Introduction

Why Language Instruction?

Language for Learning teaches children the words, concepts, and statements important to both oral and written language. The program emphasizes language as a means of describing the world and as a tool for thinking and solving problems. This language can be described as the language of learning and instruction. *Language for Learning* provides for the direct teaching of this language.

The Foundation for School Success

The language of learning and instruction is the underpinning of school success. For many children, this instruction occurs informally in their homes and preschools before they reach kindergarten. But for other children, basic language instruction must occur in school. *Language for Learning* offers these children this kind of instruction through carefully sequenced exercises that teach the concepts and skills they need to succeed in school.

The content of *Language for Learning* is based on analyses of the words, concepts, and sentence structures that teachers use as they teach, as well as an analysis of the directions and the content of school textbooks and other instructional materials. *Language for Learning* provides a basis for reading comprehension. The program's vocabulary, background- and world knowledge-building exercises, as well as its statement analysis, questioning, and concept-application exercises, prepare children for the literal and inferential comprehension of the books and other materials they will read both in and out of school.

Precise Communication

Most important, knowledge of the language of learning and instruction permits more precise communication between children and adults. It is the basis for the kind of communication that uses precise words to describe such diverse concepts as how objects are the same and different, their position, as well as the order of events in a story and the details of what happened in the story. This kind of communication is not necessarily social communication but is communication that is used to transmit and receive important information, solve problems, and engage in higher-order thinking.

Oral Language and Reading Comprehension

If children do not understand something that is presented in oral language, it is highly unlikely they will understand the same information presented in written language. In other words, children must have a solid language understanding of what is to be read before they read it. Certainly, children learn new words, new information, and new ideas from reading; however,

for this to happen, a language foundation that permits such learning must be in place.

Children in the elementary grades who have typical reading comprehension understand commonly used vocabulary, sentence forms, and instructions used in textbooks, workbooks, and library books. These children have precise knowledge of the "little words" used in instructions and descriptions and in the questions their teachers ask—words such as next, between, in front of, who, what, when, and where. They make inferences easily because they are practiced in describing the world, following and giving directions, and asking and answering questions. They are good at connecting the content of what they are reading to knowledge they already possess. These children are also good at logical thinking—they understand how logical "rules" work and when and how to apply these rules in different situations.

Following Directions and "Figuring Out"

Kindergarten and first-grade children who don't have a solid language foundation frequently don't understand the meaning of many of the words their teachers use as they explain things. They often have trouble following the directions that appear in their textbooks and workbooks. They typically have other problems related to language as well: they are not able to repeat sentences accurately; they lack much of the general information other children possess; and they have trouble with the logical "figuring out" aspects of language—for example, the classification of objects and "if-then" reasoning.

The Difference between Success and Failure

In time, some of these children will pick up these important language concepts—through the informal and formal instruction that they experience in their classrooms and at home. Some children, however, will not pick up a sufficient number of essential language concepts in their experiences at home and school. It is these children who, when they get to third and fourth grade, have trouble comprehending what they read—even though they may have the ability to read the words. These are the children who urgently need careful language instruction.

For such children, the teaching of the language of learning and instruction can mean the difference between success and failure in learning to read, as well as in the other academic subjects they will encounter in school.

What Are the Special Features of *Language for Learning*?

Language for Learning is a comprehensive oral language program. Its special features include

- a Direct-Instruction approach to the teaching of a wide range of important language concepts and skills.
- carefully organized sequences of exercises that make up the daily lessons.
- teacher directions for the clear presentation of the concepts and skills taught in the program.
- the opportunity for both group and individual practice of the content of the exercises.
- statement-repetition exercises that help children become practiced with both the concepts and statements of the language of learning and instruction.
- the application of newly-learned language concepts and thinking skills to problem-solving situations.
- a continuous integration and review of all the concepts and skills that appear in the program.
- directions for extending language instruction to games and other classroom activities.
- original stories and poems to be read to the children.
- workbook activities that teach new concepts and skills that apply what children are learning to new contexts.
- a fast cycle for those children who can progress more quickly through the program.
- a placement test and fifteen program assessments to ensure that children are working on concepts appropriate for their abilities and are progressing through the program at a reasonable rate.

What Is New in the 2008 Edition of *Language for Learning*?

In addition to a number of minor changes, there are some major improvements in this new edition.

1. All of the illustrations that appeared in earlier editions of *Language for Learning* have been replaced.
   - Each of the new illustrations presents a clear example of the concept being taught.
   - The new illustrations are more attractive and up-to-date.
2. The program assessments appear in the Teacher Presentation Books after every tenth lesson. Each assessment evaluates whether individual children perform at mastery on the content presented in the preceding ten lessons.
3. Instructional remedies are specified for children who do not perform at mastery on each part of the program assessments. The teacher provides differentiated instruction by presenting the specified Extra Help exercises.
4. Planning pages appear in the presentation books at the beginning of every five lessons.
5. Procedures for adjusting the program for preschool children appear in this guide.
6. Procedures for coordinating language and reading instruction are available.
7. Procedures for further accelerating the program for children whose scores on the Placement Test indicate they should start the program at lesson 40 are included.
8. The workbook exercises for each of the 150 lessons in *Language for Learning* are contained in two workbooks rather than four. Home-connection direction lines have been added for each exercise.
9. An Answer Key is now available for Workbooks A/B and C/D.
10. Language for Learning Practice and Review Activities CD-ROM is now available.

Who Benefits from Language for Learning Instruction?

- Kindergarten and primary age school children who have less than adequate language knowledge and skill for their age.
- Four-year-old children in preschool programs
- Primary age school children in bilingual and ELL programs