

Preface

Language development and language competence are critical to the education of all children, particularly those with disabilities. The diverse fields within the language domain, including the areas of oral language, reading, and written language, remain the focus of ongoing innovations in research and programming. This fourth edition builds on the foundations of the earlier editions and has been revised to reflect current research across the specific domains covered within the language area. The book is intended to be used as a text for coursework in teacher education training programs, with particular emphasis on classes related to language acquisition, language arts instruction, curriculum and methods, and evidence-based practices.

The purpose of this book is to examine language and its components and to suggest instructional strategies for responding to language-related difficulties. Our primary target population comprises children and adolescents who have been identified in school settings as students with disabilities who have experienced problems within language domains.

This textbook is organized into three major parts, which present key concepts within the complex subject of language development and instruction for learners with special needs, with a strong focus on communication and language development across developmental levels. The first two chapters explore in depth language, speech, and communication and then analyze key developmental milestones related to communication, speech, and language development. In addition, extensive attention is given to considerations related to cultural and linguistic diversity. The second section of the book provides an extensive discussion of oral language assessment and intervention. These areas are often underplayed or not addressed at all in textbooks focused on special education. In this domain, extensive attention is given to language considerations for preschool, school-age, and adolescent students, with particular emphasis on the social-pragmatic aspects of language that underlie many of the problems experienced by students with disabilities. The third section of the book covers the areas that are traditionally referred to as language arts instruction. Two chapters address reading, three chapters address writing, and a final chapter provides special attention to language arts instruction for adolescent students with special needs. A note on pronoun use: for the purposes of clarity, each chapter alternates male and female pronouns for children and adults respectively.