the many questions about students, teaching practices, and learning that arise for any committed teacher.
3. Talk with one another about what data reveal and how to build on those revelations.[46]

Data-literate teachers also engage in **data scooping** (see Figure 1.7) by reviewing accessible student data to learn more about individual or classwide academic performance. There are four basic steps to the practice of data scooping:

1. *Data collection* from the most relevant sources (e.g., state records, report cards, formative and summative assessments, conversations with learners). Teachers may also engage in **kidwatching** (i.e., simply observing and recording children's development over time).[47]
2. *Data organization,* which ensures that the collected student data are properly arranged in each learner's individualized portfolio.
3. *Data analysis and interpretation* to better understand and diagnose individual learners' roadblocks to learning. (Adding reflection logs to every student's portfolio is one helpful way to track instructional strategies used.)
4. *Data application,* or using student data to plan curriculum and instruction tailored to the individual strengths and needs of their learners.

Figure 1.7 **Four Steps of Data Scooping**

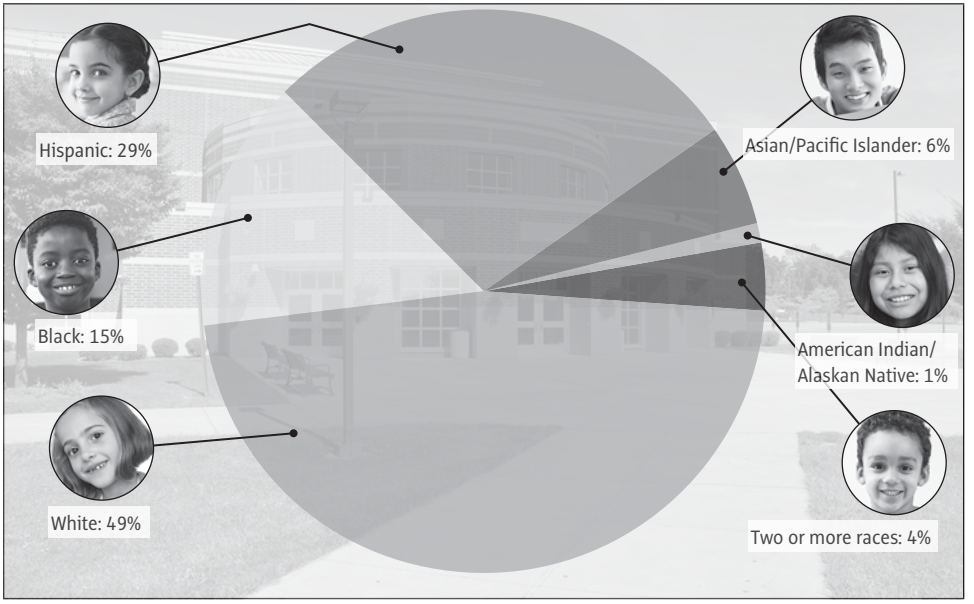


If a learner habitually scores below basic and exhibits other signs of struggling, the Star Teacher will seek opportunities to work one-on-one with him or her, provide peer support, or offer new product choices based on the student's learning style. If students new to the district score lower on a school benchmark than their peers, the Star Teacher will examine assessment data to better understand and address learning gaps. Put simply, Star Teachers exploit student data to understand what works, what does not work, and what instructional approaches may need modifying to support learners' academic achievement.

Teachers must be adaptive to the changing needs of diverse classrooms. As Figure 1.8 shows, today's students are no longer primarily white, middle class, monolingual, or Christian. With every decade the U.S. student body becomes more diverse; by 2025, nearly 6 in 10 students will be nonwhite. Effective teachers must implement strategies that appeal to increasingly heterogeneous classrooms filled with students who learn at faster or slower rates than their peers,

speak English as a second language, have unique physical or learning needs, and live in poverty or violent neighborhoods. The tendency for students in some of these groups and others to score lower on tests than their peers is known as the **achievement gap**. Other factors known to affect the achievement gap include students' race or ethnicity, parents' education level, access to high-quality preschool instruction, school funding, peer influences, teachers expectations, and curricular and instructional quality.[48] Star Teachers do not shy away from multicultural education or see it as an obstacle to overcome but rather embrace diversity as an opportunity to find new ways for students to learn.

Figure 1.8 **Projected Student Diversity in K–12 U.S. Classrooms in 2025**



Source: Data from *State Non-Fiscal Survey of Public Elementary* and *Secondary Education, 2002–03 and 2012–13; and National Elementary and Secondary Enrollment Projection Model, 1972 through 2025,* by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, n.d., Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Summary

Persistence is manifested in the day-to-day actions of Star Teachers eager to improve student learning who are constantly searching for "what works." These teachers make the classroom an interesting place to learn for students and

embrace creative problem solving. Resolute in their quest for student success, they are willing to try different strategies to solve classroom setbacks, implement differentiated instruction, and engage in data scooping to better understand and address their students' academic needs.

Key Words

achievement gap
anchor activity
café effect
cross-cultural competence
data literate
data scooping
differentiated instruction
formative assessment
grit
instructional setback
kidwatching
learning center
learning menu
motivation
persistence
persistence in teaching
problem solving
self-efficacy
setback
summative assessment
teacher efficacy
teacher quality

Extension Exercises

1. Review this story: It is 6 p.m. on a sweltering Wednesday in Texas, and Lynn is still at school grading her 6th graders' science benchmark exam. She notices that, while many did really well on other parts of the exam, nearly 60 percent of the students did not understand the earth science concepts of rotation and revolution. This is Lynn's fourth year as a teacher, and she thought she had developed a great three-day module to deliver these ideas using strategies like demonstrations, videos, small groups, and direct instruction. What happened? Did Lynn prepare for the inevitable instructional setbacks in her classroom to meet the needs of every learner? Should Lynn keep moving in her lesson? What would you say to advise or coach Lynn?
2. Review your grit score from Star Tracker 1-1 (p. 23). How did you do? In 250–300 words, please explain whether you believe your results to be correct. Do they indicate that you are a persistent teacher? Why or why not? What could you do to develop yourself as a teacher to improve your grit?

3. Sketch the current layout of your classroom space. Next, rethink your classroom design based on the suggestions in this chapter. What classroom design changes can you do that support learning? Create a new classroom design that honors the three fundamentals for the classroom environment.
4. Check out templates for bulletin boards on social media and online sources. What can you do to enhance the visual appeal of the bulletin boards in your classroom? Create a list of six to eight ideas and share with colleagues.
5. Is there an achievement gap issue in your classroom, school, or district among different ethnic groups? Use the four-step data-scooping process to analyze your state's achievement data online and obtain the data specific for your discipline and grade level. Next, create a bar graph of your findings. What teaching strategies do the data suggest that could help you assist learners in your classroom?

Going Further

Web Resources

- "Believing and Achieving," an issue brief posted by the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, integrates an overview of research on teacher efficacy with a discussion of educators' responsibility for student learning. www.centerforcsri.org/files/ centerissueBriefJan07.pdf.
- "Teacher Efficacy: What Is It and Does It Matter?" is a short research report by the National Association for Elementary School Principals. Author Nancy Poetheroe does a superb job explaining the link between teacher efficacy and student learning. Check it out at www.naesp.org/resources/1/Principal/2008/M-Jp42.pdf.
- The website *All Things Assessment* provides various ideas, strategies, and resources to improve educators' proficiency in appraising student work, which may lead to gains in student learning. http://allthingsassessment.info/about-the-center/.
- Earn 3.0 professional development hours in differentiated instruction from the Iris Center at Vanderbilt University. This online module contains strategies for organizing the classroom, suggestions for building differentiated

tests and assessments, and audio interviews from leaders with firsthand experience with differentiation in the classroom such as Carol Ann Tomlinson, professor of educational leadership at the University of Virginia. https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/.

- The site www.teach-nology.com offers many teaching resources (articles, rubrics, and worksheets) to support educators who are interested in building classrooms that support students' voices and choices.

Additional Readings

- In 2014, researcher Felicia Dixon and her colleagues examined differentiated instruction, professional development, and teacher efficacy in the following article: Dixon, F. A., Yssel, N., McConnell, J. M., & Hardin, T. (2014). Differentiated instruction, professional development, and teacher efficacy. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, *37*(2), 111–127.
- In "Teaching in the Fast Lane: How to Create Active Learning Experiences," Suzy Pepper Rollins tells how to facilitate a highly engaged classroom with ideas to accommodate different levels of learners by using learning centers and group learning "to foster students' critical thinking and confidence" and help them become self-directed learners. See more at www.ascd.org/Publications/Books/Overview/Teaching-in-the-Fast-Lane.aspx.
- This book is based on Martin Haberman's seven dispositions of Star Teachers as outlined in the following article: Haberman, M. (2002). Selecting Star Teachers for children and youth in poverty. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*(10), 777–781. Page 779 is extremely enlightening.

Endnotes

1. Grotberg, E. H. (1997). *The international resilience research project.* Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED417861.pdf (p. 13)
2. Kelly, D. R., Matthews, M. D., & Bartone, P. T. (2014). Grit and hardiness as predictors of performance among West Point cadets. *Military Psychology, 26*(4), 327–342.
3. Haberman, M. (2010). *Star Teachers: The ideology and best practice of effective teachers of diverse children and youth in poverty*. Houston, TX: Haberman Educational Foundation.
4. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-95 (2015).
5. Wheatley, K. (2002). Teacher persistence: A crucial disposition, with implications for teacher education. *Essays in Education*, 3. Available at www.usca.edu/essays/vol32002/wheatley.pdf

6. Robertson-Kraft, C., & Duckworth, A. L. (2014). True grit: Trait-level perseverance and passion for long-term goals predicts effectiveness and retention among novice teachers. *Teachers College Record, 116*(3), 1–27.
7. Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth (2014, p. 16).
8. Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth (2014, p. 21).
9. Duckworth, A. L., Quinn, P. D., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2009). Positive predictors of teacher effectiveness. *Journal of Positive Psychology, 4*(6), 540–547.
10. Haberman (2010).
11. Haberman (2010, p. 139).
12. Tomlinson, C. (2003). Deciding to teach them all. *Educational Leadership*, *61*(2), 6–11.
13. Gavora, P. (2010). Slovak pre-service teacher self-efficacy: Theoretical and research considerations. *The New Educational Review*, *21*(2), 17–30.
14. Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *17*(7), 783–805. (pp. 784-785)
15. Klassen, R. M., Tze, V. M., Betts, S. M., & Gordon, K. A. (2011). Teacher efficacy research 1998–2009: Signs of progress or unfulfilled promise? *Educational Psychology Review*, *23*(1), 21–43.
16. Jerald, C. D. (2007). Believing and achieving: Issue brief. *Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement*. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED495708.pdf
17. Guo, Y., Connor, C. M., Yang, Y., Roehrig, A. D., & Morrison, F. J. (2012). The effects of teacher qualification, teacher self-efficacy, and classroom practices on fifth graders' literacy outcomes. *Elementary School Journal*, *113*(1), 3–24.
18. Guo et al. (2012, p. 4).
19. Dweck, C. (2014). Teachers' mindsets: Every student has something to teach me. *Educational Horizons, 93*(2) 10–15.
20. Klassen et al. (2011).
21. Jerald (2007).
22. Guo et al. (2012).
23. Guo et al. (2012, p. 20).
24. Sanders, W. L., & Rivers, J. C. (1996). *Cumulative and residual effects of teachers on future student academic achievement*. Research Progress Report. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Center.
25. Haberman (2010).
26. Wolk, S. (2009). Joy in schools. In M. Scherer (Ed.), *Engaging the whole child: Reflections on best practices in learning, teaching, and leadership* (pp. 3–14). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
27. Wolk (2009, p. 4).
28. Marshall, P. (2002). *Cultural diversity in our schools.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. (p. 260)
29. Dorman, J. P. (2001). Associations between classroom environment and academic efficacy. *Learning Environments Research*, *4*(3), 243–257.

30. Perez, J., Julio Montano, J., & Perez, J. (2018). *Healthy schools as a learning tool*. Retrieved from https://healthyschools.cefpi.org/temperature.html
31. Eo, I. S., & Choi, K. Y. (2014). Study on the effects of learning by changing the color-temperature LED lamp. *International Journal of Multimedia and Ubiquitous Engineering*, *9*(3), 309–316.
32. Wålinder, R., Gunnarsson, K., Runeson, R., & Smedje, G. (2007). Physiological and psychological stress reactions in relation to classroom noise. *Scandinavian Journal of Work and Environmental Health, 33,* 260–266.; Whitlock, J., & Dodd, G. (2006). Classroom acoustics—controlling the café effect. . . is the Lombard Effect the key? In *Proceedings of Acoustics 2006: Noise of Progress*. Christchurch, New Zealand.
33. Bafile, C. (2010). From "pretty" to practical: Using bulletin boards to teach. *Education World*. Retrieved from www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev/profdev089.shtml
34. Marshall, P. (2002). *Cultural diversity in our schools*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. (p. 261)
35. Prensky, M., & Prensky, M. (2007). *Digital game-based learning* (Vol. 1). St. Paul, MN: Paragon.
36. Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Heflebower, T. (2011). *The highly engaged classroom.* Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory.
37. Haberman (2010, p. 118).
38. Parsons, S. A., Dodman, S. L., & Burrowbridge, S. C. (2013). Broadening the view of differentiated instruction. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *95*(1), 38–42.
39. Haberman (2010, p. 114).
40. Haberman (2010, p. 118).
41. Stephens, C. (2015). *Levels of understanding: Learning that fits all*. Retrieved from www.edutopia.org/blog/levels-of-understanding-learning-fits-all-charity-stephens (para 5)
42. IRIS Center. (2010). Learning menus: Examples of product choices. In *Differentiated instruction: Maximizing the learning of all students*. Retrieved from https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/di/cresource/q2/p07/di_07_link_menus/#content
43. Haberman (2010, p. 114).
44. Walkington, C., & Bernacki, M. L. (2014). Motivating students by "personalizing" learning around individual interests: A consideration of theory, design, and implementation issues. In S. A. Karabenick & T. C. Urdan (Eds.), *Motivational interventions: Advances in motivation and achievement* (pp. 139–176). Bingly, West Yorkshire, England: Emerald Group. (p. 139)
45. Stevenson, H. (2017). The "datafication" of teaching: Can teachers speak back to the numbers? *Peabody Journal of Education*, *92*(4), 537–557.
46. Morrison, J. (2009). *Why teachers must become data experts.* Retrieved from www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec08/vol66/num04/Why-Teachers-Must-Be-Data-Experts.aspx (para. 4)
47. Owocki, G., & Goodman, Y. (2002). *Kidwatching: Documenting children's literacy development*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
48. Reardon, S. F. (2013). The widening income achievement gap. *Educational Leadership 70*(8), 10–16.

About the Authors

Valerie Hill-Jackson began her teaching career with the Camden Board of Education in Camden, New Jersey—one of the nation's poorest urban school districts. She received her Interdisciplinary Doctorate in Educational Leadership degree from St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia and is currently the director of Educator Preparation and School Partnerships in the College of Education and Human Development and a clinical professor of teacher education in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture at Texas A&M University.

Hill-Jackson received the prestigious American Educational Research Association/Spencer Fellowship and the Lead Star Award for her research in childhood lead poisoning and community education. Additionally, Dr. Hill-Jackson won Maybelline's Women Who Empower Through Education Award, the Upton Sinclair Award, a Fulbright Fellowship to Cardiff University, and a Melbern G. Glasscock Non-Tenure Track Faculty Research Fellowship.

Dr. Hill-Jackson's books include *Transforming Teacher Education: What Went Wrong with Teacher Training and How We Can Fix It* (2010); *Better Principals, Better Schools: What Star Principals Know, Believe, and Do* (2016); *Better Teachers, Better Schools: What Star Teachers Know, Believe, and Do* (2017); and *Teacher Confidential: Personal Stories of Stress, Self-Care, and Resilience* (2018). Visit her website at www.teacher-confidential.com.

Nicholas D. Hartlep began his career as a 1st grade teacher in Rochester, Minnesota, before receiving a PhD in Urban Education at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee (UWM). He also has a master's in K–12 education and bachelor's in elementary education, both conferred from Winona State University. Dr. Hartlep is an associate professor of urban education and the chair of the Early Childhood/Elementary Education department in the School of Urban Education at Metropolitan State University in Saint Paul, Minnesota. He also serves as the graduate program coordinator within the School of Urban Education.

Dr. Hartlep has published 19 books, the most recent being *Asian/American Scholars of Education: 21st Century Pedagogies, Perspectives, and Experiences* with coeditors Amardeep K. Kahlon and Daisy Ball (2018) and *The Neoliberal Agenda and the Student Debt Crisis in U.S. Higher Education,* with Lucille L. T. Eckrich and Brandon O. Hensley (2017). In 2015, he received the University Research Initiative Award from Illinois State University and a Distinguished Young Alumni Award from WSU. In 2016, UWM presented him with a Graduate of the Last Decade Award for his prolific writing. In 2017, Metropolitan State University presented him with both the 2017 Community Engaged Scholarship Award and the President's Circle of Engagement Award. In 2018, the Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) granted Dr. Hartlep the John Saltmarsh Award for Emerging Leaders in Civic Engagement Award. Follow his work on Twitter at @nhartlep or at his website, www.nicholashartlep.com.

Delia Stafford is president and CEO of the Haberman Educational Foundation (HEF). She has a bachelor's in education from Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas, and a master's in education administration, elementary education, and teaching from Texas Southern University. In 1994, Stafford chartered the HEF to promote the research of Martin Haberman. Thanks largely to the foundation, Haberman's education models are being used in more than 370 school districts across the United States, especially in schools with large populations of students who are classified as at risk.

For almost a decade, Stafford directed the nation's largest district-based alternative teacher certification program in the Houston Independent School District and has been recognized twice by the White House for her advocacy of students at risk. She has written on such subjects as teacher education in urban school districts, violence prevention, the belief of effective teachers, student resilience, and the practical implementation of research. Stafford is the coauthor to *Better Principals, Better Schools: What Star Principals Know, Believe, and Do* (2016) and *Better Teachers, Better Schools: What Star Teachers Know, Believe, and Do* (2017). Learn more about the HEF at www.habermanfoundation.org.