

FUNDAMENTALS OF

# Literacy & Instruction & Assessment

6-12

Martha C. Hougen

Foreword by Carol Jago



# Fundamentals of Literacy Instruction and Assessment, 6–12



# Fundamentals of Literacy Instruction and Assessment, 6–12

edited by

**Martha C. Hougen, Ph.D.**  
University of Florida  
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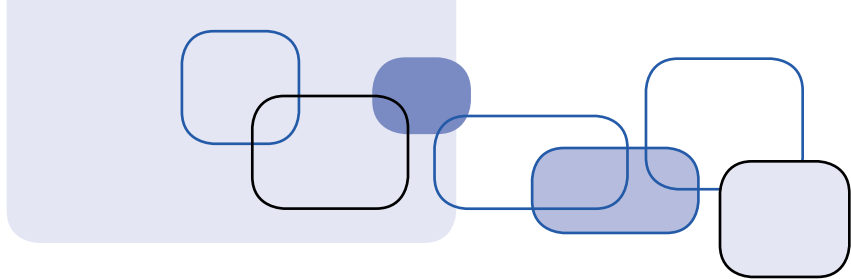
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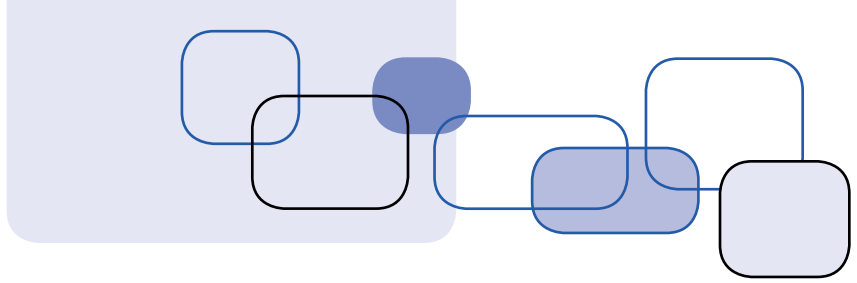
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## About the Editor

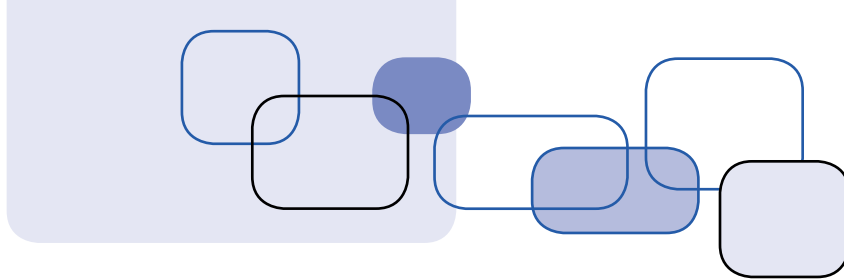
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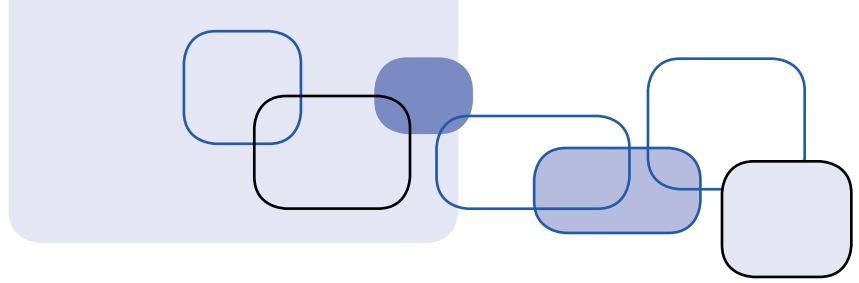
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## Foreword

I became an English teacher thinking my work would revolve primarily around interpreting Mark Twain, Emily Dickinson, and William Shakespeare. It took a classroom of eighth graders less than a week to disabuse me of this notion. I quickly realized that in order to teach content, I was going to have to develop my students' literacy. Unfortunately, I didn't know how.

*Fundamentals of Literacy Instruction and Assessment, 6–12* will make your chances for success in the classroom—and ultimately your students' chances for success in life—much better than mine were 32 years ago. It offers both guidance for what to do when students struggle with the readings you assign and the research supporting those methods. Understanding the theoretical underpinnings of a strategy will help you know when and where to employ it most effectively.

As Martha Hougen and Jennifer Wick Schnakenberg explain in Chapter 3, efficacy—the ability to promote student learning—is every teacher's goal: “When instruction is ineffective, everyone suffers—students are not learning, teachers are discouraged, test results are abysmal, and administrators and parents are not pleased.” Dr. Hougen and Dr. Wick Schnakenberg provide a model for effective instruction that builds on what students know and supports their acquisition of new knowledge. They also demonstrate methods for integrating formative assessments within instruction so that providing feedback to students regarding their progress (or lack thereof) becomes a virtuous cycle of improvement.

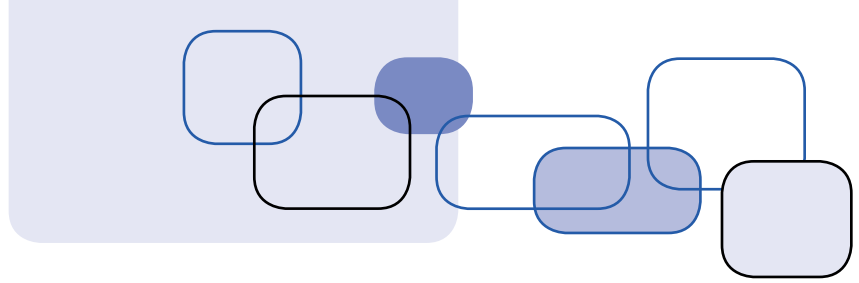
Many novice teachers unintentionally reproduce the kind of instruction they experienced in school whether or not such methods were effective. The authors of *Fundamentals of Literacy Instruction and Assessment, 6–12* do not hold back from warning you of ineffective practices—for example, responding to a wrong answer from a student with “No—anyone else?” Such careless, though instinctive, responses reinforce some students' conviction that school is not for them and that they will never be good at that particular subject. Training oneself to respond otherwise, to ask the student instead how he came to this idea, is an important step on the road to becoming an effective teacher.

You probably decided to enter the profession because your own experiences in school were largely positive. You read well; you were a decent writer; and though sometimes bored, you rarely had difficulty staying in your seat. You may well have been the “anyone else” your teacher could always count on for knowing the correct answer. The challenge for someone for whom almost any instructional method worked becoming a teacher is learning how to engage students for whom the classroom is not an easy fit—students who give “wrong” answers as a matter of course as well as those who never raise their hands at all. This textbook provides a cornucopia of ideas and approaches to help you reach and teach every kind of student. It also offers a road map for your own professional growth. Teaching isn't something that can be mastered in a 1, 2, or 5 years. It's a craft that you will continue to develop over the course of your entire career.

Young teachers I talk with often long for the good old days. If there is one thing I know for sure, it's that there have never been any “good old days.” Teenagers have always been wacky. They've always been wonderful. They have always tried to do as little as possible but loved a lively discussion. Kids haven't changed; society has. Jobs for anyone with limited

literacy have almost disappeared. The prospects for any student whom we fail with are grim. With stakes this high, the urgency to get it right every period and every day is immense. Let the research, experience, and wisdom contained in this volume help you do your best for your students.

*Carol Jago, M.A.  
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## Preface

Since the early 2000s, there has been a strong convergence of evidence about how to teach adolescent literacy and how to support students who struggle to learn. The editor and contributors to this text are passionate about sharing this evidence and the instructional strategies supported by the research. Teachers and administrators, and those who prepare them, must have knowledge of this research and evidence-based practices to meet the needs of our diverse student population. Support personnel, such as instructional coaches, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, and reading specialists, will be able to provide more targeted student support if they are aware of these precepts. Finally, parents will be more knowledgeable advocates for their children after reading this book.

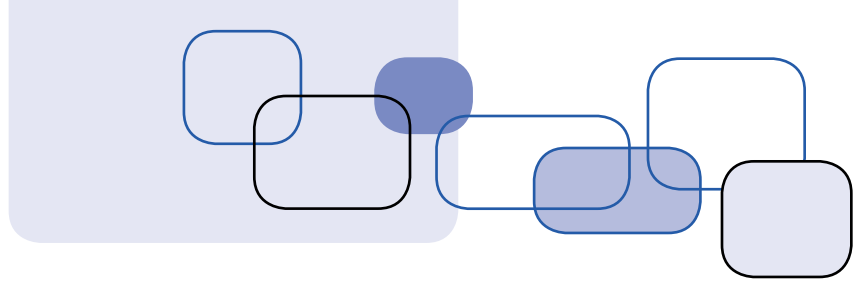
The editor, Martha Hougen, has dedicated her life to improving the literacy skills of our nation's adolescents. In this text she has combined her experiences and knowledge with that of nationally renowned researchers and educators to synthesize the most critical aspects of reading and writing instruction.

*Fundamentals of Literacy Instruction and Assessment, 6–12* is designed to be among the first texts secondary teachers will study about literacy. To become an effective literacy teacher of all students, additional study is required. This text provides essential background knowledge that enables teachers to comprehend more in-depth texts addressing complex aspects of teaching literacy. In addition to learning about the fundamental components of literacy instruction, readers learn how to address the Common Core State Standards, how to differentiate instruction for students, and how to teach literacy in specific disciplines to better prepare students for college and careers. Opportunities to apply evidence-based instructional strategies with students are encouraged while studying this text; sample lesson plans and activities are provided. Finally, assignments to reinforce the concepts presented in each chapter are recommended.

This text is designed to provide essential foundational knowledge about literacy instruction and assessment practices and to support educators in the common goal of enabling each student to become a competent and critical lifelong reader and writer.







## Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge and thank the esteemed contributors to this text. I appreciate them for sharing their vast knowledge and experience; their input has been invaluable in creating a text to promote effective adolescent literacy instruction.

Thanks also to the innumerable literacy professionals, teachers, researchers, professors, administrators, and colleagues who have contributed to my knowledge of literacy instruction and practice. It has been a great privilege to work with professionals who are constantly striving to increase our knowledge base and the success of our students.

Finally, thank you to the secondary students and teachers with whom I have had the opportunity to work. It is from them that I have learned the most about how to become an effective teacher—they are the ones who motivate me to continue learning and striving to become a better educator.



*To the teachers and students who have enriched my life by their  
dedication, motivation, perseverance, and creativity. I salute you.*



# Fundamentals of Literacy Instruction and Assessment, 6–12



# Teaching Literacy and Content

Martha C. Hougen

Congratulations on choosing to become a teacher: one of the most important, rewarding, and challenging occupations. You are in a unique position to change the lives of students, either by supporting their achievement and success or by contributing to their failure. You, of course, want to help students succeed, learn, and be prepared for college and meaningful careers when they leave school. This text is designed to provide you with the fundamentals to teach a diverse population of students to become literate, contributing citizens.

Ensuring all students are college and career ready upon high school graduation has become more and more challenging. As a secondary teacher, you will be responsible for students who speak many languages, come from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds, and have a wide variety of background experiences. Some will enter school unable to read the materials you assign; others may not know how to write a complete sentence, much less an argumentative essay or a research paper. Many will lack the skills, stamina, and motivation to tackle complex text in your area of specialization. Yet all depend on you, their teacher, to motivate them, teach them, encourage them, and care for them. This book will help you address this daunting challenge. It will guide you through research and practical applications to successfully teach all your students to read and write while teaching them the content of your course. If you study

**Objectives:** After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Provide an overview of the text and explain its purpose.
2. Articulate the big idea questions that guide the text.
3. Define and discuss what constitutes effective instruction.
4. Define and discuss what constitutes differentiated instruction, including universal design for learning (UDL).
5. Explain the difference between content area reading and **disciplinary literacy**.
6. Discuss common instructional challenges presented by students at risk for educational failure, including students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, students who are **English language learners (ELLs)**, and students who have disabilities.
7. Describe the role of the **Common Core State Standards (CCSS)** and other relevant standards.
8. Explain your responsibilities as a tutor and begin preparations to tutor a student.



these chapters, complete the recommended assignments, and apply the concepts with your students, you will become an effective teacher of literacy *and* of your content.

As a secondary content teacher, you are not expected to teach students the basics of reading like an elementary teacher teaches students to read. However, you are expected to support students to advance their general reading expertise and to learn to read in your discipline. By the time you complete this text, you will be able to weave literacy assessment and instruction into all your lessons. You will find that by teaching certain literacy skills, your students will not only improve their reading ability but also learn the content you are teaching them.

## OVERVIEW OF THIS TEXT

The overarching goal of this text is to prepare you to teach both literacy skills and the content of your discipline. To address this goal, the text is organized in three sections. You and your instructor will decide which chapters are most relevant to your work. It is suggested that all candidates study each chapter in Section I, as those chapters explain general literacy strategies that are appropriate in most contexts. You may want to choose the most relevant chapters in Section II to delve more deeply into literacy skills and strategies essential to your discipline. Section III addresses timely topics that all teachers should be knowledgeable about. A more detailed overview follows.

### Section I: Introduction to Literacy Assessment and Instruction, Grades 6–12

#### *Chapter 1: Teaching Literacy and Content*

This chapter provides the organizing framework for the text and the big idea questions addressed by each chapter. Effective instruction, needs of diverse learners, and the concept of disciplinary literacy are introduced.

#### *Chapter 2: Social and Emotional Consequences of Reading Disabilities*

Teaching students how to manage their social and emotional needs is paramount. Dr. Leslie Novosel explores the importance of social and emotional learning, the effects on students when they struggle with reading, and what educators can do to support students in developing healthy social and emotional behaviors. By learning to recognize and address the social and emotional needs of adolescents, you will be better prepared to motivate them to learn and to work cooperatively with you and their peers.

#### *Chapter 3: Features of Effective Instruction*

Becoming an efficacious teacher takes years, but this learning curve can be reduced when you learn to apply the features of effective instruction. Dr. Jennifer Wick Schnakenberg and Dr. Martha Hougen summarize evidence-based research and instructional practices effective teachers apply.

#### *Chapter 4: Academic Vocabulary Development: Meaningful, Memorable, and Morphological*

There is a wide gap in vocabulary size among groups of students when they first enter school and this gap often grows.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, because we know that vocabulary correlates with **reading comprehension**, secondary teachers must teach their students relevant, academic vocabulary in ways that accelerate vocabulary growth. Dr. Susan Ebbers and Dr. Hougen provide an in-depth background on the study of **morphology** and other components of vocabulary to ensure your students become independent learners of academic vocabulary.

### ***Chapter 5: Fluency Development for the Older Student***

Reading text easily with **automaticity** and expression supports comprehension and motivates students to read. Developing fluent reading in secondary school is difficult but necessary. Dr. Jan Hasbrouck explains that fluent reading is *not* speed reading but reading at a pace that supports comprehension. This chapter describes how to assess your students' **fluency** and how to support students in reaching a reasonable rate of reading that supports comprehension.

### ***Chapter 6: “Now It Makes Sense!”: Best Practices for Reading Comprehension***

The ultimate goal of reading instruction is to ensure students can comprehend what they read. Dr. Steve Ciullo and Dr. Colleen Reutebuch review the most effective strategies to increase reading comprehension skills of adolescent readers. Only 44% of high school graduates tested on the ACT met the reading-readiness benchmark, an indication that they are not prepared to read college-required texts.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Chapter 7: Learning to Write and Writing to Learn***

Joan Sedita clarifies the most important aspects of teaching writing—an essential skill to communicate as well as to master new learning. Currently, significant numbers of students are not prepared for the rigors of the new CCSS; indeed, about one-third of first-year college students require remedial writing courses.<sup>3</sup> Learning to write in all the disciplines and in a variety of genres for different purposes is a necessity for students to be successful in college and careers.

### ***Chapter 8: Understanding the New Demands for Text Complexity in American Secondary Schools***

The CCSS raise the rigor of reading and writing expectations. The secondary texts that students need to comprehend are more complex and demand critical thinking skills. Dr. Elfreida Hiebert explains the use of Lexiles to determine **text complexity** and the role of the teacher in selecting texts for students.

## **Section II: Disciplinary Literacy**

By now you have an understanding of the research and recommended practices to teach general literacy skills to your students. Section II of the text delves into reading in specific disciplines.

### ***Chapter 9: The What and Why of Disciplinary Literacy***

Dr. Timothy Shanahan and Dr. Cynthia Shanahan explain what disciplinary literacy is and why it is so important. Each discipline has its own norms and expectations: A historian reads authentic documents differently than a chemist reads lab reports. These different approaches to reading need to be explicitly taught to secondary students so that they can make the necessary shifts in thinking among the disciplines.

### ***Chapter 10: Disciplinary Literacy in English Language Arts Classes***

Some may be surprised to think that there is a specialized way to read in English class. Dr. Leslie Rush elucidates the skills needed to read literature and other genres successfully.

### ***Chapter 11: Teaching Disciplinary Literacy in History Classes***

Reading and writing in history class require unique approaches and ways of thinking. Dr. Abby Reisman and Dr. Brad Fogo explain how to teach students to reason, read, and write like a historian and to apply skills such as sourcing, contextualizing, and corroborating texts.

### ***Chapter 12: Teaching Secondary Students to Read and Write in Science***

An in-depth understanding of how to interpret scientific text is required to be an informed citizen. Dr. Dolores Perin explains how essential literacy skills can be taught in science classes, including how to approach scientific writing and extract information from charts, graphs, and tables.

### ***Chapter 13: Reading and Writing as a Mathematician***

For many students, a huge barrier to higher education is passing Algebra I. One reason students struggle with mathematics is because they do not know how to read and interpret mathematical symbols and text. Dr. Brian Bryant and Dr. Diane Bryant discuss how to teach students to read and write in algebra, preparing the students to be successful in subsequent mathematics courses.

### ***Chapter 14: Literacy in the Arts***

The arts provide a rich opportunity to enhance literacy skills of students. Dr. Neva Cramer uses visual and communicative arts to illustrate how to support literacy skills, including the skills of observation, discussion, reading, and writing.

## **Section III: Timely Topics**

These are interesting times in education—some say a critical time. Changes in demography, employment options, technology resources, and school populations provide challenges and opportunities. By learning how to support students learning English and those with disabilities, teachers will hone their skills while supporting the achievement of all their students. This text addresses the following timely topics.

### ***Chapter 15: Teaching Adolescent English Language Learners***

Desiree Pallais shares effective instructional strategies for teaching ELL and explains why students typically make certain mistakes while learning English. With this understanding, all teachers will be more cognizant of how to support their students.

### ***Chapter 16: Response to Intervention and Multi-tiered Systems for Support in Secondary Schools***

Current law and recommended practice dictates educators identify students who struggle and provide timely intervention instruction. In this chapter, Dr. Pamela Bell explains a framework for ensuring students receive the support they need to be successful in school.

### ***Chapter 17: Microblogging: An Example of Using Technology to Increase Engagement***

Teachers are expected to integrate technology into their instruction. The challenge is making technology available to teachers and students and ensuring the technology is used effectively to increase achievement. Dr. Hannah Gerber explains several methods of using digital literacies to support classroom instruction.

### ***Chapter 18: Current Laws, Policies, and Initiatives***

Dr. Susan Smartt and Dr. Hougen provide a brief overview of the major laws, policies, and initiatives affecting teachers today. The history and purpose of the CCSS and the resulting “shifts” in thinking are explained.

### ***Chapter 19: Ten Tips for Becoming an Effective Teacher***

Research has shown that it takes 5–7 years for a teacher to become most effective.<sup>4</sup> In this final chapter, Dr. Hougen tries to shorten that time for you by sharing 10 tips for becoming an effective teacher. However, she is the first to admit that, even after 40+ years in education, she still has a lot to learn. She hopes that you will also strive to be a lifelong learner.

### ***Endnotes, References, Glossary, and Appendixes***

At the end of each chapter are endnotes indicating the source of the information presented and often providing additional information. Complete references are also provided, and you are encouraged to explore in more depth areas that interest you.

A glossary that defines terms used in the text is provided at the end of the book. Appendixes provide additional information.

## **ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS**

### **Classroom Scenario**

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

### **Objectives**

Learning objectives are stated in most chapters and focus on the most important information you need to know and apply. You will be asked to demonstrate your ability to apply your new knowledge in class and with a student you will tutor.

### **Big Idea Guiding Questions**

Six big idea questions are addressed in most chapters. These questions are meant to guide your learning, clarify the most critical aspects of effective literacy instruction, and emphasize evidence-based recommended practices. After studying this text, you will be able to answer the following six questions for the critical components of literacy instruction:

1. What is it (the component), why is it important, and what does the research say?
2. What should students know and be able to do in Grades 6–12?
3. How do teachers assess what students know and how much they are learning?
4. How do teachers use assessments to plan instruction?
5. How do educators teach this component effectively, efficiently, and in a manner appropriate to the age or grade level of their students?
6. How do teachers develop instructional plans that incorporate standards and evidence-based strategies?<sup>5</sup>