



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

Lesson 2: Speaking

Outline:

Speaking

Everybody talks, but how well do you speak?

- Once schools valued oral expression enough to give it a slot on a report card.
- Two ways in which the language database in children is built:
 - The auditory pathway, reading out loud in huge quantities for many years.
 - Create elocution aptitude: poetry recitation, scripture recitation, famous speech recitation
 - Once the way that children were to prove that they knew their lessons was to recite them.
 - They would use verbal practice as a way for repetition and review.
 - Consumable materials changed this.

The importance of training speaking

- An important aspect of speaking is memorization.
- In the very beginning, if you want a child who can speak well, you have to give them content to use. They can pay attention to articulation and projection.
- What is gained from what is memorized?
 - You gain vocabulary from memorizing poetry.
 - Authors of poetry are forced to use a wider range of vocabulary and different sentence structure.
 - If you want children to come to love poetry, the best thing to do is to memorize it.
 - Learn it by heart. Drama people still memorize lines in a play.
 - Three distinct vital elements for developing the brain:
 - Raw memorization
 - Language acquisition



- Poetry, beauty, the spiritual side of things
- Memorization actually grows the brain. Neurons make connections with other neurons. **The more neural connections you have the more processing power you have.**
- Memorizing anything makes you smarter.
- Young children are wired for memorization. If you don't give them good stuff to memorize, they will memorize bad stuff.
- Repetition is the mother of learning.
- We have an added problem of technology interfering with memorization. "You don't have to memorize because you can look it up."
- Knowing stuff is good. Wouldn't you love to know more than you know?
- Frederick Douglass memorized language to acquire vocabulary, syntax, and sophistication of concept that came through.
- If you start children when they are young, you can more easily overcome shyness and create aptitude.
- When you have a poem memorized it is a natural thing to want to share them with others. There is an intrinsic joy in sharing the poetry.
- Learn excerpts from famous speeches and elements of Shakespeare from the histories.
- Give children increasing opportunities to hone their speaking skills.
 - Speech and debate is useful for this.
 - The children who have speech and debate experience have a poise, a confidence, a willingness to take risks, a facility with words. They develop a capacity to listen well and think on their feet.
 - In speech and debate the children are trying to emulate up.
 - We are called to share the faith with others.
 - The competition aspect of speech and debate can be a good motivator.
 - When children have a passion for learning something they will go deeper into it.
- Narration
 - Dictation is where you tell children what to write.
 - Narration is where children tell you things.
 - When you read or do something together, take time and allow the child to formally tell back to you what they remember, saw, or did.
 - This gives the opportunity to remember and re-present what they read or did. The understanding is better when narration occurs.
 - Children need to talk as much as they need to listen because that is how they learn to hear what they are thinking.
 - If you give the opportunity for narration, you will see the fluency come out later in writing.

Questions and Answers



- On the topic of recitation, how would you coach a child away from a monotone recitation?
 - Performance opportunity will gain you a lot of ground.
 - Because they'll want to be their best in front of people they will be more receptive to your suggestions and a little more attentive to how they do it (which will increase as they get older).
 - It isn't a really big problem if they do recite poorly or as fast as possible. When you do something without thinking then you can begin to think about how to do it.
- You alluded to Robinson's interest in vocabulary memorization, is that something you are a proponent of?
 - Programs that promote vocabulary memorization are not all that effective.
 - Go more for a literature base. Look up words you don't know. Reread the passage after you looked up the word. Then have them start to look up the words on their own. Move the words from passive to active vocabulary.
 - Memorize a poem with words in it that you don't know, this will help move the vocabulary from passive to active.
 - A study of Latin will increase English vocabulary.
- When it comes to memorizing famous speeches do you find it is better to learn whole speeches or smaller excerpts from many speeches?
 - Learn smaller excerpts from many speeches.
- How would you recommend schoolteachers implement more speaking in their classrooms?
 - Have students use key word outline to speak from.
 - As an audience we crave being spoken to.
 - Teachers in schools have the advantage of having a built in audience.