

FOREWORD

This initial issue of *Seminars in Speech and Language* for 1995 is devoted to the assessment and management of adolescents' language and learning disabilities. Most adolescents who are unsuccessful academically have a wide range of strengths and weaknesses; few problems may have been apparent until academic demands became more complex. Deficits in receptive or expressive language functions are often accompanied by one or more areas of cognitive dysfunction. And far too many can no longer receive special education services in middle or high schools. It should come as no surprise, then, that a distressing number drop out of school, a reaction that may be aggravated by the increased social pressures and personal concerns of adolescence. For many adolescents, academic failure ends in social failure, an enormous waste of both human and national resources.

To serve as guest editor, I asked Elisabeth Wiig if she could find time in her busy schedule to develop an issue for *Seminars'*

readers that would cover this challenging topic in a scientifically responsible, clinically relevant manner. This issue is her answer, and a New Year's gift for you. As you will see, Dr. Wiig has assembled a multidisciplinary panel whose past professional contributions have enriched our understanding and management of this heterogeneous family of disabilities. Their articles in this issue emphasize the importance of the functional interrelationships among adolescents' linguistic, cognitive, and affective functions and the social contexts within which they occur and suggest a variety of assessment and training procedures for use with this diverse clinical population. In short, this issue of *Seminars* presents a broad perspective of the language and learning problems of adolescents as well as a range of specific clinical tactics that should be considered for their management.

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