



# Language and Literacy Connections: Intervention for School-Age Children and Adolescents

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# FOREWORD

Before you begin the first chapter of this textbook and dive into the world of school-age language, let me assure you that you are in wonderfully good hands. This textbook has been written by two remarkable speech-language pathologists (SLPs), professors, and researchers who are leaving indelible marks upon the field of speech-language pathology. As you will see for yourself, the qualities that set the authors apart—their intelligence, clinical knowledge, and warmth—are evident throughout this text.

This assurance is based on first-hand experience, having had the marvelously good fortune of being a former student of Geraldine Wallach and a current colleague of Alaine Ocampo. As an undergraduate and graduate student, I found Dr. Wallach's methods unorthodox and perhaps even a little provocative, but undeniably effective. Somehow or other, without ever calling attention to what she was doing, her students "stumbled upon" revelations of their own that seemed to always align with the theme of her lecture. And for me, those revelations ultimately shaped who I became as an SLP. Later, I followed in the footsteps of Alaine Ocampo, as a doctoral student at Chapman University and a faculty member at California State University Long Beach. As a mentor to me in my role as an adjunct instructor, she was extraordinarily generous with her time

and insight, and impacted my pedagogy significantly. I am deeply indebted to both these women.

As I contemplated writing this foreword, I thought about my early work as an SLP at an elementary school. With Dr. Wallach's reference frame at the forefront of my mind, I decided to take an unorthodox approach with the students on my caseload. I had noticed that the resource specialist program teacher and I shared multiple students on our caseloads, and it seemed to me a prudent solution that we collaborate in our work with these students. She was initially hesitant to partner up with me for her English Language Arts intervention as she had never done that before, but I was able to convince her that, at the very least, we would be able to manage our caseloads more efficiently with this team approach. And, at the very best, the students would benefit from our combined expertise. This partnership enabled me to link what I had learned about best practices to how I forged my intervention, and I came to truly appreciate the value of a cohesive and collaborative approach to supporting children with language learning disabilities in the schools.

And so, that is how I came to be standing one day in front of a dozen or so students, reading excerpts from Sir Ernest Shackelton's account of his Trans-Atlantic Expedition in 1914. We were well into the





course of the intervention when I read aloud the following entry, dated October 27th:

*The end came at last about 5pm. She was doomed, no ship built by human hands could have withstood the strain. I ordered all hands on to the floe and as the floe near us was cracking we started to sledge all the gear.*

At this point in the story, the students were truly sitting on the edge of their seats. Over the past month, for two hours a week, the students and I had become members of that ill-fated expedition. With each session, I carefully controlled the competing demands that existed among the student, the content, and task. I worked to build in just the right level of challenge, identifying key scaffolding factors that empowered students to reach for understanding and move beyond. And with each expansion of comprehension, I laid the groundwork for the next step.

Because we had defined different literary genres, the students understood the difference between a work of fiction with an omniscient narrator and a diary penned by a mere mortal, and they recognized the uncertainties facing the crew. Because we had discussed the background of the expedition, defining terms such as *provisions*, *calving*, *exploration*, *quests*, *latitude*, *longitude*, and *ice floes*, and consulted maps and globes while tracing Shackleton's planned journey, the students were able to immerse themselves in the treacherous landscape of Antarctica. Because we had discussed the science of ice and how it changes state, and moves—or not—in the open ocean, they developed a growing apprehension as to how this story might end. And because they had acquired a wealth of background knowledge without ever boarding a ship, the diaries they

created afterward, taking on the role of a member of the crew, were remarkable works of literature, regardless of any eligibility for special education.

I share this pivotal experience with the readers because it truly echoes the tenets found in the pages of this textbook. This intervention was based on principles and conceptual frameworks that could be applied across the grade span and across domains. Both the resource specialist program teacher and I were able to address all of the students' goals in a holistic paradigm that encompassed oral and written language, narratives, expository text, and the continuum of literacy. This intervention moved seamlessly between the big picture and the small details: from the words we defined, to the morphological markers that shaped the meaning of those words, and to the story those words built, one sentence at a time.

This approach allowed me to provide ecologically valid intervention in the students' *most natural* setting in the school—the classroom. The intervention was framed in the context of the curriculum, using a parallel text, and incorporated a set of academic tools that could be used across subject. As well, because the intervention was based on broad principles and a conceptual framework, crafting educationally relevant Individualized Education Program goals aligned with Common Core State Standards became a simple task.

With this overarching schema as the basis of my intervention, I collaborated with general education teachers, special educators, and resource specialist program teachers, and my intervention took place in my room, the resource room, at lunch tables, in the library, in the computer lab, in self-contained special education classrooms, and in general education classrooms. Of course, my intervention





involved individual or small group pull-out sessions when the children's needs mandated targeted skill development, but I always had the goal of moving back to the *real world* of the school, where they were surrounded by ambient language all day long. And I have never looked back.

The structure of the text is very intentional. Throughout, Wallach and Ocampo have incorporated questions that support self-reflection and metaphors that shine a light on latent assumptions that may be influencing assessment and intervention decisions. From the first chapter with a series of thought-provoking statements about the construct of language, the very foundation of what we do, to the final chapter with a series of language-and literacy-based activities and the theory underpinning those activities, this text leads the reader on a journey of discovery. New graduates will be well served to place this text on the shelf of their office for use as a reference. And why is this? Because there is no doubt that seasoned professionals will question these graduates about the critical link between literacy and language, and how language learning disabilities look different over time. But, familiarity with the information presented in this text will grant these newly minted SLPs the ability to convince their colleagues that indeed language and literacy are interwoven constructs that cannot be separated.

As discussed at length in the text, *form*, *content*, and *use*, the cornerstones of language, are best viewed through a hermeneutic paradigm, which allows us to arrive at a global understanding of a construct, while still acknowledging the relevance of the pieces that make up the whole. Just as metaphors echo the Aristotelian precept that the whole is so much greater than the sum of its parts, so too is the work that fills

our days. As the authors state, language is an interrelated and multidimensional construct and our intervention should reflect a parallel inter-dimensionality. We simply cannot target language components in isolation.

Dr. Wallach and Dr. Ocampo bring unique theoretical perspectives and a broad frame of reference to their writing. Their use of metaphors is a brilliant device in that they let us to refer to different and disparate constructs in rich and unpredictable ways. Just as metaphors use symbols, or words, to represent something else, the construct of language itself vividly demonstrates the divergence and convergence between deep and surface structures. Continuing, we need look no further than children themselves to find another parallel to metaphors. Anyone who works with children can attest to the fact that what is seen on the outside may not be what is truly on the inside: we really cannot judge books by their covers.

The authors' use of key questions models the heuristic approach all practitioners would be well served to employ in their daily work. By questioning the prevailing zeitgeist that categorizes language and literacy as disparate constructs, service delivery models that reflect *what we have always done*, intervention practices that isolate form from content from use, and ingrained expectations of the role of the SLP in the schools, our field can move forward with children being the beneficiaries.

The very first question in Chapter 1, "How does one's definition of language and theoretical perspective about language learning drive intervention practices?" p. 4 is instructive and one that could be taped to everyone's therapy notebook for daily contemplation. As practitioners, we should be ever mindful



that our intervention decisions are very likely shaped by our theoretical perspectives, whether we are willing to acknowledge this or not. In Chapter 10, the authors pose their last two questions, “Can we do better?” and “Can we think outside the proverbial box?” (p. 320) and these provide the crux of this foreword. I suggest that we can and should answer a resounding “Yes!” to both of these questions, although it may not be easy. The status quo is powerful and compelling, and it does not always reflect the greater good.

Although it is true you cannot bottle the qualities that make a good SLP, this text is an excellent place to start. The conceptual frameworks and the principles brought forth in these pages provide future SLPs a road map to intervention.

For practicing SLPs, the text offers the means to shake up established practices. We must not ever forget that our work matters deeply to the children we serve and our decisions have surprisingly far reaching effects. Regardless of where you find yourself, I wish you the courage to emulate Dr. Wallach and Dr. Ocampo by being true to your values and doing what is right, even when it is difficult. Finally, I challenge you to be the change we need to see in the field of speech-language pathology. It’s a notion whose time has come.

—Margaret Vento-Wilson, PhD-CCC SLP  
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# PREFACE

This text began as a result of the authors' interest in and work with school-based clinicians in selected public schools of Southern California. As faculty members in the Department of Speech-Language Pathology at California State University, Long Beach, we worked together to build the curriculum in school-age language disorders. Working together, we looked back and looked forward as we prepared syllabi, readings, and assignments for our courses in child and school-age language disorders. It is interesting to note that when one takes a fresh look at the field of language disorders and learning disabilities, it is true that while some things change, others remain the same. As we participated in clinical supervision and field visits to school-based settings within and outside of California, we were interested in what seasoned and newly graduated practitioners had to say about the state of language intervention. What we found interesting was that many of the concepts of the 1960s and 1970s were alive and well in the clinic and resource rooms across the country. For example, there was still a tendency, although not as prevalent currently in speech-language pathology, toward looking at children as being either visual or auditory learners or looking at modality differences across spoken and written language. Some practitioners were focused on working on what we might call "discrete skills"—skills like

auditory and visual sequencing—and the like. On several Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for children with language disorders, we observed "is . . . verbing" as an objective across Grades 1–3. Another trend that remained popular was to label seemingly every other child with an academic problem as having a central auditory processing disorder (CAPD) and/or an attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Of course, many wonderful professionals work in schools doing excellent things with students, but we were still surprised by the choice of some intervention directions and the "traditionalism" that persisted. Working on literacy, for example, was and still is a controversial issue for many speech-language pathologists (SLPs).

While there are many excellent resources available today, suggesting that a number of the previously mentioned concepts require reevaluation, the theory-to-practice gap is alive and well. Moreover, "older" theories about language learning and language disorders are pervasive in practice. This is not to suggest, however, that some of the "older" research presented in this text is obsolete. Readers will find that many of the current and innovative ideas about intervention at school-age levels began to percolate decades ago. For example, Margaret Lahey's notion of







learning disabilities as a complex puzzle with a lost box cover to guide us is a classic notion that should not be lost through time. Likewise, Sandy Friel-Patti's eloquent words quoted in Chapter 1, written two decades ago, should not be forgotten. We feel the same way about Norris's words about school learning written in 1997. There is no better interpretation of the chronic nature of language disorders than the quote by Anthony Bashir and his colleagues presented in Chapter 2. It was written in 1984 and might be considered "old," but it has survived the test of time. Many other classic quotes and examples from the fathers and mothers of language-learning disabilities (e.g., Anthony Bashir, Barbara Ehren, and Joel Stark) are embedded within the text. We hope our newer readers welcome the historical view as they are introduced to a body of research that may be unfamiliar to them. We trust that our seasoned readers will enjoy a refreshing reminder.

- First and foremost, this text is a text about PRINCIPLES. We will not cover every level and every component of language with a series of activity sequences or recipes. Rather, we will offer a conceptual framework that underpins our specific intervention choices while, at the same time, we will include many practical examples and resources. We encourage our readers to keep the "bigger picture" of intervention in mind. It may be fine to focus on one component of language at certain points in time. For example, it may be appropriate to focus on morphology, but we must go beyond teaching a student Brown's morphemes in an isolated way. Perhaps working on something

"bigger" like derivational morphology for science terminology might be appropriate at school-age levels. Likewise, we have embedded pragmatic issues within the context of helping students understand why they are participating in certain activities. Pragmatics always frame what we are doing. We encourage students to ask themselves questions for spoken and written language like: Who is my audience? What's the point I'm trying to make through my writing? What is the author trying to say? What does the title tell me (or not) about what the text is about? As we note in Chapter 7, *we embed pragmatic considerations within our intervention sessions. We do not take "pragmatics" out of its natural functioning and "teach it" artificially at school-age levels.*

Within the context of the previous remarks, this text

- Asks readers to ask themselves a number of questions including:  
"What should language intervention at school-age levels look like? Where does a goal or activity "come from?" How does intervention outside of the classroom connect with what's going on inside the classroom? What are some of the barriers to successful programming for students with language learning disabilities? What are approaches to overcoming these barriers?"
- Asks current and future clinicians to examine some of the popular practices that exist today with an eye toward considering ways to make realistic modifications within the context of having too many children with diverse problems on caseloads and too little time.







The text has four major goals: (1) to encourage readers to evaluate past and current clinical and educational practices in language intervention at school-age levels; (2) to present intervention goals and activities that are theoretically sound but may require further research scrutiny; (3) to explore aspects of curriculum-relevant language intervention for students with language learning disabilities; (4) to provide guidelines for school-based practitioners that clarify how professionals with diverse backgrounds and roles share responsibility in language, literacy, and academic programming. While taking a strong language/language-disorders' perspective, the text would be a useful resource for teachers and other specialists who share students with language learning disabilities (LLD) with their school-based SLPs. We use the term "language learning disabilities (LLD)" throughout the text to refer to a heterogeneous population of children and adolescents who have ongoing language disorders who may be identified with other labels including specific language impairment (SLI), learning disabled (LD), and reading disabled, among others terms that often change based upon the learning context (e.g., school) and the learning demands (e.g., the curriculum). Various terms (e.g., specific language impairment, reading disabled, dyslexia) will be defined and elaborated upon in Chapter 2. The text takes a positive approach to the issues but also makes a strong statement about maintaining the "status quo" in language intervention when so many alternatives are available.

The three sections of the text build upon one another. Key questions and summary statements are used at the beginning of each chapter to guide readers through

the information presented in the chapter and help them with self-reflection. The text also has many sample forms, outlines, visual maps, and other supportive materials that are easily reproduced. Parts I and II present strong conceptual and practical frameworks. Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 present the building blocks for intervention across grade levels. Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 are broader than the chapters that follow in the sense that both chapters provide the macrostructure, or overarching themes, that pull the forthcoming chapters together. Readers will be challenged in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 to explore what they think the term "language disorders" means, among other popular definitions. The chapters will ask tough questions about the things we do to help children within school settings. Readers will recognize many of the challenges presented. A continuum of language learning and language disorders is presented that links preschool and school-age issues. Metaphors are used in Chapter 1 to highlight some of the ways that learners comprehend and retain information. The metaphors also serve to pull together key ideas about school-age language intervention. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 ask readers to "look at" language disorders and intervention more critically. We take two roads in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. Going back in time, we consider some of the early aspects of becoming literate in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, we highlight the specific nature of higher levels of literacy reflected in the disciplinary literacies of content-area subjects. Readers are encouraged to ask themselves a basic question: Is what I'm doing in my speech-language room relevant to the classroom? Follow-up questions include the following: How do I make language intervention "curriculum



relevant”? How do I make the time to observe in the classroom or talk with teachers when there is no time? Suggestions are presented and shared in this section of the text.

Part II marries conceptual frameworks to practical applications. Chapter 5 opens the section with examples of processing and comprehension challenges. The examples reflect some missteps sometimes taken when we fail to get beneath the “tip-of-the-iceberg” of students’ performances. A discussion of a very misunderstood relationship, language disorders and central auditory processing disorders, is presented in Chapter 5. A series of scenarios that relate to comprehending language in “real life” situations are used to make processing–comprehending connections more explicit. Examples of second-language learning we have all experienced when traveling are used to highlight some of the symptoms we see in students with language learning disabilities. Readers are asked to explore possible alternatives to the “auditory processing” diagnosis. A checklist is provided at the end of the chapter that takes readers through a series of question related to developing a shared responsibility in language and literacy. Chapter 6 through Chapter 8 explore various aspects of what language intervention at school-age levels “looks like.” Chapter 6 starts with principles of assessment and offers case examples that review conclusions about students’ language literacy abilities. Sample sessions are offered as the principles are brought to life. We then move to macro (connected discourse), followed by micro (smaller units like words and sentences) components in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8. In these chapters, we look back at both theory and practice as well as look ahead to the curriculum and the changes that face our students with LLD

as they face the demands of an ever-changing and challenging curriculum. Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 present a thorough discussion of the interactions among connected discourse, including narrative and expository discourse, content knowledge, and sentence and word-level skills. A discourse protocol by Pamela Hadley is presented in Chapter 7 that includes conversational, narrative, and expository text components. Excerpts from average achieving students and students with language learning disabilities are presented to complement the discussion. An example from the science curriculum brings the pieces of discourse together. Chapter 8 continues the themes of Chapter 7. Chapter 8 outlines the differences between foundational and disciplinary literacies and reminds readers that many popular reading comprehension strategies must be viewed from within a prism of the language skills and abilities that underlie the strategies. Activities that demonstrate both macro (connected text structure and content) and micro (sentence and word level components) elements of language are presented with an eye toward how they relate to the science and social studies curricula. Examples from the curriculum across a number of grade levels are weaved throughout the text’s chapters.

Part III moves toward a summary of key concepts discussed throughout the text. Chapter 9 reminds readers to keep language intervention relevant and functional. Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are presented as a way to create language intervention goals and objectives within the context of grade-level expectations. Current models of service delivery reinforce the notion of “shared responsibility” among teams and more creative ways to deliver service to the students who need it. Chapter 10 continues to move toward





closure. A series of abbreviated scenarios that include assessment and intervention challenges are presented. An exploration of selected intervention activities ends the chapter. Readers are asked to consider the reasons why an activity might be chosen as a review of some of the ideas presented in previous chapters. Readers are encouraged to consider alternatives to the conclusions reached in the scenarios and are encouraged to open a dialogue with their colleagues about other ways to interpret student, material, and clinician choices. Both chapters in the summary section use mini cases and scenarios as tools for encouraging conversations among col-

leagues who share students with language learning disabilities. As the text closes, some positive thoughts are expressed about finding “enlightenment” in schools and looking toward a better future for students with language learning and academic difficulties. The text leaves readers with a positive message about how much information is available currently and expresses the view that we can “do it”—we can move to more innovative practices in language intervention that are both curriculum relevant and strategy focused.

—Geraldine P. Wallach

—Alaine Ocampo





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*Geraldine P. Wallach adds. . .*

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*Alaine Ocampo adds . . .*

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# Part I

## Conceptual Frameworks for Consideration







# Innovative Language Literacy Intervention at School-Age Levels: What It Takes to Get There

“Language therapy is only as good as the clinician who is delivering it” (Hoffman, 2014, p. 91).

## SUMMARY STATEMENT

Chapter 1 asks readers to reflect upon a number of concepts that relate to creating evidence-based and curriculum-relevant language and literacy-focused intervention for school-age students with language learning disabilities (LLD). The introductory information presented here sets a tone for the remainder of the text and serves as a template for the information that follows. Readers are encouraged to embrace current thinking by asking themselves to engage in self-reflection about many long-held philosophies and

practices. Among the chapter’s suggestions to speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and their colleagues are the following: First, be willing to question the conventional wisdom of traditional language intervention practices. Second, think of the highlighted metaphors used in this chapter that may serve as scaffolds for comprehension and retention. Third, consider alternatives to some of the popular practices that are alive and well in language intervention circles and that may require reevaluation. For example, are there benefits to teaching the meanings of vocabulary words out of context, working on various aspects of central auditory processing using



nonlinguistic content, and separating the teaching of spoken and written language, among others? The format and content for this chapter draws its inspiration from information processing theory and constructive comprehension research, embedded within sociocultural twists, topics we will return to time and again in this text. Metaphors like “focus on the forest, not just the trees” and it’s a “tip-of-the-iceberg phenomenon” serve as visual and verbal images to highlight past and future directions in both assessment and intervention.

This chapter and all chapters that follow will start with a series of questions. The questions encourage readers to prepare for themes addressed in the chapter and to reflect upon their beliefs and prior knowledge about the topics presented.

### Questions for Chapter 1



1. How does one’s definition of language and theoretical perspective about language learning drive his or her intervention practices?
2. Following from Question 1, how does one’s definition of literacy and theoretical perspective about literacy learning drive his or her intervention practices?
3. What concepts in language and literacy intervention require closer scrutiny as a result of our answers to the previous questions?
4. What are selected principles that underlie the creation of more innovative and integrated language-based literacy intervention approaches at school-age levels?

There are no easy answers to complex questions, especially those related to the most effective ways to help the students we serve. In the midst of many challenges, these remain exciting times. We now know so much more about language learning and its impact upon literacy and academic success as reflected in many of the contributions discussed and referenced in this text. Nonetheless, bridging the theory to practice gap is an ongoing reality. Some intervention practices, popular for decades in the absence of research or in-depth evaluation, weave their way into intervention goals and objectives, maintaining a “we’ve always done it this way” perspective and, in some cases, acquiring mythical status (Kamhi, 1999, 2014). Likewise, standardized assessment tools, programs, and intervention kits by companies (whose names readers will recognize) cannot take us as far as we need to go to address the diverse needs of our students. These prepackaged tools may contain irrelevant drills, activities, and sequences that are often too far removed from the knowledge and skills connected to acquiring and retaining curricular content. The activities outlined in prepackaged materials may be isolated from the connected discourse abilities needed to thrive and survive in a middle school classroom. For example, it might be reasonable to teach an older student with language learning disabilities (LLD) to comprehend figurative language forms, but if the forms chosen have little or nothing to do with his or her comprehension of social studies or language arts, intervention may lose its relevance. It might also be useful to have more precise (or grammatically perfect) syntactic forms when speaking, but if those structures practiced in an intervention session are too disconnected from classroom discourse and text-



book language, they, too, become isolated paint chips on a complex canvas of language needs. The persistence of language reflected in many Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that encourages working on “two- and three-step” commands misses the way we actually process complex sentences and, all too frequently, misses semantic and linguistic factors among context and background knowledge factors that influence comprehension. To understate the obvious might be to say that while both frustrating and fascinating, the theory to practice gap, coupled with intervention goals and objectives that require a closer look, has led us to a place where those of us on the front lines of service delivery have the opportunity to implement some well-needed solutions.

Asking two basic questions: “*Why am I doing this?*” and “*Where does this technique or approach come from?*” might be a helpful way to begin to evaluate our treatment options. Indeed, the answers to the “whys” and “wheres” of language intervention is a critical piece of the clinical and educational decision-making process. Self-questioning along with an evaluation of the theoretical foundations that influence our intervention choices help us to put the “what to do now?” and “what to do next?” into a broader context. As Kamhi (1999, 2014) and others have noted, it is important to understand the theoretical principles that underpin one’s intervention choices, the evidence that may (or may not) provide support and why an approach was chosen. Ehren (2006) asked additional questions of clinicians: (1) Are your language intervention choices curriculum relevant?; (2) Is your intervention strategically focused?; and (3) Do your activities integrate spoken and written language systems? Following up on Ehren’s last point, many other

researcher-clinicians address the evolving and ever-changing role of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) in the assessment and intervention of literacy (ASHA, 2002; 2005a; 2010; Kamhi & Catts, 2012; Wallach, 2018a).

## FORMING A FRAMEWORK FOR LANGUAGE INTERVENTION, SOME BEGINNINGS: WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF LANGUAGE? OF LITERACY?

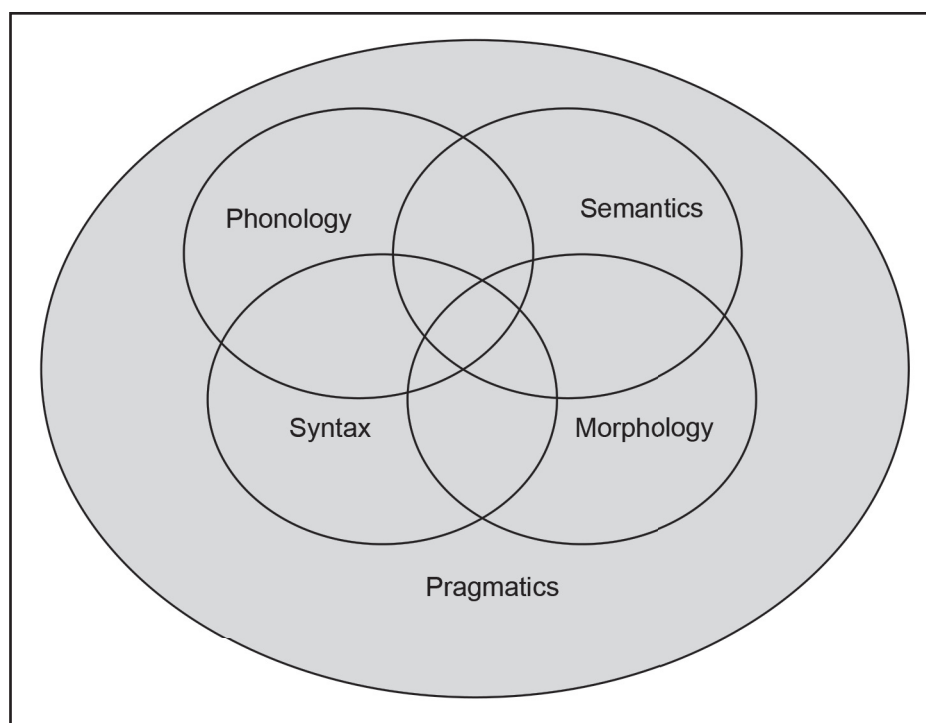
### On Language

Where do professionals start? How do they begin to answer the questions asked in the previous section? They begin by asking themselves how they define language. Apel (2014) points out that one’s definition of language should have a connection to what one “does” clinically and educationally. He goes further by saying that “one’s definition of language and theory of language development is the core of clinical practice” (Apel, 2014, p. 104). The important point Apel and others make is that practitioners should reflect upon the philosophical views they have about language and language learning when creating and delivering language intervention programs for their students. If one views language from Bloom and Lahey’s (1978) classic framework or Owens’s (2020) version of Bloom and Lahey’s model that describes the systemic and interactive nature of content, form, and use, one would hope that intervention is driven in that direction—a direction that tries to integrate rather than overly separate semantic, syntactic (plus other form aspects), and pragmatic pieces. Taking a strong sociolinguistic perspective, Owens (2020)

notes that the pragmatic piece serves as the umbrella factor and overriding aspect of communication. Regardless of what we may be targeting, pragmatic (e.g., the purpose of communicating) and contextual factors (e.g., linguistic and nonlinguistic supports) should be in the forefront of clinicians' minds. This notion of pragmatic relevance within the therapeutic process is another theme that will weave its way throughout this text for both spoken and written language. We do not "break out" pragmatics as a separate component of language "to teach," although this may be appropriate for some children at some points in time. *We view pragmatic factors as always present, which is why we consider—as noted previously—the purposes of communi-*

*cation and contextual factors as aspects of the pragmatic umbrella.*

To restate the point: clinicians' beliefs influence intervention choices. If one views language *primarily* as the production of grammatically correct sentences, focusing on the form component, his or her intervention might be driven in that direction. Importantly, for the focus of this text, if one views spoken and written language as separate systems (believing that written language is not part of the responsibilities of speech-language pathologists), intervention goals that focus only on spoken-language acquisition would likely follow. Figure 1-1 provides an example of the Bloom and Lahey framework in the updated Owens (2020) model of language components.



**Figure 1-1.** Functionalist model. Depiction of a functionalist model: Pragmatics is the overall organizing aspect of language. Owens considered pragmatics as the overriding component. Source: Figure of intersecting circles representing the language components of Bloom and Lahey (1978), adapted from Owens (2020).





As suggested, while we have discussed some techniques that require a closer look in this chapter and others, we also recognize that we have come a long way—as noted previously. We would be remiss, however, if we failed to harken back briefly to some popularly observed language in various clinics and school settings. While this text is focused on school-age children, where some of our intervention emphasis would be different (e.g., focused on written text, academic language), we might ask what we can learn from the following examples used to encourage meaningful spoken language. For example, is “good talking” an appropriate reinforcer for language learning with our preschoolers or minimally verbal children? Are external and artificial reinforcers really effective for long-term success? Taking into account pragmatic factors discussed by Owens (2020), among others, is it appropriate to tell a child to “say the whole thing” when answering a question that requires an elliptical response (e.g., What’s the boy doing? *playing*). Is the “is . . . verbing” goal alive and well and still seen on current IEPs? Are the “listening” drills we choose facilitating functional and constructive language comprehension or do they consist of isolated, unconnected commands? Are criterion referenced statements like, “Billy will achieve a score of 8 out of 10 correct responses in the clinical setting” relevant measures of language growth (Kamhi, 2014)? Along these lines, Kamhi (2014) reminds us that there is a difference between *performing* in clinic and really *learning* something. He notes: “Performance is the short-term context-specific occurrence of some behavior, whereas learning is the long-term context-independent occurrence of a particular behavior” (Kamhi, 2014, p. 93). Kamhi’s words are a stark reminder that carryover doesn’t happen

after therapy but has to be embedded within therapy.

In her now classic chapter, Friel-Patti (1994) also encouraged her readers to answer a number of self-revealing questions. She focused on professionals’ views of language learning theories including nativist, environmentalist, and behaviorist theories, among others. She asked: Are you a proponent of behaviorism as a theory of language learning? Are you a Vygotskian theorist? Do you believe language is innate or preprogrammed? Speaking of younger children, Friel-Patti (1994) reminded us so eloquently that intervention approaches often evolve from the philosophical beliefs of clinicians. She wrote:

Even the words used to describe the intervention process often disclose a theoretical bias: clinicians who portray their role as *language facilitator* are fundamentally different from those who are concerned with *teaching children to talk*. Whether or not they are acknowledged, such differences in theoretical underpinnings alter treatment options. (p. 374)

Stone and Learned (2014) also address the conceptualization of learning and educational practice from a similar perspective as Friel-Patti’s. They talk about sociolinguistic and cognitive perspectives as influencing intervention decisions with some separation and overlapping ideas embedded within the two schools of thought. The cognitivists look more closely at internal factors and processes that influence learning, whereas the sociolinguists are more focused on looking at skills within authentic tasks. While different perspectives, Stone and Learned point out that context and experience are crucial for explaining the mastery of language