

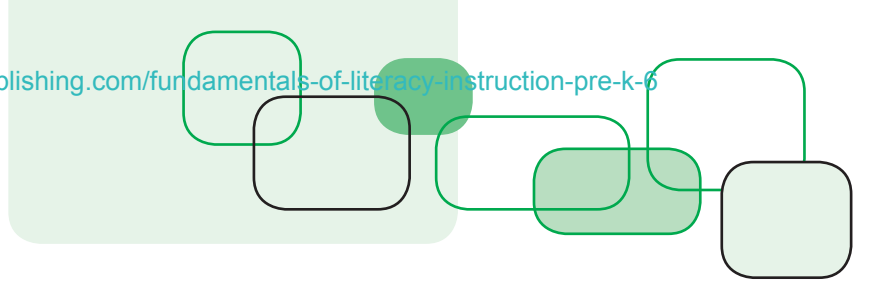
# Fundamentals of Literacy Instruction and Assessment, Pre-K–6

edited by

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## Contents

About the Editors .....	vii
About the Contributors .....	ix
Preface.....	xiii
Acknowledgments and Credits .....	xv
1 Becoming an Effective Literacy Teacher .....	1
<i>Martha C. Hougen</i>	
2 The Critical Components of Effective Reading Instruction .....	18
<i>Martha C. Hougen</i>	
3 Oral Language and Listening Skill Development in Early Childhood .....	31
<i>Christie L. Cavanaugh</i>	
4 Phonological Awareness: A Critical Foundation for Beginning Reading .....	53
<i>Stephanie Al Otaiba and Martha C. Hougen</i>	
5 Effective Phonics Instruction .....	71
<i>Martha C. Hougen</i>	
6 Beginning Handwriting, Spelling, and Composition Instruction.....	93
<i>Suzanne Carreker</i>	
7 The Common Core State Standards and Text Complexity .....	111
<i>Elfrieda H. Hiebert</i>	
8 Fluency Instruction .....	121
<i>Jan Hasbrouck and Martha C. Hougen</i>	
9 What Is Important to Know about Words of Written Language.....	138
<i>Elfrieda H. Hiebert</i>	
10 A Comprehensive, Interactive Approach to Vocabulary Development.....	150
<i>Martha C. Hougen and Susan M. Ebbers</i>	
11 Comprehension, Grades K–3.....	170
<i>Darcy Dycha</i>	

12	Comprehension, Grades 4–6.....	185
	<i>Stephen Ciullo and Colleen Klein Reutebuch</i>	
13	Strategic, Meaningful, and Effective Writing Instruction for Elementary Students.....	205
	<i>Natalie G. Olinghouse and Joshua Wilson</i>	
14	Disciplinary Literacy .....	225
	<i>Kristie Hotchkiss and Susan M. Smartt</i>	
15	Current Laws, Policies, Initiatives, Common Core State Standards, and Response to Intervention .....	241
	<i>Susan M. Smartt</i>	
16	Putting It All Together: Becoming an Effective Literacy Teacher.....	257
	<i>Heather A. Haynes</i>	
17	Ten Tips for Becoming an Effective Teacher.....	270
	<i>Martha C. Hougén and Susan M. Smartt</i>	
	Appendix A: “Recipe” for a Sticky Board .....	273
	Appendix B: Say It and Move it Card .....	274
	Appendix C: Helpful Web Sites .....	275
	Appendix D: Lesson Plan Template .....	281
	Appendix E: Glossary.....	286
	Index .....	295



## About the Editors

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Dr. Hougen has worked with struggling readers as a general and special education teacher, public school administrator, and university faculty member. She consults with national organizations, state departments, universities, and school districts across the country regarding teacher education, reading, special education, and the development of higher education faculty collaboratives.

Dr. Hougen's publications focus on improving instruction for students with reading difficulties through the implementation of research-based practices. Awards Dr. Hougen has received recently include the National Educator of the Year, 2007, from the Council for Exceptional Children, Division of Learning Disabilities, and the Outstanding Administrative Leadership in Reading Award from the Texas State Reading Association, 2006.

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Dr. Smartt owned and directed a reading clinic for 20 years in which she provided comprehensive psychoeducational assessments and tutoring services. She has been a classroom teacher, a reading coach, a reading specialist, a principal, a university faculty member, and a researcher. Her publications include authorship and coauthorship of journal articles, edited volumes, and books on research-based reading intervention and policy initiatives, including *Next STEPS in Literacy Instruction: Connecting Assessments to Effective Interventions* (Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 2010), with Deborah R. Glaser, Ed.D. She travels the country extensively, presenting workshops for classroom teachers and administrators.

# 1

## Becoming an Effective Literacy Teacher

### Introduction

by Martha C. Hougen

**C**ongratulations for choosing to become a teacher, one of the most important, rewarding, and challenging occupations. You are in the unique position of changing the lives of students, either by supporting your students achievement or by contributing to their failure. You, of course, want to help students to succeed, to learn, and to be prepared for college and careers when they leave school. The first years of school are of immense importance: you are the one to teach the basics of literacy to young students and to instill in them a love of reading and of learning. The contributors to this book have a passionate dedication to ensuring that the students in our schools succeed and that their teachers are knowledgeable and effective. We hope to impart the passion, the motivation, and the knowledge to enable you to be that wonderful teacher your students will always remember as contributing to their success.

A teacher's critical responsibility is to teach students to read well. This book will guide your reading instruction. It is not meant to be the one and only book you will use on how to teach reading; it is the first, introductory book. As you will learn, there are huge volumes dedicated to every aspect of reading, and new research is being published every day. This book is meant to be an overview so that when you do tackle the more complicated texts, you will have the background information you need to understand the information presented.

**Objectives:** After studying this chapter you will be able to do the following:

1. Provide an overview of the text and explain its purpose.
2. Explain your responsibilities as a tutor.
3. Define and discuss what constitutes effective instruction.
4. Define and discuss what constitutes differentiated instruction.
5. Discuss common instructional challenges presented by students at risk for educational failure, including students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, students who are English language learners, and students who have disabilities.
6. Define scientifically based research and explain why it is important.
7. Share the contents of two relevant web sites that support literacy instruction.
8. Explain your responsibilities as a classroom teacher in a response to intervention (RTI) model.
9. Articulate the big idea questions and explain the rationale for the questions.
10. Describe the role of the Common Core State Standards and other relevant standards.
11. Begin preparations to tutor a student.

## PART I: OVERVIEW OF TEXT

This text is organized by the critical components of reading instruction for students in grades Pre-K–6. The chapters follow the typical development of reading skills. Although students learn at different rates, all students master basic reading skills in a similar sequence when first learning to read, from recognizing sounds to decoding words. At the same time, oral language, listening, vocabulary, fluent reading, and comprehension skills are developing in the early reader. Learning to write is another crucial skill students must master to communicate effectively. In addition, writing reinforces the development of reading skills and facilitates learning content. Finally, discussions about recent legislation and policies will be presented, including current initiatives to guide and support student success through the adoption of Common Core State Standards and the implementation of a multitiered system of supports, often referred to as RTI (response to intervention). The last two chapters “put it all together,” illustrating how everything you learned in this book, from effective instruction and assessment to national policies and initiatives, can be implemented seamlessly in your classroom.

### Chapter 1: Becoming an Effective Literacy Teacher: Introduction

In this chapter, you will learn about some of the challenges you will face as a teacher. You will read an explanation of major initiatives and considerations, to be discussed more thoroughly later in the book. Your responsibilities as a tutor are outlined, and you are provided a template of a recommended lesson plan format.

### Chapter 2: The Critical Components of Effective Reading Instruction

Several national reports have recently published converging evidence about what constitutes an effective reading program and how to effectively and efficiently teach students. The critical components of reading instruction and the features of effective instruction are introduced in this chapter and are elaborated upon throughout the text.

### Chapter 3: Oral Language and Listening Skill Development in Early Childhood

The years before children enter school are some of the most important to developing the foundation for literacy. You will learn about oral language and listening skill development and how you can promote these skills with your students. If children enter your classroom without these skills, you will be confident about what to do to address these gaps.

### Chapter 4: Phonological Awareness: A Critical Foundation for Beginning Reading

One of the most researched prerequisites of learning to read is phonemic awareness. You will learn about this important component, how to teach it, and how to guide students from an awareness of sounds to an understanding of the alphabetic principle (i.e., that sounds can be mapped to letters), and to beginning reading.

### Chapter 5: Effective Phonics Instruction

Knowledge about how sounds are represented by letters, why words are spelled the way they are, and how to decode, or read, words is discussed in this chapter. After studying this chapter, rarely will you answer a student’s query about why a word is spelled the way it is with, “I don’t know. It just is.” The knowledge you will learn and will share with your students will decrease some of the frustration about spelling difficult words and determining the meaning of obtuse vocabulary.

## Chapter 6: Beginning Handwriting, Spelling, and Composition Instruction

Learning the correct ways to form letters, write phrases and sentences, and spell words are important skills not often explicitly taught in the early grades. This chapter provides a guide to systematically teaching these skills.

## Chapter 7: The Common Core State Standards and Text Complexity

At this point, you will know the basics of teaching early reading skills. It is time for your students to practice reading. Now is a crucial time in their reading development. The text you select for your students to read can accelerate their reading progress *or* can frustrate them and slow their reading achievement. This chapter will help you select texts that are not too easy, not too hard, but just right. The expectations of the Common Core State Standards are reviewed, and the use of the Lexile system to determine reading levels of texts is explained.

## Chapter 8: Fluency Instruction

You have taught your students to decode words, but they still appear to struggle, reading word by word. It is time to work with them to develop reading fluency, reading with accuracy, expression, and at an appropriate rate or speed. This chapter provides the information you need to teach students to read with fluency and comprehension.

## Chapter 9: What Is Important to Know About Words of Written Language

The history of the English language is fascinating. There are more words in the English language than in any other alphabetic language. English has also been open to integrating words from other languages. When you know the clues that words contain, such as their origin, root, and original meaning, you will find English spellings more predictable than not. This chapter will introduce you to the history of the language, unlock clues, and increase your understanding of the English language.

## Chapter 10: A Comprehensive, Interactive Approach to Vocabulary Development

Too many students are entering our schools with inadequate vocabulary knowledge. Poor vocabulary is a huge barrier to comprehension. This is apparent when “good” readers enter the upper elementary grades and seem to suddenly struggle with understanding what they are reading. You will learn multiple ways to increase your students’ vocabulary knowledge and word consciousness.

## Chapter 11: Comprehension, Grades K–3

Often, teachers spend a lot of time asking students questions about what they have read and too little time teaching them how to comprehend text. This chapter provides multiple strategies for teaching young students how to develop comprehension skills.

## Chapter 12: Comprehension, Grades 4–6

As the text students read becomes more complicated and dense, different comprehension strategies are required. This chapter discusses research-based strategies you can share with your students.

## Chapter 13: Strategic, Meaningful, and Effective Writing Instruction for Elementary Students

Earlier in the book, you learned about beginning writing skills. This chapter discusses more sophisticated writing, writing for different purposes and audiences, and various genres of writing. The ability to express oneself in writing is an important prerequisite skill for success in college and careers.

## Chapter 14: Disciplinary Literacy

Recent research has determined and state standards are requiring that students learn to read and write in the disciplines. This chapter provides an overview of what it means to read and write as a historian, a scientist, and a mathematician as well as in English/language arts. Reading and writing in the disciplines becomes increasingly important when students enter secondary school.

## Chapter 15: Current Laws, Policies, Initiatives, Common Core State Standards, and Response to Intervention

The past decade has seen significant changes in the laws affecting education. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 (PL 89-10, PL 94-142) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004 are, as this book is published, in the process of being reauthorized.<sup>1</sup> The Common Core State Standards, the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards, and standards developed by professional organizations such as the International Reading Association<sup>2</sup> and The International Dyslexia Association<sup>3</sup> provide guides to instruction. New assessments and certification requirements for teachers are being developed. This chapter explains these developments and how they may affect your instruction.

## Chapter 16: Putting It All Together: Becoming an Effective Literacy Teacher

You may feel overwhelmed at this point. This chapter helps you weave everything you have learned into a coherent, seamless instructional plan. You will learn how to organize your instruction as well as how to manage your class for differentiated instruction in varying grouping formats.

## Chapter 17: Ten Tips to Becoming an Effective Teacher

This final chapter shares 10 tips to becoming an effective teacher. These tips and the knowledge you have learned by studying this text give you the foundation for becoming a truly great teacher.

## Glossary

A glossary is provided at the end of the book. Refer to the glossary often to ensure you understand the terms discussed.

## Appendixes

The appendixes provide additional resources for you, including lesson plan formats, activities for tutoring, and more information about certain topics. Be sure to look at Appendix A to learn how to make a sticky board to use with your tutee! The sources for several sets of standards are provided; use the the standards as guides to plan your instruction.



## Organization of Chapters

### *Classroom Scenario*

Each chapter begins with a scenario similar to what you may experience as a teacher. The scenarios are designed to help you focus on one aspect of reading, using examples of actual students and teachers. Your instructors may supplement the scenarios with case studies, providing you additional information about students and their achievement data so that you can make informed instructional decisions.

### *Objectives*

The learning objectives are stated in each chapter. The objectives address the most important points you need to master. At least one will address an objective or activity for you to implement with a student you will be tutoring.

### *Big Idea Guiding Questions*

Six big idea questions are addressed in each chapter. These questions are meant to guide your learning, to clarify the most critical aspects of effective reading instruction, and to emphasize research-based best practices. At the end of the text, you will be able to answer the following questions for the critical components of reading and writing:

### *Big Idea Questions about Reading Instruction*

1. What is it (the component)? Why is it important? What does the research say?
2. What should students know and be able to do at specific grade levels, Pre-K–6?
3. How do we assess what students know and how much they are learning?
4. How do we use assessments to plan instruction?
5. How do we teach this component effectively, efficiently, and in a manner appropriate to the age/grade level of our students?
6. How do we develop instructional plans that incorporate standards and evidence-based strategies?<sup>4</sup>

### *Opportunities for Application Assignments*

Suggested opportunities to apply what you have learned are provided at the end of each chapter. The In-Class Assignments are to be completed with the student's peers during class. The Tutoring Assignments are to be completed with the student being tutored. The Homework Assignments are to be done on your own. The more practice you have applying the concepts and activities presented in this text, the more effective you will be as a teacher.

### *Suggested Resources, Web Sites, and Readings*

There are many resources available online. The most helpful ones are included in this text. Judicious use of these resources will enhance your teaching and save you time. Be sure to explore them.

### *Notes and References*

Detailed references with citations and notes regarding the content presented are provided at the end of each chapter. Refer to the notes for more information about a topic and the supporting research.

## Tutoring

During this course, you are expected to work with at least one student who is in kindergarten or grades 1–6. The authors suggest you select a student in grade 1 or 2 for the first half of the semester and a student in grades 4–6 for the second half. This will provide an opportunity to work with a beginning reader, practicing the early literacy instructional strategies presented in this book, and to teach the higher-level comprehension and writing strategies needed by students in upper elementary grades.

The text is designed for you to tutor a student for 1 or 2 hours per week. Your instructor will facilitate placing you with a student, providing the details about securing school and parental permission and explaining the work you are expected to complete with that student. This text will discuss the elements of tutoring, including assessing your student, determining instructional objectives, selecting appropriate materials, using research-based activities and strategies, and evaluating your instruction.

You need to begin assembling your “Tutoring Toolbox.” The toolbox consists of materials you should bring to every tutoring session. You will be taught how and when to use each item as you read this text. Your toolbox should include the following:

- Paper, pencils (regular, red, and blue), crayons, note cards
- A wipe-off white board, markers, and eraser
- Sticky notes
- Scissors, glue
- A selection of books to read aloud, appropriate to the grade level of your student
- Progress-monitoring instruments (graphs, selected text)
- A stop watch
- Small chips and a Say-It-Move-It chart (see Appendix B)
- A puppet
- A large, sticky board (see Appendix A)
- The San Diego Quick Assessment: available to download from <http://www.homeschooling.gomilpitas.com/articles/060899.htm>
- Other materials as determined by your instructor

## Lesson Plan Development and Delivery

Effective teachers plan ahead and deliver thoughtful instruction, informed by data, to meet the instructional needs of each student. A lesson plan template is provided to support you in this endeavor (see Appendix D). When you first begin creating lessons, you will spend hours designing just what you want. At first, you will rarely deliver it as you had anticipated. However, you will learn to be an efficient, effective teacher with an appropriate pace and well-timed instruction. If you use this template, or one provided by your instructor, you will make the best use of every minute during your instructional time. Think about this: If you waste just 5 minutes per day organizing materials or arranging groups for 180 school days, you have wasted more than 15 hours of instructional time! If you squander 20 minutes per day, you have deprived your students of 90 hours of instruction; that is about 3 weeks’ worth of learning.

Our students do not have time to waste. You should feel a sense of urgency when you are teaching, making the best use of every minute. When you have planned well, you will be an efficient and effective teacher while maintaining a comfortable, positive classroom environment. Each part of the recommended lesson plan will be discussed as you proceed through the book. A blank copy is provided in Appendix D.

Also included in Appendix D is a sample of a completed lesson plan. Extra support, or scaffolding, is provided in the form of a script. You may want to write out what you are going to say for the first few lessons to be sure you know what you want to say and to ensure you explain concepts explicitly.

## Expectations and Responsibilities of a Tutor

You will be working with one or more students during the semester. Each student deserves your respect and best effort. In reality, the student will be your teacher! You are expected to come prepared to each tutoring session, to dress and act as a professional educator, and to respect your student. Your responsibilities include respecting the confidential nature of your work. You must not discuss your student with anyone other than the student's teacher and your instructor. Do not include your student's name or photograph on anything you submit in class. If you are allowed to review test data or other personal information about the student, you must keep that information confidential. Student confidentiality is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 (PL 93-579).<sup>5</sup> It is a federal law that protects the privacy of students' education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. Stricter confidentiality laws apply to students who qualify for special education services.

## Initial Assessment of the Student

Before an instructional plan can be designed for a student, you need to know what the student knows and what he or she needs to learn. Some of this information can be obtained by talking with the student, the teachers, and perhaps the parents. However, you should also obtain more objective data about specific skills.

It is probable that the school in which you are tutoring administers assessments several times a year. You may be able to study those instruments and scores and administer a version of the school's assessment. The school and your instructor will help you determine whether it is appropriate for you to administer the assessment used by the school.

Your instructor may recommend an assessment. If not, there are several available. One assessment, used by many districts across the country, is the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills-NEXT (DIBELS), available for students in grades K–6, in Spanish and English.<sup>6</sup> The appropriate assessment can be downloaded at no cost at <https://dibels.uoregon.edu/measures/index.php?action=download/>.

However, it is essential that you also download the administration and scoring guide and the training videos and that you practice the administration and scoring of the assessments several times (five minimum) before you administer the assessment to a student. Ideally, your instructor will provide training in how best to use this instrument.

Another free assessment that provides a quick check of a student's reading abilities is the San Diego Quick Assessment available for download at <http://www.homeschooling.gomilpitas.com/articles/060899.htm>.

There are also several inexpensive assessments that will provide a global overview of the student's strengths and needs. One is the Quick Phonics Screener (QPS), which is available at <http://www.readnaturally.com/products/qps.htm>.<sup>7</sup> The QPS is an untimed, criterion-referenced assessment that measures a student's ability to pronounce the phonetic elements in real and nonsense words, grades K–adult. Teachers administer only those tasks that are appropriate for a student's age, grade, and performance level. Teachers can quickly and accurately diagnose students' strengths and instructional needs. Results can be used to monitor students' progress as their phonics skills develop.

Other screening assessments can be found in the book, *CORE Assessing Reading—Multiple Measures*. This resource also includes several Spanish versions of assessments (e.g., Spanish Phonemic Awareness, Phonics Survey, Spelling, a Verbal Language Scale).<sup>8</sup>

If the student is in the second semester of first grade or older, a reading fluency assessment can be administered in which the student reads on grade-level–connected text for 1 minute. This will be explained in depth in Chapter 8. If the material available in the classroom is used, the assessment is considered a curriculum-based assessment. There are also numerous commercially produced texts appropriate to measure oral reading fluency. Later in this text you will learn how to analyze tests of oral reading fluency.

## PART II: OVERVIEW OF INSTRUCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CURRENT INITIATIVES

Throughout the text, current research and effective instructional practices is explained. This section provides a brief overview of these considerations and initiatives including evidence-based effective instruction, differentiation of instruction, the features of effective instruction, the Common Core State Standards, and ways to provide multitiered systems of support, such as the response to intervention model.

### Three Critical Considerations for Effective and Efficient Instruction

This text addresses three practices crucial for effective and efficient instruction: 1) use of effective instructional strategies, validated by evidence-based research; 2) differentiation of instruction for students who may need acceleration and for those who may need instructional interventions due to economic disadvantage, because of a disability, or who are English language learners; and 3) implementation of the features of effective instruction to ensure that all students learn.<sup>9</sup>

**1) Use of effective instructional strategies, validated by evidence-based research** a practice that selects instructional strategies based upon sound research, is crucial. There are myriad programs, materials, and salespeople who will bombard you, selling the panacea for all educational instructional needs. However, you must select carefully and spend your money and time on materials and strategies that have been rigorously tested by scientific research. This means that the strategies have been studied with many different types of students, in different environments, by several researchers. The strategies are found to be effective with most of the targeted students (no strategy is effective with all students). Rigorous, scientific research is much more than a single study with a small group of students (e.g., the “it worked in my room” results are not sufficient to make important instructional decisions for large numbers of students). Rather, the research must be replicated with many groups of students with similar attributes to those you teach. You can be confident that the strategies presented in this text are based on research, have been used successfully with many students, and have a high likelihood of being effective when used correctly with your students.

**2) Differentiation of instruction for students who may need acceleration and for those who may be at risk due to economic disadvantage**, because of a disability, or who are English language learners is the second crucial practice. Differentiation addresses the wide range of needs presented by the students, who will have vastly different backgrounds, ways of learning, strengths, and areas in need of intensive support. Some of your students will enter school reading well; others may not know any letters or sounds. Students learn at different rates, and they have a wide variety of background experiences. Throughout this text, ideas will be presented about how to teach differently, or differentiate, for students to meet their individual needs. Differentiation may mean using different materials and activities, teaching smaller groups of students, using assistive technology, or sometimes even changing the learning objectives. Differentiating instruction based upon student needs will ensure that students master the skills taught to them.

Let us explore the specialized needs of students likely to be in your class.

*Accelerated students* are those who learn quickly and may need to be challenged with more advanced material. These students are referred to as gifted and talented, advanced, or

exceptional. However, you will encounter students who have not been identified as gifted, yet need accelerated instruction in certain subjects, and you will have students who are identified as gifted who are not gifted in all areas and may need scaffolded instruction in specific subjects. Therefore, teachers must observe and note the progress of students to know how to adjust instruction to keep the accelerated students engaged and motivated while providing additional support as needed.

At-risk students include those who may find learning in your classroom challenging because they come from economically disadvantaged homes, have disabilities, or are English language learners. Learning how to address their needs and how to include their parents are essential skills for an effective teacher.

Students from economically disadvantaged homes often have different background knowledge and have developed fewer school-ready skills than children from more affluent backgrounds. Often, children from impoverished homes have few, if any, experiences with books or being read to. Their vocabulary knowledge is typically much less than that of middle-class students.<sup>10</sup> Teachers need to make an extra effort to ensure that students develop the listening and oral language skills to be ready to learn to read. One maxim that helps many teachers is “Don’t commit assumicide.”<sup>11</sup> Do not assume your students know how to hold a book, conduct a conversation with a peer or with adults, or express their ideas in writing. Explicit instruction in acceptable behaviors in school as well as in academic subjects is required.

Classes will include students with disabilities. Federal legislation has been enacted to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.<sup>12</sup>

Under the federal law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), students may qualify for special education and related services if they are deemed to have one or more of the following disabilities:

- Autism
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness
- Developmental delay
- Emotional disturbance
- Hearing impairments
- Intellectual disability
- Multiple disabilities
- Orthopedic impairment
- Other health impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Speech or language impairment
- Traumatic brain injury
- Visual impairment, including blindness

It must also be determined that their educational performance is adversely affected due to the disability.<sup>13</sup> The law prescribes criteria for identification and assessment, rights of parents and students, and responsibilities of school personnel.

Approximately 13% of school children have disabilities.<sup>14</sup> These percentages are different in various states because states have different criteria for placing students in special education. The most common disabilities encountered in classes are specific learning disabilities. A specific learning disability is a neurological disorder that may make it difficult for students

to acquire academic and social skills. Currently, more than 2.5 million students have been diagnosed with learning disabilities, and they represent 42% of all students with disabilities.<sup>15</sup> Students with reading disabilities comprise approximately 80%–85% of all children diagnosed as having a specific learning disability.<sup>16</sup>

The definition of “specific learning disability” in the IDEA of 2004 is as follows:

The term “specific learning disability” means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations.

The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

The term does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of mental retardation; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.<sup>17</sup>

Identified students must have an individualized education program (IEP) that educators must follow. You should receive a copy of the IEP for all students with disabilities in your class. Be sure to work with the special education teacher to provide appropriate instruction for identified students.

The strategies and teaching practices suggested in this text will support students with specific learning disabilities in reading and writing. It is likely that these students will need more intensive instruction, in smaller groups and for longer periods of time, than other students. You will be able to provide much of the instruction based on what you learn in this text. However, be sure to work with the student’s special education teacher to determine how the two of you may collaborate. The special education teacher may be involved in providing small group or inclusion support. You can learn more about the specifics of what and how to teach students with specific learning disabilities by working together.

The most common specific learning disability is dyslexia. Dyslexia is a language-based disability that is typically manifested in students having difficulty with specific language skills, particularly reading. Difficulty spelling, writing, and pronouncing words are also common factors in dyslexia. In some states, students receive special education services and accommodations through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 93–112). Whatever the circumstances are in your state, the chances are very strong that you will be teaching students with dyslexia. Because the range of severity in dyslexia varies from mild to severe, students in your class with dyslexia may or may not be officially identified (certified) as specific learning disabled, and, therefore, the students may or may not be receiving special education services. Nevertheless, you will be responsible for your students’ instruction and academic success. Typically, students with dyslexia have poor awareness of the sequence of sounds in words, have difficulty with some speech sounds, read slower than their peers, demonstrate poor spelling, exhibit illegible or poor handwriting, have trouble comprehending longer reading assignments, have poor reading stamina, and/or have difficulty memorizing math facts. These difficulties are often “unexpected” because these students often have a large oral vocabulary and in-depth knowledge about certain subjects.

The most accepted definition of dyslexia is the one provided by The International Dyslexia Association (IDA):

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.<sup>18</sup>

The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) maintains a web site that provides valuable information for teachers and parents of children with dyslexia: <http://www.interdys.org>.

Go to the IDA web site and look for the Fact Sheets. They provide information on many of the elements that pertain to students with dyslexia (e.g., spelling, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), causes of dyslexia, teaching programs and practices). In addition, recently The IDA has published standards on teaching students to read and preventing reading difficulties: Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading. The standards are integrated in this text and can be obtained at <http://www.interdys.org/standards.htm>.<sup>19</sup>

Another common disability is ADHD. Students with ADHD may have difficulties with sustaining attention and may be overly active. They often receive special education services under “other health impaired” and/or “specific learning disability” if appropriate. However, many children with ADHD are protected under a different law: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 requires that individuals with a disability that substantially limits a major life activity be protected with accommodations that enable them to be successful in school and in the workplace. You will likely have students with ADHD in your classes, and the strategies and activities provided in this text will support the educational achievement of these students.

English language learners are students for whom English is not their first language. People living in the United States speak hundreds of different languages. The most common language, other than English, is Spanish. The census of 2010 concludes that Hispanics make up 16.3% of the total population, and 46% live in California and Texas.<sup>20</sup>

A great deal has been learned about how to best support students who are learning English. It is now known, for example, that we do not have to wait until they are proficient in English to begin reading instruction in English.<sup>21</sup> English language learners can be taught to read in English along with their peers. Some districts offer dual language programs where both English speakers and English learners learn English and a second language, usually Spanish. Other districts teach students to read in their home language first, and when they are proficient in their home language, they are taught to read in English. Research is not definitive about which approach is best for English language learners.<sup>22</sup>

Students who are learning English need direct instruction to increase their vocabulary, and it may take several years for them to reach academic levels of vocabulary and comprehension.<sup>23</sup> They must continue to receive intensive vocabulary and comprehension instruction throughout their schooling.

Another important finding is that the teacher does not have to speak the language of the students to be an effective teacher.<sup>24</sup> Using effective instructional strategies, as described in this book, is essential for supporting student achievement. Excellent, effective teaching of the core reading program benefits students who are learning English as well as English speakers as long as the instruction is systematic, explicit, and direct, and ample practice opportunities are provided.<sup>25</sup>

There are four stages of second language acquisition as shown in Figure 1.1, and it is important for teachers to be able to recognize the stage of each student. There are different expectations and methods to teach students at each stage.

A source that provides an excellent overview of the differences between Spanish and English letter sounds and patterns is the *Teaching Reading Sourcebook* by Honig, Diamond, and Gutlohn.<sup>26</sup>

**3) Features of effective instruction** Effective implementation of the features of effective instruction will ensure that your students learn the content you are teaching.<sup>27</sup> For many years, researchers in education have studied what constitutes good teaching. We know the skills teachers need to master to be effective. Effective teachers manage their classrooms well and make sure that all students are engaged in learning. The five features of effective instruction, listed in Figure 1.2 and explained in detail in the next chapter, are the basis for excellent teaching, no matter what you teach.

You will consider these features as you plan lessons to teach and as you evaluate lessons you taught to determine how to impress your instruction.

### Stages of second language development and suggested instructional practices

#### Stage

- Preproduction

#### Students may:

- Communicate in their native language
- Remain silent

- Early production

- Use simple words or phrases
- Use telegraphic speech
- Understand more English than they can produce

- Speech emergence

- Use new vocabulary
- Communicate using sentences
- Ask simple questions
- Understand spoken English with the support of pictures, objects, actions
- Understand more English than they can produce

- Intermediate and advanced fluency

- Express thought and feelings more effectively
- Ask and respond to higher-level questions (“what if”, “how”, “why”).

#### Suggested instructional practices

- Use normal pronunciations & speech
- Provide “think-alouds” & modeling
- Set clear goals for learning & provide immediate feedback
- Actively involve students
- Restate students’ responses
- Use photos & artifacts
- Pair students with language buddies
- Accept nonverbal responses
- Allow wait time when you ask a student to respond
- Post printed labels and word lists
- Post “yes/no” & “either/or” questions
- Focus on the meaning of a students’ response, not the syntax or pronunciation
- Continue to build vocabulary by using synonyms, webbing, semantic mapping
- Use texts with illustrations that connect to the text & to the students’ background
- Structure opportunities for students to discuss content with English-speakers
- Explain idiomatic and slang expressions
- Provide many opportunities for students to write
- Help students transfer their knowledge, of reading in their native language, to reading in English

**Figure 1.1.** Stages of second language development and suggested instructional practices. (Source: Vaughn Gross Center at the University of Texas, 2007.)



1. Explicit instruction with modeling
2. Systematic instruction with scaffolding
3. Multiple opportunities for students to respond and practice
4. Ongoing progress monitoring
5. Immediate corrective feedback

**Figure 1.2.** Features of effective instruction. (Source: Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts, 2007.)

## Working with Parents

Parents of all students and especially of students who are at risk should be included in decisions about their children. Sometimes, it is difficult for parents to come to the school to meet with you: they may work more than one job, have other children to care for, or be uncomfortable because of previous negative experiences with schools. However, it is important that their child's teacher reaches out to them and includes them whenever possible. Share good news about their children as well as your concerns. If personal meetings are difficult to arrange, send home notes and make phone calls sharing the child's positive accomplishments. (Figure 1.3) When you have established a history of sharing positive reports with parents, it is much easier to obtain their support when you have to deal with something that is not so positive.

Respect the parents' talents, whether it is reading in their first language to their child, sharing their work experiences or special skills with the class, or talking about their native culture. Parents are their child's first teacher, and they know more about their child than you do. Enlist them as your partner in educating their child.

You will consider these features as you plan lessons to teach and as you evaluate lessons you taught to determine how to improve your instruction.

## Common Core State Standards

In an effort to unify curriculum, increase achievement across the nation, and ensure that all students are college and career ready upon completion of high school, several national organizations collaborated to create standards to guide education.<sup>28</sup> The standards address Mathematics and English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, K–12. The (CCSS) were released in June 2010, and states are in the process of adopting the standards. As of May 2011, 44 states had adopted the standards. Texas and Alaska have developed their own standards.<sup>29</sup> Assessments related to the standards are in development.

September 12, 2011

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Novosel,

I am delighted to have Michael in my classroom! Today he completed his reading assignment and shared a story with the class.

I look forward to meeting you at the Open House.

Sincerely,  
Ms. Jones

**Figure 1.3.** Positive note sent to parent.

The mission of the CCSS is the following:

The CCSS provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.<sup>30</sup>

The complete CCSS for English/Language Arts are available at <http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards/english-language-arts-standards>. The Texas College & Career Readiness Standards, adopted in 2008 for the state of Texas, are similar to the CCSS and are available at <http://www.theccb.state.tx.us>.

Two other sets of standards are referred to throughout the text: the standards developed by the International Reading Association<sup>31</sup> and those developed by The International Dyslexia Association.<sup>32</sup> Upon examination of the standards, you will note agreement as to the most important skills that students must be taught.

Standards in education are intended to clarify the expectations of students and to increase the rigor of instruction. The intent is that all students, no matter what state or zip code they live in, will receive an excellent education, preparing them for further education and/or a career.

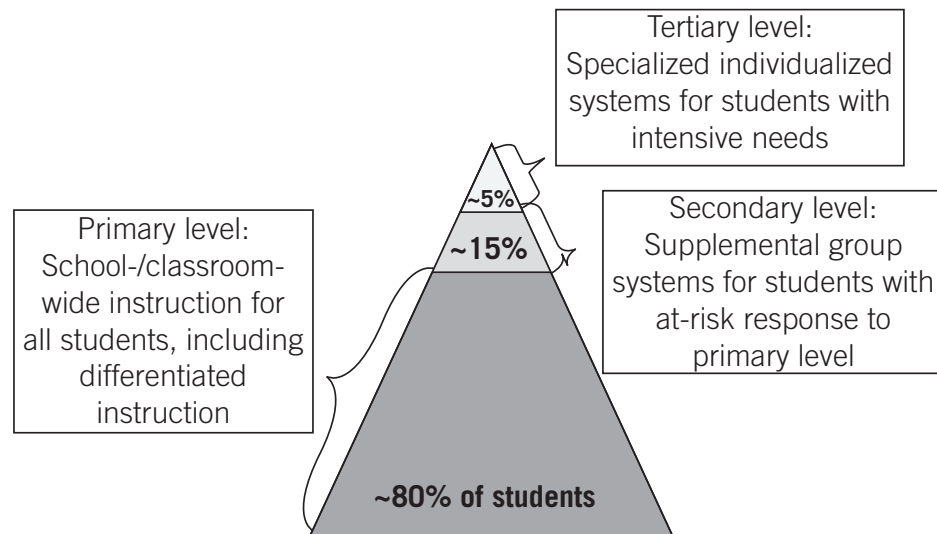
## Multi-Tiered Systems of Support or Response to Intervention

In 2004, federal legislation reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act enacting federal policies addressing special education. Several significant changes addressed how students with learning disabilities would be assessed, found qualified for services, and provided with instruction. Most importantly for classroom teachers is the requirement that students who are struggling are provided with immediate intervention instruction to address the student's difficulties in the general education classroom. Models designed to provide intervention instruction are commonly referred to as RTI or Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). The purpose is to prevent students from failing by addressing their needs immediately with effective, evidence-based instruction. This intervention instruction can take place in any grade and in any location. Intervention instruction must be provided and the student's progress (response to the intervention) documented before the student can be considered for special education services.

Most RTI models include three or four levels of service, called tiers. They include the following (Figure 1.4):

- Tier 1 is the strong core classroom instruction with differentiated instruction as needed (i.e., small group instruction addressing specified skills). It is essential that this instruction, which all students receive, is of the highest quality, is evidence-based, and is highly effective. This text concentrates on core classroom instruction in literacy. If Tier 1 instruction is effective, there is decreased need for the intensive instruction provided in the subsequent tiers.
- Tier 2 is more specialized, intensive instruction with a small group of students who all need to learn the same skill. Usually the general education teacher provides this differentiated instruction in the classroom in small groups of five or six students.
- Tier 3 is an even more intense form of instruction, usually for a longer period of time and in smaller groups. The students who receive Tier 3 instruction need focused, differentiated instruction, smaller groups, more time, and more explicit instruction. Typically, an instructional specialist or a reading specialist provides the intervention instruction. Some districts provide Tier 3 instruction through a special education placement, but other districts include Tier 3 in the general education continuum of services.
- Tier 4 typically refers to instruction provided through special education services, taught by a special education teacher.

## Multilevel prevention system



**Figure 1.4.** Levels of response to intervention (RTI). (From National Center on Response to Intervention [2010]. *What is RTI?* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Center on Response to Intervention.)

It is important to note that the federal legislation does NOT require a district or state to adopt a RTI model, nor does it dictate how many tiers a district must have, who must provide the instruction, or for how long a student must remain in a tier. At this point, those decisions are left up to the individual local school districts. However, the federal law does require that students receive immediate intervention instruction when it is first noticed that they are not achieving as expected.

Another change in the law was how students are found eligible for special education as having a learning disability. This is a complicated process that is still being discussed and will not be addressed in this text. Suffice it to say that the most important thing for you to remember about the law is that you, as a teacher, must be aware of your students' progress and be sure to provide effective instruction to ensure each student makes adequate progress. (Adequate progress will be defined in later chapters.)

The RTI model is discussed in detail in Chapter 15. More information is available from the National Center on Response to Intervention at <http://www.rti4success.org>.<sup>33</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Whether you are a reading teacher, a general education teacher, a special education teacher, a reading specialist, an interventionist, a math teacher, a science teacher, a history teacher, or an administrator, this book will provide you with the basics of what you need to know to teach students to read well. Study it carefully, complete the suggested exercises, tutor a student, investigate the suggested references and web sites, and you will be able to teach each of your students to read and write.

Again, congratulations on your choice of career, and thank you for what you do to support students to reach high levels of achievement so that they are prepared to be successful in college and careers.