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## Writing Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Writers

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# Writing Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Writers

by Meghan K. Block, Ph.D.

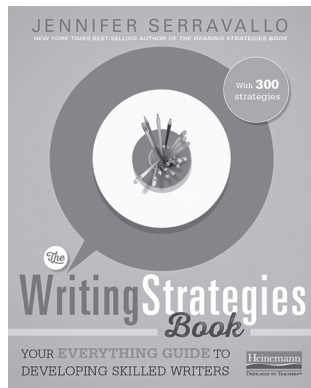
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***Writing strategies book:  
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As elementary writing instruction garners much-needed attention, many teachers are seeking quality resources to support and enhance their writing instruction. One recent resource that teachers report using or considering is called *The Writing Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Writers*. On its cover the book promises 300 strategies to support elementary teachers' writing instruction and delivers exactly that and more in its content.

In general, the book is user-friendly, easy to navigate, and includes many photographic examples of charts and graphic organizers which teachers will undoubtedly find useful. In fact, included with the book is electronic access to a variety of writing papers and tools. The amount of resources could be overwhelming; however, the first chapter offers a detailed explanation of how to navigate the book and includes useful visuals throughout to support the explanation and to highlight the resources. Not only does the introduction explain the organization and the content of the book, but Serravallo, the author, suggests very specific ways in which this book might be used to support a variety of writing curricula. All in all, the introductory chapter is quite informative and serves as a valuable resource to explain and preview the content of the book. Both novice and experienced teachers will find the front matter to be important and beneficial as they survey the resource and begin to incorporate recommended practices into their writing instruction.

The bulk of the book provides teachers a multitude of strategy ideas to support children's writing development. For each strategy, the author provides a range of grade levels for whom the strategy might be valuable, the writing genre for which the strategy is best suited, the step(s) in the writing process for which the strategy might be most beneficial, and a visual representation of key charts or organizers. On the whole, the strategies address important aspects of writing including idea generation, organization, elaboration, word choice, and conventions. The author notes that the strategies come from a variety of sources, and identifies the original sources so readers can access them. In addition to the variety of strategies, readers will better understand important elements of an ideal writing classroom. As such, teachers will gain ideas for setting up the writing space, managing conferences, and planning units.

However, though the book can be a useful support for writing instruction, it is important to note that some important elements of or approaches to writing instruction are missing. In addition, some of the strategy descriptions lack key information. As an example, one strategy suggests encouraging children to use an alphabet chart for referencing letter-sound associations in young children's writing. Though an important

strategy, the book does not address the need for a high quality alphabet chart nor does it identify elements of a high-quality alphabet chart.

Overall the book may best serve as a supplemental resource to a high quality writing curricula. Elementary teachers of all levels of experience will find that it is easy to navigate and offers many ideas to inspire writing lessons.

## Author Biography

**Dr. Meghan K. Block** is an Associate Professor of Elementary Literacy in the Teacher Education and Professional Development Department at Central Michigan University. Her teaching and research interests focus on early literacy development and instruction. She can be reached at [block1m@cmich.edu](mailto:block1m@cmich.edu).

