

# Preface

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**T**he face of your classroom is changing. According to the U.S. Department of Education, more than five million English Language Learner (ELL) students were enrolled in public schools in 2003. This is more than double the number found in 1990, representing a rate of increase seven times that of total school enrollment (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs, 2006). And while the majority of these ELL students speak Spanish, this is changing as well (Meyer, 2004). In today's classroom, you might use Korean in the morning, Russian in the afternoon, and Arabic tomorrow. Even if you don't currently have students who speak the ten languages in this book, the chances are you soon will. And it might take only one or two words from you to show your new students that they are appreciated in your classroom, school, and community.

This book offers the resources you need to communicate, at least on a very basic level, with students from the ten most common non-English-speaking populations in U.S. classrooms. With picture dictionaries, content area vocabulary, and translated reading level assessments you can support your students at school; with reproducible parent letters you can bridge the all-important gap with home.

The ten languages in this book are not the ten most common in classrooms. But they are the most common for students *who do not also speak English*. Thus Hmong, Haitian Creole, and Cantonese are included, while French, German, and Mandarin are not. This distinction might seem small, but it speaks to the purpose of this book: you can use it to communicate when English is not an option.

While communication may be the most obvious of your challenges in teaching ELL students, it is probably not your only goal. Supporting your students who are struggling with culture shock and the difficulties of adjusting to a new school, country, and potentially a new family may also be important to you. To help you learn about your new students and connect with them, this book offers quick information about your students' countries of origin. With your compassion and these communication aids, you can help ELL students learn to respect their individuality while getting up to speed in the classroom as quickly as possible.