

Preface

This new edition of the *Handbook of Language and Literacy* provides a completely updated treatment of the issues covered in the original edition as well as treatment of significant new issues. The *Handbook* is based on the premise that oral and written language skills are functionally intertwined in individual development. Understanding the complexity of this relationship requires the collaborative contributions of scholars and practitioners from multiple disciplines. The book focuses on typical and atypical language and literacy development from the preschool years to young adulthood. Our goal was to provide informative, timely resources for a broad audience, including practitioners, scholars, and students in the fields of communication sciences and disorders, educational psychology, general education, special education, and learning disabilities.

In undertaking the new edition of the *Handbook*, we retained our original three purposes. First, we wanted the content to provide researchers, professionals, and graduate students with state-of-the-art knowledge regarding theory and research focused on linkages between spoken language development and typical and atypical literacy development. Since the first edition of the *Handbook* in 2004, the integration of language and literacy has become an increasing focus within both the field of education and the field of speech–language pathology. Despite this converging set of emphases, few resources are currently available that address these issues in a single volume. This book helps to fill that gap.

Our second aim in developing the *Handbook* was to offer a comprehensive examination of the empirical evidence on the integration of language-related processes with literacy instruction and its outcomes. All too often, language intervention or literacy instruction takes place in a manner suggestive, consciously or unconsciously, of the independence of the processes of language and reading/writing. It is our conviction that such an approach misses rich opportunities to improve the effectiveness of educational and clinical efforts.

Our third aim was to emphasize the benefits of a multidisciplinary approach to the study of language and literacy. In designing the *Handbook*, we have assembled con-

tributors with multiple perspectives from the disciplines of communication sciences and disorders, special education, and cognitive and educational psychology, among others, to address the complex issues surrounding the dynamic interactions among language processes and typical and atypical literacy development. This combination embodies our joint conviction that progress cannot be made in our understanding of the complex issues related to fostering literacy development without taking a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspective.

In planning for the new edition, we strove to retain up-to-date coverage of enduring issues in the field, and to include treatment of issues that have become pivotal in the field since the original 2004 publication. These new topics include complementary research methods in literacy, digital literacy, disciplinary literacy, response to intervention, and theoretical and practical issues related to bilingualism and second-language learners. In addition, we sought to create increased coverage of language and literacy issues related to the increasingly diverse population in 21st-century schools. To accomplish these goals, we invited a subset of the original authors to prepare new chapters that provided updated treatments of their original content. In addition, we invited a set of new authors and charged them with covering new issues or original issues from new perspectives. In all, 17 of the 35 chapters involve new author teams; 6 of these involve new topics (see above), and 11 provide new perspectives on topics treated in the original edition. The remaining 18 chapters represent significantly updated versions of chapters contributed by the original authors (sometimes with new coauthors).

Like the original edition, the *Handbook* contains four major sections. Part I provides a critical overview of major theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of language and literacy acquisition, with a particular emphasis on developmental variations and underlying neurobiological and genetic correlates of atypical development. Part II explores variations in the sociocultural and sociolinguistic contexts of language and literacy acquisition, including normative development and developmental variation. Part III examines the multiple components of the linguistic/discourse system and their relationships to successful and unsuccessful literacy learning. Part IV is devoted to an examination of the language and literacy profiles that characterize children, adolescents, and young adults struggling with word recognition, reading comprehension, writing, and spelling, and reviews the research-based evidence for effective practices in assessment and instruction/intervention.

We trust that readers of this book, whether they are students, researchers, or practitioners in literacy, special education, or speech–language pathology, will find in it the rich food for thought that provokes the kind of breakthroughs in basic knowledge and effective practice that served as the impetus for the book. We hope it will also serve to stimulate more conversations across the disciplinary and subdisciplinary boundaries that have historically characterized the academic study of these issues, as well as the provision of educational and clinical services to those who need them.

Any project on the scale of the *Handbook* could not come to fruition without the assistance of a number of people in addition to the main editors. We were fortunate in being able to work with a fine group of associates. We would especially like to express our warm gratitude to Rochelle Serwator, our editor at The Guilford Press. It was Rochelle who urged us to undertake a second edition, and she has kept our group inspired and on track. The *Handbook* would not exist without her encouragement and guidance. We would also like to thank the authors of the chapters in this volume for their dedication and scholarship, and for their openness to crafting their ideas into the format dictated by the *Handbook's* structure. We hope that their work receives the attention it justly deserves.