Mentor Texts

Teaching Writing Through Children’s Literature, K–6

By

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To our mentors, professional as well as personal, who have taught us the secrets of living, writing, and teaching.
There is no power like the gift
Of learning literacy,
Nor any greater purpose or
Responsibility.

This we bequest to rich and poor
And share with young and old;
How crucial is the charge we have
To light a child’s soul!

Thanks to Lori A. Schmidt, a participant in our Writing and Children’s Literature course offered by the Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project. Lori used the syntax of Emily Dickinson’s “There Is No Frigate Like a Book” to create this poem.
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References
Many people have acted as mentors in our professional lives, helping to inform our thinking and shape the beliefs that guide our teaching. Some of them are personal friends and supportive colleagues with whom we interact on a regular basis. Others are people we have listened to at conferences and whose work we have read extensively. Both groups have left a lasting impression in our minds and hearts, and have provided us with insights, gentle nudges, and words of encouragement.

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Several years ago we began meeting with Patti Sollenberger of Reading Matters to have conversations about picture books as avenues for helping students become more successful writers. As we sat around the table at the Reading Matters office, we all came to the realization that we had more to say. Thank you, Patti and the staff at Reading Matters, for your support and the introduction to our Stenhouse editor.

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From Rose:

A few years ago I received a Christmas card from a friend and colleague. Along with the appropriate holiday sentiment were the words Write the book. I kept that card in my desk drawer, rereading it when doubts about my ability to finish this manuscript surfaced in my head. Somehow, it served as a reminder of the many people who supported, encouraged, and believed in this project. (Thanks, Joe.)

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