

# Roles of the Reading Specialist

By: International Reading Association

Because reading specialists have advanced degrees in reading, they are in a position to prevent reading failure at their schools. This position statement describes the roles reading specialists can play in instruction, assessment, and school leadership.

Teaching all children to read requires that every child receive excellent reading instruction and that children who are struggling with reading receive additional instruction from professionals specifically prepared to teach them. Teaching all children to read also requires reading specialists in every school because the range of student achievement in classrooms, with the inclusion of children who have various physical, emotional, and educational needs, requires different educational models from those of the past.

In order to provide these services, schools must have reading specialists who can provide expert instruction, assessment, and leadership for the reading program. Reading specialists are professionals with advanced preparation and experience in reading who have responsibility for the literacy performance of readers in general and struggling readers in particular. This includes early childhood, elementary, middle, secondary, and adult learners. Learners can be in public, private, and commercial schools, or in reading resource centers or clinics.

The International Reading Association's recommendations for the roles of the reading specialist in the three specific areas mentioned above include the following:

## **Instruction**

The reading specialist supports, supplements and extends classroom teaching, and works collaboratively to implement a quality reading program that is research-based and meets the needs of students.

## **Assessment**

The reading specialist has specialized knowledge of assessment and diagnosis that is vital for developing, implementing, and evaluating the literacy program in general, and in designing instruction for individual students. He or she can assess the reading strengths and needs of students and provide that information to classroom teachers, parents, and specialized personnel such as psychologists, special educators, or speech teachers, in order to provide an effective reading program.

## **Leadership**

The reading specialist provides leadership as a resource to other educators, parents and the community.