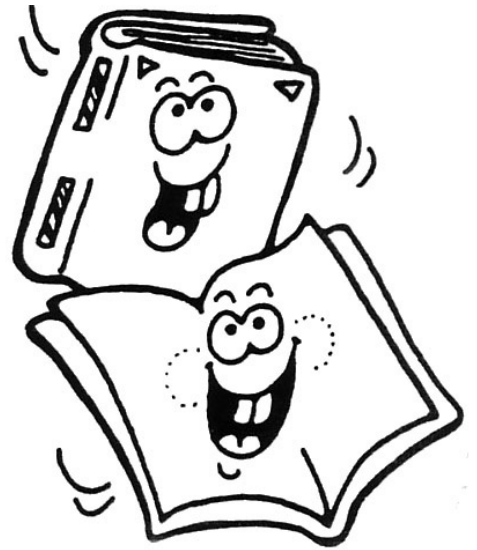




The New Essentials for Transforming Literacy Teaching

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A Portrait of a Future-Ready Learner

- Becomes a self-directed, independent learner
- Builds strong content area knowledge
- Adjusts communication based on audience, task, purpose, and content
- Comprehends as well as critiques
- Seeks to understand other perspectives and cultures
- Evaluates other points of view critically and constructively
- Values evidence
- Uses technology and digital media strategically and capably

For ideas on how to encourage these learning traits in your classroom see Chapter 1 of *Transforming Literacy Teaching in the Era of Higher Standards* (Walther, 2015).

Authentic Integration of Foundational Skills

Lessons and ideas found in *Transforming Literacy Teaching in the Era of Higher Standards*

- *Using Interactive Reading to Teach Print Concepts* p. 56-57
- *Integrating Conventions During Interactive Writing* pp. 75-76
- *Teaching Conventions With Editing Conversations* pp. 77-78
- *Introduce, Revisit, or Review Concepts Using the Morning Message* pp. 93-94

ONLINE RESOURCES

- *K, 1, 2 Foundational Skills and Language Standards Planning Guides*

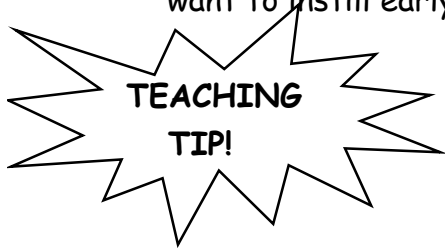
The Morning Message

What is a morning message?

A morning message is simply a short text written to, with, or by your students. You may choose to write it on the chalkboard, whiteboard, document camera, or chart paper.

What are the steps to a morning message lesson?

1. Pre-write a message or compose a message in a shared or interactive writing format.
2. Using a pointer, point to the words as you chorally read the message.
3. To complete, revise, or edit message, invite students to the chalkboard or chart to help. You may want to have a small container of chalk or markers handy for easy access. To increase participation, set the guideline that each student only gets one opportunity per day to assist at the board. Others can answer questions as you discuss and make teaching points. Vary students from day to day so all learners get frequent chances to participate.
4. Once the message is complete, *reread* with fluency and expression. This is a habit you want to instill early on!



To make each morning message as interactive and engaging as possible, invite a number of students to join you to add words, punctuation, and so on each day. Don't wait for one child to sit down before another comes up, but instead show the children how pass the chalk or marker from one to another while you continue making teaching points. To sustain students' interest as others are writing, engage in an ongoing dialogue about the process.

What kinds of writing skills and strategies can I teach during a morning message lesson?

Luckily, you can teach a multitude of writing skills and strategies during a morning message including the traits of good writing, grammar, genre awareness, and much more! Let's take a look at a few samples. . .

Source: Walther, M. P. & Phillips, K. A. (2009). *Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction: Ready-to-Use Lessons and Strategies for Weaving Morning Messages, Read-Alouds, Mentor Texts, and More Into Your Daily Writing Program*. New York: Scholastic.

Morning Message Ideas

- **First and Last (Foundational Skills)** Students circle the first word in each sentence with a green marker and the last word with a red marker.
- **What Is a Sentence? (Language Skills)** An example of how a message later becomes an anchor chart.

<p style="text-align: center;">In Kindergarten...</p> <p>MODEL HOW TO . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write what you hear and think • Stretch out words, listening for letter sounds • Leave a finger space between words • Capitalize words • Add ending marks • Spell high-frequency words • Use common spelling patterns, phonetic elements, word endings (-at, th, -ing, -er) • Use the print-rich environment as a resource when writing • Add details to sentences (Example: Instead of writing, "I ate some cake," you could write, "I ate some cake <i>with my friends</i>.") • Elaborate on ideas <p><small>Adapted from: Hall, D. P., & Williams, E. (2000). <i>The Teacher's Guide to the Building Blocks</i>. Greensboro, NC: Carson-Dellosa.</small></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">What Do You Notice? (p. 34)* (Informal Assessment)</p> <p>Try this message at the beginning of the year to quickly assess your students' awareness of written language. Pre-write a message about the upcoming day's activities. Begin by asking, "Does anyone notice anything in the message today? You might notice an interesting word, a number, a punctuation mark, or some words that look the same." Invite students to raise hands, individually come to the board, tell you what they notice, and circle it. To add variety, ask students to find certain sounds, sight words, word endings, and so on.</p> <p>EXAMPLE:</p> <p>Good morning! Welcome to first grade. We are going to have an exciting and interesting year together! SMILE and MAKE GOOD CHOICES!</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Riddles (p. 55) (Ideas and Conventions)</p> <p>Create riddles to introduce topics in science or social studies. Riddles are helpful when teaching the concept of a sentence.</p> <p>EXAMPLE:</p> <p>It is hot. It is a star. It is at the center of our solar system. What is it? It is the _____.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Letter Stealer (Conventions)</p> <p>While writing a message, leave out consonants, vowels, blends, digraphs, and other phonetic elements studied during your word study/spelling/phonics block. I tell my children that the "letter stealer" visited. Students enjoy filling in the missing letters.</p> <p>EXAMPLE:</p> <p>Good rainy __orning! So_ething is __issing in our __essage. What is it??</p>

*Page Numbers Refer to *Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction* (Walther & Phillips, 2009)

Maria's Morning Message Ideas

A Sketchy Story (Ideas) (p. 57)

Before the students arrive, write a sketchy story about your own experiences on the chalkboard, chart paper, or overhead. Share with students and encourage them to ask questions to help you add details to your own story. Jot the questions down on the side of your paper. Save the story and questions. The next morning, rewrite the story incorporating the students' ideas, and invite them to ask more questions. When the story is complete, publish it and have the students illustrate it. Always a best seller in the classroom library!!

Let's Write a List (Ideas/Organization) (p. 95)

Once you have introduced the idea of list writing, encourage children to write lists for a variety of purposes and audiences. For those students who find generating ideas a challenge, a list is a helpful organizational tool when trying to determine what to write about each day. Children can also create lists of ice cream flavors, things in the sky, ocean animals, and so on. As you are writing lists in a shared or interactive writing format, model the different conventions used to signal a list such as numbers, bullets, and dashes.

Read Aloud:

Diary of a Spider (Cronin, 2005)
Frog and Toad Together (Lobel, 1971)

What Is This Sentence Missing? (Grammar)

To raise students' awareness of the necessary parts of a sentence, write phrases that are missing the verb. Begin by asking students if they notice anything wrong with the "sentences," and then continue by inviting students to supply a number of possible verbs that could complete each sentence.

Read Aloud: *If You Were A Verb* (Dahl, 2006)

EXAMPLE:

Sarah in the pool

(Possible responses: jumped, splashed, frolicked)

The children to school

(Possible responses: skipped, rode, strolled, ran)

A boy the ball

(Possible responses: caught, tossed, pitched, lobbed, whacked)

Word Exchange (Word Choice)

One important aspect of writing is choosing precise words to communicate ideas to your reader. Each time you teach a vocabulary lesson, you are teaching young children about word choice. In addition, you strengthen students' word choice as you read aloud and discuss key words in the text. A quick and easy way to broaden your students' writing vocabularies is to introduce them to different words in the morning message.

Read Aloud: *Fancy Nancy's Favorite Fancy Words* (O'Connor, 2008)

EXAMPLE:

Good morning smart students!

(Possible responses: brainy, brilliant, clever, intelligent, sharp)

It is cold outside today!

(Possible responses: chilly, freezing, icy, frosty, bitter, wintry, frozen, arctic)

Maria's Morning Message Ideas

Thesaurus Thursday (Word Choice) (p. 60)

This year, after doing a word exchange lesson on a Thursday, my students suggested that we have "Thesaurus Thursdays." As always, the best ideas come from listening to your learners!

October Ideas:

- Spooky Sound Words
- My Candy Tastes . . .

Other Ideas:

- Adjectives to describe a particular book character
- Words to describe emotions such as mad, sad, happy

Color Songs (Sentence Fluency) (p. 130)

We've taught "the old color songs" (as we call them) for many years. A few years ago, a student requested that I teach the class how to write their own songs. To facilitate song writing, I used the familiar tunes from the color songs to help the students write their own songs.

EXAMPLE:

Tune: "Are You Sleeping?"

C-A-R car, C-A-R car

I can spell car.

I can spell car.

A car is a vehicle.

They can take you places.

C-A-R, C-A-R

Looking at Letters (Conventions)

To support young writers as they begin to discriminate between capital and lower case letters, pre-write a message alternating between capital and lower case letters. After reading the entire message aloud with your students, begin to rewrite the message spelling out each word as you write.

Invite students to clap each time they see a capital letter in the middle of a word. To make this an interactive writing experience, select individuals to share the chalk or marker and rewrite a word or two along the way.

EXAMPLE:

GoOd mORning! Do YOu NOTICe
anyTHing strangE in OUR mESSage
todAY?

Show Not Tell (Voice)

This morning message gives students a glimpse into the difference between words that show and words that tell. Many primary writers tend to tell how they are feeling rather than showing the reader with vivid verbs and description. The following message includes a few examples to get you started, I'm sure you and your students will come up with many more.

EXAMPLE:

Which sentences *show* you how the boy is feeling?

The boy is happy.

The smiling boy jumps and cheers.

He stomped his feet as he walked away.

The boy is mad.

The boy is sad.

The tears rolled down his face.

<p>Writer of the Day</p> <p>At the end of the year, assign each student a day to write the message. They may pre-write at home then copy it on the board in the morning.</p>	<p>Instead of Daily Oral Language</p> <p>Incorporate the skills from your Daily Oral Language program into the morning message. This is a huge time saver!!</p>
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The Morning Message

Why?

- Models writing every day
- Creates opportunities for literacy-related conversations
- Strengthens connections between reading and writing instruction
- Encourages students to notice and name the conventions of language
- Incorporates foundational skills and literacy strategies in an authentic, time-efficient manner
- Differentiates instruction for the diverse group of learners who enter our classrooms each year

Building Fluency Through Poetry and Song

A Few of My Favorite Song Picture Books

Groovy Joe Ice Cream and Dinosaurs (Litwin, 2016)

Sing (Raposo & Lichtenheld, 2013)

Take Me Home Country Road (Denver, 2005)

There Was an Old Monster (Emberley, 2009)

How Shall We Read Our Poems Today?

1. Teacher Read Aloud
2. Fill-in-the-Blanks
3. Tag-Team Reading
4. Choral Reading
5. Turn Up the Volume or Turn Down the Volume
6. Speed It Up! or Slow It Down!
7. Clap the Beat
8. Readers Theater
9. As a Round
10. Sing to a Favorite Tune like "Twinkle, Twinkle"

Adapted from "10 Ways to Read a Poem" by Mary Bigler, Judson Literacy Conference 2010

Elevating Reading Workshop

- Read Aloud
- Develop Text Sets
- Incorporate Informational Texts
- Engage in Collaborative Conversations
- Encourage Reading Response
- Guide Readers
- Share and Celebrate

Read Aloud!

Barton, C. (2016). *That's not bunny!* (C. Jack, Illus.). New York: Disney/Hyperion.
Fierce Hawk is perched on his nest ready to snatch his prey but he is outwitted by a clever rabbit.
Teaching Ideas: Pair with *My Lucky Day* (Kasza, 2005); **Three Read Aloud Words:** *fierce, dismayed, contents* (See M-by-M Reading p. 15-16)

Jarvis. (2016). *Alan's big, scary teeth*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick.
Alan the alligator is best known for scaring with his "razor-sharp" teeth. Find out what happens when the animals discover Alan's secret—his teeth are fake.
BOOK TRAILER: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTVaTrfzGNE>
Teaching Idea: Pair with *Grandpa's Teeth* (Clement, 1999)

McDonnell, P. (2016). *Tek: The modern cave boy*. New York: Little, Brown.
Much to his parents' and friends' chagrin, Tek refuses to leave his cave and all of his electronic gadgets until a volcano explodes and he is disconnected. Outside of his cave, Tek discovers friendship and "THE BIG BEAUTIFUL WORLD."
Teaching Ideas: Create a text set with *Doug Unplugged* (Yaccarino, 2013) and *Hello! Hello!* (Cordell, 2012);
Inferring Big Ideas—Technology vs. The Real World

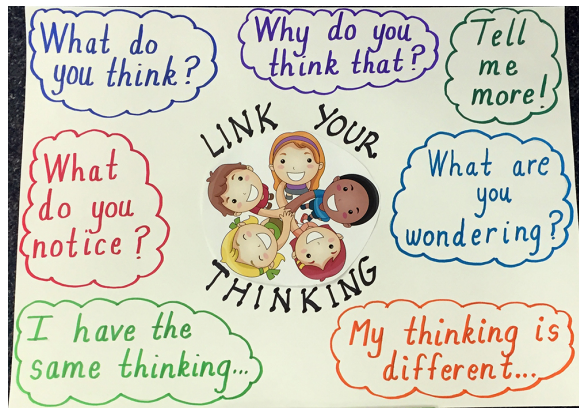
Why Read Aloud?

The Read-Aloud:

- Builds a textual lineage from which to draw when asked to compare and contrast
- Demonstrates how books work so that readers have a better understanding of craft and structure
- Sparks rich discussion and collaborative conversations
- Models how proficient readers read, understand, and interpret complex texts
- Helps all learners, especially English Language Learners, hear the nuances of the English language
- Fosters a strong sense of community

Source: *Transforming Literacy Teaching in the Era of Higher Standards, K-2* (Walther, 2015, p. 45)

Engage in Collaborative Conversations



Mini-Lesson found on pages 52-53 of *Month-by-Month Reading Instruction for the Differentiated Classroom* (Walther & Phillips, 2012) and on pages 103-103 in *Transforming Literacy Teaching in the Era of Higher Standards* (Walther, 2015)

Also see Blog Post by Lois Bridges: The Having of Grand Conversations
<http://frizzleblog.scholastic.com/post/having-grand-conversations>

BOOKS TO SPARK COMPREHENSION CONVERSATIONS

Predicting

Smith, L. (2010). *The inside tree*. (D. Parkins, Illus.). New York: HarperCollins.

Mr. Potter's house is warm and comfortable until he decides to invite a dog and a tree inside.

Teaching Ideas: Peek and Predict (See *M-by-M Reading* p. 116)

Deedy, C. A. (1991). *Agatha's feather bed: Not just another wild goose story*. Atlanta, GA: Peachtree.

I've introduced this story to many teachers and they either like it or they think it is a little odd. Either way, it is ideal for predicting. Agatha is an old woman who believes "everything comes from something." When a gaggle of naked geese appear on her windowsill, she makes them warm cloaks to replace their feathers, which make up her bed. In a surprise ending, we find out that the cloaks were made from her long white hair.

Teaching Ideas: Predict the Title (See *M-by-M Reading* p. 109)

Seeger, L. V. (2010). *What if?* New York: Roaring Brook.

Laura Vaccaro Seeger uses only 6 words in varying combinations to tell a tale three different ways. This book will spark a conversation about friendship and considering the feelings of others. It is also ideal for pointing out the difference between predicting and inferring.

Teaching Ideas: Beginning of Year; Social Studies—Friendship; Inferring (See Predicting vs. Inferring Mini-Lesson in *M-by-M Reading* p. 185)

Inferring Big Ideas

Boelts, M. (2007). *Those shoes*. (N. Z. Jones, Illus.). Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.

Jeremy really wants "those shoes"—the pair of high-tops that everyone else has, but Grandma can't afford them. Later, Jeremy finds a pair in a thrift store that are much too small, but gets them anyway. After much debate, Jeremy ends up giving his too-small shoes to another boy in need.

Teaching Ideas: Inferring Big Ideas, (See *M-by-M Reading* p. 186)

Next Step Guided Reading

The Three Steps to Effective Guided Reading Lessons

- Pinpoint an instructional focus
- Select an appropriate text that is slightly challenging, matches students' interests, and helps students practice instructional focus
- Prompt, coach, and determine which teaching points will scaffold readers so they can take the next step in becoming more independent

Pinpoint an Instructional Focus

Monitoring—First and foremost, if the reader is not monitoring for meaning, we scaffold, prompt, and teach this foundational skill.

Decoding—If the reader stops at a tricky word, then we prompt for decoding strategies and reinforce decoding as a teaching point.

Fluency—Fluency comes next because once a reader develops automaticity with words and decoding, he or she is ready to be prompted for fluency.

Vocabulary—It is common for skilled decoders to plow right through unknown words, decode them accurately, but not use the context clues to figure out the meaning of the word. Scaffolding vocabulary is an ideal teaching point for transitional and fluent readers!

Comprehension—Comprehension appears last in the sequence because it is the *goal of every guided reading lesson* and the previous scaffolds and teaching points will support readers' understanding of the text.

Match the Text to Your Instructional Focus

Focus	Text Features	A Few of My Favorites
Decoding	Some challenging words to decode	<i>Scholastic Guided Science Readers (Levels A-D)</i>
Fluency	Dialogue, few decoding challenges	<i>Elephant and Piggie, Fly Guy</i>
Vocabulary	Unfamiliar words with text or illustration clues (context, known parts, glossary)	<i>Scholastic Vocabulary Readers</i>
Retell	Straightforward storyline, supportive illustrations	<i>Frog's Lunch</i> by Dee Lillgard, <i>My Lucky Day</i> by Keiko Kasza
Main Idea	Informational texts with supportive text features like headings, diagrams, or captions	<i>Critters in Camouflage</i> by Karen Alexander, <i>Hibernation</i> by Tori Kosara both from <i>Scholastic Common Core Text Sets</i>
Infer	Fables, short stories, poetry, texts with surprises	<i>Fables</i> by Arnold Lobel <i>Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry</i> (Walther & Fuhler, 2010)

Prompt and Coach

Focus	Sample Prompts
Monitoring	Reread and think about what would make sense and begins with that letter.
Decoding	Get your mouth ready to say the first sound.
Fluency	Reread it the way the character would say it.
Vocabulary	Look at the picture/text feature to help you better understand that word.
Retell	Tell me about what you just read.
Main Idea	What are the key ideas the author wanted you to learn?
Infer	How do you think the character feels about _____? What evidence/clues helped you to figure that out?

Source: *Next Step Guided Reading Assessment* (Richardson & Walther, 2013)

Enhancing Writing Workshop

- Read Aloud Like a Writer
- Engage in Collaborative Conversations
- Share Effective Mini-Lessons
- Develop Engaging Genre Studies
- Guide Writers
- Share and Celebrate

Read Like a Writer: Collaborative Conversations

Reading aloud IS teaching writing, even if no writing activity follows the reading.
Vicki Spandel, *Creating Young Writers* (2008)

Turn and Talk Teaching Tips:

Before you begin, model "turn and talk" with another adult or student. Emphasize the importance of having a two-way conversation with one person speaking at a time. Assign students a "turn and talk" partner or small group.

During read aloud, stop several times at natural breaking points and pose the following queries for students to "turn and talk" about:

- **WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?**
- **WHAT ARE YOU WONDERING?**
- **HOW MIGHT YOU CHOOSE TO DO THIS IN YOUR OWN WRITING?**
- Where do you think this author got his/her ideas for this book?
- Listen to this! Let me reread the beginning of this book. Did the lead make you want to read the story?
- Did you hear any words that you want to remember and use in your writing?
- Can you picture this setting/character/event in your mind? How did the author help you do that? What words did he or she use?
- Notice the way the sentences flow. Talk about how the author did that.
- Does this writing have voice?
- Who is telling this story? How do you know that?

Source: Adapted from Routman, Regie. (2003). *Reading Essentials: The Specifics You Need to Teach Reading Well*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

<p>What to look for in the books you enjoy reading aloud</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various Text Structures • Sensory Language • Creative Conventions • Repetition • Word Play • Onomatopoeia • Interjections • Illustration Techniques 	<p>What to say. . . <i>Source: Choice Words by Peter H. Johnston (Stenhouse, 2004)</i></p> <p>"Oh, I love that line!"</p> <p>"Did anyone notice *any interesting words? *any new punctuation? *any new ways of arranging the words on the page?"</p> <p>"Are there any favorite words or phrases, or ones you wish you had written?"</p> <p>"Why would an author do something like that?" "How else could the author have done that?"</p> <p>"Why did the author choose that word?"</p>
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A Few of My Favorite Mentor Texts

Byrne, R. (2014). *This book just ate my dog!* New York: Holt.

When Bella takes her dog for a "stroll across the page," he disappears into the gutter of the book along with her friend, the rescue squad, and Bella herself. Quick-thinking Bella writes a note to the readers telling them to shake the book and get everyone out.

Teaching Ideas: Parts of a Book—Gutter (See morning message in M-by-M Reading p. 40); Reading-Writing Connection

Byrne, R. (2015). *We're in the wrong book.* New York: Holt.

Bella and Ben, the characters from *This Book Just Ate My Dog* (2014), get bumped off the page and end up on a journey through books of different genres including comic books, fairy tales, and more.

Teaching Ideas: Read Like a Writer; Introduction to different writing genres

Dotlich, R. K. (2015). *One day, the end: Short, very short, shorter-than-ever stories*. (F. Koehler, Illus.). Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills.

"For every story there is a beginning and an end, but what happens in between makes all the difference." So begins this one-of-a-kind book where the middle of each story is told solely with illustrations.

Teaching Idea: CCSS Standard 7—Use illustrations to understand characters, setting, or plot; Launching Writing Workshop—Little Book Ideas

Professional Books That Have Shaped My Thinking

Atwell, N. (2007). *The Reading Zone: How to Help Kids Become Skilled, Passionate, Habitual, Critical Readers*. Scholastic.

Biggs-Tucker, K., & Tucker, B. (2015). *Transforming Literacy Teaching in the Era of Higher Standards, 3-5*. Scholastic.

Fuhler, C. J., & Walther, M. P. (2007). *Literature Is Back! Using the Best Books for Teaching Readers and Writers Across Genres*. Scholastic.

Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (1996). *Guided reading: Good First Teaching for All Children*. Heinemann.

Johnston, P. H. (2004). *Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning*. Stenhouse.

Johnston, P. H. (2012). *Opening Minds: Using Language to Change Lives*. Stenhouse.

Keene, E. O. (2012). *Talk About Understanding: Rethinking Classroom Talk to Enhance Comprehension*. Heinemann.

Miller, D. (2013). *Reading With Meaning: Teaching Comprehension in the Primary Grades (2nd ed.)*. Stenhouse.

Ray, K. W., & Cleaveland, L. B. (2004). *About the Authors: Writing Workshop with our Youngest Writers*. Heinemann.

Richardson, J. (2009). *The Next Step in Guided Reading: Focused Assessment and Targeted Lessons for Helping Every Student Become a Better Reader*. Scholastic.

Richardson, J., & Walther, M. P. (2013). *The Next Step Guided Reading Assessment, K-2*. New York: Scholastic.

Richardson, J., & Walther, M. P. (2013). *The Next Step Guided Reading Assessment, 3-6*. New York: Scholastic.

Routman, R. (2005). *Writing Essentials*. Heinemann.

Spandel, V. (2007). *Creating Young Writers (2nd ed.)*. Allyn & Bacon.

Taberski, S. (2011). *Comprehension From The Ground Up*. Heinemann.

Thompson, T. (2015). *The Construction Zone: Building Scaffolds for Readers and Writers*. Stenhouse.

Walther, M. P. (2015). *Transforming Literacy Teaching in the Era of Higher Standards, K-2*. Scholastic.

Walther, M. P., & Fuhler, C. J. (2010). *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry*. Scholastic.

Walther, M. P. & Phillips, K. A. (2009). *Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction*. Scholastic.

Walther, M. P., & Phillips, K. A. (2012). *Month-by-Month Reading Instruction for the Differentiated Classroom*. Scholastic.