Preface

Today’s teachers face many challenges, including teaching all students, teaching them well, and teaching them in the context of rising expectations and high-stakes assessment. Today’s students come from increasingly diverse socioeconomic, cultural, linguistic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Because of your dedication to these children, you embrace the challenges and opportunities of teaching in today’s dynamic and diverse classroom environments. In this book we provide the foundation for meeting the challenges of teaching literacy in these contexts, providing you with the knowledge and tools necessary to teach literacy in a developmentally responsive and integrated way.

Purpose

Understanding developmentally responsive instruction allows you to teach in students’ instructional zones, accelerating their literacy learning and development. We have written Teaching Reading and Writing: The Developmental Approach (PreK to Grade 8) to provide you with the knowledge and strategies for this type of teaching, including up-to-date research on literacy development, instruction, assessment, and intervention. In this book, we address three goals:

1. Provide foundational knowledge in the nature and progression of literacy development, identifying what learners are able to understand about the essential elements of literacy at different developmental stages, and when and how are they able to apply those understandings with your help as well as independently.
2. Provide an understanding of the essential elements of literacy and how related instructional strategies support deep and meaningful engagements with texts.
3. Provide an understanding of the foundations and nature of culturally responsive literacy instruction.

Using This Book

Intended for preservice and experienced teachers alike, this book provides a wealth of content and does so in a conversational, approachable style that connects theory to practice by including:

- Vignettes and sample lessons from real classrooms
- Authentic student work samples
- Ways to use and integrate print-based and digital texts across the curriculum
- Tools for organizing and managing a comprehensive, developmentally responsive literacy program

Whether you’re preparing to teach or have a classroom of your own, Teaching Reading and Writing: The Developmental Approach promises to provide you with the tools and knowledge...
necessary to confidently and competently meet the diverse needs of students in today’s classrooms. It is designed to help you teach in a student-centered, research-based way. Beginning with assessment, you’ll learn to identify students’ stages of development as a means for determining not only what to teach, but how to teach it. Most methods texts dedicate separate chapters to the essential elements of literacy—word analysis skills, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and motivation—but our chapters reflect an integrated model of literacy instruction that is based on the understanding that reading and writing are developmental processes. As such, you will see these components of literacy addressed in every chapter.

- Each chapter begins with real-life scenarios that illustrate the theory in practice. This will help you immediately see the relevance and application of theory.
- Student work samples are included in each chapter to help you actually see the kind of work students at each stage of development create so you will know what to expect from learners across the developmental continuum. We also help you learn how to analyze student work to identify a student’s stage of development and instructional needs.
- Sample lessons not only make the text engaging and accessible but they also make the text come to life. These samples help you put the theory and research into practice with real students in real classrooms. Each lesson is aligned with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts.
- Literature for children and young adults is integrated throughout the text. In each instructional chapter you’ll find a list of titles appropriate for that stage of development; in other chapters you will find titles appropriate for the various topics that are addressed. With the Common Core’s emphasis on text complexity, these lists are timely and extremely helpful for teachers who are planning Common Core-aligned lessons each day.
- An illustrative companion text, Newbury Honor Award-winning Al Capone Does My Shirts by Gennifer Choldenko (2004), is available.
- Each chapter ends with a comprehensive chapter summary, suggested extension activities, recommended professional resources, and additional online resources.

The first two foundational chapters of Teaching Reading and Writing: The Developmental Approach address the nature of development and interaction of thought, language, and literacy. They introduce you to the developmental model, the literacy essentials, historical trends in the field, as well as the current policy environment in which the Common Core State Standards and Response to Intervention (RTI) figure prominently. By giving you an overview of these topics early on, we’re able to build on this knowledge in each of the subsequent chapters.

The third foundational chapter addresses the principles and practices of effective, developmentally responsive literacy instruction, and the fourth grounds your understanding of development and instruction in effective assessment.

Chapters 6 through 10 are dedicated, respectively, to each stage of literacy development: emergent, beginning, transitional, intermediate, and skillful. Within each chapter, you’ll learn how to differentiate instruction for students within each stage, meet the expectations of the new Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, accommodate English learners, collaborate with other professionals, integrate print and digital literacies, and build
home–school connections. The literacy essentials are addressed in each of these chapters with a special focus on the unique needs of learners at each specific stage of development. You will learn what to teach, when to teach it, and how to teach it.

In addition to a special feature titled “Accommodating English Learners” in each chapter, the fifth chapter of this book is dedicated to the special needs of English learners. The chapter addresses specific accommodations English learners may need in the literacy classroom, as well as the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy. A specific chapter on Teaching Readers who Struggle provides an overview of Response to Intervention as well as profiles of readers who struggle. For each profile, you will learn about research-based methods proven to accelerate the achievement of these readers. General suggestions for accelerating the achievement of all learners are included at the end of the chapter.

At the end of Chapter 1 you will find the section “How to Use This Book,” which provides much more specific information and advice on the purpose and application of the organization of the book and the features of each chapter. These features include Strategies for the Classroom, The Language of Your Instruction, Accommodating English Learners, Reading and Writing in Digital Contexts, Children’s Literature Connection, and Working and Collaborating.

We hope you’ll find Teaching Reading and Writing: The Developmental Approach to be the foundation and guide for your literacy instruction that we have intended it to be. It will support your dedication, excitement, and commitment to the very best of literacy instruction—a guide to helping your students move toward reading and comprehending literary and informational texts independently and proficiently, and toward writing for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Supplements**

The following supplements comprise an outstanding array of resources that facilitate learning about literacy instruction. For more information, ask your local Pearson representative. For technology support, please contact technical support directly at 1-800-677-6337 or online at www.247.pearsoned.com.

**Instructor’s Resource Manual and Test Bank**

For each chapter, the instructor’s resource manual features activities and resources for instructors to use in the classroom. Answers to the Self-Check questions for each chapter from the text are also included. In addition, the TestBank includes multiple-choice, essential terms, and short-answer items. Page references to the main text, suggested answers, and skill types have been added to each question to help instructors create and evaluate student tests. (Available for download from the Instructor Resource Center at www.pearsonhighered.com/irc.)

**PowerPoint™ Slides**

Ideal for lecture presentations or student handouts, the PowerPoint™ presentation provides dozens of ready-to-use graphic and text images.
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Chapter Outline

» What Is Literacy?
» The Importance of Print and Digital Literacy
» The Many Faces of Literacy
» The Literacy Essentials
» The Literacy Essentials from a Developmental Perspective
» The Sociocultural Contexts of Literacy Learning
» Levels of Support and the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model
Focus Questions

1. How are “print literacy” and “digital literacy” alike? How are they different?
2. Why is each of the following essential to the development of proficient reading and writing: Comprehension, Writing, Vocabulary, Word Structure, Fluency, Motivation?
3. What is the importance of understanding the developmental nature of literacy across the five stages: Emergent, Beginning, Transitional, Intermediate, Skilled?
4. Describe the sociocultural contexts of literacy learning and how they may impact your teaching of literacy.
5. Why is the “Gradual Release of Responsibility” model for instruction such a powerful framework for teaching literacy?
to teach well. Most of the teachers here, though, are within their first three or four years of teaching, and I like having that program as a resource for them that they can draw from and lean on for support when they need to. Our veteran teachers—we’ve got a very supportive school culture—help them sort out and focus on what is of most help in the program for their kids, and what they don’t really need to bother with. Otherwise, those programs can be overwhelming to teachers early in their careers! Together with the support they receive from the veterans, I think our newer teachers are doing a pretty good job of becoming effective literacy teachers!”

You ask if there is a literacy coach or specialist at Compello Elementary. Arlene shares that the district has budgeted for a literacy coach for every three “bubble” schools—those not quite qualifying for free and reduced lunch—and that the coach does her best, “but it sure is difficult if that person isn’t living every day in your school!” The district does a pretty good job of providing professional development during the year, Arlene adds, but more and more the focus has been placed on building and trying to support effective professional learning communities within each school. “They’re trying to get us to have more within- and between-grade discussions,” she comments, “focusing on ‘data-driven’ instruction—how do we know how well our students are doing in reading and what adjustments can we then make in our instruction? This had been part of our RTI [Response to Intervention] framework the last few years, and we’ve been working not only to use the assessments we are mandated to use, but [and here Arlene winks again] adding a couple of assessments that we feel give us perhaps better ‘classroom-based’ information about individual students.

“You know, another big push we began a couple of years ago was how to adjust our reading instruction to fit the new Common Core State Standards that our state is mandated to use. Teachers throughout the district have expressed some concern that the new grade-level expectations may be too advanced for many of our students. Our mission as administrators throughout the district is to support the teachers’ efforts to achieve the higher expectations for reading and writing but to do so in ways that reflect good instruction. Fortunately, most administrators understand a developmental model of learning—almost all of us are former classroom teachers—so we are better able to set the appropriate tone for our teachers.”

This vignette captures several important themes that we will address in this text: the social nature of literacy learning; the differentiation of instruction, which involves meeting with small groups of students while other students are working independently or at literacy work stations; the importance of getting to know your students well; and a vocabulary activity and a literature discussion in which the children are actively involved. Arlene also touches on some of the practical situations that every teacher experiences and must learn how to negotiate—using a mandated curriculum, following district-mandated procedures while appropriately exercising the experienced teachers’ and principal’s professional judgment in customizing instruction and assessment.

What Is “Literacy”?  

Simply put, literacy is the ability to read and write. Reading is thinking guided by print (Calkins, 2000), and writing is using print to guide the thinking of others. Do you remember how you learned to read? To write? Were those experiences joyful ones—or challenging? Do you enjoy reading today? Writing? What do you use reading and writing to do?

These are important questions. You will be reflecting on them as you read and apply teaching strategies and activities we will be sharing in this book. This is because teaching reading and writing will probably be the most important responsibility you will have as a teacher. Your own experience in learning to read and write will influence how you approach this responsibility.

How you were taught determines:

- What you think about reading and writing
- How you use reading and writing
- How you will be learning to teach reading and writing to others
If you have pleasant memories—or at least had a few teachers who inspired you—you are fortunate in being able to build on your personal experiences as you prepare to teach your students. You may recognize those teachers in this book. If you did not have enjoyable experiences—if in fact you do not like to read all that much today—we hope you will learn, as we move through this text together, how you can change your own experiences and in turn support children's joyful and purposeful learning.

In a best-selling book published many years ago titled *Why Johnny Can't Read*, a journalist wrote that all we have to do is teach a child the sounds that the letters make, and that child will learn to read (Flesch, 1956). If it were that simple, of course, we probably wouldn't need teachers. There is no question that it is necessary to learn how letters represent sounds, but becoming literate involves so much more than that. You'll not only be teaching your students about reading, but you'll also be helping them learn how this tool will empower them to learn and to think more critically. Many students, unfortunately, experience difficulty in developing literacy right from the beginning. Many other students learn easily, but run into difficulty later on. This is because literacy—reading and writing—is also complex. Becoming literate and using the tool of literacy develop over many years, and how well this tool is acquired and used depends in large part on the teachers students will have—on you.

## The Importance of Print and Digital Literacy

A generation ago, being able to read at the eighth-grade level would suffice in many occupations (Wagner, 2010). In the twenty-first century, however, that is not enough. The levels at which students must be able to read are considerably higher because requirements for getting a job are more stringent in an increasingly globalized economy. Globalization and information technology have merged. Because of this reality, literacy must develop and support students' abilities to think critically, problem solve, communicate effectively, and collaborate. As Principal Arlene Robinson pointed out, at the present time in the United States this awareness is reflected in new standards for literacy in general and for literacy in the specific content areas or domains (*Common Core State Standards Initiative*, 2010).

We all know that the digital world is changing in profound ways how young people, as well as those who teach them, are looking at and thinking about their worlds (Gee, 2007; Carr, 2010). Changes in society and technology have led a number of educators and scholars to think about literacy in broader terms: They point out that there are many ways to "read" and "write" the world. Some are beginning to ask if there will still be a role for "print" literacy—for abilities based on paper, pen, turning pages, books on shelves in libraries—in this digital revolution. As the content of this book will show, there definitely will be: Much of the ability to understand and navigate digital environments, as well as to use social media responsibly and effectively, is grounded in skills that come right out of print literacy. Texts and the thinking that goes into understanding them (*reading*) and creating them (*writing*) provide frameworks for thinking about what's going on in the real world and the digital world. It has been estimated that textbooks—one of the traditional means of delivering content in schools for centuries—will be totally digital by 2017, accessible for all students on low-cost e-tablets (*State Educational Technology Directors Association [SETDA]*, 2012).

This is why we will emphasize your teaching of literacy in *print*-based contexts, which we define as information and stories presented in printed texts as well as on screens that can be...
scrolled and hyperlinked. In these contexts you will teach not only basics such as letters and sounds but critical literacy as well (Frey, Fisher, & Berkin, 2009; Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). Although students may be “digital natives,” they will still need you to reveal and guide them through the nature and implications of print—of reading and of writing.

The Many Faces of Literacy

A number of scholars and educators describe literacy in terms of a set of flexible “practices for communicating purposefully in multiple social and cultural contexts” (Mills, 2010, p. 247). Increasingly, of course, these contexts include digitized experiences, because we are now living in a “hypermediated” environment—television, movies, digital books, video games, and social
media with almost instant connectivity. Students’ experiences with fictional characters occur across several formats in what scholars term “branded fiction” and “genre mixing” (Lefstein & Snell, 2011; Sekeres, 2009). Just think of Harry Potter (books, movies, websites, clothing, theme park), Selena Gomez (music, television, movies, website), and the American Girl series (books, clothing, dolls, movies). There is an exciting new literacy frontier stretching out through these new interconnections and technologies. There are also unparalleled seductions: How are reading and writing affected, and what will they mean in this New World?

We can begin to answer this question by turning to the Old World. The essence, insight, and meaning of critical thinking have not changed at least since Socrates’ time over 2,000 years ago. And dating from Socrates’ day, we have had at least four “technological” revolutions that have affected reading and writing directly and significantly:

- An alphabet that can represent all the sounds in a language
- The development of the book
- The invention of the printing press
- The development of the Internet

What we are seeing now in the digital and social media environments—e-tablets, incredibly sophisticated Internet-enabled smartphones, the ability to store and do work in the “cloud”—are but way stations along the development of the Internet’s vast highway system. In the future, your students will see and use far more fascinating and capable devices and platforms to access and live in the Internet’s digital worlds.

There is no question that, with each new technology, how people “do” literacy is significantly affected. Indeed, each technological revolution has also accelerated the arts, humanities, and sciences as well as social, economic, and political developments (Olson & Cole, 2006). Throughout each of these revolutions, however, the true meaning and potential of reading and writing has remained and will continue to remain remarkably constant: thinking critically and very often feeling deeply so that we may communicate with ourselves, with others, and with our world. That’s what reading and writing have meant, and what they will continue to mean.

The Literacy Essentials

Reading and writing are reciprocal processes. As students learn to read and write, each ability supports the other. As they read and think in different genres—for example, mystery, biography, poetry—students learn, with teacher guidance, how writers use the language and structure of those genres to affect readers: how readers think, how they learn, how they feel, how they are entertained, and how they behave. Our students then use these models to guide their own writing. Understanding this reciprocal process, your approach to teaching reading and writing will be based on your knowledge of:

- What needs to be taught and understanding effective ways to teach it
- The development of language, thought, and literacy in children and older students

First, we will address the what; second, we will lay the cornerstones for the developmental foundation.
The Literacy Essentials: The “What” of Effective Instruction

We’ve mentioned that reading and writing involve the use of print to guide thinking. Texts are like “blueprints” for constructing meaning (Spiro, 1980). Reading involves purposefully engaging a text—following the blueprint—in ways that ensure we are constructing as best we can the meaning that the author intended. When we write, we use our understanding of those same “blueprints” to help our readers construct the meaning we are trying to convey. So that we may teach students how best to build meanings as they interact with texts, it’s necessary that we understand the essential components involved in this process of meaning construction. Attention to these essentials is necessary to enable all the other literacies:

- Comprehension
- Writing
- Vocabulary
- Word structure
- Fluency
- Motivation

Comprehension

To comprehend is to understand. Comprehending or understanding what we read may occur at different levels—deeply, or more superficially—depending on our purpose for reading. And that is the key: Comprehension is active, not passive. “Meaning” is not literally on the page to be passively lifted off. Understanding what we read is not somehow a by-product of identifying the words on the page. Driven by our purpose, meaning must be constructed from the blueprint that the information on the page suggests, together with the background knowledge we bring to the page. Because every reader brings a unique set of background experiences and understandings to every reading, whenever a reader reads a text, a new meaning is constructed that did not exist before.

In general, comprehension of any text is a process that proceeds in the following manner (Perfetti, 1985, 2007):

- The meaning of the words is determined.
- The order of and relationships among the words within each sentence are processed.
- The sentences are related to each other.
- Larger chunks of text are related to each other.
- An overall “model” of the text is created in the reader’s mind.

From the author’s blueprint to the reader’s construction of the model—that’s what comprehension is about. Importantly, readers’ models of texts seldom contain the exact wording of the text (that would seriously overload their memories) but rather construct a more general understanding or sense of what the text is about.

For many years, reading comprehension has been described in terms of three levels: literal, inferential, and critical (Irwin, 2006; Israel & Duffy, 2008). Generations of teachers have tried to help students understand these levels by using the phrases reading the lines (literal), reading between the lines (inferential), and reading beyond the lines (critical). These phrases made sense if students already understood the levels of comprehension, but were of little help if they didn’t. Over the last several years, educators have developed more effective ways to discuss and support students’ understanding of how they can actively engage texts to best achieve their purposes for reading (McLaughlin, 2009; Raphael, Highfield, & Au, 2006).
Our purposes for reading a particular text—what information or experience we are looking for, and why—determine how we approach any reading we do. This is because our purposes will guide what we look for and the degree to which we need to rely on our own background knowledge as we read.

And our purposes for reading a text vary, of course: We may simply want to escape and enjoy a narrative world, fictional or real; we may need information right now to solve a problem we are having with our printer; or we may—as is so often the case with students—be reading because a teacher has required us to and given us questions to answer. Regardless, readers must be able to apply strategies that will help them in accessing the sources of information they will need in order to achieve their purposes:

- Some information sources will be “right there,” explicitly stated in the text;
- Other information sources may be inferred from the text by “thinking and searching”;
- Still other information sources may be accessed by combining information that is explicit or implied in the text with the reader’s background knowledge or “in the head” information (Raphael, Highfield, & Au, 2006).

As teachers, we teach our students strategies for accessing these information sources. We want them to grow from applying these strategies consciously and deliberately to applying them almost effortlessly, without even thinking about it (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008; Frey, Fisher, & Berkin, 2009).

The strategies we teach assist students in learning what to do before, during, and after reading. The chapters in this book are structured to reflect these strategies, priming your thinking before you get into the substance of the chapter and supporting your active engagement before, during, and after your reading. These tactics help define your purposes and what you pay attention to during your reading of the chapter. The chapter summary for each chapter pulls together the important

An important part of our background knowledge—its content and how it is organized—relies on specific experiences we have had. For example, if we are reading about a particular soccer match, our ability to understand the information about fielders, goals, penalty kicks, and so forth relies on the experiences we have had with soccer matches. If we haven’t had much experience, then we’re not going to be able to comprehend very much of the article. Schema theory explains this phenomenon (Anderson, Spiro, & Montague, 1977; Freebody & Anderson, 1983; McVee, Dunmore, & Gavelek, 2005). **Schema theory** provides an important perspective for much of our understanding about comprehension in reading. If you read and understand fairly easily the article on the soccer match, for instance, it is because you have a robust mental *schema* for soccer matches. Your soccer schema has been constructed over time as you have learned more and more about soccer, and perhaps even played it. The *schemas* (or *schemata*) for different types of experiences apply to all social and cognitive, or thinking, activity. For example, someone whose “restaurant schema” has been constructed based only on experiences in more expensive establishments might enter a McDonald’s or Burger King and stand around waiting to be seated by the *maître d*—admittedly a silly example, but one we hope illustrates the nature of schema theory.

Our schemas organize our concepts and vocabulary and apply them to specific situations. Our concept of “net,” for example, is applied to our soccer schema and has to do with where goals are scored, although the net looks different from the net in basketball. Similarly, our concept of “net” is used differently in our “fishing schema” and in our “Internet schema”—the result of our experiences in fishing with our uncle and using the Web. The implications for learning in general and reading comprehension in particular are profoundly important.
information keyed by the initial focus questions. Although we include snippets of narratives throughout the text, because this is primarily an informational text, the chapters are structured in such a way that purposes and information will be developed, sustained, and hopefully learned.

We’ve just noted the types of texts your students will listen to and read: narrative and informational. An important part of the background knowledge about reading that you will help your students learn is the structure of these types of texts.

The notion of narrative, or “story,” runs deep in every culture in the world. Many have said that we organize and make sense of our lives through the structure of a story or narrative. The power of stories in the lives of children, first heard and later read, cannot be overstated. “As they are told and retold, stories have the function of wrestling with the ultimately inexplicable chaos of reality around us. They give it form, and in shaping and reshaping the form, they help us gain control over it” (Jabbour, cited in Templeton, 1996). Stories or narratives offer a structure that helps younger children and older students take on problems and, over time, resolve those problems. Narratives may take on different forms in different cultures—Latino and Hispanic, for example, and Native American/Indigenous and African—but they serve the same function in all cultures: teaching and reassuring us as we grapple with life’s challenges, large and small. For example, Sandra Madura, a teacher at Compello Elementary School, selects Al Capone Does My Shirts (Choldenko, 2004) for her fifth-grade class. The main characters are children of parents who are working in the maximum-security prison on the island of Alcatraz in San Francisco Bay. Sandra wants her students to read and explore this text because, as a work of historical fiction, it connects to her instruction in U.S. History and its narrative reflects the timeless struggles and worries of young people on the verge of puberty.

While a sense of narratives may be “wired in” to our collective psychology and experience, informational texts are not (Havelock, 1988; Ong, 2002). They structure information to accomplish different purposes: inform, describe, argue, or persuade. Our ability to reason logically, however, may develop based on our experience with the structure and the language of informational texts (Olson, 1996). Informational, or as it’s often referred to, expository text, does not “tell stories” in the narrative sense. It’s structured to convey and represent information in supportive and accessible ways—or at least it should be. When it isn’t, students should be led to inquire “Why not?” Such inquiry is an important part of critical thinking and reading. For example, middle school students might come to question a history text that states the primary cause of the Spanish-American war was the explosion of the battleship Maine.

Informational texts also are usually characterized by the use of Academic Language (Brock, Lapp, Salas, & Townsend, 2009; Schleppegrell, 2004; WIDA, 2011; Zwiers, 2008). Academic Language includes challenging vocabulary—new and abstract nouns and verbs, for example—and more complex sentences (Nagy & Townsend, 2012). These sentences are more complex because they’re longer, often contain a number of clauses, and include connective words and phrases such as therefore, subsequently, and as a consequence.

**Comprehension Strategies** What are the comprehension strategies for narrative and informational texts that you will be teaching your students? You will see different labels, but most educators (e.g., Block & Pressley, 2007) agree that they involve:

- Predicting
- Questioning
- Drawing inferences
- Identifying important information
- Summarizing
- Monitoring
Each of these strategies will be taught in the context of specific narrative and informational texts. They will also overlap in places. You will teach them directly, individually, but will also demonstrate how they may be used in combination. Learning them, and learning how and when to use them, is a developmental process. We’ll describe each briefly here, and then unpack them in later chapters.

- **Predicting.** Decades ago, Russell Stauffer (1969) revolutionized the way many educators thought about reading instruction by encouraging teachers to ask students “What do you think will happen next?” before and during the reading of a story. For many years, reading had been taught as if students were passive recipients of information, but this simple question emphasized that students could and should read actively—and that if they did, their understanding, recall, and retention would improve. Getting students to predict what they will learn or find out, and then revise or confirm their predictions as they read, is powerful. Prediction involves bringing background knowledge to bear, often visualizing what might occur. For example, after reading the blurb on the back cover of *Al Capone Does My Shirts* (Choldenko, 2004), Sandra Madura asks her students, “What do you think might be the kinds of trouble Moose Flanagan [the novel’s main character] could get into on Alcatraz?” The resulting discussion not only primes the students for their reading but it also gives Sandra helpful information about her students’ background knowledge.

- **Questioning.** Like predicting, asking questions before and during reading makes it much more likely that readers will understand and recall the information. Of course, these questions are often posed by teachers, but we will support our students’ learning about how to pose questions themselves. One question that inevitably springs from Sandra Madura’s fifth graders before reading the first chapter of *Al Capone Does My Shirts* is “Why is this kid living on Alcatraz, anyway?” The answer, found on the first page of Chapter 1, “Devil’s Island,” is “My mother said I had to.” Of course, this answer only begs more questions—the kinds of questions students would naturally ask of their world, because their minds are set up this way. Teachers simply remind them to do this when they read or listen to texts, and teachers model how to do it when the going gets tough.

- **Drawing inferences.** This is one of the most complex processes in the act of reading and one of the most important to teach students how to do. Inferring relies on the reader’s background knowledge. For example, consider the two sentences “Shelley is eleven years old. Her sister, Julie, is fourteen.” Now answer the question “Who is older, Shelley or Julie?” This may seem fairly simple, but you can read those two sentences all day long and not find the answer to the question unless you also use your background knowledge about numbers. Similarly, your ability to infer the relationship between the following two sentences relies on your background knowledge: “The citizens demonstrated loudly in the streets. The government cut benefits significantly.” Answering the question “Why did the citizens demonstrate?” relies on your drawing an inference based on your background knowledge: The order of the sentences might suggest the government cut benefits because the citizens demonstrated, but your knowledge of current events, relationships between governments and their citizens, and so forth, led you to infer that the citizens demonstrated because of the government’s actions.

These examples are meant to illustrate not only the nature and subtlety of inferring but also the importance of being sensitive to students’ reading levels and background knowledge. What may appear to us or some of our students to be “right there” on the page is often not obvious to other students. This highlights the significance of demonstrating and walking students through the strategy of how to draw inferences.

- **Identifying important information.** Depending on the reader’s purpose, in both narratives and informational texts, it is necessary to determine what is essential and what is not, and to understand the relationships among this information. Students often assume that all
information in a book is important—otherwise, wouldn't the author have left it out? That is why it is important to emphasize the purpose for reading. For example, the chapter on Andrew Jackson, "Old Hickory," in Joy Hakim's (1993) The New Nation includes boxes with interesting if not fascinating information about Jackson and his era. In one of these boxes we learn that Jackson bought 20 spittoons for the East Room of the White House at a fairly steep price. Although that type of information may catch our eye as we are previewing the chapter before reading more carefully—and we might remember it because of its interest—it may not be the most important information to focus on when we go back and read the chapter thoroughly. As the teacher, you will walk students through the chapter, showing them how the topic sentences in each paragraph help "label" the essential information and point to supporting details. In this case, most paragraphs describe the chronology of Jackson's life and how his experiences shaped his perspective when he was later elected President of the United States.

- **Summarizing.** A summary answers the question "What is this text really about?" It is a shorter version of the text, capturing the main point or points. Crafting a summary is the most challenging strategy, as it relies on and pulls together all of the other strategies. Some educators make a helpful distinction between "summarizing" and "writing a summary" (e.g., Frey, Fisher, & Berkin, 2009). Summarizing during reading is one way of ensuring that readers are making sense of the reading and getting the big picture. In this sense, summarizing is a way of monitoring one's reading, which we explore in the next section. But summarizing after reading either by sharing orally or writing a couple of sentences, or by writing a more developed composition, draws on the same types of information and strategies.

When you first address summarizing, begin with narratives. Younger children can learn the basics of summarizing, even though they may not be writing summaries for a while. What are the most important things or events that happened in the story? What did they all add up to? For informational text, students learn that the headings, subheadings, and boldfaced text represent the most important ideas. As we'll see in later chapters, putting this information into one's own words is important, and we will support our students in doing so.

- **Monitoring.** During reading, we should be aware of how it's going—are we cruising along with most things making sense, or are we encountering some problems in making sense of some sentences? Being aware of (1) the degree to which we're making sense as we read and (2) what to do about it when we aren't, involves monitoring. If we are encountering difficulty, self-monitoring helps determine where the difficulty lies and how to fix it, which involves plugging in another strategy.

**Strategies versus Skills** The strategies we've listed here are often referred to as skills. So is there a difference between strategies and skills? Yes, and this difference has to do with the degree to which readers are aware of them. A strategy is what we teach and students consciously learn to apply over time. When our students reach the point where they are applying a strategy without thinking about it, it has become a skill (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008). Strategies are conscious and deliberate; skills are automatic. Our objective, of course, is for these strategies to become automatically applied by our students. When they are self-monitoring and encounter difficulty when they read, it is our hope that they will remember a strategy and apply it, as needed.

One last, very important, point: You will encounter many labels for strategies, types of questions, and types of support. These labels and strategies appear in your curriculum guides, standards, and articles you may read. Despite all the labels and terminology, just remember the basics of good comprehension instruction: Through your support and guidance

- You are helping your students grow and develop their background knowledge, which includes their own world knowledge and what they are learning about the structure of the particular type of texts they are reading.
At different places throughout this book you will see a Penguin icon. It indicates those places we refer to Gennifer Choldenko’s *Al Capone Does My Shirts* (2004)—a Newbery Honor Book award recipient, published by Penguin Press, and an excellent work of historical fiction. We will be sharing examples of how the various components of literacy may be illustrated and taught with this literature connection. We share examples of many other types of literature as well, but by referring often to Choldenko’s text we will be able to experience with you—and you with your students, present or future—the types of “close, attentive reading that is at the heart of understanding and enjoying . . . literature” as well as the “deep, and thoughtful engagement . . . [that] builds knowledge, enlarges experience, and broadens worldviews” (*Common Core State Standards*, 2010, p. 3).

*Al Capone Does My Shirts* effectively illustrates the elements of literature and literary devices that writers use. Because of that, Choldenko provides us many opportunities to guide students’ thinking and exploration of language; of perspective; of history (the setting for the novel is Alcatraz and San Francisco in the mid-1930s during the Great Depression); of diversity, including the main character’s sister Natalie, who is autistic; and of moral decisions and the challenges they often present to young people.

An excellent companion volume for *Al Capone* is *Children of Alcatraz: Growing up on the Rock* by Claire Rudolf Murphy (2006). An informational picture book, *Children of Alcatraz* addresses the historical sweep of the island. Throughout most of that history—before, during, and after the federal prison was maintained on Alcatraz—children lived there.

- You are showing your students how to activate and use their background/prior knowledge to deepen their understanding of text before, during, and after reading.
- Your students are learning to do this based on their purpose/goal/intention for reading.

**Writing**

Our expanded definition of *literacy* includes a wide range of purposes and types of writing. As we’ve noted, the texts our students read are blueprints for constructing meaning. Importantly, these texts will also be the blueprints for constructing the meaning that our students, through their writing, want their readers to construct.

Traditionally, the readers of our students’ writing have been teachers, but teachers should not be the *sole* readers of everything students write. We should be facilitators of our students’ developing ability to communicate with, and influence, their immediate contexts and the broader world beyond. As students learn through your reading instruction how authors structure arguments, provide information and explanation, and create narrative worlds, they will apply this knowledge in composing their own texts. They will think carefully about their audience and how their writing may best be structured to affect that audience. For example:
A second-grader writes about why the *Henry and Mudge* (Cynthia Rylant) books are her favorites, offering her opinion, supported by two or three reasons, using linking words such as *because*, and providing a conclusion.

A seventh-grader writes a persuasive essay in support of teachers allowing writing in an online fanzine to count for class credit in English. The fanzine in this case is dedicated to the "vampire and werewolves" fantasy genre. In her paper, she addresses the teachers in the English/Language Arts department in her middle school. She begins her persuasive piece by introducing her point. She then organizes and supports her point with appropriate reasons and evidence, chooses words and phrases that explicitly establish the relationship between her topic and the support she offers, and adopts the appropriate tone or style for this type of argument.

For our students’ informational writing, there is at present an increased focus in the Common Core State Standards on **argument**. We’re not referring here to the heated in-your-face type of exchange, but rather the more objective, logical presentation of a point of view. Well-constructed arguments are invaluable in both education and the workplace. The argument form is used to change points of view, move others to act in a certain way, or convince others of the reasonableness of your position. Unlike persuasive writing, however, its power is in its structure. Whereas persuasive writing is usually selective in presenting a point of view and appealing to the reader’s emotions, arguments rest on the power of the structure and reasoning in the writing. **Informative** and **explanatory** writing are used both to examine and to convey information and ideas with clarity and accuracy. This type of writing supports our students’ learning as well as their communication with others.

Like the reading of narratives, **narrative writing** supports students’ developing understanding of themselves and their world, and provides a form through which they can try out these developing understandings with others. It also helps them develop further insight into the narratives they read and the ideas and themes that narratives explore.

You will support your students’ understanding of the **process** of writing. The work of published authors does not spring, magically, from their pens or keyboards in perfect final-draft form. Many students, however, have this naïve belief. In reality, however, just about every composition is developed over time through planning, revising, and editing. Think back to our questions at the beginning of this chapter: Do you enjoy writing? Many teachers may not enjoy or choose to do a lot of writing outside of the profession, and yet they must encourage and support their students in doing so. Some very wise writing teachers have encouraged us that by writing with our students, sharing and modeling our writing, we not only help the students’ development but also come to enjoy writing ourselves (Calkins, 1994; Fletcher, 1996; Graves, 1983; Routman, 2005). Over the years, the **National Writing Project** (www.nwp.org) has supported thousands of teachers in becoming writers and in supporting their teaching of writing, and we encourage you to become involved yourself with this excellent project.

**Vocabulary**

Students’ understanding of words and the concepts the words represent is one of the best predictors of their success in school (Anglin, 1993; Schleppegrell, 2004; Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Vocabulary “sets the ceiling” on students’ comprehension (Biemiller, 2005). Regardless of the grade or grades you teach, you will be teaching your students specific words as well as teaching them about words—the processes of word formation that apply to most of those hundreds of thousands of words in English (Nagy, 2007; Templeton, 2012). Your instruction will be what educators call generative: Knowing how words “work” will help students generate, from one word, an understanding of several other related words. Your instruction will also be engaging and motivating, helping students develop an interest in and wish to explore words (Baumann, Ware, & Edwards, 2007; Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2012; Scott, Skobel, & Wells, 2008).
Three Layers of Vocabulary Instruction  We will frame vocabulary instruction throughout this book within three layers that we've adapted from Stahl and Nagy (2006):

1. **Immerse the learner in rich oral language and in wide reading and purposeful writing.** Learners of all ages must be surrounded by rich oral language and should be reading widely. For many students, this is going to occur only in their classrooms. The words, phrases, and nuances of meaning students encounter in their reading should also be tried out and exercised in their writing—further extending students’ understandings of the underlying concepts. You will support your students’ wide reading, and for children who are emergent and beginning readers, and therefore not able to read widely, you read to the children books that reflect a range of words in contexts that are compelling and engaging.

   Although wide reading is absolutely necessary for growing a large vocabulary, it is not sufficient. The next two layers provide the additional sufficient support.

2. **Explicitly teach and talk about word structure.** The structure of words gives important clues to their meaning. So many of the words students will encounter in their reading, and should use in their writing, are created by combining the meaningful elements of *prefixes*, *suffixes*, and *roots*. Younger students, for example, are walked through the simple relationships involved in taking the word *help* and adding prefixes and suffixes:

   - help
   - helping
   - helpful
   - unhelpful

   Older students explore how a word such as *courage* is affected by the addition of different prefixes and suffixes:

   - courage
   - courageous
   - courageously
   - encourage
   - discourage
   - discouragingly
   - discourageable
   - undiscouraged
   - encouragement
   - encouragingly

3. **Engage in deep, intense study of specific words.** The words that represent the most important concepts in a text or unit of study deserve focused instruction. Looking at how they are used in context and examining their structure supports the learning of these words. They should also, however, be explored through activities that involve learners in comparing and contrasting the words and their concepts in ways that construct deep and lasting understandings. For example, fourth-graders learning about classical Greek civilization will learn or expand understanding of concepts such as *democracy*, *city-states*, *myth*, and *legend*. Democracy may be contrasted with autocracy: How are they alike (a form of government) and different (rights and freedoms enjoyed by citizens)? How might an understanding of the meaningful parts that make up democracy and autocracy support learning and remembering the concepts they represent (*cracy* means "rule or govern," *demo* refers to "people," and *auto* refers to "self"—rule by the *people* versus rule by an *individual").

Three Major Types of Vocabulary  There are three major types of vocabulary: (1) everyday conversational vocabulary; (2) more "academic" vocabulary that occurs in all content areas and subjects, referred to as *general* academic vocabulary; and (3) academic vocabulary that primarily
occurs within each specific content area or subject, more recently referred to as domain-specific vocabulary. You will also see the labels “Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3” to refer to these three types (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002), Tier 1 being the equivalent of conversational vocabulary, Tier 2 general academic, and Tier 3 content-specific.

- **Conversational vocabulary** refers to the basic, most frequently used words in the language. The words often label common things or actions and they seldom require direct instruction because they are used so frequently—for example, chair, fun, happy, and ran. As we’ll explore in later chapters, however, many of our new English learners may need instruction in some of these words.

- **General academic vocabulary** refers to words that students encounter often in their reading and should be able to use in their writing. These words are also likely to occur in formal oral language contexts such as lectures. They occur across all content areas—examples are coincidence, energetic, fortunate, and paradox. Often, students have the underlying concepts for the words but just need to learn the new labels.

- **Content- or domain-specific academic vocabulary** refers to words that occur in specific content areas such as mathematics (numerator, rectilinear), science (enzyme, magnetic field), the arts (bass clef, impressionism), and history and social science (antebellum, preamble). The domain-specific vocabulary in English/Language Arts is often referred to as literary vocabulary—for example, foreshadowing and rhyme scheme (Hiebert & Lubliner, 2008). In contrast to general academic vocabulary, much domain-specific academic vocabulary represents new concepts, or familiar concepts with new applications.

**Selecting Specific Words for In-Depth Study** How do you know which specific words to select for deep and intense study? We will address specific guidelines later in the developmental chapters, but in general, for the primary grades, we ensure that children, especially English learners, acquire the most frequently occurring words they may not be picking up in conversation. We also emphasize appropriate general academic vocabulary, and begin to explore the domain-specific vocabulary that will represent important concepts in content-area units of study. For the intermediate grades, both general academic and domain-specific vocabulary will receive significant emphasis. In the middle grades, domain-specific vocabulary receives primary emphasis.

For example, although several unfamiliar terms appear in the first few chapters of Al Capone Does My Shirts, teacher Sandra Madura chose those that she believed were critical to her students’ understanding of the developing narrative and were important for them to learn by the intermediate grades. Some of the words she selected were convict, criminal, electrician, innocent, affliction, and Eleanor Roosevelt. Sandra knew that most of her students have at least heard most if not all of these words, and some have some knowledge about them. She also knew that most of the words are important general academic vocabulary terms—thus requiring a deeper understanding—and those that are domain-specific are important in the context of the narrative. She skipped those that were not critical to understanding the chapter or the larger themes—words such as embezzler and conniver, the meaning of which she could simply mention along the way.

A final word about vocabulary. Knowing a word is not an all-or-nothing, “either you know it or you don’t” situation. There are degrees of knowing a word. Before beginning a unit on “Oceans,” for example, Kim Leslie has her fifth-grade students self-assess their knowledge of the important vocabulary words that will be addressed in the unit: For the word plankton, for instance, each student indicates if she or he:

- Has never heard of the word
- Has heard it but does not know what it means
- Has some ideas about what it means
- Knows it well
Not only does this preassessment provide Kim with important information about her students’ prior knowledge about oceans, it also pulls her students into the topic and gives them a sense of ownership of their developing understanding. Over the course of the unit, they will see how their knowledge grows for the words and the concepts they represent.

**Word Structure**

Does the spelling of English words make sense? Most folks would answer “Of course not!” But there is far more logic in the way words are spelled than most people realize, and we will be exploring how we can support our students’ understanding of this logic throughout this book. Yes, there are famous examples of the illogic of spelling (for example, *though*, *tough*, *through*, *bough*), but when taken together with most words in the language, these examples are fairly few in number. Learning to read and spell words in English involves learning about the logic at the level of sound and the logic at the level of meaning. We’ll briefly examine the logic at the level of meaning here, and address this more deeply as well as the logic at the level of sound in Chapter 2. Subsequent chapters will provide support in how we teach about these levels to students at different developmental levels.

Recall from the previous section how the structure of words gives important clues to their meaning. Among words that are related in meaning there is a strong visual connection, captured in the spelling of the related words. This relationship is referred to as the spelling–meaning connection: “Words that are related in meaning are often related in spelling as well, despite changes in sound” (Templeton, 1983, 2012). It also explains most of the “odd” spellings in the English language. For example, why are there silent consonants in the following words?

- bomb
- sign
- muscle

They are there because they maintain the visual relationship with words to which they are related in meaning:

- bombard
- signature
- muscular

Why do vowel letters have different sounds, as with the letter *i* in the following words?

- define
- definition
- definitive

Although it stands for three different sounds, the letter *i* is there because it helps to maintain the visual relationship among these words, which of course are related in meaning.

Why do many consonant letters stand for different sounds? The spelling–meaning connection explains most of these: When reading *Al Capone Does My Shirts*, for example, Sandra Madura and her students discussed the profession of Moose Flanagan’s dad: *electrician*. Sandra wrote the word *electric* on the white board and then the word *electrician* underneath it. She underlined the final *c* in both words and reminded the students how words related in meaning are often related in their spelling. Even though the sound that the *c* represents changes when -*ian* is added to *electric*, the spelling does not change because of the meaning relationship that these two words share.

As we will explore later, when students develop an awareness and understanding of these connections between spelling and meaning, their vocabularies may also grow in breadth and in depth. This is the “second layer” of vocabulary instruction, discussed above on page 14.

Students will develop insight into the logic of sound and meaning only if we are aware and understand this logic ourselves. If you are just coming to this awareness, know that we will explore these relationships in some depth in several other chapters. As Hughes and Searle (1997)
point out, “Many teachers themselves see spelling as more arbitrary than systematic; at least, they give that impression to their students . . . . If we teachers do not believe that spelling has logical, negotiable patterns, how can we hope to help [students] develop that insight?”

**Fluency**

Fluency refers to the ability to identify words quickly and accurately and to read orally with expression (Rasinski, Reutzel, Chard, & Linan-Thompson, 2011). Becoming a reader who is able to read an unfamiliar text with expression, sounding natural, is a developmental phenomenon. It fundamentally depends on the ability to identify all or almost all words automatically, without having to stop to decode or figure them out. For this reason, fluency has been described as the bridge between word decoding and comprehension (Pikulski & Chard, 2005). It is impossible to read aloud naturally without being able to decode almost all the words in a text automatically and accurately. This means that instruction should emphasize attention to the structure of printed words as well as plenty of opportunities to read texts at appropriate levels, encountering the most frequent words and word patterns in the language over and over. Rasinski (2011) has pointed out that readers who are able to read orally with good expression are also better able to comprehend material when reading silently. If oral reading is awkward and “disfluent,” comprehension during silent reading will suffer.

Although fluency depends on word knowledge and the rapid and automatic recognition of words in text, fluency also depends on the related ability to recognize and read in phrases or “phrasal units” (Benjamin & Schwanenflugel, 2010; Rasinski, 2011). This ability, too, is a developmental phenomenon. It depends on experience with text, advancing word knowledge, and overall language development. Occasionally, students who seem to be fine in all these areas still struggle with reading fluently at the more rapid rate than their abilities would suggest. We will address this challenge in Chapter 11.

**Motivation**

Motivation is key to success in learning. Students are motivated to read if they’re interested. Again, as Smith (2004) observed, “No one ever taught reading to a child who wasn’t interested in reading, and interest can’t be demanded” (p. 212). If students are not motivated to read, then they will not be able to bring their attention to bear on a text, much less apply the strategies you have been teaching. The motivation and love of reading come from being “hooked” by a particular book, author, or topic and then going from there. When a student experiences success with reading because she or he is interested and motivated, the teacher may then build on that to develop a willingness to read material in which the child is not naturally interested. We set that stage by developing background knowledge; for example, before reading a chapter about the parts of a cell.

When students are motivated and engaged readers, they can overcome what otherwise are often challenging obstacles to the rate and extent of their literacy development, including parental education and income (Guthrie, 2004). A number of researchers have confirmed that the following practices will help establish the environment for nurturing students’ motivation to read and expansion of interests (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Langer 2001):

- Allow opportunities for students to choose what to read. When you get to know your students and what motivates them in their own lives, you will know what topics and books to make available. Listen to and value their opinions.
- Provide students with easy access to interesting texts.
- Read real texts for genuine reasons and purposes.
- Provide students opportunities to discuss readings.
- Provide a range of genres.
The Language of Your Instruction
Standards and Their Influence

The topic of standards is part of your instructional language because the terminology used in literacy standards inevitably becomes a significant part of the terminology you use in the classroom. Over the last decade, elementary teachers and students in the United States have faced a considerable increase in grade-specific standards and testing. Some have argued that this trend has resulted in a narrowing of the curriculum, a decrease in morale among educators, and an increase in “one-size-fits-all” teaching practices (Allington, 2002; Gehsmann & Templeton, 2011/2012; Nichols & Berliner, 2007). In June 2010, the National Governor’s Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers unveiled a new set of standards, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (www.corestandards.org). Throughout this and the other chapters, you’ll notice a margin icon that signals important connections to this new set of standards. In contrast to a number of standards documents in the past, we are encouraged because this new set of standards acknowledges the realities of elementary teachers and the diverse learners they teach. The CCSS affirm that “instruction should be differentiated . . . . The point is to teach students what they need to learn . . . . to discern when particular children or activities warrant more or less attention” (p. 15, emphasis added). These acknowledgments in such an influential standards document are important and very appropriate.

A word about standards may be helpful here: To a greater or lesser degree, there have always been grade-level expectations or their equivalent in education. They determine what is taught and tested. Unavoidably, they often clash with classroom realities that reflect the range of abilities among students. Although not disagreeing with the intent of standards, educators who understand learning in a developmental perspective have often criticized what and how much is expected by the end of each grade level. Over the course of a generation, the expectations for children’s reading and writing have increased, and occur earlier in the standards. What used to be the first-grade curriculum is now addressed in kindergarten, for example, and this shift ripples on through the grades: Middle school expectations of a decade ago now appear in grades 4 and 5.

The CCSS are the current version of this phenomenon and will define the instructional landscape in almost all states for the next several years (a handful of states have not adopted these standards; they elected to retain their existing state standards). The broad-based literacy expectations of the CCSS are admirable, as we will note. When we drill down into some of the specifics—expectations for which you will likely be held accountable—there may be some challenges. Throughout this text, we will demonstrate how a developmental model of literacy grounds effective literacy instruction and will support you as you negotiate the ever-present tension between (1) providing literacy instruction that is in children’s “construction zones” (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Newman, Griffin, & Cole, 1989) and (2) addressing grade-level standards for which you may be accountable.

The Common Core State Standards reflect what your students will be expected to learn, but another important set of standards reflects what teachers are expected to learn and be able to apply in their teaching and in their interactions with the broader community: the International Reading Association’s (IRA) Standards for Reading Professionals (2010; listed in the Online Resources at the end of this chapter). This document informs much of the information and support we provide you in this text. The IRA Standards provide six overarching standards that include foundations for literacy instruction, what and how to teach, the effective assessment of literacy learning and development, understanding diversity and teaching from a culturally responsive perspective, establishing a supportive literacy environment, and a commitment to lifelong learning and collaboration with other educators and the broader community through professional learning and leadership. In addition, specific standards for different instructional roles are provided. Those for pre-K through elementary and middle/high school classroom reading teachers are reflected in this book.

The Literacy Essentials from a Developmental Perspective

As discussed earlier, reading and writing are reciprocal processes. The mutually supportive relationship between these two abilities begins in the preschool years and will continue to be the foundation for students’ literacy development. We take a developmental approach to the teaching of literacy because this supports our teaching to where students are rather than where they are not.
Determining where your students fall along the continuum of literacy development ensures that you will be teaching them in their instructional zone or level, so your instruction will make sense (Morris, 2008). You will know how far you can “stretch” your students without winding up in their frustration zone. When you meet your students in their appropriate instructional zones, you are able to build on what they already know and what they are trying to do.

If this sounds quite obvious to you and you’re thinking “Of course!” that’s a very good sign. Unfortunately, as we will address throughout this text, you often may feel pressured to teach content or concepts that are beyond particular students’ learning zones. But if your literacy instruction is grounded in the developmental perspective, you will be able to move your students farther along toward that content and those concepts by teaching in, rather than beyond, their instructional zones.

Certainly the development of literacy takes time, but it is the examination of how literacy development proceeds, and what it looks like, that informs our teaching during this time span. A classic study of first-, second-, and third-graders who were learning to read found that children “displayed much greater uniformity in what they knew about reading and print than in how they brought their knowledge to bear on text . . . . Many differences . . . turned out to be more a matter of how [the children] used knowledge than of knowledge acquisition or knowing per se” (Bussis, Chittenden, Amarel, & Klausner, 1985, p. 65, emphasis added). The developmental model, then, helps us determine what our students are likely to know at any point along the developmental continuum, and therefore how better to support their use of that knowledge.

**Stages of Literacy Development**

Whereas all students at some level are trying to make meaning when they read, the ease with which they are able to do so during reading, and how well they adjust when the reading becomes challenging, depend on their stage of reading development. The degree to which students are able to write—to encode their thinking at the word and sentence level while keeping in mind the purpose of their writing—depends on their stage of literacy development. Chapter 2 will explore the characteristics of development at each of these stages in some depth, and Chapters 6 through 10 will address instruction at each of these developmental stages. To set the stage, however, here we offer a brief introduction to these stages of literacy development.

**Emergent Stage**

The emergent stage ranges from the preschool years through kindergarten, and it is not unusual to find some first-graders who are in the emergent stage. This stage is an important foundational time during which children develop concepts about print:

- Print represents spoken language.
- Print carries meaning and performs different functions (for example, labels things, tells stories).
- Print has directionality—in English, top-to-bottom, left-to-right, with a return sweep at the end of each line.
- Print represents words and sounds.
- The smallest units of writing are letters, and there is a limited number of letters that occur over and over again.

Emergent learners develop concepts of “story” and often of “nursery rhyme.” With little effort, over time they memorize favorite texts and “read” them back, turning the pages at exactly the right places. This is not true reading, of course, but an extremely important foundational understanding for reading to develop. Their written productions evolve from random scribbles to letterlike forms. See Figure 1.1.
Beginning Stage

The **beginning stage** is when learners attend much more closely to print. The children are coming to understand that units on the printed page or screen correspond to speech, and they develop an increasingly sensitive awareness of how this correspondence works. Over time, while teachers are continuing to model how print “works,” children are also learning about letters, letter names, and some of the sounds the letters stand for. This immersion in actual texts and learning about the smallest elements of these texts (letters) gradually helps children learn to “read the spaces” (Clay, 1991, 2001), and develop a **concept of word in text** (Flanigan, 2007; Morris, Bloodgood, Lomax, & Perney, 2003).

After they have a functional understanding of words in text—that words have beginnings and endings, indicated by spaces—children’s awareness of all the sounds that a word contains develops rapidly. They become fully aware of **phonemes**, the smallest units of speech, and come to understand the **alphabetic principle** that letters represent sounds and are matched in a left-to-right sequence within the printed word. These understandings in turn lay the foundation for developing a **sight vocabulary**—words that the learner recognizes immediately both in text and in isolation. Like emergent learners, they continue to benefit from repeated readings of predictable texts. They also benefit from reading some **decodable texts** that are written to contain several examples of the phonic/spelling patterns the children are learning in their word study instruction. When beginning readers encounter a new text, their reading rate is quite slow and choppy, often described as “word by word.” Reading fluency obviously has yet to develop, because beginning readers are spending so much of their “thinking space” focused on identifying the words on the page.

Because of the read-alouds you will be conducting with your children at this stage, they will be developing a more elaborate concept of story as well as developing a beginning understanding of informational texts and how they work. The students are able to learn that each type of text usually has different purposes. Interestingly, young boys often respond with more interest to informational texts than to narratives (Zambo & Brozo, 2009), a point we will explore further in Chapter 2.

Learners at the beginning stage are able to exercise their developing knowledge about print through their **writing**. Just as with their reading, their writing is slow going, definitely not fluent.
They expend so much thinking space and energy matching up letters with the sounds they want to represent, while still trying to hold onto the topic of their writing (not to mention the pencil!). It is important not to set too many expectations on them during these initial attempts with respect to quality and correctness of writing. If they wish to, or are required to, revise a piece of writing, then care should be taken on how much is addressed during the revision process. Simple conventions—capitalization at the beginning of a sentence and a period at the end—and any wording changes they might wish should be about the maximum expectation. First-grader Elisa’s writing (Figure 1.2) took a few minutes to complete.

Some children move into the beginning reading stage in kindergarten, while most move through this stage in first grade; some children are still in this stage in second grade.

**Transitional Stage**

The *transitional stage* is a time when learners move toward fluency in their reading—that is, increasing rate and expression. This development is grounded in their increasing word knowledge—understanding how printed words work—and their growing familiarity with narrative and informational texts. The children’s store of sight words increases dramatically. During this stage, they will become silent readers, which is something beginning readers simply cannot do. All of this knowledge about words and print allows them to recognize words more rapidly and automatically, which in turn frees up more thinking space as they read. Because there is more space on their brain’s “desktop” while they read, they are better able to analyze, summarize, and generalize based on their own reading rather than just on the texts that are read to them by the teacher (Applebee, 1978; Barone, 1989; Madura, 1998).

Because of their growing familiarity with and understanding of the nature and functions of print and texts, transitional learners are also becoming more fluent in their writing. Their processes of encoding words and ideas become more rapid, and they are able to hold information and ideas in their heads better as they are encoding that information. They are also better able to keep in mind the purpose and audience for their writing. For transitional learners, *revision* of their writing is a realistic expectation. Figure 1.3 represents two entries from second-grader Kirstin’s journal.
Many children move into the transitional stage in first grade; most will move through this period in second or third grade, though a few are still at this stage in fourth grade.

The Intermediate Stage

Many students move into the intermediate stage in third grade; for most, however, movement into this stage corresponds to the intermediate grades—grades four and five. A number of middle-grade students are still in this stage as well. The children’s developing understanding of texts allows for reading more extensive texts, and sustaining their reading over longer periods of time. Fluency develops further, allowing quite natural-sounding oral reading of on-level texts. Their reading interests may expand considerably, and they may immerse themselves for weeks on end in particular series books or particular genres. Students in the intermediate stage develop the ability to step back and think in more depth about the structure and content of what they read—a noted foundation for the more sophisticated cognition that will come in just a few years. Importantly, this is the stage during which students’ acquisition of vocabulary from wide reading begins to increase dramatically.

Intermediate writers incorporate the more complex patterns and features of both narrative and informational texts. They are better able to “orchestrate” the many cognitive demands of writing—more fluently encoding at the word and sentence levels, while sustaining focus and intent. Writing also becomes a vehicle for learning (Scardamalia, 1981), not only in response to the reading that the students are doing but also through their original compositions. It is a powerful medium through which they discover who they are, work toward establishing their identities, and learn that who they are and what they do really matters.

Figure 1.4 shows an entry from fifth-grader Richard’s learning log; he has been reading different informational texts that address the topic of extinct animals. His misspellings (“exstinked,” “indangerd,” and the different attempts at species—“speceys”/“speaces”) are revealing examples of his underlying word knowledge, although he is clearly able to read these words in text. As we’ll explore in Chapter 2, when students move into the transitional stage, and then continuing throughout their development, there will usually be a gap between words that they are able to read and their ability to spell those words correctly.

**FIGURE 1.3 Transitional Writer’s Journal Entries**

Sharon’s frind broke her arm yesterday by jumping off a swing.

I cant whate till tomarow.

Many children move into the transitional stage in first grade; most will move through this period in second or third grade, though a few are still at this stage in fourth grade.

**FIGURE 1.4 Intermediate Writer’s Journal Entry**

I thought it was fun to learn about birds that are exstinked and indangerd speceys and about the dodo bird I didn’t know there was. I thought that it was a joke about the dodo bird. It’s cool to learn about other indangered speaces and I loved talking about the dodo bird. Whats’ inchrasting is that they eat a plant called the dodo plant!
Skillful Literacy Stage

The skillful literacy stage represents a level that many students do not attain. But they certainly are capable of developing the language and thinking skills to grow into this level. Some students at the upper elementary level and many more in the middle grades are capable of this level of development. At the skillful literacy stage, the ability to read deeply, thoughtfully, and critically may be applied to a wide range of genres, although there will always be room for fine-tuning the strategies with which particular genres or the literature in particular disciplines may be read. Reading can become much more flexible and strategic. Students become increasingly able to analyze themes and character motivations, as well as relate contemporary literary characters and themes to earlier works. Word knowledge may grow into an appreciation not only of the frequently occurring Greek and Latin word elements but also the histories of words. This insight affords more nuanced understanding and appreciation of words and their use, across disciplines and literary texts.

Students’ writing at this stage often displays complex analysis and interpretation, reflecting a more sophisticated, discipline-specific vocabulary. The degree to which students develop this insight in their writing will depend on the support and guidance they receive from their teachers. Twelve-year-old Catherine’s personal narrative in Figure 1.5 shows her understanding of how the form of this genre, including the first person as narrator, may be used to develop suspense. Also apparent is Catherine’s more sophisticated use of the conventions of writing such as semicolons and ellipses, and her correct spelling of more complex words such as competition and visualized. Her vocabulary knowledge is suggested through her appropriate and effective use of the word conceded in this context, and she has effectively used and punctuated dialogue.

**FIGURE 1.5 Catherine’s Personal Narrative – A Nerve-Wracking First Time**

> It was early competition season: November, maybe even December, and it was our first time tumbling on tumble track in awhile; we’d been so busy working on perfecting our routines. Once we took two, maybe three turns each, I did my back layout. As I got out of the dusty pit full of foam blocks that cushioned my landing, my coach shouted, “Wow! That was so high! Double next time.”

> “What?!” I nervously asked. “I have never done a double back before . . .”

> “It’s okay,” she answered. “Just set your arms up, circle them back, grab your legs and pull your flip around twice, until you hit the pit.”

> “Alright,” I conceded. I was not totally convinced. When I got back in line, I was asking all of my friends who had done a double before, “Is it hard? Is it scary?” They all told me it was a piece of cake and that I’d be fine.

> It was almost my turn. I visualized all of the double backs I had seen before and tried to picture myself doing the same motions. The line moved up, I was next. Panic rushed through my body.

> “Okay,” I told myself. “Just set, circle and keep pulling, I will be fine.” Around me, my team chanted and cheered my name, encouraging me to go for it. But I was in my own world. With my body shaking, I closed my eyes, took a deep breath and prepared . . .
The Sociocultural Contexts of Literacy Learning

We talked earlier about the new digital age and its implications for literacy instruction. That is a very important context, but social and cultural contexts are equally if not more important in terms of how they impact your teaching and your students’ learning of literacy. When your students walk through the door in the morning, they bring their language, family, and a community heritage with them. If you are to be effective, your instruction must be responsive to the cultures that language, family, and community represent (Au, 2005; Moll, 2005). How our students see themselves, who and what they value, how they behave, and how they learn—all are a function of the embedded contexts in which they live. Figure 1.6 represents the embedded nature of these sociocultural contexts.

Learning Cultural Practices

For many of our students, it’s not just content and a new language that they are trying to learn—it’s a whole set of cultural practices as well. These practices are reflected in school and in the larger societal mainstream. Most middle-class English-speaking children have grown up in these practices, hardly noticing them. For learners outside the mainstream, however, these norms will need to be made explicit (Delpit, 1995). Because of the range of diversity in so many of the nation’s schools, as these cultural norms are learned, there are also many opportunities to learn about nonmainstream students’ lives and experiences. If we as teachers are open, we will never cease to be impressed with the integrity of their lives and experiences, and open to ways

FIGURE 1.6 Embedded Contexts for Schooling
in which those lives can inform and enrich our own. Not the least of these ways is the possibility of English-only students beginning to learn the new language spoken by some classmates, as the new classmates learn English. Surely, in more ways than one, language learning is a two-way street (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008; Templeton, 2010).

As you are also well aware, there are communities in which the out-of-school challenges are significant and daunting—such as extreme poverty, not enough to eat, and instability and insecurity at home and in the community—and they inevitably affect the classroom. Many teachers who choose to teach in these contexts, however, discover that their rewards may be greater in the long run, in terms of personal satisfaction and helping to change lives for the better.

Broadly speaking, a culture reflects the language, beliefs, values, literature, art, and institutions of a group. A culture is a framework for making meaning (Templeton, 1997), and the students in our classrooms see themselves in terms of the culture from which they come. They have learned how to interact with children and adults, and bring this understanding into the classroom. The classroom offers the most promising context in which different cultural and language communities may interface, communicate, and learn from one another.

We’ve already talked about the critically important role that you will play in orchestrating this interaction and communication. You’re a part of your students’ sociocultural context, right down to how you feel on a particular day and how that affects your interaction with your students. We spoke earlier of the importance of your making literacy interesting and purposeful to your students. You will be successful with this to the extent that you understand and value your students’ different backgrounds, expectations, and voices. If you keep this in mind and respond to these differences, at the same time supporting your students’ developing understanding of societal norms and mainstream culture, you will be an effective teacher of literacy. Susan Florio-Ruane (2001) best summed this up when she observed that when we as teachers understand that “language, identity, education, and culture are inextricably entwined, we may approach the teaching of literacy with greater sensitivity, insight, and imagination.”

**Developing a Culture of the Classroom**

As we explore briefly below and later in Chapter 3, you will work to develop a culture of the classroom that establishes norms for how your students use space, time, and resources, and how they behave and interact. This culture of the classroom will support the social engagements that underlie true learning, because we know that “any function . . . in development appears twice: First, on the social level, and later, on the individual level” (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky went on to note that “all the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals” (p. 57). This is true for our students’ out-of-school learning as well as for their learning in our classroom.

The expectations you hold for the types of literacy you wish your students to develop are first addressed through social collaboration, in whole class and small groups. We, as teachers, are supporting our students in their growth toward “the close, attentive reading that is at the heart of understanding and enjoying complex works of literature” (CCSS, 2010) and in the reasoning processes with which they analyze and evaluate both literary and informational texts. This ability will grow through our support of students’ developing critical literacy skills. These involve students learning how to evaluate information that is presented within a single text and in texts across multiple subject areas. They will learn that the creators of messages will be using and crafting information in certain ways in order to influence what they believe and how they think. This will ground their understanding of how different forms of media are linked, often in a Web-based environment, and how these forms are used to create information and narratives. These new information and communication technologies, including social media, will be
explored for their potential to link individuals globally as well as here at home. The worldview and understanding you are helping your students construct through their literacy engagements may literally be informed by fellow students in other countries from different cultural and language contexts.

Levels of Support and the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

As with the teachers in Compello Elementary School, because you are teaching literacy developmentally, you will balance whole-class instruction with small-group instruction. To teach the essential components of literacy in a developmentally responsive way, the daily “literacy diet” you provide your students includes reading, writing, word study, and *your* reading to the students (Flanigan et al., 2010; Willows, 2002). The proportion of time you allocate to these ingredients will vary depending on the developmental level of your students, but you will work to ensure that the ingredients will be addressed—whole class, small group, and independent work.

It’s a significant undertaking to orchestrate these different class and group configurations to support your classroom culture. You will experience more success (and far fewer headaches!) if you walk your students through these configurations and involve them in evaluating how successfully they can negotiate movement and responsibility. This will take time at first, but gradually, students will build behaviors and expectations that can be maintained over the course of the school year.
year (Boushey & Moser, 2006). Your goal is for both younger and older students to be trusted to handle most of their interactions and tasks on their own.

**Gradual Release of Responsibility Model**

In teaching tasks and expectations, but most definitely in teaching literacy strategies and content, most educators agree that we should follow the **Gradual Release of Responsibility** model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). See Figure 1.7.

For generations, an “I Do It” (or “I Say It”) and then “You Do It” model prevailed in most classrooms. Ironically, this model left out perhaps the most essential aspect of teaching: the social aspect in which the teacher supports students’ application of what she has modeled, demonstrated, or shared. The teacher-guided step is the critical bridge linking Vygotsky’s (1978) “first on the social level, later on the individual level” insight. This model will be applied, in the developmental context, throughout this text.

**Differentiating Instruction**

You will be able to demonstrate, share, and model a great deal in a whole-class format, and because you will have learners at different points along the developmental continuum, you will also meet your students in small groups. It is critical that instruction be **differentiated** in this manner, to provide more appropriate instruction—both in what is taught and in “face time” with your students.

For example, after reading a chapter in Katherine Paterson’s (2004) *Bridge to Terabithia* to her fourth-grade class, Kellie Hiatt had her students respond to the following statement: *Most boys of Jesse’s age wouldn’t become involved in either the real or make-believe world of Terabithia.* Most of her students were able to discuss, argue, and evaluate their responses at a fairly critical level. When Kellie meets her transitional-level readers in small groups, however, they read and discuss a transitional-level text with the theme of friendship. Had they been required to read and respond to *Bridge to Terabithia* on their own, they most likely would have become frustrated and disengaged. The effort required to identify the words in the text would have prevented the transitional-level students from constructing and thinking about the meaning in the text.

At the present time, you will very often hear **differentiated instruction** discussed in the context of **tiered instruction** (Walpole, McKenna, & Philippakos, 2011). Often addressed in the Response to Intervention (RTI) model (Lipson & Wixson, 2010), reading instruction is
conceptualized in three tiers: Tier 1 is the “core” grade-level instruction that should be provided every student. This level of instruction is differentiated based on students’ stages of development, strengths, and instructional needs. For those who still experience difficulty, however, instruction is further differentiated. First, they will receive Tier 2 instruction—usually small-group, more focused, with more support. Students who are still struggling are evaluated for Tier 3 instruction—generally intensive, one-to-one, and usually sustained over a period of time. We’ll discuss in Chapter 11 the particulars of this model, and our extension of it, as we apply the model to students who are struggling in their literacy learning.

Chapter Summary

Literacy is the ability to read and write. Print literacy refers specifically to the skills necessary to understand information and stories that appear in both printed texts and on digital screens. Reading and writing are reciprocal processes, each ability supporting the other. Proficient reading and writing depend on the following literacy essentials:

- **Comprehension**—An active and not a passive process, comprehension is constructed as we read a text, drawing on our background knowledge and the information “blueprint” that the text provides.
- **Writing**—Constructing a “blueprint” for readers who in turn construct the meaning we intend. What and how we write depends on our understanding of literature and of informational texts—how we create a narrative world or present information.
- **Vocabulary**—Understanding the concepts that words represent and the relationships among those concepts. Learning vocabulary involves learning specific words and learning about words, such as how prefixes, suffixes, and roots combine to form words.
- **Word structure**—The ways in which words are written or spelled and the information that the spelling represents. This information is at the levels of sound and meaning.
- **Fluency**—The ability to identify printed words quickly and accurately and to read orally with expression.

Becoming literate is a developmental process that occurs across five developmental stages: emergent, beginning, transitional, intermediate, and skillful. Determining where each of your students is along this continuum gives you more precise insight into what you will teach.

Literacy instruction occurs in embedded sociocultural contexts. Students’ ability to learn is influenced by the classroom, school, language, and cultural heritage of the home and the larger community.

The Gradual Release of Responsibility model for instruction makes explicit what and why something is to be learned. This model provides teachers a vehicle for ensuring that students will be successful in applying and using what they have learned.

Suggested Extension Activities

**Observe:** Make arrangements to observe in a primary (K–2), intermediate (3–5), or middle school (6–8) classroom during the reading/literature or writing block. Your observation may be of either a small-group or whole-class lesson. Based on the perspective presented in this chapter on the reading and writing processes and how teachers may facilitate their learning and development, pay particular attention to the following:

- Which literacy essentials is the teacher addressing in her or his lesson?
- How does the teacher interact with the students? How does she or he present a lesson and follow the Gradual Release of Responsibility model?
- Every few minutes during the lesson, focus on a different student and observe the degree to which he is engaged in the activity. If the student is not that engaged, why not? If the student is
engaged, why? How does the teacher facilitate engagement?

- If possible, make notes of your observations during the lesson. If this is not feasible, jot down your observations as soon after observing as possible. In either case, jot down your impressions afterward. What leapt out at you, impressed you, puzzled you?

It may not be possible for you to observe in an actual classroom because of the time of year or because you are a classroom teacher and it isn’t convenient at this time to make arrangements to observe in a colleague’s classroom. In that case, go to MyEducationLab and select a literacy instructional video from one of these three levels to watch and respond to.

Reflect: What are three big ideas or “takeaways” from this chapter that have given you the most insight into teaching and/or learning literacy? Write these down. Then, briefly explain why each has really caught your attention. Meet in a small group with fellow students or teachers to share and discuss. If face-to-face discussion is not possible, share in the online threaded discussion forum your instructor has provided for the course.

Engage: If you plan to read Al Capone Does My Shirts as the companion exemplar text for this book, please do the following before you being reading:

1) Take no more than 5 minutes and write down what first comes to mind when you think about each of these topics: The Great Depression, Alcatraz, Al Capone, Autism. Get your thoughts down in whatever manner is most comfortable for you—a list, short sentences or phrases, a cluster—the form doesn’t matter.

2) Meet in a small group or online to share these initial thoughts. If you’re not clear about what someone has shared, ask him or her. Your colleagues, of course, may ask you as well.

3) After you’ve shared, add to your initial jottings: What additional information did you learn? How were these topics elaborated and/or clarified for you? What new information did you learn? Were there any surprises? What questions do you have?

Recommended Professional Resources


Online Resources

To familiarize yourself with some of the online resources for literacy instruction, explore the following websites of some of the most important and supportive professional organizations in literacy education:

International Reading Association

www.reading.org

National Council of Teachers of English

www.ncte.org

National Writing Project

www.nwp.org

To further your understanding of policy initiatives affecting literacy, explore one of the following websites. We will be revisiting them throughout this text.

International Reading Association’s Standards for Reading Professionals


Common Core State Standards for English/Language Arts

www.corestandards.org/
How to Use This Book

To the extent that it is possible in a book or online format, we have tried in this text to develop an ongoing conversation with you. While this conversation is obviously one-sided, we still have tried to present content and ask questions just as we would if we were sitting across from you. With this goal in mind, we have organized this text so as to provide (1) effective and, we hope, efficient delivery of content; (2) opportunities to engage your critical thinking about the teaching of literacy; and (3) realistic opportunities to apply ideas, strategies, and activities.

In each chapter you will find:

• Focus questions that target the major topics.
• Opening vignettes that provide a real-world context for the level and types of instruction that are addressed in each chapter. These vignettes are based on and reflect the instruction of exemplary teachers and administrators who we know and have worked with extensively.
• Feature boxes throughout each chapter that address significant topics and themes in literacy instruction.
• Chapter-ending features and resources.

You will have students who are at different developmental levels of literacy in your classroom, and so throughout this text we offer support for accommodating these different levels. As you read each developmental chapter (Chapters 6 through 10), you may find it helpful to refer from time to time to Table 2.1 (pages 50–54), a comprehensive chart that summarizes the developmental continuum, to remind you of the characteristics of students at each particular developmental level.

The feature boxes in the chapters are organized around the following themes:

• Strategies for the Classroom—This feature succinctly presents practical activities and strategies for teaching the content addressed in each chapter.
• The Language of Your Instruction—This feature will provide models of language and questioning that you can use to initiate, engage, and facilitate students’ thinking about and discussion of texts and words.
• Accommodating English Learners—In each developmental chapter, aspects of accommodating literacy instruction for English learners are presented.
• Reading and Writing in Digital Contexts—In each developmental chapter, examples of reading and writing instruction and application are provided.
• Children’s Literature Connection—Chapters 3 through 11 include recommended titles across genres and cultures. In Chapter 10, this feature is labeled Young Adult Literature Connection.
• Working and Collaborating—Chapters 6 through 10 include suggestions for how you may collaborate and partner with your students’ homes and the community—fellow educators, parents, and volunteers—with examples for supporting literacy instruction and intervention for learners specific to each developmental stage.

As we’ve done in this chapter, throughout this text we will be making connections with the Common Core State Standards, specifically those that address reading, writing, and language. As a literacy teacher, in most states you will be expected to address these standards, and your students’ progress toward meeting these standards will be assessed. What we have learned about effective instruction is reflected in these standards. Our connections will be of two types: (1) discussing aspects and applications of the CCSS and (2) calling out instruction that supports the CCSS through a marginal icon.

The resources at the end of each chapter include those you’ve just seen here in Chapter 1:

• Chapter Summary—The summary is keyed to the focus questions presented at the beginning of each chapter.
• Suggested Activities with Students—These provide you the opportunity to apply the chapter information with students—either your own or those in your preservice field-based experiences.
• Your Ongoing Professional Development—Questions to Explore with Fellow Students/Colleagues—These provide you the opportunity to explore collaboratively and problem solve, with your classroom colleagues or fellow teachers, specific situations and case studies. Your instructor may require these questions to be addressed in class or on the website for the course.
• **Recommended Professional Resources**—We have kept two points in mind in selecting and recommending significant authors/books/articles on particular topics: (1) We know your time for reading beyond this assigned text is limited and (2) because of that, we have tried to select wisely. Our recommendations provide further background information and practical application to help you grow and develop your teaching repertoire and knowledgeably apply this information.

• **Online Resources**—You are already familiar with the experience of doing an online search—for example, for “phonics instruction” or “critical reading”—and coming up with thousands of hits. Many of them are likely to be quite good, but how do you know, and how do you decide? We provide criteria for doing so (just as you will help your own students in their online explorations), but we also recommend some very helpful sites—those that provide good instructional ideas and activities that have a solid research base.

We’ve already begun in this chapter to refer to *Al Capone Does My Shirts*, by Gennifer Choldenko. Though not written for younger students, this work of historical fiction is an excellent book for those in the intermediate and middle grades. We will make reference to it often to illustrate the strategies and activities we discuss in the areas of word study and vocabulary, comprehension and literature response activities, and writing. These examples will include how this and similar books may be used for on-, above-, and below-level students. For younger students, many of the types of texts we have used as examples may be found on [www.wegivebooks.org](http://www.wegivebooks.org).