

What are the important common and not-so-common characteristics of today's youth? What impressions do effective teachers have of the youngsters they teach? What impressions do you have? Who are the Students?

Outline

I. **A Central Goal of the Effective Teacher - Developing a Sense of Efficacy** – teach students that their existence “matters” and that they are capable of making important contributions to the world.

II. What is your own impression of today's children and youth? Generally positive? Generally negative? How will this attitude play out as you work in schools?

III. Patterns of Learner Development

A. Preschool and Kindergarten – extremely active learners but do not have good fine muscle control (spills), teachers need patience and tolerance

B. Grades 1 to 3 – some still have trouble with fine muscle control, need praise and recognition, if they begin to develop low self-esteem they may stop trying

C. Grades 4 to 6 – girls growing fast and become interested in boys; boys have no interest in them; girls play with girls – boys with boys; students begin to look to peer group instead of teacher for guidance

D. Grades 7 to 9 – great variations in maturity, many youngsters become very self conscious, unpredictable behavior

E. Grades 10 to 12 – search for personal identity; may see themselves as always on stage, feelings that no one else has ever experienced what I am experiencing, capable of abstract thinking but also have strong emotional needs

IV. Selected Characteristics of Today's Learners – as a teacher you will be challenged to recognize and respond to **common characteristics** of young people and also adjust your instruction to meet **unique needs** of individual learners.

A. Learners' Families – with single parents and working parents, more children come to schools needing social and personal information originally communicated within the traditional family

B. Very Young Learners – nearly 50% of 3 & 4 year olds nursery school or day care.

C. Abused and Neglected Learners – every state has laws requiring teachers to file reports with the appropriate authorities when there is suspected child abuse. Teachers are expected to know the behavioral indicators of possible abuse.

D. Learners and Violence – while learners are almost twice as likely to be victims of violence away from school, serious crimes committed in schools are on the rise . . . especially in middle school and high school.

E. Learners' School-to-School Mobility – a surprisingly large numbers of students will be coming and going from your classroom.

F. Poverty and Learners – the poverty rate among school children is higher in US than that in other developed countries; children of poverty tend to perform less well in school

G. Minority-Group Learners – there is an achievement gap between white students and minorities (especially African Americans and Latinos) and special efforts will be required to narrow this gap

H. Learners with Disabilities – about 13% of learners are eligible for programs directed toward special needs students

I. At-Risk Learners – many of the above conditions are characteristic of learners we refer to as at-risk. More individual attention is needed for at risk students.