

Professional Development Bibliography

These books are like mega-power vitamins for teaching professionals who are serious about building their effectiveness. For each one, I've noted exactly what it is that makes it so valuable.

Atwell, Nancie. *In the Middle: New Understanding About Writing, Reading, and Learning*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1998.

Most teachers are familiar with this important book, which introduced to many of us the concept of “writing workshops” in our classrooms. Some useful points for discussion are Atwell’s solutions for organizing student time, for offering students choice, and for weaving together academic lessons and students’ individual processes.

Buckner, Aimee. *Notebook Know-How: Strategies for the Writer’s Notebook*. Portland: Stenhouse, 2005.

This gem is for teachers whose students write journals in class. Buckner offers some wonderful, concrete activities for teaching writing craft using journal entries. Her activities are clear and effective, and they extend the usefulness of an already essential habit, journal writing.

Carroll, Joyce Armstrong. *Dr. JAC’s Guide to Writing with Depth*. Spring, TX: Absey, 2002.

One of my favorite books written in the last ten years, Carroll has gathered together a kid-friendly collection of rhetorical devices used by writers to change writing from plain to amazing. Her book is as easy to use as a glossary: each concept has a clear definition and engaging samples from literature, bringing to all of us what has traditionally been reserved for the most elite classrooms.

Daniels, Harvey. *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups*. Portland: Stenhouse, 2002.

This updated classic has inspired many teachers to try turning literature discussions over to student groups. The book is filled with practical tips for how to set up and manage the groups for authentic discussion.

Eggers, Dave, ed. *The Best American Non-Required Reading 2002*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.

Most teachers are aware of the Best American Poetry series and the Best American Essay series, but this series only began in 2002. The inspiring and thought-provoking opening pages by Dave Eggers discuss the growing literacy among 15-to-25-year-old Americans, who are reading more and more—just not in school. It makes for a wonderful staff-development discussion and should be required reading for all teachers.

Gallagher, Kelly. *Reading Reasons: Motivational Mini-Lessons for Middle and High School*. Portland: Stenhouse, 2003.

Gallagher takes something as abstract as “why would I want to be a better reader” and delivers concrete, compelling, and digestible mini-lessons that will make students into believers. My favorite is “reading arms you against oppression.” In a democracy, teaching this is active patriotism.

Glasser, William. *The Quality School*. New York: HarperCollins, 1998.

People need certain things and will act to obtain them: safety, fun, love, and belonging to a group, for example. We can build our classrooms for amazing rigor and academic success if we remember to use what we know.

Graves, Donald. *Build a Literate Classroom*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1991.

In creating good classroom habits, what is the teacher’s responsibility and what is the student’s? Teachers do best when they invite students to be a part of classroom routines, and this book is a primer on how to accomplish this. Though the book focuses on elementary classrooms, the ideas work perfectly even with high school seniors.

Harvey, Stephanie. *Strategies That Work, Second Edition: Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement*. Portland: Stenhouse, 2007.

This book reminds us of the importance of heeding “the consequences of our own teaching actions,” as James Moffett said. When one of my lessons falls flat, this is a great book to pick up and browse through for inspiration about going back in there another day.

Killgallon, Don. *Sentence Composing: The Complete Course*. Upper Montclair: Boynton/Cook, 1987.

Elementary-school teachers understand about giving students one bite at a time, and high school teachers appreciate the need for it, too. This book demonstrates how teaching grammar can be as functional as manipulating sentence parts in a step-by-step way. Teachers who use these concepts notice remarkable growth in the maturity level of their students’ writing.

Lane, Barry. *After "The End": Teaching and Learning Creative Revision*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1992.

This book will convince anyone that revision and proofreading are not synonymous, and it's a must for any teacher who watches students trudge through the drudgery of producing "a new draft" by copying the old draft with a few superficial corrections. The best lessons here are snapshots, thoughtshots, and the "three questions" technique.

Langer, Judith. *Guidelines for Teaching Middle and High School Students to Read and Write Well*. Washington, DC: National Research Center on English Learning & Achievement, 2007

This report is, amazingly, both brief and massive. Langer and her colleagues set forth six characteristics of instruction that accomplish change in students. This report contains a wealth of material to foster professional growth and educational-policy discussions. (Since it comes from the U.S. Department of Education, it bears a helpful stamp of authority.) It also has many suggestions for further reading.

Moffett, James. *Teaching the Universe of Discourse*. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook, 1987.

OWilliam Strong called this book the Rosetta Stone of teaching English. James Moffett's clarity helps bring into focus the differences between our real mission in teaching students to write, think, and speak; and traditional practices that do not accomplish these goals. If I could own only one book about teaching, this would be it.

Newkirk, Thomas. *The School Essay Manifesto: Reclaiming the Essay for Students and Teachers*. Shoreham: Discover Writing, 2005.

Newkirk explores the differences between real-world essays (engaging, playful, wonderful to read) and typical school essays (deadly boring to read or write, and usually five paragraphs). By examining the origins of both kinds of essays, this manifesto can help us teachers combat the terrible urge to teach the same way we were taught.

Noden, Harry. *Image Grammar: Using Grammatical Structures to Teach Writing*. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook, 1997.

Noden shows students how to use "brushstrokes" to make an image clearer, using grammatical structures (like participles, appositives, and adjectives out of order) the way an artist uses paint. This book makes it so easy, even very young children can do it, elevating their writing to new levels of sophistication.

Ray, Katie Wood. *What You Know by Heart*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002.

My favorite thing about this wonderful book is at the back: a collection of tiny, unusual devices captured from literature for students to read, ponder, and imitate in their own writing.

Romano, Tom. *Clearing the Way: Working with Teenage Writers*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1987.

Teachers find their way to this book for different reasons, but whether you read a page, a chapter, or the whole book, you appreciate your new colleague Tom Romano. I go back to him time after time, for a dose of his light touch with students, his humor, and his compassion with struggling student writers.

———*Crafting Authentic Voice*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2004.

The student samples and Romano's discussion of them are wonderful. It's worth studying not only what Romano says to his students, but how he says it. Many people talk about treating students with respect and human dignity, but here is a rare glimpse of it in action.

Spandel, Vicki. *Creating Writers Through 6-Trait Writing Assessment and Instruction (4th edition)*. Boston: Alyn & Bacon, 2004.

This is the "six traits" book. Many schools across the country have embraced the traits because of it. Spandel analyzes quality writing into concrete, describable, visible components. She has also written a version (*Creating Young Writers*) for elementary-age writers.

Tovani, Cris. *I Read It, But I Don't Get It: Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers*. Portland: Stenhouse, 2000.

Tovani's work with struggling students will sound familiar, and her "back to the drawing board" tenacity is refreshing. This book offers simple and reproducible processes to teach students who think they just are not readers. Tovani shows her students what good readers do when they hit snags. This book is clear, engaging, and way at the top of my list. I wish Cris Tovani had been my teacher.

Vygotsky, L. S. *Mind in Society Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge: Harvard, 1978.

This is not light reading. But the theories and thoughts in this collection are the underpinnings for many of my classroom practices and would make wonderful reading for any teachers who have time for deep study. The most thought-provoking chapter for me is titled "The Role of Play in Development" and is about the development of signs and symbols (and later, writing) in children.

———*Thought and Language*. Cambridge: MIT, 1986.

Vygotsky was a contemporary of Piaget, but Vygotsky's research into the cognitive process never made it into education classes until relatively recently. This is because he lived in the former Soviet Union, and his work was suppressed there for years. This important, classic body of research draws conclusions different from Piaget's. The dense academic style doesn't exactly make for a page-turner, but the information is invaluable.

Weaver, Constance. *Teaching Grammar in Context*. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook, 1996.

How did you learn grammar? How should you teach it? The entire debate about teaching grammar is contained in this book, as well as conclusive research and research-based techniques for teaching grammar within the context of writing.