



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

Lesson 4: Writing

Outline:

Writing

Writing includes handwriting, spelling, grammar, composition, and arguing and presenting good ideas.

- If children have a good database of reliably correct sophisticated language patterns, writing is so much easier.
- If children can read with good comprehension they will continue to build that database.
- Certain things work well in developing writing skills and certain things do not work well.
 - Least effective way: Over reliance on grammar
 - Least effective way: Free writing, express yourself on paper
 - Most effective way: Sentence combining, put two ideas together into one sentence like putting Legos together
 - Most effective way: Text reconstruction, *Teaching Writing: Structure and Style* teaches writing in this way.
- One of the great fallacies is that writing is about expressing yourself. Writing has almost everything to do with expressing ideas. Everything comes from somewhere else.
- Human beings learn only by imitation. We imitate things and then when we build up enough imitated things we can come up with a unique combination of already existing things.

Handwriting

- Writing on paper is becoming increasingly unimportant to most people.
- The drive towards technology is assuming that very soon nobody will need to write on paper.
- Now people say that you should not have students make letters in specific ways (stroke order, cursive).



- For dyslexic children, if you do not deal with stroke order, you will have added frustration.
- Cursive writing is important. If you do not learn to write in cursive, you will never be able to read cursive (Declaration of Independence).
- There are differences between typing and handwriting, and differences between handwriting and cursive writing.
- Wouldn't we all write more elegantly if we were to consider cursive writing?
- Children used to learn to write with copywork. We have thrown out the copywork idea at a time when we most need the discipline of it.
 - Children need to build up stamina to write on paper. The best way to develop the stamina is through copywork.
 - Copywork patterns good writing.
 - Copywork strengthens reading. Copying is like slow motion reading.
 - Change copywork from a chore to a challenge/game.
 - When you write, you are copying your thought. Copywork is a bridge that builds fluency in writing.
 - Contemplation occurs with copywork.
- Children's brains work faster than their hands. You can write key words for their sentences, and they can write the story from your key word outline.
- All learning is mimetic learning. We have to imitate in order to create. When you imitate something, you understand and appreciate it more.

Writing Eloquently and Persuasively

- Find the most eloquent and persuasive writer you can and steep yourself in him, memorize chunks of him, and bring them it completely into your soul.
- C.S. Lewis is a good place to start.
- Understand the structure and style as best you can, so that you can recognize what makes good writing good.
- One thing we hope to do in terms of the technical side of the four language arts is that we want the student to leave it with the desire to reach a higher level of excellence.

Questions & Answers

- Can a child do copywork and listen to a read aloud at the same time?
 - It might be easier for them to listen to classical music. I'm not sure whether the benefit of getting the reading time in would outweigh the confusion of trying to read and listen to two different things.
- Can you compare the benefits of dictation versus copywork?
 - Dictation promotes an attentiveness to auditory pattern and detail and it forces improved memory.
 - Copywork is more independent.
- If someone were to stop everything and just read, how would you put in copywork, and dictation, and a little bit of math?



- This is more possible with younger children. Do some basic skills and spend the bulk of your time reading outloud; read history, science, and literature.
- Allocate time rather than content.