

Big Water" GOES TO SCHOOL



Workshop Proposal



Big Water Goes to School!!

Who: Big Water (Robert Selvaggio) is a singer/songwriter/artist with a mission to keep creative thinking alive. His passion for children's education was sparked in 2001 with an invitation from his niece's 5th grade teacher to participate in a poetry program in Columbus, Ohio. That experience spurred Big Water to start his creative thinking workshops in any elementary school he could go to. Eight years later, Big Water has spent countless hours in many classrooms across the country. Big Water has a BA in Communication from The Ohio State University ('91) and has 20 years of experience professionally teaching recreation and outdoor life to children and adults. Using these experiences as a base, Big Water has found purpose helping kids develop their creative minds for use in their every day lives.

What: 'Big Water Goes to School' is an interactive workshop that helps kids learn to express themselves and works to create positive thinking habits and healthy communication. This workshop is a discussion with children about emotions and feelings and works to help them find creative, positive and artistic ways to express them. Workshops are age specific and delicately balanced for each class. To aid in the intimacy of the individual and group interaction, the class is informally gathered as one big group. By leading through example, Big Water shares his music and discusses it as an extension of his own emotions and thoughts. Exercises are designed to empower the individual mind by taking a creative look at our selves and sharing a piece of that with the class. Activities encourage critical thinking, public speaking, and creative expression. (See Workshop Exercise Examples, page 2).

Where: This workshop can take place in the heart of any classroom. The classroom offers a safe and familiar place for children to share and express themselves.

When: The formats for this workshop vary in length (usually 30 – 60 minutes per class) and can be customized to fit whatever a teacher or school needs. The workshop is designed to be interactive, easy and fun. There is also no set up or tear down time which makes it easy to integrate with normal curriculum.

Why: This workshop is designed to nurture creative thinking and positive habits in children. It is also designed to fit into many areas of the elementary literature, writing, reading, and health curriculum. It is a great tool for teachers to integrate new perspectives into the normal routine of study.

How: To bring Big Water to your classroom, all you need to do is write to us at bw@bigwater.cc. Then, we work together to meet your specific needs. Workshops are scheduled upon availability. Please be sure to check out www.bigwater.cc for more information on Big Water.

Workshop Exercise Examples

What's in a Name??

This exercise begins with Big Water telling the story of how he got his name, what his name means and where it comes from. The discussion then poses the question to students, "If you could pick a name for yourself, what would it be and why?" There are two formats for this exercise. The first is a group discussion of the subject. The second is a follow up visit with Big Water that allows some preparation time (usually 2-3 weeks) for students to pick a name and ready a short presentation for that name to present to the class. Presentations are usually one minute or less. The presentation may be writing a poem or reading one out of a book, drawing a picture or making an art piece. It can be anything appropriately within their imagination. A 'line up' or order of performance is put together with the class to ready them as a whole. To get the ball rolling, Big Water usually leads. The students then present, one at a time, what they chose and why and express it creatively through their presentation. Original work is strongly suggested, but not pressured. Participation is mandatory, meaning everyone, including teachers, has to make a presentation of some kind. This allows a way for students to learn public speaking and listening skills in an equal and safe environment.

Stormin' Brains...!!

This is an improvisational exercise to stimulate and develop quick creative thinking. It demonstrates how brainstorming as a group or individually can lead to a productive outcome. Students are encouraged to suggest ideas to formulate a song. With the help of Big Water, the suggestions are put together to create a song. That song is then performed and used as an example that brainstorming/collaboration is a great tool for innovative problem solving and collective creativity.

The Grumpy Patrol

This exercise touches on emotions and feelings. It discusses ways to express emotions and feelings creatively and with positive communication. The exercise begins with a discussion on where feelings come from and an acknowledgement of those feelings. Questions are posed as to ownership and expression of feelings. The discussion continues in an attempt to help students realize self-responsibility with their own feelings and actions. The exercise finishes with an interactive discussion of ways to positively express all kinds of emotions and feelings.

What Folks Are Saying...

“Big Water has visited my classrooms over the past 6 years. His message and workshop offers so much for the students. The workshop correlated with our state standards in writing, reading, and health. The students not only learned so much from Big Water, but also enjoyed his music. His message is one of positive self-awareness that is crucial for all students to learn. I highly recommend this workshop for any teacher of any level. It truly is inspiring.”

**Renee Pappas
4th Grade Teacher
Horizon Elementary
Hilliard, Ohio**

“On Monday March 31, 2008 Big Water came to Taylor Elementary in Palisade, Colorado. The kids were excited to see who the day's special guest was going to be. In walked a very tall man and with him his good friend "Audrey". He sat down and 23 curious second graders gathered in front of him. They were immediately engaged and notably enthusiastic as Big Water began to tell them stories and play them a few of his songs. Big Water sends a positive message to young learners through his music and does a great job getting them actively involved with what he is doing. He spent about a half hour with my class that day and then went on to meet a number of other students at our school. The main response that I received from other teachers and students was; "When will he be able to come back to see us again?" The consensus at Taylor Elementary is... We love Big Water! I would highly recommend that if you have the opportunity to have Big Water visit your school you should do it! It will be an experience that will stay with you and your students for a lifetime! We can't wait to have him back!”

Jeff Liddle
2nd Grade Teacher
Taylor Elementary
Palisade, Colorado

“This past spring Big Water came to L.E. Willson Elementary School in Sheffield Alabama to perform and speak to my son’s 5th grade class. I had no idea what was going to happen. He was unbelievable. The children as well as the teacher were so taken by him. He had an uncanny way of making people around him feel good. The teacher told me a few days later that one child, who is very secluded, couldn’t stop talking about him. I remember this child. He was sitting all by himself, looking very sad and lonely. Big Water picked right up on this and brought this child front and center and made him feel important, and that was without saying one direct word to him. Who knows what kind of effect this will have on the child’s life. I truly enjoyed Big Water’s performance and, for lack of a better word, motivational speech. The children learned a great deal and it touched all of our hearts.”

Gary Baker
Professional Songwriter
Sheffield, AL/Nashville, TN
garybakermusic.com

“This past spring we had the privilege of introducing the kids, ages 0-5, to the lovely tunes of Big Water. We were all amazed at how well the children responded and were touched by the positive messages the music was spreading. I also noticed how great Big Water was with the kids. They just really enjoyed him, even the infants. I believe that music is a very important part of life, and enhances many different aspects of a child. Anyone would benefit working with Big Water, especially kids!”

Cody Harris
Pre-School Teacher
Southwood Childcare
Bozeman, MT

...Comments on a Collaborative Art Project...

“The collaborative Arts Program Big Water and I have worked on took place in a public school setting located in Dublin, Ohio. While Big Water played his guitar and sang, the students worked on different art forms. During the first visit, students created Suminigashi pieces. Suminigashi is a Japanese art form known as the floating of ink. The energy/vibration of the people and the activities going on in the room creates the patterning of the ink floating on the water. Next the students took paper and "walked" the paper onto the water, so the paper would capture that vibration.

During the second visit, the students created handmade papers , the first was made of corn husk and the second of tree bark. As Big Water played, we placed all the hand made sheets together forming a heart in the middle.

Not only are these collaborative efforts of the arts fun, but aid in creating a very healing, peaceful atmosphere in which to learn and grow.”

Sue Andrews
Art Instructor
Chapman Elementary
Dublin, Ohio

Defining the Next Generation...

We are at the intersection where humanity, technology, faith and spirituality are all coming together in a way like never before to define who and what we are and how we interact with our world. More importantly, this intersection of pieces is the making of us, individually and together, and what we will become. Through continued creative and critical thinking, open communication, and working together we are allowing ourselves the opportunity to learn, love and interact with our world in new and exciting ways. I've compiled some information and resources on my quest for knowledge and this is what some of our modern minds are saying. The future is on its way...

'CREATIVITY'

"CREATIVITY can be taught, nurtured, enhanced. While schoolrooms have often stifled rather than nourished creativity, we are now emerging into a period demanding creativity for the workplace as well as the school, and the forms schooling will assume in the future. Just as present-day schools were the invention of the Victorian Age to meet the needs of the developing Industrial, factory Age, in the Information Age we need new forms of schooling and learning. The pathways will be through CREATIVITY."¹

1. "Creativity." 2008. The Teacher Development Network. <<http://members.tripod.com/~ozpk/000create>>.

'Creative Thinking'

"Creative thinking involves creating something new or original. It involves the skills of flexibility, originality, fluency, elaboration, brainstorming, modification, imagery, associative thinking, attribute listing, metaphorical thinking, forced relationships. The aim of creative thinking is to stimulate curiosity and promote divergence."²

Benjamin Bloom (1956)

2. Lamb, Annette. "Critical and Creative Thinking – Bloom's Taxonomy." teacher tap. 2007. Professional Development Resources for Educators and Librarians. <eduscapes.com/tap/topic69.htm>.

‘Thoughts on Collaboration...’

The physicist David Bohm, while researching the lives of Einstein, Heisenberg, and Bohr, noticed that their incredible breakthroughs took place through simple, open and honest conversation. He observed, for instance, that Einstein and his colleagues spent years freely corresponding and brainstorming with each other. During these interactions, they exchanged and dialogued about ideas, which later became the foundations of modern physics. They exchanged ideas without trying to change the other's mind and without bitter argument. They always paid attention to each other's views and established an extraordinary professional fellowship. Other scientists of the time, in contrast, wasted their careers bickering over petty nuances of opinion and promoting their own ideas at the expense of others. They mistrusted their colleagues, covered up weaknesses, and were reluctant to openly share their work.

Einstein and his associates had discovered and used a set of ancient Greek principles of intragroup communication, which was developed by Socrates. Socrates and other Greek philosophers would sit around brainstorming and debating various issues. Their discussions, however, rarely got out of hand.

Although hot tempers emerged, the participants were bound by seven principles of discussion Socrates established to maintain a sense of collegiality. Socrates called these principles Koinonia, which means "spirit of fellowship." The basic principles were:

- 1) Establish dialogue.
- 2) Exchange ideas.
- 3) Don't argue.
- 4) Don't interrupt.
- 5) Listen carefully.
- 6) Clarify your thinking.
- 7) Be honest.³

³. Michalko, Michael. "Collaboration Techniques – Koinonia." 2008. [CreativeThinking.net](http://creativethinking.net).
<http://creativethinking.net/DT01_EinsteinsBrainstorming.htm?Entry=Good>.

'Moving forward...'

*"Today the left brain capabilities that powered the information age are necessary but no longer sufficient. The "right brain" qualities of inventiveness, empathy, joyfulness and meaning – increasingly determine who flourishes and who flounders. ...**professional success and personal fulfillment now requires a whole new mind.**"⁴*
Daniel Pink

⁴. Pink, Daniel. [A Whole New Mind](#). London: Penguin Books, 2005.

'The School of Thinking'

The **School of Thinking** (SOT) was founded by [Michael Hewitt-Gleeson](#) and [Edward de Bono](#) in [New York, United States](#), in 1979 to teach 'thinking' as a skill.

SOT's initial mission was to get 'thinking' into schools as a school subject. Under Hewitt-Gleeson's direction, the School of Thinking trained many thousands of people around the United States, and also installed thinking skills into school districts, corporations, and government organizations. Within five years, 'teaching thinking' in US schools had become, according to the [New York Times](#), the biggest new trend in education. On [January 9, 1983](#), the New York Times, in its Education Winter Survey, wrote:

"A major new effort to teach thinking skills is planned by the University/Urban Schools National Task Force, which will soon initiate a program in the public schools of New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Detroit, Minneapolis and Memphis... The School of Thinking in New York is the base in this country for teaching de Bono's theory, disseminated from its headquarters in London, which includes breaking out of traditional thinking patterns. This means trying to devise new ways of looking at problems... it affirms the belief that without specific efforts there is no assurance students will learn to think clearly."⁵

⁵. "School of Thinking." [Wikipedia](#). 30 June 2008. School of Thinking. <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_of_Thinking>.

'Innovation'

The heart of this book is Sawyer's proposal that "collaboration is the secret to breakthrough creativity" (Sawyer, p. ix). In the introduction, with his background in psychology, Sawyer expresses his contradictions in the traditional focus on the individual, and through his research, he has found that true creativity and innovation only comes through the open sharing of information between groups of individuals.

This "collaboration over time" suggests that "great inventions emerge from a long sequence of small sparks; the first idea often isn't all that good, but thanks to collaboration it later sparks another idea, or it's reinterpreted in an unexpected way. Collaboration brings small sparks together to generate breakthrough innovation." (Sawyer, p. 102)⁶

⁶. Wiatrowski, Rachel. "Sawyer's Group Genius." Review of Group Genius: the creative power of collaboration RK Sawyer (2007). 2 Aug. 2008. <<http://creativityresearch.blogspot.com/2008/08/sawyers-group-genius.html>>.

'Hot Dog'

Even the hot dog, as we know it, is the result of the right idea-spurring question being asked at the right time. Antoine Feutchwanger sold sausages at the Louisiana Exposition in 1904. He first sold them on plates, but this proved too expensive. He then offered white cotton gloves along with the franks to prevent customers from burning their fingers. The gloves also were expensive, and customers walked off with them. Antoine and his brother-in-law, a baker, sat down and brainstormed. "What could be added (**MAGNIFY**) to the frankfurter that would be inexpensive and would prevent people from burning their fingers?" His brother-in-law said: "What if I baked a long bun and slit it to hold the frank? Then you can sell the franks, and I can sell you the buns. Who knows, it might catch on."⁷

⁷. Michalko, Michael. "Collaboration Techniques – Edison's Idea File." 2008. CreativeThinking.net. <http://creativethinking.net/DT02_EdisonIdeaFile.htm?Entry=Good>.

Dear, Big Water...

After doing these workshops over the last eight years, I have received countless letters from classes and students all across the country. To read the thoughts of children is incredibly inspiring. I am including some of these letters that I have received and hope they make you smile, as they have made me. I also include them as examples of how this can be a useful opportunity in working on written communication in conjunction with this workshop. This suggested exercise is encouraged and would take place after the workshop has been given. Teachers could also use this to give students a chance to work on letter writing in a real way. It is a fun way for students to learn to communicate with their world. Please enjoy.

Thanks very much for your time.

Let music heal the world!!

Big Water

Big Water Base Camp
820 N River St #111
Portland, OR 97227
503-975-8577
booking@bigwater.cc

www.bigwater.cc/goestoschool

'Big Water Goes To School'

4-1-08

Dear Big Water,
I liked your songs. I thought about what my name would be. I think it would be Love Animals. I liked Dreams and my special dream is that I want to be a veterinarian when I grow up. I like the name Audrey. It is a pretty name. I liked Dreams because it is a good song. My second favorite song is I can Climb this mountain because it means that you can do it no matter what and I like that.

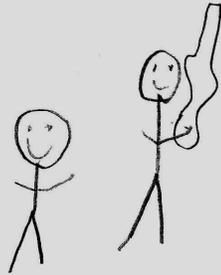
From,
Victoria



4-2-08

Dear Big Water,

Thank you for coming to our class Big Water. I really liked the Dreams. My dream is being a professional bowler. Will you come to our class again? I especially liked how you named one of your guitars Harold and one named Audrey. I also enjoyed all of your songs. What did you name your guitar? I thought over last night and I named myself Rookie Roller. Your guitar look cool.



Your friend,
Collin

May 2, 2008

Dear Big Water,

Your presentation was fantastic! I really liked the 'Dream' song. I also liked the other songs. Thank for the music show!

Sincerely,

Marissa

P.S. What song will you come up with next?

P.P.S. What kind of music do you like?

P.P.P.S. Yellow paper!

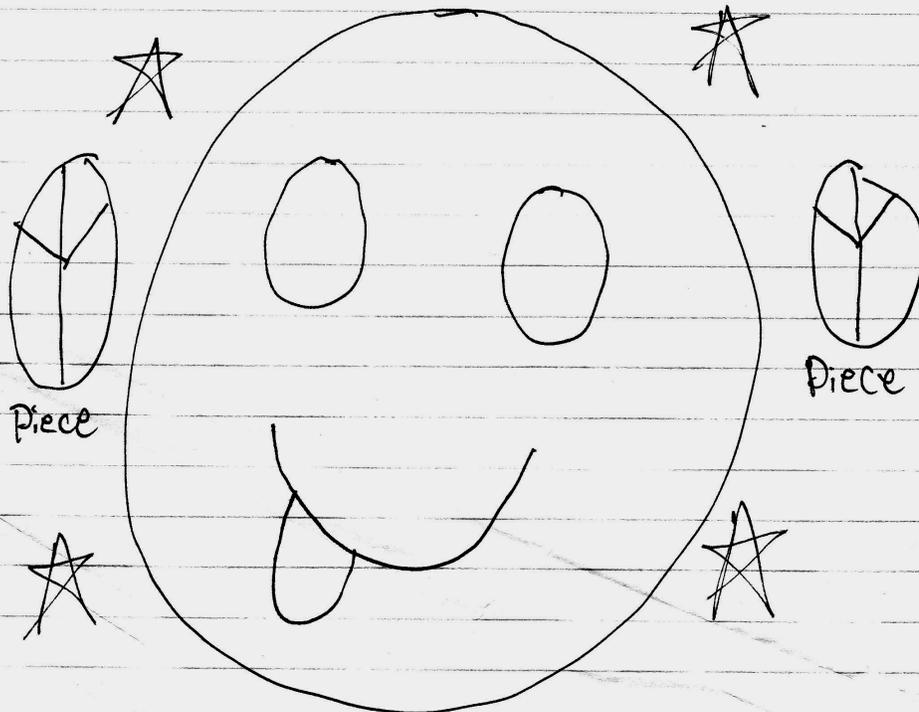
P.P.P.P.S. I hope I get to see you soon!

MAY 2, 2008

Dear Big water,
I love your music and your fantastic
enthusiasm to explain how the world
can be so beautiful, and you are the
best music wrighter ever.

(your biggest fan).

Dakota



Big Water Goes To School!!

Big Water/Robert Selvaggio

Big Water Base Camp
820 N River St #111
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503-975-8577

booking@bigwater.cc

More Info on Big Water:

www.bigwater.cc

www.facebook.com/aguagrande

Big Water Goes To School!!