



Chapter I

Communicating and Planning for Instruction

Introduction

A great irony in this age of information technologies is that communication skills for many people have atrophied. Students take low levels of communication and high levels of information overload for granted. This state of affairs has dire consequences for education, where clear, cogent communication is a prerequisite to learning. While it is tempting to “get with the times” by reducing communication to brief, sloppy exchanges, our challenge as teachers is to contradict these trends by modeling formal communication and information skills. This chapter begins with a description of an effective teacher to remind us that teaching involves a wide range of dispositions, knowledge, and skills. The remainder of the chapter focuses on demonstrations, lesson planning, and instructional objectives. Lesson plans and objectives are fundamental tools for demonstrating the applications, explanations, and implications of technologies to your students. Demonstrations are the single most effective method for technology teachers. Organization and communication are the keys to effective demonstrations.

The intent of this chapter is to provide you with the instructional tools that ground the practice of teaching technology studies. Communication, demonstrations, and lesson planning. These are the tools that will help you to immerse yourself in the craft of teaching. Recalling the model of reflective practice explained in the preface,

this book takes the form of cycles that begin with you as a teacher. Over the first four chapters, you will be challenged to identify with certain instructional practices and techniques, and to choose among those with which you most identify. This chapter provides the tools for scaffolding a wide range of curriculum and instructional dispositions, knowledge, and skills. The operative word in this chapter is practice. Practice, practice, practice!

Characteristics of an Effective Teacher

A good teacher is a good person. Simple and true. A good teacher rather likes life, is reasonably at peace with her or himself, has a sense of humor, and enjoys other people. Among other things, a good teacher is good because s/he does not seem to be dominated by a narcissistic self which demands a spotlight, or a neurotic need for power and authority, or a host of anxieties and tremblings which reduce her/him from the leader of the class to its mechanic (Hamacheck, 1969, p. 343).

Dr. Donald Maley wrote one of the best descriptions of an effective technology teacher. After a life of work in technology education, Maley passed away in 1993. But his article titled *Identifying Skills and Attitudes Technology Educators Must Now Possess*, is as timely today as it was when written in 1990. Maley (1990) described the cultural, social, and technological changes that were underway and anticipated responses technology teachers would have to make *if* they wanted to remain relevant in the new century. In the attitudinal or affective dimensions, the following are significant: Positive attitude to learning, faith in the intelligence of students, celebration of multiculturalism, respect for teaching as a profession, and ecological sensitivity in a world with finite resources. When Maley described an effective technology teacher, he included two skill dimensions to complement the attitudinal dimension. Teaching skills are those that normally come to mind when we think of C&I. For technology teaching, he included technical skills for demonstrations, design, and maintenance. The second group of skills is for personnel support and relate to skills necessary to manage classroom problems, resolve conflicts, and network outside of the school.

Maley's list is a complement to generic lists of what makes an effective teacher. Think about your teachers from the past. What qualities did they possess? What qualities should any teacher possess? Your teacher's characteristics will probably include what Maley suggested, and more. A good teacher expresses (Clark, 1988):

- Belief in and development of human capacities
- Awareness of one's vocation to become human

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