



Classical Teaching & Writing Symposium: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing with Andrew Pudewa

Lesson 1: Listening

Outline:

Listening

Language Arts

- Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the language arts.
 - If listening and speaking are not well developed then reading and writing are very difficult to develop.

Listening

- In English we use the words hearing and listening.
- Listening has the connotation of being active. It has intentionality with it.
- Listening can be divided into two categories:
 - Natural listening
 - Developed, trained, practiced listening
- You cannot get something out of the brain that is not in there to begin with.
 - If you want students to write and speak the English language well, you have to have a great, extensive vocabulary and syntax in them that will allow for fluency and eloquence later on.
 - Young children absorb language powerfully.
- Auditory pollution (TV, radio) interferes with a child's ability to hear well and consequently for them to store language well and for them to listen well.
- Consider the environment and some of the impediments to good hearing and listening.
- **The primary source of language coming into the brain is through the ear.**
- If we want good quality language coming out, then we have to have good quality language going in.
 - Television does not supply good quality language. Sentences are not lengthy or complex. The net value in terms of language level is pretty low.



- Peers are the number two source of language. There is very little good that a peer will learn from a peer. Adults will pull up the vocabulary and syntax for children.
- Parents are the third source of language for children. Busyness is a problem. It is hard to find time for sustained meaningful interactions.
- We also get language from reading. The reading habits of Americans is shifted. The majority of Americans did not read a book in the past year.
- Solution - Restore the discipline of reading out loud to children (in large quantity). If you can't listen to it and gain value there is a zero percent chance that you can read it and gain value from it.
- For most of our children, their ability to use language later in life will be directly a function of what they take in through the ear early on.
- Things to consider when you observe children:
 - Children would sink down when they were being read to and when they are concentrating.
 - The primary function of the ear is balance. Children will want to not have to balance **so they can devote more energy to listening**.
 - A lot of children can listen and not necessarily look at the same time.
- If you can discipline yourself to talk to yourself in your mind you can get more productive constructive thinking done.
- If you don't know language, you hear tones. By differentiating and affixing meaning to tones you acquire language ability.
- Dictation is important. You can learn to listen better. It is a teachable, learnable, practice-able skill.
- Advanced listening needs:
 - In debate you have to hear and actively listen (aggressively listen) to what your opponent is saying.
 - Children who don't read early or easily are more likely to develop better listening skills.
- Read to your children out loud in huge quantities every day.

Questions & Answers

- Should we consider classical music auditory pollution when it is played as background music?
 - We have brains that operate differently (inborn and conditioning).
 - Some children must have music.
 - Some people can hear music and not listen to it, so they cannot do intellectual tasks while listening to music.
- I have heard of teachers using a metronome in class to teach. Is that valuable or detrimental?
- As far as noise pollution, what is the goal? Is it to bring more quiet or is it to raise the quality of what they hear?



- Auditory pollution refers specifically to background buzzing noises. We have to exert willpower over that background noise. If the noise were louder it would be harder.
- Children do not have the same ability to exercise will over neurology.
- Raising the quality of what they hear brings order to the chaos.
- We don't have to understand everything. Some of the best things written will never be understood. There is a poetic value to things (rhythm).
- Children understand way more than they tell us.