

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a noble, honorable, and challenging profession. The training to prepare to become a teacher requires years of preparation that includes college course work, student teaching, and successful completion of standardized tests. The training doesn't stop there. As soon as a teacher steps foot into a classroom, the life of a teacher continues in real-world experiences. No hard-working, diligent, and sincere teacher ever feels as though she has arrived. Each new year, each new school day, each new class, each new student brings new challenges and victories.

Robert Marzano, in the book titled *Classroom Instruction That Works* (2001), wrote: "After analyzing the achievement scores of more than 100,000 students across hundreds of schools, the conclusion shows that the most important factor affecting student learning is the *teacher*" (p. 3).

Even in these turbulent times, the teacher still has a profound impact on the success of his students. Despite other factors that seem to influence a child's daily performance, the teacher is an anchor that promotes the intellectual, emotional, and social skills of our youth.

Recipe for Teaching: A Reflective Journal is intended to be a companion to the text *Recipe for Great Teaching: 11 Essential Ingredients*. Each section is a reflective view of the ingredients discussed in the text. It also provides an opportunity for you to respond to the reflective questions at the end of each chapter.

It is clear that effective teachers are reflective about their practice. These teachers always consider how well they are doing with their students, how they can embellish what works well, what they could do differently in challenge areas, and whether they have effectively reached each child who crosses the threshold of their classrooms each day.

Recipe for Teaching: A Reflective Journal is intended to facilitate the process of being reflective about your practice. It will challenge you to look deeply into yourself, your students, your profession, and your ultimate impact in the lives of all those you touch: students, parents, colleagues, and community.

Finally, savor the activities in this *Recipe for Teaching: A Reflective Journal* as an opportunity for these ingredients to marinate and encourage your continued development in the profession. Teachers absolutely make the difference!