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Professional Books of Interest

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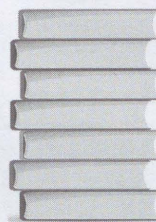
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Professional Books of Interest

by Kathy Highfield



We head into the time of year I loved most as a classroom teacher—the high productivity that takes place in the winter months after all of the classroom routines and procedures are firmly set and students grow by leaps and bounds. In this issue, we review four excellent books that will make great additions to your professional reading list and cover four very important and timely topics in literacy education: vocabulary instruction, writing conferences with our youngest learners, adolescent reading, and emerging bilingual students. The books this month cover a wide range of interest and topics. We hope you enjoy the reviews and we also hope that you get your hands on one of these books to further develop your own literacy learning.

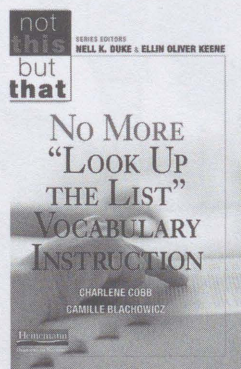


Kathy Highfield

Happy reading,

Kathy
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Cobb, C., & Blachowicz, C. (2014). *No more “look up the list” vocabulary instruction*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. ISBN 978-0325049205. \$16.50



Some dream of the perfect vocabulary program that will meet all students' needs. And some teachers have looked far and wide at multiple vocabulary programs hoping to find one that will truly impact word learning. Most of us have experienced this: we have worked hard to guard a valuable portion of the instructional day and dedicate it to word learning only to find that students do not remember words that have been studied when they encounter them weeks or months later. In their book, *No More “Look Up the List” Vocabulary Instruction*, Charlene Cobb and Camille Blachowicz approach this very complex problem facing teachers. They have culled

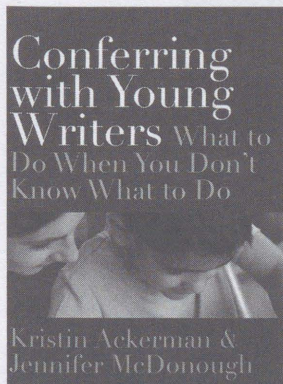
through many high-quality research studies on vocabulary instruction and have pulled together a valuable book. In this book, they answer the following important questions:

- How many words should I teach and how do I select them?
- How can I foster student independence using resources such as dictionaries and glossaries?
- How can I find time for meaningful vocabulary instruction when I need to focus on so many other priorities in the curriculum?
- How can I assess and hold students accountable, especially when some students don't remember the words that I teach?

Compiling findings from the vast field of research, Cobb and Blachowicz share a framework for vocabulary instruction that makes sense, can be infused into a balanced literacy approach, and will

not result in wasted planning time or wasted classroom instructional time. Charlene and Camille directly answer each of the above four questions with honest answers and present options that will make sense to educators. They cover important topics such as word selection, building independence, finding time for meaningful vocabulary instruction, and holding students accountable for learning. The authors present a starting point by helping teachers reflect on their own practices related to vocabulary instruction. Teachers can celebrate what is going well in their classrooms and find areas where they could use some new ideas. Cobb and Blachowicz follow up this reflection with new ideas on fostering word consciousness, teaching individual words, fostering rich and varied language experiences, teaching word-learning strategies, engaging in review, and being accountable.

This book is one in a series of books edited by Nell Duke and Ellin Oliver Keene (Not This, But That) that provides research based, real-world application of high quality research on best practices. This small book (less than 100 pages) will become a valuable resource for teachers in grades 3-8. If students in your school are struggling with learning vocabulary or looking for new ways to support vocabulary instruction, I highly recommend this book as the focus of a book study or book club group on vocabulary instruction. Thank you, Charlene Cobb and Camille Blachowicz for providing classroom teachers with such helpful information in a clear and honest way.



Ackerman, K., & McDonough, J. (2016). *Conferring with young writers: What to do when you don't know what to do*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers. ISBN 978-1625310392. \$28.00

This book is a result of

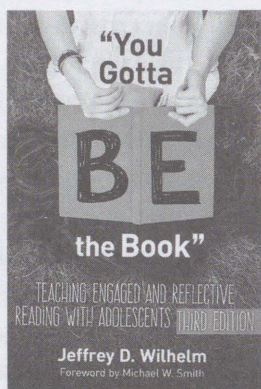
two teachers, Kristin Ackerman and Jennifer McDonough, working together to improve the quality of their writing workshop in their lower elementary classrooms. They begin by discussing their concerns about their young writers. These concerns centered on conferring time with writers, the most important time when they were face-to-face with individual students. Ackerman and McDonough point out that a relationship of trust is essential in a writing conference. This means looking past a page of errors and truly seeing who students are as writers, listening to what students are saying during a writing conference, noticing and connecting with student-writers as they develop, and finding joy in the process.

The book is structured around three Fs: frequency, focus, and follow-up. The authors delve deeply into each F as they provide practical and sound insight into maximizing time with students, keeping specific goals in mind, and making teaching stick. In the chapter on frequency, Ackerman and McDonough write about the importance of routine, choice, organized materials, and partner time. In the chapter on focus, they provide a structure to help teachers focus themselves and students on one goal at a time. Using elaboration as an example, they walk through the process from looking more deeply into the standards, to sharing what transpires in student conferring sessions, to examining student work over time. They not only shed light on focusing student conferences, but also on how teachers can focus during conferring time as well. The last chapter deals with the third F: follow-up. Here, the authors discuss ways to be sure that students use the strategies they are taught. The authors provide supports for assessment, sharing examples of observation forms, checklists, rubrics, and reflections, all designed to help teachers scaffold young writers.

This practical book is packed with examples from the authors' own classrooms, support from research, short vignettes, and student work that bring their writing to life. Kristin Ackerman and

Jennifer McDonough provide a solid foundation for effective early elementary writing conferencing.

Wilhelm, J. (2016). *You gotta be the book: Teaching engaged and reflective reading with adolescents, 3rd Edition*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. ISBN 978-0800757987. \$29.95



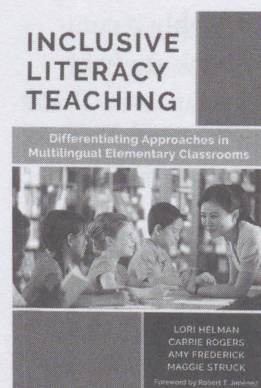
The first edition of *You Gotta Be the Book*, by Jeffrey Wilhelm, came out 20 years ago. Since then, we have experienced dramatic shifts in education. If you have already read this book, it is time to pick up the third edition and read it in light of these transformative changes. If you have not read this book, now is the time. The third edition of this book takes into consideration changes in learning standards, years of conversations with and questions from classroom teachers, an emphasis on nonfiction texts and disciplinary literacy, and the essential role of engagement and motivation in classrooms. Wilhelm tells his own journey. Twenty years ago, he viewed himself as a confident teacher, delivering consistently powerful lessons and having a sound grasp on the art and science of teaching. Now, he uses the metaphor of struggle to understand the complex processes of teaching and learning. He paints a powerful picture of how teacher research helped him to better understand adolescents as readers.

Wilhelm begins by providing an overview of reading theory and its place in teaching adolescents. He challenges teachers to see students as individuals and to study each and every one through the lens of teacher research in order to help students understand the value of reading in their own lives. As a teacher, Wilhelm had struggled with the idea that reading was so meaningful in his own life, while his adolescent students appeared disconnected and turned off by reading activities in school. Early

in his teaching career, Wilhelm conducted case studies on three highly engaged readers to better understand what they did to make reading meaningful. Through this, he learned how to help disengaged students to more actively and expertly read and enjoy books. In the book, he follows the three engaged student-readers' reading responses over the course of their seventh-grade year, focusing specifically on the moves they made as readers. This study foundationally informed the teaching and reading research community about what highly engaged adolescent readers do as they read.

Wilhelm then delves into the role that drama and art can have in helping reluctant readers participate in the process of reading, see reading as meaning making, and become engaged and motivated when reading. Wilhelm's case studies shed light on the difficulties and struggles reluctant readers face when reading.

Wilhelm ends each chapter with a commentary—a look back at the original writing with the perspective and knowledge of a life-long career in teaching and research as he shares what he has learned over time. If you work with adolescent readers, this book should be on the top of your to-read list.



Helman, L., Rogers, C., Frederick, A., & Struck, M. (2016). *Inclusive literacy teaching: Differentiating approaches in multilingual elementary classrooms*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. ISBN 978-0807757864. \$35.95

Our classrooms are becoming more diverse. In this timely book, Helman, Rogers, Frederick, and Struck provide guidance on differentiation and support for students with varied language backgrounds. The authors follow the unique stories of six multilingual students so that teachers can better support and differentiate

learning for emergent bilingual students in their classrooms. The storied lives of the six multilingual students help educators to understand that there are multiple paths for bilingual students; each faces his or her own challenges and successes. The book provides foundational knowledge for teachers to understand how language impacts learning so that they can provide tailored instruction to students. Throughout the book, the authors present tools to help teachers meet the needs of bilingual students.

Helman and colleagues provide a wealth of critically important information for teachers of bilingual students. They first focus on helping teachers to bridge what students' current achievement levels and the academic standards they are expected to achieve in the school setting. Next, they examine academic language and its role in literacy learning, attending to the fact that language learning is social and extremely complex. The authors discuss building meaningful and supportive relationships with students and families and the role relationships play in making school learning relevant. They explore building relationships through three

ways of knowing: 'just teach' teacher relationships, providing instrumental support, and engaging in a 'benefit-of-the-doubt' treatment of students. Following this section, they turn their attention to ways that educators can increase meaningful involvement with multilingual families. The main contribution of this book is that it provides a solid foundation for bilingual education by illustrating how every individual child's experience differs, even within the same school.

This thorough book provides an up-close look at the lives of six children as they navigate becoming bilingual in elementary classrooms. Every question that arose in my mind as I read was answered with examples, ideas, and resources. Connections to standards, resource charts, and sample student work help to illuminate and expand the conversation. The authors cite sound research to support their points in meaningful and focused ways. Each chapter ends with a series of discussion questions that can be used to support a book study. I highly recommend this book for anyone working with emergent bilingual students and their families.

