

Secondary Literacy Network Book Reviews

Title:	50 Ways to Develop Strategic Writers
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Author: Gail E. Tompkins & Cathy Blanchfield

Teacher/Coach's Area: Foreign Language

Comment: Very extensive list of strategies to promote quality writing and thought among students. Each strategy can be adapted to any classroom and content area. Strategies extend from peer editing to journaling.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Algebra Out Loud
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Author: Pat Mower

Teacher/Coach's Area: Math/Life Skills

Comment: Math is often a hard subject in which to incorporate reading and writing. This gives great examples and samples of how to bring literacy to Algebra. It's very practical and would be easy to implement.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Becoming a Better Teacher
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Author: Giselle O. Martin-Kniep

Teacher/Coach's Area: Special Education

Comment: This book was very easy to maneuver. It was well designed for the teacher on the go. It shares quite a bit of information quickly and easily. Although I am not a "portfolio teacher" because I am afraid of the time and space needed to be successful, I believe that Martin-Kniep's chapter on portfolios can help me change my thoughts on the subject.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Building Literacy in Social Studies
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Author: Ogle, Klemp, McBride

Teacher/Coach's Area: Social Studies

Comment: This book offers rationale, ideas and examples of literacy strategies that are specific to the field of social studies, while many books are cross-curricular in nature. This is 100% directed to the Social Studies teacher.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: Social Studies

Comment: As a teacher in the Social Studies field, there is an obvious wealth of fantastic ideas, content and resources. The book features examples that are both teacher and student friendly; that can easily leap from the pages into the classroom. I plan to purchase a copy myself.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Choice Words
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Author: Peter H. Johnson

Teacher/Coach's Area: Foreign Language

Comment: As educators, we use language to share information and knowledge, praise and scolding. With every word we utter, we affect learning. Therefore, being aware of and monitoring how to talk to students is crucial. Choice Words raises this awareness and highlights effective strategies for speaking with students and promoting learning.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: Social Studies

Comment: Language is the most often employed relationship with our students. How we use it can separate an engaged class from a disengaged one. This book forces reflection on how we use language in our rooms with suggestions for improvements.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Content Area Writing, Every Teacher's Guide
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Author: Daniels, Zemelman, Steineke

Teacher/Coach's Area: HS English

Comment: Although reading is extremely important, writing can increase student understanding and achievement while saving valuable classroom time. This book embellishes the important aspects that any teacher should know about writing and encourages them to help students meet and go beyond basic writing needs.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: English

Comment: This book provides many practical writing strategies for content area teachers. The ideas are explained in fairly brief sections, and I think it would be valuable for all teachers.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?
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Author: Chris Tovani

Review Completed by: Math Teacher

Comment: Being from a discipline that tends not to emphasize reading strategies, I found this book stressed the value of having effective readers across different disciplines. Unlike other books that list various reading strategies, this book shows the value to teachers on why strategies are important in all classrooms.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Geometry Teacher's Activities Kit
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Author: Judith & Gary Muschla

Teacher/Coach's Area: Math

Comment: Excellent book for supplementing very simple instructions and students will be able to use their creativity as they reinforce what they should know. It also provides a challenge since the problems are complex and require several steps.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: Math

Comment: Good supplementary material especially for vocabulary. Good for all levels.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Geometry Out Loud
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Author: Pat Mower

Teacher/Coach's Area: Math

Comment: There are a lot of in-depth activities which are adaptable. This is not just a book to make copies of activities for kids. There are some but it is more of an idea book

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: Literacy Coach

Comment: This is a great resource for math teachers to find ways to approach literacy in a math class. The "pre-reading" activities are of special importance because math teachers may not spend sufficient time on accessing prior knowledge. I would encourage teachers to use many of the suggestions in a math journal at the beginning of class to promote thinking about the concepts being discussed.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	How to Teach So Students Remember
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Author: Marilee Sprenger

Teacher/Coach's Area: Special Education

Comment: I believe this book will help me in the classroom because as I read the book a lot of the examples are things I experience everyday. Being able to refer to the examples will help me teach my kids to understand the importance of paying attention and grasping the information.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area:

Comment: All teachers need to read this. Kids need help remembering.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area:

Comment: More practical ideas in tapping into students' emotional memory as well as left hand side.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	How's It Going
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Author: Carl Anderson

Teacher/Coach's Area: CTE Teacher

Comment: The book is very user friendly. It is applicable to a K-12 audience and has simple, but complete instructions. The book does a great job of demonstrating how important the teacher student relationship is and just how much can come from such a relationship. Finally, he speaks from experience. This is a practical instructional method that seems to have most of the 'kinks' worked out.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: Literacy Coach

Comment: The strong point of this book is in its simplicity. It presents conferring in a non-threatening way for teachers. Carl takes the reader through his ups and downs and shows his human side.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	I Read It, But I Don't Get It
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Author: Cris Tovani

Teacher/Coach's Area: English

Comment: Straightforward easy to read ideas for improving reading comprehension. Narrative style provides real life examples of strategies in action and student responses. Accessible book.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: English

Comment: Very interesting. The personal stories provide strong connections and support to what she is selling- the ability to understand. Access tools section is a nice complement.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Illuminating Texts
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Author: Jim Burke

Teacher/Coach's Area: English

Comment: Burke addresses the many different facets of reading in today's culture. His insight provides guidance and examples of how to tackle the many different texts that we and our students confront everyday. He devotes a chapter to computer literacy.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: Social Studies

Comment: The book does a nice job of reflecting different types of text and analyzing how best to go about reading that format. This is great in our world of new media and the ease of presenting opinions as fact.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Linking Science & Literacy in K-8
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Author: Edited by Rowena Douglas, Michael P. Klentschy, Karen Worthy, and Wendy Binder

Teacher/Coach's Area: English/Science

Comment: This book is awesome! I just learned I will be teaching fluency instead of English next year. I was warned that I would have to do a lot of lecture. In just these 6-8 minutes of glancing through, I took a page of notes on ideas for my classroom. I need to buy this book.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Literacy Strategies Across the Subject Area
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Author: Karen O. Wood & Bruce Taylor

Teacher/Coach's Area: English High School

Comment: This book contains strategies that promote literacy in all subject matters. Not only does it provide explanations of the strategies, it also provides copies and reproducibles for the classroom. It is an excellent resource.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Living and Teaching the Writing Workshop
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Author: Kristen Painter

Teacher/Coach's Area: Secondary Literacy Consultant

Comment: Finally! A guide to get us looking at ourselves as writers. This is not only about putting pen to paper, but about all of the intangible elements that go into the writing process such as time, place and tools.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	QAR Now Question Answer Relationships
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Author: Taffy E. Raphael; Kathy Highfield; Kathryn H. Au

Review Completed by: English Teacher

Comment: A MUST-READ even for teachers talented at questioning because QAR transfers that talent to the students. Life Skills + Discipline Mastery

Recommend: Yes...a must read.

Title:	Socratic Circles: Fostering Critical & Creative Thinking in Middle and High School
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Author: Matt Copeland

Review Completed by: Literacy Coach

Comment: Very readable "how to" user's guide to implementing Socratic Circles. Chapters develop step by step. Lots of dialogue transcripts with explanations.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding
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Author: Stephanie Harvey & Anne Goudvis

Teacher/Coach's Area: English High School

Comment: This book, as many of the books on literacy, offers many strategies to help students comprehend text. The first 200 pages are very valid; however, it is the appendices that are the most valuable. It is in these sections that resources are listed that can be used for specific strategies. Awesome stuff!

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Summarizing, Paraphrasing and Retelling
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Author: Emily Kissner

Teacher/Coach's Area: English/Literacy Coach

Comment: Intro stresses effect of summarizing on retention and on assessing comprehension. A module chapter focuses on teaching the difference between topic and a main idea, giving an example of paragraphs with the same topic but different main ideas. It also exemplifies implicit main ideas. Focus on brain research says sense and meaning are needed for memory. We need more "How to" on this topic.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: Sp. Ed. Teacher

Comment: This is an excellent resource for teachers working with students in special education.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Teaching Reading in Middle School
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Author: Laura Robb

Teacher/Coach's Area: Math/Life Skills

Comment: Great book. It's systematic and provides strategies and the reasons for them. Good real life examples and also explanations of how to begin/organize them in your own classroom.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: Special Education

Comment: What a great book with awesome examples. This book has many ideas where you can bring reading and writing in to the classroom. This is a must have for any Math teacher.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Teaching Reading in Social Studies, Science, Math
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Author: Laura Robb

Teacher/Coach's Area: Social Studies/History

Comment: This book is light, practical and easy to navigate through and it is loaded with an abundance of ideas for subject matters often left behind in the literacy debate. The only downside to the book is that it seems geared toward the 3-7 crowd of upper elementary and middle school, but most of the examples, ideas, etc. seem translatable to the high school level.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: English/Science

Comment: Great book for beginners and advanced. There are so many ideas and it's easy to look through and find them.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Tools & Text for 50 Essential Lessons
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Author: Jim Burke

Teacher/Coach's Area: English

Comment: This book is an awesome resource. I would definitely recommend it. I found so many handouts that could be useful. It doesn't require much reading. It provides a quick resource for English teachers, but it definitely includes tools that could apply to other content areas as well.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: Special Education

Comment: This resource guides a teacher's instruction as they teach students the ELA academic essentials. Easy to read lesson format provides structure for the teacher including core standard text to use and tools.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: Special Education

Comment: This resource would be helpful for teachers in any context area and is well organized for ease of use. The strategies appear very practical.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Ways to Think About Mathematics
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Author: Steve Benson

Teacher/Coach's Area: Literacy Coach

Comment: I'm often asked to assist math teachers in helping students to become interactive and literate in mathematical concepts. The first direction I like to take the teachers is in the area of movement and real life problems. Although this book doesn't discuss "real life" problems, you are allowed to think through solutions with no "right" answer. The students deal with ideas and problems vs. facts and repetition. It is a good resource for math teachers to use as they try to promote engagement in mathematics.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: English/Science

Comment: Great book for beginners and advanced students. There are many ideas and ways to help student organize their thinking around problem solving.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	When Kids Can't Read
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Author: Kyleene Beers

Teacher/Coach's Area: Special Education

Comment: This book provides a chart breakdown of reading skills secondary readers should have and what to do if they don't have the skills, along with the chapter that covers those skills. It's great for secondary teachers because we often know that a student has problems reading but we don't know why or what to do about it. This book is great.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: CTE

Comment: As a student, I struggled with reading throughout my k-12 experience. I did not have the proper strategies in place to help me make it through school. This book helps teachers address students such as myself. It will allow the teacher to pull-in some of those struggling readers and thus help them say, "I can read."

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Wondrous Words
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Author: Katie Woodray

Teacher/Coach's Area: H.S. English

Comment: The wisdom of this text crosses disciplines. It reminded me of why many of us like books on tape: we like to be read to. I am also a firm believer in reading more to write better.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: ELA Consultant

Comment: This is not an Elementary teacher's book- it is every teacher's book. Page 120 will give you invaluable information because these 5 parts KWR addresses allows anybody to teach anything.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Words, Words, Words
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Author: Janet Allen

Teacher/Coach's Area: Special Education

Comment: This book provides alternatives to standard look it up in the dictionary- strategies. It focuses on constructing meaning and making connections to words. The strategies appear to be easily incorporated into a wide variety of lessons for any context areas.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: Foreign Language

Comment: What a great book! It presents many strategies that can easily be adapted to any classroom. The most significant chapter is: "Reading as the Heart of Word- Rich Classrooms" the chapter explains the benefits of reading, as related to vocabulary development.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Writing Reminders: Tools, Tips & Techniques and Reading Reminders: Tools, Tips & Techniques
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Author: Jim Burke

Teacher/Coach's Area: English/Literacy Coach

Comment: I liked the organization of each chapter: Rationale, What to do and Classroom Connection. There are places in the margin to take notes. Great resources listed at the end of each chapter too. I think this book should be added to the list.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: HS English

Comment: Burke compiles this book in a user friendly way making it impossible for teachers not to use it. The book addresses skills in key areas and prepares both teacher and students for success. "What to do" and "Classroom Connection" at end of each chapter provides clear directed applications.

Recommend: Yes

Title:	Yellow Brick Road
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Author: Janet Allen

Teacher/Coach's Area: H.S. English

Comment: Good resource book for most teachers. The book offers many suggestions, stories about struggling readers and reproducible handouts.

Recommend: Yes

Teacher/Coach's Area: Special Education

Comment: Designed to meet the needs of students in grades 4-12, this resource provides researched based methods to support teachers as they assist students who struggle to comprehend in English and context.

Recommend: Yes