An Invitation to Join the Conversation

For any conversation try asking:

Who is doing the talking?
Who is being talked about?
What is at stake for whom in this conversation?

The voices of children and students are mostly absent from public conversation, even when it is directly about them. If I can’t find the children’s voices (and want to!), I can start by looking at the children’s’ points of entry. What do kids and people speaking with/for/to kids have to say and how do they say it? What can we learn as writers from these conversations? Let’s imagine how mentor texts that are part of children’s literacy experiences can be not only sites for comprehension but sites for crafting ideas and joining conversations. Let’s imagine how children’s books can create access to meaningful conversations for students.

Group Mentor Text Activity

Quickwrite
For any topic, area of interest, inquiry, etc (after some experiences, work with primary texts, reading into the conversation, responding to texts, writing about their own ideas), ask students to list in their daybooks all the possible stances they can think of that people have on this topic… What do different people think about ________.

Group Lightening List
Chart ideas from quickwrite, getting as many written as possible on the chart in three minutes.

Small Group Explorations

1. What do we have to say as a group?... choose from group list or choose something else to play with for a few minutes
2. How can we say it? .... As a group develop your idea in writing to get other people in the room thinking with you... you’ll share some version of this in ab it
3. Someone(s) in the group read your mentor texts selections.
4. Discuss what you perceive that these texts have to do with persuasion... discuss as many possibilities as you can.... someone take notes.
5. Find something, one small idea or one big idea, that you can try out in your piece of collaborative writing.
6. Revise your piece of writing as group
7. Decide how you will share with the room
Books that Think With Me When I Think About Persuasion

When I was browsing through our book shelf for pieces that are useful in thinking about persuasion, I found…

books having characters enacting persuasion within them...

- *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss
- *Edwina: The Dinosaur Who Didn’t Know She was Extinct* by Mo Willems
- *Click, Clack, Moo* by Doreen Cronin
- *Everybody Needs a Rock* by Byrd Baylor

even failed persuasion,

- *Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* by Mo Willems
- *Don’t Let the Pigeon Stay up Late* by Mo Willems
- *There is a Monster at the End of this Book*

explicitly persuasive pieces,

- I *Wanna Iguana* by Karen Kaufman Orland
- *Should We Have Pets?* by Sylvia Lollis

books that give craft ideas on perspective,

- *Dear Peter Rabbit* by Alma Flor Ada
- The *Jolly Postman* by Janet and Allan Ahlberg
- *Voices in the Park* by DK Publishing

books that give craft ideas on angle,

- *Zoom* by Istvan Banyai
- *Re-Zoom* by Istvan Banyai

books that reframe dominant narratives, and

- *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* John Scieszka
- *The Paperbag Princess* by Robert Munsch
- *There are Things I’ll Never Say* on therearethingsillneversay.org

books that engage the school reform conversation

- *Storytime* by Edward Bloor
- *Differendooper Day* by Dr. Seuss and John Scieszka