

Talking, Drawing, Writing: Lessons for Our Youngest Writers

By Martha Horn, Mary Ellen Giacobbe

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In the early grades, talking and drawing can provide children with a natural pathway to writing, yet these components are often overlooked. In *Talking, Drawing, Writing: Lessons for Our Youngest Writers* Martha Horn and Mary Ellen Giacobbe invite readers to join them in classrooms where they listen, watch, and talk with children, then use what they learn to create lessons designed to meet children where they are and lead them into the world of writing. The authors make a case for a broader definition of writing, advocating for formal storytelling sessions, in which children tell about what they know, and for focused sketching sessions so that budding writers learn how to observe more carefully.

The book's lessons are organized by topic and include oral storytelling, drawing, writing words, assessment, introducing booklets, and moving writers forward. Based on the authors' work in urban kindergarten and first-grade classes, the essence and structure of many of the lessons lend themselves to adaptation through fifth grade. The lessons follow a consistent format:

- what's going on in the classroom;
- what children need to learn next;
- the materials needed;
- the actual language used in the lesson;
- when children's literature is used, reasons for choosing the books and suggestions for other books;
- suggestions for other lessons.

Martha and Mary Ellen show the thinking behind their teaching decisions and provide a way to look at and assess children's writing, giving us much more than a book of lessons; they present a vision of what beginning writing can look and sound like. Perhaps most powerfully, they give us examples of the language they use with children that reveal a genuine respect for and trust in children as learners.

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Editorial Review

Review
'What a fabulous resource for kindergarten teachers and those interested in valuing the language of drawing further.' --Enjoy and Embrace Learning blog

About the Author
Martha Horn and Mary Ellen Giacobbe are co-directors and designers of Writing in Kindergarten, a professional development project based in Boston Public Schools. Both have been classroom teachers and now work as consultants providing classroom-based in-service training for teachers across the United States. Martha is a Professor of Education at Rhode Island College and Providence College. Mary Ellen serves as a consultant for the Literacy Collaborative at Lesley University

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