

MOI@Mia (Mid-Continent Oceanographic Institute at Mia)

Mid-Continent Oceanographic Institute (MOI) is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting students with their writing skills, emphasizing cross-curriculum creativity. To learn more, visit MOI's website <http://www.moi-msp.org/>.

What's with the wacky name?

From MOI website: "We're glad you asked! Our wacky name serves a few purposes. First, it's a play on our beloved, landlocked state of Minnesota, the land of 10,000 lakes (but no oceans...yet). Second, we feel having a creative name allows our student authors to be more creative, too. It creates a space where anything is possible—even an ocean in Minnesota—and no idea is too big or too silly to be discussed and taken seriously. Lastly, MOI is a chapter in development for a nationwide network of creative writing and tutoring centers, [826 National](#). Each chapter has its own wacky storefront."

Storytelling & Bookmaking Field Trips

During a field trip, students will learn about the elements of a story while collaborating in small and large groups. At the end of the field trip, students are invited to finish the story individually, which the group has left at a cliffhanger ending. The field trip teaches students about collaboration, self-editing, the bookmaking process, and elements of successful storytelling. Volunteers—including an illustrator—work with student authors to complete and publish a book within two hours.

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Mia's storytelling field trips are offered to third grade classes. At Mia, the three main characters for each story are based on three artworks in our collection. Each child will leave with a "published" book with an ending to the story written by themselves.

This is a complex but fun process. Here is what the schedule for each day will look like:

10:00 Students are escorted to Studio 112 where they begin the program

One of you will meet the group and walk them through the third avenue lobby since they are heading to the studios, not the galleries.

The program facilitator (from MOI) introduces themselves and facilitates a conversation about what MOI is and about what Mia is. They tell the kids about their grumpy boss, the captain, who is bored in a submarine underground. They receive a call (over walkie talkie) from the captain who is way down under the museum. The captain is bored and says they need a book. So, the facilitator and the students decide the kids will write a book for the captain together.

Around 10:10 the students are beginning to collaboratively develop a setting for the book. Once they have their setting an artist in the room will be illustrating that setting for the cover of the book.

The whole time they are developing the story, a scribe (MOI staff or volunteer) is typing it. It is visible on the studio wall. One Mia volunteer takes notes at the front of the room while the kids are creating the story.

Around 10:30 character development begins

This where the tour guides come in. The kids will be shown the three artworks for the day, which have been selected in advance by Mia staff. They will decide which will be the antagonist, the protagonist, and the sidekick. By about 10:30 each group of about 8 or 9 kids will go up to the gallery with their tour guide. They will discuss only one art work—the character they are developing. Using a list of prompts provided by MOI the students will decide a lot of things about that character. None of this will be based on actual information about the artwork. It works great if production volunteers or MOI volunteers can take notes during these gallery conversations. Ideally, the students will have a chance to see all three artworks before heading downstairs.

By roughly 11:00 all three groups will come back to the studio

When gathered back at the studio, a couple of students from each group will share out about the character they developed. The artist will use this information to illustrate the characters for the middle of the book. They will already be familiar with the artworks. The students then play-act an encounter between the characters to begin the story narrative. All the while, the typist is creating the story.

By about 11:20 or 25 the Captain will call in to find out about the books

Yes, the books. They think all the kids are writing books. When they hear there is only one book, they says oh no, I need a lot of books. At this point each student is asked to write their own ending to the book. MOI and Mia volunteers make sure that every student has a story page and a pencil.

Shortly thereafter, book production begins!

This is where production begins! Facilitators will also be called on to help with production.

While the students are writing the publication team will be working with MOI staff to make copies of the front cover and the character illustration, and to assemble the books as soon as we have printed forty copies on a copier that is in 111 with the other assembly supplies and the captain!!! Volunteers also read each student ending and write a short comment about each that the captain will use to tell each student something special they enjoyed about the story.

As the students finish their endings, the captain will walkie talkie into the next room and say something to each kid about their ending while the production team collates, staples and binds (with duct tape) the books.

While this is happening students will be asked to complete feedback sheets and/or prompted to draw pictures of their artwork with the captain in them (they will have to guess what they think the captain looks like) to keep themselves preoccupied.

Each child leaves with their own book. Each of you gets a book too! Your name will be in the credits on the inside cover of each book.

This is a wacky, fun, but definitely complicated process. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you!!!!