

# Instructing Students Who Have Literacy Problems

SEVENTH EDITION



Sandra McCormick | Jerry Zutell

# Special Features

## in *Instructing Students Who Have Literacy Problems*

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**PEARSON**

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## DEDICATION

*To my grandchildren, Jacob, Daniel, Autumn, and Avery, energetic, intelligent, curious, affectionate, independent, and each very much a unique personality. Watching you learn and grow, especially as readers and writers, gives me great joy and the energy and motivation to continue studying and writing about literacy learning.*

—JZ

*To Robert Ruddell, a proficient, respected, objective, scholarly, self-directed literacy professional . . . and, my husband and friend. With your life-long commitment to the reading field, you understand the importance of informed and perceptive work with delayed readers.*

—SM

*To our former students and tutors in The Ohio State University Reading Clinic. What we learned from guiding your efforts, observing your progress, and cheering your accomplishments continues to inform our own learning, thinking, and writing.*

—SM

—JZ

# About the Authors

## Sandra McCormick

**BEFORE ASSUMING A POSITION AT A UNIVERSITY**, Sandra McCormick taught as a classroom teacher and Title I reading teacher, worked as a Reading Resource teacher in a literacy coach role, and supervised a citywide reading program. She also was a television reading teacher on a PBS program aimed at students with reading delays. After Dr. McCormick joined the faculty at The Ohio State University, she taught courses on remedial and clinical reading instruction, and on methods for instructing students with reading-related learning disabilities. She also supervised the university reading clinic.

Dr. McCormick is the author or editor of several books in addition to this one. She is widely published in journals such as *Reading Research Quarterly*, *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, and *Language Arts*. She has served on the Board of Directors of the International Reading Association and as coeditor of the National Reading Conference Yearbook. She was a distinguished finalist in 1990 for the Albert J. Harris Award, presented annually for significant research on reading disabilities.

## Jerry Zutell

**JERRY ZUTELL BEGAN HIS STUDY OF LEARNING TO READ AND SPELL** and his interest in working with struggling readers under the direction and guidance of Dr. Edmund H. Henderson at the McGuffey Reading Center, University of Virginia, where he received his Ph.D. in Reading Education. He served as a member of the faculty of the College of Education at The Ohio State University (OSU) for almost 30 years and, upon Dr. McCormick's retirement, served as the director of the OSU Reading Clinic for several years until his own retirement.

His specific areas of interest include the study of children's acquisition of word knowledge in reading and writing. He has done research and written articles about assessing students' oral reading fluency, the stages of spelling development, the connections between word knowledge in spelling and reading, and instructional practices for making students better readers and spellers.

Dr. Zutell was the coeditor of the National Reading Conference Yearbook for three years (with Dr. McCormick). He is the developer of the Directed Spelling Thinking Activity (DSTA), an innovative, student-active cycle of word study instruction, and the Theme, Context, Roots, Reference, and Review (TC3R) model of vocabulary instruction. Dr. Zutell has served as a principal consultant on *Merriam Webster's Primary Dictionary*, was one of the senior authors on the Zaner-Bloser spelling series *Spell It—Write!*, and is the author of the Zaner-Bloser vocabulary series *Word Wisdom*. He is also the coauthor (with Timothy Rasinski) of *Essential Strategies for Word Study: Effective Methods for Improving Decoding, Spelling, and Vocabulary*.

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# Preface

AS IS EVIDENT FROM ITS TITLE, *Instructing Students Who Have Literacy Problems*, 7th edition, is intended for use with teachers and prospective teachers who will work with students who have difficulties in learning to read. This textbook is concerned with students of all ages—elementary school, middle school, and high school students—and their assessment and instruction in special reading programs. The book is used most often with upper-level undergraduates and graduate students who are seeking reading specialist certification or a graduate degree in reading. In addition, it has been the textbook of choice for a number of learning disability (LD) reading classes, as increasing numbers of universities require such courses in their LD teacher training programs. Further, this text has excellent potential for in-service sessions that prepare teachers to participate in the Response to Intervention (RTI) initiative because it covers instruction for students at all RTI tier levels, including special attention to those most severe cases receiving instruction in Tier 3.

*Instructing Students Who Have Literacy Problems* has long been one of the top books in the field for addressing the needs of struggling readers. It is popular with university instructors because it provides research-based information. Currently, in the literacy field, there is a heavy emphasis on research-based (also called “evidence-based”) instruction. This book has a well-deserved reputation for satisfying that need.

At the same time, it is equally noted for providing teachers with practical ideas they can really use in their own teaching. The authors are known for being particularly successful in translating research into easy-to-follow methods for real-world classrooms. In their comments, university professors who have reviewed this book have stressed that a positive feature is its practical applications, especially the actual materials that teachers can and do use. They have pointed out that teachers are particularly appreciative of this aspect.

This text reflects the balanced view of literacy instruction held by most educators today. While acknowledging that the fundamental purpose of reading is to comprehend text, the current perspective also recognizes that accurate, automatic word recognition and knowledge of word identification strategies are necessary precursors for understanding printed material. This textbook treats both issues well—word learning and comprehension—for students who have difficulties in learning to read. The balanced conception of reading programs held by the authors of this book is further exhibited in the suggestions that are included for integrating reading, writing, and spelling when working with delayed readers.

Major topics in the book are:

1. **Foundations** of remedial and clinical reading instruction, covering basic concepts and definitions in reading in Chapter 1, as well as information on the incidence of reading delays (including the most recent demographic data and statistics available at the time the 7th edition was written), major literacy

initiatives (such as the Common Core State Standards and Response to Intervention), types of reading programs, roles of reading teachers, and other basic essentials of this educational area. In addition, a detailed, but readable Chapter 2 provides discussion of research related to the complex topic of **causes of reading delays/disabilities**.

2. **Assessment**—Four comprehensive chapters are devoted to this topic. These four chapters, Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6, cover all issues surrounding formal and informal assessment, as well as all important assessment instruments and procedures used with reading-delayed students. In revising for the 7th edition, the authors completed an extensive updating of information about published tests because published tests undergo fairly frequent revision.
3. **Instructional interventions**—There are full chapters on the following topics, all emphasizing techniques for use with delayed/disabled readers: (a) **principles** of highly effective instruction (Chapter 7); (b) development of automatic **word recognition and fluency** (Chapter 8); (c) **word identification strategies** (Chapter 9); (d) fostering **knowledge of word meanings** (Chapter 10); (e) instruction to improve **comprehension of narratives** (Chapter 11); and (f) instruction to improve **comprehension of informational material** (Chapter 12).
4. **Reading instruction for special populations**—Chapter 13 provides in-depth information for **instructing the most severe cases of reading delay**, as well as individuals who are *nonreaders*. Few books have this specialized information, and that chapter has been of high interest to many potential adopters. Chapter 14 deals with reading instruction for **new English-language learners, adults who are illiterate** or functionally illiterate, and **students in poverty environments**—with all topics in the chapter updated in the 7th edition.



## New to the 7th Edition

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- The 7th edition is available in **e-text format**. Students have the option of purchasing an accompanying loose-leaf, binder-ready version for an additional amount. The paper version includes the same basic information as the e-book, but the electronic version includes both pop-ups and video links that provide additional helpful, interesting ideas and examples.
- An up-to-the-minute trend in the literacy field is the **use of technology to teach reading**. Some of the suggested procedures are exceptionally helpful for struggling readers, some less so, and some, not at all. In the 7th edition of this text, a new, extensive, current section on technology and reading is included, with the emphasis on less-able readers. This section has been comprehensively researched and a critical review provided. That is, not only are procedures described, but critiques also are offered for each. Especially for delayed readers, it is imperative not to waste instructional time on procedures that provide weak—or no—results. Thus, both descriptions and evaluations are included in this new, comprehensive section.
- Another omnipresent topic at the present concerns the guiding principles of the **Common Core State Standards (CCSS)**, adopted by most U.S. states. In this 7th edition, attention is given to the CCSS in every chapter, particularly

treating their applicability to struggling readers. The information is presented in the following ways: (a) an overview in Chapter 1, (b) boxed material titled Focus on Standards found throughout chapters, and (c) a margin icon located in various sections of the text, signaling chapter content particularly relevant to the CCSS. Although the developers of the CCSS intend that the Standards apply to all students—even high-needs pupils—for these students the Standards must be looked at through a slightly different lens. These differences are addressed and specific suggestions are made for accommodating delayed/disabled readers.

- A feature new to this edition is “**The Teacher’s Lesson Plan Book.**” At several locations throughout the book there are representations of pages from a type of lesson plan book often used by teachers. With each there is a lesson plan that translates chapter information into a practical lesson that can be used in real-world classrooms. Research-based information characterizes the present text. It frequently is helpful for teachers when textbooks and instructors explicitly provide assistance for translating this research into practice. Each lesson plan book page presents a complete plan suitable for a 1-hour instructional or assessment session.

The figures displaying The Teacher’s Lesson Plan Book pages are found in Chapter 6 (two figures of two assessment-session lesson plans for two different students); Chapter 7 (two figures representing two successive days of instructional lessons for one student enrolled in a special reading program); Chapter 10 (one figure illustrating a 1-hour session on meaning vocabulary development for a small group of struggling readers); and Chapter 13 (three figures showing three successive days’ lessons for a nonreader enrolled in a reading clinic).

- Numerous **new instructional procedures** for use with delayed readers, not discussed in previous editions, are comprehensively described. For example: (a) the Directed Spelling Thinking Activity (DSTA), which moves word sorting exercises from a one-to-one activity to a group lesson, and includes assessment as well as instructional procedures; (b) Theme-Context-Roots-Reference-Review (TC3R), an active learning endeavor for meaning vocabulary development; and (c) Responsive Reading Instruction (RRI), a program suitable for use with severely disabled readers that has been given high marks by the organization that publishes evaluations of programs used in Response to Intervention initiatives.

Because of the individual differences of students who are struggling to achieve in reading, conscientious teachers want, and need, to learn about as many high-quality programs and procedures as possible.

- Several **new assessment procedures** also are described in the 7th edition. For example: (a) the Informal Word Recognition/Identification Inventory (IWR/II), a research-based and teacher-tested assessment procedure that examines sight word recognition; testing and scoring procedures for the IWR/II include traditional methods, as well as procedures for using technology to assist in administration of the assessment; (b) the Speed-Accuracy-Meaning Plus (SAM+) test, which was developed to observe and analyze the oral reading of struggling readers in reading clinics; the description provides procedures for recording, coding, summarizing, and interpreting errors; and (c) the Vocabulary Recognition Task, which is an informal measure of meaning vocabulary knowledge devised by vocabulary researchers Stahl and Bravo (2010).



Assessment helps teachers make decisions about instruction. Knowledge of an array of high-quality assessment methods is important for reading specialists.

- A new, extensive section on matching text to reader addresses the renewed interest in **text readability/text complexity** generated by the Common Core State Standards. This section discusses (a) current views, (b) readability formulas and leveling procedures, and (c) arguments for approaching the issue of text complexity differently for struggling readers than for average readers.

Discussion of text complexity in relation to achievement presently is highly pervasive in the reading instruction literature. Although literacy educators recognize the existence of individual differences in students' aptitudes and learning rates, in many of the writings on text complexity this diversity has been ignored . . . to the detriment of delayed/disabled readers. This section addresses that concern in a forthright manner.

- A new section concludes the four-chapter assessment unit. This section, titled "**A Lesson Plan Format for Assessment Sessions**," provides guidelines for pacing assessment so that fatigue does not affect students' results, suggests appropriate teacher actions, and, as well, offers ways to keep students motivated and interested on test-taking days. In addition, accompanying the running text for this section there is a lengthy table listing pleasurable reading-related activities to intersperse between tests during assessment sessions. Teachers need to learn to manage assessment sessions (which sometimes are onerous for students) so that results obtained can accurately guide instructional planning.
- The 7th edition contains 21 **new figures and 7 new tables**, seen for the first time in this edition. In addition, many figures and tables have been revised and/or updated. Visual materials such as these clarify information for students, provide examples, offer actual teaching and testing materials for use in teachers' classrooms, and generate greater interest.
- Every chapter is now preceded by a list of expected "**Learning Outcomes**," information the student should learn from studying the chapter. Furthermore, all chapters now conclude with "**Summaries**" tied to the Learning Outcomes statements. The Learning Outcomes serve as advance organizers. Research has shown that use of advance organizers often improves comprehension, as well as retention, of information.
- A short but important section has been included in Chapter 2, the causation chapter, regarding **neuroscience research** that has focused on brain functioning and learning to read. This section reports what responsible writers are saying in regard to that growing body of investigations. Some misinterpretations and over-interpretations have crept into the professional reading literature and special education literature regarding this research. It is important for reading specialists and special educators to have an understanding of what information is viable and what information is questionable.
- A new section has been added to the four-page table that reports the **history** of remedial and clinical reading instruction. This table, titled "**Some Trends and Issues in Remedial and Clinical Reading Instruction**," is divided into 10-year time spans, beginning in a time period prior to the 1800s. For the 7th edition it was time to begin the section listed as "2010–the present." In this new tier, important information is included for this most recent time period regarding (a) instructional approaches, (b) suggested causes of reading disability, (c) prevalent assessment techniques and tools, and (d) milestones. When one

does not know the history of one's field, mistakes can be repeated. This has happened more than once in the reading and special education areas. Reading specialists and others working with students who have reading problems should be aware of the past history, trends, and issues of the literacy field.

- Other new inclusions to this edition are: numerous **up-to-date recommendations for specific books and instructional materials**, new **boxed material that provides helpful information**, new **website addresses** that offer useful ideas to teachers of reading, and updated **information on published programs**.



## Popular Features That Have Been Retained

- Especially popular in this book are the case studies and vignettes included to provoke interest about important topics and to enhance learning. The **case studies** describe actual students the authors worked with in their roles as directors of the Reading Clinic at The Ohio State University. The case studies illustrate various facets of remediation and assessment, giving the teacher or prospective teacher who is reading this text a rich picture of how the achievement levels of delayed readers can successfully be improved with exemplary teaching.

The **vignettes**, titled “Real Teachers in Action,” feature teachers, and each vignette demonstrates, step by step, how a teacher carried out an important technique described in this book, doing so in a real-world classroom.

Prior to beginning the 7th edition, the editor selected five professors to review the previous edition for help in planning the upcoming edition. One reviewer indicated that she uses the case studies in her class by having students discuss the strategies and add ideas of their own. She stated that the case studies are what drew her to this text. Another reviewer found the vignettes to be a plus. She found that her students use them when they write their own lesson plans for a skill or strategy.

Six case studies and five vignettes help to guide learning in this text. There are individual case studies of three students covering the four different phases of word learning. There is also one student case study for each of the following topics: (a) assessment, (b) student problems with reading comprehension, and (c) emotional stresses resulting from reading delay.

The teachers in the vignettes demonstrate (a) how reflective observation can be a valid form of assessment, (b) how to combine teaching and testing, (c) how to conduct a word sorting lesson, (d) how to conduct a sheltered English lesson, and (e) how to tutor an adult nonreader in literacy lessons.

- Of significant interest in literacy education today is the **Response to Intervention (RTI)** initiative, a combined effort by reading specialists, special educators, and general educators to provide early intervention to struggling readers. Young students enrolled in RTI programs are instructed in a series of tiers depending on the seriousness of their problems. Because the sole purpose of this textbook is to help teachers learn to teach students who have reading difficulties—difficulties of all types and at all levels of severity, the entire text of *Instructing Students Who Have Literacy Problems* (7th ed.) is ideal for training teachers to work at *all* phases (or, “tiers”) of RTI. Furthermore, previously

included information on RTI has been expanded throughout the 7th edition of this book.

- Another important issue in literacy education at the present time concerns reading instruction for new **English-language learners (ELLs)**. With the last two decades seeing the largest number of immigrants *ever* to enter this country, unprecedented numbers of classroom teachers and reading teachers in all parts of the nation are faced with the challenge of providing instruction that will effectively meet the unique needs of these pupils. Many teachers were not trained in their original university programs to work with students whose low-level English-language literacy skills are compounded by limited knowledge of oral English. In the two previous editions of this text, one-half of Chapter 14 was devoted to research-based instructional procedures for increasing the language and literacy levels of these students. This highly acclaimed section of the book remains in the 7th edition.



In addition, running throughout the book is a special feature called “Especially for ELLs.” This feature is comprised of boxed material, signaled by a margin icon, that presents facts and ideas particularly beneficial for educators who are working with the literacy needs of ELLs, doing so in relation to one or more of each chapter’s major topics. The 7th edition includes more of these special boxes than seen in the previous edition.

- Professors and students have decidedly positive reactions to the **study aids** called “**Learning from Text**” that are interspersed throughout chapter sections. Designed to assist those teachers who are reading this book to gain deep understanding of important material, these study aids also provide a model of excellent comprehension/study procedures teachers can use with their own classes.
- The sections titled **Reflections** found at the ends of all chapters are helpful to college and university professors because these sections suggest activities that can be used to engage students in their courses in thoughtful experiences about each chapter’s content.
- A detailed section in Chapter 7 presents suggestions for ways in which **high-quality literature** can feasibly be used instructively with delayed readers.
- Instructors and students rate the book as **highly readable**. A Pearson editorial assistant summarizing the comments of the five reviewers noted earlier said “Reviewers were extremely enthusiastic about the text’s readability and how user-friendly it is.” Some of the specific comments of reviewers when asked to specify strengths of the book were: “Format and ease of reading”; “Very well written and organized”; “Text is reader-friendly with charts and vignettes”; “Special features of charts and diagrams”; “Extra features that aid the reader with deeper understanding and classroom application”; “The students typically really like the text and ease of use.”
- A close review of the 7th edition will disclose many other topics and features that professors and students will find valuable.



## Supplements for Instructors

The resources below are available from [www.pearsonhighered.com/educator](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/educator). Instructors can enter the author or title of this book in the catalog at the top, select this particular edition of the book, and click the Resources tab. Select a supplement and log in to download the material.

## Instructor's Manual and Test Bank

All sections of the online Instructor's Manual and Test Bank have been fine-tuned to conform to the new 7th edition textbook revisions. For each chapter, the Instructor's Manual features key terms, learning objectives, and numerous helpful teaching suggestions. The Test Bank includes multiple-choice, true/false, matching, short-answer, and essay questions. Suggested answers accompany each question to help professors evaluate student tests. The Instructor's Manual and Test Bank are available from the Instructor Resource Center at [www.pearsonhighered.com/educator](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/educator).

## PowerPoint™ Presentation

Designed specifically for professors using this text, the PowerPoint™ Presentation consists of a series of slides for every chapter that can be shown as is, or, alternatively, can be used to make handouts or to produce overhead transparencies. The presentations highlight key concepts and major topics for each chapter. All parts of the presentations were developed to encourage active student participation in lectures and discussions. This useful supplement for the busy professor is available for download from the Instructor Resource Center at [www.pearsonhighered.com/educator](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/educator).

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*Sandra McCormick*

*Jerry Zutell*

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# PART 1

## **Foundations of Remedial and Clinical Reading Instruction**





# Basic Concepts and Definitions in Reading

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*One current educational initiative, Response to Intervention (RTI), advocates early intervention when students show delays in learning to read*





## LEARNING OUTCOMES

### 1.01 Educational Initiatives

Identify recent major initiatives related to literacy instruction and discuss important characteristics of each.

### 1.02 Types of Reading Programs

Distinguish among the several types of reading programs as they relate to students with different abilities and needs. Identify common instructional components across all of them.

### 1.03 Roles of Reading Specialists

Define the term **reading specialist** and describe some of the roles that reading specialists might perform.

### 1.04 Important Definitions

Discuss the use of various terms used to describe struggling readers. Explain the differences between categorical models and a dimensional approach.

### 1.05 The Incidence of Reading Delay

Explain why consistent estimates of students with serious reading delays are hard to obtain.

### 1.06 Milestones in the History of Remedial and Clinical Reading Instruction

Discuss why reading educators should have at least a basic knowledge of the history of remedial and clinical reading instruction.

### 1.07 Models of the Reading Process

Explain how different models of the reading process view that process from different perspectives. Discuss the practical implications of each model for reading instruction.



Teachers of reading are responsible not only for helping students *learn how to read*, but also *how to learn from reading*. Throughout this book we include aids called “Learning From Text” to help you study effectively. These aids also suggest ideas you can use with *your students* to help them comprehend text. The best study guides (a) assist in learning a lesson’s content and (b) teach general strategies for understanding and remembering. The study aids in this text are in *shaded boxes* and signaled by the icon shown here, labeled “Learning from Text.”

—The Authors

**IF YOU WERE ASKED TO NAME THE MOST IMPORTANT INVENTION IN HISTORY**, *what would you say?* The Almanac of World History (Daniels & Hyslop, 2003) suggests this answer: *the printing press. In the mid-1400s, after Johannes Gutenberg modified wine presses to accommodate movable type, thus developing a practical printing process, book printing multiplied amazingly from the single Bible that was Gutenberg’s first product to several million copies of several thousand works a mere 50 years later (Daniels & Hyslop, 2003). With the proliferation of books came the proliferation of literacy. The proliferation of literacy, in turn, led to a diffusion of ideas and hastened many of humankind’s other achievements.*

Literacy became an increasingly respected accomplishment and eventually was seen as a necessary one. For example, in 17th-century Sweden, being literate to read religious books was considered so important that parents were fined if they failed to teach their children to read, and marriage was denied adults until they could

demonstrate literacy. In the 1800s, literacy was promoted in Western countries so citizens could participate effectively in politics and the military, and as a means of improving the nation's economic condition as a result of a better-educated workforce.

Being able to read is even more critical in contemporary life (see Table 1–1). For individuals, reading provides access to employment, educational opportunities, social adjustment, and entertainment. In addition, a literate population is crucial for generating ideas that lead to social change; thus, many governments, including the U.S. government, mandate universal education, with literacy as a prime objective.

Fortunately, as a result of typical educational experiences, most students attain reading skill. In fact, data from many sources show that students in U.S. schools exhibit reading achievement surpassing that from any other period in American education (e.g., Klenk & Kibby, 2000; "SAT, ACT," 2004; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Furthermore, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) recently reported an international comparison of literacy levels in which U.S. students, while scoring lower than students in 9 countries, scored higher than students in 39 others (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011a). In addition, on a subscale used by PISA requiring students to *reflect on and evaluate* material they read, U.S. students scored higher, on average, than students in comparable, developed countries.

Unfortunately, these positive findings are not true for all. Because you are reading this text, likely you are a teacher who is concerned about those elementary and secondary students who show serious delays in literacy achievement.

**TABLE 1–1** Reading Levels of a Sampling of Items and Materials Encountered in Adult Life

Items and Materials Ability Needed	Approximate Grade Level of Reading
Help-wanted ads in newspapers	6–7
Front-page stories in newspapers	9–11
Dosage and symptom information on aspirin bottle labels	10
Preparation directions on boxes of frozen dinners	8
Directions for filling out the 1040 income tax forms	9–10
Training materials for military cooks	7–8
Articles in: <i>Saturday Evening Post</i> , <i>Ladies' Home Journal</i> , <i>Popular Mechanics</i> , and <i>Harper's</i>	12+
Articles in romance, TV, and movie magazines	8
Recent presidential inaugural addresses	9
Information on financial statements	11–16+
Life insurance policies	12
Apartment leases	College
<i>Reader's Digest</i>	9
Online patient health education materials	10
Hospital forms to be read by patients	11–14

Sources: Compiled from Bargantz and Dulin (1970); Bittner and Shamo (1976); Bormuth (1973–74); Felton and Felton (1973); Hirshoren, Hunt, and Davis (1974); Hoskins (1973); Kilty (1976); Kwolek (1973); Pyrczak (1976); Razik (1969); Sabharwal, Badarudeen, & Kunju (2008); Sticht (1975); Wikipedia (2013); Willis, Miller, & Abdehou (1990); Worthington (1977).

The consequences of low literacy, for the individual and for society, are serious. Although such students are a relatively small segment of the population, your concern for them is shared by the public and by educational agencies.



## Educational Initiatives

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Local school districts, states, provinces, and national governments often propose reform measures to improve reading achievement.



### The Common Core State Standards

One recent initiative widely affecting reading instruction in the United States is the development of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). As of this writing, as the time for implementing the Standards and the related high-stakes testing grows near, there is widespread concern that states and school districts are not sufficiently prepared to make the transition to them (McLaughlin, Overturf & Shanahan, 2013). Still, these Standards have critical implications for both regular classroom teachers and teachers of delayed and disabled readers.<sup>1</sup>

Two groups, the Council of Chief State School Officers, along with the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, have spearheaded the preparation of an extensive grade-by-grade list of *expectations*—that is, *Standards*—representing literacy and mathematics knowledge that students should have by the time of high school graduation. The Standards were created in response to a concern that some high school graduates are not sufficiently prepared in reading and in math to succeed in college or in careers. The intent of these Standards is that all states operate with the same rigorous set of expectations for achievement in grades kindergarten through 12, instead of the previous policy in which standards varied from state to state.

To prepare the new set of Standards, several factors were taken into account. First, and basically, the developers considered what students need to know and be able to do in reading and mathematics for success in college and in the workplace. They also asked what strengths were seen in standards from the various U.S. states that should be incorporated into this core set designed to be used in common by all states. In addition, they wanted to ensure that the CCSS would be based on research and not merely opinion, and that they not only contained rigorous content, but also led to skillful *application* of knowledge. Furthermore, the developers asked how literacy and mathematics education in other top-performing nations could inform these U.S. Standards.

There also was another factor given particular attention. The developers noted with interest a study that looked at student performance on the ACT college admissions test (ACT, Inc., 2006). The results indicated that the distinguishing characteristic between students who performed well on the ACT and those who did not was the ability of the former to read complex text. At the same time, there was evidence that texts read by students in the elementary, middle school, and high school grades had become increasingly less complex over the last 50 years. What is more,

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<sup>1</sup> In addition, special reference to information specifically cited in the CCSS is signaled in the margins throughout the chapters of this book by this Standards icon: .

assessing text readability through use of a measure called Lexile scores showed that (a) the complexity of university books had increased during the same time period, and (b) workplace reading frequently is now substantially higher in complexity than the 12th-grade level (Stenner, Koons, & Swartz, 2010). The Standards developers were concerned that students were having limited experience with the sophisticated types of texts they would be required to read—with little assistance—in university programs and in career-related reading material. After reviewing other research confirming the importance of *learning to comprehend increasingly complex texts*, and doing so while reading *independently* (e.g., see a review of this research by Adams, 2009), that goal became one of the prime aims of the CCSS.

To reinforce the emphasis on text complexity, the Standards specify **text complexity grade bands**. The so-called “bands” are simply grade levels grouped together so that texts considered to be appropriate for those levels can be expressly recommended. Stipulation of text complexity grade bands begins at grade 2 after students have, hopefully, mastered the basics of beginning reading. The bands are grouped in this manner: Grades 2–3, 4–5, 6–8, 9–10, 11–College/Career level. To help teachers move students through appropriately complex text, an Appendix to the Standards document includes long listings of specific literature and informational books suitable for each of these text complexity grade bands.

Table 1–2 represents a *sampling* of the CCSS literacy Standards to be accomplished by the end of various grade levels and designed for different purposes. Although this table presents a highly abbreviated list, it gives a brief glimpse of typical goals that are included. For the complete CCSS, see the website indicated in the adjacent margin.




For the complete CCSS,  
visit this website: [http://  
www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).

**Applicability to Delayed Readers.** With the emphasis on challenging content and complex text, teachers of delayed and disabled readers may be concerned about how these Standards apply to their students. The CCSS developers have taken the position that “Promoting a culture of high expectations for *all* students is a fundamental goal of the Common Core State Standards” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, p. i.). Thus, it is the intent that the CCSS eventually be met by all struggling readers, including those delayed in reading acquisition because they are new English-language learners (ELLs).<sup>2</sup>



To achieve that goal, the developers of the CCSS caution that there must be instructional supports and accommodations for these students. Those can include special reading programs (including learning disability classes that provide research-based reading instruction); specially trained teachers; individualized instruction; pacing adjustments; multiple exposures to the same content; varied experiences to achieve a single learning objective; and others. Likewise, temporary adaptations to assessment procedures often are necessary (for example, until writing skill has sufficiently developed, one might assess a student’s comprehension of literature and informational text orally).

We must be aware that delayed readers have failed, to some degree, to benefit from classroom instruction as typically presented; therefore, the manner in which teachers help delayed readers move toward meeting these Standards is particularly important. Although a Standard itself might not be changed, the path to achieving it

<sup>2</sup>Throughout this text, you will find margin icons that look like this: . As you will see, most information in this book is very useful for educators who are teaching new English-language learners (ELLs) to read. But, in addition, this icon signals facts and ideas that are of particular interest for these students.



**TABLE 1–2 A Sampling of Reading, Writing, and Language Standards from the Common Core State Standards**

<b>Kindergarten, Reading-Literature: Key Ideas and Details:</b> With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.
<b>Grade 1, Reading—Informational Text: Craft and Structure:</b> Know and use various text features (e.g., headings, tables of contents, glossaries, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text.
<b>Grade 2, Reading Foundational Skills: Phonics and Word Recognition:</b> Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words, for example, distinguish long and short vowels when reading regularly spelled one-syllable words.
<b>Grade 3, Writing: Text Types and Purposes:</b> Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.
<b>Grade 4, Language: Conventions of Standard English:</b> Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking; for example, produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons.
<b>Grade 5, Reading—Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:</b> Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries; adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics.
<b>Grade 6, Reading—Informational Text: Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:</b> By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
<b>Grade 7, Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing:</b> Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
<b>Grade 8, Language: Knowledge of Language:</b> Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening; for example, use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to the fact).
<b>Grade 9, Range, Quality, and Complexity of Student Reading: Range of Text Types:</b> <i>Literature</i> should include stories (encompassing the subgenres of adventure stories, historical fiction, mysteries, myths, science fiction, realistic fiction, allegories, parodies, satire, and graphic novels); drama (encompassing one-act and multi-act plays, both in written form and on film); poetry (encompassing the subgenres of narrative poems, lyrical poems, free-verse poems, sonnets, odes, ballads, and epics). <i>Informational text</i> should include literary nonfiction (encompassing the subgenres of exposition, argument, and functional text in the form of personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, essays about art or literature, biographies, memoirs, journalism, and historical, scientific, technical, or economic accounts [including digital sources] written for a broad audience).
<b>Grade 10, Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies: Key Ideas and Details:</b> Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
<b>Grade 11, Reading Standards for Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects: Craft and Structure:</b> Determine the meaning of symbols, key terms, and other domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in specific scientific or technical context relevant to grades 11–12 texts and topics.
<b>Grade 12, Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: Research to Build Present Knowledge:</b> Conduct short, as well as more sustained, research to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Source: Adapted from National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Common Core State Standards for English language arts & literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects, K–12* (pp. 1–66). Permission to reprint by public license from National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of State School Officers.



may be different than that seen in the general curriculum. The whole of the present textbook is devoted to instruction and assessment that facilitates achievement for struggling readers.

## Response to Intervention (RTI)



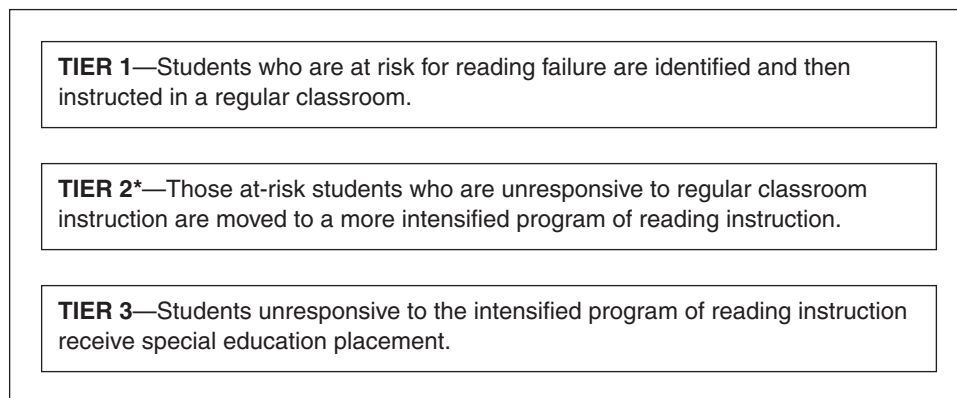
Another educational plan currently generating much interest is known as Response to Intervention (RTI). Resulting from the U.S. Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004), this initiative focuses on reading instruction in the early school years. Although RTI began as a special education initiative, professionals planning the legislation recognized that the involvement of reading teachers also was important to meeting its aims. Consequently, this reauthorization of IDEA endorsed reading teachers, as well as special education teachers, as providers of instruction, assessment, and leadership activities in relation to the procedures of RTI (Mesmer & Mesmer, 2009).<sup>3</sup>

RTI specifically targets students who, early on, already exhibit delays in learning to read—or show strong probabilities of delays. Concerned with the large numbers of these students referred to special education programs, educators are hoping that the phases of early intervention provided by RTI, described in the following paragraphs, will reduce this number (Kucan & Palinscar, 2011).


The core of the RTI effort is a “tier system” in which delayed readers may move through a succession of educational “tiers,” with the instructional intervention intensifying at each succeeding level, or “tier.” School districts’ policies vary regarding the number of tiers used, but a typical number is three. See Figure 1–1. A common example of how this works is described next.

First, students who may be at risk for reading failure are identified at the beginning of a school year. This is accomplished through examination of records from the

**FIGURE 1–1** The Tier System of Response to Intervention (RTI)



\*School district policy varies in regard to the number of tiers used. In some cases, there is more than one tier between the first tier (general instruction in a regular classroom setting) and the last tier (special education placement).

<sup>3</sup>The present textbook is written with the specialized purpose of helping teachers who are engaged in instructing students who have literacy problems. Thus, *all* content in this text can be helpful to teachers across the tiers of the RTI process. When the designation RTI is *specifically* mentioned, you will see this icon: .

previous year, or through assessments and observations during the first month of the current year. If current-year observations and assessments are used, these typically are carried out by the classroom teacher, often with the aid of a school psychologist. Special educators, reading teachers, and literacy coaches also may be part of a team that confers to aid in identification. In some schools speech and language teachers as well as specialist teachers for new ELLs collaborate with the team (Ehren, 2013). For a period of time considered to be the *first tier* of instruction, these students receive reading instruction in their regular classrooms. A basic premise of the RTI process is that the students must receive high-quality, research-based instruction in that classroom—that is, if students should fail to progress, one must be able to eliminate poor or mediocre instruction as the cause (Taylor, 2008). Throughout this instruction, the students' progress is carefully monitored. Furthermore, at approximately the middle of the first semester, a formal evaluation is undertaken to further gauge the degree of responsiveness these students have shown to regular reading instruction.

In some cases, students demonstrate adequate growth as a result of this general instruction. Other students may be insufficiently responsive—that is, their progress in reading acquisition is atypically slow, outside even the wide range in normal achievement seen with beginning readers—and, thus, they are moved to a *second tier* of instruction that is more intensive than the first. At times, instruction comprising the second tier continues within a regular classroom setting, but often it does not—for example, to accomplish the second-tier goal of intensifying instruction, students may be assigned to small-group instruction with a reading specialist. There are, in fact, several ways in which “intensification” occurs. Fuchs and Fuchs (2006) documented the following approaches often seen in common practice:

1. using more teacher-centered, systematic, and explicit instruction;
2. conducting the instruction more frequently;
3. adding to its duration;
4. creating smaller and more homogeneous student groupings; or
5. relying on instructors with greater expertise. (p. 94)

Reading teachers often have major roles in all these modifications, as do learning disability (LD) teachers and classroom teachers. In fact, the RTI movement has had a positive effect in fostering cooperation among varied educational groups—for example, a partnership has been established between the International Reading Association and the National Center for Learning Disabilities in support of a program called the *RTI Action Network* (“RTI Action Network,” 2009). (See the adjacent margin note for information on how teachers can obtain help from this network.)

In the second tier of instruction, as in the first, assessment has an important role. Second-tier assessments are used in two ways: (a) to help teachers plan or modify instruction so that it expressly meets the requirements of individual students, and also (b) to evaluate the need for a student to move to a third tier, or not. In some school districts, “assessment” primarily means administering tests; in others, a professional’s observations of daily classroom performance provide the measures; and in some districts, both means are used. As a result of these assessments, a student may (a) be deemed remediated and begin once again receiving the same general instruction provided for others in a regular classroom setting; (b) continue in the second-tier, more intensified instruction; or (c) be referred to a third tier because the student is failing to respond even to the increased level of instruction in the second tier.



The RTI Action Network provides practical suggestions for teachers engaged in the RTI process. Visit its website: <http://www.rtinetwork.org>.