

The Writing Strategies Book by Jennifer Serravallo: A Professional Resource Review

Saskatchewan School Library Association

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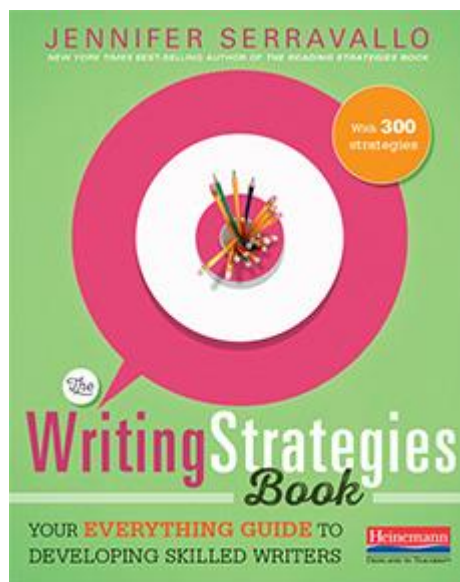
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Through a professional book club with other TLs in my school division, and with the excitement of the **SSLA Learning Event in October** looming, I had the opportunity to get my hands on a 'hot off the press' copy of The Writing Strategies Book by Jennifer Serravallo. I was excited to get started if not a little intimidated by the size of the book. It is exactly what it claims to be – a book of writing strategies. There are 300 strategies for levels K-8 which seemed daunting to me in the beginning as I tried to navigate through that much information and make it useful. I was surprised by the ease at which I could follow this guide to either developing or strengthening the writing program in my classroom. I have not read The Reading Strategies Book, so I'm not familiar with her writing style – however, after reading this I have already ordered a copy!



The "Getting Started" section of the book clearly guides the reader through how to use the book. She outlines how to find the right strategies and how each strategy is organized to maximize the ease in which teachers can find the right tool and information needed. She explains the theory behind organizing the book and how to incorporate the strategies into your existing writing

program (ex. *Daily 5* or *Write Traits*). She even includes pictures to help teachers set up a “writing center” at various levels, and how to plan a unit.

The strategies are organized into 10 writing goals: composing with pictures, engagement, generating ideas, focus, organization / structure, elaboration, word choice, conventions: spelling, conventions: grammar and punctuation, and partnerships and clubs. Each goal has an introduction as to its importance and how to match the goal to the students’ needs. There is even an index of all the strategies for that goal including what page they are on, the levels and genres / text types. The strategies themselves are very detailed. They include a description of the strategy, the language of the lesson, some prompts to ask students, mentor texts to use with the strategy, and any visuals you can use to help support. They also include "Hat Tips" which reference the root of the ideas and the author that inspired it.

The way this book is organized makes it simple to meet the needs of the students in our diverse classrooms. They would also be easily adaptable to support writing for students in high school. I wholeheartedly recommend this book as a “must have” resource for your writing program.

I’m excited to participate in the **Learning Event with Jennifer Serravallo** offered by SSLA on **October 11, 2017**. To register in the fall go to our website: <http://ssla.ca/Learning%20Events> She is also presenting in Saskatoon on November 14, 2017 organized through Living Sky School Division.