

# Preface

**P**romoting the self-determination of students with disabilities has become best practice in the field of special education since it became a focus of interest in special education research and practice in the late 1980s. This initiative was stimulated with funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to support model projects that identified the skills and characteristics necessary for students with disabilities to become more self-determined, as well as identifying the in-school and out-of-school experiences that lead to the development of self-determination. Due largely to the federal emphasis on and funding to promote self-determination as a component of the education of youth with disabilities, there are now empirically based methods, programs, and strategies to support instruction to achieve this outcome. Further, there are now several empirical studies that demonstrate that enhanced self-determination improves the educational outcomes of youth with disabilities. As such, it is important that teachers be aware of the importance of promoting self-determination and be able to access and use proven methods, materials, and strategies to promote this outcome.

This text is intended to be a user-friendly guide to instructional and assessment strategies that enable teachers to promote student self-determination. While the content is theory driven and based on sound research, the text's focus is on instructional and assessment strategies that enable teachers to promote the self-determination of children and youth with disabilities. Moreover, we place these instructional and assessment strategies in the context of inclusive educational practices and standards-based reform and access to the general curriculum. The primary audience for the text is educators working with students with disabilities (across all categorical areas), as well as school administrators and higher education students preparing to work with students with disabilities.