



PREFACE

Creating Literacy Instruction for All Students will not tell you how to teach reading and writing. Providing literacy instruction is in large measure a matter of making choices: Should you use basal reader anthologies or children's books, or both? Should you teach children to read whole words or to sound out words letter by letter, or both? Should you have three reading groups or four in your class, or no groups? There are no right answers to these questions. The answers depend on your personal philosophy, your interpretation of the research, the level at which you are teaching, the diversity of the students you are teaching, community preferences, and the nature of your school's or school district's reading program.

What this book will do is help you discover approaches and techniques that fit your teaching style and your teaching situation. Its aim is to present as fairly, completely, and clearly as possible the major approaches and techniques shown by research and practice to be successful. This book also presents the theories and research behind the methods, so you will be free to choose, adapt, and/or construct approaches and techniques that best fit your style and teaching situation. You will be creating literacy instruction.

Although the text emphasizes approaches and techniques, methods are only part of the equation. Reading is not just a process; it is also very much a content area. What students read does matter, and, therefore, I have provided recommendations for specific children's books and other reading materials. The basic premise of this book is that the best reading programs result through a combination of effective techniques and plenty of worthwhile reading material.

Because children differ greatly in their backgrounds, needs, and interests, the book offers a variety of suggestions about techniques and types of reading materials. The intent is to provide you with sufficient background knowledge of teaching methods and children's books and other reading materials to enable you to create effective instruction for all the children you teach, whether they are rich or poor; bright, average, or struggling; with disabilities or without; urban or suburban; or from any of the diverse cultural and ethnic groups found in today's classrooms.

This book also recognizes that reading is part of a larger language process; therefore, considerable attention is paid to writing and the other language arts, especially as these relate to reading instruction. Whether reading or writing is being addressed, the emphasis is on making the students the center of instruction. For instance, I recommend activities that allow students to choose writing topics and reading materials. Approaches that foster a personal response to reading along with a careful analysis of text are also advocated. Just as you are encouraged by this text to create your own reading instruction, students must be encouraged to create their own literacy.

Changes to the Ninth Edition

During the time that has elapsed since the publication of the eighth edition of this book, it has become clear that teachers across the country are struggling with implementing the more demanding standards set by Common Core and by states that have created their own version of standards designed to prepare students to be college and career ready. Because assessments aligned with the Common Core are more difficult, students' scores on tests that are based on the Common Core have dropped precipitously, especially among students who live in poverty and those who are English language learners (ELLs). Although teachers generally approve of the more challenging standards, they have expressed a need for additional support. A major focus of this revision has been to provide additional explanations, examples, and teaching suggestions for Common Core State Standards. These examples are especially geared toward those standards that focus on mood and tone or using

multiple sources, including primary and digital sources, that have not been emphasized or even presented in traditional literacy curricula.

Other new features include:

- In keeping with Common Core’s emphasis on reading informational text, techniques specifically designed for reading and writing informational texts have been added.
- Additional sources of informational books, periodicals, websites, and databases as well as suggestions for their use.
- Suggestions for additional ways to integrate electronic resources into the curriculum along with intriguing programs that promote literacy teaching and learning.
- Increased emphasis, throughout the text, on the kind of thorough instruction and preparation needed to read and respond to complex literary and informational text.
- Increased focus on matching students with appropriate materials. Given the emphasis on providing students with more challenging materials, the text stresses the need to give students materials on their reading level but also use scaffolding, such as step-stone reading, and more intensive instruction and practice to move them into higher levels of functioning.

As with previous revisions, the ninth edition also contains updated information and research as well as the additions and revisions listed below.

Chapter 1: The Nature of Literacy

- Explanation of current emphasis on analysis of complex text
- Recommendation to combine reader response and text analysis
- Updates of the status of literacy achievement in the United States
- Added information about Common Core State Standards with emphasis on key goals
- Updated information on the new literacies
- Additional information on the importance of parent talk on the development of language in young children
- Additional information on developing the literacy of English language learners
- Expanded discussion of the need to provide materials on the appropriate level

Chapter 2: Teaching All Students

- Added information on the impact of poverty on literacy development and techniques for helping students living in poverty
- Information on specific language impairments
- Description of additional literacy programs for gifted students
- Added discussion of role of students’ culture in a literacy program

Chapter 3: Assessing for Learning

- Explanation of learning targets and learning progressions
- Additional information on providing feedback as an essential element in assessing for learning
- Expanded discussion of performance assessment
- Added information about running records
- Explanation of student learning objectives
- Additional information on obtaining readability estimates of texts

Chapter 4: Fostering Emergent/Early Literacy

- Expanded information on reading aloud to students
- Explanation of dialogic reading
- Additional information on effective preschool literacy programs

Chapter 5: Teaching Phonics, High-Frequency Words, and Syllabic Analysis

- Additional information on teaching blends
- Explanation of changes in scope and sequence for teaching phonics so as to align with Common Core State Standards
- Addition of NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) Oral Reading Fluency Scale

Chapter 6: Building Vocabulary

- Expanded description of how words are learned
- Discussion of ways in which vocabulary from informational text is learned
- Inclusion of additional techniques for learning new words
- Use of technology to build vocabulary
- Description of the teaching of idioms and proverbs
- Description of a strategy that combines morphemic and contextual analysis
- Description of ways to assess vocabulary
- Discussion of the need to close the vocabulary gap

Chapter 7: Comprehension: Theory and Strategies

- Expanded explanation with examples of a situation (mental) model of comprehension
- Discussion of a standard of coherence, which is the reader's criteria or general sense of the logic and consistency of the text
- Description of close reading
- Discussion of need to balance preparing students to read but not providing so much preparation that there is no need to read
- Discussion of examples of the kinds of comprehension difficulties that students experience on national assessments

Chapter 8: Comprehension: Text Structures and Teaching Procedures

- Discussion of importance of being able to answer “how” and “why” questions
- Discussion of specialized techniques used in informational texts
- Explanation of strategies, including reflective reading, for reading informational text
- Expanded discussion of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy
- Importance of building a positive identity as a learner
- Application of a questioning technique known as responsive elaboration to specific breakdowns in comprehension
- Discussion of finding textual evidence

Chapter 9: Reading and Writing in the Content Areas and Study Skills

- Explanation of how to use a steppingstone approach to build students' ability to read high-level texts on the same subject
- Discussion of using databases of informational texts
- Description of using primary sources
- Expanded explanation for using retrieval to enhance memory

Chapter 10: Reading Literature

- Discussion of the New Critics and close reading
- Discussion of combining close reading and reader response
- Explanation and listing of questions to promote close reading
- Explanation and listing of questions to promote reader response
- Discussion of fables and their role in a literature program
- Addition of close reading questions for discussing novels
- Expansion of discussion of character, plot, and theme analysis
- Explanation of mood, tone, and point of view

Chapter 11: Approaches to Teaching Reading

- Expanded discussion of units
- Expanded discussion of guided reading
- Description and exploration of the project approach

Chapter 12: Writing and Reading

- Expanded explanation of importance of writing
- Discussion of use of mentor texts
- Expanded discussion of use of technology in writing
- Expanded explanation and discussion of techniques for composing explanatory and informational texts and reports
- Expanded discussion of the assessment of writing
- Expanded discussion of the impact of writing on reading

Chapter 13: Creating and Managing a Literacy Program

- Expanded coverage of differentiation of instruction
- Additional discussion of involving parents
- Expanded description of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Discussion of programs and texts that incorporate extensive digital supports
- Expanded coverage of e-books

Organization of the Text

The text's organization has been designed to reflect the order of the growth of literacy. Chapter 1 stresses the construction of a philosophy of teaching reading and writing, including the concepts of close reading and reader response. Chapter 2 stresses the need to prepare every child to be college and career ready and discusses the diversity of students in today's schools and some special challenges in bringing all students to full literacy. Chapter 3 presents techniques for evaluating individuals and programs so that assessment becomes an integral part of instruction. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss emergent literacy and basic decoding strategies, including phonics, syllabic analysis, fluency, and high-frequency words. Chapter 6 presents advanced word-recognition skills and strategies: morphemic analysis, dictionary skills, and techniques for building vocabulary. Chapters 7 through 9 are devoted to comprehension: Chapter 7 emphasizes comprehension strategies that students might use, including those needed to read complex text; Chapter 8 focuses on text structures and teaching procedures; Chapter 9 covers application of comprehension skills in the content areas and through studying. Chapter 10 takes a step beyond comprehension by focusing on responding to literature and fostering a love of reading.

Chapters 4 through 10, which emphasize essential reading strategies, constitute the core of the book. Chapters 11 through 13 provide information on creating a well-rounded literacy program. Chapter 11 describes approaches to teaching reading. Chapter 12 explains the process approach to writing narrative, informational, and persuasive text and discusses how reading and writing are related. Chapter 13 pulls all the topics together in a discussion of principles for organizing and implementing a literacy program. Also included in this final chapter are a section on intervention programs, a section on technology and its place in a program of literacy instruction, and a section on professional development.

This text, designed to be practical, offers detailed explanations and numerous examples of applications for every major technique or strategy. Many suggestions for practice activities and reading materials are also included. I hope that this book will furnish an in-depth knowledge of literacy methods and materials so that the teachers and future teachers who use it will be able to construct lively, effective reading and writing instruction for all the students they teach.

Enhanced eText Features

Enhanced eText features have been incorporated throughout the text. Features that have been added to the digital revision include Taking a Closer Look, Digging Deeper, Your Turn, Lessons from the Past, and Section Quizzes.*

- **Taking a Closer Look** presents brief video clips of literacy techniques being taught or explanations by literacy experts. These are then followed by reflection questions about how these techniques are used and their effectiveness in the classroom.
- **Digging Deeper** are pop-up features that present additional information on key topics, such as sources of high-quality websites or motivating voluntary reading.
- **Your Turn** features are hands-on activities, such as planning a lesson or analyzing a running record, that allow students to practice what they have learned about in each chapter.
- **Learning from the Past** pop-up features offer a brief history of the literacy instruction covered in the chapter, for example, a history of phonics or writing instruction.
- **Section Quizzes** are presented at the end of each section and align with each learning outcome. This is a powerful feature of the digital revision. In addition to enabling readers to check their knowledge of a section, the quizzes foster retrieval of essential information, which promotes long-term memory. The quizzes also provide preparation for professional tests, such as the Praxis (ETS) or Foundations of Reading (Pearson) that readers might be required to take.



Pearson's eLearning modules are individual learning objects, self-contained at the topic level. Each module is built around a single, practical and applied learning outcome. Modules include learning outcomes, presentations of concepts and skills, opportunities to apply one's understanding of those concepts and skills, and assessments to check for understanding. The modules have three main sections. The **Learn** section presents the essential information a learner needs in order to meet the module's learning outcome. The **Apply** section includes exercises meant to give the learner an opportunity to practice applying this concept in a classroom context. And finally, the **Assess** section provides a test to measure the learner's understanding of material presented in the module, as well the learner's ability to use this material in an instructional setting.

In the new edition, you will find:

- The module "Multi-Tiered Systems of Support" in Chapter 2 to enhance coverage of Response to Intervention.

*Please note that these enhancements are available only through the Pearson eText platform. Other third-party eTexts (i.e., CourseSmart, Kindle) might not contain these enhancements.



- The module “Formative Assessment” in Chapter 3 to enhance coverage of formative assessment.
- The module “Selecting Texts” in Chapter 3 to enhance coverage of leveling systems.
- The module “Building Phonemic Awareness” in Chapter 4 to enhance coverage on learning the letters of the alphabet.
- The module “Developing Fluency” in Chapter 5 to enhance that chapter’s fluency coverage.
- The module “Guided Reading” in Chapter 8 to deepen and articulate the chapter’s coverage of guided reading.
- The module “Nonfiction Structures and Features” in Chapter 9 to enhance coverage of text features that foster learning.
- The module “Writing Workshop” in Chapter 12 to deepen and articulate the chapter’s coverage of writing workshop.

FEATURES OF THIS TEXT

Throughout the ninth edition of *Creating Literacy Instruction for All Students*, special pedagogical features draw the reader's attention to issues of recurring importance in literacy instruction as well as aid with review and understanding of key concepts.

Opening Learning Aids include **Anticipation Guides**, which are statements designed to probe students' attitudes and beliefs about key concepts and practices that will be explored in the upcoming chapter. **Using What You Know** is an overview of the chapter and is designed to activate students' background knowledge about the chapter content.

ANTICIPATION GUIDE

Complete the anticipation guide below. It will help to activate your prior knowledge so that you interact more fully with the chapter. It is designed to probe your attitudes and beliefs about important and sometimes controversial topics. Sometimes, we don't realize that we already know something about a topic until we stop and think about it. By activating your prior knowledge, you will be better prepared to make connections between new information contained in this chapter and what you already know. There are often no right or wrong answers to Anticipation Guide statements; the statements will alert you to your attitudes about reading instruction and encourage you to become aware of areas where you might require additional information. After completing the chapter, you might respond to the anticipation guide again to see if your answers have changed in light of what you have read. For each of the following statements, put a check under "Agree" or "Disagree" to show how you feel. Discuss your responses with classmates before you read the chapter.

	AGREE	DISAGREE
1. Before children learn to read, they should know the sounds of most letters.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Reading should not be fragmented into a series of subskills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Oral reading should be accurate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Phonics should be taught only when a need arises.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Reading short passages and answering questions about them provide excellent practice.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Mistakes in oral reading should be ignored unless they change the sense of the passage.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

USING WHAT YOU KNOW This chapter provides a general introduction to literacy instruction in preschool and grades K–8. Before reading the chapter, examine your personal knowledge of the topic so that you will be better prepared to interact with the information. What do you think reading is? What do you do when you read? What do you think the reader's role is? Is it simply to receive the author's message, or should it include some personal input? How about writing? What processes do you use when you write? How would you go about teaching reading and writing to today's students? What do you think the basic principles of a literacy program should be? What elements have worked especially well in programs with which you are familiar?

Marginal annotations provide the reader with interesting, practical, and handy guidance for planning and adapting instruction. These notes are titled *Adapting Instruction for Struggling Readers and Writers*, *Adapting Instruction for English Language Learners*, *Using Technology*, *Assessing for Learning*, *Building Language*, *CCSS* (marking places in the text where a Common Core State Standard is being addressed), and *FYI* (providing information on a variety of topics).



LESSON 4.1

OBJECTIVE Students will segment words into phonemes.

Elkonin Phonemic Segmentation Technique

STEP 1. Explain the task, model it, and guide the child through it. Explain to students that this will help them read and spell words.

STEP 2. Give the child a drawing of a hat. Remind the child to say the word that names the picture and to stretch the word out so that she or he can hear the separate sounds. If the child has difficulty noting the sounds, very carefully and deliberately pronounce the word. Emphasize each sound, but do not distort the word.

STEP 3. Have the child put a marker in each block while saying each sound. The number of blocks tells the child how many separate sounds there are in a word. The child says /h/ and puts a marker in the first block, then says /a/ and puts a marker in the second block, and finally puts a marker in the third block while saying /t/.

STEP 4. As the child becomes more proficient, eliminate the blocks and markers, and have her or him simply tell how many sounds are in a word.

STEP 5. Evaluate the students' ability to segment words. Note how many sounds students are representing in their invented spelling. Provide additional instruction and practice as necessary.



Model Lessons cover nearly every area of literacy instruction.



EXEMPLARY TEACHING

Turning Reluctant Readers into Avid Readers

During the summer children living in poverty lose about three months in reading achievement (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2014). Without the structure of school and access to the school's literacy resources, students read less or fail to read all together, thus sliding three months down the literacy scale. Preventing the summer slide from grades 1 through 8 would add approximately 2.4 years of growth and go a long way towards closing the poverty-induced literacy gap.

One way to combat the summer literacy slide is to develop students who have a strong desire to read. Middle school teacher Kathy King-Dickman (2013) worked with several groups of reluctant readers in high-poverty schools. Out of the fifty middle-school students that she taught, only four were avid readers. She described her students as being bored and disengaged. Drawing on 27 years of teaching experience, she focused on what worked best. Her first step was to get to know the students and show that she really cared about them. She then prefaced each class with an explanation of why they were learning the skill or topic being taught that day. She also gave them choices and conferred often

about the books they were reading. A key element was providing books at their level. Noting that many of her students were reading below grade level and spent much of their day being frustrated by materials and tasks that were too difficult, she arranged for them to select books at their reading level, not their grade level. Realizing that students living in poverty may not have a place or time when they could read, she provided opportunities for reading in school. As her students grew into the habit of reading at school, they began finding places and times to read outside of school.

She built on their strengths so that they began to see themselves as readers and writers. She fostered students' discussions so that they became more engaged and benefited by sharing knowledge and insights with their classmates. As the year progressed, most of King-Dickman's students became avid readers. Recently, she received a letter from Elena, a student she taught from fourth through seventh grade and whose family had no steady income. In her letter, Elena explained that she had planned to read three books that summer but was now beginning her tenth. Elena ended her letter by saying, "Thank you for teaching me to read and write" (p. 62).

Exemplary Teaching features help make the descriptions of teaching techniques come alive by offering examples of good teaching practices. All are true-life accounts; many were drawn from the memoirs of gifted teachers, and others were garnered from newspaper reports or my own observations.



Building Language

When students are responding orally to IRQ questions, note the level and quality of their language and use your observations to plan a program of language development.



Adapting Instruction for Struggling Readers and Writers

Classroom teachers are taking increased responsibility for helping struggling readers and writers. Suggestions for working with struggling readers and writers are made throughout this book.



Adapting Instruction for English Language Learners

As students move up through the grades and the texts become more complex, proficiency in English becomes a greater factor and ELLs may begin to fall behind. (August, Shanahan, & Shanahan, 2006).



Using Technology

Controversies similar to "how should phonics be taught?" are often explored on the websites of professional organizations, such as the International Reading Association.

CCSS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CC.R.1: 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.

Assessing for Learning

Assessments for the Common Core State Standards will include summative, benchmark/interim, and formative assessments. By making use of technology, the assessment will provide teachers with timely feedback so that results can be used to plan instruction.

FYI

To clarify your philosophy of teaching, ask, "What are my instructional practices, and why am I doing what I'm doing?" Examining your practices should help you uncover your beliefs.



CASE STUDY

Good Decoding, Poor Comprehending

Although he has excellent decoding skills and reads orally with fluency and expression, Mark has problems understanding what he reads. He also has difficulty answering questions about selections that have been read to him. On a reading inventory known as the QRI-3, Mark was able to read the sixth-grade word list with no errors. He was also able to read the words on the sixth-grade oral passage with no errors. However, his comprehension was below 50 percent on the sixth-grade passage and also on the fourth- and fifth-grade passages. Puzzled by Mark's performance, the reading consultant analyzed Mark's responses (Dewitz & Dewitz, 2003). The consultant wanted to get some insight into Mark's thinking processes. The correct responses didn't reveal much about Mark's thinking. They simply restated what was in the text. When erroneous responses were analyzed, patterns appeared. Mark could answer questions that required

comprehending only a single sentence. However, he had difficulty with questions that required linking ideas across sentences or passages. Putting ideas together posed problems for him. Mark could pick up information from one segment but couldn't integrate that with information from another segment.

Mark also overrelied on background knowledge. He made up answers. This happened when he was unable to recall a fact or put pieces of information together. Mark also had some minor difficulty with complex syntactical structures and vocabulary. Based on an analysis of Mark's responses, the consultant created a program for Mark and other students who had similar difficulties. After instruction, Mark was able to comprehend sixth-grade material. He was no longer overrelying on background knowledge, and he was connecting and integrating ideas.

Case Studies offer perspectives on teachers at work improving their programs.

STUDENT STRATEGIES

Judging Sources

Once students seem to grasp the concept of judging sources for fairness, help them develop a set of questions that they might use to assess printed sources and websites they consult:

- Is the source up to date?
- Who is the author?
- Is the author unbiased? Is there any reason that the author would be in favor of one side or one position?
- Is the writing fair, or does it seem to be slanted?
- Does the author give enough proof for all conclusions?

Who is the publisher? Is it a well-known company, an educational institution, a company, or an individual?

Is the website an educational, governmental, organizational, or commercial site, or is it the site of an individual?

You might post the questions as a reminder for students to use them when they are reading. The questions might also be adapted and used in evaluating speeches and informational TV programs.

Student Strategies outline step-by-step strategies to help students become independent learners.

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

Alphabet Knowledge

- Have children create their own alphabet books.
- Help children create name cards. Explain that names begin with uppercase letters but that the other letters in a name are lowercase.
- Make a big book of the alphabet song, and point to the letters and words as children sing along.
- If children are using classroom computers or tablets, teach the letters of the alphabet as you teach them keyboarding skills.
- Encourage students to write as best they can. This will foster learning of the alphabet as they move from using pictures and letterlike forms to actual letters to express themselves.
- As you write messages, announcements, or stories on the board, spell out the words so that students will hear the names of the letters in a very natural way.
- Sing songs, such as "Bingo," that spell out words or use letters as part of their lyrics.
- Read books such as *Chicka chicka boom boom* (Martin & Archaumbault, 1989), in which letters play a prominent role.
- Most important, provide an environment in which children are surrounded by print. Encourage students to engage in reading and writing activities. These might include "reading" a wordless picture book, using a combination of drawings and letterlike figures to compose a story, creating some sort of list, using invented spelling to write a letter to a friend, exploring a computer keyboard, or listening to a recorded account of a story. Interaction with print leads to knowledge of print. The ability to form letters improves without direct instruction (Hildreth, 1936). However, systematic instruction should complement the provision of opportunities to learn. Learning the alphabet is too important to be left to chance.

Reinforcement Activities provide practice and application, particularly in the area of reading and writing for real purposes.

Student Reading Lists are provided in all instructional chapters as a resource for titles that reinforce the particular literacy skills being discussed.



STUDENT READING LIST

Alphabet Books

Aylesworth, J. (1991). *Old black fly*. New York: Holt. Rhyming text follows a mischievous black fly through the alphabet as he has a very busy day.

Ehler, L. (1989). *Eating the alphabet*. New York: Harcourt. Drawings of foods beginning with the letter being presented are labeled with their names in both upper- and lowercase letters.

Hoban, T. (1982). *A, B, see!* New York: Greenwillow. Uppercase letters are accompanied by objects in silhouette that begin with the letter shown.

Jocelyn, M. (2006). *ABC x 3*. Plattsburgh, NY: Tundra Books. Presents letters and illustrative words in English, Spanish, and French. The letter *p* is accompanied by *pear, pera, and poire*. Some words and illustrations will need explaining.

Martin, D. (2010). *David Martin's ABC: Z is for zebra*. North Vancouver, BC, Canada: DJC Kids Media. Clever drawings reinforce the shapes of letters. Each letter is accompanied by a humorous illustration, such as an ant crawling over the letter *A*.

Musgrove, M. (1976). *Ashanti to Zulu*. New York: Dial. This Caldecott winner gives information about African tribes as it presents the alphabet.

Onyefulu, I. (1993). *A is for Africa*. New York: Dutton. Color photos and a brief paragraph using the target letter show everyday life in Africa.

Scary, R. (1973). *Richard Scary's find your ABC*. New York: Random House. Each letter is illustrated with numerous objects and creatures whose names contain the letter.

Smith, R. M. (2008). *An A to Z walk in the park*. Alexandria, VA: Clarence Henry Books. Letters are illustrated with more than 200 animals.

Wood, A. (2003). *Alphabet mystery*. New York: Blue Sky Press. When the letter *x* is missing, the other 25 letters search for him.

Wood, J. (1993). *Animal parade*. New York: Bradbury. A parade starts with an aardvark, an antelope, and other animals whose names begin with *A* and proceeds through the rest of the letters of the alphabet.

Ziefert, H. (2006). *Me! me! ABC*. Maplewood, NJ: Blue Apple Books. Dolls make a series of requests.

Each chapter ends with a brief summary and activities designed to extend understanding of key concepts: **Extending and Applying** provides suggestions for practical application. **Professional Reflection** asks readers to reflect on their ability to implement key assessment and instructional practices in the chapter.

Summary

- Emergent literacy instruction attempts to capitalize on the literacy skills that the child brings to school. Students form their own concepts of reading and writing. Knowing how students understand reading and writing, teachers can plan activities they build on these early conceptualizations.
- To foster literacy, the teacher immerses the class in reading and writing activities. By reading to children, the teacher builds knowledge of story structure and story language, vocabulary, and background of experience. To build language, the school should use techniques to make the child an active partner in conversations and discussions. Through shared reading and language-experience stories, including shared writing, dictation, and scaffolded writing, basic literacy concepts and skills are built.
- Once primarily a matter of copying and learning letter formation, writing in preschool and kindergarten is now seen as a valid means of expression. Children are encouraged to use invented spelling and write as best they can at first, but gradually develop the ability to spell conventionally.
- Progress in literacy is closely tied to knowledge of the alphabet, phonological awareness, and students' persistence. Children are ready to begin learning letter sounds when they know nine letters and can perceive beginning sounds.
- Increasingly, preschool and kindergarten programs are including instruction in literacy and preliteracy skills. Several preschool programs have been shown to be highly beneficial to at-risk learners. Parent involvement is an essential ingredient in fostering emergent literacy.
- A number of formal and informal measures can be used to assess emergent literacy.

Extending and Applying

1. Using the procedures described in this chapter, plan a lesson teaching letters or beginning sounds. If possible, teach the lesson and make a video recording of it. On a paper copy of the lesson plan, reflect on the effectiveness of the lesson.
2. Administer to one or more kindergarten students assessments of letter knowledge, beginning sounds, letter sounds, and developmental spelling, using measures described in this chapter or the previous one. Also obtain a writing sample. Based on an analysis of the assessments, highlight the strengths and needs of the student(s), and plan a program for them. To see examples of PALS being administered, visit the PALS website at the University of Virginia.
3. Examine stories written by a kindergarten class. What are some characteristics of children's writing at this age? How do the pieces vary?
4. Search out alphabet books, rhyming tales, songbooks, Apps, and other materials that you might use to enhance alphabet knowledge, rhyming, and perception of beginning sounds. Keep an annotated bibliography of these materials.
5. Read the report on Literacy Express, a pre-K program, which obtained medium to large effects for oral language, print knowledge, and phonological processing according to the What Works Clearinghouse. Place "Literacy Express" in the search box.

Support Materials for Instructors

The following resources are available for instructors to download on www.pearsonhighered.com/educators. Instructors enter the author or title of this book, select this particular edition of the book, and then click on the “Resources” tab to log in and download textbook supplements.

Instructor’s Resource Manual and Test Bank

The Instructor’s Resource Manual and Test Bank features a series of Learning Outcomes, a Chapter Overview, suggestions for Before, After, and During Reading, a list of suggested Teaching Activities, a Resource Master (a graphic organizer designed to help readers organize information from the chapters) and suggestions for Assessment. The test bank offers more than 250 questions, including multiple choice and essay questions. This supplement has been written completely by the author, Tom Gunning.

PowerPoint Slides

Designed for teachers using the text, the PowerPoint™ Presentation consists of a series of slides that can be shown as is or used to make handouts or overhead transparencies. The presentation highlights key concepts and major topics for each chapter.

TestGen

Test Gen is a powerful test generator available exclusively from Pearson Education publishers. You install TestGen on your personal computer (Windows or Macintosh) and create your own tests for classroom testing and for other specialized delivery options, such as over a local area network or on the Web. A test bank, which is also called a Test Item File (TIF), typically contains a large set of test items, organized by chapter and ready for your use in creating a test, based on the associated textbook material.

The tests can be downloaded in the following formats:

- TestGen Testbank file—PC
- TestGen Testbank file—MAC
- TestGen Testbank—Blackboard 9 TIF
- TestGen Testbank—Blackboard CE/Vista (WebCT) TIF
- Angel Test Bank (zip)
- D2L Test Bank (zip)
- Moodle Test Bank
- Sakai Test Bank (zip)

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To my wife, Joan, who offered helpful comments, continuous encouragement, and provided many hours of assistance. I deeply appreciate her loving support and understanding, especially when deadlines necessitated working long hours.

T. G.

The Nature of Literacy

1



After reading this chapter, you will learn and be able to:

- Contrast the major theories of literacy learning and language development.
- Discuss the current status of literacy and major literacy initiatives.
- Explain the role of language and of students' cultures on literacy learning.
- Explain the basic principles of teaching reading.
- Discuss the qualities of highly effective teachers.



ANTICIPATION GUIDE

Complete the anticipation guide below. It will help to activate your prior knowledge so that you interact more fully with the chapter. It is designed to probe your attitudes and beliefs about important and sometimes controversial topics. Sometimes, we don't realize that we already know something about a topic until we stop and think about it. By activating your prior knowledge, you will be better prepared to make connections between new information contained in this chapter and what you already know. There are often no right or wrong answers to Anticipation Guide statements; the statements will alert you to your attitudes about reading instruction and encourage you to become aware of areas where you might require additional information. After completing the chapter, you might respond to the anticipation guide again to see if your answers have changed in light of what you have read. For each of the following statements, select "Agree" or "Disagree" to show how you feel. Discuss your responses with classmates before you read the chapter.

	AGREE	DISAGREE
1. Before children learn to read, they should know the sounds of most letters.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Reading should not be fragmented into a series of subskills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Oral reading should be accurate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Phonics should be taught only when a need arises.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Reading short passages and answering questions about them provide excellent practice.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Mistakes in oral reading should be ignored unless they change the sense of the passage.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

USING WHAT YOU KNOW This chapter provides a general introduction to literacy instruction in preschool and grades K–8. Before reading the chapter, examine your personal knowledge of the topic so that you will be better prepared to interact with the information. What do you think reading is? What do you do when you read? What do you think the reader's role is? Is it simply to receive the author's message, or should it include some personal input? How about writing? What processes do you use when you write? How would you go about teaching reading and writing to today's students? What do you think the basic principles of a literacy program should be? What elements have worked especially well in programs with which you are familiar?

Major Theories of Literacy Learning and Language Development

"Awake! Awake!" These are the first words I remember reading. But the words were as magical as any that I have read since. Even after all these years, I still have vivid memories of that day long ago in first grade when reading came alive for me, and, indeed, awakened a lifetime of reading and a career as a reading teacher.



Reading is, first and foremost, magical, as those who recall learning to read or who have witnessed their students discover the process will attest. It opens the door to a vast world of information, fulfillment, and enjoyment. After having learned to read, a person is never quite the same.

Although magical, reading is complex. Becoming an effective teacher of reading requires grounding in the theories behind reading acquisition and instruction. As Pinnell, a noted literacy researcher and practitioner, states:

Understanding learning is the only true foundation for sound teaching. No matter how good the materials, the program, or the instructional approach, teaching will miss the mark if it is not based on a coherent theory of learning. The word *theory* simply refers to the set of understandings that a teacher holds and believes about how children learn. Everything teachers do in the classroom proceeds from this set of beliefs and understandings, whether they are conscious of it or not. (2006, p. 78)

The first step, then, in understanding reading requires understanding how children learn and how language develops. There are a number of theories that describe how children learn. They fall into two broad areas: behaviorism and cognitivism.

Behaviorism

Behaviorism stresses observable responses to stimuli. In a behavioral approach, learning consists of the acquisition of new behaviors. Responses that are reinforced increase in frequency. Responses that are not reinforced are extinguished (do not occur again). A response that has been conditioned to a particular stimulus should be elicited if that stimulus is presented. Behaviors are learned or increased when a person receives reinforcers such as praise, privileges, gold stars, or monetary rewards or simply sees that the responses are correct. A basic principle of behaviorism is that we tend to repeat behaviors that are rewarding and avoid those that are not. According to behaviorism, we are passive receivers of knowledge rather than active constructors. Behavioral approaches tend to be teacher-centered.

Scripted programs, such as Reading Mastery (SRA McGraw-Hill), often take a behavioral approach. In Reading Mastery, students first learn individual letter sounds and then learn to blend the sounds to form words. The teacher points to a letter and says, “Here is a new sound.” The teacher touches the letter and says the sound for the letter. Students are told to say the sound when the teacher touches the letter. Signals are used so that students respond in unison. Then individuals are called on to say the sound. One objective of this procedure is to obtain as many correct responses from each child as possible. Incorrect responses are quickly corrected so that they will be extinguished. Behavioral programs are often referred to as being “direct instruction.” The National Institute for Direct Instruction provides extensive information on direct instruction along with a number of videos.

Cognitivism

Behavioral approaches to learning, with their emphasis on external forces, dominated from about the 1890s until about the 1950s. Rejecting a strictly external view of learning, cognitive psychologists became interested in the inner workings of the mind. **Cognitivism** is based on the proposition that mental processes exist and can be studied. A related proposition is that humans are active participants in their learning rather than passive recipients. Reinforcement is seen as being important in learning, not just because it strengthens responses, but because it is a source of information or feedback (Woolfolk, 2001). Cognitive approaches tend to be student-centered.

Piaget’s theories are examples of a cognitive approach to learning. Piaget is also known as a constructivist because of his emphasis on the ways in which children construct an understanding of the world.

Piaget's Theories

Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist, stressed stages of cognitive development and the unique nature of children's thinking. As an adherent of **constructivism**, he believed that children construct their own understanding of reality and do not simply reproduce what they see and hear. Children's thinking, according to Piaget, is qualitatively different from adults' thinking, and it evolves through a series of hierarchical stages. He also believed that children's thinking develops through direct experience with their environment. Through *adaptation*, or interaction with the environment, the child constructs psychological structures, or *schemes*, which are ways of making sense of the world. Adaptation includes two complementary processes: **assimilation** and **accommodation**. Through assimilation, the child interprets the world in terms of his or her schemes. Seeing a very small dog, the child calls it "doggie" and assimilates this in his or her dog scheme. Seeing a goat for the first time, the child might relate it to his or her dog scheme and call it "doggie." Later, realizing that there is something different about this creature, the child may accommodate the dog scheme and exclude the goat and all creatures with horns. Thus, the child has refined the dog scheme. To Piaget, direct experience rather than language was the key determiner of cognitive development.

Social Cognitive Views of Learning

According to social cognitive theories, people are an important element in the learning equation. We learn from and with others. L. S. Vygotsky, an adherent of **social constructivism**, stressed the importance of social factors in cognitive development (1962). Although both Piaget and Vygotsky believed that children need to interact with the world around them, Vygotsky theorized that learning results from both direct experience and social interaction. If, in examining minerals, a teacher emphasizes the hardness of the minerals, that is what the students will learn. If another teacher emphasizes the value or usefulness of the minerals, that is what the students will learn. Vygotsky is best known for the concept of the **zone of proximal development (ZPD)**. He distinguished between actual and potential development. Actual development is a measure of the level at which a child is functioning. In a sense, it is a measure of what the child has learned up to that point. Potential development is a measure of what the child might be capable of achieving. The difference between the two levels is the zone of proximal development. As explained by Vygotsky (1978), the zone of proximal development is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 84). In other words, the zone of proximal development is the difference between what a child can do on his or her own and what the child can do with help.

FYI

Vygotsky neglected the importance of other ways of learning. Children can and do learn through nonverbal imitation and self-discovery (Berk, 1997).

Focusing on the importance of interaction with adults or knowledgeable peers, Vygotsky's theory is that children learn through expert guidance. In time, they internalize the concepts and strategies employed by their mentors and so, ultimately, are able to perform on a higher level. The support and guidance provided by an adult or more capable peer is known as **scaffolding** (Bruner, 1975, 1986). When parents converse with a child acquiring language, they respond at a higher level of language use but at one that is in the child's zone of proximal development. In their responses, they provide contextual support by restating, repeating key words, and/or focusing on meaning rather than form. Support at the beginning levels of language learning is extensive but is gradually decreased as the child progresses.

Ideally, instruction should be pitched somewhat above a child's current level of functioning. Instruction and collaboration with an adult or more capable peers will enable a child to reach a higher level and ultimately function on that level. Instruction and interaction are key elements. The overall theories of evaluation and instruction presented in this book are grounded in Vygotsky's concepts of actual and potential development and the zone of proximal development.

Implications for classroom instruction based on an integration of the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky are listed below:

- Provide students with hands-on experiences and opportunities to make discoveries.
- Be aware of and plan for individual differences. Because children have different experiences and come from different backgrounds, they develop at different rates.
- Children learn best when activities are developmentally appropriate. Careful observation of the processes a child uses provides insight into the child's level of development. According to Piaget, the child's current level of development determines what she or he will learn. Teaching needs to be adjusted to the child. According to Vygotsky, teaching should be directed to a child's emerging skills. It should be in the zone of proximal development.
- According to Vygotsky, classrooms should be rich in verbal guidance. Interactions with the teacher and peers foster learning. Modeling of strategies for improving comprehension and using context clues are examples of ways teachers foster social cognitive learning.

Cognitive-Behavioral Approach

Behavioral and cognitive principles have been combined in an approach known as **cognitive-behavioral approach**. Our behavior is affected by the set of rewards and punishments we have experienced in the past and by our beliefs, thoughts, and expectations (Westmont Psychology Department, 2008). Suppose that, based on your past experience of receiving low grades on tests, you believe that you are not very smart and therefore it won't make much difference if you study for a test; so you don't study, and you get a poor grade, thus reinforcing your lack of self-efficacy. A cognitive-behavioral approach helps students change their attributions, so they see that effort is required for success. They also learn to see themselves as competent learners. Cognitive-behavioral classroom management provides techniques for students to gain control of their learning. Students are taught to set goals, establish and follow a plan for reaching each goal, monitor their progress toward reaching that goal, and evaluate whether they have reached it. Along with learning strategies for improving reading and writing, students are taught self-regulation strategies. A student might set as a goal improving comprehension of text content. The student might then use a checklist or self-talk to prompt herself or himself to set a purpose for reading, survey the text, think about what she or he knows about the topic, make predictions, ask questions while reading, and summarize at the end of each section. The student monitors the use of the strategies to see if they are helping and evaluates whether she or he is reaching the goal of improved comprehension of the text. As Meichenbaum and Biemiller (1998) explain, practice usually involves "both physically performing the skill or skills involved in the task and verbally guiding oneself (thinking out loud—demonstrating self-regulation overtly) while carrying out the task" (p. 126).

Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches

Another way of looking at theories of literacy learning is to note where those who apply them fall on a continuum. On one end of this continuum are those who espouse a subskills, or bottom-up, approach; on the other end, there are those who advocate a holistic, or top-down, approach. In between are the interactionists.

Bottom-Uppers In the **bottom-up approach**, children literally start at the bottom and work their way up.

1. First, they learn the names and shapes of the letters of the alphabet.
2. Next, they learn consonant sounds.
3. Third, they tackle simple and then more complex vowel correspondences.

Bottom-up procedures are intended to make learning to read easier by breaking complex tasks into their component skills. Instruction proceeds from the simple to the complex. In essence, there are probably no 100-percent bottom-uppers among reading teachers. Even those who strongly favor phonics recognize the importance of higher-level strategies.

Top-Downers A **top-down approach**, as its name indicates, starts at the top and works downward. Learning to read is seen as being similar to learning language; it is holistic and progresses naturally through immersion. Subskills are not taught because it is felt that they fragment the process and make learning to read more abstract and difficult (Goodman, 1986). One of the most influential models of reading is that proposed by Ken Goodman (1994b). According to Goodman, readers use their background knowledge and knowledge of language to predict and infer the content of print. In Goodman’s model, students use three cueing systems: semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic. Semantic cues derive from past experiences, so students construct meaning by bringing their background of knowledge to a story. Syntactic cues derive from knowledge of how the structure of language works. Graphophonic cues refer to the ability to sound out words or recognize them holistically. Based on their use of these cues, students predict the content of the text, confirm or revise their predictions, and reread if necessary. When reading the sentence “The moon is full tonight,” the reader can use his or her knowledge of the moon, context clues, and perhaps the initial consonants *f* and *t* to reconstruct *full* and *tonight*. According to Goodman’s theory, it is not necessary for the reader to process all the letters of *full* and *tonight*. However, in order to make use of background knowledge, context clues, and initial consonant cues, the reader must consider the whole text. If the words *full* and *tonight* were read in isolation, the reader would have to depend more heavily on processing all or most of the letters of each word. As far as comprehension is concerned, the top-down view is that students build their understanding through discussions of high-quality literature or informational texts. There is generally no direct, explicit instruction of comprehension strategies.

Interactionists Most practitioners tend to be more pragmatic than either strict top-downers or dyed-in-the-wool bottom-uppers and borrow practices from both ends of the continuum. These **interactionists** teach skills directly and systematically—especially in the beginning—but they avoid overdoing it, as they do not want to fragment the process. They also provide plenty of opportunities for students to experience the holistic nature of reading and writing by having them read whole books and write for real purposes. In his study of highly effective teachers, Pressley (2006) found that most were interactionists: “There is a great deal of skills instruction, with as many as 20 skills an hour covered, often in response to the needs of a reader or writer. Skills instruction is strongly balanced with holistic reading and writing, with students reading and experiencing substantial authentic literature and other texts that make sense for them to be reading given their needs” (p. 3). As cognitive psychologist M. H. Ashcroft (1994) notes, “Any significant mental task will involve both data-driven (bottom-up) and conceptually driven (top-down) processing” (p. 75).

In an interactive compensatory model, students use top-down processes to compensate for weakness in bottom-up processes or vice versa. For instance, students who have weak decoding skills make heavy use of context to make sense of a passage. On the other hand, when content is unfamiliar, readers get all they can out of the data. They read every word carefully, may reread it several times, and may even read it out loud. Think about how you read a set of directions for completing a complex, unfamiliar activity or a list of new tax regulations.

Where do you fit on the bottom-up, top-down continuum? Go back to the anticipation guide at the beginning of the chapter. Take a look at how you answered the six statements. If you agreed with only the odd-numbered ones, you are a bottom-up advocate. If you agreed with only the even-numbered statements, you are a top-downer. If your answers were mixed, you are probably an interactionist.

Reader Response Theory

Still another way of looking at reading is from a literary, or **reader response**, view. Literary theory explores the role of the reader. In the past, the reader’s role was defined as being passive, getting the author’s meaning. The model of transmission of information in which



Using Technology

Controversies similar to “How should phonics be taught?” are often explored on the websites of professional organizations, such as the International Reading Association.

the reader was merely a recipient was replaced by transactional theory, a two-way process involving a reader and a text. In her study of how students read a poem, Rosenblatt (1978) noted that each reader was active during the **transaction** between reader and text:

He was not a blank tape registering a ready-made message. He was actively involved in building up a poem for himself out of his responses to text. . . . The reader was not only paying attention to what the words pointed to in the external world, to their referents; he was also paying attention to the images, feelings, attitudes, associations, and ideas that the words and their referents evoked in him. (p. 10)

The type of reading, of course, has an effect on the transaction. The reader can take an efferent or an aesthetic **stance**. When reading a set of directions, a science text, or a math problem, the reader takes an **efferent** stance, the focus being on obtaining information that can be carried away (*efferent* is taken from the Latin verb *efferre*, “to carry away”). In the **aesthetic** stance, the reader pays attention to the associations, feelings, attitudes, and ideas that the words evoke.

New Criticism

New Criticism, a theory of reading literature that was popular in 1920s through the 1960s, is now being advocated. New Criticism emphasizes focusing strictly on the text and ignoring historical, social, and political influences as well as subjective reader responses. According to New Criticism theory, the meaning and emotional impact of the text is revealed through careful analysis. Under reader response, students are encouraged to make personal connections to the text. This practice has been criticized of late because some of the connections were only very loosely related to the text and did not contribute to an understanding of it (Boyles, 2012/2013). Achieve the Core (2013), an organization created to help teachers understand and implement Common Core State Standards, recommends asking mainly **text-dependent questions**:

As the name suggests, a text dependent question specifically asks a question that can only be answered by referring explicitly back to the text being read. It does not rely on any particular background information extraneous to the text nor depend on students having other experiences or knowledge; instead it privileges the text itself and what students can extract from what is before them. (p. 1)

However, readers are most motivated to read a text closely when they can make personal connections to the text. Therefore, this textbook recommends a kind of close reading that combines features of reader response with features of New Criticism. **Close reading** can be accompanied, when appropriate, by making personal connections, especially those that deepen the readers’ understanding of and response to the text. See Table 1.1 for a summary of theories of learning and reading development.

Importance of Literacy Theories

Why is it important to be aware of different theories of teaching reading? For one thing, it is important that you formulate your own personal beliefs about reading and writing instruction. These beliefs will then be the foundation for your instruction. They will determine the goals you set, the instructional techniques you use, the materials you choose, the organization of your classroom, the reading and writing behaviors you expect students to exhibit, and the criteria you use to evaluate students. For instance, whether you use children’s books or a basal anthology, how you teach phonics, and whether you expect flawless oral reading or are satisfied if the student’s rendition is faithful to the sense of the selection will depend on your theoretical orientation (DeFord, 1985).

Approach Taken by This Book

This book draws heavily on research in cognitive psychology, combines an interactionist point of view with a holistic orientation, and takes an integrated approach. Both the

FYI

To clarify your philosophy of teaching, ask: “What are my instructional practices, and why am I doing what I’m doing?” Examining your practices should help you uncover your beliefs.

TABLE 1.1

THEORIES OF LEARNING AND READING DEVELOPMENT

Theory	Features	Implementation
Behaviorism	Observable behavior is stressed. Responses to stimuli are reinforced or extinguished. Drills, guided practice, and acquisition of facts, skills, and concepts are emphasized.	Present and reinforce skills, such as phonics, in systematic fashion. Reinforce appropriate behavior.
Cognitivism	Mental processes are important. Students are active learners as they use strategies to acquire facts, skills, and concepts.	Teach strategies. Ask questions that help reveal students' thinking.
Constructivism	Through active experiences, children construct their understanding of the world.	Arrange for learning experiences and opportunities for problem solving. Gear instruction to students' stage of development. Focus on inquiry and discovery learning.
Social Constructivism	Thoughts and ideas of others are an essential element in constructing knowledge. Students learn through expert guidance from more knowledgeable others. Social interaction, the zone of proximal development, and scaffolding are key elements in learning.	Make sure students are in their zone of proximal development. Co-construct knowledge with students. Scaffold students' learning.
Cognitive-Behavioral	Learning is affected by the learning task and situation and the ability, interests, and attitudes of the students. Students use self-regulation to acquire facts, skills, and concepts.	Build self-efficacy. Teach students to set goals and self-regulate. Walk students through the process of setting goals, working to reach goals, and monitoring progress.
Interactionist	Both top-down and bottom-up processes are used. Students are active learners as they employ strategies to acquire facts, skills, and concepts.	Teach students to use phonics skills and context. Encourage students to relate new learning to what they already know.
Reader Response	Reading is a transaction in which the reader affects the text and is affected by it.	Emphasize personal responses and interpretations. Encourage students to make personal connections to what they have read.
New Criticism	Stresses a close analysis of the text and how it was composed.	Encourage students to read and re-read the text and note how the author used language and literary devices to shape meaning.

Source: Portions of the chart are based on Woolfolk (2001), Table 9.8, Four Views of Learning (p. 358).

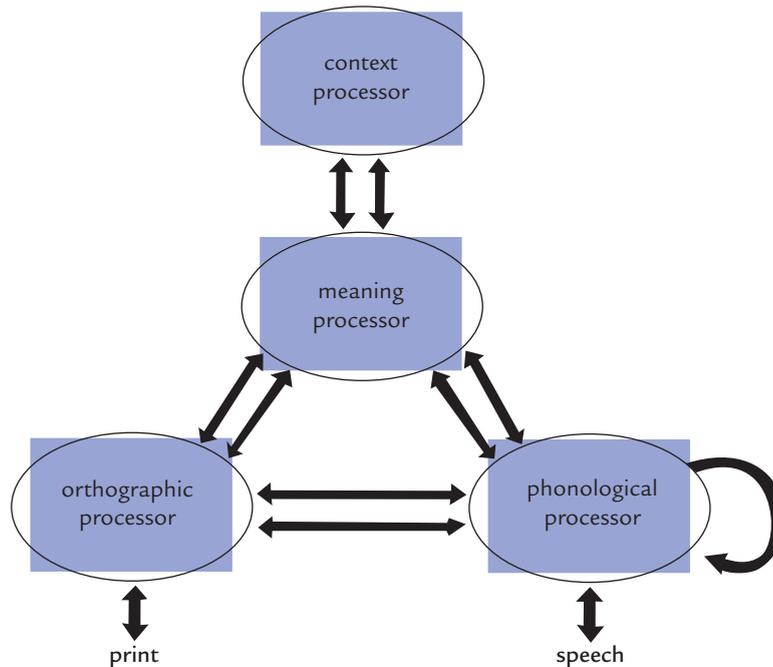
bottom-up and top-down approaches are step by step (Kamhi & Catts, 1999). In the bottom-up model, the reader progresses from letters to sounds to words. Seeing the word *moon*, the novice reader sounds it out as /m-/oo/-/n/ and then blends the sounds to compose the word *moon*. In the top-down process as Goodman described, the reader uses language cues to predict and to confirm the word. Seeing the sentence "The wolf howled at the moon," the reader uses her knowledge of language and wolves to predict that the word is *moon* because that makes sense in the sentence. She may decode the initial letter but doesn't have to decode all the sounds in the word to predict that the word is *moon*. However, in an integrated approach, the processes occur in parallel fashion. For instance, when students decode words, four processors are at work: orthographic, phonological, meaning, and context (Adams, 1990, 1994).

1. The orthographic processor is responsible for perceiving the sequences of letters in text.
2. The phonological processor is responsible for mapping the letters into their spoken equivalents.
3. The meaning processor contains one's knowledge of word meanings.
4. The context processor is in charge of constructing a continuing understanding of the text (Stahl, Osborne, & Lehr, 1990).

The processors work simultaneously, and they both receive information and send it to the other processors; however, the orthographic and phonological processors are

FIGURE 1.1

MODELING THE READING SYSTEMS: FOUR PROCESSORS



Source: Adams, Marilyn Jager. *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning about Print*, Figure 8.1, p. 158, © 1990 Massachusetts Institute of Technology, by permission of the MIT Press.

always essential participants. Context may speed and/or assist the interpretation of orthographic and phonological information but does not take its place (see Figure 1.1). (Context would speed the decoding of *moon*.) When information from one processor is weak, another may be called on to give assistance. With a word such as *lead*, which has more than one pronunciation and meaning, the context processor provides extra help to the meaning and phonological processors in assigning the correct meaning and pronunciation.

In an integrated model, both top-down and bottom-up processes are used. However, depending on circumstances, either bottom-up or top-down processes are emphasized. If one is reading a handwritten note in which some words are illegible, top-down processes are stressed as knowledge of language and knowledge of the world are used to fill in what is missing. If one is reading unfamiliar proper names or words in isolation, bottom-up processes are emphasized.

In an integrated approach, reading is considered an active, constructive process, with the focus on the reader, whose experiences, cultural background, and point of view will play a part in her or his comprehension of a written piece. The focus is on cognitive processes or strategies used to decode words and understand and remember text: using phonics and context to decipher unknown words, activating one's knowledge of a topic, predicting meaning, summarizing, and visualizing.

Stress is also placed on teaching strategies in context and holistically applying them to children's books, periodicals, ads and other real-world materials, and content-area textbooks. The integrated approach is a balanced approach in which systematic instruction and immersion in reading and writing play complementary roles.

To test your understanding of this section, complete [Section Quiz 1.1](#)

The Status of Literacy and Major Literacy Initiatives

America's students are reading better than ever. According to a long-term NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) study, 9-year-olds scored 13 points higher than did their counterparts in 1972 and 13-year-olds scored 8 points higher (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013a). According to NAEP's latest results, which are the highest ever for fourth and eighth graders, 68 percent of fourth graders and 78 percent of eighth graders can read at least on a basic level (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013b). Some 35 percent of fourth graders and 36 percent of eighth graders performed at or above the proficient level. Some 8 percent of fourth graders and 4 percent of eighth graders performed at the advanced level. What do the levels mean? Table 1.2 provides descriptions of the performance at each level. The basic level is a conservative estimate of grade-level reading. Students at the below-basic level are reading below grade level. The proficient level is apparently above grade level (Pellegrino, Jones, & Mitchell, 1999). NAEP data provide an overview of the kinds of literacy instruction that students in the elementary grades and middle school will need. Students at the upper end will need to be challenged. Those at the lower end, especially those performing below the basic level, will need extra help and, in some cases, extensive intervention. To learn more about the actual reading performance of the nation's students, see [Digging Deeper 1.1: Basic vs. Proficient Levels](#).

Because large percentages of students are reading below grade level, several major initiatives are attempting to reform the teaching of literacy. These include the Elementary and Secondary Act, Common Core State Standards, Scientifically Based Literacy Instruction, and Response to Intervention (Response to Intervention is explained in Chapter 2).

The Elementary and Secondary Act

The Elementary and Secondary Act plays a highly influential role in literacy instruction and assessment. The proposed Elementary and Secondary Act is designed to prepare all students to be college and career ready. Emphasis is on improving the effectiveness of teachers,

TABLE 1.2

DESCRIPTION OF NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP) LEVELS

Grade 4		
Basic	Proficient	Advanced
Should be able to locate relevant information, make simple inferences, and use their understanding of the text to identify details that support a given interpretation or conclusion. Students should be able to interpret the meaning of a word as it is used in the text.	Should be able to integrate and interpret texts and apply their understanding of the texts to draw conclusions and make evaluations.	Should be able to make complex inferences and construct and support their inferential understanding of the text and apply their understanding of the texts to make and support a judgment.
Grade 8		
Basic	Proficient	Advanced
Should be able to locate information; identify statements of main idea, theme, or author's purpose; and make simple inferences from texts. They should be able to interpret the meaning of a word as it is used in the text. Students performing at this level should also be able to state judgments and give some support about content and presentation of content.	Should be able to provide relevant information and summarize main ideas and themes. They should be able to make and support inferences about a text, connect parts of a text, and analyze text features. Students performing at this level should also be able to fully substantiate judgments about content and presentation of content.	Should be able to make connections within and across texts and to explain causal relations. They should be able to evaluate and justify the strength of supporting evidence and the quality of an author's presentation. Students performing at the Advanced level should also be able to manage the processing demands of analysis and evaluation by stating, explaining, and justifying.

Source: Adapted from National Center for Education Statistics. (2013b). *The Nation's Report Card: A First Look: Mathematics and Reading 2013* (NCES 2014-45). Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

using measures of students' performance as part of teacher evaluation systems, using measures of growth rather than percentages of students passing a proficiency standard to assess the progress of schools, and providing assistance to low-performing schools.

College and Career Ready Standards

Most states have adopted a challenging set of standards known as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and are using an assessment system that is aligned with the standards so that every student will be college and career ready. “The skills and knowledge captured in the ELA/literacy standards are designed to prepare students for life outside the classroom. They include critical-thinking skills and the ability to closely and attentively read texts in a way that will help them understand and enjoy complex works of literature. Students will learn to use cogent reasoning and evidence collection skills that are essential for success in college, career, and life” (National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010a). There are ten anchor standards each for reading, writing, speaking and listening, language, and content-area reading (grades 6–12) and content-area writing (grades 6–12) and 2–4 anchor standards for foundational early reading, decoding, and fluency skills (grades K–5). The anchor standards are broad statements of objectives, which are further broken down into more specific grade-specific objectives. The anchor standards are listed on the inside front cover. To find specific standards by grade level, consult the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and also Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

Common Core State Standards also call for content teachers to develop the literacy skills needed to read and write competently in their subject areas. States that have not adopted Common Core have created other standards and assessments that also prepare students to be college and career ready.

As suggested by Valencia and Wixson (2013), when implementing the Common Core State Standards, focus on the big ideas. Overall, Common Core fosters the following four major goals in reading, writing, speaking/listening, and research/inquiry.

1. Reading: “Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.”
2. Writing: “Students can produce effective and well-grounded writing for a range of purposes and audiences.”
3. Speaking and Listening: “Students can employ effective speaking and listening skills for a range of purposes and audiences.”
4. Research/Inquiry: “Students can engage in research and inquiry to investigate topics, and to analyze, integrate, and present information.” (Smarter Balanced, 2013).



TAKING A CLOSER LOOK 1.1

ROLE OF STANDARDS

Watch the video and reflect on the associated questions.

In a sense, the primary skill advocated by the Common Core State Standards is the ability to read complex texts. ACT researchers (2006) found that “the clearest differentiator in reading between students who are college ready and students who are not is the ability to comprehend complex texts” (pp. 16–17). Since workplace text is equal in complexity to college-level text, the implication is that in order to prepare all students to be college and career ready, it is essential to prepare students to read complex texts. Learning to read complex text is a long-term objective that starts at the earliest levels and develops through elementary, middle, and high school, as each level builds on skills and understandings established at earlier levels. Comprehending complex text requires vocabulary and background development, instruction in skills, and the development of higher-level discussion and writing skills. A key feature of the Common Core State Standards is reading a greater proportion of informational text, which helps develop background knowledge and

academic vocabulary. Reading additional informational text should not be interpreted as spending less time reading literary texts (Langer, 2011). It does mean, though, that students should be reading more in science, social studies, and other content areas.

However, the most drastic change in the Common Core State Standards is the implementation of grade bands. There is an apparent gap between the reading skills possessed by today's students and those required for college and their careers, and also between the difficulty level of materials that students are reading at the end of high school and those that they will be required to read to become college and career ready (National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010b). To close both gaps, the Common Core State Standards have incorporated a feature known as grade bands. The bands include grades 2–3, 4–5, 6–8, 9–10, and 11–12. The difficulty level at each band has been expanded so that by senior year students will be expected to be able to read at or close to college and career level. In other words, the standards call for students to be able to read more challenging material at every grade level beginning with grade 2. Even though Common Core State Standards call for students to read more challenging materials, this does not mean that students should be given material that exceeds their reading ability. Giving students material that is too hard is virtually guaranteed to stunt their literacy growth. To learn more about the mismatch between students' reading levels and the level of materials that they are given, see [Digging Deeper 1.2: Grade Level Bands and the Measured Reading Levels of Students](#).



Using Technology

- The website of the New Literacies Research Team offers videos and articles exploring the new literacies.
- The Joan Ganz Cooney Center website provides information on using media to advance learning.

Twenty-First-Century Skills and the New Literacies

Complementing the Common Core State Standards are the **new literacies**. The new literacies can be thought of as the reading, writing, and communication skills required for the successful use of technology. New literacies include the ability to use a variety of digital devices and skills to acquire, organize, and communicate information. New literacies involve the ability to search the Internet efficiently, use digital databases, read and respond to e-text, and use tablets and other digital devices. For older students, it may also involve the ability to text, create a website, work online with others, and create a multimedia presentation.

In addition to technical know-how, new literacies also include a variety of cognitive and social skills, such as those described as “Twenty-first Century” skills. Twenty-first-century skills include critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2013).

New literacies and twenty-first-century skills require adaptability on the part of the teacher. Many kindergarteners and even pre-K students are arriving at school with the ability to manipulate tablets and smart phones (Rideout, 2014). For teachers, the essential questions are how best to make use of the children's knowledge of the media and technology, how to help students who come to school with limited experience with technology, and how to provide students with a basic foundation in literacy so that they are prepared to make use of future technological changes. On a practical note, Common Core and other assessments are given online and so require students to be able to keyboard proficiently and to carry out procedures such as highlighting, dragging and dropping, cutting and pasting, and moving items to show relationships. A panel of experts on writing recommend that students be taught to type beginning in first grade and should be able to type as fast as they can write by end of second or third grade and should have basic word processing skills by end of second grade (Graham et al., 2012).

The Merging of Traditional Skills and New Technologies

A key reading skill in this digital era is the ability to decide quickly and efficiently whether an article, study, or other document merits reading. With so much information available, it is essential that students not waste time reading texts that are not pertinent or worthwhile. Having more data to work with means that students must be better at organizing, evaluating, and drawing conclusions from information as well as conveying the essence of it to

others. They also need cognitive flexibility to use vast amounts of information when creating diverse solutions to increasingly complex problems. The more complex skills required to make the best use of technology will be addressed in subsequent chapters. Of course, these more complex skills build on traditional comprehension and study skills.

Scientifically Based Literacy Instruction

Because large numbers of students are reading on a basic level or below and because the gap between the reading achievement of poor and middle-class students is substantial, there has been a call in federal regulations for programs that are scientifically based. In federal regulations, scientific evidence is defined as the results of studies in which experimental Method A has been compared with established Method B and/or a control group and found to be statistically superior. The International Reading Association (2002) uses the term *evidence-based* rather than scientifically based. *Evidence-based* is a broader term and includes qualitative studies as well as the more scientifically based studies that include comparison of experimental with established method or control group.

The most extensive study of research-based programs was conducted by John Hattie (2009), a New Zealand educator, who analyzed more than 800 meta-analyses. A meta-analysis is a study of studies that uses statistical techniques to determine effectiveness. Based on his analyses, Hattie (2009) concluded that visible teaching is the most effective method of learning.

Visible teaching and learning occur when learning is the explicit goal, when it is appropriately challenging, when the teacher and the student both (in their various ways) seek to ascertain whether and to what degree the challenging goal is attained, when there is deliberate practice aimed at attaining mastery of the goal, when there is feedback given and sought, and when there are active, passionate, and engaging people (teacher, student, peers, and so on) participating in the act of learning. It is teachers seeing learning through the eyes of students, and students seeing teaching as the key to their ongoing learning. The remarkable feature of the evidence is that the biggest effects on student learning occur when teachers become learners of their own teaching, and when students become their own teachers. When students become their own teachers, they exhibit the self-regulatory attributes that seem most desirable for learners (self-monitoring, self-evaluation, self-assessment, self-teaching). (p. 22)

Key Effective Factors for Visible Teaching and Learning

The theme of this text will be to make teaching and learning visible. To accomplish that purpose, the text will emphasize effective practices. Each chapter will conclude with a feature entitled “Extending and Applying,” in which you will be asked to extend your knowledge of key effective practices and apply them, and also “Professional Reflection,” in which you will be asked to reflect on your ability to implement key assessment and instructional practices. The Professional Reflection checklists are modeled on highly effective teacher evaluation systems in widespread use such as those constructed by Robert Marzano (2010) and Charlotte Danielson (2010) and those used by charter schools such as Achievement First (n.d.), and also the International Reading Association or IRA (2010) Standards for Reading Professionals. The Professional Reflections only cover practices related to literacy instruction. Classroom management and routines are not addressed. The overall intent of this book is to equip you with the knowledge, understanding, and skills to become a highly effective literacy teacher.

As a teacher, you should become acquainted with the major findings of literacy research so that you can construct an effective program and can assess whether new techniques or materials that you are thinking about trying are supported by research. You should also assess the research base to see if it is applicable to your students and your situation. A technique that works well on a one-to-one basis may not be effective with small groups. Of course, research doesn’t answer all the instructional questions that arise. You need to become a teacher–researcher so that you can test methods and materials and have a better basis for selecting those that are most effective in your situation. You also need

to assess all aspects of your program with a view to replacing or improving elements that aren't working and to adding elements that are missing.

As far as possible, the suggestions made in this text are scientifically and evidence-based. However, in some instances they are based on personal experience or the experience of others. Teaching literacy is an art as well as a science.

To test your understanding of this section, complete [Section Quiz 1.2](#)

Role of Language and Culture on Literacy Learning

As magical as it may be, reading is only our second major intellectual accomplishment. Our first and by far most important intellectual accomplishment is our acquisition of language. Without language, of course, there would be no reading. Reading is very much a language activity, and, ultimately, our ability to read is limited by our language skills. We can't read what we can't understand. Even if we can pronounce words we don't understand because of superior phonics skills, we are not reading. **Reading** is a process in which we construct meaning from print. Without meaning, there is no reading.

Developing Language

Theories of language learning are similar to those of cognitive learning. From the behavioral standpoint, language is learned through reinforcement. As babies make sounds and toddlers say words, they are reinforced by their caregivers. Imitation is also a factor. In contrast, the nativist viewpoint maintains that children are born with a language acquisition device (LAD) that predisposes them to learn and generate language structures (Chomsky, 1968). According to nativist theorists such as Noam Chomsky, syntax is too complex to be learned by imitation or instruction. The mental structures for syntax are activated by verbal input. Using words that they hear, children are able to understand and generate sentences that follow rules too complex for them to learn simply by imitation or instruction. However, interactionists stress the interaction of children's cognitive abilities and environmental factors, such as input from caregivers and others. Interactionists note that caregivers use a number of strategies, such as speaking slowly, repeating, and filling in missing words, to encourage and scaffold emerging speech. According to social interactionists, humans use these strategies naturally. We have an inborn need and desire to communicate.

Although young children learn many words through imitation, language learning is also a constructive process. According to constructivist theory, if children were mere imitators, they would only be able to repeat what they hear. But they construct sentences such as "Mommy goed work," which is something that adults do not say. Creating a hypothesis about how language works, young children note that *-ed* is used to express past action and then overapply this generalization. With feedback and experience, they revise the hypothesis and ultimately learn that some action words have special past-tense forms.

Components of Language

Language has a number of interacting components: **phonology** (speech sounds known as phonemes), **morphology** (word formation), **syntax** (sentence formation), **semantics** (word and sentence meaning), **prosody** (intonation and rhythm of speech), and **pragmatics** (effective use of language: knowing how to take turns in a conversation, using proper tone, using terms of politeness, etc.) (National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, 2003).

FYI

By engaging students in discussions and conversations that ask them to see likenesses and differences and to categorize and make predictions, you are building higher-level thinking skills.



TAKING A CLOSER LOOK 1.2

USING LINGUISTICS TO PLAN INSTRUCTION

Watch the video and reflect on the associated questions.

Learning a Second Language

Large numbers of students learn English as a second or even a third language, so it's important to have some understanding of the acquisition of additional languages. Learning a second language is easier than learning a first language. Students who have a firm foundation in their first language have an easier time learning a second language. Concepts about language and its functions have already been formed. If English is similar to the first language, there may be a transfer of word and syntactical knowledge. Students are best able to learn a second language when their native language is accepted and they feel secure and confident. Input that is comprehensible is another key factor (Krashen, 2003). In reading, **English language learners (ELLs)** will acquire more language and comprehend better if when reading text in English they know 98 percent of the words in the text (Nation, 2001). Input can be enhanced through boldfaced vocabulary words and marginal glosses and illustrations. Speaking slowly, using gestures and visuals, and explaining new words help make oral input comprehensible. Motivation is also a key factor. Initial success in acquiring language is a powerful motivator and leads to increased language acquisition.

Acquiring Vocabulary

By age 3, children have a speaking vocabulary of about 1,000 words. By the time they enter kindergarten, they may know 5,000 words or more. The major influence on the size of children's vocabularies is the quantity and quality of the kind of talk they are exposed to. According to language expert Todd Risley (2003), the most important thing parents and other caregivers can do for their children is to talk to them. The amount of talk directed toward young children is powerfully related to their verbal abilities and their success in school. Hart and Risley (1995) collected data on the quantity and quality of parent talk. They found that the sheer volume of talk that young children hear varies greatly. Some children hear fewer than 500 words in an hour of family life. Others are exposed to 3,000 words in an hour. Some parents express approval or affirmation forty times an hour, whereas others, fewer than four times an hour. These differences add up. By age 4, some children have heard more than 50 million words, while others have heard just 10 million words. By age 4, some children have had 800,000 affirmations, while others have heard just 80,000. But there is more than just a quantitative difference between the most talkative and the least talkative families.

The least talkative families use talk primarily to control and guide children. The most talkative families also use talk in this way, but they go beyond giving directions. Much of their extra talk consists of descriptions and explanations. It contains a more complex vocabulary and structure and added positive **reinforcement**. The amount and quality of talk to which children are exposed are correlated with the size of their vocabularies and their later language and cognitive development.

Research with younger children found similar results. Weisleder and Fernald (2013) recorded the speech heard by low SES (socioeconomic status) infants and toddlers. As in the Hart and Risley study, the number of child-directed words was associated with the size of the toddlers' vocabularies at 24 months. Children who heard more words were also more efficient at processing language. A significant finding of the research is that living in economic poverty does not necessarily mean that the language environment is impoverished. As Fernald commented, "A central message of this research is that SES does not determine the quality of children's language experience. Despite the challenges associated with living in poverty, some of these moms were really engaged with their children, and their kids were more advanced in processing efficiency and vocabulary" (Carey, 2013).

Although studies show that the amount of talk is not strictly related to socioeconomic status, professionals talk the most and parents on welfare talk the least. However, there is a great variability among the working class. Many of the most talkative parents, along with the quietest, are in the working class. And it is parental talkativeness rather than socioeconomic status that relates to later verbal ability. In other words, it isn't how much money parents have or how much education they have or whether they are members of a

minority group that counts; it is how much and how well they talk to their children. As Risley (2003) hypothesized, “The accumulation of language experience is the major determiner of vocabulary growth and verbal intellectual development” (p. 2).

In a longitudinal study of children in Bristol, England, Wells (1986) found that children’s language was best developed in one-to-one situations in which an adult discussed matters that were of interest and concern to the child or the two talked over a shared activity. It is also essential that the adult adjust his or her language so as to take into consideration and to compensate for the child’s limited linguistic ability, something parents seem to do intuitively.

Through careful listening and active involvement in the conversation, parents were able to help the children extend their responses so that both knowledge of the world and linguistic abilities were fostered.

As a teacher, you can’t change the quality or quantity of language to which children have been exposed, but you can increase the quantity and quality of talk in your classroom and encourage parents and other caregivers to do the same. This book emphasizes high-quality, language-rich social interactions of the type conducted by the parents who best foster their children’s language development.



Children learn to read by reading. Sonya Etchison/Shutterstock

Importance of the Students’ Cultures

Living as we do in a multicultural, pluralistic society, it is important for us to explore and understand the literacy histories of our pupils. We have to ask such questions as these: In students’ culture(s), how are reading and writing used? What values are placed on them? What are the ways in which the students have observed and participated in reading and writing? Is literacy in their environment primarily a group or an individual activity? Given this information, instruction should build on the students’ experiences and develop and reinforce the skills and values important to their culture(s) as well as those important to the school.



TAKING A CLOSER LOOK 1.3

USING CHILDREN’S CULTURE TO ENRICH THE CLASSROOM

Watch the video and reflect on the associated questions.

To test your understanding of this section, complete [Section Quiz 1.3](#)

Basic Principles of Teaching Reading

What kind of program will help meet the literacy needs of today’s students? That is a question that the remainder of this book will attempt to answer. However, the ten principles discussed below, if followed faithfully, should make a difference in determining such a program.

1. *Children learn to read by reading.* Learning to read is a little like learning to drive a car—instruction and guidance are required. In addition to instruction and guidance, novice readers, like novice motorists, require practice. They must read a variety of fiction and nonfiction books, newspapers, and magazines to become truly skilled. In a way, each book or article makes a child a better reader. As Hirsh (1987) pointed out, children must have a broad background in a variety of areas in order to be able to understand much of what is being written and said in today’s world. For example, a child who has read the fable “The Boy Who Cried Wolf” will have the background necessary to understand a story that includes the sentence, “Frank cried wolf once too often.” Reading is not simply a matter of acquiring and perfecting skills; it also requires accumulating vocabulary, concepts, experiences, and background knowledge.

To provide the necessary practice and background, children's books are an essential component of a reading program. Unfortunately, large numbers of students are illiterate: They *can* read, but they *do* not, at least not on a regular basis. Only 56 percent of students ages 6 to 8 are frequent readers, which means they read at least five days a week. That percentage drops to 38 percent for 9- to 11-year-olds and 30 percent for 12- to 14-year-olds (Harrison Group, 2010). Lewis and Samuels (2003) found that additional reading was beneficial for all students. For average students, it added about 17 percentile points, a half-year's gain in reading skills, but it was especially beneficial for ELLs, struggling readers, and students just beginning to learn to read. In a longitudinal study involving some 6,000 subjects, students who read for pleasure outperformed infrequent readers in vocabulary by 14.4 percentage points. Reading for pleasure had a greater impact than parental education level. Students who read a lot but whose parents had limited education did better than students who did not read a lot but whose parents were well-educated (Sullivan & Brown, 2013).

The case for including children's books in a reading program is a compelling one. First, as just noted, those who read more, read better. Second, research suggests that students who read widely and are given some choice in what they read have a more favorable attitude toward reading (Harrison Group, 2010). As a practical matter, wide reading builds the skills needed to do well on assessments for the Common Core State Standards.

To succeed on the . . . assessments, students need access to a wide range of materials on a variety of topics and genres, both in their classrooms and in their school libraries, to ensure that they have opportunities to independently read widely among texts of their own choosing during and outside of the school day in order to develop their knowledge and joy of reading. (PARCC, 2011, p. 6)

Using children's books in a reading program not only leads to greater enjoyment of reading but also builds skill in reading. In addition, allowing some self-selection should produce students who can and do read. To assist you in choosing or recommending books for your students, lists of appropriate books are presented throughout the text along with a description of several extensive lists of leveled books. Chapter 3 also describes a number of devices for leveling or assessing the difficulty level of books.

2. *Reading should be at the appropriate level of challenge.* Current emphasis is on developing students' ability to read complex text. However, this should not be misinterpreted to mean that students should be given text that is above their zone of proximal development. If children find reading difficult, they will acquire a distaste for it and will simply stop reading except when they have to. Because of inadequate practice, they will fall further behind, and their distaste for reading will grow. In addition, students will be unable to apply the strategies they have been taught, and learning will be hampered (Clay, 1993). Research by Gambrell, Wilson, and Gantt (1981) and Nation (2001) suggests that students do best with reading materials in which no more than 2 to 5 percent of the words are difficult for them. In tryouts of a revised edition of the Developmental Reading Assessment, researchers concluded that students whose word reading accuracy was below 97 percent experienced difficulty with comprehension (Pearson Education, 2009).

There is a belief that reading on-level text will boost below-level readers up to a higher level. In one study comparing struggling readers given reading-level text with struggling readers given grade-level text, the reading-level students outperformed the grade-level students in comprehension and fluency, even though the grade-level students were given extensive preparation and support for the texts they were assigned (O'Connor, Bell, Harty, Larkin, Sackor, & Zigmond, 2002). In a related study, below-level fifth-graders who were given materials on their level did better than below-level fifth-graders given grade-level material (Tracey & Young, 2005).

Reading should not be too easy for students at any level. If they are not presented with any challenging reading materials, students might be bored or fail to fully develop their ability. Sometimes there is a tendency to provide struggling readers with a steady diet of simplified text. Building the decoding and fluency skills of below-level readers is

FYI

Although materials should be within students' zone of proximal development, instruction should include teaching students how to read complex text.

absolutely essential and is best done with materials on their level. However, as they begin to master basic skills, struggling students should be given opportunities to read complex text on their level so that eventually they will be college and career ready. Of course, they should be taught the skills and provided with the scaffolds needed to read more challenging text. To learn more about the importance of providing students with appropriate level texts, see [Digging Deeper 1.3: Appropriateness of Grade-Level Text](#).

3. *Instruction should be functional and contextual.* Do not teach skills or strategies in isolation—teach a word-attack skill because students must have it to decipher words. For example, teach the prefix *pre-* just before the class reads a selection about prehistoric dinosaurs. Students learn better when what they are being taught has immediate value. Suggestions for lessons that are both functional and contextual are presented throughout this book.

4. *Teachers should make connections.* Build a bridge between children’s experiences and what they are about to read. Help them see how what they know is related to the story or article. Students in Montana reading about an ice hockey game may have no experience either playing hockey or watching the sport. However, you could help create a bridge of understanding by discussing how hockey is similar to soccer, a sport with which they probably are familiar. You should also help students connect new concepts to old concepts. Relate reading, writing, listening, and speaking—they all build on each other. Reading and talking about humorous stories can expand students’ concept of humor and remind them of funny things that have happened to them. They might then write about these events. Also build on what students know. This will make your teaching easier, since you will be starting at the students’ level. It will also help students make a connection between what they know and what they are learning.

5. *Teachers should promote independence.* Whenever you teach a skill or strategy, ask yourself: How can I teach this so that students will eventually use it on their own? How will students be called on to use this skill or strategy in school and in the outside world? When you teach students how to summarize, make predictions, or use context, phonics, or another skill or strategy, teach so that there is a gradual release of responsibility (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Gradually fade your instruction and guidance so that students are applying the skill or strategy on their own. Do the same with the selection of reading materials. Although you may discuss ways of choosing books with the class, you ultimately want students to reach a point where they select their own books.

6. *Teachers should believe that all children can learn to read and write.* Given the right kind of instruction, virtually all children can learn to read. There is increasing evidence that the vast majority of children can learn to read at least on a basic level. Over the past three decades, research has shown that Reading Recovery, an intensive 12- to 20-week early intervention program, can raise the reading levels of about 74 percent of the lowest achievers to that of average achievers in a class (International Data Evaluation Center, 2013). Reading Recovery uses an inclusive model:

It has been one of the surprises of Reading Recovery that all kinds of children with all kinds of difficulties can be included, can learn, and can reach average-band performance for their class in both reading and writing achievement. Exceptions are not made for children of lower intelligence, for second-language children, for children with low language skills, for children with poor motor coordination, for children who seem immature, for children who score poorly on readiness measures, or for children who have already been categorized by someone else as learning disabled. (Clay, 1991, p. 60)

A number of intervention programs have succeeded with struggling readers (O’Connor & Vadfas, 2011). An important aspect of these efforts is that supplementary assistance is complemented by a strong classroom program. These results demonstrate the power of effective instruction and the belief that all children can learn to read. Actually, a quality program will prevent most problems. A national committee charged with making recommendations to help prevent reading difficulties concluded, “Excellent instruction is the best intervention for children who demonstrate problems learning to read” (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998, p. 33).



Adapting Instruction for Struggling Readers and Writers

Classroom teachers are taking increased responsibility for helping struggling readers and writers. Suggestions for working with struggling readers and writers are made throughout this book.

7. *Literacy programs should be goal-oriented and systematic.* In keeping with the current concern for preparing all students to be college and career ready and the widespread adoption of the Common Core State Standards, this text has incorporated these standards throughout the text. The margin note “CCSS” designates places in the text where suggestions for implementing a particular standard are presented. However, the text is not limited to Common Core State Standards. The overall purpose of the text is to explore a full range of techniques, assessments, materials, and activities that will help all students fully develop their literacy abilities.

8. *Teachers should build students’ motivation and sense of competence.* Students perform at their best when they feel competent, view a task as being challenging but doable, understand why they are undertaking a task, are given choices, feel part of the process, and have interesting materials and activities. For many students, working in a group fosters effort and persistence. Students also respond to knowledge of progress. They work harder when they see that they are improving, and they are also energized by praise from teachers, parents, and peers, especially when that praise is honest and specific (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997; Sweet, 1997; Wigfield, 1997).

9. *Teachers should build students’ language proficiency.* Reading and writing are language-based. Students’ reading levels are ultimately limited by their language development. Students can’t understand what they are reading if they don’t know what the words mean or if they get tangled up in the syntax of the piece. One of the best ways to build reading and writing potential is to foster language development. In study after study, knowledge of vocabulary has been found to be the key element in comprehension. Students’ listening level has also been found to be closely related to their reading level. The level of material that a student can understand orally is a good gauge of the level at which the student can read with understanding. While fostering language development is important for all students, it is absolutely essential for students who are learning English as a second language.

10. *Teachers need to know how students are progressing so that they can give them extra help or change the program, if necessary.* Assessment need not be formal. Observation can be a powerful assessment tool. However, assessment should be tied to the program’s standards and should result in improvement in students’ learning. In each chapter in which lessons are presented, suggestions are made for assessing those lessons. Suggestions for assessment can also be found in Assessing for Learning annotations in the margins and in Chapter 3. In addition, instruments for assessing phonics and the ability to read multisyllabic words are provided in Chapter 5.

To test your understanding of this section, complete [Section Quiz 1.4](#)

Qualities of Highly Effective Teachers

A number of top researchers have visited the classes of teachers judged to be highly effective (Pressley, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Block, & Morrow, 2001). Their students read more books and wrote more stories. Virtually all read on or above grade level. Their writing skills were surprisingly advanced. They also enjoyed school. On many occasions, observers watched in surprise as students skipped recess so that they could continue working on an activity.

Caring and High Expectations

Perhaps the most outstanding characteristic of highly effective teachers is that they cared for their students and believed in them (Pressley et al., 2001). In one study, teachers who



The teacher is the key to effective literacy instruction.

Monkey Business Image/Shutterstock

were genuinely convinced that their students could and would learn were compared with teachers who were less optimistic about their students' learning (Wharton-McDonald, 2001). For instance, typical first-grade teachers believed that writing was difficult for young students and expected their students would only be able to produce pieces of writing composed of a sentence or two by year's end. Their expectations were discouragingly accurate. By year's end, most students in their classes were producing narratives that consisted of one to three loosely connected sentences with little attention to punctuation or capitalization. Highly effective teachers had higher expectations. They believed that first-graders were capable of sustained writing. By year's end, they expected a coherent paragraph that consisted of five or even more sentences, each of which started with a capital letter and ended with a period. And that's the kind of writing their students produced. Students have a way of living up to or down to teachers' expectations. As noted researcher Robert Slavin (2013) comments, "Love has to come first. A teacher without a passion for children and a belief in what they can accomplish is not likely to make much of a difference even using the most research-proven of programs."

However, the highly effective teachers realized that high expectations are in the same category as good intentions; they need to be acted upon (Pressley et al., 2001). High expectations were accompanied by the kind of instruction that allowed students to live up to those expectations. Highly effective teachers were also superior motivators. The teachers created a feeling of excitement about the subject matter or skill areas they taught (Ruddell, 1995).

Balanced Instruction

As students evidenced a need for instruction, effective teachers were quick to conduct a mini-lesson. A student attempting to spell *boat*, for instance, would be given an on-the-spot lesson on the *oa* spelling of long *o*. However, essential skills were not relegated to opportunistic teaching. Key skills were taught directly and thoroughly but were related to the reading and writing that students were doing.

Extensive Instruction

Effective teachers used every opportunity to reinforce skills. Wherever possible, connections were made between reading and writing and between reading and writing and content-area concepts. Often, students would develop or apply science and social studies concepts in their writing.

Scaffolding

Exemplary teachers scaffolded students' responses. Instead of simply telling students answers, these teachers used prompts and other devices to help students reason their way to the correct response.

Classroom Management

Highly effective teachers were well organized. Routines were well established. The core of their classroom management was building in students a sense of responsibility. Students learned to regulate their own behavior. The greatest proportion of time was spent with high-payoff activities. When students composed illustrated booklets, for instance, the bulk of their time was spent researching and composing the booklets. Only a minimum of time was spent illustrating them.

Students learned how to work together. The classroom atmosphere was one of cooperation rather than competition. Effort was emphasized. Praise and reinforcement were used as appropriate. Students were also taught to be competent, independent learners. They were taught strategies for selecting appropriate-level books, for decoding unfamiliar words, and for understanding difficult text. Their efforts were affirmed so that they would be encouraged to continue using strategies. "Jonathan, I liked the way you previewed that

book before selecting it to read. Now you have a better idea of what it is about and whether it is a just-right book for you.”

High-Quality Materials

The best teachers used the best materials. Students listened to and read classics as well as outstanding contemporary works from children’s literature. There was a decided emphasis on reading. Classrooms were well stocked with materials, and time was set aside for various kinds of reading: shared, partner, and individual.

Matching of Materials and Tasks to Student Competence

Highly effective teachers gave students materials and tasks that were somewhat challenging but not overwhelming. Teachers carefully monitored students and made assignments on the basis of students’ performance. If the book students were reading seemed to have too many difficult words and concepts, students were given an easier book. If they mastered writing a brief paragraph, they were encouraged to write a more fully developed piece. However, they were provided with the assistance and instruction needed to cope with more challenging tasks.

Becoming a Highly Effective Teacher

Although a great variety of topics will be covered in later chapters, the ten primary principles discussed previously are emphasized throughout. Teaching suggestions and activities are included for fostering wide reading, keeping reading reasonably easy, keeping reading and writing functional, making connections, setting goals and assessing progress, and, above all, building a sense of competence and promoting independence. This book is based on the premise that virtually all children can learn to read and write.

Essentials for an Effective Lesson

In order to translate the key concepts discussed so far into a practical instructional context, the basic components of an effective lesson are listed in this section. These components are based on research and incorporate the essential elements contained in widely used teacher evaluation systems, which means that when your lessons are being evaluated, these are the elements that will most likely be considered. A variety of sample lessons are provided in this text. The lessons will incorporate these essential elements.

Objectives Objectives incorporate key skills or understandings that are based on national (Common Core or similar standards), state, or district standards and students’ needs. They are clearly stated and shared with students. They might be posted. One way of checking on clarity of objectives would be to ask students to explain what they are learning and why.

Content/Texts/Activities Content and activities are challenging but engaging. Texts/materials are of high quality and on students’ instructional levels. Where appropriate, students are given a choice of activities or texts. Texts might be traditional print, digital, or a combination.

Instruction Instruction includes an explanation of what is being taught and why. Skills, strategies, or understandings are presented explicitly through modeling, demonstration, simulation, and/or explanation. Students are provided with guided practice interspersed with additional instruction as needed. The teacher continuously checks for understanding and modifies instruction as necessary. Focus is on deep understanding. Ultimately, students apply what they have learned. Emphasis is on lots of reading and writing.

Evaluation Using observation, quizzes, work samples, checks for understanding, and other means, teachers assess students’ grasp of the skills, strategies, and understandings presented. Instruction is modified as needed. Teachers document student progress and reflect on the effectiveness of the lesson. What went well? What might need improvement?

FYI

Teachers typically direct most of their questions and reinforcement to the top third of the class. When teachers direct instruction to all students, including the bottom third of the class, overall achievement improves.

The following key elements are not specifically described in the sample lessons but are implied:

Differentiation Students are grouped, as appropriate, and are also provided with additional instruction and practice, as required. Adjustments are made in instruction, activities, and materials to meet the needs of all students. As part of instruction and differentiation, analyze the language demands being made by the skill, strategy, or understanding that you are developing. What vocabulary, figurative language, syntactical, or rhetorical elements will students need to comprehend in order to be successful? (Watts-Taffe, Laster, Broach, Marinak, Connor, & Walker-Dalhouse, 2012). Also consider students' IEP and 504 plans.

Classroom Atmosphere The classroom is set up for maximum efficiency, management routines are established, and students are engaged in learning. Instructional time is maximized. A caring, supportive atmosphere is established, and there is a spirit of mutual cooperation and respect and a we-are-readers-and-writers attitude.

To test your understanding of this section, complete [Section Quiz 1.5](#)

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

Summary

- Approaches to teaching reading can be viewed as being bottom-up, top-down, or interactive. Behavioral theories of learning favor bottom-up approaches, focus on observable phenomena, describe the student as being a passive recipient, tend to be teacher-centered, and emphasize subskills and mastery learning. Cognitive theories tend to be top-down or interactive in their approach, emphasize the active role of the reader as a constructor of meaning, are often student-centered or teacher–student interactive, and stress mental activities. Social cognitive theories stress the social aspects of learning, scaffolding of instruction, and the zone of proximal development. This book combines an interactionist point of view with a holistic orientation and takes an integrated approach.
- Literary theory explores the role of the reader. In reader response, reading is viewed as a transaction between the reader and the text. The subjective response of the reader is an integral part of the process. According to New Criticism theory, the meaning and emotional impact of the text is revealed through a careful analysis. Combining reader response's emphasis on making connections with New Criticism's focus on careful analysis is an approach recommended by a number of literacy experts.
- Although today's students are reading better than ever, large percentages of students are reading below a basic level and many of today's students are not being adequately prepared for college or career. Several major initiatives are attempting to reform the teaching of literacy: the Elementary and Secondary Act (EASA), College and Career Ready Standards, RTI, and Scientifically Based Literacy Instruction. A proposal for EASA's renewal calls for preparing all students to become college and career ready. Students in grades 3 through 8 and one grade in high school are required to take Common Core State Standards assessments or similar assessments designed to measure students' ability to read and write complex text.
- In their language theories, behaviorists emphasize imitation and reinforcement, nativists stress an inborn propensity for learning language, and interactionists stress the interaction of the learner with opportunities to learn. Learning a second language is easier than learning an original language, and an accepting environment, self-confidence, and motivation foster second-language development. Because of differences in parenting styles, children come to school with widely varying vocabulary development. However, the school's role is to foster vocabulary development in all children and also to value and build on the diversity of cultures present in today's schools.
- Widespread reading and functional instruction commensurate with children's abilities are essentials of an effective reading program. Also necessary is instruction that helps students make connections and fosters independence. Believing that virtually every child can learn to read and building students' motivation and sense of competence are important factors in an effective literacy program, as are setting goals, systematic and direct instruction, managing classroom behavior, building language proficiency, building higher-level literacy, and ongoing assessment.

- Highly effective teachers conduct instruction that is balanced, scaffolded, and extensive and that uses high-quality materials matched to students' needs and abilities. Complementing effective programs are carefully planned lessons, which include

clear objectives; challenging but engaging content, texts, and activities; instruction geared to deep understanding; ongoing assessment; differentiation; and a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning.

Extending and Applying

1. Many school systems require teacher applicants to submit a portfolio. Some require new teachers to complete portfolios as part of the evaluation process. Even if a portfolio is not required in your situation, creating and maintaining one provides you with the opportunity to reflect on your ideas about teaching and your teaching practices. It will help you get to know yourself better as a teacher and so provide a basis for improvement. The portfolio should highlight your professional preparation, relevant experience, and mastery of key teaching skills. Also, draw up a statement of your philosophy of teaching reading and writing.
2. Examine the standards for the school district in which you teach or plan to teach and for the grade you are teaching or plan to teach. These might be an adaptation of Common Core State Standards or standards created by the state. Which of these standards do you feel prepared to teach? For which of the standards might you need additional information and preparation?
3. To find out more about twenty-first-century skills, visit the website, Partnership for 21st Century Skills. What are the key skills being advocated? How might you integrate twenty-first century skills into your curriculum?
4. Take another look at the characteristics of highly effective teachers. What are your strengths and weaknesses in this area? What might you do to build on your strengths and work on your weaknesses?
5. Analyze one or more of your lessons in terms of the Essentials of an Effective Lesson discussed in the chapter. What changes might you need to make to your lessons?
6. To find out more about literacy instruction, see Learning from the Past 1.1.

Professional Reflection

Do I . . .

- _____ Have an understanding of the nature of literacy?
- _____ Have an understanding of the key components of an effective literacy program and a plan for implementing them in my teaching situation?
- _____ Have a general understanding of the Common Core State Standards or other standards in the school district where I teach or plan to teach?

_____ Have a personal philosophy for teaching literacy?

In the past, teachers were evaluated on the quality of their presentations. Today, many school districts also evaluate teachers on the basis of how much their students learn. How might you prepare yourself for an evaluation system that combines quality of presentation with degree of student learning?

Glossary

Accommodation is the process by which concepts or schemes are modified or new ones created to accommodate new knowledge.

Aesthetic refers to a type of reading in which "the reader focuses on experiencing the piece: the rhythm of the words, the past experiences the words call up" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 10).

Assimilation is the process of incorporating new ideas into existing ones.

Behaviorism is a philosophy of learning that describes all the activities of an organism in terms of observable actions or behaviors.

Bottom-up approach refers to a kind of processing in which meaning is derived from the accurate, sequential processing of

words. The emphasis is on the text rather than the reader's background knowledge or language ability.

Close reading means that the reader closely analyzes the text and how the author uses language and literary devices to convey information or a message. A close reading emphasizes the importance of the text rather than biographical information about the author or the circumstances under which the text was written. Readers respond to questions about the text by citing evidence from the text rather than using personal experiences or connections.

Cognitive-behavioral approach is an approach to learning in which self-talk and rewards are used to replace faulty learning habits and beliefs with effective habits and strategies and realistic beliefs.

Cognitivism is a philosophy of learning that describes the activities of an organism in terms of observable actions or behaviors and internal or mental states.

Constructivism is a cognitive philosophy of learning that describes learning as an active process in which the learner constructs mental models of reality.

Efferent refers to a kind of reading in which the focus is on obtaining or carrying away information from the reading.

English language learners (ELLs) are students whose native language is not English and who cannot participate effectively in the regular curriculum because they have difficulty speaking, understanding, reading, and writing in English-speaking classrooms.

Interactionists hold the theoretical position that reading involves processing text and using one's background knowledge and language ability.

Morphology is the component of language that has to do with meaningful word parts, such as roots and affixes.

New Criticism is a literary theory in which reading is viewed as a careful analysis of the text. Close reading is a key tool used in this approach.

New literacies includes using digital technologies but also includes the social practices, such as social networking and texting, associated with advances in technologies.

Phonology is the language component that consists of producing and understanding speech sounds.

Pragmatics is the component of language that has to do with engaging in effective communication.

Prosody is the component of language that has to do with the intonation and rhythm of speech: pitch, stress, and juncture.

Reader response is a literary theory in which reading is viewed as a transaction between the reader and the text. The subjective response of the reader is an integral part of the process.

Reading is a process in which we construct meaning from print.

Reinforcement is a condition or consequence that increases the likelihood that a certain behavior will occur in response to a stimulus.

Scaffolding refers to the support and guidance provided by an adult or more capable peer that helps a student function on a higher level.

Scripted program is one in which the directions for using the program are so detailed that teachers are provided with the exact words to be used for instruction.

Semantics is the component of language that has to do with word and sentence meaning.

Social constructivism is a cognitive philosophy of learning that describes learning as an active process in which the learner constructs mental models of reality individually and in interaction with others.

Stance refers to the position or attitude that the reader takes. The two stances are aesthetic and efferent.

Syntax is the language component that has to do with the way in which words are arranged in a sentence.

Text-dependent questions are those in which the answer can be found directly stated in the text, can be inferred from information in the text, or can be inferred from information in the text combined with the reader's knowledge. The question cannot be answered solely from the reader's knowledge.

Top-down approach refers to deriving meaning by using one's background knowledge, language ability, and expectations. The emphasis is on the reader rather than the text.

Transaction refers to the relationship between the reader and the text in which meaning is created as the text is conditioned by the reader and the reader is conditioned by the text.

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is the difference between independent performance and potential performance as determined through problem solving under the guidance of an adult or more capable peer.

2

Teaching All Students



After reading this chapter, you will learn and be able to:

- Consider how student composition in today's classrooms has changed and how these diverse populations impact how teachers teach and reach all students.
- Develop and implement a literacy program based on the needs and characteristics of diverse student populations.
- Adapt instruction to foster the literacy needs of English language learners.
- Understand the effectiveness of the Response to Intervention approach in ensuring progress for all students.
- Accommodate diverse languages, dialects, cultures, and literary heritages.



ANTICIPATION GUIDE

For each of the following statements related to the chapter you are about to read, select “Agree” or “Disagree” to show how you feel. Discuss your responses with classmates before you read the chapter.

	AGREE	DISAGREE
1. By and large, techniques used to teach average students also work with those who have diverse needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Except for a small percentage of students who have severe disabilities, it is possible to bring virtually all students up to a high level of proficiency.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Economically disadvantaged children may have difficulty learning to read because of challenging life circumstances.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Of all the students with diverse needs, gifted children require the least help.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. It is best to teach English language learners to read in their native language before teaching them to read in English.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. All dialects are of equal value.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

USING WHAT YOU KNOW

The United States is the most culturally and linguistically diverse nation in the world. Dozens of languages are spoken in U.S. schools, and dozens of cultures are represented. By 2016, white students will represent less than half of the public school population. Adding to that diversity is the trend toward inclusion. Increasingly, students who have learning or reading disabilities, visual or hearing impairments, emotional or health problems, or other challenges are being taught in regular classrooms. Because these children have special needs, their programs may have to be adjusted so that they can reach their full potential. Adjustments also need to be made for children who are economically disadvantaged or who are still learning English. The gifted and talented also have special needs and require assistance to reach their full potential. What has been your experience teaching children from other cultures or children who are just learning to speak English? What has been your experience with students who have special needs? Think of some special needs students you have known. What provisions did the school make for these students? Could the school have done more? If so, what? What are some adjustments that you make now or might make in the future for such students?

Diversity in Today's Schools

The success of the nation's schools depends increasingly on how we plan for all our children. As a first step, we can put children at the center of the learning process (Crawford, 1993). If, as educators, we focus on all children and use caring and common sense in dealing with their needs, we will have gone a long way toward establishing equity in our schools.

Mandates to prepare every student to be college and career ready (U.S. Department of Education, 2010), the response to intervention (RTI) initiative highlighted in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA), and Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of



Chief State School Officers, 2010a) have brought into focus the importance of providing for all students.

With the recognition that classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse, attempts are being made to provide for the literacy needs of all students. Providing effective instruction requires, first of all, that we get a sense of the student diversity in today's classrooms. Currently, just under 50 million students are enrolled in public schools (Kena, Aud, Johnson, Wang, Zhang, Rathbun, Wilkinson-Flicker, & Kristapovich, 2014). Forty-eight percent of public school students are considered to be part of a racial or ethnic minority group, an increase from 22 percent in 1972 (Aud, Wilkinson-Flicker, Kristapovich, Rathbun, Wang, & Zhang, 2013). The increase is mainly due to the growth in the number of Hispanic students. Hispanic students currently represent 23 percent of public school enrollment, up from 6 percent in 1972. Nearly 20 percent of school-age children are living in poverty.

FYI

IDEIA is sometimes referred to by its original designation: IDEA.

**TAKING A CLOSER LOOK 2.1****BUILDING ON STUDENTS' CULTURE**

Watch the video and reflect on the associated questions.

Adding to this linguistic, ethnic, and racial diversity in today's classrooms is the inclusion of students with special needs: students who have learning or reading disabilities or physical or emotional difficulties, who are living in poverty, or who need to be challenged because of special gifts or talents they possess. About 6.4 million students or 13 percent of the school population is served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). In the typical classroom, as many as one student in three may be in need of some sort of differentiation or extra attention to reach his or her full literacy potential.

To test your understanding of this section, complete [Section Quiz 2.1](#)

Meeting the Literacy Needs of All Students

Key obstacles to literacy learning include physical, social and emotional, and cognitive impairments or difficulties. However, the most pervasive obstacle to literacy development is poverty, which often intersects with other factors.

Economically Disadvantaged Students

The percentage of children living below the poverty level was 19.9 percent in 2013 (DeNava-Walt & Proctor, 2014). Nearly 10 million of the nation's school-age children live below the official poverty level. Twenty percent of students attend high-poverty schools, which means that at least 75 percent of the students qualify for free or a reduced-price lunch (Aud et al., 2013). High-poverty schools have teachers who are less experienced, are less likely to have advanced degrees, and are more likely to lack certification. Differences in reading achievement between students who attend high-poverty schools and those attending low-poverty schools (25 percent or less qualifying for free or a reduced-cost lunch) are dramatic. In 2009, about 55 percent of fourth-graders from high-poverty schools performed below basic on the NAEP tests, compared with 13 percent of fourth-graders from low-poverty schools. About 47 percent of eighth-graders from high-poverty schools performed below basic, compared with 13 percent of eighth-graders from low-poverty schools. However, when low-income students attended low-poverty schools, their achievement was similar to that of the middle-class students (Kahlenberg, 2009).

Some research indicates that students from low-income homes progress at approximately the same rate as middle-income students, especially in the early grades. However, low-income students start out behind and sustain a small loss during summer vacations, whereas middle-class students experience small gains (Barton & Cooley, 2008; Reardon, 2013). As the years go by, these summer differences accumulate so that students living in poverty end up significantly behind their more economically fortunate peers.

FYI

English language learners (ELLs) and minority students are more likely to live in poverty than white English-speaking students (Aud et al., 2013).

Poverty in and of itself does not mean that children cannot and will not be successful in school. For instance, even in the poorest neighborhoods, about one child out of a hundred enters kindergarten knowing letter–sound relationships and how to read words (West, Denton, & Germino-Hausken, 2000). (The proportion is two out of a hundred for middle-class children.) However, because their families and communities generally have fewer resources, low-income students are more reliant on schools. The quality of schooling makes a difference. Although poverty is associated with lowered performance in reading, students who attend high-performing schools in impoverished neighborhoods have high reading achievement (Kim, Mazza, Zwanziger, & Henry, 2013).

To learn more about the impact of poverty, see [Digging Deeper 2.1: Impact of Poverty on Literacy Development](#).

Principles for Teaching Economically Disadvantaged Children

Poverty and the struggles that it causes can lead students to adopt negative outlooks. Students living in poverty may be less optimistic about the future and may seem to display a lack of effort, which is really a manifestation of a lack of hope (Jensen, 2013). Building one-on-one relationships with your students can encourage them and lead to increased effort. When students have a relationship with their teachers, they work harder to please them. Provide interesting tasks for students to perform, affirm their efforts, and build bridges between what students are learning and their cultures. Students may feel that they have limited ability, so it is important that you stress the importance of effort and the malleability of intelligence. Learning literally makes students smarter. In studies, students who read more acquired more vocabulary and achieved higher scores on tests of cognitive ability. Other steps that can be taken to develop the skills of economically disadvantaged students are discussed below.

- *Provide a safe, caring environment where students can develop the behaviors they need to be successful in school.* As Jensen (2013) suggests, “Stop telling students what to do and start teaching them how to do it” (p. 28). Develop responsibility by giving students choices, having them take part in projects, and fostering teamwork and decision making.
- *Build background.* It is important to develop background in reading in all children. For some children from low-income families, this background will have to be extensive. Limited incomes generally mean limited travel and lack of opportunity for vacations, summer camps, and other enriching activities. However, the teacher should not assume that children do not have the necessary background for a particular selection they are about to read. One teacher was somewhat surprised to learn that a group of low-income sixth-graders with whom she was working had a fairly large amount of knowledge about the feudal system (Maria, 1990). Use a technique such as brainstorming or simple questioning to probe students’ background to avoid making unwarranted assumptions about knowledge.
- *Create an atmosphere of success.* With student input, establish challenging goals but convince students the goals are both desirable and reachable. Provide examples of others who overcame adversity to attain their goals. If possible, bring in local citizens who have done well. Encourage students’ efforts and celebrate their successes (Jensen, 2013). Also provide practical help in reaching those goals. “Determine which skills the student will need in order to pursue a goal and cultivate those skills. This may include helping with reading, writing, public speaking . . . using public transportation, or many other skills that students from privileged backgrounds assimilate” (Tomlinson, 2013, p. 89).
- *Make instruction explicit.* Middle-class children are more likely to be taught strategies at home that will help them achieve success in school and are more likely to receive help at home if they have difficulty or fail to understand implicit

instruction at school. Children from low-income homes need direct, explicit instruction. If these children do not learn skills at school, family members will be less likely to supply or obtain remedial help for them. These students must have better teaching and more of it (Delpit, 1990).

- *Provide a balanced program.* Because the economically disadvantaged as a group do less well on skills tests, teachers may overemphasize basic skills (García, 1990). Economically disadvantaged students need higher-level as well as basic skills and strategies. These skills should be taught in context with plenty of opportunity to apply them to high-quality reading materials and real life.
- *Provide access to books, magazines, and other reading materials.* One of the most powerful determiners of how well children read is how much they read. Unfortunately, children from low-income households often have few books in their homes. One study found that poor children, on average, had fewer than three books in their homes. What's more, their classrooms, schools, and public libraries had far fewer books than did those in more affluent areas (Krashen, 1997–1998). This is unfortunate, because the number of books a student reads is related to the number of books available and to having a quiet, comfortable place to read (Krashen, 1997–1998). How important is providing materials and incentives for students living in poverty? Engaged readers from low parental education and income groups achieved at a higher level than less engaged readers from high parental education and income backgrounds. “Engaged readers can overcome obstacles to achievement and become agents of their own reading growth” (Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001). A recent international study confirmed this finding. Data from PISA indicated that reading engagement is a stronger predictor of reading achievement than socioeconomic status (OECD, 2010). Indeed, about one-third of the achievement was attributed to reading engagement.
- *Counteract the fourth-grade slump.* In their classic study of children of poverty, Chall, Jacobs, and Baldwin (1990) observed a phenomenon known as the *fourth-grade slump*. Students perform well in second and third grades on measures of reading and language, although form lags behind content in writing. However, beginning in fourth grade, many poor students slump in several areas. They have particular difficulty defining abstract, more academically oriented words. In addition to vocabulary, word recognition and spelling scores begin to slip. These are the skills that undergird achievement in reading and writing. They are also the skills for which the schools bear primary responsibility. From fourth grade on, the school's role in the development of low-income children's literacy capabilities becomes especially important. Added opportunities for writing and reading in the content areas were a key recommendation of the study. The researchers noted that children who wrote more comprehended better, and those who were in classes where the teachers taught content-area reading had higher vocabulary scores. It also helps to “overdetermine success.” Overdetermining success “anticipates all the ways children might fail and then plans how each will be prevented or quickly and effectively dealt with” (Slavin, 1997–1998, p. 7). This means making arrangements for tutoring, counseling, and family support.

Students with Learning Disabilities

Approximately 4.8 percent of all U.S. students aged 3 to 21 (about 2.3 million students) have been determined to have a learning disability (Aud et al., 2013). The term **learning disability** is controversial; experts disagree as to what constitutes a learning disability. The most widely followed definition is that used by the federal government and contained in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEIA (PL 108–446):

Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder



EXEMPLARY TEACHING

Turning Reluctant Readers into Avid Readers

During the summer children living in poverty lose about three months in reading achievement (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2014). Without the structure of school and access to the school's literacy resources, students read less or fail to read all together, thus sliding three months down the literacy scale. Preventing the summer slide from grades 1 through 8 would add approximately 2.4 years of growth and go a long way towards closing the poverty-induced literacy gap.

One way to combat the summer literacy slide is to develop students who have a strong desire to read. Middle school teacher Kathy King-Dickman (2013) worked with several groups of reluctant readers in high-poverty schools. Out of the fifty middle-school students that she taught, only four were avid readers. She described her students as being bored and disengaged. Drawing on 27 years of teaching experience, she focused on what worked best. Her first step was to get to know the students and show that she really cared about them. She then prefaced each class with an explanation of why they were learning the skill or topic being taught that day. She also gave them choices and conferred often

about the books they were reading. A key element was providing books at their level. Noting that many of her students were reading below grade level and spent much of their day being frustrated by materials and tasks that were too difficult, she arranged for them to select books at their reading level, not their grade level. Realizing that students living in poverty may not have a place or time when they could read, she provided opportunities for reading in school. As her students grew into the habit of reading at school, they began finding places and times to read outside of school.

She built on their strengths so that they began to see themselves as readers and writers. She fostered students' discussions so that they became more engaged and benefited by sharing knowledge and insights with their classmates. As the year progressed, most of King-Dickman's students became avid readers. Recently, she received a letter from Elena, a student she taught from fourth through seventh grade and whose family had no steady income. In her letter, Elena explained that she had planned to read three books that summer but was now beginning her tenth. Elena ended her letter by saying, "Thank you for teaching me to read and write" (p. 62).

may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. Such term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Such term does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. [PL 108-446, section 30(A, B, C)]



Using Technology

For more information on learning disabilities, visit these sites: [Learning Disabilities Association of America](#), the [International Dyslexia Association](#), or [Council for Exceptional Children](#).

In the past, a definition based on some measurable discrepancy between performance and ability was used to identify learning disabilities. However, this definition often delayed services, because a sufficient discrepancy didn't show up until students had been in school for several years. School systems now have the option of using response to intervention (RTI) as an identification tool. In RTI, students are provided tiers of increasingly intensive instruction. If they fail to make progress, their lack of progress may indicate a learning disability. However, RTI cannot be the sole determining criterion. States must use multiple measures to determine a learning disability.

Characteristics of Students with Learning Disabilities

Because of the broad definition, the group of students classified as having a learning disability is quite heterogeneous. It includes students who have visual- or auditory-perceptual dysfunction, memory deficits, problems using language to learn, or all of these conditions. Students may have an underlying problem that manifests itself in all school subjects, or the problem may be restricted to a single area, such as reading, writing, or math. In general, a learning disability can be caused by a weakness in information processing. Key information-processing skills include visual-perceptual skills, auditory processing and language skills, and attention and motor skills. However, the most common reason for referral is a reading problem. About 80 percent of students classified as having a learning disability have a reading difficulty. (Chapter 13 contains information about intervention programs for students with a reading disability.)

Using Technology

Bookshare® is an online library of digital books for people with print disabilities. **Bookshare®** offers text-to-speech capability. Free memberships are available to schools and qualifying students.

Students with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Estimates of the percentage of school-age children with **attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)** range from 5 to 11 percent (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). ADHD has as its primary symptom difficulty in focusing and sustaining attention. This may be due to a chemical imbalance and is frequently accompanied by **hyperactivity** or **impulsivity**.

ADHD is not classified as a learning or reading disorder. A student can have ADHD but demonstrate no difficulty learning. However, there is considerable overlap between the two categories. Many students diagnosed as having a learning disability also have difficulty with attention. Consequently, ADHD students may qualify for special services or **modifications** and **accommodations** under IDEA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Section 504 is designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance.

To learn more about IDEA and Section 504, see [Digging Deeper 2.2: IDEA and Section 504](#).

Assisting Students with ADHD

The nature and extent of ADHD are still being debated. However, it is clear that large numbers of students have difficulty learning because of a problem with attention. It is important that teachers look at ways in which they can help the student perform better in school and in which the school can adjust to the student's characteristics. For instance, ADHD children, by definition, have difficulty sitting still. Why not allow them stretch breaks or the opportunity to participate in projects that involve movement? Instead of just focusing on trying to change the child, teachers need to work with him or her and modify the program.

Other suggestions include the following, many of which would be beneficial to all students:

- Provide students with tasks that are meaningful and interesting.
- Give students a choice of materials and activities.
- Allow mobility in the classroom; use writing, reading, and other learning centers.
- Allow students to confer with peers or work in cooperative groups.
- Make sure students understand directions. Establish eye contact. Give directions one step at a time, writing them on the board as you do so. Make sure that the students have copied the directions accurately and understand them.
- When students have homework assignments, make sure they leave with all the necessary materials and directions.
- Help students keep a schedule for major assignments. Break the assignment down into a series of smaller steps. Check to see that each step is completed.
- Use aids, such as pictures, the overhead projector, document camera, and videos whenever possible.
- Schedule many brief periods of practice for rote material rather than a few long ones.
- Work closely with parents so that the home supports the school's efforts, and vice versa.
- Minimize distractions. Have ADHD students sit near you and put away any books or tools they aren't using.
- Make sure classroom procedures are clear and everyone understands them.
- Highlight important information. In one study, writing the difficult parts of spelling words in red resulted in improved performance for ADHD students (Zutell, 1998).



Using Technology

Visit the following websites for more information about ADHD and other mental health issues:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

National Institute of Mental Health

U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

The OCR provides information about Section 504.

- Use peer tutoring. In several studies, peer tutoring dramatically increased the on-task behavior and performance of both students with ADHD and students without ADHD (DuPaul & Eckert, 1996).
- Use technology. Technology has the potential to increase the achievement and on-task behavior of students with ADHD.

Students with Intellectual Disabilities

About 1.2 to 1.6 percent of the population is classified as having some degree of **intellectual disability**, which is sometimes referred to as *cognitive disability* or *mental retardation* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011). Intellectual disability is determined by two criteria: low level of intellectual functioning and deficits in adaptive behavior. Low level of intellectual functioning translates into an IQ score below 70, or two standard deviations below the mean.

A primary problem for students with intellectual disabilities is limited reasoning ability. Through modeling and other techniques, the teacher must make explicit the processes of reading and writing that average students often pick up on their own. Book selection and the use of decoding, comprehension, study, and writing skills have to be modeled carefully and continually. The teacher must also model processes that underlie learning: paying attention, staying on task, listening, and determining relevant information.

For most children who have intellectual disabilities, the major obstacles to reading achievement are vocabulary and conceptual development. Because of limited cognitive ability and, perhaps, lack of experiential background, they may have difficulty comprehending what they read. They need to have concepts and background built in functional, concrete ways. They also need appropriate materials. Students need materials that appeal to their age but that are on the appropriate reading level. A language-experience approach, which is explained in Chapter 11, is especially effective because it is based on students' language.



Using Technology

The website for the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities provides a wealth of information.



TAKING A CLOSER LOOK 2.2

UNDERSTANDING INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

Watch the video and reflect on the associated questions.

When provided with scientifically based, well-planned instruction, students with intellectual disabilities do make progress, but at a slower pace. Even those in the mild range (56 to 69) may need three years to achieve a year's growth (Allor, Mathes, Roberts, Cheatham, & Al Otaiba, 2014). Some students with intellectual disabilities may never read beyond a second-grade level. Others will never be able to do any sustained reading. Because their literacy development is so limited, it is important that they be taught the literacy skills they need to function in society. These skills include reading traffic and warning signs, labels, simple cooking directions, and common forms. They also have to know how to write their name, address, telephone number, date of birth, names of family members, and other information frequently requested on forms.

Students with intellectual disabilities should also be taught how to read the newspaper and use the Internet, especially for functional items like weather forecasts, movie times, transportation information, and making purchases. They must know, too, how to use the white, blue, and yellow pages of the telephone book or find similar information on the Internet. Stress should be placed on locating emergency numbers and also making use of assistive devices, such as text-to-speech offered on computers and other digital devices.

Slow Learners

Functioning generally on a higher level than students with intellectual disabilities but on a lower level than average students are a large number of students known as **slow learners**. They make up approximately 14 percent of the school population. Because they have IQ scores between 70 and 85 (approximately), they function on too high a level to be classified

as having an intellectual disability but are frequently excluded from remedial reading programs for students who have a learning disability because their IQ scores are too low. Although they have some special needs, slow learners are often denied special services.

Slow learners manifest some of the same characteristics that students with intellectual disabilities display, but to a lesser degree. They tend to be concrete in their thinking, need help with strategies and organization, and are eager for success. They have difficulty with abstract concepts and so need a lot of concrete examples. They also need more practice and more repetition (Cooter & Cooter, 2004). Their executive functioning is on a higher level than that of children with intellectual disabilities. They are better able to decide when and where to use strategies and are better able to classify and group information. They also are more aware of their mental processes and can take more responsibility for their learning.

In terms of instruction, these are “more so” students; they need the same instruction that regular students need, but more so. They must be given more guidance, more practice, and more time to complete learning tasks. In one study, students with IQs between 70 and 80 required one and a half years to make a year’s gain (Allor, et al., 2014). One of their greatest needs is to have materials and instruction on their level. (Materials for learning-disabled students can also be used with slow learners.) A slow learner in the fifth grade might be reading on a second- or third-grade level. All too often, slow learners are given a basal that is below grade level but still above their reading level or a content-area textbook that is on grade level and well above their reading level. This is frustrating and leads to lowered self-concept and lowered achievement.

Students with Language and Speech Disorders

As Ratner (2013) points out, without treatment, delayed or disordered language development may lead to difficulties in reading and writing as well as in oral communication and the acquisition of adequate social skills. Hearing impairment, intellectual disabilities, and autism impact language development. There is also a condition known as **specific language impairment (SLI)**, in which the cause of the disorder is not known, but is suspected to be neurological.

Specific Language Impairment Specific language impairment is thought by some experts to be a delay in language development (Ratner, 2013). Children with this impairment, many of whom may have been late talkers, experience slow growth in language development, even in the school years, and so fall behind in reading. About one-quarter of children with SLI have difficulty with **lexical retrieval**, or the ability to retrieve words from memory. For instance, unable to retrieve the word *bat*, a student might say, “The thing that you hit a ball with.” The speech of these students is marked by hesitations, roundabout expressions, and “you knows.” Students who have retrieval difficulties may have difficulty using picture and context clues because they cannot retrieve from memory the name of the object shown in the picture or think of the word that might fit the context.

Articulation Disorders In addition to language disorders, there are articulation disorders, which do not generally impact reading or writing, but may negatively impact students’ social development and self-esteem.

Inclusion

Inclusion means teaching students who have disabilities or special needs within the general education classroom. In order to accelerate the trend toward educating special education students within the regular classroom, the concept of inclusion has been widely adopted. Inclusion has come to mean providing support to classroom teachers as they, in turn, provide support for the education of students who have disabilities. Supporting students who have disabilities means creating and maintaining a warm, accepting atmosphere for all students and making whatever accommodations and modifications are required to develop their literacy abilities.



Today’s classrooms include students with diverse educational, physical, social, and emotional needs.

Lisa F. Young/Shutterstock



Using Technology

The Whole Child’s website provides a unique approach to education, and covers information about inclusion.

With the emphasis on inclusion and the advent of assistive devices to aid speech and hearing, including the growing use of **cochlear implants**, a greater number of students with speech and language disorders are being mainstreamed. The teacher's role consists primarily of being sensitive to the difficulty and helping the child to apply skills in the classroom that she or he learned while working with a speech or language therapist. For students who have retrieval problems, for instance, the teacher might provide the child more time to respond and prompts to help the child retrieve the response.

Students Who Are Gifted and Talented

A reading and writing program for **gifted and talented students** should take into account the individual characteristics of the children. About 50 percent of the gifted come to school already reading (Terman, 1954). Provision should be made for them and for those reading above grade level. For example, gifted second-graders reading on a fifth- or sixth-grade level should not be restricted to second-grade material. The materials they read should be on their instructional and interest levels.

Because they master basic reading skills early and may not be sufficiently challenged by the classroom collections of books, gifted students should learn how to select books from the school library. To enable them to investigate areas of special interest, provide early instruction in the use of dictionaries, encyclopedias, the Internet, and other basic references, as well as in the use of research skills. These students may also need help with study skills as they progress through the grades. Some are able to get by in the lower grades because of their ability, but as they reach more advanced grades, they may not have acquired the study habits and skills that will enable them to work up to their abilities.



Using Technology

For additional information about giftedness, the National Association for Gifted Children has a wide range of resources available.



TAKING A CLOSER LOOK 2.3 GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

Watch the video and reflect on the associated questions.

Reading and writing workshops work quite well for the gifted. Through self-selected reading in a reading workshop, gifted students are free to pursue advanced work at an accelerated pace. Through writing workshops, gifted students can also explore a broad range of writing genres. In creating reports on subjects of interest, they can investigate topics in depth and apply a host of practical research skills. Gifted students might also attempt some of the more difficult kinds of writing, such as poetry, drama, and short pieces of fiction.

One program that works exceptionally well with the gifted is Junior Great Books, a program in which students read literary classics and discuss them using a technique known as **shared inquiry**TM. The group leader, who is trained by the Great Books Foundation, initiates and guides the discussion, but it is up to the group to interpret the reading and validate its interpretation with evidence from the text. In addition to developing skill in the careful reading of complex materials, shared inquiryTM is designed to develop discussion and thinking skills. In an independent study comparing major discussion approaches, Junior Great Books was superior to all the others in preparing students to obtain higher comprehension scores (Murphy & Edwards, 2004). The program features high-quality selections, excellent discussion guides and follow-up materials, and conscientious training of leaders. (Junior Great Books also works well with average and struggling readers.)

Although designed to be used with all students, another program that works well with the gifted is the Schoolwide Enrichment Model-Reading Framework (SEM-R). SEM-R is a supplementary program that makes special provision for gifted students. Higher-level thinking skills are emphasized. Students are also encouraged to read challenging materials, books that are “moderately or slightly above” their reading level during class sessions. A basic goal of the program is to increase the amount of challenging reading that talented readers do.



Using Technology

The Neag School of Education's page on the Schoolwide Enrichment Model-Reading Framework (SEM-R) provides a video and extensive information about SEM-R.

To test your understanding of this section, complete **Section Quiz 2.2**

Fostering Literacy for English Language Learners

Some 21 percent of children ages 5 to 17 (or 10.9 million) speak a language other than English at home, and 9.1 percent (or 4.4 million) are served in programs that provide language assistance (Aud et al., 2013; Kena et al., 2014). *English language learners* refers to students in programs of language assistance. Nearly one out of every four public school students is Hispanic. Seventy-five percent of those who speak English with difficulty speak Spanish. Children in U.S. schools today come from more than a hundred language communities. Among the languages spoken, in order of number of speakers, are Spanish, Vietnamese, Hmong, Haitian Creole, Korean, Arabic, Chinese (Cantonese), Russian, Tagalog, Navajo, Khmer, Portuguese, Urdu, Chinese (Mandarin), Serbo-Croatian, Lao, and Japanese.

English language learners (ELLs) have diverse backgrounds. Some are new arrivals; others were born in the United States but grew up in a home where a language other than English was spoken. Some new arrivals have a rich educational background and are literate in their native language. Others have never been to school, or their schooling was interrupted. Some are solidly middle class. However, a large number live in poverty.

The question of how English language learners should be taught to read and write strikes at the core of what reading is—that is, a language activity. The prestigious Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children recommends teaching ELLs to read in their native language while, at the same time, teaching them to speak English as a second language (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Once they have a sufficient grasp of English and of basic reading in their native language, they can then learn to read in English. In fact, in some studies students were taught to read in their native language and in English simultaneously, although the lessons were held at separate times during the day (Goldenberg, 2011). Five major reviews of research have concluded that “teaching students to read in their first language promotes higher levels of reading achievement *in English*” (Goldenberg, 2011, p. 691). “Two languages are not competing for space in a student’s brain but are mutually supportive and reinforcing” (Escamilla & Hopewell, 2010, p. 18). First of all, children build a solid foundation in their native tongue. With language development, thinking skills are enhanced, concepts are clarified and organized, and children learn to use language in an abstract way. Because they are also learning math, science, and social studies in their native language, background experience is being developed.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Only

Not all ELLs have access to a bilingual program. If the only program offered is one that teaches the students English as a Second Language (ESL), it is best to delay formal reading instruction until the children have a reasonable command of English (Goldenberg, 2011). However, students can complete language-experience stories and read easy books as they learn English. They should also be encouraged to write as best they can. As they gain proficiency in oral English, they can tackle increasingly complex reading and writing tasks. Their oral-language skills will support their reading and writing, and their reading and writing will reinforce and build oral-language skills.

The classroom teacher’s role is to support the efforts of bilingual and/or ESL specialists by meeting regularly with them and working with them to plan activities that will enhance students’ progress. Even after students have finished the ESL program, they still require special language-development activities. Some adjustments that might be made to adapt classroom instruction to ELLs’ needs are described in the following subsections.

Provide a Secure Environment

The first step in helping ELLs build literacy is to provide a safe, secure, and caring environment (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001). As a teacher, you can acquire basic information about the newcomer, seat the student close to you so that you can supply guidance as needed, and assign a buddy. Having a buddy, preferably one who speaks the newcomer’s language,



Adapting Instruction for English Language Learners

As students move up through the grades and the texts become more complex, proficiency in English becomes a greater factor and ELLs may begin to fall behind (August, Shanahan, & Shanahan, 2006).

will help a newcomer feel welcome and adjust to the school's routines. The buddy can accompany the newcomer during the school day and explain classroom procedures and how to use the cafeteria, line up for the bus, and other routines; such conversation builds language skills. You can also make sure that the newcomer becomes part of the classroom community by introducing him or her, providing information about his or her country of origin, and integrating the newcomer into the classroom's cooperative groups.

Develop English

The greatest need of ELLs is to develop skills in understanding and using English. Students vary in the rate at which they learn a second language. Aptitude for learning language varies. In addition, there are social and psychological factors. More outgoing children will learn a second language more rapidly, as will children who are highly motivated (Tabors, 1997). Children face a double bind when learning a second language. In order to do so, they must be socially accepted by their peers so that they can learn language from them. But to be socially accepted, they need to be able to speak to the other children. Age also has an impact on children's language development. Young children need to learn less language because they and their English-speaking peers are at an earlier stage of language development than older children are; however, they also have less cognitive capacity than older children, so they may take longer to learn a second language.

When they first enter a school environment in which English is spoken, ELLs may continue to use their native tongue. When they find that this isn't working, many of these students enter a nonverbal period, which may last a few weeks, a few months, or even an entire year. They use gestures and other nonverbal strategies in order to communicate. Gradually, the children use increasingly complex English to communicate. At first, ELLs learn object names: *blocks, water, paint, books*. They might also use commands or comments such as *stop, okay, uh-oh, please, yes, no, hi, and bye-bye*. They also pick up a series of useful expressions or routine statements, such as "Good morning. What's happening? How did you do this?" They progress to useful sentence structures, such as "I want ____" or "I like ____," which they complete using a variety of words.

In order to cope with the demands of the school setting, ELLs use a number of strategies:

- Join a group and act as though they know what is going on. This might mean joining a group that is playing with toy cars or building with blocks. ELLs participate by watching the activities of the others.
- Connect what they see with what people are saying. If the teacher holds up a round object and says "ball" several times, they assume that the name of the round object is *ball*.
- Learn some words and expressions, and use them. Even though ELLs know very little English, they become part of a social group by making the most of what they do know and so have the opportunity to expand their language.
- Find and use sources of help. Finding an adult or a friend who will teach them new words or expressions and help resolve confusions fosters language development (Tabors, 1997).
- Use a copying strategy. Not fully understanding directions or the complexity of an assignment, ELLs often imitate their English-speaking classmates. They look to see how they are doing a workbook page or might even copy a sentence composed as part of a writing assignment. Copying may be viewed by the teacher and classmates as a coping strategy and, thus, tolerated (Weber & Longhi-Chirlin, 2001). When not copying from others, students often copy words that are displayed around the room or words from stories they read. Expression of their own ideas is very limited.

ELLs should be encouraged to ask questions or seek help when they don't understand what they are being taught or what they are supposed to do. These students are often



Adapting Instruction for English Language Learners

Through reading or having read to them books such as *The Star Fisher* (Yep, 1991) and *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975), students whose families immigrated to the United States learn that others also face problems as they adjust to a new culture (Miller, 2000).

confused by assignments or explanations or don't know what question the teacher is asking because they don't understand enough of the language (Weber & Longhi-Chirlin, 2001). ELLs can do better in small groups because they are in a less intimidating environment and have the opportunity to ask peers for help.

Provide Comprehensible Input

The key to developing language is to provide comprehensible input (Krashen, 2003). To make input more comprehensible, modify the language to make it more accessible. Modification includes speaking more slowly, emphasizing the pronunciation of key words, using shorter sentences, simplifying the syntax, and using a more basic vocabulary. In some instances, you might provide a more elaborated explanation in which each step is more clearly expressed (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2002). Use the same set of directions for key tasks and routines. Also scaffold language comprehension and development. Use gestures or actions along with words. The request "Line up for lunch" might be accompanied by a gesture for lining up and a gesture for eating (Tabors, 1997). Be repetitious. Repeating statements, key phrases, or words provides ELLs with an added opportunity to catch what is being said (Tabors, 1997). To facilitate understanding of oral language, add illustrative elements to discussions. Use objects, models, and pictures to illustrate vocabulary words that might be difficult. Role-play situations and pantomime activities. When talking about rocks in a geology unit, bring some in and hold them up when mentioning their names. When discussing a story about a tiger, point to a picture of the tiger. When introducing a unit on magnets, hold up a magnet every time you use the word; point to the poles each time you mention them. Supplement oral directions with gestures and demonstrations. Think of yourself as an actor in a silent movie who must use body language to convey meaning.

Find out what words, if any, the student knows in English and build on those. On the other side of the coin, learn a few key expressions in the student's home language and use them: "It is time for lunch." "Line up for lunch." "Line up for recess." "Take out your reading books." Obtain these expressions from online sources, parents, other children who speak the student's language, or the bilingual teacher.



TAKING A CLOSER LOOK 2.4 COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT

Watch the video and reflect on the associated questions.

Additional Techniques for Developing English

The good news is that ELLs placed in an English-speaking classroom can and do make progress. They develop speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills when their teachers believe that they can learn and present them with meaningful instruction and activities.

Model Modeling consists of demonstrating some language element that the student is having difficulty with or needs to learn. For instance, to model the use of *this* and *is* and *these* and *are*, you might say, "This is my pencil. These are my pencils. This is my book. These are my books." The student is offered the opportunity to use the constructions but is not required to do so. She or he may need more time to assimilate the structures.

Expand In an expansion, you repeat the student's statement but supply a missing part. For example, if a student says, "Car red," you say, "Yes, the car is red." This affirms the student's comment but also gives the student a model of a more advanced form (Bunce, 1995).

Plan Conversations Increasing the amount of oral language in the classroom enhances English speaking. Structure conversations at the beginning of the school day and at other convenient times to talk about current events, weather, hobbies, sports, or other topics of interest. Encourage students to participate in discussions and provide opportunities for them to use "language for a broad variety of functions, both social and academic" (Allen, 1991, p. 362).

Build Academic Language Special emphasis should be placed on **academic language**. As students learn English, they first acquire functional structures that allow them to greet others, make conversational statements, and ask questions. This type of everyday communication is heavily contextualized and is augmented by gestures, pointing at objects, and pantomiming. It takes approximately two years for students to become socially proficient in English (Cummins, 2001). However, schooling demands academic language, which is more varied and abstract and relatively decontextualized. This is the language in which math procedures and subject matter concepts are explained.

Cummins referred to everyday functional language as Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and to decontextualized school-type language as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). It takes one to two years for ELLs to acquire basic conversational skill and to catch up to English-speaking students in decoding. However, it takes five years or more for ELLs to catch up in academic English (Cummins, 2011). Even though ELLs may seem proficient in oral English, they may have difficulty with academic language. Mastery of conversational English may mask deficiencies in important higher-level language skills (Sutton, 1989). Because of the time required to acquire academic language, ELLs may not demonstrate their true abilities on achievement and cognitive ability tests administered in English.



TAKING A CLOSER LOOK 2.5

EVERYDAY AND ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

Watch the video and reflect on the associated questions.

Learning academic language is more than just learning big words. As Zwiers (2008) explains, it also means learning the smaller words, the grammar, and the thinking skills necessary to put the big words together in an understandable text or utterance. Academic language includes the thinking skills of analyzing, explaining, inferring, and organizing as well as language skills. It requires the ability to think and talk about language as well as use language. And it requires acquisition of background knowledge on a wide range of topics and ideas. “Teachers further the acquisition of CALP by analyzing the conceptual and critical thinking of grade-level curriculum and taking the time to ensure that all students are explicitly taught such requirements” (Díaz-Rico, 2004, p. 305). This includes development of the ability to read complex text. Complex text has complex language, including advanced vocabulary and syntax. Understanding academic vocabulary often requires understanding the complex language structures in which academic vocabulary appears (Nagy & Townsend, 2012). The biggest roadblock for ELLs is they don’t get the opportunity to work with complex text (Fillmore & Fillmore, 2013). In one program, students analyzed the construction of single sentences to figure out their meaning (Fillmore & Fillmore, 2013). This helped ELL students to develop their understanding of complex written English. Nagy and Townsend (2012) recommend presenting academic vocabulary not as words to be memorized but as tools to be used when discussing, writing about, or reading academic content.

Academic vocabulary can be thought of as bricks and mortar (Dutro & Moran, 2003). Bricks are the content-specific technical words such as *cells*, *nucleus*, *hypotenuse*, and *democracy*. Mortar consists of the words used to articulate the concepts represented by the technical words: *require*, *causation*, *temporary*, *determine*. Mortar words can be even more abstract than brick words. Mortar words are also used to describe academic tasks: *analyze*, *contrast*, *synthesize*. Academic language includes stock phrases, which use figurative language: *when all is said and done*, *what it all boils down to*, *read between the lines*, *see eye to eye* (Zwiers, 2008).

Develop academic vocabulary as part of your explanations and discussions (Larson, Dixon, & Townsend, 2013). For instance, instead of saying, “place into a group,” say, “classify,” explaining, of course, what classifying means. The first time you present an academic equivalent of a common term, write it on the board, pronounce it, and have students pronounce it. This will help students commit it to memory (Rosenthal & Ehri, 2008). Some other substitutions include:

- do–achieve
- correct, right–accurate

- make–create
- tell more–expand
- find–locate
- happen–occur
- answer–respond
- like–similar
- look at this carefully–analyze
- What will happen?–predict
- See how these are the same or different–compare, contrast (Larson, Dixon, & Townsend, 2013)

Academic Word List (AWL) Academic words can be divided into two categories: all purpose words that appear widely in academic texts but not in everyday texts, and technical words that tend to be discipline-specific (Snow, 2010). Content teachers typically present the technical words necessary to understand key concepts in their disciplines but are less likely to introduce the academic words used to explain the concepts (Snow, 2010). Lack of academic language and especially academic vocabulary has been described as a lexical bar, one that blocks the progress of a large number of students (Corson, 1985, 1995). The Academic Word List (AWL), a standard, widely used list developed by Coxhead (2010), provides a practical starting point for building the needed academic language skills.

Because it has been drawn from college texts, the AWL has been adapted. Words not typically found in elementary or secondary texts have been eliminated. The 510-word adapted AWL is presented in Table 2.1. In the adapted AWL, words are listed according to three levels of tested difficulty: basic, intermediate, and advanced. Basic words are those known by 40 to 80 percent of students at the end of grade 2. Intermediate words are those known by at least 40 to 80 percent of students in grade 6.

Advanced words are those known by 67 percent or higher of students in grades 8 to 12. Each level is split in two, with the first half being composed of the higher-frequency words and the second half being composed of the lower-frequency words in that level.

Some techniques you can use to foster both general and academic language follow.

Assess Students’ Academic Language and Background A first step in fostering academic language is to assess students’ academic background and command of academic language. This can be done through informal conversations or interviews and by listening to students as they talk with a reading buddy, in a small group, or on the playground. If students can write, have them write letters in which they introduce themselves, discuss how this school is different from previous schools, explain what their favorite subject is, or tell what they like and dislike about reading and writing. Also read their logs and journals and note their participation in class discussions (Zwiers, 2008). You can obtain from the ESL teacher and the school records data on students’ language and academic background. You may find that students have studied English as part of their schooling in their native land. However, they might be better at recognizing English words in print than they are at recognizing them in speech. You might also find that students have acquired a broad background of cultural knowledge from their families, sometimes known as “funds of knowledge,” which you can build on (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 2005).

Although English language learners might be in the most need of academic language, struggling students, students who speak a dialect other than mainstream English, and native speakers of English who have had limited exposure to school-type language also need academic language.

Foster Output Output is also an essential element of second language acquisition (Anthony, 2008). Output has three functions: noticing/triggering, hypothesis testing, and reflecting. When attempting to say or write something, a student might recognize that she

FYI

Academic language should be emphasized from the beginning of ELLs’ schooling.

TABLE 2.1

ACADEMIC WORD LIST: BASIC A1 AND A2

Adapted Academic Word List: Basic A1 and A2						
A1	culture	link	similar	convert	inspect	schedule
	cycle	locate	somewhat	convince	instruct	secure
accurate	design	major	task	cooperate	investigate	structure
achieve	device	medical	team	detect	lecture	substitute
adult	encounter	normal	topic	displace	likewise	sufficient
aid	energy	obvious	transfer	display	notion	sum
approach	enormous	occur	uniform	dispose	overlap	summary
area	environment	paragraph		draft	overseas	suspend
assume	estimate	period	A2	drama	participate	target
attach	expand	portion		edit	plus	text
available	expert	positive	adjust	eliminate	precise	tradition
aware	final	previous	appreciate	emerge	predict	transmit
challenge	function	primary	appropriate	error	proceed	transport
chapter	goal	principal	assign	export	recover	vehicle
chart	grade	publish	assist	foundation	register	violate
chemical	grant	purchase	author	furthermore	reject	visible
code	image	remove	capable	globe	relax	vision
communicate	indicate	research	channel	guarantee	rely	
community	individual	respond	clarify	identical	resolve	
compound	involve	reveal	conduct	index	restrain	
contact	issue	route	construct	initial	restrict	
couple	label	series	consume	injure	retain	
create	legal	shift	contribute	insert	reverse	
Academic Word List: Intermediate B1						
B1	brief	demonstrate	illustrate	obtain	region	style
	capacity	depress	impact	odd	release	survey
abandon	category	despite	item	partner	require	survive
accompany	complex	economy	journal	percent	resource	symbol
adapt	conclude	element	labor	phase	role	tape
alter	conflict	establish	layer	physical	section	technique
alternative	considerable	expose	maintain	policy	seek	technology
apparent	consist	feature	mental	potential	select	temporary
approximate	constant	federal	method	principle	sex	theory
aspect	credit	file	military	process	site	unique
assure	data	focus	minimum	professional	source	vary
attitude	decade	fundamental	minor	project	specific	volume
benefit	define	generation	nevertheless	range	stable	
bond	definite	identify	nuclear	react	stress	

TABLE 2.1

ACADEMIC WORD LIST: BASIC A1 AND A2 (continued)

Academic Word List: Intermediate B2						
B2	contrary	equivalent	insight	monitor	promote	theme
	converse	exceed	institute	network	publication	trace
access	core	exclude	intense	option	random	transit
accommodate	correspond	exhibit	interval	outcome	reside	trend
assemble	debate	exploit	liberal	overall	restore	undertake
attain	derive	extract	license	parallel	revise	version
collapse	dimension	fee	manipulate	perspective	scheme	visual
commence	distribute	flexible	manual	phenomenon	sole	voluntary
comment	document	formula	margin	philosophy	specify	welfare
comprise	domain	fund	mechanism	pose	sphere	widespread
confer	dominate	generate	media	preliminary	strategy	
confirm	duration	ignorance	medium	prime	submit	
consequent	ensure	imply	migrate	priority	sustain	
consult	equip	inevitable	minimize	prohibit	tense	
Academic Word List: Advanced C1 and C2						
C1	decline	internal	rigid	bias	diverse	practitioner
	deny	interpret	sequence	cite	dynamic	predominant
accumulate	devote	invest	significant	classic	enhance	quote
acquire	distinct	isolate	statistic	coherent	erode	rational
adequate	domestic	justify	status	colleague	ethic	refine
affect	emphasis	logic	subsequent	commit	ethnic	regime
ambiguous	enable	mature	technical	commodity	format	reinforce
analyze	enforce	modify	thereby	compensate	hierarchy	reluctance
annual	estate	neutral	transform	compile	highlight	scope
authority	evaluate	objective	trigger	complement	implement	straightforward
bulk	eventual	occupy	ultimate	comprehensive	incentive	subordinate
cease	evident	output	whereas	compute	incline	successor
circumstance	evolve	panel		conceive	incorporate	supplement
civil	explicit	perceive	C2	confine	induce	terminate
clause	external	precede		conform	initiate	thesis
commission	factor	prior	abstract	contradict	integrate	undergo
component	finance	proportion	academy	controversy	integrity	underlie
concentrate	framework	prospect	acknowledge	coordinate	intermediate	unify
concept	hence	psychology	adjacent	corporate	intervene	utilize
consent	hypothesis	pursue	advocate	crucial	model	valid
constitute	impose	radical	amend	currency	motive	via
contemporary	income	ratio	anticipate	denote	nonetheless	whereby
context	input	regulate	arbitrary	diminish	offset	
contract	instance	revenue	assess	discriminate	passive	
contrast	intelligence	revolution	attribute	distort	persist	

Source: Adapted from Coxhead, A. (2000). A New Academic Word List. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34, 213–238.

doesn't know the required words. She then takes steps to acquire the needed words. Locating the words, the student formulates her message, which leads to the second function of output: hypothesis testing. In hypothesis testing, the student delivers the message and uses feedback to revise the message if necessary. The third function of output is reflecting on what was said and possibly modifying the message. The speaker might realize that what she said didn't sound right and then take steps to correct her statement (Swain, 2005).

Use Cued Elicitation Questions Cued elicitation questions incorporate a portion of the response: "Gold is called a precious metal because ____." "The main character in this story is similar to the main character in ____." Use these statements and other devices to encourage students to use more specific or more abstract language (Edwards & Mercer, 1987, 2013; Zwiers, 2008).

Co-Shape In co-shaping, you provide prompts that help the student shape responses that make use of scientific language (Zwiers, 2008). Notice how a teacher co-shapes the following interchange:

Student: It happened in some kind of jungle place in olden times.

Teacher: Do you remember where the rain forest was?

Student: South America.

Teacher: Do you recall what part of South America?

Student: It was on the edge.

Teacher: Yes, the setting is the rain forest at the tip of South America. Do you remember when the story took place?

Student: Olden times. About a hundred years ago.

Teacher: Yes, the setting is the rain forest at the tip of South America in the beginning of the twentieth century.

Use a Hierarchy of Questions Match the difficulty level of questions with the students' level of English. At the lowest level, students might nod or shake their heads or answer *yes* or *no*. Either/or questions can be used once students are speaking: "Is this line the latitude or the longitude?" *Wh-* questions come next, with *why* questions being posed last (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2002).

Use Sentence Starters and Word Walls As you teach new procedures, routines, and concepts, post a list of words needed to carry out those procedures or routines and talk and write about the new concepts. Create a wall of needed words and expressions that students might refer to and that you might review periodically. Also provide sentences that students might use to take part in a discussion: "I think the main character was brave, and here is why I think so. The main character ____." Sentence starters can be used in speaking in much the same way as they are used in writing.



EXEMPLARY TEACHING

Scaffolded Language

Ms. Page uses a scaffolding device known as *semantic contingency* to help English language learners formulate their responses (Manyak, 2008). In semantic contingency, the student recounts an experience or talks about a topic on which she or he is knowledgeable. Because the experience or topic is familiar, the student has an easier time talking about it. The teacher uses spoken

prompts and gestures to draw out the student. Aided by the teacher's scaffolding, the student is able to use more English than usual but is also encouraged to use gestures and native language words when English fails him. If unfamiliar with the native language, the teacher has the native words translated. At times, the teacher may be able to use the context and the student's gestures to get the meaning.

Check Understanding Periodically, you should check for understanding. This can be done continually as you look for signs of understanding. Or it can be done by asking the students to give a thumbs up if they understand or a thumbs down if they don't. You might also ask students if they understand, but some students might be reluctant to admit that they don't. Follow up by asking students to show what they are expected to do or explain the concept being discussed or answer a question about it. Students should be taught how to seek help when they don't understand (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2002). On a practical note, teach students how to ask questions such as "I don't understand. Could you explain that again?" or "I am not sure what to do. Could you show me?" Also explain to students that if they are reluctant to ask for an explanation during class, they might approach the teacher after class.

Empower Students Teach students strategies for getting their meaning across: asking for help from listeners if necessary, repeating or using other words if listeners don't seem to understand, showing what they mean, and using gestures. Students might also work with a partner. Older students might keep a dictionary of useful academic terms and expressions.

Handle Errors with Care Focus on meaning rather than on correcting errors. Correcting errors during an interchange can be embarrassing and will probably limit a student's willingness to take risks with language. You might provide a rephrase, as long as you believe it will be helpful and not discouraging to the student, or schedule a language session later.

Student: There are too many noises in the room. My ears pain.

Teacher: Yes, there is too much noise in the room. No wonder your ears hurt.

Use the Student's Language Also plan strategic use of the student's native language. Use the level of English that the student is familiar with. However, for developing complex concepts, use the student's native language, if possible, or ask another student who speaks the language to provide a translation. That way the student doesn't have the burden of trying to understand difficult concepts expressed in terms that may be hard to understand.



TAKING A CLOSER LOOK 2.6

FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE

Watch the video and reflect on the associated questions.

Gear Instruction to Stages of Second-Language Acquisition Although there is some overlap among stages, a second language develops in approximately five stages (see Table 2.2): preproduction, early production, speech emergence, intermediate, and advanced. (Stages are adapted from Díaz-Rico, 2004; Guzman-Johannessen, 2006; Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2003). Gear questions and other activities to students' language level (Lalas, Solomon, & Johannessen, 2006). For the lowest levels, for instance, ask *what*, *who*, and *where* questions. These can be answered with single words. Progress to *when* questions, which might demand a phrase, and then to *how* and *why* questions, which require more elaborate language.

In preparation for teaching ELLs, take note of the students' level of knowledge and language. Plan for the kinds of difficulties they might experience. Ask yourself, "What specifically am I going to do to increase comprehensibility? How will I differentiate for ELLs at different levels?" Develop knowledge of text structures and use graphic organizers. Go through each chapter in any text you plan to use and note features, such as illustrations, that will be of help to ELLs. After each lesson, reflect. Ask yourself, "Have I fostered language development? Was I able to make the text accessible?" (Lalas, Solomon, & Johannessen, 2006).

Teachers might underestimate the abilities of ELLs. Because they are speaking in broken English, ELLs might not seem as knowledgeable or as intelligent as native English speakers. However, teachers might have unrealistic expectations for ELLs at the intermediate stage. At this stage, students might seem to have more advanced language than they possess (Lalas, Solomon, & Johannessen, 2006).

TABLE 2.2

STAGES OF SECOND-LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Level of Language	Characteristics of Learner	Teaching Suggestions	Building Literacy
Preproduction	Students know a few English words but primarily use gestures and pointing to communicate. This stage is known as the <i>silent period</i> , because students speak only a few words of English or none at all. This stage may last up to six months or a year. Despite not speaking, students may acquire an understanding of up to 500 words.	Use concrete objects, gestures, and pointing; repeat and paraphrase; speak slowly; ask <i>what</i> , <i>who</i> , <i>where</i> , <i>either-or</i> , and <i>yes/no</i> questions.	Students can use books that label illustrations. Encourage drawing and writing of labels and captions.
Early production	Students can understand and use some common words and expressions such as "OK," "That mine," "Can I sharpen pencil?" This stage may last up to six months. Students may acquire a combined listening–speaking vocabulary of 1,000 words.	Use concrete objects, gestures, and pointing; speak slowly; simplify language; build English vocabulary; ask <i>what</i> , <i>who</i> , <i>where</i> , <i>yes-no</i> , and <i>either/or</i> questions and questions that elicit a simple list of words.	Students can understand easy predictable text. Encourage writing of brief pieces that use basic sentence patterns. Use repeated sentences from predictable books as models.
Speech emergence	Students can use brief, everyday expressions and have greater receptive than expressive command of English. Students begin to participate in class discussions. This stage may last for up to a year. Most students acquire about 3,000 words by the end of this stage.	Use heavy visual support and gestures; develop English vocabulary; ask <i>what</i> , <i>who</i> , <i>where</i> , and <i>when</i> questions and questions that can be answered with a phrase or brief sentence.	Students can read more advanced predictable text; they may benefit from interactive writing.
Intermediate	Students have a fairly good grasp of everyday English and begin to grasp and use academic English. They can work in groups. This stage may last for up to a year. Most students acquire about 6,000 words by the end of this stage.	Use visual supports, including graphic organizers, and gestures; use prompts to foster elaboration; ask <i>what</i> , <i>who</i> , <i>where</i> , <i>when</i> , and <i>why</i> questions and questions that require explanation or elaboration. Some students can benefit from sheltered instruction (see pp. 400–401 of this text).	Students may need easier texts and/or assistance with texts; most benefit from language experience. Scaffold writing by introducing needed vocabulary and forms; use frame paragraphs.
Advanced	Language is comparable to that of a native speaker. Students may take up to five years or more to reach this stage.	Continue to provide visual support and build vocabulary.	Students can read grade-level texts. Develop higher-level thinking skills; develop a full array of writing skills.

Use Cooperative Learning and Peer Tutoring Strategies Working with peers provides excellent opportunities for ELLs to apply language skills. In a small group, they are less reluctant to speak. In addition, they are better able to make themselves understood and better able to understand others. Working with buddies and in small groups provides context and fosters language learning (Cummins, 1994).

Use Print Use print to support and expand the oral-language learning of English language learners. Label items in the room. Write directions, schedules, and similar information about routines on the board. Talk and write about field trips, science experiments, and plans for a party. As you write them, read them orally (Sutton, 1989). Also encourage students to write:

Use print materials with these activities as a natural extension of the oral language generated: write a class language experience report about the field trip; record information on a science chart; write dialogues or captions for a set of pictures; make lists of party items needed; follow written directions to find a hidden treasure. (p. 686)

Also use books to build language. Children’s books can be used to stimulate discussion, to show objects that ELLs may not be familiar with, and to build concepts. Books that are well illustrated and whose illustrations support the text are especially helpful. For younger children, a predictable book such as *Cat on the Mat* (Wildsmith, 1982) repeats the simple pattern “The ____ sat on the mat.” Eric Carle’s *Have You Seen My Cat?* (1973) repeats the question pattern “Have you seen my ____?” For older, more advanced students, First Fact books such as *The Sun* (Winrich, 2005) use primarily simple subject-verb-object sentences. Such books build knowledge of basic syntactical patterns as well as vocabulary. After reading texts of this type, students might use the patterns in their oral language and writing.

Provide Intentional, Systematic Instruction Instruction in English should be intentional and systematic. A distinguished panel of experts in literacy and language learning recommend the following research-based practices:

One major theme in our recommendations is the importance of intensive, interactive English language development instruction for all English learners. This instruction needs to focus on developing academic language (the decontextualized language of the schools, the language of academic discourse, of texts, and of formal argument). . . . Ensure that the development of formal or academic English is a key instructional goal for English learners, beginning in the primary grades. . . . Daily academic English instruction should . . . be integrated into the core curriculum. Consider asking teachers to devote a specific block (or blocks) of time each day to building English learners’ academic English. . . . Provide high quality vocabulary instruction throughout the day. Teach essential content words in depth. In addition, use instructional time to address the meanings of common words, phrases, and expressions not yet learned. (Gersten et al., p. 2)

In your lesson plans for ELLs, include language objectives that focus on vocabulary, syntax, figurative language, and other elements that might pose problems for your students. In addition to making key concepts more accessible to ELLs, such lessons will build their language skills (Bielenberg & Fillmore, 2004).

To test your understanding of this section, complete [Section Quiz 2.3](#)

Role of Response to Intervention (RTI)

Response to intervention (RTI) has been designed to raise the achievement of all students but especially those at risk for failure. The reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004 (PL 108-446) specified a change in the way students are identified as having a learning disability. Previously, students were identified as having a learning disability on the basis of a gap between their ability and their achievement. With IDEIA, they may be identified through a procedure known as response to intervention, complemented by other indicators or measures.

However, RTI is much more than a method for identifying students with learning disabilities. RTI is a commonsense approach in which struggling students are offered increasingly intensive instruction. Most students respond favorably when provided with added instruction (Scanlon, 2010; Vellutino et al., 1996). Failure to make adequate progress is an indicator of a possible learning difficulty.

RTI is a whole-school improvement program that enlists all staff members, the community, and parents to ensure that the literacy potential of all students is fully developed. This typically consists of three levels of prevention or intervention: primary, secondary, and tertiary (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2011). The primary level, which is generally referred to as Tier I, is designed to improve the overall instructional program so that everyone benefits. This means that teachers provide enhanced differentiated instruction so that all students have the opportunity to learn. Students in need may be provided with added help within the core program. If the students continue to lag behind despite being provided with differentiated instruction, they are given supplementary secondary level instruction, which is generally referred to as Tier II. This moderately intense intervention is usually



Using Technology

More than 8,000 books in Spanish, with readability levels provided, can be found at AR Bookfinder. Go to the advanced search tab to limit results to Spanish-only books.



Better prepare to implement RTI and assess your understanding in the interactive module “Multi-Tiered Systems of Support.”



Using Technology

The following websites contain extensive information on RTI:

- National Center on Response to Intervention
- Star Legacy Modules on RTI from Vanderbilt University
- The International Reading Association

provided in a small group for a period of 12 to 20 weeks. If the students still fail to make adequate progress, another secondary intervention might be implemented or the student might be provided tertiary level (Tier III) prevention. Tertiary-level prevention would typically be one-on-one instruction (intervention programs are discussed in Chapter 13). If progress is still inadequate, placement in special education is considered. Because Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have more demanding objectives, interventions might need to be more extensive. Students now are judged in terms of how well they are being prepared for college and career (Lipson & Wixson, 2012). In the past, students were given simple texts when they were struggling, but, in many instances, they were never taught to comprehend the more complex text that the CCSS require.

Universal Screening

FYI

Screening measures given three times a year are often used to monitor progress and to see if students are reaching benchmarks.

The first step in RTI is to screen all students. The screening measure is designed to identify students who might be at risk, and it is recommended that it be administered three times a year (see Chapter 3 for more information on screening measures). If screening measures are given three times a year, students who were doing well in the beginning of the year but have fallen behind can be identified. In addition, screening measures can be used to assess the effectiveness of the classroom program. If large numbers of students are not doing well, this is an indication that the program is not appropriate and/or is not being implemented effectively.

At least 80 percent of students should reach the program's benchmarks. If a number of teachers fail to have at least 80 percent of students meeting the benchmark, this could be an indication that the program is ineffective. If just one or two teachers fail to have at least 80 percent of students meeting the benchmark, this could be an indication that those teachers are not as effective as they should be.

All other things being equal, it is estimated that about 20 percent of public school students will require intervention. Of that 20 percent, 15 percent will need only Tier II (secondary) instruction, but the remaining 5 percent will also need Tier III (tertiary) instruction. On the basis of the screening and other data, instruction is differentiated. Low performers are given extra help from the classroom teacher. Screening at the beginning of the year can over-identify students. The progress of students who do poorly on beginning-of-the-year screenings should be monitored for 4 or 5 weeks. If their performance is still below what is expected, they might then be provided with

extra instruction in Tier II. An exception to this practice is for students who obviously have significant learning difficulties. They should be provided with intervention without delay.



As part of RTI, all students are monitored three times a year. Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock



Adapting Instruction for Struggling Readers and Writers

Assessments used to monitor the progress of struggling students must be on their reading level; otherwise, progress cannot be measured.

Monitoring Progress

Continuous monitoring of progress is a key component of RTI. The first steps in progress monitoring are to establish where students are and set goals or benchmarks. Then progress toward reaching those goals or benchmarks can be monitored. Results are used to see if the students are making adequate progress and to plan more intensive instruction, if needed. Results can also be used to assess the effectiveness of the program. The program might require more reinforcement or a slower pace (Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, & McKnight, 2006). (See Chapter 3 for more information on monitoring.) To find out more about RTI, see Learning from the Past 2.1.

RTI and English Language Learners

Some teachers might be hesitant to provide or recommend intervention for English language learners (Gersten et al., 2007). For instance, when ELLs experience difficulty learning basic decoding skills, teachers might attribute this to a lack of adequate English and decide to wait until the student acquires more English (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006). This tactic could delay intervention. Just as a proportion of native English speakers experience difficulty learning decoding skills, so, too, do a proportion of ELLs. However, instruction should be geared to the students' level of language development (see Table 2.2). Students should have sufficient command of English so that they are able to benefit from decoding instruction.

Collaboration

RTI requires a high level of collaboration. A schoolwide learning team sets up the framework for RTI and makes decisions about core curriculum and intervention approaches. Students' behavior is also addressed in RTI. The schoolwide team establishes a behavior management system and behavior intervention programs. Grade-level or other teams meet to analyze data and decide whether the core program is effective and to plan ways of increasing its effectiveness. These teams also discuss the progress of pupils, ways to differentiate instruction more efficiently, and other classroom concerns. Another team composed of the school psychologist, reading specialist, special education teacher, and classroom teachers meets to plan interventions for those students who are not making adequate progress in the core program. According to a recent survey, RTI has succeeded in increasing collaboration and has resulted in improved instruction and fewer LD referrals (Scanlon, 2013–2014).

Impact of RTI on Your Teaching

As a classroom teacher, you will have primary responsibility for implementing Tier I and, in varying degrees, Tier II interventions. As part of Tier I, you will be working to improve your classroom program and implement it with fidelity to make it as effective as possible.

You will be looking for gaps in the program and ways to close up those gaps. You might meet with other teachers in your grade level or department to discuss ways to improve the program. You will be examining data to get a sense of the overall effectiveness of the program and the progress of students, so as to identify those who need more help. You will be differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students but especially those who struggle. You will be closely monitoring students who struggle to see how they are responding to instruction. Depending on your school's program, you might also be called on to provide some Tier II instruction. Even if another professional provides Tier II instruction, you will need to be knowledgeable about the instruction so that you can coordinate your efforts with those of the Tier II instructor. Best results are obtained when intervention supports the classroom program. In the event that Tier III instruction is required, you will also be coordinating that intervention. Chances are you will also be called on to take part in meetings to discuss the progress of struggling students in your class and to help plan an intervention program. You will be part of a team dedicated to helping all students attain the highest level of literacy of which they are capable. RTI calls for classroom teachers to be leaders in helping to plan and implement programs for students. Having had extensive interaction with the pupils in their classes, classroom teachers are in a unique position to contribute to the planning of effective intervention (Ehren, 2013).

To test your understanding of this section, complete [Section Quiz 2.4](#)

A Multicultural Approach to Teaching All Students

It is important to value and build on every student's culture. Children from all cultures need to see the connection between their backgrounds, families, communities, and school. First and foremost, it is essential that teachers become acquainted with the children's culture, especially if the teachers' backgrounds are different from those of the children they teach (Strickland, 1998). Reading, discussions with the children, visits to homes, and interaction with those who are knowledgeable about the various cultures represented in the classroom are some informal ways of obtaining information.

The teacher should make ongoing efforts to become familiar with the literacy heritage of the students in his or her class, and especially with how literacy is used outside of school. For example, according to Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988), African American families may read for a wide range of purposes, but the school often fails to reinforce the purposes for reading and writing taught in the home. Parents of ELLs may not realize the important role they play in their children's literacy development, even though the parents' English may be limited. As Verhoeven (2011) comments, "Children with strong first language development within the home and continuous support for this language within the home and the wider community will develop language skills that can later be transferred to the second language" (p. 665).

Understanding students' cultural background can lead to more effective teaching. Various cultural groups might have socialization practices and expectations that put children at a disadvantage when they attend school in the United States. For instance, children of Mexican immigrants are taught to be passive around adults. They are also discouraged from showing off what they know (Valdes, 1996). However, in the typical public school classroom, students are expected to be assertive and demonstrate their knowledge. As a result of a lack of assertiveness and a failure to display what they know, children of Mexican immigrants may be judged to be lacking in skills and background knowledge and placed in lower reading groups.



TAKING A CLOSER LOOK 2.7

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN LEARNING

Watch the video and reflect on the associated questions.

In working with children and parents from other cultures, you need to be metacognitive: You need to realize that you perceive your students and their parents through your own cultural lens (Maldonado-Colon, 1999) and that the lives of your students are different in some ways from yours. You need to study the culture of your students and find out as much as you can about your students' everyday lives. If you do these things, there is a greater likelihood that your teaching will be more relevant and more effective.

In developing teaching techniques that are appropriate for diverse **learning styles**, you have to be aware of the ways in which students think and process information. Teaching needs to be more collaborative. You have to ask children how they construct meaning so that you can gain insight into their thinking processes. You need to try varied approaches to teaching and organizing classes to learn which ones work best. You also need to give students choices to determine the kinds of activities they prefer. Many suggestions for increasing the achievement of ethnic and linguistic minority children—such as cooperative learning and being sensitive to learning styles—should help all children learn better (Banks, 1994).

Including the Student's Language

A student's language is part of who she or he is. Rejecting it is interpreted as a personal rejection. Everyone speaks a dialect, which is determined by place of birth, socioeconomic status, and other factors. Some African American children speak a dialect known as African

American Vernacular English (AAVE), which is very similar to standard English (Ball, Skerrett, & Martinez, 2011). The differences between the two dialects are minor and include features such as dropping the suffixes *-ing* and *-ed*, omitting the word *is* (“He busy”), and using some variations in pronunciation such as “pin” for *pen* (Bryant, 2013; Shuy, 1973).



TAKING A CLOSER LOOK 2.8

AFFIRMING STUDENTS' LANGUAGE

Watch the video and reflect on the associated questions.

Dialect has no negative effect on reading achievement; it may, however, influence teacher attitude (Goodman & Goodman, 1978). Teachers who form unfavorable opinions on the basis of variant dialects can convey those feelings and associated lowered expectations to students. If they constantly correct language, teachers might also be hindering communication between themselves and their students.

Even when reading orally, a child who uses a variant dialect should not be corrected for dialect-based misreadings, such as dropping *ed* or *s*. In fact, translation of printed symbols into one's dialect is a positive sign (Goodman & Goodman, 1978). It indicates that the student is reading for meaning and not just making sounds.

Teachers should use standard English, thus providing a model for children who speak a variant dialect. Although all dialects are equally acceptable, the use of standard English can be a factor in vocational success. Rather than correcting or eradicating a variant dialect, Brown (1988) recommended that standard English be presented as a second dialect that students may use if they wish. The New Standards Speaking and Listening Committee (2001b) suggests that students who have been in school a few years should be expected to use standard English for academic purposes but not necessarily in social situations. “All students should learn the shared rules of standard English—but not in ways that tread on their heritage” (p. 24). One approach that values both AAVE and SE (standard English) is to use students' knowledge of AAVE to help them understand SE and to help them develop a code-switching ability in which students switch between AAVE and SE as appropriate (Ball, Skerrett, & Martinez, 2011).

Implications of Diversity for Instruction

The diversity present in today's classrooms means that teachers need to be able to differentiate instruction. To do so, teachers should learn about the cognitive, cultural, literacy, and linguistic background of students and use that knowledge to plan instruction. The diversity that students bring to the classroom should be valued and built on. To meet the needs of all students, teachers must apply the principles of RTI by monitoring the progress of each student and modifying and intensifying programs, supplying added help, or getting assistance if students fail to make progress. In addition, it should be noted that children who are poor or disabled often have below-level reading achievement. However, just because a child is poor or disabled does not mean that his or her teacher should have lowered expectations. As Phillips, Hayward, and Norris (2011) caution:

There is a belief that poverty and gender create ceilings on reading ability. . . . The evidence shows that within any group there are enormous spreads in quality of performance so that identifying individuals on the basis of the individual's group can be both grossly inaccurate and unfair. (p. 117)

Whether all students can be brought to readiness for college or career, only time will tell. However, it is possible to make dramatic improvements in students' literacy achievement. Reading Recovery (What Works Clearinghouse, 2007, 2013; Phillips, Hayward, & Norris, 2011) and other high-quality programs have shown that most students, even those who are older, will become proficient readers when properly taught. However, achieving this goal will take not just an all-school effort, but the involvement of all of society as evidenced by the success of the Harlem Children's Zone (n.d.), which provides support for low-income children from cradle to college and currently has 500 participants in college

FYI

As is true of a number of dialects, some African American English pronunciations can cause slight difficulty in phonics. Students might not perceive some final consonant clustering and may confuse word parts, as in *toll* and *told* or *coal* and *cold*. The use of context and added work on auditory discrimination will help take care of this minor interference.

and 500 in the pipeline for college. Well-stocked neighborhood and school libraries, adequate health care, parenting programs, contributions from businesses, and the support of all citizens will be needed to foster the high level of literacy achievement being called for. More than ever, parents will need to become partners in their children's education.

Preparing all students to be college and career ready requires taking a long-term view of literacy. As literacy professionals, we need to ask ourselves, "What kind of program will result in literacy proficiency for virtually all students?" The temptation is to drill students on the kinds of items they will be tested on. The drill-skill approach hasn't worked in the past and won't work now. It is too shallow. What is needed is an in-depth approach that builds students' background knowledge and vocabulary, fosters language development, and develops the kinds of skills needed to cope with the literacy demands that students face now and will face in the future so that they are prepared to take their place in postsecondary education and the world of work.

Subsequent chapters will build on the background given in this chapter and will provide specific suggestions for applying the concepts of RTI and differentiating and adapting instruction when working with diverse students. Insofar as possible, the suggestions made in this text are evidence-based. However, in some instances, they are based on personal experience or the experience of others. Teaching literacy is an art as well as a science.

To test your understanding of this section, complete [Section Quiz 2.5](#)

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

Summary

- The United States is the most diverse nation in the world. Nearly half of the 50 million students in the public schools are members of ethnic or racial minorities. Adding to this diversity is the inclusion of students with special needs. Mandates to prepare every student to be college and career ready, IDEIA, and response to intervention (RTI) are key initiatives designed to provide for the needs of this diverse school population.
- Students with diverse needs, students raised in poverty, and students who have physical, mental, or cognitive disabilities benefit from instruction that develops language, background, and literacy skills and that respects their language and culture. Gifted and talented students need to be given challenging material and programs.
- English language learners do best when taught to read in their first language so that they can use that as a foundation for learning to read in English. The greatest need for ELLs is to develop English language skills. All teachers need to adapt instruction so as to build the English language skills of ELLs.
- RTI, which can be used as part of a process for identifying students with learning disabilities, is a practical approach in which struggling students are offered increasingly intensive instruction.
- It is important for teachers to understand, value, and build on every student's culture and language. Understanding students' diverse cultural styles of learning and responding can help prevent misunderstandings and enhance learning.

Extending and Applying

1. Interview the special education, Title 1, reading specialist, or literacy coach at the school where you teach or at a nearby elementary or middle school. Find out what kinds of programs the school offers for special education, Title 1, and struggling students. Also find out whether RTI is being implemented in the school and, if so, how it is structured. What might be your role in this process?
2. Observe a lesson in which English language learners are being taught. Note whether the teacher makes adaptations for the students and, if so, how. In particular, what does the teacher do to make input comprehensible? What is done to encourage output? Does the teacher intentionally present vocabulary or language structures?

3. Observe a classroom in which remedial or special education instruction is offered according to the inclusion model. What arrangements have the specialist and the classroom teacher made for working together? What are the advantages of this type of arrangement? What are some of the disadvantages?
4. Investigate the culture of a minority group that is represented in a class you are now teaching or observing. Find out information about the group's literature, language, and customs. How might you use this information to plan more effective instruction for the class? Plan a lesson using this information. If possible, teach the lesson and evaluate its effectiveness.

Professional Reflection

Do I . . .

- _____ Have an understanding of the diverse populations served by today's elementary and middle schools?
- _____ Have an understanding of the principles of RTI?
- _____ Have an understanding of how I might adapt and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners?
- _____ Have an understanding of the importance of believing that all students can learn?

Am I able to . . .

- _____ Differentiate instruction?
- _____ Build on the culture and background that each student brings to literacy?

Glossary

Academic language is abstract, decontextualized school-type language that is used to understand and express complex ideas.

Accommodation is a change in the process of instruction or assessment that does not change the content. It could be the use of large-print books or extra time when taking a test.

Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) refers to a difficulty focusing and maintaining attention. It can exist on its own or coexist with hyperactivity and impulsivity.

Cochlear implants are electronic devices that provide representations of sound by stimulating the auditory nerve.

Gifted and talented students have mental abilities or other talents that are well above average. Approximately the top 2 percent of the population is classified as being gifted or talented.

Hyperactivity refers to the tendency to be overly active, impulsive, or distractible.

Impulsivity refers to the tendency to act on the spur of the moment without thinking of the consequences.

Inclusion means teaching students who have disabilities or special needs within the general education classroom.

Intellectual disability refers to a condition in which a person has a low level of cognitive functioning, such as an IQ score below 70 or two standard deviations below the mean, and has difficulty with adaptive behavior.

Learning disability is a general term used to refer to a group of disorders that are evidenced by difficulty learning to read, write,

speak, listen, or do math. The speaking and listening difficulties are not caused by articulation disorders or impaired hearing.

Learning styles refer to individual preferences in acquiring, remembering, and applying new information and skills. Learning styles include auditory, visual, or hands-on learning; learning in wholes or pieces; and learning alone or with others.

Lexical retrieval is the ability to retrieve words from memory.

Modification refers to altering the curriculum, changing the school attendance requirement, or making other changes in school policy designed to aid students who have disabilities. A reading assignment may be reduced or the student might be provided with an easier version of a text.

Response to intervention (RTI) is an assessment and intervention approach in which students' ability to learn is evaluated by noting how well they respond to instruction of varying degrees of intensity and also providing whatever intervention is needed.

Shared inquiry™ is a discussion technique created by the Great Books Foundation in which participants respond to open-ended questions about a literary work and, through interaction with other members of the group and guidance by the group leader, develop their own text-based interpretations.

Slow learners have below-average ability but are not intellectually disabled. In general, IQs of slow learners range between 70 and 85.

Specific language impairment (SLI) is delayed or disordered language development not accounted for by brain damage, autism, or other factors.