Preface

Literacy Development in the Early Years, Eighth Edition, is for teachers, reading specialists, administrators, students in teacher education programs, and parents. It is appropriate for graduate, undergraduate, and professional development courses in early literacy, and it complements texts on teaching reading in the elementary school, children’s literature, child development, early childhood curriculum, and teaching language arts.

I wrote the book because of my special interest in literacy development in early childhood. I taught in preschool, kindergarten, and the primary grades; I was a reading specialist; and then I taught early childhood curriculum and literacy courses at the university level. My research has focused on instructional strategies in early literacy. Over the years, research in early literacy has generated new theory. It has implications for new instructional strategies and reinforces older practices based on little or no research to establish their validity. The book describes a program that nurtures literacy development from birth through third grade.

The ideas in the book are based on research. They have been tried and they have worked, but not all are appropriate for all teachers or all children. The good teacher functions most effectively with strategies he or she feels most comfortable with. The teacher needs to be a decision maker who thinks critically about the design of his or her literacy program and the selection of materials. Children come to school with diverse social, emotional, physical, and intellectual abilities and achievement levels. They have diverse cultural backgrounds, experiences, and exposures to literacy. All must be addressed appropriately.

Underlying this book is the merging of the art and the science of teaching. The science involves theories based on research findings that have generated instructional strategies. The book is also based on current standards for teaching literacy and current policy. Most of the book contains descriptions of strategies and steps for carrying them out. But the research does not necessarily take into account individual differences among teachers and children. The art of teaching concentrates on those human variables. This book provides a comprehensive and balanced approach to early literacy instruction. Constructivist ideas that involve problem-solving techniques are blended with explicit direct instructional approaches so that teachers can decide what works best for the children they teach. There is a strong emphasis on learning to read through the integration of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing. There is also a strong emphasis on the integration of these literacy skills into content-area learning. Differentiation of instruction is a major theme. That theme suggests that teaching must be directed to the individual needs of every child and, in addition, there is a strong emphasis on the diverse nature of children.

The Introduction places you in an early childhood classroom immediately. Its purpose is to provide you with an exemplary model of excellent literacy instruction.
Chapter 1 provides a framework of theory, research, and policy from the past and present that has influenced strategies for developing early literacy.

Chapter 2 covers the important issues of assessment and provides you with concepts for authentic assessment, portfolio assessment, and standardized assessment. This chapter emphasizes how assessment must guide instruction and how they are connected. With this philosophy in mind, strategies for assessment are integrated into all chapters.

Chapter 3 is about the diversity in our classrooms. The chapter has been expanded because of the diverse nature of our children. There is an emphasis on English language learners (ELLs) in the chapter as well as discussion of special learning needs such as learning disabilities, physical disabilities, gifted children, and others. This chapter provides strategies for teaching children who are diverse in many ways. However, meeting the needs of these individuals is focused on throughout the book. An icon indicates that a particular strategy is important not only for native speakers but for English language learners as well.

Chapters 4 through 7 deal with oral language and vocabulary development, word analysis, comprehension, and writing. These chapters discuss theory and research specifically, developmental trends, instructional strategies, and methods for assessment. The book views the development of literacy skills (reading, writing, oral language, listening, and viewing) as concurrent and interrelated; the development of one enhances the development of the others. Furthermore, the theories, stages, acquisition, and strategies associated with each are similar, and it is difficult to separate them entirely. To make the volume more readable, however, I have treated the various areas of literacy in different chapters.

Chapter 8 places a strong emphasis on motivation. This chapter focuses on how to deal with materials that are relevant in children’s lives. It emphasizes the interrelatedness of the areas of literacy and describes how they can be integrated into the entire school day within content areas. There is an enhanced section on technology in literacy in early childhood and the importance of playful literacy. An important goal is to teach reading but also to create lifelong readers.

Chapter 9 provides the organization and management of the components presented in the book that are organized to create a successful program. The best strategies will fall apart if the school day is not organized well. Ways of scheduling the school day are discussed, as are how to organize whole-group, small-group, and individualized instruction. An area of extreme importance to teachers is how children can learn to work independently at centers while teachers instruct small groups to meet achievement needs. This is accomplished through differentiation of instruction.

Chapter 10 discusses the strong influence of the home on the development of literacy, especially in a child’s earliest years. It discusses broad perspectives concerning family literacy, such as integrated home and school programs, intergenerational programs, and sensitivity to cultural differences to provide programs that are not intrusive but build on the strengths of the families being served.

Each chapter begins with expected outcomes to focus on while reading the text. Important vocabulary in the chapter is listed at the beginning of each chapter. The questions and vocabulary are followed by a vignette from the classroom, theory and research, and then practice and assessment. Each chap-
ter has multiple and reproducible strategies throughout. The chapters end with a summary that focuses on the expected outcomes with questions and activities for further study. There is also a quiz at the end of each chapter for students to use to test themselves. The appendices supplement the text with lists of materials that teachers use in carrying out a successful program to develop early literacy. Appendix E offers the instructor ideas for his or her college classroom. Key words dealing with early literacy development are defined in the glossary at the end of the book. An online Instructor’s Resource Manual is also available.

What’s New in the Eighth Edition

New features of the eighth edition include the following:

**Pearson eText**

- This edition is available for the first time as a Pearson eText*. The affordable, convenient, interactive version of this text includes tools to help navigate and understand important, current content. The Pearson eText* is available with a black and white, loose-leaf printed version of the text.

Features of the Pearson eText* include:

- Tools to take and share notes, highlight and bookmark chapter concepts, and search by keyword
- Accessible from your computer, iPad and Android tablets with the Pearson eText app
- More affordable than a traditional text book
- Extended access upgrade is available

- Videos: These videos offer a glimpse at the real world of teaching. View interviews of experts and footage of teachers and administrators discussing and applying chapter concepts.

**Throughout the Text**

- The format of each chapter has changed and begins with Learning Outcomes. The major headings in the chapter are aligned to those outcomes. Each Chapter ends with a summary of the learning outcomes and a quiz for students to test themselves on chapter concepts.

- Activities and Questions: Each chapter includes questions that test students’ knowledge of the content they have just read throughout the chapter.

- There is a strong emphasis on the new Common Core State Standards. When applicable a standard is written above a strategy. There is an emphasis on the use of informational text, integration of literacy throughout the curriculum, a look at close reading, and dealing with complex text.

*eText enhancements are only available via the enhanced Pearson eText, and not other third-party eTexts such as CourseSmart or Kindle.
More strategies than ever before are embedded within the book with vignettes for putting them into practice.

A new Integrated Language Arts Unit in Appendix B about Animals uses Common Core State Standards in the content areas.

Continued emphasis is placed on research and policy in early literacy development, including findings from the National Reading Panel, the National Early Literacy Panel, Preventing Reading Difficulties, Reading First, the Rand Report, the implications of the No Child Left Behind legislation, Race to the Top, and the Common Core State Standards.

Updated photographs, as well as tables, and illustrations enhance the text.

There are additional strategies for developing literacy in writing workshops, reading workshops, independent and partner reading, organizational methods, and comprehension development.

Appendixes for children's literature, early literacy software, and multiple websites for teachers and children have been updated.

There are additional assessment tools for carrying out a very complete case study of a child's abilities and needs in Literacy Development and an emphasis on assessment guided instruction.

Emphasis is placed on school relevance and motivation.

There is a strong emphasis on how to organize children with similar needs for small-group instruction.
1 Foundations of Early Literacy Development

Surveying the Past to the Present

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1.1 Discuss the historical roots of early childhood education.
1.2 Discuss the evolution of theory and practice in early childhood education across the twentieth century.
1.3 Differentiate among constructivism, explicit instruction, and the balanced comprehensive approach to literacy instruction.
1.4 Describe the effects of evidence-based research, governmental policies, and legislation on early childhood literacy.

VOCABULARY

accommodation
assimilation
balanced comprehensive approach (BCA)
behaviorist learning perspective
child-centered curriculum
    (progressive education)
Common Core State Standards
constructivist perspective
emergent literacy
explicit instruction
integrated language arts
policy
reading readiness
research
scaffolding
schema
theory
whole-language instruction

Photo credit: Douglas Bushell
Sylvia Ashton Warner wrote in her book *Spinster* (1963) “What a dangerous activity reading is: teaching is. All this plastering of foreign stuff. Why plaster on at all when there’s so much inside already? So much locked in? If only I could draw it out and use it as working material. If I had a light enough touch, it would just come out under its own volcanic power.” What Sylvia-Ashton Warner said is true. The issue is how do we unlock what is inside the right way? Following is a vignette in which a Mom helps a child who has a lot locked inside and helps her daughter with a light touch do draw it out.

Four-year-old Natalie and her mother were in the mall and doing some errands. As they approached one store, Natalie said, “Look, Mommy, I can read those letters: T-A-R-G-E-T. Those letters spell Marshalls.” Natalie’s mother smiled and said, “That was great, Natalie. You got every letter right. Now I’ll read the sign for you; it says Target. This is another store like Marshalls. You did some good thinking when you tried to read that word since the stores look alike. Do you see any letters in the word Marshalls that you have in your name?” Natalie looked and then said, “I have an A and so does Marshalls, and I have an L.”

Not too long ago, we would have chuckled at Natalie’s remarks as cute but incorrect. Today, we realize that she is demonstrating a great deal of literacy knowledge that needs to be recognized. First, she knows what letters are, and she can identify the ones on the sign. Next, she knows that letters spell words. She knows that words are read and have meaning. Although she did not read the word correctly, she made an informed guess. Through utilizing background knowledge, Natalie was aware that this building was a department store. Even though she had never been to this one, she called it by a store name she was familiar with. She was using some of her literacy knowledge with an adult she knew was interested and would positively interact with her. Her mother offered encouraging reinforcement for what Natalie did know and support by modeling the correct response when she needed help. Her mother also continued the learning experience by asking Natalie if any of the letters in Marshalls were in her name.

Babies begin to acquire information about literacy from the moment they are born. They continue to build their knowledge of oral language, reading, and writing as they grow. A great deal of attention must focus on literacy development in early childhood. Research demonstrates that teachers, parents, and administrators must view young children as having literacy skills even though the literacy demonstrated by them is not conventional like adults. Early literacy behaviors have implications for instructional practice and later reading success.

Like a child’s first words and first steps, learning to read and write should be exciting and rewarding. This book draws on research and blends it with theory, policy, and practice that have proved successful in developing literacy. It presents a program for developing children’s literacy from birth to 9 years. This book takes into account the joint position statement of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children entitled *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children* (1998) and the position statement by the IRA, *Literacy Development in the Preschool Years* (2006). It also considers the *National Reading Panel Report* (2000), *National Early Literacy Report* (National Center for Family Literacy, 2004), *Common Core State Standards*.
Standards (2011), and other works that will be documented throughout the chapters. The rationale for the book includes the following beliefs:

1. Literacy learning begins in infancy.
2. Families need to provide a literacy-rich environment and literacy experiences at home to help children acquire skills. Families need to be continuously involved in their children’s literacy learning.
3. Teachers must be aware that children come to school with unique and varying degrees of prior knowledge about reading and writing.
4. Children need to develop reading and writing skills through experiences at school that build on their existing knowledge.
5. Literacy learning requires a supportive environment that builds positive feelings about self and literacy activities.
6. Literacy learning requires a school environment rich with accessible materials and varied experiences.
7. Teachers must serve as models for literacy behavior by scaffolding and demonstrating strategies to be learned.
8. During their literacy experiences, children should interact within a social context to share information and learn from one another.
9. Early reading and writing experiences are motivating when they are relevant and concrete; these activities should actively engage children.
10. Early reading and writing experiences need to provide systematic and explicit skill instruction.
11. A literacy development program should focus on experiences that integrate reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing within the language arts and in content areas such as music, art, social studies, science, and play.
12. Diversity in cultural and language backgrounds must be acknowledged and addressed in early literacy development.
13. Differences in literacy development will vary and are addressed with small-group and one-to-one differentiated instruction.
14. Struggling readers must be provided for with early intervention programs in addition to the regular literacy instruction.
15. Assessment of achievement should be frequent and match instruction, and multiple formats for evaluating a student’s literacy development should be used.
16. Standards for early literacy grade-level benchmarks should be tied to instruction and assessment and used as a means for reaching goals for all children to read fluently by the end of third grade.
17. Instruction must be age appropriate for the development of children, with high and achievable expectations.
18. Programs should be research based. For example, the National Reading Panel Report (2000) provides us with research-based components in reading instruction to ensure success. These include phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, comprehension, and fluency. Writing is also a necessary component. The Report of the National Early Literacy Panel (National Center for Family Literacy, 2004) also includes preschool literacy skill achievement markers.
This book incorporates the work of philosophers, educators, psychologists, and researchers who have described how young children learn and what they need to be taught. The book emphasizes that literacy development occurs in prepared, literacy-rich environments where planned experiences facilitate development in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing in coordination with content-area subjects. Although some chapters concentrate on language, reading, or writing, an important concern at all times is the integration of all these literacy dimensions. In early childhood, literacy instruction should occur all day long. It should be explicit, embedded, and spontaneous.

Literacy development must focus on both learning and teaching. Teachers must explicitly instruct children while also encouraging them to be actively involved in collaborative learning experiences, using materials with which they can explore and experiment. A major focus of the book is to motivate children to view reading as a relevant act and associate it with pleasure. Children must understand that reading is a source of information that is valuable for them to learn to succeed in life. According to statistics from the U.S. Department of Education, Justice, and Health and research by Assel, Landry, Swank, and Gunnewig (2007), those who are functionally illiterate are likely to:

- Drop out of high school
- Have behavior and social problems that result in being incarcerated
- Be chronically ill
- Live in poverty
- Have children who will be illiterate

Alternatively, those who learn to read are likely to:

- Graduate from high school and possibly college
- Have strong social skills
- Enjoy a healthier life
- Earn a living to support themselves and a family
- Have children who are literate

Ninety percent of the children who are below grade level in reading at the beginning of fourth grade, although they can improve, will never reach grade level. Therefore the early childhood teacher has a tremendous responsibility.

The Historical Roots of Early Childhood Education Theory

Early childhood education is not a recent development. Since the 1700s, philosophers, theorists, psychologists, and educators have addressed appropriate educational practice for learning in early childhood. They address the issue of whether learning to read is a matter of nature or nurture, both of which have implications for early literacy instruction in contemporary education.

Rousseau—1712–1778

Born in Geneva in 1712, Jean-Jacques Rousseau became a philosopher, writer, and composer. In his work titled *Émile* (1762), Rousseau strongly
recommended that a child’s early education be natural. That is, children should only be asked to learn things for which they are developmentally ready. Rousseau advocated abandoning contrived instruction in favor of allowing children to grow and learn with the freedom to be themselves. He believed that education follows the child’s own development and readiness for learning. According to Rousseau, children learn through curiosity. He believed that children have individual ways of learning and that formal instruction can interfere with development. Rousseau’s philosophy suggests that the role of the educator is to use strategies that mesh with the child’s readiness to learn and that require as little adult intervention as possible.

**Pestalozzi—1746–1827**

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (Rusk & Scotland, 1979) was influenced by Rousseau’s natural learning ideas, but he added another dimension. He started his own school and developed principles for learning that combined natural elements with informal instruction. He found it unrealistic to expect children to learn completely on their own. Although Pestalozzi felt that children may be
able to teach themselves to read, he believed that it was necessary for teachers and parents to create the conditions in which the reading process grows. He suggested that children’s potential develops through sensory manipulative experiences, so he designed lessons that involved manipulating objects he called “gifts.” Children learned about them through touch, smell, language, size, and shape.

**Froebel—1782–1852**

Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel was a German pedagogue and one of Pestalozzi’s students. Froebel also believed in the natural unfolding of a child; he followed Pestalozzi’s ideas by providing plans for instructing young children (Rusk & Scotland, 1979). Froebel is known for emphasizing the importance of play in learning. He specified that the benefits of playing to learn require adult guidance and direction and a planned environment. Froebel saw the teacher as a designer of playful activities and experiences that facilitate learning. He was the first educator to design a systematic curriculum for young children that included objects and materials. In handling and playing with these materials, children used psychomotor skills and learned about shape, color, size, measurement, and comparison. Many of Froebel’s strategies are used in early childhood classrooms today, such as circle time when the class sings songs and learns new ideas through discussion. He coined the term *kindergarten*, which means “children’s garden.” This illustrated his philosophy that, like seeds, children grow if they are tended to and cared for by the gardener, or teacher.

**The Evolution of Twentieth-Century Theories and Practices**

Out of the philosophies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries evolved the theories and practices that defined early childhood education across the twentieth century. Even though the theories underpinning early childhood education in the twentieth century are, in many ways, in conversation with the theories from earlier centuries, the approaches in the twentieth century are more numerous and more varied.

**Dewey—Progressive Education**

John Dewey’s (1966) philosophy of early childhood education led to the concept of the *child-centered curriculum*, or *progressive education* as it was called. Dewey believed that curriculum should be built around the interests of children. He agreed with Froebel that children learn through play and in real-life settings. He maintained that social interactions encourage learning and that themes of interest to children, such as learning about dinosaurs, are the vehicles for learning information and skills. Dewey rejected the idea of teaching skills as ends unto themselves. He also believed that learning is maximized through integrating content areas.

Dewey significantly influenced programs in United States early childhood education. Classrooms reflecting Dewey’s ideas contained centers for different activities and content areas. Shelves in a “block corner” held various sizes and shapes of blocks, toy cars, trucks, and figures of people. An art area had
easels with paint, crayons, paste, scissors, construction paper, clay, and scraps of materials, such as fabric, Styrofoam, and pipe cleaners. The dramatic-play center looked like a kitchen, with a sink, oven, refrigerator, empty food boxes, table and chairs, telephone, mirror, dolls, and some clothing for dressing up. A science area revealed a water-play table, shells, interesting rocks, plants, a class animal, and magnets. The music area had a piano, rhythm instruments, and, at that time, a record player. There was a rug for children to sit on when they came to sing by the piano. One corner of the room had a shelf of children’s literature and soft pillows to lie on when looking at books.

The day began as children entered the classroom and played with quiet toys. Then the teacher called them to circle time to talk about the weather and the calendar. The conversation soon focused on a topic in social studies or science—animals or community helpers, for instance—with perhaps a song in keeping with the theme. Circle time was commonly followed by a period of free play in which children could use the materials in the different areas of the room. There was minimal guidance during free play. A snack, sometimes followed by a rest period, was an integral part of the daily routine. The day might also include a special lesson in art, social studies, or science appropriate to the theme being studied. Outdoor play allowed children to run, climb, play in sandboxes, and use riding toys. The teacher read a story daily, and related it to a class theme.

Reading and mathematics were not taught formally or as isolated skills. Instead, the teacher might ask a child to count out enough cookies for all the children in the class, to name the date on the calendar, or to compare the sizes of different children. There were no workbooks or commercial reading materials. Teachers led some informal activities that could eventually lead to reading, but they did not explicitly teach children to read. The letters of the alphabet might be found strung across the wall, the days of the week pointed out on a calendar, children’s names written on their cubbies, and other items in the room labeled with words. The goal was to accustom children to school routines and make them comfortable in this environment. The focus was on social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development of the children as a whole with minimal formal instruction in reading and writing.

Skinner—Behaviorism

At roughly the same time that Dewey was advocating progressive education, behaviorists were taking a different approach to learning. According to behaviorists, the outcome of learning is a permanent change in behavior that is caused by a response to an experience or stimulus (Slavin, 1997). Behaviorists suggest that we learn through imitation and association, and through conditioning, or a series of steps that are repeated so that the response becomes automatic. B. F. Skinner (1954) found that human learning was not automatic and unintentional; people operate on their environment to produce learning. Skinner’s research demonstrated that positive reinforcement for a desired behavior increased the use of that behavior. Skills are acquired in a series of steps, small enough to avoid failure, with rewards at each level. A behaviorist learning perspective includes an organized program presented in a systematic and direct manner. Learning requires time on task, structure, routines, and practice. Behaviorist programs are skill based, with little time for social, emotional, or physical development; the main concern is the acquisition of
cognitive skills. The materials are rated according to difficulty and are often programmed sequential lessons. The programs provide objectives for learning and then a script for the teacher using direct instruction as demonstrated below (Engelmann & Bruner, 1969):

Teacher: sh, sh, sh: What sound is this?
Teacher: sh, sh, sh. Now you say sh.

Some reading programs that use behaviorist methods are DISTAR: Direct Instruction System for Teaching Arithmetic and Reading (Englemann & Bruner, 1969), Programmed Reading Series (Sullivan & Buchanan, 1963), and Success for All (Slavin, 1997).

Although behaviorism is often not viewed as child-friendly, there are ways to use the explicit instruction in an engaging manner. At the end of the chapter is a behavioristic child friendly lesson from the classroom that demonstrates the use of explicit instruction done well.

**Montessori—Senses and Systems**

Maria Montessori (1965) created a method of instruction that used the senses to promote learning. Her emphasis was not on the natural unfolding of the child, their interests, or play. Rather, she believed that children needed early, orderly, systematic training in order to master skills. Therefore, she created an environment supplied with materials for learning specific concepts to meet specific objectives. The use of the materials is modeled by the teacher, which the child imitates, providing the source for learning. Children educated themselves by using these manipulatives. The materials were self-correcting; therefore, the children could determine their errors and make corrections. All the materials in the classroom were stored in their own containers, on a particular shelf, and in order of difficulty. According to Montessori, the teacher is a guide who prepares an environment with materials designed to teach specific skills. These materials are attractive, sturdy, and have influenced manipulatives we use for learning today. In this systematic area of learning, children work with practical life materials first, which include activities such as buttoning clothes, pouring water, and scrubbing tables. There are precise steps to complete each task correctly.

The second area of learning is called sensorial. Through the five senses of touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight, children learn about size, color, and shape by manipulating materials designed to teach these skills. The curriculum includes learning reading and math, which are taught using manipulative materials. In math, Montessori created bead clusters that teach counting, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Early reading instruction includes learning the sounds of letters with the help of cards that have raised textured letters. Children trace the cards as they make the sound. Sight words are taught using real objects and pictures. Montessori’s curriculum is based on behaviorist theory. Children’s curiosity and exploration are of less concern than working with a material to achieve a goal. Play is not as important as work, because it takes away from the opportunity to achieve. Montessori promotes independent learning for children, with daily schedules that are systematic and organized.
Piaget—Cognitive Development

Jean Piaget’s (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969) theory of cognitive development describes the intellectual capabilities of children at their different stages of cognitive development. The stages are as follows:

1. **Sensorimotor Period** (0–2 years): Thoughts are determined by sensory explorations as a baby hears, sees, tastes, and feels.
2. **Preoperational Period** (2–7): A child’s language develops, and thinking is concrete. The child begins to organize his world.
3. **Concrete Operational Period** (7–11): The child begins his thought processes in the concrete and is able to eventually move into some abstract ideas.
4. **Formal Operations Period** (11–adult): This high level of thinking involves using language to deal with abstract thought.

Trying to involve children in abstract thinking experiences during the preoperational stages would be considered inappropriate. Piaget believed that a child acquires knowledge by interacting with the world. Educators who have applied his theories involve children in natural problem-solving situations where they learn through assimilation and accommodation. **Assimilation** means that the child incorporates new information into existing schemes. That is, she interprets new information in terms of information she has from the past. For example, when Michael saw a cat for the first time, he said, “Look at the dog, Mommy.” Michael used what he knew about four-legged animals from his experience with dogs and applied it to the cat, an animal he had never seen. **Accommodation** requires changing existing schemes to incorporate new information. A child accommodates when a new situation is unfamiliar. In this situation, the child has to create a new response. Michael, for example, knows what dogs do and look like, such as bark and have four legs. When he perceived a cat to be a dog, he had

Piaget stressed that learning occurs when children interact with peers and adults in a social setting as they act on the environment.
assimilated the new experience with reference to his present comprehension level. The complementary process of accommodation may be engaged when the child finds that the new object is not a dog, but rather a cat, and that the cat meows and doesn't bark. His conceptual understanding of cat must be refined due to the incongruity; he accommodates his thoughts to fit the reality more accurately.

According to Piaget, children need to be active participants in their learning by changing and reorganizing their knowledge. Learning occurs when children interact in their environment with peers and adults. Educators who have incorporated Piaget’s theories in curricula have designed constructivist-type programs: a setting with many real-life materials, including the opportunities to play, explore, experiment, and use language. A Piagetian preschool curriculum, called High Scope, encourages decision making, problem solving, self-discipline, goal setting, planning one’s own activities, and cooperating with teachers and peers. Piaget agreed that young children should use their curiosity and spontaneity to learn. His theories do not stress content-area centers such as math and science. The Piaget curriculum has centers that involve children in cognitive activities such as:

1. **Language Development**: Talking, listening to stories, and describing.
2. **Classifying**: Describing attributes of objects, to notice sameness and differences, sort, match, and the like.
3. **Seriating**: Placing objects in a particular order, typically by size.
4. **Representing in Different Modalities**: Learning about something in many different ways; for example, to learn about an apple, eat an apple, make applesauce, draw an apple, write and read the word apple, sing a song about apples, and so on.
5. **Spatial Relations**: Children are asked to put things together, take things apart, rearrange things, reshape things, see things from a different point of view, describe direction or distance, and so on.

**Vygotsky—Schema Acquisition**

Lev S. Vygotsky’s (1978) general theory of intellectual development suggests that learning occurs as children acquire new concepts or schemas. A schema is a mental structure in which a person stores information she knows. People store information and call it to mind when they have to make predictions, generalizations, or inferences. According to Vygotsky, mental functions are acquired through social relationships. To extend or build a new concept, children must interact with others who provide feedback for their thoughts or help them to complete a task they could not do on their own. Parents and teachers need to talk with children and provide the language they need in order to help them understand new ideas and solve problems. The child needs the help of a more knowledgeable person to scaffold the new ideas. Adults scaffold by modeling for children how to complete a task and what it looks like. The scaffolding directs a child’s attention to what she needs to know. Children learn by internalizing the activities and language of others into their world. Vygotsky speaks of the “zone of proximal development” when a child can do some parts of a task but not all. This is a sensitive time for learning. When the child internalizes the
This child needs a more knowledgeable person to model and help with new tasks.

task, she performs the new task alone. Now, the teacher or parent must step back and allow the child to take responsibility to perform and practice the new skill independently. Vygotsky’s approach uses a social constructivist theory. This theory is recognized as an appropriate model for early literacy.

Reading Readiness

A strong influence on reading instruction came from developmental psychologists such as Arnold Gesell (1925), who advocated maturation as the most important factor in learning to read. Preschool and kindergarten teachers were told to avoid reading instruction because such young children were not ready to read. At this stage, children played and explored, sang songs, listened to stories read by the teacher, and participated in circle times that were based on themes. Methods were child centered, with concern for social, emotional, and physical development. Morphett and Washburne (1931) supported the postponement of reading instruction until a child was developmentally “old enough.” Their study concluded that children with a mental age of 6 years and 6 months made better progress on a test of reading achievement than younger children. Uncomfortable about waiting for children to mature, educators began to provide experiences they believed would help prepare children for reading.

The popularity of testing during the 1930s and 1940s helped educators in this effort and affected the next several decades of early childhood reading instruction. The standardized tests included sections of specific skills used to indicate whether a child had reached the maturity to be ready to learn to read. The term reading readiness became popular; instead of waiting for a child’s maturation to unfold, educators focused on nurturing that maturation through instruction in skills seen as prerequisites for reading. Readiness skills included (1) auditory discrimination, the ability to identify and differentiate familiar sounds, similar sounds, rhyming words, and the sounds of letters; (2) visual discrimination, including color recognition, shape, and letter identification; (3) visual motor skills, such as left-to-right eye progression, cutting on a line with scissors, and coloring within the lines of a picture; and (4) large motor skills, such as skipping, hopping, and walking on a line. The reading-readiness model implies that children prepare for literacy by acquiring these four skills. These skills are taught systematically on the assumption that all children are at a similar level of development when they come to preschool or kindergarten with little concern for experiences and information that children may already have. However, educators discovered that some children could read without the knowledge of many of the skills outlined, and some children mastered the skills but had difficulty learning to read.
The Research Era

Between the 1960s and the 1980s, researchers investigating early childhood literacy development brought about many changes in practice. Investigators looked at the cognitive development of the child using varied research methodologies such as experimental studies with treatment and control groups, correlational research, interviews, observations, videotapes, and case studies. The research was done in diverse cultural and socioeconomic settings. It took place in classrooms and homes, rather than in laboratories, as in the past. Research in the areas of oral language development, family literacy, and early reading and writing had a strong impact on educators understanding the processes involved in becoming literate, how children learn, and how to teach initial reading and writing.

Key Approaches to Early Childhood Literacy

In early childhood literacy, two approaches shared the stage. The constructivist theory views learning as an active process by which children construct knowledge by problem solving, guessing, and approximating. In contrast, explicit instruction views learning as a teacher-directed activity with emphasis on teaching a task and the specific steps needed to master it, for example teaching reading through phonics. The balanced comprehensive approach attempts to blend these two key approaches for more effective outcomes.

The field of literacy tends to vacillate in its approach. For a period of time, educators embrace constructivist thinking and promote exploration and experimentation on the part of the child. Then, either gradually or abruptly, educators switch to championing direct, explicit instruction and rely more heavily on phonics and other direct methods. These swings often include periods of widespread adoption of emergent literacy, whole-language instruction, phonics, and balanced approaches.

Emergent Literacy

To acquire literacy skills, children need models to emulate and to create their own forms of reading, writing, and speaking. This is called an emergent literacy perspective in preschool and kindergarten. The emergent literacy perspective exposes children to books early; it is a child-centered social constructivist approach with more emphasis on problem solving than on direct instruction of skills.

Emergent literacy, a phrase first used by Marie Clay (1966), assumes that the child acquires some knowledge about language, reading, and writing before coming to school. Literacy development begins early in life and is ongoing. There is a dynamic relationship among the communication skills (reading, writing, oral language, and listening) because each influences the other in the course of development. Development occurs in everyday contexts of the home, community, and school through meaningful and functional experiences that require the use of literacy in natural settings. The settings for the acquisition of literacy are often social, with adults and children interacting through collaboration and modeling. To provide meaning and purpose, literacy activities occur and are embedded within content areas such as art, music, play, social studies, and science. For example, in art, children are given directions to read for making play dough.
At every age, children possess certain literacy skills, but these skills are not as yet fully developed or conventional (Baumann, Hoffman, Duffy-Hester, & Rowe, 2000; Morris & Slavin, 2003). Emergent literacy acknowledges a child's scribble marks on a page as rudimentary writing, even if not one letter is discernible. The child who knows the difference between such scribbles and drawings has some sense of the difference between writing and illustration. Similarly, when children narrate familiar storybooks while looking at the pictures and print and give the impression of reading, we acknowledge the activity as literacy behavior, but not conventional reading. Emergent literacy accepts children at the level they are functioning and provides a program for instruction based on individual needs.

**Constructivism and Whole-Language Instruction**

Whole-language instruction is similar to the emergent literacy perspective, but it considers children who are not reading conventionally. Advocates of whole language support the constructivist perspective and natural approaches to learning. It is a philosophy about how children learn, from which educators derive strategies for teaching. In a whole-language approach, literacy learning is child centered because it is designed to be meaningful, relevant, and functional. Learning to read is based on a child’s life experiences at home or those created in school. For example, if a beehive is discovered at school and removed by an exterminator, children may be interested in discussing, reading, or writing about bees. Although learning about bees is not a part of the curriculum, the teacher allows children to pursue this teachable moment (Collins & Shaeffer, 1997; Fingon, 2005).

Literacy activities are integrated into the learning of content-area subjects such as art, music, social studies, science, math, and play. The use of social studies and science themes connects content areas and literacy experiences. Skills are taught when they seem appropriate; for example, in the unit on farms, when the class hatches baby chicks in an incubator, journals may be kept on the progress of the chicks, and the digraph \( ch \) could be emphasized. In art, children draw farms, sing farm songs, visit a farm, and learn some scientific and social studies information about the farm. Topics are selected by the children and teacher, or spontaneously based on something of interest that occurs in school, in someone’s home, or in the world.

Equal emphasis is placed on teaching reading, writing, listening, and oral language, because all of these components help create a literate individual. In the past, this program has been referred to as an integrated language arts approach. Themes are studied through the use of varied genres of children’s literature which

Children need to be exposed to books and writing early in life. Early attempts at literacy should be encouraged and rewarded.
Thematic units often use a science or social studies topic, and teachers integrate literacy activities into content-area lessons.

provides the main source of reading material for instruction. Classrooms are rich with literacy materials throughout the room and housed in literacy centers. This design is often called a rich literacy environment.

In a classroom that uses holistic strategies, teachers place more emphasis on learning than on teaching. Learning is self-regulated and individualized, with self-selection and choices of literacy activities. Rather than teach lessons in literacy, teachers provide experiences that engage children in literacy activities. Social interaction is encouraged with children along with opportunities for peer tutoring. Children learn through practice by engaging in long periods of independent reading and writing and sharing what is learned—by reading to others and presenting written pieces to an audience. A major objective of this approach is an emphasis on the joy of reading and the development of lifelong readers.

In classrooms that use holistic approaches, skills are taught when they are relevant and meaningful. In whole-language classrooms, themes (such as dinosaurs) are studied. The teacher may focus on some letters and sounds in the initial consonants found in the vocabulary of the current theme (such as names of dinosaurs). In early implementation of whole-language programs, some individuals thought that skills were not to be taught in any systematic way; children would acquire necessary skills by being immersed in experiences with reading children’s literature and writing. Certainly, skills are assimilated through this immersion approach, but specific skills, such as decoding strategies, usually require explicit instruction by the teacher.

In a whole-language approach, assessment is continuous and takes many forms: Teachers collect daily performance samples of work; they observe and record children’s behavior in different situations; and they build a portfolio filled with information about each youngster. The evaluation process is for the teacher, parent, and child. Conferences are held to discuss progress.

In whole language, teachers and children are the decision makers about instructional strategies and materials used. Commercial materials do not dictate the instructional program, although they may be used. Literacy learning is embedded throughout the curriculum during the school day. Large blocks of time are needed for projects. Children often read independently; however, there was little accountability for what was read. Whole language, the integrated language arts approach, and emergent literacy are similar in practice and use a social constructivist approach to learning.

Explicit Instruction and Phonics

During the mid-1980s and early 1990s, whole-language instruction began to be criticized because test scores seemed to indicate that children were not acquiring literacy skills. Many educators misunderstood the philosophy and thought that whole language meant teaching children only in whole groups. Thus, teachers
stopped meeting with small groups of children for instruction to handle individual needs. Many educators also made the incorrect presumption that whole language meant you shouldn’t teach phonics at all, when actually phonics was to be taught through immersion into literature with spontaneous and contextual teaching of skills instead of explicit instruction. As a result of the misinterpretations, many children received little or no instruction in phonics. Strikingly, many schools did not follow or monitor a scope or sequence of skill development. Because of misinterpretation, inadequate professional development, and incorrect implementation, many children did not develop skills they needed to become fluent, independent readers.

The pendulum began to swing again to those who favored an approach to early literacy development with more explicit use of phonics; these individuals cited many studies to substantiate their claims. According to Juel (1989), as children begin to experiment with reading and writing, they need to focus on the sounds that make up words. As a precursor to learning how to use phonics (sound–symbol relationships), children need the ability to rhyme words, hear syllables or parts of words, know that words are made up of individual sounds, segment sounds out of the words, blend them together, and substitute sounds in words. These skills are called phonological awareness and phonemic awareness. Phonological and phonemic awareness instruction in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade strengthens reading achievement (Byrne & Fielding-Barnsley, 1993, 1995; Stanovich, 1986). With phonological and phonemic awareness, children can then learn principles of phonics, including (1) alphabetic knowledge (knowing that words are composed of letters) and (2) sound–symbol relationships (knowing that there is a relationship between printed letters and spoken sounds). Research results report that knowledge of sound–symbol relationships, or phonics, is necessary for learning to read and write (Anthony & Lonigan, 2004; Lonigan, 2006). Chapter 5 covers phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics in greater detail.

A behaviorist or direct-skills approach for literacy instruction proposes the use of a strong phonics programs in early literacy. The materials for instruction provide systematic, explicit instruction of skills with scripted guides for teachers.

Statistics surrounding achievement, coupled with current political beliefs and school leadership, determine the type of reading instruction that is adopted. Research has proven, however, that no single approach produces demonstrably better results. First-grade studies (Bond & Dykstra, 1967a, 1967b) tried to answer the question: Which method is best for early literacy development? This classic research pooled the findings from 27 independent studies conducted from 1964 to 1967. Bond and Dykstra ultimately concluded that no one method was more effective than another such that it should be used exclusively. What has been found is that exemplary teachers are the key to successful literacy instruction (Pressley, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Block, & Morrow, 2001).

**Balanced Comprehensive Approach**

The International Reading Association’s position statement, entitled Using Multiple Methods of Beginning Reading Instruction (1999), suggests that no single method or single combination of methods can successfully teach all children to read. Teachers must know the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual status of the children they teach. They must also be well versed
in the various methods for reading instruction. Only then can educators develop a comprehensive plan for teaching reading to meet individual needs. This perspective on literacy instruction, which emerged as a result of the whole language versus phonics discussion, is a balanced comprehensive approach (BCA). The use of a BCA includes careful selection of the best theories available and matches learning strategies based on these theories to the learning styles of individual children to help them learn to read. Both skill-based explicit instruction and holistic constructivist ideas, which include problem-solving strategies, might be used (Morrow & Tracey, 1997). Explicit teaching of skills is a start for constructivist problem-solving activities, and

**Figure 1.1** Strategies and Structures in a Balanced Comprehensive Approach

![Diagram of the Balanced Comprehensive Approach (BCA)]

**Source:** Adapted from L. M. Morrow, D. S. Strickland, and D. G. Woo, *Literacy Instruction in Half- and Whole-Day Kindergarten: Research to Practice* (Fig. 2, p. 76). Newark, DE: International Reading Association. Copyright © 1998 by the International Reading Association.
The Effects of Evidence-Based Research and Public Policy on Early Literacy

Throughout the twentieth century until about the 1960s, federal educational policy was mostly voluntary and symbolic. Schools were governed locally; in other words, varied teaching models were accepted and no accountability procedures were dictated by the federal government. As time passed, documents that came from the federal government became more prescriptive. The federal government also engaged in more of its own research as a way to support policy decisions that involved more prescriptive programs. As a result, today there is more centralized authority and greater accountability. Evidence-based research and public policy have had significant effects on early literacy initiatives and practices.


The National Reading Panel Report (2000) was a significant meta-analysis that revealed key elements to literacy success. The report presents findings about the most effective strategies for teaching children to read. The panel reviewed more than 100,000 studies to come up with its results. Panelists admit, however, that some areas that may be important to literacy instruction, such as writing development and motivation for reading, were not studied because of a lack of adequate numbers of high-quality investigations to analyze. In addition, only randomized experimental studies with treatment and control groups were selected for analysis. Other research designs, such as qualitative or case study and correlational, were not included because the designs did not meet with the...
**Figure 1.2** Constructivist and Explicit Behaviorist Lesson Plans for “The Three Bears”

*Directions:* Photocopy, color, and laminate figures on firm paper. Cut and then paste felt on the back and tell the story to the children using the figures and a felt board. Have the children retell the story as they heard it. Next, ask the children to tell the story again but create a new ending.
Figure 1.2  Constructivist and Explicit Behaviorist Lesson Plans for “The Three Bears” (continued)
Figure 1.3  Sequencing Strips for "The Three Bears"

Directions: Cut out strips and arrange them in the correct order of events. Technology Link: Video record children in an explicit instruction lesson and in a constructivist setting. Note the differences in how they pay attention (or don't) and how involved they are (or aren't)

Once upon a time, Goldilocks was wandering through the woods.

She came across the three bears’ house and walked inside.

First she saw three bowls of porridge.

She tried the first bowl, but it was too cold.

She tried the second bowl, but it was too hot.

She tried the third bowl and it was just right.

Next she saw three chairs.

She sat in the first chair, but it was too small.

She sat in the second chair, but it was too big.

She sat in the medium-size chair and it was just right.
Then Goldilocks went into the bedroom and saw three beds.

The first bed was way too big.

The second bed was way too small.

The third bed was just right, so she fell asleep.

Soon after, the three bears came home.

They noticed that someone had been sitting in their chairs.

They noticed that someone had been eating their porridge.

They noticed that someone had been sleeping in their beds.

Little Bear found Goldilocks in his bed and screamed! Goldilocks woke up, ran out the door, and never came back again.
The results of the report indicate that learning the following elements is crucial to early literacy success.

- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Fluency

Writing, independent reading, and motivation were not studied because there wasn’t enough scientifically based research to determine if these were predictors of literacy success. However, it is generally accepted among literacy researchers that these elements are necessary for successful literacy development.

**National Early Literacy Panel Report**

The National Early Literacy Panel Report (2008) studied existing scientifically based research to identify the skills and abilities of young children from birth through age 5 that predict later achievement in reading, such as the ability to decode and comprehend. After identifying the variables, the panel determined environments, settings, programs, and interventions that contribute to or inhibit the skills that are linked to later outcomes in reading. The variables the panel identified include:

- **Alphabet knowledge (AK):** knowledge of the names and sounds associated with printed letters
- **Phonological awareness (PA):** the ability to detect, manipulate, or analyze the auditory aspects of spoken language (including the ability to distinguish or segment words, syllables, or phonemes), independent meaning
- **Rapid automatic naming (RAN) of letters or digits:** the ability to rapidly name a sequence of random letters or digits
- **RAN of objects or colors:** the ability to rapidly name a sequence of repeating random sets of pictures or objects (e.g., car, tree, house) or colors
- **Writing or writing one’s name:** the ability to write letters in isolation on request or to write one’s own name
- **Phonological memory:** the ability to remember spoken information for a short period of time
- **Concepts about print:** knowledge of print conventions (e.g., left-right, front-back) and concepts (book cover, author, text)
- **Print knowledge:** a combination of alphabet knowledge, concepts about print, and early decoding,
- **Reading readiness:** a combination of alphabet knowledge, concepts about print, vocabulary, memory, phonological awareness, and the ability to match or discriminate visually presented symbols and sounds such as loud, soft, high, and low
- **Oral language:** the ability to produce or comprehend spoken language, including vocabulary and grammar
One important conclusion from the report is that involving children in appropriate activities will help them develop in these listed areas. Schools whose students do not score well on measures testing for these variables will be identified as needing help.

**No Child Left Behind (NCLB)**

Federal research into early childhood literacy influenced policy decisions. In January 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was passed by the Bush administration. This nonpartisan program was one of the first policies to demonstrate a dramatic involvement of the federal government prescribing what happens in literacy instruction. The goal of NCLB is for every child in the United States to become a fluent reader by grade 3. The legislation was designed to close the achievement gap in literacy development between socioeconomic classes and prevent literacy problems before they occur. To help accomplish this goal, the federal government awarded *Reading First* grants to low-achieving school districts for use with children in kindergarten through grade 3. To qualify for these grants, states had to identify the reading assessments and programs in use and demonstrate that the programs were reliable, valid, and scientifically or evidence based. Reading programs considered in these categories were supported by research data that demonstrated their quality. Programs had to include the following characteristics:

- Randomly selected subjects in the studies
- Experimental designs with treatment and control groups
- Objective data that could be identified and interpreted similarly by any evaluator
- Valid data that adequately represented the tasks that children need to perform to be successful readers
- Reliable data collected on a different day or by a different person
- Systematic data collected according to a rigorous design of either quantitative or qualitative research
- Refereed data approved for publication by a panel of independent reviewers

The use of financial incentives for districts to achieve the policy goals continued under the Obama administration, which in 2010 launched the *Race to the Top* grant program for underachieving schools. As with the *Reading First* grants, *Race to the Top* grants include specified components to enhance educational outcomes. In *Race to the Top*, for example, grant recipients will be accountable for student scores on standardized tests and will be obligated to implement merit pay for teachers whose children score well. Many believe *Race to the Top* will intensify test-preparation activities because a teacher’s future livelihood will depend on his students scoring high marks on a designated standardized test. The educational community is concerned that using one test as the measure for success could have a negative effect on the curriculum. Moreover, using a single, designated test puts pressure on children and teachers and is not the true manner in which to judge success.
Common Core State Standards

Standards have become a staple of American schools and curriculum since they first entered the reform scene in the early 1990s. Schools, teachers, and students find their academic lives shaped by whatever standards become a priority where they live. Since the early 1990s, there has been an effort to develop national standards that create a clear statement of what students should know and be able to do at various developmental levels. Standards, therefore, attempt to outline the typical progression of student performance, assessments, and curricular schemes. Standards are established for content, and tests are used to measure the degree to which students have learned that content. Studies, however, have shown variability across states in the content and quality of standards, assessments used to measure student achievement, and the criteria used to gauge success on standards (Bandeira de Mello, 2011; Polikoff, Porter, & Smithson, 2011). The Common Core State Standards Initiative (2010) is an attempt to reduce that variability.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) represent the latest, and most ambitious, version of what standards can do for schools, teachers, and students. Different from policies like NCLB, the development of the CCSS was not driven by a federal agency but by the states. Initiated under the auspices of the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the CCSS attempt to ensure that at the end of K–12, students are prepared to enter either college or the workforce and take their place as knowledgeable, contributing members of the American economy and society. As a state-led initiative, the CCSS are intentionally designed to improve upon the current standards of individual states by creating clear, consistent, and rigorous standards to which all American students will be held, irrespective of where they reside.

The CCSS were established by looking closely at standards and curriculum in consistently high-achieving United States sites. The designers also carefully examined the standards in use in other countries whose students regularly score highest against international standards. Considering the standards of the highest achieving foreign countries ensures that the CCSS require a comparable level of achievement so that all American students are prepared to succeed in a global economy and society. The CCSS have also been designed to reflect the knowledge and skills required to participate as workers and citizens in a global and increasingly digital world.

The title of the standards—Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects—highlights the need for developing literacy and language proficiencies in the context of disciplinary knowledge. That is, knowledge must extend into content area courses rather than exclusively English language arts courses. For grades K–5, the CCSS suggest an integrated view of the components within the English language arts of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The standards for grades 6–12 are organized by discipline—first the ELA and then subject areas, to distinguish which standards are the responsibility of the English language arts curriculum and teachers, and which are to be addressed by subject-area teachers. Within ELA, when teaching history or science and technology, the expectation is that reading, writing, speaking, and listening will be highly coordinated and integrated.

The intention of the CCSS is to provide guidance on the core content of any curriculum, with the explicit expectation that districts, schools, and teachers
will add specification and differentiation to their implementation of the core goals. To be clear, the CCSS are neither a curriculum nor a method. They do not define the full range of support for English language learners and students with special needs, for example. What the CCSS do provide is a core set of expectations with enough flexibility for districts, schools, and teachers to design their own implementation. In that way, the CCSS acknowledge that there is no single best way to meet the standards—what’s important is achieving them. Ultimately, therefore, the content of the standards will be assessed. Chapter 2 will cover the CCSS in greater detail, including what they cover and how they will be assessed.

An Idea from the Classroom

Learning the Initial Consonant P (Explicit Instruction)

Explicit Modeling for Children

Teacher: Today we are going to learn about the sound of P. Who has a name that starts with a P?

Peter: My name does.

Teacher: You are right. Let’s everyone say Peter.

Class: Peter.

Teacher: Now put your hand up to your mouth and say Puh, Puh, Puh.

Class: Puh, Puh, Puh.

Teacher: How did it feel?

Nancy: I felt air, and it was warm.

Teacher: Good. I’m going to tell you a story that has a lot of P words in it. I will use felt figures to tell the story. Listen and remember your favorite two P words so you can tell your neighbor about them after the story. You might hear pig, party, pizza, panda, plums, or purple. The story is called The Pig’s Party. (See the characters in Figure 1.4. Photocopy, color, laminate, and put felt on the back for use on a felt board or magnets for use on a white board. The characters and items in the story are numbered here and in Figure 1.4.)

Pink Pig was having a party. He wanted it to be a perfect party. He had invited Patty Pig (1), his favorite pig person, Panda Bear (2), and Proud Peacock (4). He had petunias on the table and there were pizza for dinner and popsicles for dessert. Panda Bear came to the party first, and Pink Pig asked, "How can I look special for Patty Pig?" Panda Bear said, "Borrow my panda bear suit, and you will look perfect." So Pink Pig put on Panda Bear’s suit, and he thought he looked perfect (3). Then Proud Peacock came to the party. Pink Pig asked him, "How can I look perfect for the
party?” Proud Peacock said, “Take my purple plumes and put them on, and you will look perfect.” So he did (4, 5, and 6). Everyone agreed he looked perfect. Patty Pig (7) knocked on the door. Pink Pig opened it. She screamed when she saw Pink Pig; she thought she saw a monster with his purple plumes and panda bear suit, and she ran away. Pink Pig gave back the suit to Panda Bear and the plumes to Proud Peacock and took a petunia to run to find Patty Pig (1 and 8). He found her hiding behind the porch. When she saw Pink Pig she said, “Thank goodness it is you Pink Pig,” and they had a perfect party.
**Guided Practice**

**Teacher:** Tell your partner the two words you liked the most that started with a P in the story.

**Josh to Jen:** I liked *plumes* and *Patty*.

**Jen to Josh:** I liked *petunia* and *pizza*.

**Teacher:** How many of you had the same two words? (Only a few children raise their hands.) How many of you had one word the same? (A few more raise their hands.) How many had two different words? (Most of the class raise their hands.)

**Independent Practice**

**Teacher:** I will put the pig story and the felt characters in the literacy center in this plastic baggie and you can tell the story or read the story and write down the P words you remember and like the most. There is paper for you to write your words on.

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**An Idea from the Classroom**

**Out to Eat: Kindergarten Restaurateurs (Constructivist Theory)**

At the end of a unit on nutrition, students in my kindergarten class have the opportunity to create their own restaurant menu. Regardless of the menu they create, students are encouraged to include healthy foods. Students draw on their knowledge of different foods and their personal experiences at various restaurants. As a result, our classroom is filled with menus for Italian restaurants, Mexican restaurants, diners, breakfast bistros, and more. Our kindergartners write and illustrate their own menus, using invented and conventional language.

During our morning meeting each day, several students have the opportunity to share their menus with the class and use persuasive language to try to convince their classmates to visit their restaurant. Then, each week, one or two students set up their “restaurant” for classmates to visit during dramatic play or centers. I assist students by making copies of their menus for their classmate patrons and helping them locate or create the foods they will need using the kitchen area of our classroom. Not only are many speaking and listening standards addressed as students take on the role of restaurant owner, chef, or guest, but students utilize what they’ve learned in our nutrition unit when deciding what to order!

Amy Monaco, Kindergarten Teacher
Summary

1-1 Discuss the historical roots of early childhood education.

Theories of early childhood began in the 1700s with Jean-Jacques Rousseau and continued into the 1800s through the work of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and Friedrich Froebel. Rousseau advocated abandoning contrived instruction in favor of allowing children to grow and learn with the freedom to be themselves. He believed that education follows the child's own development and readiness for learning. Pestalozzi combined Rousseau's natural learning philosophy with elements of informal instruction, including sensory work with manipulatives. Froebel continued the work of Pestalozzi with an added emphasis on the role of play in learning.

1-2 Discuss the evolution of theory and practice in early childhood education across the twentieth century.

Seven main theories define the evolution and practice of early childhood education in the twentieth century. Progressive education, advocated by John Dewey, argued that curriculum should be built around the interests of the child and that learning is maximized through integrating content areas into instruction. The behaviorist learning perspective was built on the research of B.F. Skinner and advocated an organized program presented in a structured, routine, systematic, and direct manner. Maria Montessori also embraced a systematic approach but one coupled with specific concepts, objectives, and sensorial experiences. Cognitive development theories advanced by Jean Piaget argued that the content of instruction should be appropriate for the child's developmental stage and that children acquire knowledge through interacting with the world. Les Vygotsky argued that learning occurs as children acquire new concepts or schemas, so parents and teachers need to scaffold new ideas for children. Reading readiness involves nurturing children through instruction that helps them develop skills needed for reading: auditory discrimination, visual discrimination, visual motor skills, and large motor skills.

1-3 Differentiate among constructivism, explicit instruction, and the balanced comprehensive approach to literacy instruction.

Three key approaches in early childhood literacy are constructivist theory, explicit instruction, and the balanced comprehensive approach, which blends the two. Emergent literacy and whole-language instruction are built around the constructivist approach. Emergent literacy recognized that behaviors children participated in prior to reading authentically were actual reading activities that needed to be recognized and acknowledged. Whole language advocated the use of real children's literature and emphasized the joy of reading, the use of narrative text, and understanding about what was read. An explicit (direct-skills) approach for literacy instruction includes a strong phonics program that incorporates a systematic, explicit instruction of skills with scripted guides for teachers. The balanced comprehensive approach includes careful selection of the best theories available and matches learning strategies based on these theories to the learning styles of individual children to help them learn to read. Both skill-based explicit instruction and holistic constructivist ideas might be used.

1-4 Describe the effects of evidence-based research and governmental policies and legislation on early childhood literacy.

Throughout most of the twentieth century, U.S. federal educational policy was mostly voluntary and symbolic. As policies became more prescriptive, the federal government engaged in its own research to support those policy decisions. The National Reading Panel Report (2000) was a significant meta-analysis that revealed key elements to literacy success: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. The National Early Literacy Panel Report (2008) studied existing scientifically based research to identify the skills and abilities of young children from birth.
Activities and Questions

1. The emergent literacy and whole-language philosophies are constructivist approaches to literacy instruction. How do constructivists believe that children learn?

2. Select one of the following skills: phonologic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, or fluency. Create a lesson for an early childhood classroom that combines the doctrines of Piaget and Vygotsky. Create three additional experiences using the same skill with the doctrines of Montessori, Dewey, and Skinner. In other words, teach the same lesson five different ways based on five different approaches.

3. Observe an early childhood classroom (preschool through third grade). Decide which theoretical influences have determined the type of practices carried out. Document your findings with specific anecdotes illustrating the theory.

4. Figures 1.3 and 1.4 offer a basic look at teaching using constructivist and explicit approaches to instruction. Which type of teaching do you like best and why?

5. How do you feel about government policies such as Race to the Top influencing your classroom practice? Explain.

6. What is the purpose of having national standards?
Assessment in Early Literacy
A Guide for Designing Instruction

LEARNING OUTCOMES

2.1 Explain the role of assessment in early literacy development.
2.2 Define authentic assessment and describe several techniques for conducting it.
2.3 Identify and describe in-depth measures of assessment.
2.4 Discuss the pros and cons of standardized testing.
2.5 Compare the main types of literacy standards and how they reflect the shift in the literacy curriculum.
2.6 Describe the progress toward implementing the Common Core State Standards and assessment tools designed to measure outcomes against them.

VOCABULARY
anecdotal observation forms
authentic assessment
Common Core State Standards
high-stakes assessment
informal reading inventories
portfolio assessment
running records
standards
standardized tests

Photo credit: Jules Selmes/Pearson Education
The following is a quote from the book *First Grade Takes a Test*. “On the test there was a picture of Sally and Tom. Sally was giving Tom something. It looked like a baloney sandwich. Underneath it said:

Sally is taller than Tom. _________
Tom is taller than Sally. _________”

Jim wondered what being tall had to do with getting a baloney sandwich. And was it really a baloney sandwich? It might be tomato. Jim took a long time on that one.” (Cohen, 1980, pp. 9–10)

In the book it explains how the teacher passes out tests and how one child was very nervous since she only knew a little English but in Spanish she was fluent and read very well. She filled in boxes with an X as she was supposed to but really didn’t understand the questions to make a good decision for the answer. The author went on and talked about another child whose name was George. He read a question about rabbits and what they eat. The answer choices were sandwiches, lettuce, and meat. He knew that rabbits needed to eat carrots to keep their teeth from growing too long. He had a rabbit once, and they told him that at the pet store. He didn’t know what box to check, so he drew a carrot in the test booklet and put an X next to it.

In both incidents, children answered questions incorrectly on the standardized test but for different reasons. George, relating his own experience to the question at hand, actually had a more sophisticated answer than those provided. His answer was marked incorrect because his background experience with rabbits was different from that of the person who wrote the test. In addition, George was not familiar with how to take the test, by filling in the box beside the best answer provided. Rosa could not comprehend the test in English. Although she was reading at grade level in Spanish, she was jeopardized because of her language background. In both incidents, children answered incorrectly, but not because they did not know the answer.

**Assessing Early Literacy Development**

This chapter deals with critical issues facing early childhood educators: achieving standards by assessing the needs of children. Assessment must be sensitive to children’s different backgrounds, abilities, and needs in order for teachers to select appropriate instructional strategies.

This chapter covers macro-level issues relating to the topic of assessment in detail, including basic assessment instruments. The practical applications for assessment of children’s performance will be discussed in the chapters that deal with the various skills and instructional strategies. Underpinning all discussions of assessment is the purpose of assessment in early childhood—to generate data that can be used to create more effective instruction. That is, assessment is about information-gathering.

Early literacy educators take into consideration children’s interests, learning styles, and different achievement levels. Therefore, they think about instruction as being guided by assessment. Administering a single standardized paper-and-pencil test is insufficient for assessing everything teachers need to know about each child. Nor can one measure be the only source for evaluating a child’s progress. Teachers need to test children and assess...
their performance in many areas and under many conditions. Assessment should help the teacher, child, and parent determine a child’s strengths and weaknesses and plan appropriate instructional strategies; it should also match educational goals and practices. To meet the needs of all children, there must be multiple measures to see how a child performs in different settings.

The International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) issued a joint position statement on learning to read and write (1998) that recommends using culturally and developmentally appropriate assessment measures. Additionally, the assessments should align with the instructional objectives, while always keeping in mind best practices for the total development of the child. Quality assessment should be drawn from real-life reading and writing tasks and should continuously follow a range of literacy activities.

**Authentic Assessment: Measures and Strategies**

**Authentic assessment** is defined as assessment activities that represent and reflect the actual learning and instructional activities of the classroom and out-of-school world. Several objectives emerge from an authentic assessment perspective (Johnston & Costello, 2005; Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007; Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, 2011).

**Objectives for Assessment**

- Assessment should be based on a variety of measures.
- Assessment should be observations of children engaged in authentic classroom reading and writing tasks, daily performance samples, standardized tests, and standards-based tests.
- Assessment should focus on children's learning based on the goals of the curriculum and standards.
- Assessment should be continuous over a substantial period.
- Assessment should take into account the diversity of students’ cultural, language, and special needs.
- Assessment should be collaborative and include the participation of children, parents, and teachers.
- Assessment should be a guide to designing instruction.

To accomplish these goals, assessment should be frequent with varied measures. The main goal is to observe and record actual behavior that provides the broadest possible picture of a particular child (McKenna & Dougherty-Stahl, 2009; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). Every chapter in this book that deals with a specific area of literacy development contains a section with suggestions for collecting material related to assessment for particular skills. Authentic assessment measures that will help paint a comprehensive picture of a child are provided in this chapter and others throughout the book.

Educators should integrate a variety of authentic assessment methods into their instruction. Some of the more common and more useful types include anecdotal observation forms, daily performance samples, audio recordings,
Anecdotal Observation Forms

**Authentic observation forms** are prepared forms or teacher-made forms used for observing and recording children’s behavior. Observation forms usually have broad categories with large spaces for notes about children’s activities. Goals for observing should be planned and forms designed to meet those goals. Teachers can write down interesting, humorous, and general comments about the child’s behavior in the classroom. Observations should focus on one particular aspect of the child’s performance, such as oral reading, silent reading, behavior while listening to stories, or writing. Within the descriptions of behavior, dialogue is often recorded, for example: *Although Janet read orally without errors, her reading was without expression. She read, “The big bad wolf ran away” and every word was said in the same tone. I asked her to listen to me read the sentence and then echo read it or read it as I did after me and she did. She said, “I like doing that. Can we try it again?”* Figure 2.1 presents a sample form that can be used for several different types of observations—for example, oral reading behavior, writing, and more.

**Daily Performance Samples**

These are samples of the child’s work in all content areas that are done on a daily basis. Daily performance samples provide data points about how the child is learning and mastering the content and so allow the teacher to track...
learning trends for each student individually as well as the class as a whole. Various types of samples from different content domains should be collected periodically (see Figure 2.2).

**Audio and Video Recordings**

Both audio and visual assessments represent digital literacies that provide authentic audiences and purposes. Students enjoy the act of performing and having their efforts recorded; thus, these digital literacies simultaneously accomplish the goals of authentic assessment and student participation in intrinsically motivating practices.

**AUDIO RECORDINGS.** Audio recordings are an assessment that can determine language development, comprehension through a recorded retelling of a story, progress in the fluency of oral reading, and so on. By recording discussion sessions related to responses to literature, the teacher can better understand how youngsters function in a group. Audio recordings can also be used as a type of self-assessment. Children can listen to their own recordings to evaluate both their story retellings and fluency. Chapter 6 on comprehension provides a transcription of a child’s recorded retelling and an accompanying assessment tool.
**Videos.** Videos allow teachers to view and review their students in action. Videos are an excellent and rich form of assessment because the teacher can hear the child as well as see the child’s facial expressions and body movements. Teachers can also use videos to assess their own teaching performance. Because of the wealth of information contained in assessment videos, teachers need to have a specific purpose in mind when choosing video as an assessment tool, and collected recordings should be evaluated with a checklist or observation form.

**Teacher-made Pencil-and-Paper Tests**
As the name suggests, teachers design these tests to match instruction. Because it’s customized, this type of assessment can closely follow the progress of the students and what they are actually learning.

**Student Evaluation Forms**
Children should regularly evaluate themselves by collecting samples of their work and discussing them with their teacher, parents, and other children. In addition, children should use student evaluation (self-evaluation) forms to evaluate their own performance. Completing self-evaluation forms allows children to reflect on their learning experience and helps them become intentional learners and start to develop metacognitive skills. Self-evaluations should be an integral part of authentic assessment.

**Surveys and Interviews**
Teachers can prepare surveys to assess children’s attitudes about how they think they are learning or what they like or dislike in school. Surveys can be in the form of questionnaires or interviews with written or oral answers. Chapter 8 provides a motivation survey in the form of a multiple-choice questionnaire that asks for open-ended responses. (Note the sample surveys about literacy in Figures 2.3 and 2.4.)

**Conferences**
Conferences allow the teacher to meet with a child one-to-one to assess skills such as reading aloud, discuss a child’s progress, talk about steps to improve, provide individual instruction, and prescribe activities. Children should take an active role in evaluating their progress, and parents should be involved in conferencing with teachers about their child’s progress—both with and without the child present.

**Checklists**
Checklists and inventories include lists of developmental behaviors or skills for children to accomplish. The checklist should be based on objectives a teacher may have for instruction and designed to determine whether goals set forth have been accomplished. Figure 2.11 at the end of the chapter organizes the
Figure 2.3  Reading Interview for Children

Name: ___________________________ Date: __________________

Ask questions that are age appropriate for the child you are interviewing.
1. What is a book?

2. What do people do with books?

3. What can books be about?

4. What is your favorite book? Why?

5. What is your least favorite book? Why?

6. What is fun about reading?

7. What is hard about reading?

8. Do you like to read outside of class?

9. What kinds of things do you read outside of class?

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Figure 2.4  Writing Interview for Children

Name: __________________________  Date: ______________

Ask questions that are age appropriate for the child you are interviewing.

1. What is writing?
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________

2. What do people write about?
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________

3. What is the most fun to write about?
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________

4. What is the least fun to write about?
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________

5. What is your favorite thing about writing?
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________

6. What is hard about writing?
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________

7. If you wrote a book, what would you write about?
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________

8. Do you like to write outside of class?
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________

9. What kinds of things do you write about outside of class?
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________

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Conferences or one-on-one meetings provide a chance for students and teachers to hold interactive assessments, which heightens communication and understanding.

developmental characteristics of children and can be used as a checklist to determine how children are developing socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively based on their age. In several chapters in the book, checklists for skills are presented.

In-depth Measures of Assessment

The assessment tools discussed to this point have offered ways to take a snapshot of a student’s performance at a particular moment. As informative as they are, however, teachers also need to incorporate more in-depth tools into their assessment programs, for example, running records, informal reading inventories (IRIs), and portfolio assessments.

Running Records

Marie Clay (1993a) created running records for observing and recording children’s oral reading and for planning instruction. In this analysis, what a child can do and the types of errors the child makes when reading are recorded. Running records can be useful in determining the appropriate material to use for instructional purposes and for independent reading, and they can also help the teacher identify a student’s frustration level. The data collected from a running record, specifically the numbers and types of errors students make, should inform the level of material the teacher uses for instruction and the types of instructional strategies used to deliver it. Having the instruction reflect the information gathered from running records is crucial. One drawback of running records, however, is that they devote more time indicating types of errors students make in oral reading than evaluating their ability to comprehend text.

Using running records is straightforward. In taking a running record, the child is asked to read a short passage of 100 to 200 words from a book the child has not read before. Younger children have shorter passages, and older children have longer ones. Select a book you believe is at the independent level for a child, that is, a book that she or he can read easily. If the child gets each word correct, then select a book that is a bit more difficult. The teacher and
**Figure 2.5 Running Record Coding System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Behavior</th>
<th>Notation</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accurate reading</td>
<td>✔ ✔ ✔ ✔ ✔</td>
<td><em>Notation:</em> A check is noted for each word pronounced correctly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Self-Correction         | ✔ ✔ ✔ ✔ attempt | The child corrects an error himself. This is not counted as a miscue.  
                        | sc word in text | *Notation:* “SC” is the notation used for self-corrections. |
| Omission                | —— | A word or words are left out during the reading.  
                        | Word in text | *Notation:* A dash mark is written over a line above the word(s) from the text that has been omitted. |
| Insertion               | —— | The child adds a word that is not in the text.  
                        | Word inserted | *Notation:* The word inserted by the reader is placed above a line and a dash placed below it. |
| Student Appeal and Assistance | —— | The child is “stuck” on a word he cannot call and asks (verbal or nonverbal) the teacher for help.  
                        | Word from text | *Notation:* “A” is written above a line for “assisted” and the problem word from the text is written below the line. |
| Repetition              | ✔ ✔ ✔ ✔ ✔ ✔ | Sometimes children will repeat words or phrases. These repetitions are not scored as an error, but are recorded.  
                        | | *Notation:* Write an “R” after the word repeated and draw a line back to the point where the reader returned. |
| Substitution            | —— | The child says a word that is different from the word in the text.  
                        | Substituted word | *Notation:* The student’s substitution word is written above a line under which the correct word from text is written. |

*From Teaching Children to Read by D. Ray Reutzel and Robert B. Cooter. Copyright © 2013.*

The student each have a copy of the passage. As the child reads, the teacher makes the running record by marking the passage using the prescribed coding system to indicate whether words are read correctly and what types of errors are made. The types of errors recorded are insertion of a word, omission of a word, repeating a word, substituting one word for another, reversal, refusal to pronounce a word, and an appeal for help. Self-corrections are recorded but are not considered errors (see Figure 2.5). For the running record to be a valid representation of the student’s ability, the teacher must know the difficulty level of the materials being used and match students to the appropriate level. Leveled books for difficulty are discussed later, but are commonly used materials.
After collecting the raw data by marking up the passage, the teacher needs to analyze the data by organizing it on a running record form such as the one in Figure 2.6. The form allows the teacher to systematically review the errors the students made and classify them as meaning (M), structure (S), or visual (V) errors.

1. Meaning error (Does it make sense?). When you look at an error, figure out if the child is using meaning cues in identifying the word. If the child is using information from the text, picture clues, or context clues and reads, “The boy took the leaf from the tree” instead of “The boy pulled the leaf from the tree,” he has made an error but the meaning is intact.
This error should be marked with an M. The child knows how to use the context to get the word but needs to look more closely at the print.

2. **Visual errors (use of phonics).** When a child makes a visual error, she knows how to use phonics to decode but doesn’t pay attention to the meaning of the text. This child reads, “I stepped the milk,” instead of “I spilled the milk.” This error is marked with a V. In this situation, ask the child if what she read makes sense and emphasize that it is important to think about the meaning of the sentence when reading, as well as look carefully at the words.

3. **Structure error (Is the syntax correct?).** The child makes a structure or syntax error when he intuitively understands the syntax in sentences. For example, if a child reads, “I went to the zoo,” instead of “I ran to the zoo,” the English grammar or syntax is correct because a verb goes in that spot, but the word chosen is not correct. Therefore, you mark this error with an S and know the child understands the sentence structure but needs to look more closely at the print.

After categorizing the child’s errors, the teacher can calculate an accuracy rate:

\[
\text{Accuracy} = \frac{\text{Total words} - \text{Errors}}{\text{Total words}} \times 100\%
\]

In other words,

1. Record the number of words in the testing passage (e.g., 70 words).
2. Count the number of errors made by the child and subtract that from the total number of passage words (e.g., 5 errors subtracted from 70 equals 65).
3. Divide that number (65) by the total words in the passage (70).
4. Multiply that by 100; the result equals the percent of accuracy for the passage read (about 93 percent in this example).

If a child reads 95 to 100 percent of the words correctly (generally 0 to 3 errors in the passage), the material is at his or her independent level; if 90 to 95 percent of the words are correct (roughly 4 to 10 errors in the passage), the material is at the instructional level; less than 90 percent of the words read correctly (more than 11 errors) is the child’s frustration level. If a child is at the frustration level with the first book he or she tries, for kindergarten, stop testing. If an older child is at frustration level for the first passage, go down as many levels as necessary until you arrive at the appropriate instructional material.

Keep in mind that although leveled books are good for small group reading instruction, they are not meant to replace literature. Leveled books are only for instruction. The CCSS are recommending that, from time to time, teachers use books above a child’s grade level to help the child strive to reach higher goals. When using books that are more difficult for a child than his or her current instructional level, the teacher needs to model, provide a lot of support, and give the child time for guided practice.

The running record form also contains a place to indicate if the child’s reading was fluent, word by word, or choppy. Teachers can ask children to retell stories read to determine comprehension of text (Kuhn, 2007; Stahl & Heubach, 2005; Bellinger & DiPerna, 2011).
Running records should be done about once a month for all early childhood students. Teachers should talk to children about the types of errors they make in a running record; teachers should also provide children with strategies such as listening to the meaning of a sentence and looking at the letters in the word to figure out a word.

Children who cannot yet read sentences in the first-leveled books can be evaluated for their progress with a letter-recognition test. This test shows the letters of the alphabet printed out of order in upper- and lowercase. Children are asked to read the letter names one row at a time. The teacher records correct and incorrect letters. The test can go one step further, to determine whether students know sound–symbol correspondence, by asking children if they know the sound that particular letters make and a word that begins with each letter or sound and then recording their responses. In addition, high-frequency word-recognition assessment can be done. Figure 5.2 is a high-frequency word list. The list can be divided by grade level according to which words are considered most difficult. The teacher asks children to read words from the list beginning with what are considered to be the easiest first. If they are successful, the next group of words for the next grade level is tried.

**Informal Reading Inventories**

**Informal reading inventories (IRIs)** are similar to running records, but they place a larger emphasis on comprehension. The purpose of this type of inventory is to determine a student’s reading level, such as first, third, or sixth grade. This is done by having children read graded word lists. They may also read graded reading passages orally and silently to help determine if the materials are at their (1) independent reading level (when they don’t need help); (2) instructional reading level (when they can read the material but need some scaffolding from the teacher); or (3) frustration level (when the material is too difficult for them to read). After reading, children answer several types of comprehension questions. Students should read both narrative and informational text. The comprehension questions focus on main ideas, inferences, and vocabulary.

As with the running record, when teachers listen to the oral reading, they use a coding system to identify and record the types of errors the children make. For example, these codes will indicate if the students omit words, repeat words, reverse words, self-correct, add words, substitute words, and so on. This information helps to guide instruction. One of the most important elements of the IRI, however, is the assessment of comprehension when a child reads or listens to a story (Flippo, Holland, McCarthy, & Swinning, 2009). Children can be tested reading orally and silently. Errors are counted and an accuracy percentage is calculated which indicates if the book the child is reading is at his or her independent, instructional, or frustration level.

When we read to children, sometimes the material should be above their reading level but at their level of comprehension. With the use of the IRI, comprehension questions can determine if what is being read is too easy or too difficult for the child’s listening comprehension (Gunning, 2003; Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006; Tompkins, 2003). Teachers can make their own IRI tests, but there are also published tests. Some of these tests are:

Figure 2.7 Sample Reading Inventory and Scoring Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Grade</th>
<th>Miscues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spotty Swims</strong></td>
<td><strong>Substitution</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One day Spotty went for a walk.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sun was warm. Spotty walked to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the pond. There he saw a frog. The</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frog was on a log. Spotty wanted to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>play. Spotty began to bark. The frog</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jumped in the water.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then Spotty jumped into the water.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But poor Spotty did not know what to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do. The water was very deep. The water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>went way over his head. Spotty moved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his legs. Soon his head came out of the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water. He kept moving. He came to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the other side of the pond. That is how</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotty learned to swim.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comprehension Scoring Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>1. ___ What is the story about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>2. ___ Where did Spotty go?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3. ___ What did Spotty see?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>4. ___ What happened when Spotty saw the frog?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>5. ___ What did the frog do when Spotty barked?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>6. ___ What did Spotty do when the water went over his head?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>7. ___ What did Spotty learn in the story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>8. ___ Who was Spotty?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>9. ___ Why do you think Spotty wanted to play with the frog?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>10. ___ What is a &quot;pond&quot;?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Recognition Scoring Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Significant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Level</strong></td>
<td><strong>Significant</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–1</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>0–1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5–2</td>
<td>Ind./Inst.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Instructional</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–4.5</td>
<td>Inst./Frust.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+</td>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>5+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 2  Assessment in Early Literacy


The children are to read the passage. As they read you can determine the types of oral reading errors made, and when they answer the comprehension questions you can see how well they understand the text. If using this as a retell, for oral and silent reading, have them retell it first and then ask them the comprehension questions. Scoring procedures for retelling are in Chapter 6, scoring for types of oral errors are in this chapter, and scoring for comprehension is on the page with the passage. If a child gets 0 to 4 questions correct, the material is at the appropriate level for his independent level of reading. Five questions correct correspond to his instructional level and to 10 incorrect reflects his frustration level. The graded passages tell you what the child’s reading grade level is. Chapter 9 discusses the concept of leveling books for instructional purposes in more depth.

**Portfolio Assessment**

*Portfolio assessment* provides a way for teachers, children, and parents to collect representative samples of children’s work. It can include work in progress and completed samples. A portfolio provides a story of where children have been and what they are capable of doing now, to determine where they should go from this point forth. The teacher’s portfolio should include work selected by the child, teacher, and parent. It should represent the best work that children can produce and illustrate difficulties they may be experiencing. The physical portfolio is often a folder that is personalized with a drawing by the child, a picture of the child, and his or her name.

Currently, many teachers are opting to create digital portfolios where all of the students’ work is electronic. Computerized assignments can simply be transferred into an electronic folder, and projects that are done by hand can be scanned into a computer file and added to that same folder. A separate digital folder can be used for each child. One obvious benefit of a digital portfolio is that it is easy for the student, teacher, parents, and future teachers to obtain copies, as the folders can be attached and sent in an email or transferred to removable storage drives. Digital portfolios also reduce the amount of paperwork stored in the classroom and make organizing and tracking items easier.

Whether a teacher opts for a physical or digital portfolio, it should include grade-appropriate work such as:

- Daily work performance samples
- Anecdotes about behavior
Some schools have formal schedules for collecting portfolios and administering tests (see Figure 2.8). A portfolio should be prepared by the

**Figure 2.8** Schedule for Collecting Portfolio Samples and Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student:</th>
<th>Grade:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School:</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tests are given in September, January, and May. Record the test when given in the space provided.

<table>
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Child interview</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Parent interview</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Self-portrait</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Concepts about print test</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Story retelling/reenactment</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Written retelling*</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Free writing</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Letter recognition</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Running record*</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>High-frequency sight words</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Observation comments</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Not applicable for Pre-K.

Source: Copyright (c) Pearson Education
teacher with the child. Children usually take them home at the end of the school year. Occasionally, teachers pass a portfolio on to the next teacher the child will have (McKenna & Dougherty-Stahl, 2009).

**Standardized Tests: The Pros and Cons**

In addition to the informal assessments discussed to this point, teachers are also responsible for administering formal assessments. Standardized tests are prepared by publishers and are norm referenced; that is, they are administered to large numbers of students when they are created to develop norms. Norms are the average performance of students who are tested at a particular grade and age level. When selecting a standardized test, it is important to check its validity for your students. That is, does the test evaluate what it says it tests for, and does it match the goals you have for your students? The reliability of the test is important as well. In other words, are scores accurate and dependable? Other features of standardized tests are as follows:

1. Grade-equivalent scores are raw scores converted into grade-level scores. For example, if a child is in first grade and receives a grade-equivalent score of 2.3, his performance would be considered above grade level.

2. Percentile ranks are raw scores converted into a rank according to where the child ranked as compared to all children who took the test at the same grade and age level. Therefore, if a youngster received a percentile rank of 80, it would mean that she scored better than or equal to 80 percent of students taking the test at the same grade and age level and that 20 percent of the children taking the test scored better.

Although many criticisms are associated with standardized measures, they do present another source of information about a child's performance. In addition, taking a standardized test does expose children to another type of literacy situation that they are likely to encounter both in and out of school. Parents like receiving the information from the test because it is concrete information regarding where their child ranks among others in the same grade. It must be emphasized, however, that standardized scores are just one type of information and no more important than all the other measures discussed earlier.

**Concerns Associated with Standardized Testing**

Because standardized tests represent only one form of assessment, their use must be coordinated with that of other assessment measures. Some standardized tests for early literacy evaluate children on skills such as auditory memory, rhyme, letter recognition, visual matching, school language, and listening. Less commonly covered by standardized tests are many practices that nurture early literacy, such as measuring a child's prior knowledge, book concepts, attitudes about reading, association of meaning with print, and characteristics of printed materials. Additionally, one child might pass all portions of a standardized test and still not be ready to read. Another child might not pass any portion of the test but already be reading.
Some standardized tests do not match the instructional practices suggested by the latest research and theory on early literacy. Because school districts are often evaluated on how well children perform on the standardized tests, teachers may feel pressured to teach to the test. This situation is often referred to as high-stakes assessment because major decisions are being made from the results of one test score. For example, a teacher’s competency might be judged based on test scores; these scores may also factor into the decision to retain or promote a child to the next grade. Some schools prepare children for standardized tests by drilling them on sample tests similar to the real ones. The sample tests are graded, and instruction is geared to remedy student weaknesses. If teachers do not prepare children for the test with practice sessions and do not teach to the test, their children may not score well. Children must have the advantage of knowing what the test is like. They need to learn how to follow the directions and how to fill in the answers. Yet, test preparation must be held in balance with other teaching methods, so that students are not just learning in order to demonstrate proficiency on a high-stakes test.

Unfortunately, standardized tests, on which high-stakes decisions are based, can potentially yield inaccurate information. Figure 2.9 illustrates hypothetical sub-scores and overall percentile ranks of three kindergarten children on a typical standardized test. This example illustrates the need for teachers to use multiple assessment measures and also take into account the whole child when determining academic strengths and weaknesses.

**Figure 2.9**
Hypothetical Sub-test Profiles on Three Kindergarten Children Achieving about the Same Test Performance Rating
Student A scored well in auditory and visual skills and poorly in language skills. The child’s overall score is at the 50th percentile. Student B has good auditory skills, poor visual skills, and good language skills, and also scored overall at the 50th percentile. Student C scored fairly consistently across visual, auditory, and language skills, and likewise scored overall at the 50th percentile. These three children are very different in ability, yet have scored at the same overall percentile on a standardized test. All three children will go to the first grade and could be placed in the same reading group, even though Student A has a possible language deficit and is missing one of the most important ingredients for reading success—a strong language base. It is very unlikely that the three will achieve similar success in reading, although they might be expected to on the basis of their test scores.

Standardized test scores are less reliable with younger children than with older children, and some tests are still biased in favor of white, middle-class children despite genuine attempts to alleviate the problem. Their use tends to place rural, African American, and English language learners at a disadvantage. Prior knowledge plays a large role in how well children will do on the test. Children from white, middle-class homes tend to have experiences that lead to better achievement on the tests. The joint IRA/NAEYC position statement, Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children (1998), suggests that evaluative procedures used with young children be developmentally and culturally appropriate and that the selection of measures be based on the objectives of an instructional program. Standardized tests and multiple authentic assessments, such as interviews, anecdotal records, checklists, and so on, will provide a complete picture of a child’s progress (IRA, 1999). Parents, community members, and policy makers need to be made aware of the value of classroom-based assessment.

**Literacy Standards and Shifts in the Literacy Curriculum**

As a result, professional literacy organizations, the federal government, and individual states have outlined standards for achievement. The purpose of standards is to articulate what students need to learn at each grade level in the English/Language Arts. In 1996 and again in 2010, the International Reading Association (IRA) and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) published Standards for the English Language Arts, one of the first attempts at national standards in literacy for the United States (1996). The document advanced a set of general standards which, it argued, were needed to do the following:

1. Prepare students for literacy now and in the future with specific concerns about how technology will change the manner in which we deal with literacy in the future.
2. Ensure that students attain the vision of parents, teachers, and researchers about expectations for their achievement in the language arts.
3. Promote high expectations for literacy achievement among children and bridge inequities that exist in educational opportunities for all.


Individual states have written their own very specific standards for the English/Language Arts. Following is a sample of one of New Jersey’s state standards for reading comprehension and responding to text:

**STANDARD #3.1.K.G. COMPREHENSION SKILLS AND RESPONSE TO TEXT*.** New Jersey’s state standard for reading comprehension and responding to text includes the following requirements:

1. Respond to a variety of poems and stories through movement, art, music, and drama
2. Verbally identify the main character, setting, and important events in a story read aloud
3. Identify favorite books and stories
4. Retell a story read aloud using main characters and events
5. Participate in shared reading experiences
6. Make predictions based on illustrations or portions of stories

Full text available at [www13.state.nj.us/NJCCCS](http://www13.state.nj.us/NJCCCS). Reprinted by permission.

Standards are assessed with a test that matches the standards. Potentially everyone could pass standards-based tests since they are based on a certain number of questions answered correctly. This differs from standardized tests, which are based on norms, and 50 percent of the population will pass and 50 percent will fail. To help students become fluent readers, we must have standards beginning with preschool.

**Standards for Prekindergarten**

The National Institute of Literacy and the National Center for Family Literacy (2004) created a panel called the National Early Literacy Panel. Its purpose was to determine (from scientifically based research) what precursors, predictors, and foundational or emergent literacy skills children needed from birth to age 5 to predict success in reading and writing. Several variables were found as predictors of later literacy and could be considered standards to accomplish in preschool literacy. They include:

- **Alphabet knowledge (AK):** knowledge of the names and sounds associated with printed letters
- **Phonological awareness (PA):** the ability to detect, manipulate, or analyze the auditory aspects of spoken language (including the ability to distinguish or segment words, syllables, or phonemes), independent meaning

*www.corestandards.org*
Rapid automatic naming (RAN) of letters or digits: the ability to rapidly name a sequence of random letters or digits

RAN of objects or colors: the ability to rapidly name a sequence of repeating random sets of pictures or objects (e.g., car, tree, house,) or colors

Writing or writing name: the ability to write letters in isolation on request or to write one’s own name

Phonological memory: the ability to remember spoken information for a short period of time

Concepts about books and print: knows the title of the book, author, cover, back, front, print, pictures

Print knowledge: a combination of AK, concepts of print, vocabulary, memory, and PA

Oral language: the ability to produce or comprehend spoken language, including vocabulary and grammar

Visual processing: the ability to match or discriminate visually presented symbols

The panel also found that interventions and intentional instructional practices in preschool or at home that were code focused, involved shared reading, and promoted language development enhanced these early literacy skills.

**COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS.** The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts are national standards being implemented now. These standards have anchor standards for outcomes when children have completed their education. The standards describe what children should be able to demonstrate at the end of each grade. Here is a sample of CCSS standards for Grades K–3:

1. **Key Ideas and Details:** Reading: Fiction and Nonfiction Texts  
   a. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
   b. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; retell and summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
   c. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

2. **Craft and Structure**  
   d. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone in different types of text.
   e. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and to the whole.
   f. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
3. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
   g. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
   h. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
   i. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

4. Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
   j. Read a range of difficult text fluently and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently, orally, in collaboration with others, and proficiently.

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The CCSS are like a spiral staircase. Key Ideas and Details is the first standard in reading and is found in all K–12 grade levels. The Craft and Structure standard begins in kindergarten and becomes more complex as the grades progress. In kindergarten the standard says: With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details. In third grade it says the student will recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures/determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text. In 12th grade it says the child will determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account/provide an objective summary of the text.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS. The most current literacy standards are national standards published by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (2010). By 2013, all but five states (Alaska, Minnesota, Nebraska, Texas, and Virginia) had adopted the standards. The benefit of national standards is that the criteria for children throughout the country are all the same. If a teacher moves to a different state, he or she will be dealing with the same expectations for literacy development, and with a student population so transient, children will meet with similar expectations regardless of where they go to school in the United States. Key considerations in the Common Core State Literacy Standards are:

- To define general cross-disciplinary literacy expectations that must be met for students to be prepared to enter college and workforce training programs ready to succeed. There are grade-specific standards that define end-of-year expectations and a cumulative progression.
- The standards must leave room for states to determine how expectations and goals should be reached and additional topics that might need to be addressed.
- The standards include Comprehension of informational literature and narrative literature, Foundational skills, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Language. These processes of communication are closely connected and taught concurrently.
Students will demonstrate the ability to comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas; to conduct research in order to answer questions or solve problems; and to analyze and create an extensive range of print and nonprint texts in media forms old and new.

The standards insist that reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language be a shared responsibility with the entire school. That is, all subjects (such as science and social studies) must have a place for English Language Arts in developing students’ literacy skills in their content areas.

Implementing and Assessing the CCSS

As the Common Core has become the dominant set of standards in U.S. education for grades K–12, it’s important to understand their full range. In addition to the skills involved in reading and comprehending literature and informational text, the other skills covered by the CCSS include foundational skills, writing skills, speaking and listening skills, and language skills. (See Figure 2.10.) Each of those skill sets will be discussed specifically in subsequent chapters covering the strategies for helping students acquire those particular skills.

Figure 2.10 Common Core Standards 3 through 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 3: Foundational Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Print Concepts (word study, language development, decoding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Phonological Awareness (phonemes, syllables, rhyming patterns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Phonics/Word Recognition (high frequency words, long/short vowels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fluency (reading with purpose and understanding)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Standard 4: Writing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Text Types/Purposes (drawing, dictating, writing, distinguishing/producing different text types)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Production/Distribution of Writing (share writing, respond to adult/peer feedback, respond to questions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research to Build/Present Knowledge (where to find information, collaborative writing experiences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Range of Writing (write for extended/short times, task-oriented, ability to stay focused in different settings)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Standards 5 and 6: Speaking &amp; Listening and Language</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Comprehension/Collaboration (engage in successful conversations, answer/ask questions, express thoughts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conventions of Standard English (identify parts of speech, upper/lower case letters, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge of Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vocabulary Acquisition/Use</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Implementing the CCSS

Even though, as this book was being revised, 30 states were already teaching from the CCSS and in more than half of those states, the majority of teachers have participated in professional development related to the CCSS, there are still many questions about the implementation of the CCSS (Resmovits, 2013). The International Reading Association put out a statement about some of the questions to help teachers move forward with them. Following is a summary of some of their suggestions based on questions being asked.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USE OF CHALLENGING TEXT

- Do not increase levels of texts used in reading instruction in kindergarten and grade 1.
- Instruction across the school year needs to involve students in the reading of texts written at a variety levels.
- Engage children in close reading.

Use 50% narrative literature and 50% informational.

- Read difficult texts to young children, thus exposing them to new vocabulary, and then engage them in critical discussions. Be sure to scaffold reading of difficult text.
- Teachers need professional learning opportunities to be able to provide adequate scaffolding and support for student reading of complex texts in grades 2–12 and listening to complex text in kindergarten and grade 1.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS. Early systematic instruction of foundational skills should occur in grades K–2. However during the K–2 years, teaching of all aspects of the English Language Arts should take place simultaneously and be coordinated.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO COMPREHENSION

- Engage students in reading high-quality texts closely and critically.
- Teach research-proven reading comprehension strategies using gradual release of responsibility approaches.
- Guide students to apply strategies when reading particularly challenging texts.
- Engage in close reading with difficult text. Use short passages and read and discuss the short text sentence by sentence, looking at all the messages within.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO VOCABULARY. Study all strands of the Standards for references to vocabulary development. Vocabulary is not in one section with that title; it is discussed throughout. It is emphasized, however, in the section called Language and in the section called Speaking and Listening. Include vocabulary development across the school day in all subjects. Provide instruction in word-solving strategies as well as teaching individual words.
Chapter 2 Assessment in Early Literacy

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WRITING

- Provide opportunities for students to write in response to reading across the curriculum.
- Provide opportunities that involve reading both print and digital texts, and that require writing in response to reading.
- Teachers will need professional development in teaching students how to write for the multiple reasons that the CCSS require them to do.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISCIPLINARY LITERACY

- Read equal amounts of fiction and nonfiction texts.
- Involve content-area teachers in teaching the disciplinary literacy standards.
- Teach students the literacy strategies that are pertinent to each discipline.
- Provide appropriate professional learning opportunities for teachers in the literacy practices appropriate for their disciplines.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS

- The CCSS require equal outcomes for all students, but they do not require equal inputs. Vary the amounts and types of instruction provided to students to ensure high rates of success.
- Monitor student learning and provide adjustments and supplements based on that information.

States and schools will need to support such efforts with appropriate and timely professional development for teachers.

Assessment and the Common Core

There are two tests for the Common Core. One is called PARCC, which stands for Partnership for Assessment of Reading for College and Career. The other one is called SMARTER Balanced Assessment Tool. Different states have chosen to use one or the other. They are very similar. The tests involve children in the following:

1. Formative assessment to plan instruction.
2. Tightly links assessment to standards.
3. Assesses each child’s achievement in relationship to him- or herself.
4. Assesses each child in relationship to his or her group (compare to their class and to select groups for explicit instruction).
5. Assesses select areas of need and competence across the whole group (to adjust the curriculum if needed).

Children will not be tested until third grade. Following is some information about the tests from the third grade on.
1. There is a big emphasis on aligning the test with the CCSS.
2. Use of evidence is emphasized heavily in the questions. Some reading items include two or more multiple choice sections; part one may ask a question about a text; part two elicits evidence from the text that allowed the student to answer the question. Students have to get both parts correct to obtain credit.
3. Such evidence is treated as important even with vocabulary items (what does this word mean in this context, and which of the following bits of information is the clue that helps you to determine that?).
4. Some items require multiple responses. (For example, a question might ask “Which evidence helps you to figure out . . .?” and be followed by a list of six pieces of evidence from which the child must select all that apply.)
5. Some items allow partial credit, and others require multiple responses without any chance of partial credit.
6. For electronic assessments, some reading items require students to click-and-drag information from a text into a graphic organizer or map.
7. Students will write about the same passages that they read for the reading section.
8. Writing will be scored for development of ideas, organization, and clarity of language.
9. The use of various design schemes is aimed at reducing reliance on formulaic writing.
10. Some writing assessments require students to use information from a single text (summarization in the example shown); other assessments require the synthesis of information from either two or three texts.
11. Writings will be scored on four-point rubrics.
12. Some features of writing will be scored by machine, and other parts will be scored by readers.

**Stages of Child Development**

Early childhood education has always been concerned about the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of the child. The curriculum, therefore, should emphasize all four areas. One cannot discuss early literacy without being concerned with the total child. This information is needed when preparing instructional environments and activities. This knowledge will also help determine whether children have special needs related to learning disabilities, giftedness, or communication disorders, for example. Considering the total development of the child, and not just the cognitive, has been and always should be a hallmark in early childhood education and must influence early literacy development as well. Figure 2.11 describes the developmental characteristics of children from birth through 8 years (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1998, pp. 63–69). It can be used as a reference throughout this book in teaching and assessing child development. The chart can be used as a checklist for evaluating child development.
**Figure 2.11** Developmental Characteristics of Children during Stages of Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develops rapidly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changes from waking because of hunger and distress to sleeping through the night with two naps during the day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changes eating patterns from every three hours to regular meals three times a day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develops control of muscles that hold up the head. By four months enjoys holding up head.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focuses eyes and begins to explore the environment visually.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Begins to grasp objects at about sixteen weeks. Can grasp and let go by six months.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rolls over intentionally (four to six months).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holds own bottle (six to eight months).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shows first tooth at about six months. Has about twelve teeth by age one.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sits well alone, can turn and recover balance (six to eight months).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raises body at nine months. May even pull self up to a standing position.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Starts to crawl at six months and to creep at nine or ten months.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May begin walking by age one.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begins to smile socially (four or five months).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enjoys frolicking and being jostled.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognizes mother or other significant adult.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notices hands and feet and plays with them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>By six months likes playing, alone or with company.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Begins to be wary of strangers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperates in games such as peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imitates actions of others.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differentiates crying according to specific discomforts, such as being hungry, cold, or wet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shows emotions by overall body movements, such as kicking, arm waving, and facial expressions.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begins to show pleasure when needs are being met.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By six months shows affection by kissing and hugging.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows signs of fearfulness.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushes away things not liked.</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First discriminates mother from others; later discriminates familiar faces from those of strangers.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explores world through looking, mouthing, grasping.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspects things for long periods.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a first sign of awareness, protests disappearance of objects.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovers how to make things happen and delights in doing so by repeating an action several times.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Figure 2.11** Developmental Characteristics of Children during Stages of Development (continued)

Between six and twelve months becomes aware of object permanency by recognizing that an object has been taken away and by looking for a hidden object.

Begins intentional actions by pulling at an object or removing an obstacle to get at an object.

Becomes increasingly curious about surroundings.

### One and Two Years Old

**Physical**

Begins to develop many motor skills.

Continues teething until about eighteen months; develops all twenty teeth by age two.

Develops large muscles. Crawls well, stands alone (at about a year), and pushes chair around.

Starts to walk at about a year to fifteen months.

Places ball in and out of box.

Releases ball with thrust.

Creeps down stairs backward.

Develops fine motor skills. Stacks two blocks, picks up a bean, and puts objects into a container. Starts to use spoon. Puts on simple things—for instance, an apron over the head.

By end of eighteen months, scribbles with a crayon in vertical or horizontal lines.

Turns pages of book.

During second year, walks without assistance.

Runs but often bumps into things.

Jumps up and down.

Walks up and down stairs with one foot forward.

Holds glass with one hand.

Stacks at least six blocks and strings beads.

Opens doors and cupboards.

Scribbles spirals, loops, and rough circles.

Starts to prefer one hand to the other.

Starts day control of elimination.

**Social**

At age one, differentiates meagerly between self and other.

Approaches mirror image socially.

By eighteen months, distinguishes between terms you and me.

Plays spontaneously; is self-absorbed but notices newcomers.

Imitates behavior more elaborately.

Identifies body parts.

Responds to music.

Develops socialization by age two. Is less interested in playing with parent and more interested in playing with a peer.

Begins parallel play, playing side by side, but without interaction.

By age two learns to distinguish strongly between self and others.
Is ambivalent about moving out and exploring.  
Becomes aware of owning things and may become very possessive.

**Emotional**  
At age one is amiable.  
At eighteen months is resistant to change. Often suddenly—won’t let mother out of sight.  
Tends to rebel, resist, fight, run, hide.  
Perceives emotions of others.  
At age one, shows no sense of guilt. By age two, begins to experience guilt and shows beginnings of conscience.  
Says no emphatically. Shows willfulness and negativism.  
Laughs and jumps exuberantly.

**Cognitive**  
Shows mental imagery: looks for things that are hidden, recalls and anticipates events, moves beyond here and now, begins temporal and spatial orientation.  
Develops deductive reasoning: searches for things in more than one place.  
Reveals memory: shows deferred imitation by seeing an event and imitating it later.  
Remembers names of objects.  
Completes awareness of object permanence.  
By age two or three distinguishes between black and white and may use names of colors.  
Distinguishes one from many.  
Says “one, two, three” in rote counting, but not often in rational counting.  
Acts out utterances and talks about actions while carrying them out.  
Takes things apart and tries to put them back together.  
Shows sense of time by remembering events. Knows terms today and tomorrow, but mixes them up.

**Three and Four Years Old**

**Physical**  
Expands physical skills.  
Rides a tricycle.  
Pushes a wagon.  
Runs smoothly and stops easily.  
Climbs jungle gym ladder.  
Walks stairs with alternating feet forward.  
Jumps with two feet.  
Shows high energy level.  
By four can do a running broad jump.  
 Begins to skip, pushing one foot ahead of the other.  
Can balance on one foot.
Figure 2.11 Developmental Characteristics of Children during Stages of Development (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Stages of Child Development | Becomes aware of racial and sexual differences. 
By four shows growing sense of initiative and self-reliance. 
Becomes aware of basic sex identity. 
Not uncommonly develops imaginary playmates (a trait that may appear as early as two and a half). |
| Social | Becomes more social. 
Moves from parallel play to early associative play. Joins others in activities. |
| Emotional | Begins enjoying humor. Laughs when adults laugh. 
Develops inner control over behavior. 
Shows less negativism. 
Develops phobias and fears, which may continue until age five. 
At four may begin intentional lying, but is outraged by parents’ white lies. |
| Cognitive | Begins problem-solving skills. Stacks blocks and may kick them down to see what happens. 
Learns to use listening skills as a means of learning about the world. 
Still draws in scribbles at age three, but in one direction and less repetitively. 
At age four, drawings represent what child knows and thinks is important. 
Is perceptually bound to one attribute and characteristic. “Why” questions abound. 
Believes everything in the world has a reason, but the reason must accord with the child’s own knowledge. 
Persists in egocentric thinking. 
Begins to sort out fantasy from reality. |
| Five and Six Years Old | Physical | Well controlled and constantly in motion. 
Often rides a bicycle as well as a tricycle. 
Can skip with alternating feet and hop. 
Can control fine motor skills. Begins to use tools such as toothbrush, saw, scissors, pencil, hammer, needle for sewing. 
Has established handedness well. Identifies hand used for writing or drawing. 
Can dress self, but may still have trouble tying shoelaces. 
At age six begins to lose teeth. |
Figure 2.11 Developmental Characteristics of Children during Stages of Development (continued)

**Social**
Becomes very social. Visits with friends independently.
Becomes very self-sufficient.
Persists longer at a task. Can plan and carry out activities and return to projects next day.
Plays with two or three friends, often for just a short time only, then switches play groups.
Begins to conform. Is very helpful.
By age six becomes very assertive, often bossy, dominating situations and ready with advice.
Needs to be first. Has difficulty listening.
Is possessive and boastful.
Craves affection. Often has a love–hate relationship with parents.
Refines sex roles. Has tendency to type by sex.
Becomes clothes conscious.

**Emotional**
Continues to develop sense of humor.
Learns right from wrong.
At age five begins to control emotions and is able to express them in socially approved ways.
Quarrels frequently, but quarrels are of short duration.
At age six shifts emotions often and seems to be in emotional ferment.
New tensions appear as a result of attendance at school all day. Temper tantrums appear.
Giggles over bathroom words.
At age five develops a conscience, but sees actions as all good or all bad.
At age six accepts rules and often develops rigid insistence that they be obeyed.
May become a tattletale.

**Cognitive**
Begins to recognize conservation of amount and length.
Becomes interested in letters and numbers. May begin printing or copying letters and numbers. Counts.
Knows most colors.
Recognizes that one can get meaning from printed words.
Has a sense of time, but mainly personal time. Knows when events take place in the child's own day or week.
Recognizes own space and can move about independently in familiar territory.

**Seven and Eight Years Old**

**Physical**
Great variation in height and weight, but rate of growth slows.
Masters physical skills for game playing and enjoys team sports.
Is willing to repeat a skill over and over to mastery.
Increases in fine motor performance—can draw a diamond correctly and form letters well.
Figure 2.11  Developmental Characteristics of Children during Stages of Development (continued)

Has sudden spurts of energy.
Loss of baby teeth continues and permanent teeth appear.
Physique begins to change. Body more proportionately developed and facial structure changes.

Social
Beginning to prefer own sex—has less boy/girl interaction.
Peer groups begin to form.
Security in sex identification.
Self-absorption.
Begins to work and play independently.
Can be argumentative.
At seven still not a good loser and often a tattletale.
By eight plays games better and not as intent on winning.
Conscientious—can take responsibility for routine chores.
Less selfish. Able to share. Wants to please.
Still enjoys and engages in fantasy play.

Emotional
Difficulty in starting things, but will persist to end.
Worries that school might be too hard.
Beginning of empathy—sees other’s viewpoint.
Sense of humor expressed in riddles, practical jokes, and nonsense words.
Discriminates between good and bad, but still immature.
Is sensitive and gets hurt easily.
Has sense of possession and takes care of possessions (makes collections).

Cognitive
Attention span is quite long.
Can plan and stay with a task or project over a long period.
Interested in conclusions and logical ends.
Aware of community and the world.
Expanding knowledge and interest.
Some sevens read well and by eight really enjoy reading.
Can tell time—aware of passage of time in months and years.
Interested in other time periods.
Conscious of other’s work and their own. May comment, “I’m good at art, but Sue is better at reading.”
Differences in abilities widening.

Chapter 2  Assessment in Early Literacy

Summary

2-1 Explain the role of assessment in early literacy development.
Assessment in early literacy development is used for guiding instruction first and therefore is a crucial element in the design of a program for children. At this stage, assessment is as much about information gathering as it is about evaluation—educators need to collect information to determine how to create more effective instruction. Assessment at this stage should also seek to be panoramic. That is, assessment needs to align with instructional objectives and, at the same time, take into account the total development of the child.

2-2 Define authentic assessment and describe several techniques for conducting it.
Authentic assessment activities represent and reflect the actual learning from inside and outside the classroom. The different authentic assessment models allow educators to determine what a child knows and needs to
learn. Educators should integrate a variety of authentic assessment methods into their instruction. Some of the more common and more useful types include anecdotal observation forms, daily performance samples, audio recordings, videos, pencil-and-paper forms, student evaluations, surveys and interviews, conferences, and checklists.

2-3 Identify and describe in-depth measures of assessment.

Unlike the performance snapshots provided by authentic assessment tools, in-depth measures of assessment allow educators to track a student’s longitudinal progress. Running records involve recording on a monthly basis errors and error types and tracking a child's accuracy rate. Informal reading inventories are similar to running records but also track comprehension. Portfolio assessment involves collecting pieces of work that, over time, paint an almost complete picture of the child’s literacy achievement. The information in a portfolio should be shared with the child, parents, and school personnel.

2-4 Discuss the pros and cons of standardized testing.

Standardized tests are prepared by publishers and are norm referenced. Raw scores are converted into grade-level scores and into percentile ranks that allow for a child's performance to be compared to his or her larger group of cohorts. Scores and rankings provide simple and understandable measures of performance. There are, however, many concerns about using standardized tests: they only test one modality; they may not reflect instructional best practices; teachers may feel pressured to teach to the test; quantitative results do not qualitatively reflect the strengths and weaknesses in the aggregate score; and standardized tests produce less reliable results with younger children.

2-5 Literacy standards and how they reflect the shift in the literacy curriculum.

Literacy standards articulate what students need to learn at each grade level in English/Language Arts. CCSS describe what children should be able to demonstrate at the end of each grade and are organized into four levels: key ideas and details, craft and structure, integration of knowledge and ideas, and range of reading and level of text complexity. CCSS have been adopted by 45 states and provide uniform expectations for student outcomes across the country. The standards do however, leave room for each state to determine how to reach the standards. The CCSS emphasize helping each child become a reader who can understand critically analyze materials read, so the standards emphasize the use of non fiction materials and project based instruction.

2-6 Describe the assessment tools designed to measure outcomes.

Two types of assessments built specifically to measure outcomes against the CCSS are the Partnership for Assessment of Reading for College and Career (PARCC) and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Tool. A variety of publishers are also building assessment tools. Regardless of the assessment type, in the context of the CCSS, assessment should be formative, tightly linked to standards, assess each child’s individual progress, assess each child’s progress in relationship to his or her peers, and assess whole groups across specific areas of need and competence as a way to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum.
Activities and Questions

1. Select a child from your field placement or from your own classroom. The child can be a relative or a friend's child. The child should be between the ages of 4 and 8. Begin a portfolio for this child and collect the following pieces of work over a three-month period of time:
   a. An analyzed language sample (Chapter 4)
   b. Concepts about books and conventions of print (Chapter 5)
   c. Letter recognition (Chapter 5)
   d. Phonological awareness test (Chapter 5)
   e. Phonics test (Chapter 5)
   f. Frequently used words (Chapter 5)
   g. Sulzby's classification scheme for children's emergent reading level (Chapter 6)
   h. Story retelling for sequence, details, and story structure (Chapter 6)
   i. Assessment of writing samples (Chapter 7)
   j. Running record for grade level and types of errors (Chapter 2)
   k. Assessment of comprehension of text (Chapter 6)
   l. Child interviews about reading and writing (Chapter 2)
   m. Promoting early literacy at home, parent interview (Chapter 10)

2. Imagine that the parents in your district are not pleased with the authentic measures for assessment being used. They want to know if their children are doing as well as others. Based on standardized test scores, they want to know if their child is above, below, or at grade level. You are convinced that authentic assessment is the right way to evaluate children. What can you do to help parents understand and accept the authentic assessment strategies? Plan a parent workshop to inform them about standards and how you link your instruction and assessment to them.

3. Design your own assessment that you could potentially use in your classroom. Outline the components of the assessment and align them with the corresponding standards in this chapter. Provide a brief rationale for what this assessment is measuring and how its student results could impact future lessons.