

that some methods of instruction will be better suited than others to teach that content to students. On the other hand, a particular instructional method (cooperative learning, for example) is more effective at presenting certain types of content than others. Effective teachers know that they must develop knowledge and skills in both areas—from planning the *what* of the curriculum to planning the *how* of instruction.



INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Curriculum leaders understand that appropriate instructional methods, as well as a meaningful curriculum, are key elements of an effective learning environment. They understand that what the teacher does and what students do have powerful influences on learning and on the quality of classroom life.

After developing a curriculum, a teacher must answer the question "What instructional methods will enable me to achieve my curricular goals?" Teachers also must realize that instructional activities should meet *students'* goals. The activities must be meaningful and authentic for students. As Dewey points out in "Progressive Organization of Subject Matter" in this chapter, knowledge should be viewed as progressing out of the learner's experiences rather than as something outside those experiences. Developing appropriate learning activities, therefore, requires thoughtfulness, insight into the motivations of students, and good judgment.

Authentic learning tasks enable students to see the connections between the curriculum and the world beyond the classroom—both now and in the future. To understand how authentic learning tasks can motivate students to learn, the reader may wish to reflect on his or her own school experiences. Do you recall memorizing facts only because they would appear on a test? Did you ever wonder why a teacher asked you to complete a learning task? Did you ever feel that a teacher asked you to do busywork? What kinds of learning tasks motivated you the most?

Herbert A. Thelen (1981, p. 86) contends that authenticity represents "the first criterion all educational activity must meet." According to Thelen, an activity is authentic for a person if he or she "feels emotionally 'involved' and mentally stimulated . . . [.] is aware of choices and enjoys the challenge of making decisions," and feels he or she "has something to bring to the activity and that its outcome will be important" (Thelen, 1981, p. 86).

A comprehensive nationwide study of successfully restructured schools reported that "authentic pedagogy" helps students to (1) "construct knowledge" through the use of higher-order thinking, (2) acquire "deep knowledge" (relatively complex understandings of subject matter), (3) engage in "substantive conversations" with teachers and peers, and (4) make connections between substantive knowledge and the world beyond the classroom (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Newmann et al., 1996). In addition, as Figure 6.1 shows, the use of highly authentic pedagogy in classes boosts achievement for students at all grade levels.