

Gibson, Karen, and Sheila Wise. *If You Give a Teacher a Book: Using Picture Books to Teach the Traits of Writing*. Fort Atkinson, WI: Upstart Books, 2008. 123p. \$17.95 (ISBN: 978-1-60213-005-0)

As the title indicates, the focus of this book is to assist teachers in the use of picture books in writing instruction. The authors explain in the Introduction that many teachers have difficulty in this area, due to insecurity stemming from the inability to explain the process to students or lack of confidence in their own writing abilities.

The book is logically arranged into chapters dealing with the traits of writing: Ideas, Organization, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Voice, Conventions, and Presentation. Each section contains a summary of the trait being discussed as well as several picture books that can be used for instruction, a writing prompt and a detailed lesson plan. Many of the books can be used to illustrate multiple areas.

The authors gleaned information from working at the Pasadena Independent School District (TX). Much of their insight comes from their own experience as educators in addition to enlisting the assistance of their fellow educators. In the creation of this title, they employed an idea set forth by Heinemann that picture book authors should be used as co-teachers because of their knowledge of their audience. This idea, along with the concept of arranging the book in a way that enables teachers and Librarians/Media Specialists to collaborate, will hopefully lead to the development of a relationship between these two entities; the key to the successful teaching of not only writing, but literacy in general.

This book would be very helpful for new teachers struggling with this difficult task, or for those looking to enhance their instruction with a new and interesting approach. The authors seem to have put a lot of thought into the format and content, utilizing some very popular authors and titles and unique exercises.

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