



SOLAR LAB  
Science of Language  
and Reading Lab

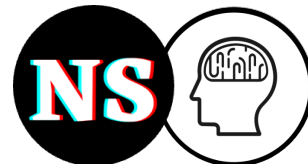


# PROBLEMATIC IDEAS ABOUT THE TEACHING OF READING

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SOCIETY FOR THE  
SCIENTIFIC STUDY  
OF READING  
CONFERENCE 2023

# OVERVIEW

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Previous syntheses

Three prominent reading instruction texts

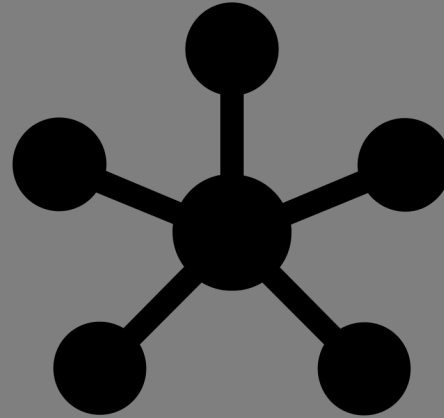
**Featured problematic idea #1**

**Featured problematic idea #2**

**Featured problematic idea #3**

Research directions

**PREVIOUS  
SYNTHESES**

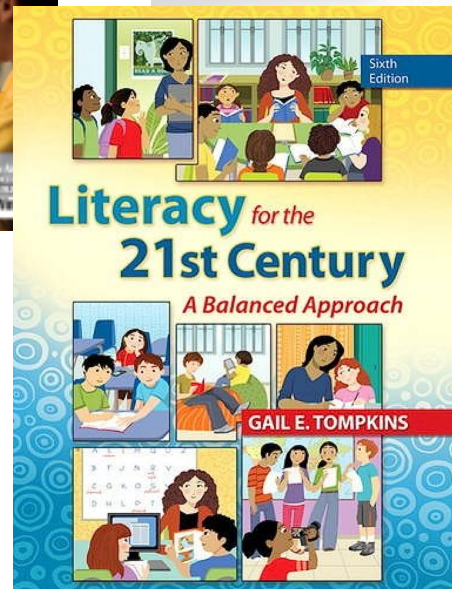
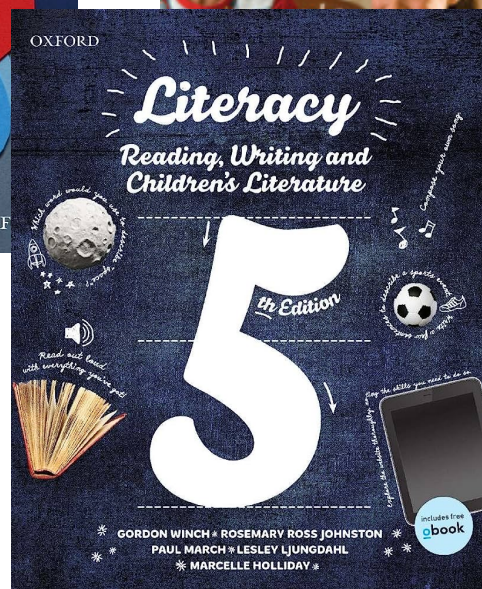
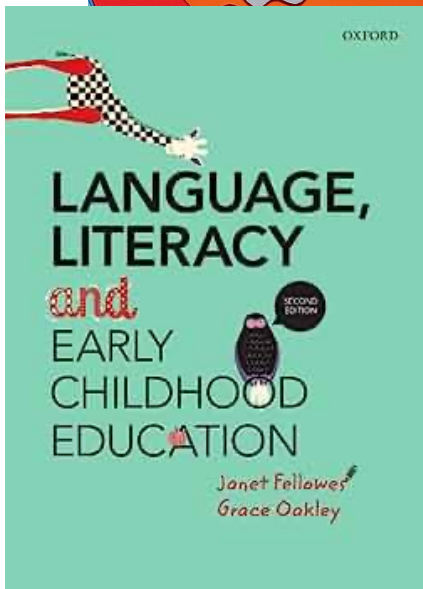
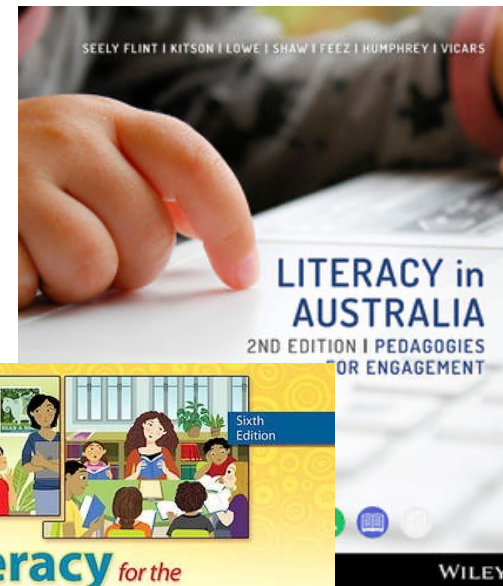
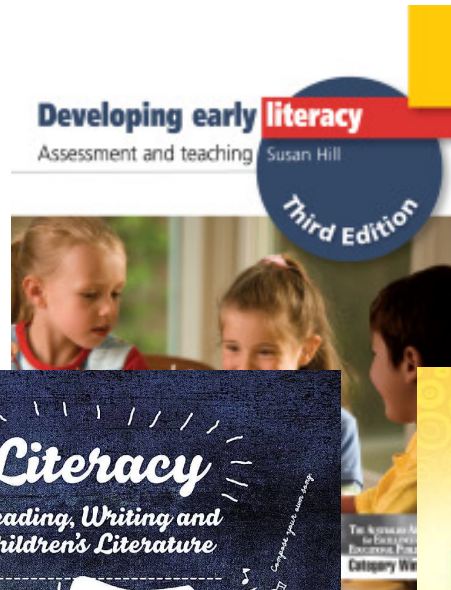
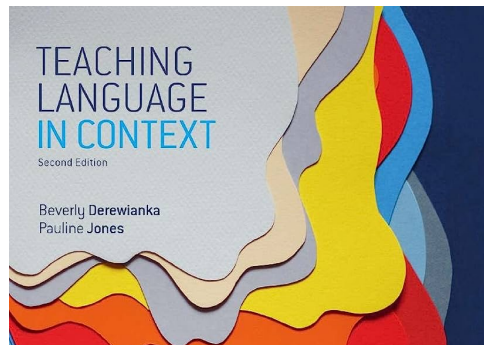


# BUCKINGHAM & MEEKS (2019)

Short-changed: Preparation to teach reading in initial teacher education. Multilit Pty Ltd.

## TOP 6 MOST POPULAR LITERACY TEXTBOOKS IN AUS ITE

## Key Findings



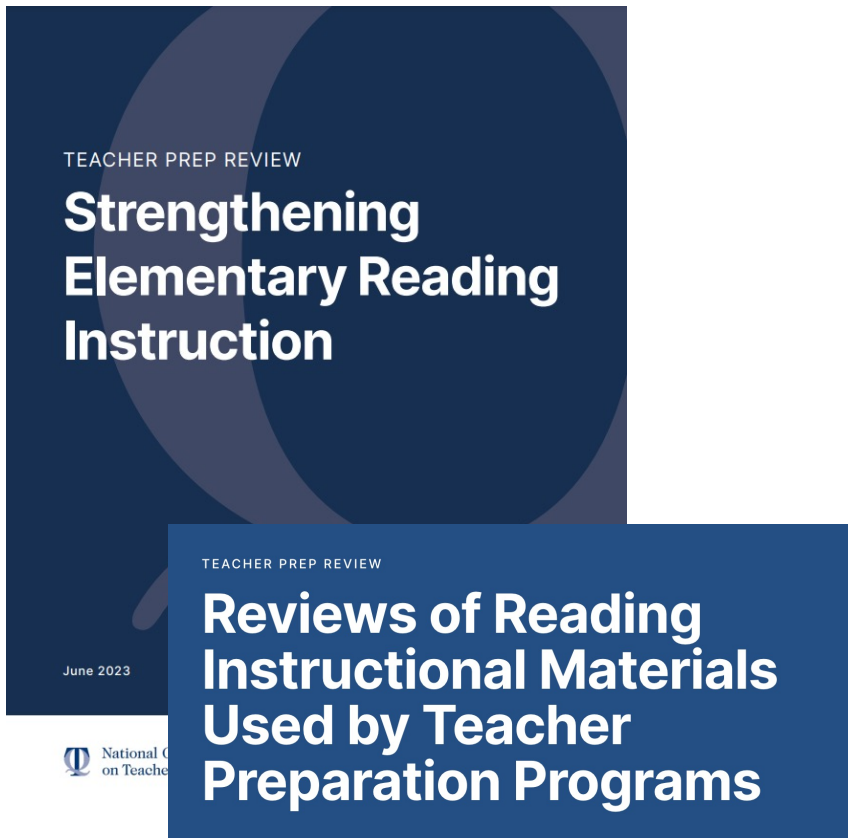
- No text had accurate or adequate overview of evidence on teaching reading
- General coverage of the “big five”
- No text had research base or guide for teaching of phonics
- Most endorsed three cueing system (all others implicitly endorsed)

# NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR TEACHER QUALITY RESEARCH

Ellis, C., Holston, S., Drake, G., Putman, H., Swisher, A., & Peske, H. (2023). *Teacher Prep Review: Strengthening Elementary Reading Instruction*. Washington, DC: National Council on Teacher Quality

## Some Key Findings

1. Only 25% of programs adequately address all five core components of reading instruction
2. Phonemic awareness receives the least attention across programs
3. Nearly one-third of programs do not provide any practice opportunities connected to the core components of reading



# SNOW (2022) THE SNOW REPORT

## Balanced Literacy Bingo

New items contributed via social media (updated November 20)

Systematic phonics teaching is just for Tier 2 teaching <sup>14</sup>	Phonics is boring for children who can already read <sup>15</sup>	Explicit phonics teaching is only for children from low-SES backgrounds <sup>16</sup>	Explicit phonics teaching is all about commercial programs <sup>17</sup>
The goal of balanced literacy is for children to love reading <sup>18</sup>	Give them time, they'll catch on / catch up <sup>19</sup>	His / her comprehension is great, and that's all that matters <sup>20</sup>	Students these days can use spell-check / speech-to-text software <sup>21</sup>
All books are decodable <sup>22</sup>	The science of reading is just for new teachers who don't yet know how to teach reading <sup>23</sup>	Systematic phonics teaching produces children who bark at print <sup>24</sup>	Balanced literacy is all about a repertoire of practices <sup>25</sup>

One size doesn't fit all <sup>1</sup>	All children learn differently <sup>2</sup>	Decodable texts contain made-up words <sup>3</sup>	Decoding should be taught in context <sup>4</sup>
English is too irregular for phonics teaching <sup>5</sup>	Decodable texts are not real books <sup>6</sup>	Explicit teaching kills the love of reading <sup>7</sup>	One size doesn't fit all
Teachers should choose what they think is best <sup>8</sup>	Decoding should be taught in context	Parents need to read to their children more <sup>9</sup>	Decodable texts contain made-up words
All children learn differently	Children should use all available cues to get words off the page <sup>10</sup>	<b>Add your special favourite here for bonus points</b> ★	English is too irregular for phonics teaching
Decoding should be taught in context	One size doesn't fit all	English is too irregular for phonics teaching	Teachers should choose what they think is best
Teachers should choose what they think is best	Immersing children in beautiful literature is what teaches them to read <sup>11</sup>	Parents need to read to their children more	One size doesn't fit all
Phonics teaching is boring for teachers <sup>12</sup>	Parents need to read to their children more	All children learn differently	Reading is only one form of literacy in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century <sup>13</sup>

# SNOW (2022) THE SNOW REPORT

## Teaching reading should always centre comprehension:

Children should use all available cues to get words off the page. (Argument 10)

Systematic phonics teaching produces children who bark at print. (Argument 24)

English is too irregular for phonics teaching. (Argument 5)

Decoding should be taught in context. (Argument 4)

As long as a student's comprehension is great, that's all that matters. (Argument 20)

## Teaching reading shouldn't use decodable texts:

Decodable texts contain made-up words. (Argument 3)

Decodable texts are not real books. (Argument 6)

All books are decodable. (Argument 22)

# PROBLEMATIC IDEAS

[Balanced Literacy Bingo](#)

## Teaching reading should foster a love of reading:

Explicit teaching kills the love of reading. (Argument 7)

The goal of balanced literacy is for children to love reading. (Argument 18)

Immersing children in beautiful literature is what teaches them to read (Argument 11)

## Teaching phonics should be a last resort

Phonics is boring for children who can already read. (Argument 15)

Phonics teaching is boring for teachers. (Argument 12)

Explicit phonics teaching is all about commercial programs (Argument 17)

Explicit phonics teaching is only for children from low-SES backgrounds (Argument 16)

Systematic phonics teaching is just for Tier 2 teaching. (Argument 14)

# SNOW (2022) THE SNOW REPORT

## Teaching reading should reflect the individuality of students and teachers:

One size doesn't fit all. (Argument 1)

All children learn differently. (Argument 2)

Give them time, they'll catch on / catch up  
(Argument 19)

Teachers should choose what they think is best.  
(Argument 8)

Balanced literacy is all about a repertoire of practices. (Argument 25)

The science of reading is just for new teachers who don't yet know how to teach reading. (Argument 23)

# PROBLEMATIC IDEAS

[Balanced Literacy Bingo](#)

## Teaching reading and spelling is not the main responsibility of the teacher:

Parents need to read to their children more.  
(Argument 9)

Students these days can use spell-check/speech-to-text software. (Argument 21)

Reading is only one form of literacy in the 21st century. (Argument 13)



# RESEARCH QUESTION

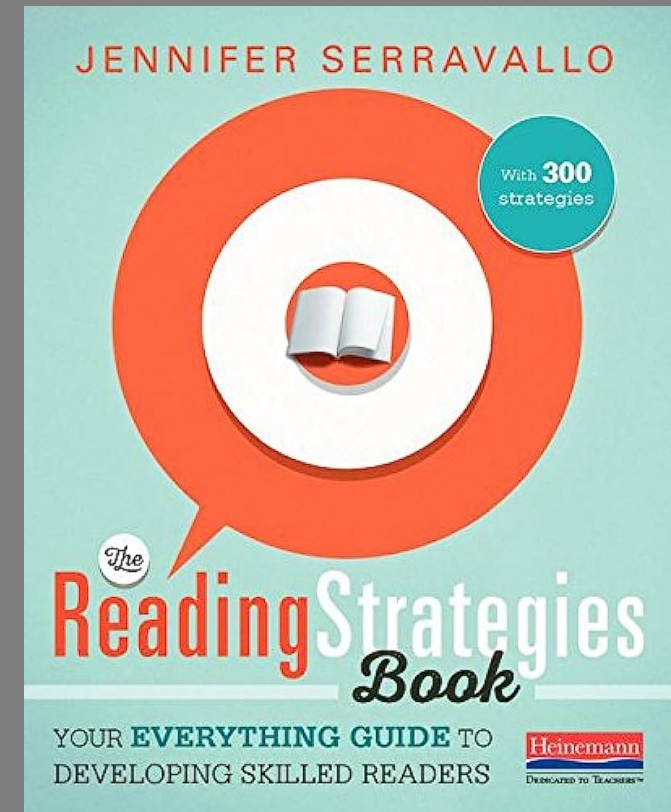
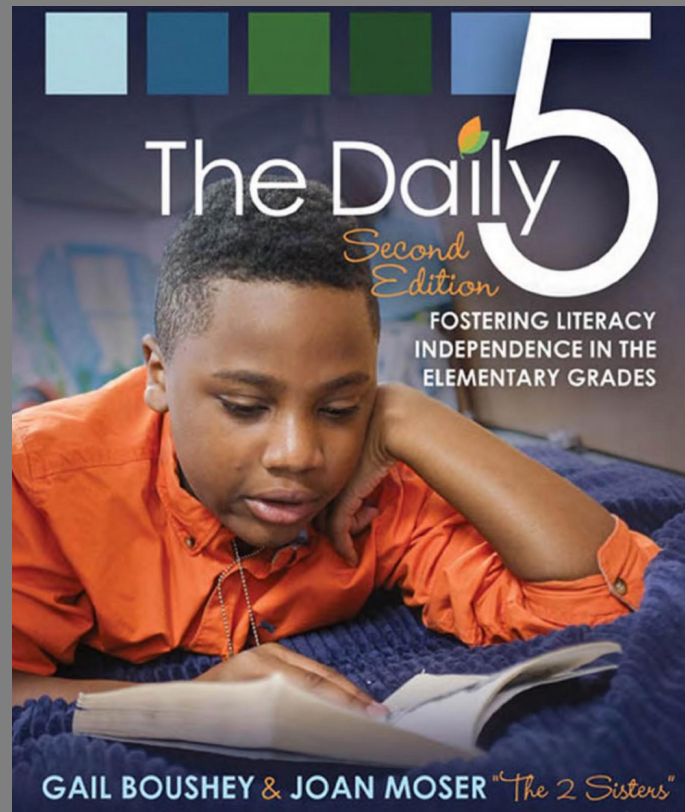
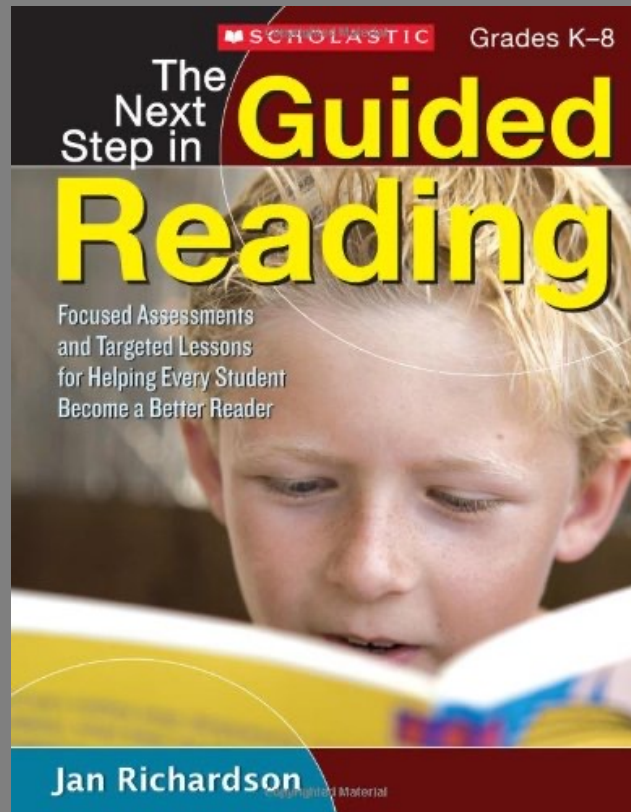
**What other problematic ideas inform teachers' practice in teacher professional literature ?**

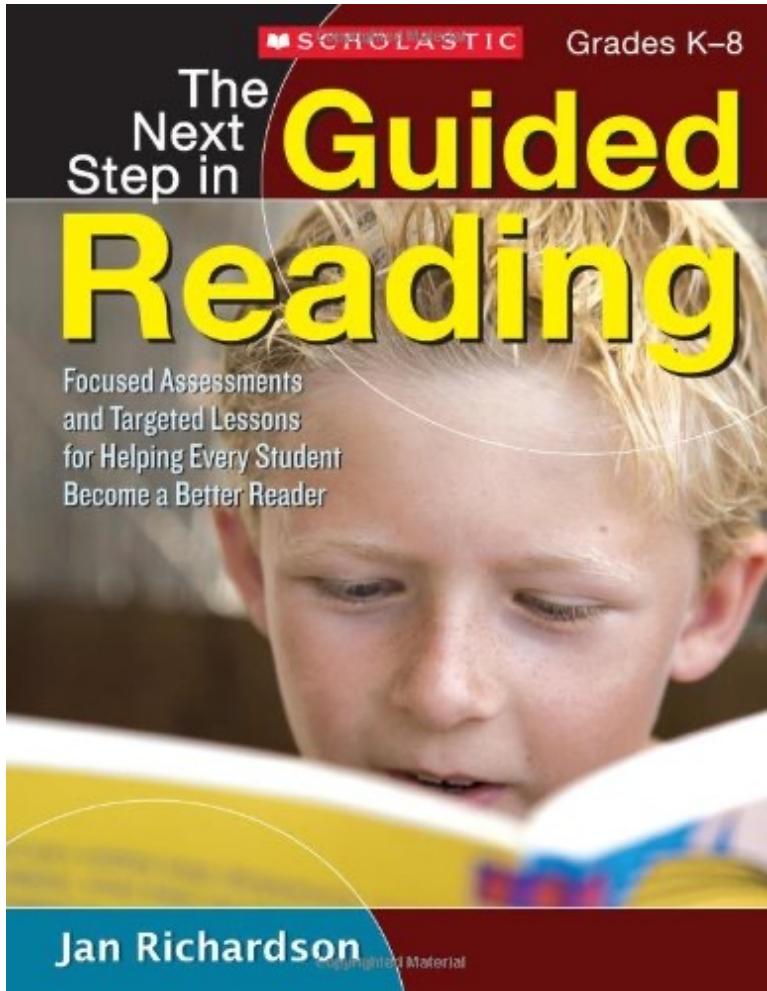
*problematic*

- creates a significant barrier to teachers adopting practices that align with knowledge from reading science

(theoretically)

# THREE PROMINENT PROFESSIONAL TEXTS





Richardson, J. (2009). *The next step in guided reading: Focused assessments and targeted lessons for helping every student become a better reader.* Scholastic Incorporated.

**RATINGS ON AMAZON, GOODREADS: 4.3; 4.46**

**CITATIONS: 112**

**NCTQ LEVEL OF USE: 110 US Courses**

**NCTQ RANK ORDER OF POPULARITY: #13 OUT OF 1087**

**SECOND EDITION: Next Steps Forward In Guided Reading**

## **FOCUS AREAS**

- Guided reading structures and set up
- Suggested focus areas for differentiated "lessons"
- De-emphasis on whole class instruction

## RICHARDSON (2009) PP .30-31

“

How can I keep children from interrupting me when I am working with small groups in guided reading?

...Make workstation activities multi-leveled so every student can find an activity appropriate for his or her reading abilities.

...Do not respond to children who interrupt you during guided reading. Do not look at them and do not speak to them.

## RICHARDSON (2009) P. 31, P. 248

“

It is impossible to know for certain that students are reading and understanding their self-selected books ... (p. 31)

...If children do not enjoy independent reading, they either have not found a book they like, or the book they have chosen is too difficult.

... Once books are available and students realize that is the only thing they will be able to do during the reading workshop, the vast majority will become eager readers...

If this approach doesn't work, have students do three literacy activities during reading workshop, one of which is independent reading. (p. 248)

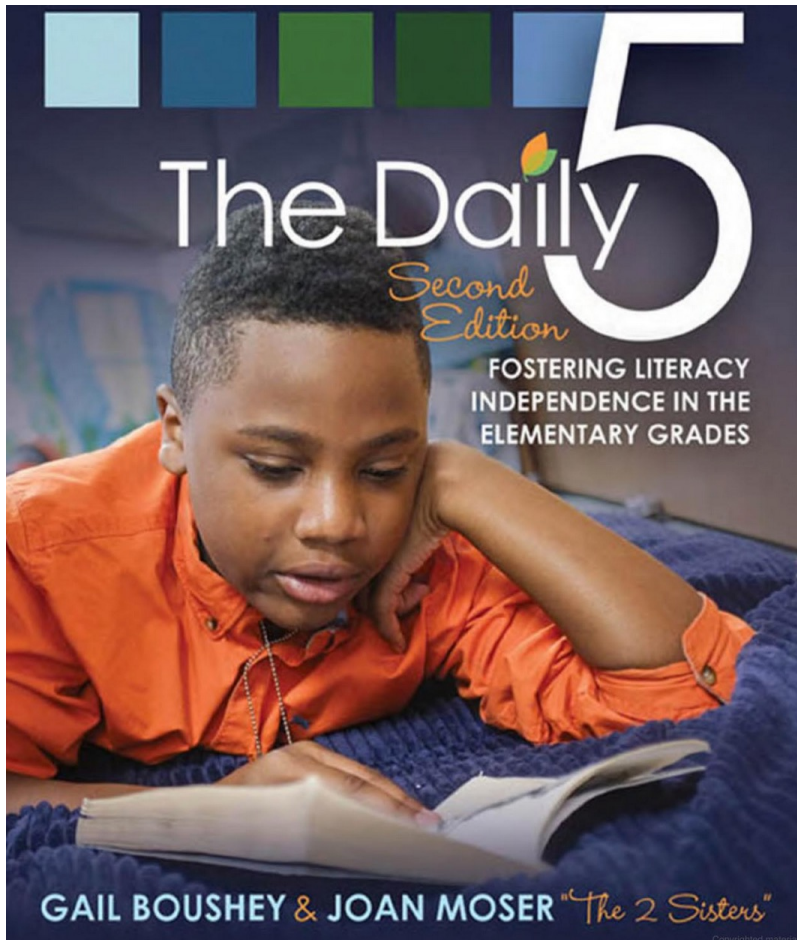
## RICHARDSON (2009, P. 67)

“

It is true that whole-group reading instruction takes less time to prepare and deliver than guided reading instruction, but efficiency does not equate to effectiveness.

Because students differ, teachers must use a variety of Assessments to discover what their students need to learn.

They must also provide differentiated small-group instruction that targets those specific needs ... it is just not possible to meet every student's needs with a single lesson.



**RATINGS ON AMAZON, GOODREADS: 4.8; 4.9**

**CITATIONS: 351**

**MULTIPLE EDITIONS: (1<sup>st</sup>: 2006)**

**NCTQ LEVEL OF USE: 63 US Courses**

**NCTQ RANK ORDER OF POPULARITY: #27 OUT OF 1087**

## **FOCUS AREAS**

- Setting up independent reading practices  
(read to self, listen to reading, work on writing, read to someone, word work)
- Explicitly teaching behaviours of focussed readers
- Structuring time in literacy block

Boushey, G., & Moser, J. (2014). *The daily 5: Fostering literacy independence in the elementary grades*. Stenhouse Publishers.

## BOUSHEY, G., & MOSER, J. (2014, P. 74)

“

We teach children that one of the most important things to do to become a better reader is to read good-fit books:

I select a book and look it over, inside and out.

Purpose: Why might I want to read it?

Interest: Does it interest me?

Comprehend: Do I understand what I am reading?

Know: Do I know most of the words?

The average number of years our children are in age parallels the average number of minutes they can maintain attention during direct instruction- whole group, small group, or one-on-one as measured by PET scans. (p. 28)

[quoting conversation with Kenneth Wesson]



# BOUSHEY, G., & MOSER, J. (2014)

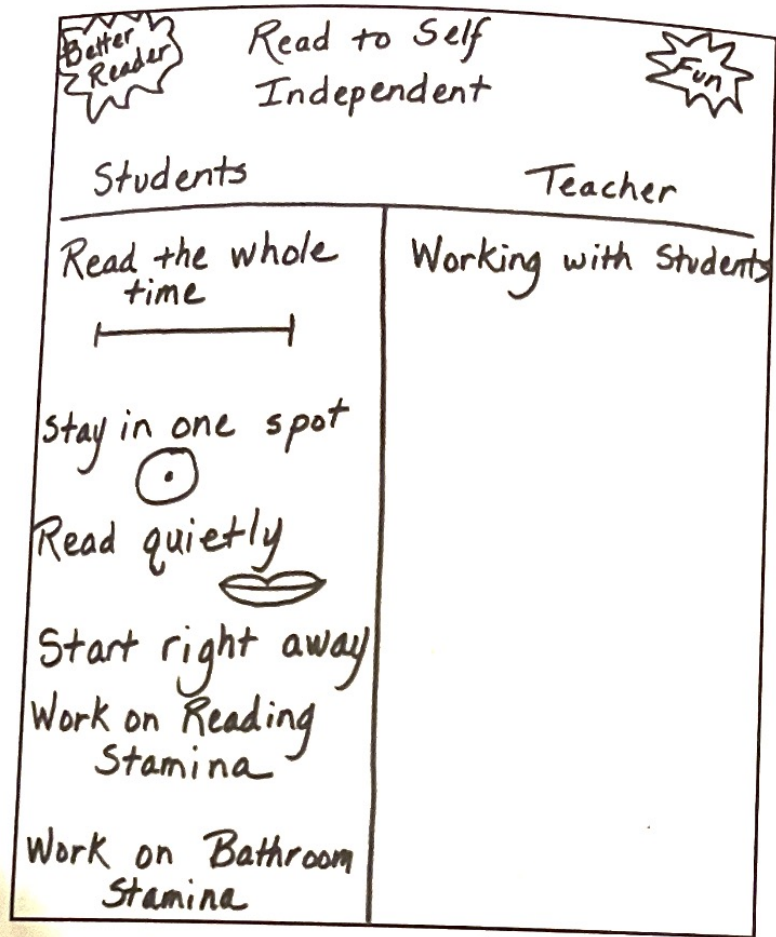
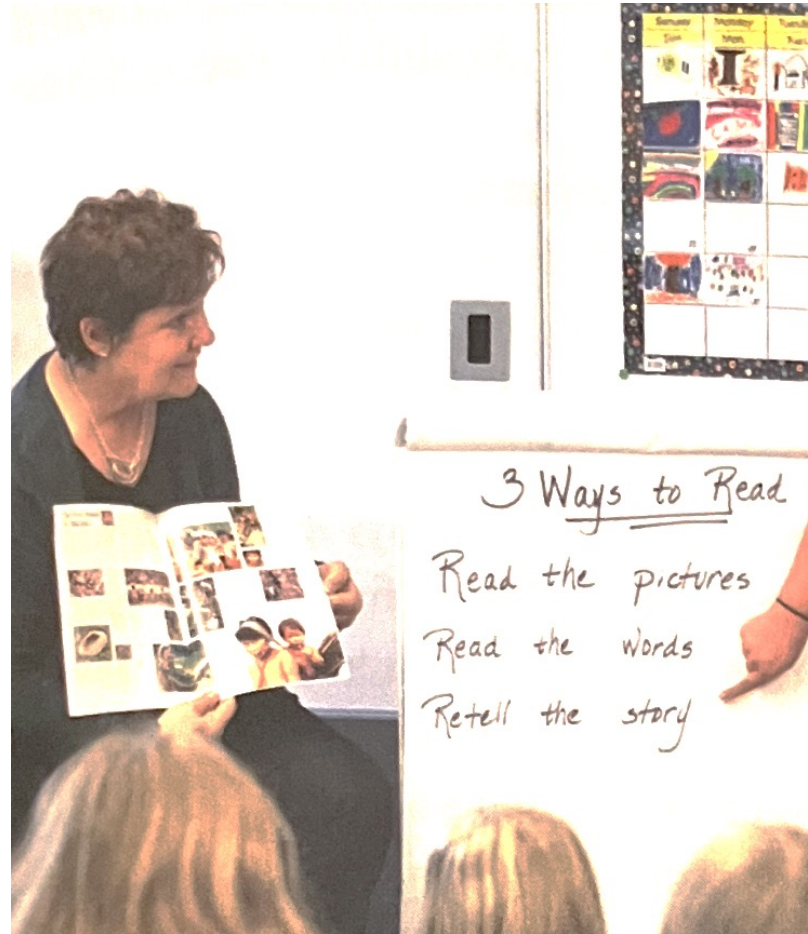


Figure 4.7  
An I-Chart for  
Read to Self

then posted in the room so that it was referred to all year long. Figure 4.7



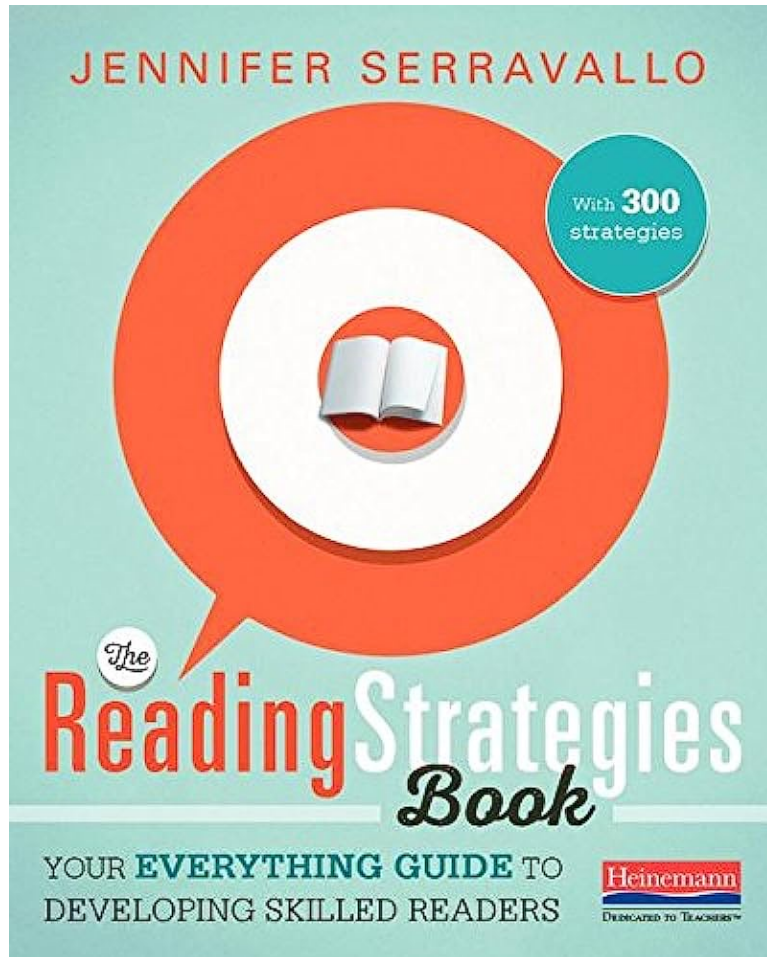
## BOUSHEY, G., & MOSER, J. (2014, P. 30)

“

No longer can we afford to use the "spray and pray" method of instruction.

...We spray our kids with general instruction from a program that is written without knowing each of our students' individual needs, and then we pray the instruction works!

Extended amounts of time for student practice is key.



**RATINGS ON AMAZON, GOODREADS: 4.8; 4.6**

**CITATIONS: 118**

**SECOND EDITION:** *The reading strategies book 2.0 (2021)*

**NCTQ LEVEL OF USE:** 175 US Courses

**NCTQ RANK ORDER OF POPULARITY:** #5 OUT OF 1087

## **FOCUS AREAS**

- Summary of 300 'strategies' to teach during modelled and guided reading – but with mistaken assumption that students learn skills without teacher instruction
- Featuring three cueing in decoding section
- Emphasis on decontextualised comprehension skills and strategies

Serravallo, J. (2015). *The reading strategies book*. Heinemann Educational Books

## SERRAVELLO (2015)

“

The way I personally would use his book is as an ultimate cheat sheet/guide to fuel all my goal-directed, differentiated instruction in conferences and small groups.

I'd also use the ideas in this book to inform the kinds of thinking aloud and prompting I did during interactive read-aloud, and the

sorts of strategies I taught in minilessons and shared reading. In other words, I'd use it like a big cookbook, each day planning a several course meal.

# PROBLEMATIC IDEAS 1-3

## SOME CAVEATS

- Sourced from non-systematic searching of textbooks
- Triangulated with my experiences discussing reading instruction with teachers
- Further systematic review and responses from teachers would strengthen range of ideas



# PROBLEMATIC IDEA #1

***Teach phonics and decoding at  
“point of need” not according to  
a scope and sequence***

# “POINT-OF-NEED” PHONICS: NO REAL SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

## WHAT WE KNOW FROM RESEARCH

- Comprehensive and systematic
- Large number of exposures

## POINTS OF CONTENTION

- S+S conflict with individualised development
- “Word work”
- Focuses come from students’ spelling errors

## WHAT MAKES IT PROBLEMATIC?

- Ineffective and inefficient
- Gaps widen
- Antagonism to “too much phonics”

## ADDRESSING THE IDEA with TEACHERS

- Rationale for S+S
- Gaps in student knowledge
- Coaching and modelling

## PROBLEMATIC IDEA #2

*Students should nearly always **choose** their own texts –*

*and when teachers do choose texts it should be based on what demonstrates the “**skill**” best*



# STUDENT CHOICE / “SKILL” FOCUS

## WHAT WE KNOW FROM RESEARCH

- (Small dose) comprehension strategy is useful
- Modelling, guiding with complex text = beneficial

## POINTS OF CONTENTION

- Students reading ↓
- Get better at reading by reading
- Levels, topics, genres vary constantly

## WHAT MAKES IT PROBLEMATIC?

- Zero accountability
- Texts chosen for interest or skill ≠ quality
- Only constant: potential strategies or “focused reading behaviours”

## ADDRESSING THE IDEA with TEACHERS

- Identify students “pretending to read”
- Introduce accountable independent reading
- Examples of high-quality whole class texts

## PROBLEMATIC IDEA #3

*Students learn to read best in differentiated guided reading lessons.*

# GUIDED READING

GUIDED READING

GUIDED READING

## WHAT WE KNOW FROM RESEARCH

- Guided reading research is weak (e.g. Denton et al., 2014)
- Whole class explicit instruction is effective

## POINTS OF CONTENTION

- Guided reading = Cornerstone, meet individual needs
- Whole class = ignores individuality
- Pseudoscience: tuning out after 5-10 minutes

## WHAT MAKES IT PROBLEMATIC?

- Incredibly inefficient (mini lesson)
- Hours wasted in groups of questionable value
- Students trained to not disrupt guided reading
- Guided reading focuses are mixed

## ADDRESSING THE IDEA with TEACHERS

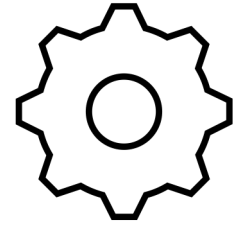
- You don't need to hear every student, every week
- Whole class = more time with teacher
- Adaptive, responsive teaching



# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

# WHAT DO TEACHERS NEED TO TEACH READING

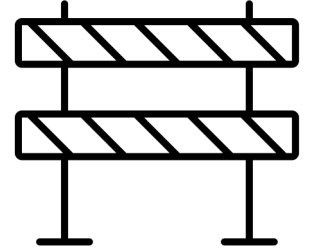
## IN LIGHT OF THE SCIENCES OF READING & LEARNING ?



### A PROPOSED SET

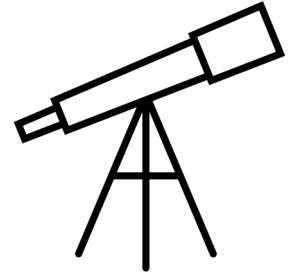
- **Linguistic system**
  - Phonological, Orthographic, Morphological
- **Literature and non-fiction texts**
  - High leverage texts and textual knowledge for students
  - Relationships between texts and knowledge
- **Human cognitive architecture**
  - e.g. Working Memory, and Cognitive Load Theory
- **Effective Instructional practices**
  - Explicit instruction pedagogy → including effective modelling, worked examples
  - Checking for understanding techniques
  - Techniques for pacing, engagement norms
- **Awareness of problematic ideas from whole language era,**
  - ... and research base that destabilise these

# BARRIERS TO CHANGE



- **Dearth of literature focused on implementation of SoR aligned approaches**
- **50+ years of problematic ideas dominating**
- **How do researchers in implementation studies account for existing conflicting ideas?**
- **Challenges of implementation and fidelity (piecemeal)**
- **Realising changes in practice is not just a scientific endeavour**

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH



- **Surveys and interviews about teacher beliefs and ideas that inform practice**
- **Teacher practice-centred studies**
- **Research syntheses for teachers with practical outputs and examples**
- **Observational studies of classroom practice in research-aligned schools**



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Cognitorium

# ACCESS SLIDES, STAY IN TOUCH





# **SOCIETY FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF READING**

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