Introduction to
Effective Instruction for Students With Special Needs

Instruction is a general term that means providing knowledge in a systematic way. Teaching is one form of instruction and computer-assisted instruction is another. In computer-assisted instruction, a computer program serves as the primary method for providing knowledge. Traditionally, teaching has been the primary form of instruction (Algozzine, Ysseldyke, & Elliott, 1997; Entwistle, Skinner, Entwistle, & Orr, 2000; Ethell & McMeniman, 2000; Ho, 2000; Kember, Kwan, & Ledesma, 2001; Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001; Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000). **Teaching** is the systematic presentation of content assumed necessary for mastery within a general area of knowledge. Teaching is most effective when certain principles are followed. According to Ornstein and Levine (1993, p. 617), teachers are most effective when they:

- Make sure that students know how they are expected to perform.
- Let students know how to obtain help.
- Follow through with reminders and rewards to enforce rules.
- Provide smooth transitions between activities.
- Give students assignments of sufficient variety to maintain interest.
- Monitor the class for signs of confusion or inattention.
- Use variations in eye contact, voice, and movement to maintain student attention.
- Use variations in academic activities to maintain student attention.
- Do not respond to discipline problems emotionally.
- Arrange the physical environment to complement instruction.

- Do not embarrass students in front of their classmates.
- Respond flexibly to unexpected developments.

These are just some of the ways in which effective teachers provide knowledge systematically. They are representative of the four components of effective instruction that frame the contents of this book.