

What Your Colleagues Are Saying . . .

Teaching reading is the responsibility of all teachers, but how? This is the book that highlights the critical skills regardless of age or curricula. It emphasizes the active view of reading, the critical nature of reading for purpose, starts from what the reader brings to the text, and acknowledges that reading tasks and purposes can be unique to content areas. Packed with great ideas, grounded in research, and written for the teacher who wants to increase their impact on their students to share the passion for learning.

John Hattie, Melbourne Laureate Professor Emeritus

Teaching reading and learning to read are enormously complex tasks. It certainly involves phonics, but so much more. Jennifer Serravallo does a masterful job of unpacking what is involved in becoming a proficient reader. Equally important, she provides remarkably clear and readable examples, with supporting detail, of how to teach those many essential competencies involved in reading instruction. It's one thing to talk about what needs to be done to create readers; it's quite another to actually show how it's done in the classroom. Clearly Jennifer Serravallo is a master of both! If you're interested in putting the science of reading into action, this book is for you.

Timothy Rasinski, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Literacy Education

We know that teaching reading is rocket science but aren't always sure how to fly the ship. This is the instruction manual. It's the guide you need to right the ship and ensure that students learn to read at high levels. You'll find practical ideas and examples that help you maneuver the complex world of literacy learning with ease.

Douglas Fisher, Professor, San Diego State University

This book is packed with tools, tables, tips, and practical lesson structures that support predictability and teacher decision-making. With student engagement front and center, Jen shows us that we don't have to choose between structured and responsive teaching. Kids need both!

Kari Yates, Author, Leadership and Literacy Consultant

Once in a generation a teacher's teacher comes along and makes plain what adults can do to ensure children thrive. Jen is that teacher, and this book is required reading for all of us who believe every child can develop powerful literacies, and want a role to play in that development.

Rachael Gabriel, Professor of Literacy Education,
Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut

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TEACHING
Reading
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JENNIFER SERRAVALLO



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Methods and Structures for Engaging,
Explicit Instruction

CORWIN Literacy

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Visit the companion website at

https://companion.corwin.com/courses/2024_TRAD

for access to video and downloadable resources.

Note From the Publisher: The author has provided content throughout the book that is available to you through QR (quick response) codes. To read a QR code, you must have a smartphone or tablet with a camera. We recommend that you download a QR code reader app that is made specifically for your phone or tablet brand.

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About the Author



Jennifer Serravallo is a *New York Times* bestselling author, award-winning educator, literacy consultant, frequent invited speaker at state and national conferences, and former member of the *Parents Magazine* editorial board. In 2023, she launched her podcast, *To the Classroom: Conversations With Researchers and Educators*. Jen is best known for creating books and resources rooted in research that help make responsive, strategic, differentiated literacy instruction possible for all educators.

Her latest books are *Teaching Reading Across the Day: Methods and Structures for Engaging, Explicit Instruction* (2024), *The Reading Strategies Book 2.0* (2023), *Teaching Writing in Small Groups* (2021), *A Teacher's Guide to Reading Conferences* (2019), and *Understanding Texts and Readers* (2018). Her books and resources are used around the world; *The Writing Strategies Book* (2017) and *The Reading Strategies Book* (2015, 1st edition) have been translated into French, Chinese, and Spanish.

Her comprehension assessment and teaching resources, *Complete Comprehension: Fiction* (2019) and *Complete Comprehension: Nonfiction* (2019), help teachers make sense of comprehension, especially in whole-chapter books and book-length nonfiction texts.

Jen holds a BA from Vassar College and an MA from Teachers College Columbia University, where she has also taught graduate and undergraduate classes.

Follow Jen on X (@jserravallo) and Instagram (@jenniferserravallo), learn more from her website/blog: www.jenniferserravallo.com, and join the Reading and Writing Strategies Facebook Community.





Introduction

We read all day long: We read fiction and feel lost in a book. We read emails filled with instructions we need to follow or that require a thoughtful response. We read the latest coverage of a tragic war halfway around the world and consider each journalist's perspective. We read to prepare dinner from a recipe, administer a child's medication correctly, and stay in touch with text message after text message on our phones. Reading is a critical life skill for us all, not merely something we do in school during an English language arts (ELA) block. Reading well opens possibilities. Struggling to read limits them—across our day and throughout our lifetimes.

Because reading is so critically important, the job of teaching students how to read well belongs to all of us. Reading well across disciplines and within varied contexts will help students to be versatile, flexible, deep readers who can better learn from their reading, transfer skills across subjects, and use strategies to meet the unique demands of reading in each content area. The depth and breadth of skills and knowledge that students will need to be proficient is not something they will only develop in the ELA block while reading literature; they need opportunities and support with thoughtful instruction in reading all day long. They also need teachers across their day (and across disciplines) who understand readers and reading and who can make instructional choices supporting not only students' knowledge development but also their reading skill development.

With all of the varied goals, skills, strategies, knowledge, and vocabulary that students need to learn (no matter the text or subject), as teachers, we need predictable, efficient, trusted structures for explicit and engaging teaching—structures that draw on the research and also make room for the *art* of teaching or what Paige et al. (2021) define as the “teacher’s decision making that involves selection, differentiation, and delivery of engaging and efficacious reading instruction” (pp. 1–2). Structures that can be used no matter your curriculum or subject area. Structures we come to know so well that they streamline our planning and help students focus their attention on *what* we’re teaching, not *how* we’re teaching it, which helps to manage the cognitive load and aid learning.





What You'll Find in Parts I and II

Part I includes two chapters that explore foundations for this book. Chapter 1 builds the case for teaching reading across the whole day. Using the Active View of Reading model (Duke & Cartwright, 2021), you'll explore various aspects of reading you'll help your students develop and then consider the role that texts, tasks, and sociocultural context play in the act of reading. Chapter 2 takes a close look at explicit instruction as I unpack key recommendations from the last several decades of research, introduce you to the nine lesson types you'll read about in Part II, and offer a crash course in key decisions you'll make, no matter what lesson type you choose. I also share advice for when to teach lessons to the whole class and when to focus instruction with smaller groups. This chapter concludes with a general discussion of text selection for instruction and independent practice.

After exploring these foundations, each of the nine chapters in **Part II** focuses on one type of lesson. The order of the chapters is not significant, and in fact, you could read them in any order you choose. Once you understand the purposes of each type of lesson, you'll choose the ones that will best serve your students and the content you need to teach, likely using a blend of them across each school day. In each chapter, we'll explore how to identify a lesson focus and plan for an engaging explicit lesson, including considerations for text selection; how to monitor progress within a lesson to know if students are meeting your goals; how to ensure your lessons are supporting students with reading skills and strategies while also helping them build knowledge and grow their vocabularies; how to pace the lesson for maximum engagement; and how to plan for responsive teaching, including anticipating possible misunderstandings and how to offer feedback to guide students as they learn.

Note that throughout every chapter, I've tried to show *and* tell, providing both explanation and examples across a wide range of grade levels, subject areas, and different group sizes. So, while a lesson example (either a teaching vignette or video) might be with, say, a small group of first graders in a science classroom, if you focus on the teaching moves and the lesson structure, you will see they apply to any grade level, subject area, or grouping—even if you're an eighth-grade teacher teaching an ELA lesson to a whole class.

In each chapter in Part II, you'll find a repeated structure with familiar sections.

Picture It

Each chapter starts with a teaching vignette and the lesson plan behind it. The callouts in this section note the hallmarks of each lesson type and key takeaways to make the teaching effective, efficient, and engaging.

An Overview

In this section, you'll find an explanation of the lesson type, along with research highlighting its essential elements and why and how this kind of teaching has a positive impact on students.

What Research Says

Each chapter is filled with research. In this section, you'll find a short summary of key findings that are aligned to, and that provide support for, the lesson type that is the focus of the chapter.

Knowledge and Vocabulary Building

In every lesson, you won't only be planning for your students' reading skill development—you'll also consider the goals you have for knowledge and vocabulary building. In this section, you'll find advice, ideas, considerations, and research to inform this aspect of your planning and instruction.

Planning

Next, you'll read about how to prepare, whether you're planning a lesson from scratch or adapting a lesson from a core program or existing curriculum. You can reference that lesson's planning template in the appendix or online as you learn about text considerations for both your demonstrations and student practice as well as other tips unique to each lesson type.

Structure and Timing

This section includes a quick guide to timing for each part of the lesson as well as tips for making it as impactful as possible.

Responsive Teaching

Here, you'll find key things to look for to help you anticipate how students might respond to the various parts of the lesson and sample prompts, redirections, questions, and responses to keep students moving toward your lesson objective.

Lesson in Action

With the online video that accompanies each chapter, you can watch me teach at least two complete lessons. For each lesson, you'll find annotations on a lesson plan that highlight my planning decisions, things I noticed when I watched the video, responsive decisions I made on the spot that deviated from the plans, ideas for what I'd do differently if I had a do-over, thoughts about what I'd teach next based on how students responded, and more. I hope these offer you not *perfect* examples but rather realistic examples of how to plan and deliver lessons, bringing the structures you'll read about to life while also responding to the students in front of you.

Spir It

In a few of the chapters, you'll read about ways to innovate with the lesson structure—for example, by changing up the text types or by offering students a chance to lead the lesson.

Take it to Your Classroom

These sections offer key takeaways and things to think about from the chapter as you bring what you've read to life with your students.

From start to finish, this book highlights research in the teaching of reading. I believe teaching should be informed by empirical research to ensure that we are developing all facets of reading, making appropriate text decisions, and making choices based on what will have the best chance of working for the most students. While writing this book, I read hundreds of studies and synthesized and translated the key findings into practical ideas you can use in your classroom. That said, I also think there are limitations to what research can tell us, and we need to be mindful of where the science leaves off and the art of teaching needs to pick up. The moment-to-moment decisions we make as teachers during lessons and the interactions we have with students during a lesson can have the biggest impact on their learning and growth. So, we need to respect the science and the promising findings published in research journals while also trusting the collective knowledge that comes from our practice and experiences with children in classrooms every day.

Students in our classrooms are unique with diverse backgrounds, strengths, and needs, and we must create lessons (or tailor lessons from an existing program or curriculum) with individual students in mind. Throughout the book, you'll find advice for planning *before* you teach a lesson, such as the amount of scaffolding you'll use to introduce the lesson, what activities and tasks you'll plan for students to do, or how you'll pace the lesson. But, as I say throughout the book, you should also expect to be surprised by what happens *during* the lesson and be prepared to respond in the moment with prompts, feedback, or new examples to make the lesson objectives even clearer for students.



We need to respect the science and the promising findings published in research journals while also trusting the collective knowledge that comes from our practice and experiences with children in classrooms every day.





What You'll Find in the Online Resources

The videos available in the online resources are a critical component of this book. When you pause to watch the examples of teaching included with each chapter, you can envision the principles, elements, pacing, structure, and moves of each lesson type. You'll see a variety of grade levels and content areas represented, which should help you to notice what stays the same, regardless of the content or age of the students.

The lessons were filmed in five classrooms across two days in two New Jersey schools, one that serves students in Grades K–4 and the other with students in Grades 5–6. As a guest in these classrooms, I visited each briefly the week prior to filming, and I planned my lessons based on information I learned about the children from my visit and their teachers. I also aligned all the lessons to the content area, ELA, and phonics curricula and scope and sequences of each class. I used a few of the lesson texts provided by the curriculum, but the majority of texts I chose to align with the current topics and skills students were studying.

Table 0.1 provides an overview of the video lessons you'll find online, though you'll want to watch the video examples when you are prompted to do so at the end of Chapters 3–11. Notice the variety of whole-class and small-group lessons, the range of grade levels, and that lessons were filmed during English language arts, science, and social studies classes.



Table 0.1 An Overview of Lesson Videos Available Online

Chapter	Video Number and Title
Read-Aloud Lessons	<p>3.1 Small-Group Read-Aloud Lesson, Fourth Grade, Social Studies</p> <p>3.2 Whole-Class Read-Aloud Lesson, First Grade, English Language Arts</p> <p>3.3 Whole-Class Read-Aloud Lesson, Fifth Grade, Science</p>
Phonics and Spelling Lessons	<p>4.1 Small-Group Phonics and Spelling Lesson, First Grade, /ō/ /</p> <p>4.2 Whole-Class Phonics and Spelling Lesson, Second Grade, VCe Review</p>
Vocabulary Lessons	<p>5.1 Whole-Class Vocabulary Lesson, Fifth Grade, Science</p> <p>5.2 Small-Group Vocabulary Lesson, Second Grade, Social Studies</p>
Focus Lessons	<p>6.1 Individual Focus Lesson (Conference), Sixth Grade, Social Studies</p> <p>6.2 Whole-Class Focus Lesson (Mini-lesson), Fourth Grade, Science</p> <p>6.3 Small-Group Focus Lesson (Strategy Lesson), First Grade, English Language Arts</p>
Shared-Reading Lessons	<p>7.1 Small-Group Shared-Reading Lesson, First Grade, English Language Arts</p> <p>7.2 Whole-Class Shared-Reading Lesson, Second Grade, Social Studies</p>
Close-Reading Lessons	<p>8.1 Small-Group Close-Reading Lesson, Sixth Grade, English Language Arts</p> <p>8.2 Whole-Class Close-Reading Lesson, Fifth Grade, Science</p>
Guided Inquiry Lessons	<p>9.1 Individual Goal Setting Guided Inquiry Lesson, Second Grade, English Language Arts</p> <p>9.2 Whole-Class Conversation Fishbowl Guided Inquiry Lesson, Fourth Grade, English Language Arts</p> <p>9.3 Small-Group Craft Study Guided Inquiry Lesson, Sixth Grade, English Language Arts</p>
Reader's Theater Lessons	<p>10.1 Small-Group Reader's Theater Lesson, First Grade, English Language Arts</p> <p>10.2 Small-Group Reader's Theater Lesson, Fourth Grade, English Language Arts</p>
Conversation Lessons	<p>11.1 Whole-Class Conversation Lesson, Sixth Grade, English Language Arts</p> <p>11.2 Partnership Conversation Lesson, Second Grade, English Language Arts</p> <p>11.3 Small-Group Book Club Conversation Lesson, Fifth Grade, Science</p>

Using Teaching Reading Across the Day as Professional Learning and/or as a Supplemental Resource

The advice, lesson types, and ideas throughout the book stand on decades of research on effective teaching and can be helpful in a wide range of classrooms and for teachers at every point in their career—from first-year teachers to experienced educators looking to fine tune; from classrooms using new core reading programs to those creating their own curriculum from scratch; from teachers of kindergarten through eighth grade; from ELA teachers to teachers of content studies such as science or history (see Table 0.2).

Table 0.2

If . . .	How This Book Can Help . . .
You recently adopted a new core reading program.	Even with a scripted program, you'll make choices—you'll modify a long lesson to fit within your time constraints, swap out a text for another that's more relevant or engaging, tailor your responses during lessons to the students in front of you, and more. Often, you'll keep the text and task the program suggests but need to use a different lesson structure with more or less scaffolding. In this book, you'll find practical, use-tomorrow advice and many other modifications necessary to adapt any program.
You embrace (or have been asked to embrace) the science of reading and want clarity around what it looks like in practice.	Much of the science of reading research tells us what happens in the brain of a reader and what areas of reading instruction to focus on. I've read the research—there are over 300 citations throughout this book—and have used that, together with countless hours of teaching in classrooms around the country and working with hundreds of educators over decades, to suggest methods, structures, and practices that honor both the science of reading and the art of teaching reading.
You're a content area teacher (i.e., science, social studies) and you assign reading, read aloud to students, or include texts in your lessons in another way.	Though a primary purpose for assigning reading in the content areas may be to help students learn content, most students will benefit from explicit instruction about how to read discipline-specific texts and will need guided practice to do so. The teaching methods and practices in the nine lesson structures in this book are designed to help students develop the skills to both read and engage meaningfully with texts <i>and</i> to learn content from the texts.
You work in a district where you create your own curriculum maps and lesson plans from scratch.	If you're designing lessons from the ground up, you'll need streamlined templates to help you plan efficiently and advice for how to maximize effectiveness. After reading this book, you'll know nine lesson structures and an assortment of methods to use within each that you can use to teach reading about any topic in any subject, text, or grade level.

(Continued)

Table 0.2 (Continued)

If . . .	How This Book Can Help . . .
<p>You are looking for ways to boost student engagement during lessons.</p>	<p>The most effective lessons are ones in which students are highly active and engaged—some research suggests that the most effective teachers elicit three to five opportunities for simple responses (quick choral responses, gestures such as a thumbs up, or holding up a response cards) and at least one opportunity for a complex response (turn and talk, writing a response on a whiteboard, or partner reading) <i>per minute</i> of each lesson. This book is filled with suggestions and concrete examples of how to engage students in lessons and then respond with feedback and prompts to keep them active.</p>
<p>You want practical, tangible examples—written lesson plans and videos—of what effective research-based reading instruction looks like.</p>	<p>Many books about research-based instruction tell about it, but few show it with concrete examples. This book contains more than 30 sample lesson plans in K–8 ELA, science, and social studies classrooms, along with video of me teaching about two dozen lessons to show what the plans look like in action. The videos were filmed across two days, all in one take, with very minimal editing. Watching them, I thought of things I would have done differently, and I have ideas for follow-up (included as commentary alongside the plans). My goal was to show not perfect lessons but rather the reality of what it means to be informed by all the best research and have the most well-intentioned plans but then need to modify and make on-the-spot decisions when teaching.</p>
<p>You want practical ideas for how to bring more intentional knowledge building and vocabulary development into each lesson.</p>	<p>Research has consistently found that knowledge and vocabulary are critical to comprehension. All of the lesson structures in this book, and all of the written and video lesson examples, show how to balance explicit teaching of strategies with intentional knowledge and vocabulary building. In addition, an entire chapter is devoted to explicit teaching of vocabulary.</p>
<p>You have students reading below grade level, but you know they need experience with grade-level texts.</p>	<p>All students need experience with grade-level texts every day. Depending on the level of text each student can read independently and their background knowledge of the topic they are reading about, they may need more or less scaffolding with that text. Several of the lesson structures in this book offer the support your students need to engage with a text that is more complex than what they can read independently.</p>
<p>Your students need support with foundational skills, including phonics and fluency.</p>	<p>Whether you teach Grades K–2 (where all or most of your class will need support with these skills) or Grades 3–8 (where only certain students might need support), the lesson structures in this book can help. Lesson structures for phonics and spelling, reader’s theater, shared reading, or focus lessons that can be centered around word reading or fluency strategies will keep your teaching streamlined and student engagement high.</p>
<p>You are in a preservice program learning to be a teacher or are new to the teaching profession.</p>	<p>The advice throughout the book is based on decades of research with hundreds of links to peer-reviewed studies and is presented clearly and with helpful scaffolds (i.e., lesson templates, video examples) to make it accessible. The lesson structures make planning more streamlined and focused and teaching more intentional, and the guidance for responsiveness and offering feedback supports the on-your-toes decision-making that is critical to effective instruction.</p>

Using Teaching Reading Across the Day With Other Books I've Authored

The information in this book adds to and complements my previous work on reading instruction but can also be a helpful resource for anyone unfamiliar with my past work (see some connections to my most recent publications in Table 0.3). Note that *Conferring With Readers* (2007), *Teaching Reading in Small Groups* (2010), *The Literacy Teacher's Playbook: 3–5* (2012), *The Literacy Teacher's Playbook: K–2* (2013), *The Reading Strategies Book* (2015), and *Connecting With Students Online* (2021) are all out of print at my request. While these books contain some information that is still relevant and helpful, there is at least some information in each book that is outdated or does not represent my latest thinking. The titles in the following table are aligned to current research. If you have *Teaching Reading in Small Groups*, for example, you should retire it and transition to *Teaching Reading Across the Day* for more updated, comprehensive, and research-aligned advice about how to plan and lead small-group (and whole-class!) lessons.



Table 0.3

If You Have/Have Read/Have Used	How <i>Teaching Reading Across the Day (TRAD)</i> May Help
<i>The Reading Strategies Book 2.0 (RSB2.0, 2023)</i>	<i>TRAD</i> will help you bring the research-based strategies from <i>RSB2.0</i> to life in your classroom. <i>TRAD</i> offers dozens of videos to see the incorporation of strategies in a variety of lesson structures for a range of ages and will help you see how strategies are one part of a well-crafted lesson that should also include intentional knowledge and vocabulary building. You can use the charts, strategies, and prompts from <i>RSB2.0</i> to simplify and streamline planning using the templates and advice from <i>TRAD</i> . <i>RSB2.0</i> 's skill progressions can help you monitor progress during all the lessons described in <i>TRAD</i> . Between these two books, there are over 1,000 citations to peer-reviewed research; they make a perfect text set to help with both <i>what</i> to teach and <i>how</i> to teach it in any classroom.
<i>A Teacher's Guide to Reading Conferences (TGRC, 2019)</i>	In <i>TRAD</i> , I cover lesson structures for whole-class and small-group teaching (with occasional mention of one-on-one instruction). In <i>TGRC</i> , I offer advice for mostly one-on-one conferences, though I explore small-group strategy lessons (also known as <i>focus lessons</i> in <i>TRAD</i>) and book clubs (also known as <i>conversation lessons</i> in <i>TRAD</i>). Both <i>TGRC</i> and <i>TRAD</i> offer video examples of a variety of types of lessons.
<i>Understanding Texts and Readers (UT&R, 2018)</i>	In <i>UT&R</i> , I focus on quantitative and qualitative leveling and expectations for reader response aligned to text complexity for second- to sixth-grade text levels. It also includes skill progressions aligned to comprehension goals. The content in <i>UT&R</i> could inform text selection and help you monitor progress in comprehension as you plan lessons as described in <i>TRAD</i> .
<i>Complete Comprehension: Fiction (CC: F, 2019) and Complete Comprehension: Nonfiction (CC: NF, 2019)</i>	<i>CC: F</i> and <i>CC: NF</i> are assessment, evaluation, and teaching kits focused on increasingly complex whole works of fiction and nonfiction. In the Teach portion of each resource, there are video examples of some (but not all) of the same lesson types found in <i>TRAD</i> (close reading, read aloud, focus lessons, etc.). However, the primary focus of <i>CC: F</i> and <i>CC: NF</i> is not on the lesson structures, so <i>TRAD</i> could help you teach more explicitly, efficiently, and with increased engagement based on the information you glean from <i>CC: F</i> and <i>CC: NF</i> .
<i>The Writing Strategies Book (2017) and Teaching Writing in Small Groups (TWiSG, 2021)</i>	These two books, one about writing strategies (<i>what to teach</i>) and one about writing instructional methods (<i>how to teach</i>), could work well to round out a classroom that uses the lesson structures in <i>TRAD</i> . In truth, many of the structures I explore in <i>TWiSG</i> can be used as whole-class lesson structures, just as many of the structures in <i>TRAD</i> work well in either a whole-class or small-group format.
<i>No other books by Jennifer Serravallo</i>	<i>TRAD</i> can be your introduction to my approach to engaging, efficient, explicit instruction in literacy! Like all of my work, <i>TRAD</i> is designed to offer practical advice and clear examples no matter the grade level you teach, your subject area, or your approach to literacy instruction.

The advice, lesson types, and ideas throughout the book stand on decades of research on effective teaching and can be helpful in a wide range of classrooms and for teachers at every point in their career.



