

From Striving to Thriving: How to Grow Confident, Capable Readers
by Stephanie Harvey and Annie Ward



A Guide for Reading, Thinking and Discussion

Part i: Trust – Chapters 1 – 4

The introduction to this book includes nineteen pages of incredible content, charts, photos, information boxes, teaching advice, charts, a diagram of attitudes and understandings, a list of reading and writing assessment standards, a comprehension continuum, and lots and lots of ideas and encouraging words.

The first page of each chapter in the book displays a box that provides information links to a description of specific practices and a lesson about the chapter topic, located at the back of the book.

Chapter 1 – Table the Labels

At the heart of this book is the belief that every child can be a **thriving reader**. The journey from striving to thriving includes matching books to readers, providing time for choice reading, and pumping up the reading volume.

- Think about Steph’s story about Anthony. What were her beliefs and practices that led to success for this student? **Make a list of Steph’s beliefs and a separate list of her practices for this child. Identify items on these lists that would be helpful to you in working with a particular student in your classroom. Explain your thinking.**

- On page 34, the authors state the following: “But although children differ, after many years of teaching reading and studying the teaching of reading, we do not advocate differentiating instruction.” Steph and Annie follow these words with a paragraph that details their thinking that **good instruction is good instruction** and is at the learning core for all students. **(It is important to read the entire section on this topic.)**

What are your reactions to this thinking? Do you have an experience that aligns with or reinforces this belief? Which of your classroom practices and experiences demonstrate this idea?

- From page 42 to the end of the chapter, the authors introduce their readers to a wealth of interesting, engaging and thought-provoking professional literature, ideas and research. **Which of these resources would you like to explore further and why does the information intrigue you? How does your professional reading encourage and affect your teaching practices? What aspects of teaching reading do you want to learn more about as you begin a new school year?**

- Consider your classroom meeting and reading spaces. **What do you feel works well for your students in your environment? What would you like to change? How does your learning environment influence teaching and learning in your classroom?**

- **What 3 ideas from Chapter 1 would you like to try in your classroom?**

Chapter 2 – Cultivate Curiosity

In Chapter 2, the focus is on the idea that curiosity matters and considers the belief that human beings are born as curious creatures. As teachers, we need to fan the curiosity flame.

- On page 73, the authors state, “When strivers accept that we believe in them and they know that we value their questions, they are far more likely to ask them.”

How does the act of questioning support the processes of reading and writing?

How does your own curiosity elevate your teaching practices?

- **Discuss the relationship between questioning and trust.**
- **What experiences do you encourage in your classroom that lead students to explore, investigate and research questions that interest them?**

Chapter 3 – Ensure Access To and Choice of Books

The power of the right book for the right child at the right time is discussed in Chapter 3.

- This chapter begins with the following quote: “There’s no such thing as a kid who hates reading. There are just kids who love reading and kids who are reading the wrong books. We need to help them find the right books.” - James Patterson

What are your ideas and strategies for finding the right book for each child in your classroom? What tools do you use to acquaint yourself with the multitude of books available in a variety of topics, genres and formats? What interview and survey tools do you use to discover the reading interests of each of your students? What methods do you and your children use to document their reading lives?

- **As a teacher, how do you establish and ensure reading choice, reading access, reading volume and a variety of reading experiences for your children?**
- Study the diagram of a classroom library on page 95.
Create a similar visual of your classroom library. Make a list of books that you would like to add to your collection that would support the activation of curiosity.
- Take note of the “Must–Have Genres for Striving Readers” on page 99. **What ideas would you add to this discussion?**

Chapter 4 – Pump Up the Reading Volume

This chapter focuses on the belief that reading makes reading better.

- “The overwhelming benefits of voluminous engaged reading compel us to give all kids a whopping daily dose and make it a foremost intervention for striving readers.”
– Michael Lewis

Recall an experience you have had with a student who clearly grew as a reader by reading lots of books. Talk about how this transition changed the child and how it affected you as a teacher.

- On page 124, the authors describe specific books and characters that serve as precursors for later literacy learning. **Think of 3 books that you feature in your classroom that might serve as mentor texts for understanding more involved literary structures and lessons.**
- “Trust the book, trust the reader.” **What does this concept mean to you?**

- Finding time to include independent choice reading in your daily classroom schedule can be an overwhelming quest. **How, with what resources, and when do you make choice reading happen?**

Part II: Teach – Chapters 5 and 6

Chapter 5 – Book-Match Relentlessly

The authors believe in the idea of a watershed book, one that propels a person to a “torrent” of engaged reading. **Discuss your own watershed book. What about that particular text influenced your reading life? What information guides you as you endeavor to put a special book in each child’s hands?**

- Watershed reading experiences are the catalysts that transform many readers from striving to thriving. **Reflect on the importance of these words and share the changes you believe this experience creates in a student’s self-concept.**
- The majority of Chapter 5 focuses on a variety of ideas for assisting boys and girls in getting their hands on the right book at the right time. The suggestions include: finding copies of next-up books, offering preview stacks, sharing titles through book talks, increasing reading volume with book ladders, and creating custom books. **Which of these strategies have you integrated in your classroom? How do you gauge and monitor the success of these experiences? Which of these ideas will you include in your reading planning this year?**
- **How do you identify and keep track of possible book titles and authors that you would like to include in your classroom library?**
- **How do you monitor and document student reading choices?**
- **What questions would you like to ask the authors about the content of this chapter?**

Chapter 6 – Teach Thinking-Intensive Reading

“The point of this chapter is to share a variety of strategies that we teach to the whole group and in small groups - comprehension, fluency, and meaning making in general - that give striving readers the edge they need to turn their struggle around.” – Stephanie Harvey and Annie Ward

- **Share one of your stories about a striving reader in your classroom who became a thriving reader.**
- Research on reading-intensive reading instruction is presented on page 169. **What information in these reviews surprises you? What information excites you?**
- Steph and Annie are great believers in the power of interactive read-alouds (pages 180 – 183). **How do you prepare for lessons that include interactive read-alouds? What are you doing during the lesson and what are the students doing? What are your favorite books to use during interactive read-aloud experiences?**
- Striving readers often have difficulty with fluency. **What experiences do you provide for students who are struggling with fluency in their reading? What are your go-to strategies that support students as they work to become fluent readers in content area texts?**
- **What new ideas did you encounter in this chapter that you will introduce in your classroom?**

Part III: Transition

Chapter 7: Assess Readers in the Round

Assessing readers in the round is critical to gathering full-spectrum data, analyzing and discussing the data with striving readers, and setting reading goals with students and their families. This process informs and directs instruction. (You can download a series of Assessment Forms for this chapter at scholastic.com/ThriveResources.)

- The authors have included their formative assessment, *Assessing Readers in the Round*, on a fold-out flap, located on the inside cover of the text. **How will this chart be helpful to you?**
- “Want to collect data on how children are learning? Know them. Watch them. Listen to them. Talk with them. Sit with them. Be with them.” - Joe Bower
Share your thoughts regarding this statement. What classroom data do you have that supports this approach?
- This chapter is packed full of ideas for assessing students in a variety of ways. As you read through the information, consider the following: **Which of the assessment strategies have you utilized in your classroom? Which of the charts and explanations might you integrate into your existing assessment plans? What are your big questions about assessment?**
- On page 215, Steph and Annie describe the *Over the Shoulder Miscue Analysis* (OTS). **What information does this formative procedure provide that might be different from other assessment tools that you have used before? Are any of these ideas new to you? Would this assessment be one that you would try in your classroom? Why?**
- **How do you organize your reading assessment information so that you can easily access it for planning daily lessons and reinforcement?**

Chapter 8: Advocate Tirelessly

“Trying to do the right thing can be tiring and often lonely. So, we’ve written this chapter to put wind in your sails as you seek to get what you need for your students and for yourselves.”

- Stephanie Harvey and Annie Ward

- On page 235, the authors list 10 moves that teachers might use to advocate for striving readers. **Choose 3 of these statements and analyze how each might be helpful to you and your students.**
- How do you advocate for your own professional development? **What growth opportunity or literacy topic is most important to you this year? What process does your district offer for educators to share what they learn with colleagues?**
- **Write a short reflection, focused on the ideas and ideals that you want to carry with you after reading the book, *From Striving to Thriving*.**
- **What five words would you use to describe the essence of this book?**