**Mentor Texts: Review of the Literature**

**23 Textbooks** published 2007-2014 with “Mentor Texts” in the title

**Including 65 articles** published 2007-2014

* + 30+ journals, mostly education and English (but not all)
  + almost no repeating authors, but represent teachers, professors, librarians (no student voices except as incorporated in articles, no parent voices, no general public voices)
  + wide range of contexts (age/grade levels, cultures/nations, content areas)
  + range of purposes (teaching various writing traits and genres, teaching test taking and writing, teaching multimedia composing, teaching reading, teaching ideologies such as social justice)
  + range of article types (how-to, reflective essays, studies)

**Other terms**

* + Model text
  + Touchstone text
  + Exemplar

**Ambiguities**

* + Which is the mentor: teacher, text, author, student…or the act of deconstructing the text?
  + Misapplied metaphor?
  + Lines between mentor texts, intertexuality, plagiarism

**Quotes of Interest**

“Essential to this study is the recommendation of SFL researchers who suggest that the teaching-learning cycle begin with teachers deconstructing a mentor text to show the features of a particular genre. Then teachers jointly construct text with students by accepting and negotiating students' contributions. Finally, students are encouraged to construct text independently (J. R. Martin, 2009)” (Brisk, Hodgson-Drysdale, & O’Connor, 2011/2012, p. 2).

“[The teacher] used the mentor texts and the descriptive language in them as examples. On an overhead projector, she compared parts of the mentor texts with and without the author's descriptive language, and the students were asked which piece was more informative and why. The students all came to the same answer: The descriptive knowledge helped to serve the author’s purpose, which is to inform the reader. Cheryl also discussed with them the role of the illustrations to complement the written text and reflect important information.” (Brisk, Hodgson-Drysdale, & O’Connor, 2011/2012, p. 5).

“In writing workshop and in content area writing, students at all stages benefit from studying mentor texts. This is especially true of intermediate writers as they are well positioned to focus more intently on author's craft and revision techniques. As they learn to "read with the eyes of writer" and "write like a reader" (Hansen, 2001), they begin to form a rubric for effective writing.” (Gehsmann & Templeton, 2011/2012, p. 11)

“Even more memorable was the fascination that I had with Crockett Johnson's line drawings of both boy and fish. With a slight adjustment in the positioning of the eye, or the arch formed by the raising of an eyebrow, so much was conveyed by the illustrator and understood by the reader. In order to grasp an understanding of how this could be done, I spent hours tracing the figures of the boy and of the fish. … A couple of years ago, I heard Kevin Henkes talk about the impact that Crockett Johnson had on his work as an illustrator. I realized that many of us, both novices and experts, have been mentored by the literature that we have encountered” (Giorgis, Bedford, & Fabbi, 2008, p. 6)

Brisk, M. E., Hodgson-Drysdale, T., & O'Connor, C. (2011/2012). A study of a collaborative instructional project informed by systemic functional linguistic theory: Report writing in elementary grades. *Journal of Education, 191*(1), 1-12.

Gehsmann, K. M. & Templeton, S. (2011/2012). Stages and standards in literacy: Teaching developmentally in the age of accountability. *Journal of Education, 192*(1), 5-16.

Giorgis, C., Bedford, A., & Fabbi, Jennifer L. (2008). From the editors: Children's books as mentor texts. *Journal of Children's Literature, 34*(2), 4-7.