A New Job Description: The Capacities of a Contemporary Teacher and Professional Learner

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We recognize that there are necessary factors to consider when shaping a new professional position. For example, we would be ill advised to ignore the lessons learned from the negative impact of behaviors and environments that we call "antiquated." We see that the emergence of classical teaching approaches was a direct counter to those effects. In addition to these factors, we propose that significant differences in generational perspectives directly affect teachers' work and approach to learning. The changes in the purposes and roles of teachers lead to provocative questions such as these: What is the job of a teacher today? What are the skills we need? What are the dispositions we need? What are the challenges and benefits? What is exciting about the profession? What is the future of the art and craft? How can we receive feedback to support our ongoing professional growth and learning?

In summary, in this chapter we do the following:

- Describe viable classical capacities that we should prize and keep as teachers
- Explore the impacts of generational perspectives and changes in purpose and role on the profession of teaching
- Detail and discuss our six proposed capacities as a platform for the contemporary teacher

Antiquated Elements

What might be lingering as antiquated in teaching approaches? If you were a teacher in era that we refer to as antiquated, you would have been expected to fill the expectations listed in Figure 2.1. This widely circulated job description, or set of rules, is for a teaching position in the 1800s. Although the original source is unknown, it provides a striking contrast to the new expectations for our profession. The expected dispositions, behaviors, and personal habits for teachers have certainly been challenged over time, and many appear antiquated in contrast to present-day ideas about integrity, transparency, and acceptance of all people with equal expertise. At the same time, some elements may have evolved but are still relevant today, such as the need to maintain and plan for the physical environment and to customize available resources for individual learners.

Figure 2.1. Job Description for Teachers in the 1800s

- Teachers each day will fill lamps, clean chimneys.
- Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.
- Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual taste of the pupils.
- Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
- After ten hours in school the teachers may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.

- Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.
- Every teacher should lay aside from each pay a goodly sum of his earning for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.
- Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity, and honesty.
- The teacher who performs his labor faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five cents per week in his pay, providing the Board of Education approves.

Source: Anonymous. In Bials, R. (1999). *One-Room School* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin), p. 29.

Classical Role

What is classical about the job of teaching? What worked then, works now, and will most likely always work? To clarify the difference between antiquated and classical pedagogical techniques, we offer the following as a list of possible classical roles:

- Teacher as planner
- Teacher as guide
- Teacher as coach
- Teacher as plant and safety supervisor
- Teacher as knowledge source
- Teacher as communication link between families/students and the school
- Teacher as collaborative faculty member
- Teacher as creative thinker
- Teacher as researcher
- Teacher as caring disciplinarian

Again, we do not want to lose these classical techniques because of the need to develop contemporary techniques; rather, we are committed to sustaining them. Even as we strive to respond to the dramatic changes in our profession with contemporary pedagogy, we are committed to keeping what works, to retain the effective as we add new responsibilities and requirements. We do not want to throw the baby out with the bath water. The classical techniques are the answer to the question "What do we keep?"

Snapshot of a Changing Profession

To begin our discussion of the changes in the teaching profession, we introduce a teacher named Jasmine, who entered the field of education in 1994 equipped with her overhead markers and her flash drive full of lesson plans. WebQuests and e-mail were still evolving and just being introduced to teachers. Jasmine felt confident and on the cutting edge of her profession. By 1998, however, along with most of her Generation X colleagues, a more humble Jasmine felt out of date and was struggling to learn how to use contemporary tools. The frustration was immobilizing at first, but Jasmine was resilient and persevered. By 2004, as Generation Y entered the work force, Jasmine was learning new digital skills, apps, and techniques and realizing that the education profession would never be the profession she had been trained for in college. It was changing faster than the textbooks, professors, and even membership organizations like ASCD could articulate.

Jasmine's experience suggests the need for the contemporary teacher to become a self-initiated professional learner. It also illustrates the importance of considering a generational perspective on learning.

Generational Perspectives

We see four generations currently in the work force with distinctive characteristics that can inform our collegial understanding: Matures, Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. The greatest surprise in our discussion, though, is that age is not the only criterion that some people use to define generational membership, and different criteria affect the resulting definitions. One alternate criterion is location; so a "generation" in China is not the same as a "generation" in Canada. Another criterion is parenting style, so those raised by a grandparent may defy their age-related generational stereotypes. A third criterion is access to technology during developmental years. This criterion suggests that as technologies change at faster rates, the size of generations gets smaller. The logical extension of this last point is that current high school freshmen are not in the same generation as current 1st graders, who have grown up with touch technologies that weren't available when the older students were in the primary grades. When multiple generations coexist in a school system, what is the impact on curriculum? How can faculty members develop their own skills to match the changing needs of each new generation as they advance through our learning system?

In its current and vital role, technology can be used to unite generations and blur the distinctions among them. Consider the development of texting. Generation X needed to learn how to text as adults; it was not a part of their college or high school experience—but it *was* for Generation Y. Boomers text; it remains one of the best ways for them to stay in touch with their children. Matures text, but they often reserve the right to reply in any manner of their choosing; if you text them, they might respond with a phone call. Looking forward, even members of Generation Z report that they no longer use voice mail unless absolutely forced to and would prefer a contact to use texting or social networking options instead (Wayne, 2014).

Anecdotes and observed patterns have taught us that the stereotypes about generations are increasingly "cross-pollinating." It is less about age and more about the ability to connect and communicate intergenerationally. This development is increasingly important in education as we find ourselves in an age where there may be four generations in the workforce

teaching three different generations of children at once in the same learning system. It is no wonder we have concerns about how quickly things change and need revising, both in terms of what we teach and how we teach it. The truth is, whether we were taught on a green, black, white, or smart board, the instructional techniques used in the past seemed very similar. These techniques, honed after the educational reforms of the 1920s, worked to some extent in years past but are getting less effective with the younger generations and the new purposes and needs facing schools.

Pedagogy, curriculum, structures, assessment patterns, and roles within our profession need to be challenged. Yet as a profession we continue to get mired in archaic structures and policies and often feel immobilized by the size of the task of updating structures in a meaningful way for the information age. We, as a profession, struggle with the scope and scale of the change.

At the same time, many individuals, particularly those in Generations X and Y, are prepared, even eager and impatient, for the changes. But what, exactly, are those changes? What structures and policies need to be revisited? What stakeholders need to be convinced that their roles need to shift? Who gets educated first?

The short answer to the last question is "I do," because each individual is accountable for the innovations that are needed. The answers and solutions cannot come from the ever-powerful "they" or even "we"; the job is personal. In other words, it requires a meaningful shift from an external motivation to achieve compliance or lofty goals to an internal motivation to learn a new skill each month to achieve the specific goal of modeling effective learning behaviors for children of the future. This was not always the teacher's job. The job has changed; it has been upgraded.

A Platform to Stand On: Contemporary Teacher Capacities

The word "platform" has several definitions, including two that apply to our discussion. One states that a platform is *a declaration of principles and policies* on which a group of people stand. The other refers to the raised horizontal *structure that elevates perspectives* for work purposes. Using this understanding, we propose a platform consisting of six capacities of the contemporary teacher. These capacities are a combination of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that correspond directly to the changing roles of all learners. The new learner roles and capacities include those of self-navigator, social contractor, media critic and media maker, innovative designer, and globally connected citizen. We explore in greater depth how each of these five capacities, as well as a sixth capacity—advocate for learners and learning—affects teachers. We begin our exploration by considering our conception of a contemporary teacher through an online job posting in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2. Job Posting for a Contemporary Teacher

Seeking contemporary teachers for new learning environments, both on site and virtual. Please review proposed capacities and attitudes, including new skills, dispositions, and roles, as described below.

Looking for a teacher who can demonstrate the following capacities:

1. Teacher as self-navigating professional learner.

The position requires independence and professional collegiality. Self-navigating reflects the teacher's independent management facility for providing and selecting a range of virtual and on-site learning environments. As a professional learner, you should be a seeker of new

knowledge and skills. Contemporary professional learners are digitally literate, creating and curating clearinghouses with applications and tools to support learning. An openness to sharing your personal learning pathways with others in your PLC is advisable.

2. Teacher as social contractor.

Through careful social networking, the teacher will support meaningful affiliations with groups of students, education groups, and learning communities. Respectful expansion of resources and point of view is a residual effect of networking and should reflect a commitment to the school's mission. By modeling social contractual relations with a larger community, it is hoped that learners will aspire to the same quality of connection.

3. Teacher as media critic, media maker, and publisher.

Modern learners require a teacher who displays fluency with digital literacy, media making, and classical print media. As a composer and producer of education ideas, curriculum, instructional strategies, policies, digital tools, and management strategies to assist the field, publishing professional work using a range of e-tools is a natural outgrowth of this capacity. If you are sharing your own professional work, then you are more likely to cultivate the same with your learners.

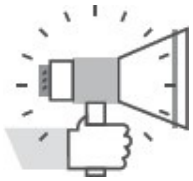
4. Teacher as innovative designer.

Becoming a creator of curriculum compositions, learning experiences, and refreshed environments that “break set” is at the heart of inventive educational solutions. By being accountable for innovation, teachers engage learners in timely inquiry, showing passion for ideas, creativity, and updated knowledge. Innovation requires feedback from an appraiser, assessor, judge, coach, and leader.

5. Teacher as globally connected citizen.

Displaying openness and know-how that supports global connectedness is critical to the times in which we live. An engaged examination of global issues, problems, and themes should be reflected in curricular choices. Central to those connections is the ability to establish respectful and active participation in global learning opportunities ranging from point-to-point collaborations, ongoing global projects, and the use of global applications.

6. Teacher as advocate for learners and learning.



Showing unwavering commitment to the potential for children and adolescents in your care is a clear and classic capacity. We are looking for a modern teacher who actively promotes relevant learning experiences with other colleagues, parents, community members, and policymakers using both face-to-face and social networking skills. Nurturance of the specific learners in your care requires a thoughtful understanding of brain research and of the interests, needs, and passions of each child. Those adhering to the ideal one-room schoolhouse, isolationism, and use of papyrus need not apply.

Teacher as self-navigating professional learner

Just as our learners need to cultivate navigation strategies, teachers need to self-assess, self-motivate, and chart their own learning paths and networks. The ability to maneuver in the digital age is critical to modern-day teachers as they select fruitful virtual and on-site environments that best support specific learning targets. Coaching self-navigation for learners is clearly dependent on and modeled by teachers' proficiency to do the same in their own professional growth—to be professional learners. Confidence is developed by committing to personal learning quests, like the one outlined by the action steps in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3. Action Steps for Becoming a Self-Navigating Professional Learner

Action Steps	Evidence and Artifacts
❍ Creates personalized professional learning plan as a teacher and learner on site and virtually.	
❍ Actively contributes to improving the learning environment in ongoing study groups.	
❍ Curates a robust clearinghouse of applications and pertinent websites and resources for professional learning.	
❍ Communicates with other learning organizations to inform core school team.	
❍ Investigates and researches breakthroughs in knowledge fields.	
❍ Draws from both virtual and on-site networks of other learners to support group work.	
❍ Constructs self-monitoring feedback loop with other learners.	
❍ Researches breakthroughs in learning and cognition.	
❍ Cultivates learner self-management schemes and abilities on site.	
❍ Cultivates and monitors learner self-management approaches virtually.	
❍ Investigates and researches breakthroughs in education and field of study.	
❍ Researches new breakthroughs in learning and cognition.	

Historically, as teachers we have been asked to be the holders of knowledge, to always know the answer. In the past, asking for help, making mistakes, and being imperfect threatened our position and authority. Now there is an understandable role struggle, as our learners do not look to us as gatekeepers. This change in roles may be one of the greatest shifts in our profession—from being the keeper of knowledge to being a model for how to learn.

Let us return to Jasmine, the teacher we introduced earlier in this chapter, who is in her third decade of teaching and finds her role has shifted from curriculum "coverer" to a guide who does not always know the end result.

When she is preparing her social studies unit on issues in responsive government for her 13- and 14-year-old learners, she knows the target but may not always know the way her students will reach it. She is encouraging inquiry using a full arsenal of research tools for navigation. She will be modeling inquiry and collaborating with them as learners. She is both creating a culture for professional learning and curating instructional tools for self-navigation.

Her efforts prompt the following provocative questions: *What is a culture of learning? How do I manage my own learning? How can I assist my learners in managing their learning? How am I adapting to and embracing the changing demands of my profession? How will I get feedback about my own learning? How will I model my process of learning so my students can see clearly how professionals learn? How does my own learning fit into my school's learning process? What websites and digital media applications will we be using in class and for my own professional development? How might I curate and create a clearinghouse for more network links that are viable and reliable?*

Teachers wrestling with these kinds of questions are attempting to navigate the information age successfully and to guide their learners to do the same. Jasmine is motivated and committed to growing professionally. She has committed to learning about brain-based research that can inform her instructional and learning practice with students. With a set of engaging websites to research, an online course from MIT, a set of webinars by neurologist, educator, and author Judy Willis (http://www.radteach.com) and a book study with her colleagues at school, she has sketched out a personal learning plan with the goal of redesigning learning experiences to support her students and her own learning. Her plan will be mapped out using curriculum-mapping software under the professional development tab.

We believe a clear demonstration of contemporary self-navigation involves creating and curating a clearinghouse with contemporary apps and resources. Just as teachers can establish such a resource for their students, they can do so for their own personal professional learning, as shown in the example in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4. Curriculum21 Website Using WordPress

Source: Curriculum21. Used with permission.

The first example is built on a WordPress platform on our Curriculum 21 Clearinghouse, with submissions by teachers around the world who wish to share resources with the tag "professional development." It illustrates how an organization, a school, a teacher, or a student can host a site to assist in navigating resources. Other examples may be found on an organizing platform called Diigo, https://www.diigo.com/, where educators can submit links to websites and create a network around a common issue or topic.

By thoughtfully reviewing the extraordinary array of available resources and applications, educators hope to find those that will best support their

learning. Organizing these into a curated website is a sign of a teacher's independence and navigation capability. The professional learner prizes agile navigation to find essential knowledge and understanding. In addition, the professional learner enjoys the camaraderie of sharing with others who are searching for new ideas and possibilities. A truly exciting aspect of the time in which we live is that such sharing can be immediate, rich, and expansive.

Teacher as social contractor

Creating meaningful, secure, and productive social contracts is essential to establishing relationships based on trust. The art and craft of negotiation and creating written and unwritten agreements about responsibilities, partnerships, and knowledge sharing must be honed so that a society or culture can function effectively. The new digital territory that has opened up in our learning landscapes brings with it a heightened need to not just "network" loosely, but to value and to shape contractual parameters. This is true for and between all members of the learning system. Once something is "out there," it cannot necessarily be changed, deleted, or controlled. This reality means ideas can be manipulated and misrepresented, poor decisions can haunt us for lifetimes, and impulsivity can lead to severe consequences.

Teachers and their students represent the first social contract in the learning process in formal educative settings. By developing a learning plan that reflects agreements, partnerships, connections, and negotiations, they create the contract for learning. Given the unknowns in the virtual world, it is critical that students identify meaningful and safe social networks. Contemporary teachers model this behavior and share their experience in connecting with meaningful cyber networks. The concept of the cyber faculty becomes dynamic when students observe how their teachers expand and extend learning through deliberate professional networking choices.

We must all be social contractors, setting up our learning networks, curating our clearinghouses, and sharing what we know, as outlined in the

action steps in Figure 2.5. The next step is to model and teach students how to build and nurture their own learning networks. Once a teacher knows how to participate in the virtual world of learning networks, it becomes much easier to teach those skills. The key is to build networks that are safe, ethical, and efficient. Students know that they have access to tens of thousands of teachers and other people who offer to answer their questions. However, students often lack the skills to craft quality questions, protect their identities, or post their questions in the right spaces to get quality answers. Once they have posted, students need to learn protocols for thanking respondents within networks, evaluating the quality of answers, and synthesizing learning into their work—including giving appropriate credit. These are the behaviors that teachers and students learn together and hone in the physical space, to be implemented in the virtual space.

Figure 2.5. Action Steps for Becoming a Social Contractor

Action Steps	Evidence and Artifacts
❍ Seeks networks and organizations that can specifically contribute to the growth of the learning environment.	
❍ Guides learners in forging viable networks and finding resources to support curriculum inquiries on site and virtually.	
❍ Helps students learn to network with others, on site and virtually, for personalized learning projects.	
❍ Supports and develops students' critical response in on-site interactions with others.	
❍ Engages in local, regional, national, global forums regarding professional learning.	
❍ Supports the profession of teaching and learning and seeks other teachers as peers to support personal learning endeavors.	

Kinds of networks

Figure 2.6 shows various kinds of networks. When thinking about joining or participating in a network, it becomes important to understand what kind

it is and how the different kinds can be used. When building your learning network, you can choose to combine several forms of networks and use them together. These networks connect everyone from professionals to beginners in any field and with any common interest, from playing video games to programming remote controls. Some connect abandoned pets with homes; others share recipes. There are networks for every profession and hobby, and they welcome members who are willing to learn and share their own learning. So how do you get started?

Figure 2.6. Kinds of Networks

Community or Guild—A group that gets together regularly around a common interest or affinity. Communities and guilds are often membership-based and may have fees or dues. Members may connect personally and network actively, with a focus on answering questions and sharing resources. A guild or community may use shared physical spaces for advertised events such as conferences that members commit to attending together.

Wiki Sharing—A group that contributes to the same virtual space around a common interest or affinity. The members may or may not actually connect personally. The participants build a common knowledge or understanding together. The commitment to the authenticity and accuracy of the wiki brings the members back repeatedly.

Local—A group that meets in person and has conversations regularly. The members may use a title of a club or committee to describe their connection. They often have a shared affinity or goal.

Twitter—An ongoing conversation whose participants come and go freely while the conversation remains online. Twitter participants may also schedule specific online events to participate in at a common time. Participants may also occasionally meet personally at a physical space for a conference or other event around a specific conversation.

Social Networking—A method of placing a website in a network that connects with other websites in a shared format. Members can visit websites and connect, communicate, or share information.

Blog or Channel—A method of posting or publishing a commentary, an opinion, or a video publicly. Participants come and go freely and can share

comments, provide feedback, post resources, and have online conversations around the post. Members can subscribe to blogs or channels that they are interested in, which encourages producers to make more content and share it.

Membership-Based Virtual Guild or Network—Similar to a blog or channel in terms of what and how items are shared; however, members agree to pay dues. This encourages producers of content to make high-quality contributions. Membership-based virtual guilds often organize local or community gatherings to meet physically and strengthen connections.

Five steps to building a learning network

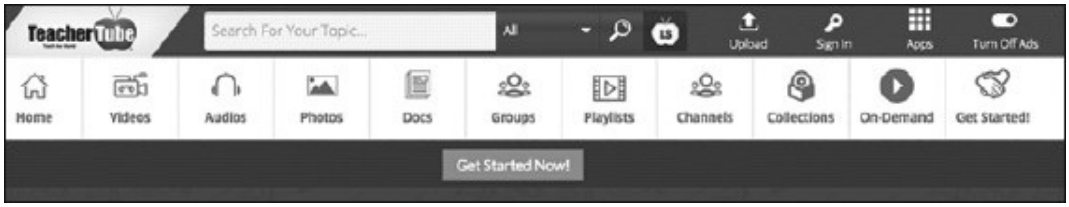
A learning network is a tool of the professional learner. It is a way to find new ideas and answers to questions quickly. It is a collection of reliable sources that have been identified and verified by the network curator. The process of building a learning network is front-end heavy because it requires the curator to select the modes of connection and then find contacts that are worthy of being in the learning network. Once this is done, the network begins to provide quality information and answers—as well as additional contacts. Just like a solid building, a learning network needs a strong foundation. Once that is in place, it will expand easily.

Jasmine provides an example of how a teacher can become a network curator. Her work in this realm began when she realized that her coteachers viewed her as a source of digital tools. Jasmine had gotten some ideas at a conference she attended, and once she shared those, her colleagues wanted more ideas and more sources of information, and Jasmine knew she had to find a way to continue to learn about digital tools without going to a conference. She needed a learning network to gather and to share digital media learning resources.

Step 1: Search. The first thing Jasmine did was to conduct an Internet search. She found a collection of websites with samples of digital tools and feedback on using those tools in classrooms. These kinds of sites are updated by teachers and helped Jasmine create her own clearinghouse of

tools. She created a folder in her browser called "Curriculum21" and began marking useful sites and saving them there so she could easily check them when she needed new ideas. Jasmine also reached out using TeacherTube (see Figure 2.7) and YouTube, looking for how-to videos for teachers, such as those on Common Craft, an online network that provided videos explaining how to use certain tools and apply them in a classroom (https://www.commoncraft.com).

Figure 2.7. TeacherTube



Source: Image © 2015 by TeacherTube, retrieved 7/26/16 from www.TeacherTube.com. Used with permission.

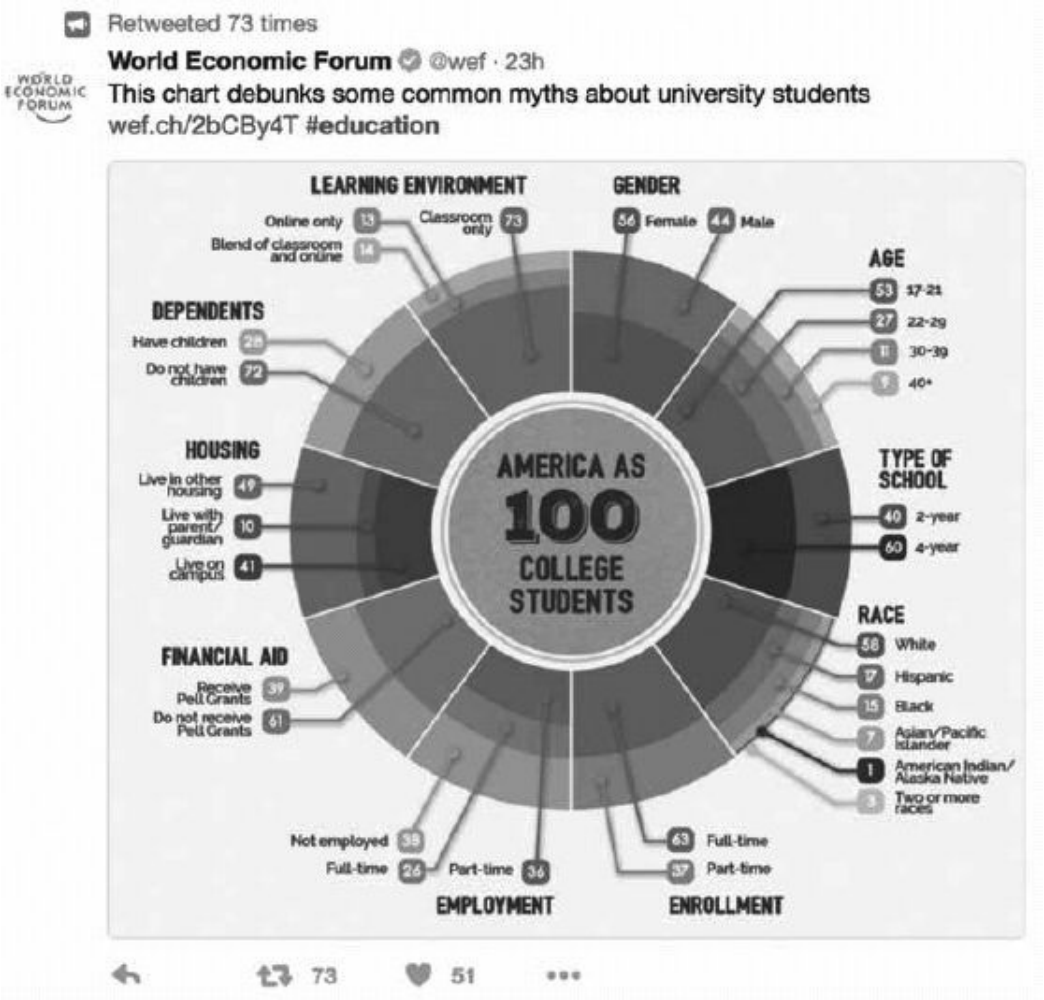
Step 2: Search for partners. The second thing Jasmine did was to create a Twitter account dedicated to her professional learning. She did not contact family members and high school friends through this account; instead, Jasmine identified a contact from the conference from whom she wanted to learn more. She selected Silvia Tolisano, and searching on Twitter she found that Silvia's Twitter username was "@langwitches" (see Figure 2.8). Jasmine "followed" @langwitches and immediately went to see whom Silvia was following. Jasmine was now looking at part of Silvia's learning network, and because she trusted Silvia, she felt confident about many of the resources there. She chose to follow ASCD, AERA, ISTE, Curriculum21, Marzano, McTighe, Kallick, Zmuda, and Fisher for starters. When she returned to her Twitter homepage, she started to see tweets from Silvia sharing links and tools she was learning about at a conference in Florida. Jasmine was not attending that conference but Silvia was, and now Jasmine was able to share the new links with her coworkers. She was already learning through her network.

Figure 2.8. Twitter Sample

Source: Image © 2015 by Silvia Tolisano, retrieved 7/24/16 from http://langwitches.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ascdconnect.png. Used with permission.

Step 3: Search the discussion. The third thing Jasmine did was to find a Twitter hashtag for a topic she thought was important. She searched the hashtag *#education* and decided to see what kind of discussion was going on there (see Figure 2.9). By searching this hashtag, Jasmine was now participating in a global conversation about education. At first, she was just listening, but when ready, she could share her questions, ideas, or images with her fellow educators around the world—without leaving her classroom. Her learning network was growing, and she already had two tools working for her.

Figure 2.9. Hashtag Conversation



Source: Image © 2016 by World Economic Forum, retrieved 8/5/15 from https://twitter.com/search?q=%23education&src=typd.

Step 4: Participate—reflect and publish. The fourth thing Jasmine did was to write about the first three steps she had taken and to reflect on them. She drew some quick pictures, nothing more than doodles at this point, to capture the moment in an image. She did this because she realized her learning network was a two-way system. If she learned, then she should publish her own learning to help others who were just starting. This step was the hardest for her because she did not feel qualified; she was just a teacher, just a learner. Next, she posted her images, including *#education* and *@langwitches* in the post, thus connecting her notes to two parts of her learning network.

This act of publication is a critical part of being in a learning network. All

systems have give and take. What affects us is, in turn, affected by us. Learners teach, teachers learn; it is the elegance of the cycle that makes it so exciting and rewarding. No matter how small the learning, we must strive to share it, publish it, network it.

Step 5: Evaluate and synthesize responses. The fifth thing Jasmine did to build her learning network was to review the feedback, comments, and questions people posted about her pictures. Some people retweeted the work; some suggested how to rotate it, making it easier to view.

Others asked questions about the images and wanted to know if more steps were coming soon. Finally, one person wrote her own steps and created a color version of the notes, making the ideas even easier to share. Jasmine downloaded this image and added it to her own files, hoping to include these skills in a unit of study for her students. The learning network gave feedback that Jasmine had to read, evaluate, and then sort into what she would synthesize with her own thinking or reject. What she was doing represents the cycle of the learning network in full swing. This is the cyber-community working together to make our profession easier.

Following these five steps consciously and deliberately creates a kind of power—the power that comes from creating a network with purpose. It is not enough simply to dabble in these steps; it is important to follow them from start to finish as a process. Another power comes from being in a community of people who are all doing the same thing you are trying to do.

Making connections and participating in a community with purpose empowers the participant as an educator. Finally, there is a power in publishing. Participating in a network above the level of observer indicates a commitment to the community. That commitment is rewarded by increased connections, feedback, and a sense of emotional ties to the community. It is also an investment in the strength of the community, achieved by sharing learning and active research with other participants, and sharing reflections about process and product development in the fastest way possible. The combination of rewards and investments makes participation in a learning network among the most powerful tools of a professional learner in the field of education. It is also the tool of the cyber faculty.

There is joy in learning—just as there is frustration in being left out of the

learning, left behind by the innovations, and overwhelmed by how much there is to learn. What we contemporary teachers have to learn is not printed neatly in one handbook. It shifts and moves, and we need to learn, unlearn, and learn again. This process has been evolving as knowledge is published and shared without familiar gatekeepers. But the great joy that comes from following the first five steps of the learning network can be likened to the first moments a person can walk, read, or speak. There is a whole world out there to join, and the frustration melts away when we can get information and answers quickly—useable pieces of knowledge that are relevant, meaningful, vetted, and free.

In Jasmine's case, after years of feeling outdated and left behind, she felt joy again. The ability to share this joy with a community, to connect and learn together, is the power of a network. It is wonderful to know that we do not have to face the challenges of an evolving profession alone. We have access to a network of professionals and learning companions at our fingertips.

Provocative questions emerge for teachers who are becoming social contractors and are building a learning network in collaboration with learners: *What information does this student already know and have access to? How much time will this take to learn? What kind of feedback will I need to make sure I am going in the right direction? Who can help me? Who can give me feedback? Who has already been learning about this? How can I connect with, communicate with, meet with, and learn from this contact? How can I find more contacts to learn more? What questions have been generated from this learning? How do I ask for help? How do I show my appreciation for help given to me? How do I search for and reach out to people who have an affinity for what I am learning about? Who am I collaborating with to examine and solve persistent problems? Who am I speaking to and working with to keep a positive attitude about my profession and my students?*

Teacher as media critic and media maker

Arguably it is universally accepted that teachers need to be literate in classical communication. They need to have a command of "receptive" skills for listening and reading and "generative" skills for expression in writing and speech. Educators are committed to ensuring that their students can excel in interacting with text and deriving meaning from it. To be literate is to demonstrate competence in the selection of works of literature and information, to be able to critically respond to those works, and ultimately to communicate personally in both oral and written formats.

Given the new forms of communication that have rapidly and dramatically changed our world over the past century, we face a corresponding need for media-literate teachers who can guide their learners in developing both receptive and generative capacities (Jacobs, 2014). Figure 2.10 outlines action steps that teachers can follow to become effective media critics and media makers.

Figure 2.10. Action Steps for Becoming a Media Critic and Media Maker

Action Steps	Evidence and Artifacts
❍ Cultivates media-making know-how by using terms to describe features in a media piece.	
❍ Integrates the study of high-quality film, television, radio, and podcasts in ongoing units of study to support learning and understanding.	
❍ Develops a canon of excellent media types: documentaries, shorts, narrative features, animation.	
❍ Supports students' critical-thinking analysis of reliability of media and web-based sources.	
❍ Employs media-making tools in lesson planning and resources for learners to use.	
❍ Coaches and creates media-making strategies for students' design of products.	
❍ Cultivates classical print using contemporary media making to publish products.	
❍ Contributes to publishing in institutional archive.	
❍ Is active in ongoing book and media study groups.	
❍ Shares publications with other learning organizations to inform school's core team.	

Receptive media literacy to support the role of media critic

Receptive media literacy means becoming a discerning critic of all modern media, including film, television, radio, websites, applications, and podcasts. Too often students take what they see and hear at face value. Thus teachers must model and demonstrate critical analysis of sources in their own curriculum planning and instruction. If Jasmine shows her 8th graders Robert Kenner's documentary *Food Inc.* in a unit of study on issues in the food industry, she needs to help them identify the bias in the film and challenge the portrayal of facts in the same way that she might guide her students to scrutinize traditional print sources.

At the most basic level, a critical media user questions the sources that

emerge on a browser. Teachers often share concerns that "the kids just use the first site that comes up on a browser." This is akin to a student taking the first book off the shelf in a library and looking no further. Jasmine needs to ensure that her learners first enter the proper search words to get to the information that they are seeking; second, that they locate the "site map" of a specific website to delve further into its origins; and third, that they can identify the bias, purpose, and audience for a website; and fourth, that they properly identify the authors of any website used for research submitted in class.

Information technology leader and author Alan November (2015) points to how North American browsers have a built-in bias that takes us to sites filtered to specific news sources or to commercial sites. He notes that entering a country code (http://www.web-l.com/country-codes/) in an advanced Google search leads to an array of sites that are directly from the host country. Given that the validity of a source from another country might be called into question, another level of refining the source involves adding the letters "ac," which means that the search will find only academic institutions. November notes, "Using this new search, students are empowered to access a perspective they may not otherwise have considered."

Receptive media literacy extends to a broad range of media genres that fall under the label of "the moving image," connoting genres intended for viewing. Narratives, documentaries, and animation are categories of visual media, and within each are even more refined genres—for example, features, short documentaries, animated shorts, realistic narrative, fantasy narratives. What is more, the platform has great significance in the experience; for example, IMAX productions, news programs, television sit-coms, procedurals, rom-coms, and streaming series are different from one another. The contemporary teacher must be explicit about the differences between them when guiding students to become critical and conscious media viewers. A closer look at film and film making illustrates the task at hand.

Film has been a seminal form of influence and engagement for over one hundred years, though it is rarely studied formally in elementary and secondary programs. Outside of the occasional high school elective, thoughtful and integrated media study is not the norm. We support the

notion of a formal study of film and media as an integral part of the K–12 curriculum. Jacobs and Baker (2014) write about the need for a district or school to develop a formal film canon and suggest the following five instructional tenets to guide contemporary study:

- An engaged understanding of the languages of film
- The critical role of screenwriting
- A focus on moving from passive to active viewers of film
- A respect for and use of the rules of filmmaking
- Introducing a popular film text for the first experience

To assist faculty engaged in this enterprise, they have created a Film Canon Project (http://www.filmcanonproject.com) as a resource that taps into award-winning and well-recognized films. Curriculum designers can integrate the study of film—whether narrative, documentary, or animated—into any curriculum area. Of course, choices must be relevant to a unit focus, but given the wealth of media available, far too often we neglect remarkable opportunities to expand our learners' views through the use of film.

Generative media literacy to support the role of media maker

Formal study of what constitutes quality media provides a natural opportunity to cultivate serious media-making skills. We admire the work of the world's largest media-learning center dedicated to K–12 education, the Jacob Burns Film Center in Pleasantville, New York. Its recently released Learning Framework for Visual Literacy provides a dynamic set of developmental understandings to assist in cultivating literate and aware media makers. The framework's language reflects the notion of reception (viewing) and generation (creating). In addition, the center offers an easy-to-use tool called *View Now Do Now* to help teachers and learners make media products. (See https://education.burnsfilmcenter.org/education/)

Generative media literacy focuses on narrative and informational forms that combine the dimensions of sound and image (both moving and still). Thus teachers need to create carefully crafted media to support their efforts to communicate media literacy to students. For example, if a 3rd grade teacher creates a website for a unit of study on animal habitats that includes a short video or slides with voiceover narration to assist her students, she is modeling the very behaviors that she should encourage in them.

A knowledge of media-making terms can provide focus and direction to both teachers and students who become media makers. The Jacob Burns Film Center has created a free, easy-to-use visual literacy glossary that is an excellent tool for expanding our know-how as media makers (see https://education.burnsfilmcenter.org/education/visual-glossary/). Teachers and students pore over this interactive site and can actually see the terms come alive. For example, students might see the term "Aerial Shot" or "Extreme Close-Up" and find examples in a film but also employ the technique in their media making. What is more, they might even inject the term in their "classical" writing (e.g., How might you convey an "extreme close-up" in your opening paragraph for a story created in a literature class?).

Media making leads naturally to issues related to publishing. Publishing is about sharing learning and communicating to an audience. Creating opportunities for learners, both adults and children, to publish and work through different media formats means that teachers must be fluent in this kind of creation. Teachers can publish works ranging from books to newspapers to journals, in both hard copy and online versions.

With the availability of self-publishing tools on our laptops and tablets, the classical notion of publishing has become more immediate and expansive, and it is critical that students understand the world of responsible publishing. Today people can create books, films, music, and images with no feedback or guidance from anyone else, which is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, the situation appears to be liberating—creative solutions can be shared quickly, good ideas can spread and generate social change, expertise can be respected and be impactful no matter its origins. But on the other hand, the situation allows for freedom to distort and to eliminate quality review.

The ability for children and adults to publish without a gatekeeper

highlights the need for overt training before publishing on any level. Published works range from those that go through the most formal form of review before publication to the often immediate, if not thoughtless, tweet or text, and teachers should explicitly explore and help learners understand the different options. To clarify the degree of vetting and access to published work produced in both classical and contemporary platforms, teachers should introduce their learners to five levels of publishing, listed here from most to least formal:

1. Publishing in a peer-reviewed journal or a professionally published, vetted source
2. Publishing in a nonprofessionally published source
3. Posting on a personally controlled network
4. Sharing and posting on an open network, or commenting on a network that requires a log-in
5. Texting, tweeting, or messaging on an open network or editorial section

Levels 4 and 5 have both positive and negative implications. There is the potential for spontaneous expression and fresh connections. The downside is impulsive posting and a deluge of network responses. Media sharing goes hand-in-glove with being a discerning media critic in understanding the intricacies of each of the five levels.

The new ease of publishing reminds us that it is important that we not "experiment" too much with our students, that we do not appear reckless or irresponsible as we commit to innovation in education. The information age has opened doors to educators that give us access to media, media making, and classical publication resources that we can build upon and hone as a profession. But these doors are only valuable if we are committed, as a profession, to networking and publishing our learning in accessible portals that will provide feedback for our own learning, as well as gateways for others to learn. This give and take, this loop of learning, is the most contemporary way for our profession to grow and evolve in the information age.

The role of media critic and media maker prompts a number of provocative questions: *What are criteria for a high-quality media production? Who can help me make a quality piece in this media format? What are the tools we already have available that are designed to help make these media forms? What audience will be able to experience our products, and how will we both share with and get feedback from this audience? What are the five levels of publishing, and how can I model them for my students? What is the decision-making process we go through before sharing our work publicly? Who do we ask to help us edit and revise our work? What is the process for sharing media and publishing in networks safely, ethically, and efficiently? How do we learn from participating in the process of publishing and sharing media?*

Teacher as innovative designer

Innovation is inherently bold. It requires teachers to think about their teaching in terms beyond the basic skills and knowledge of how to manage, organize, plan, instruct, and assess students. Just as we ask students to develop courage and risk-taking behaviors instead of simply regurgitating material, we look for teachers to be innovative designers within their profession. It is not enough to obey leadership and comply with policy and regulations. It is not enough to solve immediate problems while failing to design and share systemic solutions. We think of the contemporary teacher as a person who seeks new situations and recognizes possibilities outside the box.

A contemporary teacher must balance the reliable structures of education with the powers and advantages of open design. We see this when teachers are able to design curriculum quests that nurture the highly personalized inquiry experiences of learners while also assessing standards as they are achieved by learners. The ability to do both—to meet standards and to nurture the authentic learning process with students as active and leading participants—is the contemporary art and craft of teaching. The balance requires a teacher to be fluent in a variety of instructional designs and

current on available resources and networks. It also requires the teacher to be open to letting go of control and allowing students to make content decisions and to pursue questions they are interested in. Finally, a classical command of the standards is fundamental so that a teacher can recognize ways to develop student mastery that is not static and overly controlled. Meeting the standards can come from a number of entry points, including innovative pathways. It takes a master teacher to note when standards are met as students self-navigate worthy quests of genuine learning.

The shift to becoming an innovative designer can draw from the larger world of design and business. In an unusual and visually exciting book, *The Third Teacher: 79 Ways You Can Use Design to Transform Teaching and Learning*, a group of architectural and furniture designers offer specific recommendations based on their work with schools. Three specific suggestions resonate here:

- **#71 Consult with kids.** Survey students about what they would like to study, then design spaces that let them learn what they want to learn.
- **#73 Expand virtually.** Make sure a classroom has the capacity to link into learning opportunities beyond its four walls—even beyond the Earth itself.
- **#74 Embrace purpose.** Install technology that can simulate real-world situations—given the chance to solve authentic problems, kids will rise to the challenge. (OWP/P Architects, VS Furniture, & Bruce Mau Design. 2010, pp. 224–231)

Espousing design thinking is a basic premise of the work of IDEO, a cutting-edge design consulting firm that works in a wide range of business and service industries and has turned its attention to K–12 education. Its *Design Thinking Toolkit* (https://www.ideo.com/work/toolkit-for-educators) provides fresh language and five steps to support an innovative design process: Discovery, Interpretation, Ideation, Experimentation, and Evolution. By developing skill sets for each of these processes, students can apply them to any situation or presenting issue. We believe teachers can embrace this kind of design thinking as part of a viable approach to teaching and learning. An example of seeing the five steps in action is the

nonprofit Henry Ford Learning Institute, which has adopted IDEO's approach and works with public schools in Dearborn and Detroit, Michigan. A whole faculty and community approach has supported the discovery and research of possibilities, the site-based interpretation of how these ideas might play out, the generation of ongoing fresh curriculum and teaching ideas, instructional experimentation, and continual evolution. See https://www.ideo.com/work/a-design-thinking-approach-to-public-school.

The contrast between innovative design solutions and the type of assessment that is valued by most education institutions is stark. The contemporary learner needs us to shift our focus onto valuing genuinely creative and purposeful activity that results in new solutions. We need teachers, administrators, and community members to use an innovative design approach to address challenges related to instruction, curriculum, and learning environments and spaces. Contemporary teachers are powerful when they express curiosity about the future. Such curiosity leads them to try new techniques, tools, and methods of working with contemporary students. In other words, they are fascinated with timeliness and new learning. We see teachers showing passion for ideas, creativity, and updated knowledge, and engaging their own networks to learn and do more. This commitment to learning new things is a prerequisite for many of the capacities of a contemporary teacher. Figure 2.11 lists action steps for developing the capacity of teacher as innovative designer.

Figure 2.11. Action Steps for Becoming an Innovative Designer

Action Steps	Evidence and Artifacts
❍ Upgrades approaches for assessment to ensure the integration of new media and digital tools.	
❍ Formally studies design-thinking models in careers and professional practices, such as architecture, engineering.	
❍ Collaborates with students on testing new instructional approaches using virtual learning models to see if they are effective.	
❍ Operationally defines with students what "innovation" will look like in the classroom or learning situation and monitors results.	
❍ Engages in ongoing study of cutting-edge brain research to support student learning.	
❍ Develops ongoing curriculum unit plans focused on contemporary issues and problems.	
❍ Collaborates with learners on studying the lives and breakthroughs of innovators past and present.	
❍ Employs a range of learning and instructional-delivery options in on-site settings.	

The role of innovative designer leads to these provocative questions: *How can I support my students in learning about design thinking? What problems and issues fascinate my learners? Are all creative acts innovations? What does innovation look like in my practice as a professional? How do I encourage courage? What is worthy of instructional time and resources? How can I engage my students in both focusing and managing their own learning? Am I accountable for all children learning what I had to learn in school? Are we accountable for using new techniques that are not first approved by the administration? Who is accountable for my learning?*

Teacher as globally connected citizen

The learning possibilities enabled by global connections are unparalleled in history. Real-time connections are occurring every day between individuals and communities around the world. Grandparents in Italy can have video conversations with their grandkids in Cincinnati. A boy in Toronto can engage in a Minecraft challenge match with a girl from Mexico City. The availability of global information and networks has transformed the traditional classroom window into a conduit for expanded points of view. These opportunities come with a concurrent need to foster knowledge about people and places and issues related to economic, social, political, and environmental well-being. Contemporary teachers must think and act as citizens of their local community and the world. As noted in Chapter 1, the Council of Chief State School Officers and the Asia Society (Jackson & Boix Mansilla, 2011) have encouraged the development in learners of four global competencies:

- Investigate the world
- Recognize perspectives
- Communicate ideas
- Take action

Several "right now" instructional approaches and resources are available to teachers to support them as they invite students into the realm of global inquiry. Here are some examples:

- **Global apps—**Globally oriented applications and websites that include gapminder.org, newspapermap.com, and newsela.com, make it easy to access information from a variety of sources worldwide.
- **Point-to-point communication platforms—**Communication services such as Skype and Google Hangouts, and webinar support platforms such as GoToWebinar enable direct communication between students and others outside the classroom. See Figure 2.12, which shows 5th graders in Prairie Elementary School interviewing Heidi about the future of education.
- **Social networks—**Online networks can provide virtual meeting places

where students can share ideas or conduct inquiries globally. An example is the Student Technology Conference (studenttechnologyconference.com), which is organized by students around the world as a forum for presentation, discussion, and sharing of technology used in education settings.

- **Organization-sponsored projects—**Both not-for-profit and profit-making groups often sponsor projects that students participate in. An example is the Out of Eden project (www.outofedenwalk.com), sponsored in part by the National Geographic Society and the Knight Foundation, which follows journalist Paul Salopek's seven-year, 21,000-mile walk retracing the global migration of our ancestors.
- **Field trip, travel, and residency programs—**An abundance of programs support student travel and encourage direct interaction between students and host-country individuals. They range from programs in which students travel as a group to various destinations, to those such as buildOn.org that involve students temporarily living abroad and working together on philanthropic projects.

Figure 2.12. Global Inquiry in Action

The study of contemporary global issues resonates because of the interconnectedness of people on our planet. Facing the Future (http://facingthefuture.org), which has been cultivating meaningful curriculum approaches for over 20 years, is a terrific resource for identifying teachable global topics that are rich areas for investigation. Included among these are *sustainability, climate change, biodiversity, energy, population, human consumption, materials economy, micro-financing, health access, water-borne diseases, drug and alcohol abuse, environmentally related health conditions caused by poor air quality, agricultural and industrial practices that damage the environment,* and *social-economic systems.* In short, contemporary teachers should not only display a willingness to use digital tools for connecting students with locations beyond the classroom walls, but also put priority on content that is global and relevant.

Figure 2.13 shows action steps that contemporary teachers can take to become globally connected citizens. In doing so, they are helping their students to develop their own capacities in this realm.

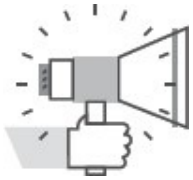
Figure 2.13. Action Steps for Becoming a Globally Connected Citizen

Action Steps	Evidence and Artifacts
❍ Engages students in using specific globally oriented applications (such as newspapermap.com or newsela.com).	
❍ Sets up purposeful point-to-point communication using Skype or Google Hangouts.	
❍ Establishes social media networks to share ideas or inquiries.	
❍ Engages in a long-term project (such as Out of Eden or 100 People: A World Portrait).	
❍ Supports field trips, travel, and residency programs.	
❍ Networks student to others on site and virtually for investigation of queries.	
❍ Communicates with parents in sync with pertinent faculty teams.	
❍ Works collaboratively with the full range of faculty teams.	
❍ Engages in local, regional, national, and global forums regarding professional learning.	

While acknowledging the importance of connecting beyond the classroom walls, it is important to note that global citizenship also applies to our own backyard. We want to cultivate respect in our learners in terms of their immediate encounters and daily interactions. The active engagement of students as respectful participants in their immediate environment is essential to the functioning of any society. Recently we worked with a kindergarten teacher in the Bronx who asked her students to focus on the following essential question: "How can I make my block a better place to live?" The children interviewed shopkeepers about the history of their businesses, the supply and demand of services, and recommendations for how they, as children who live on the block, could make life better. The results were personal and honest. The main finding was that shopkeepers appreciate a polite and respectful child. Students filmed the interactions on digital media and compiled them into a short documentary. The experience was exemplary: citizenship begins with the local.

As our world has become much smaller, the scope of our possible connections has become much larger. Today's teacher is a globally connected citizen. In fact, it is not difficult to stretch our imagination and envision eventual galactic citizenship as nations and groups continue to explore space. Today's students can debate such questions as whether NASA's plan for a human flight to Mars is worth the economic investment and who should monitor luxury space travel for wealthy individuals.

In the role of globally connected citizen, provocative questions emerge: *What is the relationship between a person and the place where that person lives? Where can I reach people who have an affinity for the same kinds of things I do? How can I revise my work so people can easily translate it using online tools? How can I share my point of view respectfully with others? How can I evoke social change effectively? How can I make a contribution to my community? My world? My family? My school? In what ways am I collaborating with others to find and design systemic solutions whenever possible?*



Teacher as advocate for learners and learning

Being an advocate for learners is tied to the notion of nurturing, which, in turn, is directly tied to the role of the mother and the father of a child. Thus it is common to see the word "nurturing" used often in early childhood education. The care of our youngest and most vulnerable children requires a range of both gentle and firm guidance and support; but given the demands of modern life, teachers need to cultivate a disposition that is caring and patient with learners of *all* ages. Whether we are working in infant/toddler playrooms or in a graduate program, certain dispositions, as described by Costa and Kallick (2014), create a fundamental sense of safety and freedom. "As we examine the many lists of desired learnings to prepare our future citizens for a life of problem solving, uncertainty, and globalization, and given the access we have to information through technologies, it becomes apparent that the keys to learning are dispositional in nature" (p. 1). For example, cultivating a disposition for humor is a vital part of connecting in a classroom. This does not mean that every teacher should be a joke teller, but rather that teachers and students should be able to appreciate humor and share a laugh when the learning gets tough. Learners need to laugh.

Nurturers show unwavering commitment to the potential of learners. By holding fast to a belief in youth and their ability to make a difference now and into the future, nurturers instill confidence and joy in learning. If each of us reflects and identifies a teacher who made a difference in our life, he or she was likely a caring and intelligent gardener of the mind and soul. Certainly the range of temperaments and personalities of those teachers would be wide, but there are likely commonalities among these great educators. Focusing passion, experience, scholarship, and playfulness, nurturers connect learning to life, to people, to stories, to the fabric of society. Our greatest teachers protect learners. Children and young people

feel safe to develop physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually because true nurturers see the whole child. Nurturing is the most foundational of the capacities, and is the compelling core of our profession.

When Jasmine begins to craft a personalized learning plan with 13-year-old James, she is nurturing his engagement and focusing his curiosity. He is fascinated with road construction and the problems that occur after a heavy snowfall on the streets in his neighborhood, and so she makes an effort to incorporate that interest into his learning plan. Jasmine realizes she not only needs to support James, but also may need to advocate for the conditions necessary to support personalized learning with her school leadership, board, and community.

Her efforts spur provocative questions such as these: *What do my students need? How can I create a safe environment for learning? What challenges are my learners facing before they walk into my classroom? How can I support them in a positive and caring way? How is physical, moral, emotional, and spiritual development affecting my learners? What can I do with the brain in mind to craft my lessons in the most effective and meaningful way? How can I group my learners to maximize their experience? In what ways will I share feedback about performance with learners to give them the time and information they need to improve their performance? What can I do when I am disappointed with student performance, behavior, or effort?*

In addition to being an advocate for learners, the contemporary teacher has a deep loyalty to and advocates for the authentic learning process. In its most basic and human form, learning is about trying new things and then considering the feedback before trying something else. If the feedback is positive, we do it again. If the feedback is negative, we try something else. Authentic learning promotes responsible risk taking and innovation. Manufactured or contrived learning is an experience that is structured so that failure is unacceptable and seen as outside the learning process. Failure is used to sort those who "did not learn" from those who "did learn." This sorting approach to schooling suppresses the learning process for both students and teachers. When the learning process is suppressed, innovation is suppressed.

Political and policy advocacy is now part of the contemporary educator's responsibility. Contemporary teachers need to actively advocate for

environments where it is safe to learn in a way that acknowledges that learning involves making mistakes. When we make mistakes, we are open to developing new skills, stretching our thinking, and constructing new knowledge. Educators must protect their own learning process and, by doing so, model for all learners that failure is a genuine and authentic part of that process. When educators encourage their own learning process and protect their peers when learning new things, they build a learning community of professional educators. We must all be allowed to learn—and sometimes fail—in order to be innovative and productive in schools.

Teachers have legitimate reasons to fear failing in front of administrators, peers, students, and families. It is no wonder we hesitate to model authentic learning when doing so might mean we could lose our jobs because we tried something new. We can draw courage from the stories of others, as exemplified by the engaging 50 Great Teachers program on National Public Radio (see http://www.npr.org/series/359618671/50-great-teachers). The vignettes feature exceptional individuals who have demonstrated conviction and imagination in reaching the learners in their care.

The stories in the 50 Great Teachers program reflect the need for a supportive environment. In Chapter 5 we discuss leading a school culture loyal to learning, but here we recognize the need in each individual to commit, openly, to the authentic learning process no matter who is acting in the role of learner. If we begin there, a positive risk-taking culture can thrive. So the capacity to protect and encourage the authentic learning process is a foundational part of being a contemporary teacher. We call this being *loyal to learning*. It shows our courage to learn. It shows our ability to face a culture of threat together as professionals, and to accept the learning process for what it really is—a process. As noted in an article in *Education Week* titled "New Advocacy Groups Shaking Up Education Field," a wide political spectrum of action groups has emerged in the United States and across the world in the last few years (Sawchuk, 2012). Bearing names meant to signal their intentions—Stand for Children, Democrats for Education Reform, StudentsFirst—they are pushing for such policies as rigorous teacher evaluations based in part on evidence of student learning, increased access to high-quality charter schools, and higher academic standards for schools and students. Sometimes viewed as a counterweight to teachers' unions, they are also supporting political

candidates who champion those ideas.

Whether appearing at a local school board meeting or contributing to an online discussion on personalized learning, we believe that teachers should be encouraged to speak out, raise questions, and take action as advocates of learning. Figure 2.14 outlines action steps teachers can take to develop this capacity.

Figure 2.14. Action Steps for Becoming an Advocate for Learners and Learning

Action Steps	Evidence and Artifacts
❍ Cooperatively guides and structures personalized learning plan for each learner.	
❍ Listens thoughtfully, respectfully, and responsively to individual learners.	
❍ Constructs self-monitoring feedback loop with learner.	
❍ Engages in ongoing study of new approaches to support students.	
❍ Employs a range of learning and instructional delivery options in virtual settings.	
❍ Matches the nature of student learning with a grouping configuration.	
❍ Maintains ongoing records and feedback on each student and for groups of learners.	
❍ Looks at problems or challenges from various perspectives before selecting a course of action.	
❍ Draws from both virtual and on site networks of other students to support group work.	
❍ Constructs self-monitoring feedback loop with learner.	
❍ Cultivates student self-management schemes and abilities on site.	
❍ Cultivates and monitors student self-management approaches virtually.	
❍ Maintains meaningful feedback on the progress of students in digital portfolio contributions.	

Action Steps	Evidence and Artifacts
○ Actively participates in policy issues regarding learners, learning, and institutions.	
○ Engages in local, regional, national, global forums regarding professional learning.	
○ Participates in teaming and intervisitations to model and give feedback to colleagues.	
○ Discusses learning new techniques with faculty members in a positive way.	
○ Promotes teachers who publicly model the authentic learning process.	
○ Promotes mistakes as a natural and positive part of the learning process.	

The provocative questions connected to being an advocate for learners and learning are focused on the authentic learning process: *Are there meetings and hearings I should attend to support better conditions for learning? Are there community members or leadership groups I can share my ideas with regarding personalized learning? Is there active research I could be conducting to test new ideas? Is there anyone on our faculty who is afraid to learn new ideas that I can support? Can our schedule allow for more teaming or more intervisitations so we can model and give feedback around new techniques without evaluation?*