Dedication
This text is dedicated to my wife, Pam Dewitz, who provided continual support and encouragement and dealt with undeserved neglect as this new edition was being written. We continue to dedicate this text to Michael Graves’ sister, Susan Jones, who in her 35 years of teaching led well over a thousand second-graders toward the high level of literacy they needed to succeed in the 21st century.
About the Authors

In writing and revising this book, each of us brought to the task his or her experiences and expertise, and we would like to briefly introduce ourselves.

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Preface

Welcome to the sixth edition of Teaching Reading in the 21st Century. In this edition we reaffirm the values that set our text apart. We believe that motivation underlies everything we do in school. Technology and efficiency can take us only so far down the road to fostering a new generation of students who read avidly for enjoyment and enlightenment. Motivation leads to children who read widely and deeply and with that their fluency, vocabulary and comprehension grows. Every chapter of this book is focused on developing students who will read and therefore can read. We believe this is especially vital in the digital age that dominates our lives.

When the fifth edition of this book was published in 2011 we were just digesting the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act and we paid little attention to the Common Core State Standards that were in their final draft. Since then the impact of NCLB has stayed strong, reinterpreted through the Every Student Succeeds Act and that of the CCSS has risen and begun to decline. The focus of all these national initiatives has been to make teaching and learning more precise and efficient. Assessment has taken a center stage in schools. In this text we put assessment in its proper perspective and give teachers the tools to determine what their students need, reaffirming the prerogative of the teachers in the classroom and questioning whether computer-based assessment should drive instruction.

The digital world plays an increasingly more prominent role in our classroom as a site for reading and writing. Students read for information online, write and revise online, and take tests online. In this edition of the book, we want to help new teachers and their students use these new technologies effectively and carefully. The Internet makes new demands on our students. They must know how to search for information, evaluate its truthfulness, and synthesize what they read. Not an easy task for an adult let alone a student.

New to This Edition

This new edition of Teaching Reading in the 21st Century is a significant rewrite of the previous editions of the book. We listened to the reviewers of the fifth edition, considered how the research was evolving, and rewrote the book in a number of ways. Rather than update each of the past chapters, we decided that new chapters were needed, especially in the areas of assessment, comprehension, and a careful consideration of the texts, both print and digital, we use for teaching students to read.

• Rethinking assessment (Chapter 5). Since the last edition, assessment has become a more powerful force in our schools, not just measuring the results of instruction but influencing the type of instruction. It is not just the high-stakes tests that have a critical effect on how we teach reading, but the increasing number of progress monitoring and interim computer-based assessments that are directing what we teach and how we teach. We wrote a new chapter on assessment to help teachers use intelligently the many assessments that pervade our schools. We believe that teachers are better suited to make instructional decisions than test developers within publishing companies who create new assessment products. We also added assessment advice to many chapters so that teachers can create their own tools to assess students’ growth in word identification, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
• New chapter on texts for reading instruction (Chapter 6). The Common Core State Standards made the reading of complex texts one of its ten anchor standards, and the Rand report on comprehension made text one of the four pillars when teaching comprehension. We wrote a new chapter to discuss how to select the right texts for beginning reading instruction and for developing comprehension. We also updated all of the children’s literature suggestions and included more contemporary literature that reflects the diversity in our schools.

• A focus on digital text. Reading informational text continued its movement from the pages of trade and reference books to digital texts on the Internet. Throughout the book we have provided information and research on how to help elementary and middle school students learn to use Internet resources effectively and critically. We have provided strategies on how to find trustworthy, useful, and readable websites. We have included in several chapters strategies to help students comprehend and learn from digital text. In Chapter 6, we present strategies for helping students locate and assess the trustworthiness of Internet information. In Chapter 12, we help students comprehend and synthesize digital information.

• Reading comprehension reinterpreted (Chapters 11 and 12). The research on teaching children to comprehend has not changed, but our view of that research has evolved. Because much of what children read for information comes from the Internet, we devoted a full chapter to comprehending informational text and another to narrative text. Within each chapter we placed a stronger focus on developing students’ knowledge and leading effective discussions. We also provided guidelines for developing curriculum that are more inviting and motivating than the skill-a-week pacing guides.

• Understanding the history of literacy. The teaching of reading has a long history and we believe it is important for all educators to understand it. When we can, we give you a look into the past and help you understand why new ideas were adopted, why some ideas persist, and why some old ideas should be rethought. In Chapters 1 and 2, we focus on the tortured history of reading instruction. Understanding that history will help you become a better consumer of new instructional ideas.

Key Content Updates by Chapter

• Chapter 1, Reading and Learning to Read. Because schools were not created yesterday, we begin with a look at the crises, trends, and fads of the past 20 years and sketch the current state of reading education in America. We remain focused on the belief that if teachers have a strong model of how children learn to read they will make the best choices for their students.

• Chapter 2, Reading Instruction. As we examine the basics of reading instruction, we take note of the slowly declining influence of the Common Core State Standards, the still rising influence of high-stakes assessments, and the enduring research-based principles of effective instruction. We believe that reading is a constructive act and through careful guidance when needed, all students can learn to read.

• Chapter 3, Motivation and Engagement. The increasing impact of digital devices on American children makes a focus on motivation vital. We have added to this chapter ideas on how to create or foster interest in children, not just discover it. We describe more motivating activities and provide our readers with a tool to determine what motivates individual students.
• Chapter 4, Organizing Instruction So All Will Succeed. The chapter helps teachers organize instruction so that all students can succeed because there are multiple reasons why children struggle to learn to read and enjoy reading. We believe and the evidence suggests that many learning problems can be handled in the general education classroom before the students need to go down the hall for extra help. We added information on interventions for English learners and students with learning problems.

• Chapter 5, Classroom Assessment. We completely rewrote this chapter to reflect the rising and negative impact of assessment on reading instruction and learning. We doubt that high stakes tests and the many tests that followed have improved teaching and learning. We have also provided teachers with many new tools to assess their own students and these tools are spread throughout Chapters 7 through 14, where we focus on specific components of reading.

• Chapter 6, Choosing Texts for Reading Instruction. This is a brand-new chapter. The Common Core State Standards pushed for students to read complex text. Other reports placed the text right next to the reader, the activity, and the context as the focus of reading instruction. In this new chapter, we help you evaluate texts, select them, organize them, and help children make the best use of the Internet.

• Chapter 7, Emergent Literacy. Emergent readers have not changed much in ten years, but our understanding of the factors that propel the development of literacy have. We have placed more emphasis on vocabulary as a driving force and on how it influences other components of the process. We have also added emergent literacy assessment tools.

• Chapter 8, Word Recognition. Learning to recognize words was central to the previous editions of the book. We continue to believe in the vital role of phonics, but every student needs a different dose. We have updated this chapter by adding more information on linkage between word identification and vocabulary and provided some resources for assessing students’ development of word recognition skills.

• Chapter 9, Fluency and Independent Reading. We switched our focus from fluency as an activity to fluency as the outgrowth of motivating students to become independent, avid readers in school and out. Reading volume is critical. While isolated fluency activities are useful, our overall goal is to help you develop students who will read. We added some suggestions for developing fluency in small group and individual activities plus suggestions for assessing it.

• Chapter 10, Vocabulary Development. We continued our focus on a four-pronged approach to developing students’ vocabulary and provided new material on selecting words for instruction and activities for teaching word learning strategies. Building knowledge of the world and of words is a major factor in becoming a strong reader.

• Chapter 11, Teaching Reading Comprehension: Focusing on Narrative Text. This is a new chapter pulling together what the research says about assisting children with literary texts. We compare and contrast different approaches to comprehension including basals, guided reading, scaffolded instruction, and a novel approach and merges read-alouds and book clubs. We have a strong focus on the importance of discussion and techniques for assessing students’ comprehension.

• Chapter 12, Comprehending Informational Text. This, too, is a new chapter. Here we describe the knowledge, strategies, and motivation students need to read for information. Much of this reading now takes place on the Internet. We included new information on how to help students read for information on the Internet, a confusing, often untrustworthy place. We have added new information on teaching about text structure and fostering discussions that cause students to think deeply.
• **Chapter 13, Writing and Reading.** In this chapter we have added some new ideas on the integration of reading and writing. We have also described how teaching writing can improve students’ reading comprehension.

• **Chapter 14, Reading Instruction for English Learners.** The number of English learners in schools is rising, and it is increasingly important for teachers to understand strategies for differentiating instruction. The revisions in this chapter have focused on new ideas about developing oral language skills and vocabulary.

**Special Features**

This text has a number of features designed to make understanding our sometimes-complex ideas easier. We have included different features for the print and the digital versions of the text.

In the print and digital versions:

• We start each chapter with a set of **Learning Outcomes** that list our purpose in writing each chapter. Each major section of the chapter addresses one of the learning outcomes.

• Within each chapter we have provided **In the Classroom** examples that offer specific lesson plans or teaching and assessment tools for measuring students’ competence in each area we address.

• The **Reading Corner** in each chapter offers an updated list of children’s books that can be used for specific curriculum goals. Some lists are focused on a genre, some on topics, and some reflect a range of text complexity.

• Within each chapter we provide **Reflect and Apply** questions and activities that we hope will help you think through the ideas and issues within each section of the chapter.

• We also provide references to the appendix for this book, where you can download lesson plans and other documents for your classroom instruction.

**My Lab Education**

One of the most visible changes in the sixth edition, also one of the most significant, is the expansion of the digital learning and assessment resources embedded in the eText and the inclusion of My Lab Education in the text. My Lab Education is an online homework, tutorial, and assessment program designed to work with the text to engage learners and to improve learning. Within its structured environment, learners see key concepts demonstrated through real classroom video footage, practice what they learn, test their understanding, and receive feedback to guide their learning and to ensure their mastery of key learning outcomes. Designed to bring learners more directly into the world of K–12 classrooms and to help them see the real and powerful impact of literacy concepts covered in this book, the online resources in My Lab Education with the Enhanced eText include:

• **Self-Checks.** We have created short quizzes, *Self-Checks*, with which you can monitor your own learning. The self-checks are made up of self-grading, multiple-choice items that not only provide feedback on whether questions are answered correctly or incorrectly, but also provide rationales for both correct and incorrect answers.

• **Application Exercises.** We also provide application exercises for each section of the chapter. These exercises help you apply what you have read, engage you in some critical thinking, and bring some of our abstract ideas into a real-world
context. After learners provide their own answers to the questions, they receive feedback in the form of model answers written by experts.

- **Video Examples.** Throughout each chapter you will find videos of classroom instruction, opinions of other experts (yes, there are others), and at least one humorous take on our field by John Oliver.

## Acknowledgments

Clearly, *Teaching Reading in the 21st Century* continues to change and evolve. With each new edition we have built on the combined expertise of many colleagues throughout the country who are dedicated to literacy education. To you, we extend a special thank-you for your valuable feedback and assistance.

- Our editors, Drew Bennett and Carolyn Schweitzer, who assisted us throughout the revision process; our production editor, Yagnesh Jani.
- The many people who granted us permission to cite their work and reproduce their materials in this text.
- The reviewers: Carol L. Butterfield, Central Washington University; Deborah A. Farrer, California University of Pennsylvania; Marie A. Fero, Eastern Illinois University; Kitty Y. Hazler, Morehead State University; Susan Hendricks, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Kimberlee Sharp, Morehead State University; Maureen Siera, St. Martin’s University; Linda Skrobak-Heisler, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; and Christina D. Walton, Morehead State University.
- The reviewers of previous editions, who have been so helpful in shaping this text.
- The teachers, researchers, and students whose names you will see mentioned on nearly every page of this text, especially Sarah Collinge, Bethany Robinson, Jonni Wolskee, Babs Mowry, Alison Montano, Cheri Cooke, Lauren Liang, and Cheryl Peterson, who wrote outstanding lesson plans; Presley Williams and Cole Williams who lent us the thoughtful school work; Lili Claman who developed some book lists; Raymond Philippot, who assisted us with many of the other chapters; as well as Mark Aulls, Ann Beecher, Barbara Brunetti, Jerry Brunetti, David Carberry, Jim Hoffman, Susan Jones, Stephen Koziol, Anita Meinbach, Judy Peacock, Lynn Richards, Randall Ryder, Wayne Slater, Margo Sorenson, Kelly Spies, and Diann Stone. All lent their time and very special talents to this project.
- Our colleagues at the University of Minnesota and Stanford University, with special thanks to Lee Galda, Jay Samuels, Barbara Taylor, and Susan Watts, whose scholarship and dedication to the profession are without equal.
- Our students and teachers from kindergarten through graduate school, who over the years have inspired our thinking and contributed significantly to the ideas you will read about in this text.
- Our friends and family—especially my wife Pamela Dewitz, who listened, encouraged, and sustained me throughout this lengthy revision, and especially our accomplished, supportive children, Julie, Erin (Michael & Bonnie Graves), Rachel, David, and Erica, Presley and Cole (Peter and Pamela Dewitz).