for writing teachers to understand the strategies for helping students improve in reading. Reading and writing are inextricably intertwined.

Robb's eleven chapters help teachers with researching; organizing reading workshops; understanding strategic reading; discovering what students know about reading; preparing strategy lessons to help students learn to read; modeling; connecting books and students; organizing strategic reading groups; cross-grad ing projects; and assessing, interpreting, and evaluating. Each chapter includes solid research that's well documented and well explained. Call-out boxes highlight the applications of research in everyday classrooms. Chapters are peppered with samples from Robb's classroom, sample handouts, schedules, lesson plans, lists of ideas, lists of strategies, guidelines, and hints. At the end of each chapter, Robb challenges readers to pause and reflect about their own reading programs and the issues she's just raised.

Teaching Reading in Middle School is an easy-to-read, solidly grounded book, and—most importantly—it is practical for classroom teachers. All of Robb's handouts and materials are provided in five appendices for the classroom teacher to reproduce. It's a book I envision teachers pulling from the shelf and using over and over again. The downside, if there is one to this book, is that Robb doesn't give as much emphasis to writing as I'd like to see. Okay, I'm a writing project director, and I love writing as much as Robb loves reading; I'm prejudiced about it. Still, I'd like to see her put more emphasis on the writing component of her reading-writing workshop. To be fair, Robb does have students writing a good bit—they write "all about me" letters, fast writes, literature response journals, observation notes, story-specific questions, "what's hard? what's easy?" reflections, debriefings, and even minilessons. It's clear to me that she integrates reading and writing. What isn't clear is how Robb would go about helping other teachers integrate the two subjects.

Robb's book is one I've ordered for our summer institute library; I'm going to encourage our middle school fellows to try it out, and I'm going to use pieces of it in various activities this summer. I'm also going to use it with my preservice teachers. They need to hear this voice of experience and practicality as they prepare to teach.

I strongly recommend this book because of its practical applications of theory but also because of the thoughts and questions it raises, not all of them new by any means. For example, if students aren't reading at grade level, they can't be writing at grade level. It seems to me that we have to adjust our teaching and our assess-
looks consciousness cannot have true personal or political significance for our students.

While Perry advocates a dialogic method for guiding students to develop their awareness of their own conscious experience of writing processes and topics, because of her goal, her teaching is fundamentally student centered. Thus, she draws upon Peter Elbow’s work as well as Freire’s in arriving at a “composition of consciousness.” Perry takes on criticism of Elbow’s expressivist practice as apolitical or, worse, elitist, in order to reclaim his theory and approach as dialogic. In particular, Perry finds that a full reading of Elbow’s “believing game” and “cooking”—letting the ingredients of a composition communicate with and flavor one another—encompasses an author’s apprehension of his or her work in the context of an audience. Elbow’s praxis extends beyond the author and the text and is a potentially political enterprise through the dialogism inherent in the writing process and the metacognition and reflection that dialogue, both internal and external, demands.

To learn to write, Perry contends, students must write to learn. She proposes that writing instruction ought to center on creating knowledge about writing. Perry suggests that we have not given process writing our full ideological and institutional support. “We need to stop and think long and hard,” she argues further, “before taking steps down the post process path” (208). Her proposal that we work with our students toward achieving a composition of consciousness is a call for a recommitment to the theoretical underpinnings that built and braced the process writing movement. Perry locates consciousness as not only the site of but the basis for knowledge making.

Specifically, as she calls for an approach to writing instruction based upon dialogue and reflection, Perry sets out not only to reestablish Freire and to rehabilitate—or redefine—Elbow, but to challenge three regnant approaches to writing pedagogy: positivism, critical pedagogy, and social construction (strange bedfellows, those, as Perry acknowledges). Perry first acknowledges and describes the extensive and unsettled debate over the nature of consciousness, explaining that, for her purposes as a writing teacher, it is the “target and tool for creating knowledge about writing” (11). She claims that positivist approaches, such as those advanced by E.D. Hirsch, wrongly and simplistically cast writing as a mechanized skill and consider instruction as one size fits all. Perry notes, as many educators have, that this viewpoint is not only reductive but reactionary in that it ignores the inequities such an approach serves to perpetuate, as well as overlooks the Freirean concept recognizing the learner as present in the construction of meaning.

That said, Perry goes on to stress the limits of critical pedagogy and the social constructionist approach. Her composition of—and in and through—consciousness sees learners as individuals with unique experiences, outlooks, and needs. Perry claims that any approach that addresses them as merely constituted by sociocultural institutions and positions will fail to tap their rich inner lives and to engage them with the writing process. She further cautions that in critical and social constructionist approaches to literacy instruction, the literacy component can get short shrift. That is, the topic of research and description can become privileged, overreflective attention to oneself as a writer. While Perry’s call that we avoid this is aptly heeded, she sets up a false dilemma: though a focus on the research and writing topic can dominate the composition-class experience at the expense of exploration of the research and writing processes, it needn’t. Given time, we can guide our students to consider both. Indeed, their contemplation of the former can inform their manipulation of the latter, and Perry’s call to critical consciousness can be turned upon the issues students take up in their research.

Ultimately, Perry wants students to depart the composition classroom with a cognitive repertoire for thinking about writing and to be present in their continuing construction of knowledge. Perry’s goal is important, and where realized, should yield rich rewards for our students. But her philosophy already informs practice where freshman composition is taught at my institution (the University of Iowa), as well as in its program for preparing literacy instructors. So while the author’s hoped-for world is worth striving to attain, her view of current circumstances is perhaps too grim. Moreover, most of the freshmen who enter the composition
course that I teach expect to learn about writing. These students are, however, often uncertain what such learning will look like, especially the students in the "average" sections. Perry's call for students to reflect upon their process, indeed to be held accountable for doing so, is worth heeding. The strategies and ways of thinking about writing that she exhorts we help our students internalize are worth cultivating, again as a joint, dialogic enterprise. She is wise to note that this is a time-consuming project—not only in terms of intensive sessions but also in terms of extended practice over time—and to suggest that our institutional systems for providing writing instruction need to account for this in terms of class size and course length.

Reading Perry's book and mulling my own response to her writing and ideas brought to mind the question of audience. Perhaps more of her colleagues agree with Perry than she knows. But, then, part of her mission in writing this book is to suggest that perhaps Freire's work is more foundational and Elbow's is more in line with their thinking than her colleagues are aware. Whether or not accepting Perry's argument will lead us to change or merely affirm our views, her linking of theory to practice is worth tracing.

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