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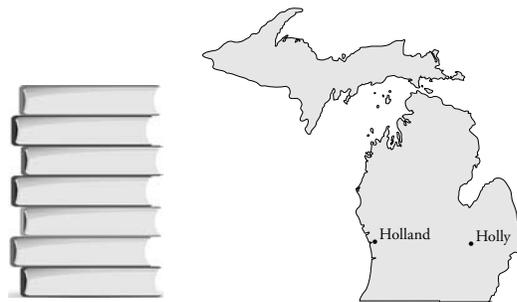
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# Professional Books of Interest

by Kathy Highfield  
and Laura Pardo



It's that time again...the beginning of the school year. Teachers are filled with excitement about the potential of a whole new group of students. As always, teachers welcome the opportunity to become better at their practices. In this issue of *Michigan Reading Journal*, we review three books and two documents that will support your professional learning this year.

Welcome back, and have a wonderful start to the new school year.

Happy reading,  
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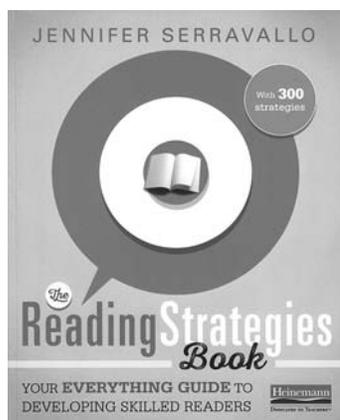


**Kathy Highfield**



**Laura Pardo**

Serravallo, J. (2015).  
*The Reading Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Readers*.  
Portsmouth, NH:  
Heinemann. ISBN  
978-0325074337  
\$36.50



Serravallo's new book promises to become a favorite of teachers who want to provide targeted, specific, and effective comprehension strategy instruction for readers of all levels. Building on the strength of her co-authored 2007 book, *Conferring with Readers*, in this book, Serravallo provides a comprehensive menu of strategies to use prior to, during, or after conferring with readers. A more practical, theoretically-based, comprehensive book for teachers does not exist—Serravallo's book sets the new standard for the old concept of "teacher edition" because the strategies she presents

work for all types and levels of texts, with multiple and varied literacy programs or models, and with diverse students.

The book contains over 300 strategies in the form of short mini-lessons and is organized around thirteen goals that are sure to appeal to K-8 teachers. Serravallo chose this structure to reiterate her commitment to using goals in the classroom—where students set precise and attainable reading goals and teachers provide instruction to help them reach their goals. The thirteen goals are:

- Supporting Pre-Emergent and Emergent Readers
- Teaching Reading Engagement: Focus, Stamina, and Building a Reading Life
- Supporting Print Work: Increasing Accuracy and Integrating Sources of Information
- Teaching Fluency: Reading with Phrasing, Intonation, and Automaticity
- Supporting Comprehension in Fiction: Understanding Plot and Setting

## Must Read Texts - Professional Books of Interest

- Supporting Comprehension in Fiction: Thinking About Characters
- Supporting Comprehension in Fiction: Understanding Themes and Ideas
- Supporting Comprehension in Nonfiction: Determining Main Topic(s) and Idea(s)
- Supporting Comprehension in Nonfiction: Determining Key Details
- Supporting Comprehension in Nonfiction: Getting the Most from Text Features
- Improving Comprehension in Fiction and Nonfiction: Understanding Vocabulary and Figurative Language
- Supporting Students' Conversations: Speaking, Listening, and Deepening Comprehension
- Improving Writing About Reading

The book is not intended to be read and used from cover to cover in page order. It provides a menu of sorts, and teachers can select specific strategies to use with specific students. Within each chapter or goal, the strategies are organized in the same way, so once teachers are familiar with the layout, they will be able to select, adapt, and use the strategies quickly. Each one-page strategy lesson includes a definition of the strategy, prompts to use with children as scaffolds during instruction, and an example of a visual to support the instruction (e.g. Exemplars, Anchor Charts, Process Charts, and Content Charts). In the margins, Serravallo lists reading levels that might benefit from this strategy, what type or genre of text should be used with the lesson, and the skills the lesson focuses on. Some lessons include teaching tips, while others include lesson language; these features provide additional information to promote understanding of the nuances of some of the strategies—a valuable support for teachers as they plan for instruction.

What teachers will likely find most helpful is that using the strategies in this book after analyzing the data from formative assessments makes grouping, differentiation, and establishing target outcomes easier and more precise than other methods they might have used. Readers approach text differently

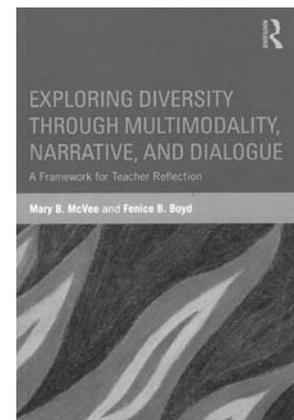
and it can be difficult to not only determine the strengths and areas of needed growth for individual readers, but also to find ways to provide the individual strategy instruction that each student needs. This book will help teachers do this.

Finally, throughout the text, Serravallo shares her personal thoughts about comprehension and strategy instruction. She also includes titles of books she's reading and cites the work of researchers who she admires. The book is a must for teachers who want to help their students improve their reading skills, and, once purchased, it won't be long before the book has the most revered spot in a teacher's classroom—the pages dog-eared, colored tabs sticking out at random, pregnant with post-it notes, bookmarks, and margin notes.

McVee, M., Y Boyd, F. (2015). *Exploring Diversity Through Multimodality, Narrative, and Dialogue: A Framework for Teacher Reflection*. New York, NY: Routledge. ISBN 978-1138901070 \$49.95

Teachers experience diversity in their classrooms, schools, and communities. They work regularly with students who bring their own cultural, linguistic, and social norms, and whose backgrounds differ in significant ways from their own. Students come from various ethnic and racial backgrounds, from any number of linguistic and cultural heritages, and spanning socio-economic classes. Some teachers struggle with knowing what to do about diversity in their classrooms, and this powerful text by Mary McVee and Fenice Boyd provides a framework by which teachers can engage in purposeful reflection designed to build a more nuanced understanding of diversity.

Using narrative as both a lens and a reflective tool, the authors share their own stories of crossing cultural boundaries and invite readers to acknowledge



and examine their own border crossing stories. They emphasize the power of story through the lens of the graduate students they teach in a class focused on Language, Literacy, and Culture—allowing readers to eavesdrop on several book club conversations where their students considered “hot lava” topics and tried to make sense of the stories of diversity that they were reading (told by Lisa Delpit, Vivian Paley, and Gloria Ladson-Billings for example).

The framework discussed by McVee and Boyd also relies on dialogue and multimodality. By engaging students in book clubs where they read narratives that explored various aspects of diversity, responded individually using multiple modes of meaning, and by discussing the texts and the individual responses, the authors were able to challenge their students to develop empathy to texts and others whose perspectives vary from their own viewpoints.

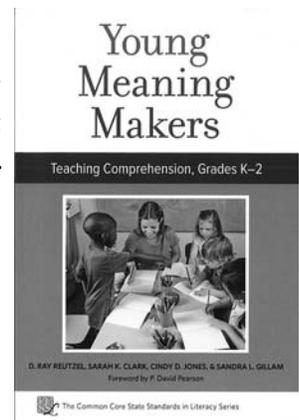
Woven throughout the book are prompts for reflection and dialogue, making this text a living document and an excellent text to be used in a professional learning community or book club. Written for both pre- and in- service teachers, the text can be engaged through multiple lenses and at various points in a teacher’s career. It can even be reread because the particular make-up of one’s reading group and one’s own narrative of experiences and perspectives will be different at each reading. Each time we cross a cultural border, our narratives change—thus we enter the text and dialogue with others having gained new perspectives.

As readers engage the stories in the text, they will also share their own stories and listen to the stories of the members of their group. Similar to what occurred in the student conversations shared in the text, accessing hot lava topics through dialogue will illuminate nuances of diversity that may have previously been invisible while also challenging readers to examine their own biases and cultural deficits. Through examining one’s own perspectives and the perspectives of colleagues, one can begin to think about how to acknowledge, understand, and celebrate the diversity among one’s students.

The narrative format of the text, the willingness of the authors to be vulnerable as they reveal their own experiences with cultural border crossings, and the focus on reflection all work together to create a must-read text for teachers and administrators who want to experience diversity in meaningful ways—ways that will make a difference in the ways they interact with the diverse students found in K-12 classrooms across the United States.

Reutzel, R., Clark, S., Jones, C., Gillam, S. (2016). *Young Meaning Makers: Teaching Comprehension, Grades K-2*. New York, NY: Teacher’s College Press. ISBN 0807757608 \$35.95

As literacy teachers, we are continuously adjusting our instruction in order to best meet the needs of students. This means that we work hard to keep up on classroom-based research and theory and seek to align our work with grade-level content standards.



Early elementary teachers may struggle with the application of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to the youngest of learners. This is the focus of Reutzel, Clark, Jones, and Gilliam’s book, *Young Meaning Makers: Teaching Comprehension, Grades K-2*. Reutzel and his colleagues begin with a chapter that focuses on theory, since every instructional decision comes as a result of a teacher’s theory about how students learn, but they introduce theory in a logical way that is connected to the realities of classroom instruction, sprinkled with scenarios of early elementary classrooms.

“Just as understanding schema theory helped to propel classroom teachers’ comprehension instruction forward over the past 3 decades, teachers can benefit greatly from gaining a knowledge and understanding of the CI (Construction Integration) Model of Text Comprehension to inform and foreground their use of the CCSS

Reading Anchor Standards as the basis for their current and future classroom reading comprehension instruction” (p. 10). This book clearly answers the following questions.

- Why should teachers change their model of text comprehension to inform comprehension instruction?
- How will this theory help teachers?
- What shifts need to take place to best meet the needs of our youngest learners?

In Chapter 2, the authors address the critical role of oral language acquisition and help teachers understand how to leverage the power of oral language to support reading comprehension. Next, in Chapters 3 and 4, Reutzel and his colleagues discuss how to design instruction providing sample lessons structures that support comprehension. We have understood for years that “the old adage, “learn to read and then read to learn,” puts young children at a disadvantage” (p 61). Reutzel and his colleagues outline ways to help early elementary teachers provide learning experiences that are perfectly positioned for our youngest learners. The authors include resources and sample lessons that are clear and helpful.

Finally, the authors delve deeply into appropriate and aligned assessments that will provide teachers with usable and actionable information to better know next steps for students. This book is a must for early elementary teachers who wish to design (rooted in the most current theory) the most appropriate instruction for their students.

*Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy PreKindergarten and Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy Grades K to 3*  
MAISA (Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators) GELN (General Education Leadership Network). Retrieved on August 15, 2016 from <http://gomaisa.org/general-education-leadership-network>

The General Education Leadership Network (GELN) has provided an invaluable resource for

PreKindergarten and teachers of grades K-3. And the good news is that they are currently working on similar documents for upper elementary (grades 4-5) and secondary (grades 6-12). If you are not yet familiar with these documents, they are well worth your time and attention. These documents present a ‘standard of care’ for our Michigan students at the classroom level and focus on the instructional practices that should be taking place each and every day in order to positively impact the literacy learning of our students.

*“The purpose of teach of this document is to increase Michigan’s capacity to improve children’s literacy by identifying a small set of research-supported instructional practices that could be the focus of professional development throughout the state. The focus of the document is on classroom practices, rather than on school- or system- level practices (which will be addressed in a future document). Research suggests that each of these ten practices can have a positive impact on literacy development. We believe that the use of these practices in every classroom every day could make a measurable positive difference in the State’s literacy achievement. They should be viewed, as in practice guides in medicine, as presenting a minimum ‘standard of care’ for Michigan’s children.”*  
(MAISA GELN Website <http://gomaisa.org/general-education-leadership-network>)

We hope to have more information in the next issue about the development of these two documents and about what GELN has planned for the release of new resources to support our professional learning. Stay tuned!

