

Literacy Leads

More on Daybooks: There's Always More to Learn!

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I have received so much email on daybooks lately, I didn't want to keep all the ideas to myself. So, with permission, I share these wonderful thoughts and ideas...

Generating Writing Topics

A teacher (Karen Dawson – not me!) designed an idea for helping students generate writing topics. I found out about it when Angie Curran shared at our Fall Institute in Concord. Hopefully, you can see the photo in color above and black white below. The teacher made a list of the 100 things she likes the best: 100 small moments. She just started writing words and drawing. The middle school kids loved it. When finished, they glued them in their daybooks. What could be better than writing about yourself? What do you know more about?



Collaboration Corner: Lacy Manship shares on kindergarten daybooks

Pretty much, the same type of stuff that goes into any daybook also works for kindergarten. The biggest difference I guess is that visual literacy is really important to an emergent reader.

We glue a lot of texts (with words and pictures) in there. Real stuff from the world is very important to us and also stuff that I make kindergarten friendly - (using big type and rebus pictures for example).

As far as what kind of writing I expect from them... well for me more than what I "expect of them" is what I expect of myself. I expect, that as a teacher of young children, that I recognize where each child is developmentally and that I honor whatever developmental space that is by cherishing what she and he bring to the paper. What I notice is that they use drawings (which I definitely name as part of writing) and graphophonetic marks - swirlies (love those!), letter-like forms, letters, words, sentences) to represent their thinking. Given models from the real world, from their peers and from teachers, children really want to write (unless at age five someone has already told them they can't- which they usually can overcome with some time). So, it is not really a matter of high expectations, but more a matter of giving them the space (I mean physical but also symbolic space) to do it happily.

STUFF IN KINDERGARTEN DAYBOOKS PHOTOS

- pictures of kids DOING stuff at school like playing at centers
- often write reflection with writing and drawing

REAL WORLD TEXTS

- page copied from favorite book
- printed internet page
- pictures with captions of animals or other interesting science stuff
- pamphlets or whatever from field trips or
- environmental print

KID WRITING

- Freewriting (yep, we do it and drawing is definitely allowed!)
- Reader response
- Drawings of block structures
- Planning for center work
- Reflections on center work
- Math reflection
- Science reflection
- Writer's workshop stuff (topics lists, stories,
- Glued in products from writing center
- Surveys taken of other kids

SCHOOL STUFF

- name of the week with photo of that child (We do a word study on one name a week)
- class rule pictures
- recipes used in class
- poems
- words to songs
- directions for science experience
- word lists
- alphabet with pictures
- number line

Other Reflections...

I actually went home and showed my 5-year old daughter what I had started and asked her if she would like to start a daybook? She started jumping up and down with excitement. She must have worked on it in her room for 1 hour straight. She put in pictures, stickers, her school sight words. She even practiced drawing her beta fish and spelling beta. It was so cool to see the pure excitement in her eyes. I even pulled mine out later that day and added to it.

Elementary Literacy Facilitator

I look forward to the other days to learn more. I just wanted to share that with you.

I am kind of doing a daybook with my little guy at home. Of course I had to modify the idea a little but he is so happy, every night when I say let's work in our daybook he gets so happy! He had been identified as needing some early intervention help for reading probably due to the fact that he is bi-lingual (or maybe reading is really hard for him?) and I was not very sure of how to reinforce at home this program so I just bought a daybook and started writing a few words down for him to

read. As he started coming home with notes from his teacher and worksheets he had done at school, we started gluing them in so that I can look at them and find an idea of what I need to do with him. You should have seen how proud he was tonight when he told his dad he had 10 pages in HIS book and he could read them all! So thank you so much. This has been a very rewarding experience.

High School Foreign Language Teacher

I will use daybooks every day in my teaching. I was already using a notebook that was similar to a daybook, but not exactly. The problem was that it only worked for some students, not all. My big breakthrough was to find a way to make it work for every kid. The daybook makes students take ownership of it.

Middle School Health Teacher

The daybooks will be quite useful in my teaching if done correctly. Of course my students lose everything. I see the daybook as a wonderful tool for them to keep notes, warm-ups, and vocabulary for my class. I have attempted to use composition books this year, but they do not in any way resemble a "daybook." I now realize that I must keep my own daybook to match my students' daybooks.

Middle School EC Teacher

The experience (of trying my own daybook) really opened my eyes on how interesting a daybook can be. I had always looked at them like they should be just for quick writes or reflections. I never thought about the play part, which in my opinion is the best part.

Middle School ELA Teacher

I began this staff development with great hesitation. I really did not want to do this – really. After today I realize that writing is different for different situations. I love the thought that writing ENRAVES your thoughts and that it moves you from having an opinion to having an idea. I also love the idea of "playing" in your daybook. I can so see using daybooks as part of my math classroom – yes the writing will be different than an ELA classroom but they can write processes, explanations, flow charts... and this will help ENGRAVE what they are learning.

Middle School Math Teacher