Writing Box Program: The Reading Writing Connection

Lisa Von Drasek, Curator
An Infopeople Webinar
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https://www.lib.umn.edu/publishing/writingboxes
How did this begin?
Kids Have All the Write Stuff: Inspiring Your Children To Put Pencil (or Crayons or Felt-Tip Markers or Computers) to Paper

by

Sharon A. Edwards

Robert W. Maloy
Once upon a time, there was a man named John. He was at the man state and he needed to go to the bathroom. When he got out of the bathroom, he heard a sound coming from the fairies wheel. He walked to the fairies wheel and saw a hat on the floor. It said "Belonging to Markie." He put it on. Because it looks nice. But when he put it on, it took over his body, and he said: "I know wonder he took it off and then he look like Markie." But evil and then. When he blended it was right time and then when John went to bed, he was able to take of the hat and when he woke up he was in Boughen and then he heard a whimper and it soon
Note the zipper closure bag with ten markers labeled
The Making of a Crisis

Scramble on Asbestos Is Symptom of Years Of Wider Physical Deterioration in Schools

BY JOSH BARBANEL

It was a moment of clarity in the confusion and missteps of the asbestos crisis in New York City public schools. Schools Chancellor Ramon C. Cortines, surrounded by a phalanx of elected officials and construction experts, was at an emergency meeting yesterday with angry parents in the auditorium of Public School 13 in the East New York section of Brooklyn.

"Don't tell us to calm down," one parent shouted to cheers. "The health of our children is at stake."

And then one official in the front of the room, Meyer S. Frucher, a trustee of the School Construction Authority, felt a drop of water on his head. Then the schools were safe and they were asbestos-free and there was water falling on my head," Mr. Frucher said later. "And most of the damaged asbestos was caused by leaking roofs and windows."

Whatever fraud or incompetence triggered the current asbestos mess, whether there is much of an underlying health risk in asbestos, parents and educators agree that it is only a symptom of a much more-serious ailment in the public school system: deferred and nonexistent school maintenance.

For most of the last 50 years, and especially after the 1975 fiscal crisis, New Yorkers have been unable or unwilling to pay the full cost of maintaining the schools; officials say, causing
I write to please myself.
I decide how to use the Writing Box.
I choose what to write
and
I know when it is finished.
I am a reader and writer right now.
I have things to say and write everyday.
I write when I play
and
play when I write.
I can write about my experience and my imagination.
I spell the way
I can
and
learn to spell
as I write.
I learn as I write
and
write as I learn.
What is the take-away for the librarian?

• To be able to articulate why writing is an essential part of literacy
• That supporting writing IS a part of our jobs
• That a Writing Box program is an inexpensive easy replicable, easily adaptable program for a range of ages and community members
• That the right-to-read includes the right to create and communicate in a safe, non-judgmental environment.
Be able to select and evaluate mentor texts for

- diversity
- age relevance
- as text to inspire thematic independent writing by children, teens, and adults
Provide a barrier-free access
Be able to understand writing as a facet of literacy
Be able to understand how competency in writing develops in children
Be able to provide and facilitate a safe, non-judgement writing space for children, young adults and their families.
Recognize issues, challenges, and be prepared for them
Writing and Reading

Read ✒ Write ✒ Now!
How I Became a Pirate

Melinda Long

David Shannon
Edwards and Maloy observed parents and their children writing over a four-year period, then developed a formula for successful children’s learning:
Play + Choice + Approximation + Risk-taking = Children’s Learning
Play

The Writing Box program supports playful writing.

Writing is not “work.” There is no “right way” to write.
Choice

We give parents and children a choice of prompts and materials.

We know that competent writing, like reading, takes practice.
Approximation

This means accepting good tries at spelling and sentence structure, and even at different ways of communicating meaning, without constantly criticizing or correcting.
Risk-Taking

We ask all participants to take a risk, to be willing to try something new: “I have never made a map before!”

Librarians can model enthusiasm in the face of a fear of failure, and help parents overcome the instinct for perfectionism:

“Let’s get the writing down on the page. We can look up how to spell when we revise later.”
TWO ONIONS, FOUR GARLIC BULBS, SERENDIPITY AND A DOG NAMED WINN DIXIE

My dog's name is Winn Dixie on account of that is where I found him. He was in the produce department and you know they don't like dogs mixed in with the fruit and vegetables.

The produce manager, he was all excited, waving his arms around and chasing Winn Dixie, screaming, "that dirty dog. who let that dirty dog in here?" which was a good question, because they don't normally let dogs in any part of Winn Dixie. They think they carry germs. But Winn Dixie was running around and the produce manager was chasing him and Winn Dixie thought it was a game. His tongue was hanging out and his tail was wagging and every one in a while he would let out a happy bark. And I happened to come in Winn Dixie at exactly that minute. It was the same thing my teacher was talking about in school it was serendipity. My daddy had said, "bea, run on up to the Winn Dixie and get me five onions and two cloves of garlic." My daddy was fixing to make spaghetti and he likes to spice it up. And I said yes sir. I like to run errands on account of my bike is very, very fast and I'm good at taking instructions and I can remember a long list of things in my head. Five onions and two cloves of garlic was a snap for me. So I got up there to Winn Dixie and I stopped at the front door to check and see if the superball vending machine had either money or a superball laying in the bottom of it and it didn't. And then I weighed myself. I weighed fifty-two pounds. I am small for my age. People have been saying that ever since I can remember. But I think I am just fine.

And then I headed on back to the produce department and that is where I set eyes on Winn Dixie for the very first time. Winn Dixie was skidding around the corner of all the fruit displays and wagging his tail so hard he was knocking apples and oranges off the display and they were rolling around in the aisles, along with the tomatoes and green peppers that Winn Dixie was knocking off. And the produce manager was chasing him and hollering at nobody in particular, "help me, help me catch this dirty dog." And then Winn Dixie sat down, just like that, thump. And the produce manager couldn't stop. He tripped right over Winn Dixie and went flying through the air. It was something to see. I decided right off I had to have that dog. The produce manager had him cornered and he was hollering and screaming right in Winn Dixie's face. And Winn Dixie was just wailing his tail and smiling back at the produce manager. He's a real friendly dog. And people were all gathered around looking and pointing. And then all of a sudden, Winn Dixie was thinking that he wasn't over and he barked and jumped and tried to put all four of his paws at once on the produce manager and it knocked him down. Which is when the produce manager started to cry. It was sad and funny at the same time and Winn Dixie started licking the man's face and everybody kind of moved on, because it is one thing to see a produce manager get in a fight with a dog and that's the kind of thing it's fun to watch, but it's not any fun at all to watch a produce manager cry.

"This is serendipity," I thought to myself. If Daddy hadn't wanted to make spaghetti and sent me to get him four onions and two cloves of garlic, I wouldn't have met Winn Dixie.

"All right," the big Winn Dixie manager started pushing his way through the crowd, saying, "all right, all right, whose dog is this?" and that was more serendipity. Maybe it was just what my daddy calls my big mouth, but I knew if somebody didn't speak up they would take Winn Dixie to the pound.


The produce manager looked at me like he wanted to kill me a hundred different ways and the big manager turned on me and said, "What's your name?"

"Bea," I told him.

"Bea?" he said.

"That's right," I said. "Bea buloni."

"And you are how old," he said.

"I'm ten," I told him.

"Well," he said, "Miss Buloni, ten years old is old enough to know that you do not bring dogs into a grocery store."

"Yes sir," I told him. "He just got off his leash and I was chasing him and he ended up in here somehow."
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At the Public Library
Continuity and Consistency

• 8 weeks

• 1 hour a week, formal program

• Writing boxes available at the reference desk for check out for in-library use
Eight reproducible workshops

1. Maps
2. Cartoons
3. Hieroglyphics
4. Menus and Recipes
5. Newspapers
6. Postcards and Letters
7. Poetry
8. Handmade books
Five Common Elements
For A Writing Box Program

1. Books related to the topic- Mentor Texts

2. Creation of sample by the librarian

3. Modeling the action of writing

4. A simple interaction with the children

5. Writing Box materials
What did I forget?
Once upon a time, I was in my house. I saw a Zombie and he broke in my door. I ran as fast as I could. I called the police, but they were already there.
Grown ups
Parents
Care Givers
Special Friends
Grandparents
Five Common Elements
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5. Writing Box materials
Books Related To The Topic or Mentor Texts
What am I looking for in the books I select for mentor texts?
A riveting story, whether fiction or informational
We need to give thanks every dawn for the gifts of life, for each breath drawn.

For everything that keeps us living, we speak our words of true thanksgiving.

— from the poem “Giving Thanks” by Joseph Bruchac
Compelling Art

Does the art reflect and illuminate the text?
Age relevance: does it engage and inform its intended audience?
Accuracy reflecting diversity of culture, nationalities, economy, and abilities.
Dramatic page turns: the art of the picture book hinges on compelling page turns.
Consistent style
Is it excellent throughout and is the voice consistent?
Read-aloud-ability: is it a joy to read aloud?
Looking at the art of the book,

• What media is used? Do watercolor illustrations serve the story? Is the art accomplished or amateur?

• Is this a serious biography?

• Do visual elements add to or distract from the text?

• Is the layout clean and communicative, or is it confusing?

• Are pieces of the pictures lost in the gutter?
Dear Paul,

Maggie and I miss you. She waits by the door for you every night. Love, Lisa

Paul Von Dreses
65 Middagh St
Brooklyn, NY 11201
Dear Paul,
Maggie and I miss you.
She waits by the door every night.
Love, Lisa

Paul Von Drasek
In a hotel in San Diego
San Diego CA 98765
Other Side of Postcard
Are We There Yet, Daddy?
by Virginia Walters
illustrated by S.D. Schindler

As the Crow Flies
A First Book of Maps
by Gail Herman
illustrated by Harvey Stevenson

Me on the Map
by Joan Sweeney
illustrated by Annette Cable

My Map Book
by Sara Fanello

Mapping Penny's World
by Loreen Leedy
MAP OF MY BEDROOM

MY DESK

MY SISTER'S DESK

TOY CHEST

MY FAVORITE TOYS

MY SISTER'S BED

MY BED

CARPET

TOM
Read Aloud Mapping Sam
Have a short discussion
What is a map?

Model the making of a map.
This is very quick, just a few minutes.
The digestive system, I guess?

I want you kids to only chew your food.

Try to nibble the food so you can chew.
Map Of: Forever
In The Past

9110's
Sophie Nacht 319 Becky Yang

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Modeling
Cartoon Template
Cartoons

The END
FRANKENSTEIN MAKES A SANDWICH

AND OTHER STORIES YOU'RE SURE TO LIKE, BECAUSE THEY'RE ALL ABOUT MONSTERS, AND SOME OF THEM ARE ALSO ABOUT FOOD.

YOU LIKE FOOD, DON'T YOU?

WELL, ALL RIGHT THEN.

BY ADAM REX
Popcorn

1. Crisco
2. Spoon
3. Pan
4. Popcorn
For double batch

Pancakes

You will need:

- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 cup of flour
- 1/2 cup of water
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 teaspoons of salt
- Plate
- Spatula
- Bowl

More on other side of page
Recipe for Pasta

Things you'll need:
- Tomato sauce
- Pasta
- Bowl with holes to let water out
- Big pot
- Gloves that let you hold hot things
- So water to half way up the pot

How you make it:
1. Fill water up to half way and put bowl up. Wait till water boils.
2. Then put pasta in.
3. Wait 10 to 20 minutes.
4. Put gloves on.
**Merengues**

You will need:
- 1 Tablespoon vanilla extract
- 2 Tablespoons Water
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup sugar & 2 bowls
- 20-23 cookie trays
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 cup measure

Seperate eggs into 2 bowls. Mix whites until very stiff. Put water in measuring cup and add vanilla. Add water & vanilla to egg whites & mix more. While mixing, add sugar. Grease cookie sheet. Splop batter on cookie sheet. Bake for 11 to 15 minutes or until cooked on top. EAT!

**Meringues**

You will need:
- 1 Tablespoon vanilla extract
- 2 Tablespoons Water
- 4 eggs
- 1 whisk or mixer
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 bowls
- 20-23 cookie sheets
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 cup measure

Seperate eggs into two bowls. Mix whites until very stiff. Put water in measuring cup and add vanilla. Add water & vanilla to egg whites. Mix more. While mixing, add sugar. Grease cookie sheet. Splop batter on cookie sheet. Bake at 350° for 11-15 minutes or until cooked on top. EAT!
NEW DRUG RAP FOR ROBERT DOWNEY JR.

BUSTED

Actor fired from ‘Ally McBeal,’ checks into rehab
April

Animal News

New Animal Found!
Newspapers
Kid News

Wednesday April 2001

Joey's 9/10 gettethnest of the year

They were so good they got the rest of the year off. They also getsummer home work. They did lots more home work then they did. They also gave the teachers ice cream.

Bush has done nothing since he has been president.

Bush has done nothing since president. He made USA worse. Next USK.
HARKEN AND BEHOLD HIM!
FOR IT IS THE END TIMES!

LORD GOD RISES UP FROM SUNKEN CITY

STARS HAVE ALL BEEN DEVOURED; THE MOON IS DISAPPEARING BY BIT; DARKNESS

The unknowable himself has risen from the flimsy depths; to gorge himself upon our night sky, cracking the stars like crab’s legs and sucking out the glimmering marrow, casting the shells aside.

president kanye west proposes creating artificial stars in his shape

Recently elected president of the United States; Kanye “yezy” west, former

Claudine Tremont of Westen, N.D., was the first to notice the missing constellations. "I talk to Cassiopeia every night, you know, and suddenly, last Saturday, she was gone!" says the concerned citizen.
Accessibility
Collaborating:
Writing Is Noisy Business
Red Sings from Treetops
A year in colors

by Joyce Sidman
Illustrated by Pamela Zagarenski
In SPRING, Red sings from treetops: cheer-cheer-cheer, each note dropping like a cherry into my ear.

Red turns the maples feathery, sprouts in rhubarb spears; Red squirms on the road after rain.
Orange turns blue, blue salt
Yellow beams
Blue Hours
Big Raindrops
blackfights
Blue twinkles in the night
prancing dancing in the water
blue in the sky
blue in the water beaming everywhere
Green Dances,
It peeks out from
every corner.
It jumps out
at you.

Sharing
Green Dance.
It peeks out from every corner.
It jumps out if you.
Green Dance.
It peeks out from every corner.
It jumps out at you.
GREEN DANCER
It beeds but friend
every moment sum pout you
Green dances,
It peeks out from every corner.
It jumps out at you.
Respecting Privacy
can B play with glider
Getting the Buy-in

Page 160

Inexpensive
Supports Literacy
Multigenerational
Replicable

Fun!
Stuff that comes up

- Privacy
- Spelling
- Blocks-inspiration
- Writer/editor
- Parents
- Standing back, not commenting-describing-can you tell me about your writing? What do you want to say?
- Perfectionism
They who make no mistakes make nothing
The most significant outcome of a Writing Box program is a cohort of participants who gain confidence and competency in their writing.
Evaluating Outcomes

- Are the children and young adults engaged in the work?
- Are they excited about their writing, about sharing it, and about their peers’ work?
- Is attendance steady or growing?
- Are participants engaged? Do they write?
- Are their adults writing?
Do they seem excited to be there, or are their adults making them attend?
Is the topic open enough to engage writers of different skill levels and ages?
outcomes

• Are participants borrowing titles on display, and titles that tie in with a session’s project?
• When materials are available at the reference desk, are writers requesting and using them?
• Have we had requests for an expansion of the program?
• Have community groups like the Girl Scouts of America asked to participate?
WHAT ANIMALS REALLY LIKE

FIONA ROBINSON
Ladies and gentlemen! Boys and girls!
Here, for the first time, I present my new song.

“What Animals Like Most.”
A-one, a-two, a-one, two, three, a-
We are lions,
and we like to prowl.

We are wolves,
and we like to howl.

We are pigeons,
and we like to coo.

We are cows,
and we like to ...
... dig.
We are horses, and we like fresh hay.

We are monkeys, and we like to play.

We are warthogs, and we like to ...
... blow enormous bubbles.
Blow enormous bubbles?
Stop! Stop!
That's not in my song.
We are frogs,
and we like to swim.

We are shrimp,
and we like to ski.
Ski? Ski?
That's not in my song either.
When have you ever been skiing?
Say, you had great weather!

Well, we just got our photos back. Here we are in Switzerland...
Sssshhh!
Order! Order!
We'll start again with the kangaroos.
A one, a-two, a . . .
Don’t expect us to sing that we like to hop around! Actually, we prefer Ping-Pong.
That's it. I give up!

Don't give up. Just let us sing about what we really like, not what you think we like!
Hmmm. Well, what do you think, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls?
It will probably sound very silly.
And it won't rhyme, you know.
Are you sure you want to hear what the animals really like?
Oh! OK then. From the top. A-one, a-two, a-one, two, three, and . . .
We are lions, and we like ... flower arranging.
We are wolves,
and we like to perform magic!

We are pigeons,
and we like ballet.
We are cows, and we like to dig.

We are monkeys, and we like all-you-can-eat buffets.
We are horses, and we like deep-sea diving.

We are worms, and we like to bowl.
We are warthogs, and we like to parachute.

We changed our minds. We also like to change our minds!

Aha! You said you liked blowing enormous bubbles before!
We are frogs, and we like tennis and most martial arts. Our favorite food is pizza with extra mushrooms, but with absolutely no tomatoes whatsoever.

We are shrimp, and we like to ski.
We are kangaroos,
and we like Ping-Pong.

And we are mice,
and we like cheese.
Fold heavy stock in half
What people think I like best or am like from my outsides

Reading books, libraries, teaching...
What I really like best underneath.

Dogs, Dogs, Dogs, Dogs, Puppies
Writing Box Program: The Reading Writing Connection

Lisa Von Drasek, Curator

lvondras@umn.edu