

Training for Triumph E-Newsletter
Issue 022
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**WTH Seminar at a Location
Near You!**

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_____ "Teaching Writing in a Co-Op or Small Group Setting"

Donna Reish

*Email Jonathan at trainingfortriumphhomeschool@mchsi.com if you wish to be taken off this mailing list—or to add a friend. Thanks!

Section I: Training for Triumph (TFT) Events and Announcements

1. Hello: Note From Donna

Dear Fellow Heart Trainers,

We have had a full summer here at the Reishes! We finished revisions on CQLA Blue Pre A and CQLA Blue A (available now!) and the three *Meaningful Composition* books (MC 4+, MC 6+, and MC 8+). We will have Blue B and Blue C revisions, as well as some new *Meaningful Composition* books available late this winter/early spring.

This has been a strange summer for me—Kayla moved to Texas (see blog—Kayla moved); Cami is preparing to be married in November (more on this later); and Kara was gone all summer with the Academy of Arts and got home just after her eighteenth birthday last month (see blog—Kara's home!).

Anyway, it was just Ray, me, and three little boys (not so little anymore, I guess, but I'll never admit they're not "the three little boys"!) for two weeks this summer after Kayla moved, before Kara returned, and while Cami was in California at disability training at the Joni and Friends Headquarters (where, again, Joni told her that she would be in California working at JAF headquarters some day! ☺). Talk about weird. I am beginning to think that having Kayla and Cami stay home while they did their undergraduate work may backfire on me as they all start to leave at about the same time. I should have accepted the gradual method!!

We haven't been working as much on the distribution of our new book, *The Well-Trained Heart* as we would have liked to, but like I keep telling anybody who wants me to do more and more and more: "I can't speak about homeschooling if I'm not homeschooling!" ☺ So, some things will be slower in coming. We do have a couple of large distributors: The Old Schoolhouse and Barnes and Noble—though the red tape on getting it onto B and N's webstore, etc. is lengthy, so it will be awhile before we actually have sales there. Contact Ray if your company or group would like to carry *The Well-Trained Heart*.

Speaking of WTH, we are holding our first WTH seminar next month! Check out the link below for registration and details. We are so excited about these seminars, and pray that this will be the first of many!

We are already busy this fall with cottage classes. I have over fifty writing students—testing the new CQLA's and MC's and getting all the bugs out of them; Ray and Kara have nearly forty speech and debate students (junior high and high school); Kara and

Jonathan have nearly twenty elementary and middle school speech students; Joshua has dozens of government, writing, and speech students at his LaGrange, Indiana location. We are all busily teaching. It is rewarding and just plain fun. I adore my students—they are sweet, hard working, and inquisitive (most of the time!). I am so thankful for the opportunities to train homeschooled students in how to be excellent communicators for Christ. Check out our website and my blog for upcoming class offerings. Also, check out the article at the end of this newsletter about teaching writing in a small group setting.

And, of course, don't let all of that academic training get in the way of heart training. We want to raise well-educated kids—but even more importantly, we want to raise children with hearts for the Lord and others.

Love,
Donna

P.S. Don't miss the **upcoming article** ("Only by Comparison") that Ray and I have had "percolating" all summer. (Can you even use that analogy anymore—I mean, do people really percolate coffee nowadays or does it just always drip?) And—don't miss the **unveiling of the "\$100 Pay-It-Forward Award"**—that was given after twelve years of searching for a recipient. Both of these will be in next month's newsletter, as well as in Donna's blog.

2. Well-Trained Heart Seminar in Fort Wayne, Indiana; October 10th and 11th

LEAH (Loving Education At Home) is sponsoring Training for Triumph's Well-Trained Heart Seminar at First Assembly of God on October 10th and 11th. The Well-Trained Heart Parenting Seminar is a Friday evening/Saturday morning event in which Ray and Donna Reish will expound upon the heart-training teachings found in their new book, *The Well-Trained Heart*. Come join us for a time of learning and heart training for Mom and Dad--and eventually for all of our children!

When: Friday, October 10th from 7:00 pm-9:30 pm

Saturday, October 11th from 9:00 am-12:00 noon

Where: First Assembly of God; W. Washington Center; Fort Wayne, IN (directions at [tft website](#))

Who: All parents are welcome; babies permitted as needed; no nursery care will be provided.

Registration: Fill out a registration form available at the TFT website and send it to the contact at the bottom of the form to register; cost is \$10 per person for entire seminar. Form: www.tfths.com/seminar.php

Deadline: Parents may register at the door, but in order to assure that we have secured a large enough room and provide enough binders, please register early, preferably by October 1st.

Information: You may get more information about the seminar by calling Nicole Nigg at 260-486-1098. For more information about the seminar's content or to order the *Well-Trained Heart* book, see the Reishes website (www.tfths.com) or call Reishes at 260-597-7415.

Seminar Content:

*What is a well-trained heart? begins with Mom and Dad	*The well-trained heart
*What the Bible says about heart training parenting vs well-trained heart parenting	*Child-controlled
*Character training in children	*Recipe for Rebellion
*Gaining the heart of your child selflessness and service	*Training children in
*Empathy training	*And more!!!

3. Reishes' Speaking and Teaching Availability

Ray, Donna, Joshua, and occasionally a daughter or two, are available to speak to support groups, small groups, and conventions/seminars. We are working on our spring speaking schedule, so contact us to set up an evening, a convention, or one of our seminars (The Almost 3 R's Seminar and/or The Well-Trained Heart Seminar), so contact Ray to set something up.

Additionally, we are setting up our second semester teaching schedule. We know what classes we are offering at our home, and those are probably all filled up. However, we are working on classes north of Fort Wayne, and Joshua is available to travel during the winter (though three of his days each week look spoken for at this point). If you are interested in coming to FW classes or your co-op would like to see about Joshua coming to your area, contact Ray. See our class offering list at **XXXXX**.

Section II: Heart Training—This and That

4. Big Week for the Reishes: Disability Awareness Week

This week is a big week for the Reishes! Cami (third child, 20, getting married in eight weeks!) is our church's disability director. This week marks the first-ever Disability Awareness Week at our church. She (and her fiancé Joseph) has been working tirelessly to prepare for the week. It started off today with a special service dedicated to One Heart and disability. They had Cami's Thursday night Bible Study group sign a song ("Friend of God"). It was glorious to see over fifty of these special adults joyfully signing, singing, clapping, and smiling! ☺ Then Cami's "little sister" (in One Heart's mentoring program) got to help give the announcements, and a young man with Down's Syndrome got to pray for the offering. They had two promo videos—one with Cami and others explaining One Heart and one announcing the big banquet that One Heart is hosting this week (the Luke 14 banquet—bring the poor, the crippled, the blind that my house may be full). Then, to the delight of our family, our children (along with others involved in One Heart) performed part of the drama that Kara (fourth child, eighteen) wrote for the Luke 14 banquet. Kara directed it, and she and all three little boys performed in it. Lastly, a man who lost three of

his limbs nearly thirty years ago in a car accident, who is a traveling evangelist with his family (also homeschoolers!) spoke. This afternoon, Cami had a special luncheon for the families involved in One Heart. It was an incredible, rewarding day for all of us.

All week this week, the kids will continue to practice their drama (today they only performed about ten minutes of the thirty minute playlet they will give Friday night) and Cami and Joseph will finish the loose ends associated with the Luke 14 banquet. It looks as though they will serve nearly four hundred people a banquet, along with entertainment and Bible teaching. We are so excited and pleased to see the four younger kids working so selflessly to serve those who are less fortunate and need a loving touch from the body of Christ.

You can see Cami's One Heart promo, as well as the video about the Luke 14 banquet at the link below. They are September 21st and September 14th video announcements. I'm not sure how much longer they will be up there, but they are there now.

Oh, and if you want to teach your children to serve, consider disability ministry. As you will see in the video clip, only five percent of those affected by disabilities are involved in church. There are social programs galore for these people, but they do not simply need more activities—they need to know Jesus—and their families need to know that there are Christians out there willing to give of themselves and help them.

www.firstassemblyfw.org/VideoAnnoucements.php

5. Other Heart Moments at the Reishes' This Summer

To read about other heart training endeavors at our house this summer, visit my blog:

Kayla Moved Away--www.homeschoolblogger.com/relationalhomeschool/593236/

Kara's Home--www.homeschoolblogger.com/relationalhomeschool/593234/

6. Bible Reading and Listening Link!

Some of you may have received the forward going around with every chapter of the Bible (at Bible Gateway) linked on one sheet of paper. Well, we did, and what a blessing it has been! We are planning to use it on the main computer (in the dining room) for morning listening while the kids are doing their chores—after we get through this busy drama sprint we are on. But in the meantime, Ray and I put it on our laptop and *listen* to the linked chapters nearly every night while we are getting ready for bed, finishing up odds and ends, etc.

We have used Bible Gateway for years, but for some reason I never saw the “listen to” feature of it. This is so cool! Even though we have a couple of different Bible versions on cd's, cassettes, cd

roms, etc., this is just incredibly convenient and more user-friendly (just click and listen!). Anyway, I will put the link below. To use it, you simply click on the chapter of the Bible you would like to read or listen to. Once there, you can choose any version imaginable to read (though just KJV and NIV are available to listen to). Then you can hit the little ear to listen—and wahal..somebody with a cool accent will read the chapter to you. Ray and I started using this about a month ago and are twice as far as we have ever gotten in that same time period reading aloud together. Another added feature is that the text is on the page, too, so we often find ourselves, double checking to make sure we heard right, scanning to see someone's name or location again, etc. Try it..you'll love it!

<file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/User2/Local%20Settings/Temporary%20Internet%20Files/Content.IE5/W10IF957/TheBible%5B1%5D.htm>

Section III: CQLA and Meaningful Composition

7. About the Colors and Volumes—new labeling information

In CQLA, it does not matter which color you begin with! **The three color series'-- Red, Blue, and Green--are just the way the character qualities are divided.** Choose the level you need according to your student's language arts abilities (Level Pre A--2nd and 3rd grade; Level A 4th and 5th grade; Level B 6th, 7th, and 8th grade; Level C high school), then choose the color series you desire according to the character qualities you would like to study that year. Be sure to get the same color (same set of character qualities) for each student so that the **entire family is studying the same quality at the same time.**

Check out the character qualities of each color series at our site:

www.ffths.com/cqla.php

8. Meaningful Composition Samples Now Available!

We have **samples of the three MC's** that we now have available—Book 4+, Book 6+, and Book 8+. All three of these are strong remediation books for students who have not been taught to write via a directed writing approach. They contain eighteen weeks of writing lessons, including, but not limited to, how to do the Key Word Outline (complete with given passages), how to complete our revising system (the Checklist Challenge), and much more. If you are looking for a step-by-step writing program, with each part of the process laid out for your student, you will probably love *Meaningful Composition*! Also, great for those teaching co-op or small group classes. (They have lesson plans specifically designed for group classes.) MC books are the books we use to teach our composition-only classes—to over fifty students this fall! See the article at the end of this newsletter for tips and ideas on how to teach writing in a co-op or small group setting. Oh, and check out our samples-- <http://www.ffths.com/samples.php>

9. New TG Excerpts and New CQLA Helps at Website

Check out the following new TG features now available at our site. Those of you living in states in which school plans for the year must be submitted will especially benefit from the newer, detailed Scope and Sequence Charts. Just print and submit!
(<http://www.ffths.com/cqlateach.php>) :

10. TFT Curriculum Links for You to Know

You probably already know that you can **get CQLA help, read past e-newsletters, read articles, download samples, read the first chapter of the WTH**, and more at our website at www.ffths.com You can also go to Homeschoolblogger to read some of my **musings** (when I get time to add them) at

<http://www.homeschoolblogger.com/relationalhomeschool>

Did you also know that you can **join the CQLA users group** to commiserate with other CQLA users or learn more about the program? That link is

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CQLAUsers/> And don't forget our CQLA **one month samples** to "try before you buy": www.ffths.com/samples.php

Section IV: In the Kitchen This Month

11. Wedding Reception—Not Ours Yet!

Cami and her fiancé Joseph blessed Joseph's sister and her new husband **by preparing the food for their wedding reception**. Joseph and his sister chose the menu, and I helped Cami and Joseph figure up the amounts, etc. They had a few glitches along the way—needing to make the punch at the last minute when they weren't prepared to do so and dropping a glass bowl filled with several pounds of cheese ball (and the bowl shattering, resulting in starting over on the cheese balls), but overall they did an awesome job—and Cami, once again, saw the benefits of all of her early mega-cooking training days!

The wrap recipe (at my blog) is Joseph's own recipe—and he has gotten quite famous for it at his other sister's wedding a few years ago and his brother's graduation party a couple of years ago. (He has been a bachelor living alone or with his younger siblings for six years, so he's had lots of cooking experience!) The other recipes were ours—mostly simple concoctions of cream cheese and something else—sure to please most guests with all that creaminess! ☺ **Go to my blog to read the details of their menu and recipes.**
www.homeschoolblogger.com/relationalhomeschool/592817/

12. Cooking for Two--Using a Saucepan!

Additionally, Cami (twenty, third child, engaged to Joseph) wanted to cook food for a new mom, so she and I set out to cook for two adults—and one two year old. We had a blast! It was especially good for Cami to see how fast you can cook for two (since she has never cooked for less than six, and usually closer to ten!).

We were both amazed how quickly it went—twelve entrees and/or sides made, froze, and cleaned up in a little over two hours. (We had never used the “sauce pans” in our pots and pans set to speak of except for a couple of boiled eggs for salad, etc. a time or two—and we were both in awe at how quickly water begins to boil in a little pan! One of my friends called when we were cooking, and I exclaimed, “I’m cooking in a saucepan!” over and over again—then my sauce pan promptly boiled over. I mean, those babies are fast! Someday when it’s just me and Ray, I’ll pull those sauce pans back out and have fun boiling something fast again! Check out our “menu” and “recipes” www.homeschoolblogger.com/relationalhomeschool/593196/

Section V: Article From Training for Triumph

“Teaching Writing in a Co-Op or Small Group Setting”

Donna Reish

Homeschooling parents everywhere are enjoying fellowship and sharing their strengths through co-ops and small group classes. Oftentimes, like-minded families will get together one day a week and have parents take turns teaching what each one feels she or he is best at or enjoys. Other parents do the same, and the result is often a different take on a subject passed on, a passion for a subject that one might not have but another does spread around, and quality lessons taught to students. Personally, Training for Triumph offers what we have termed “cottage classes” in which parents pay for a once-a-week class taught by one of our teachers (Ray, Donna, or one of our older children) in a subject that their child(ren) might enjoy taking outside of the home (or through our up and coming correspondence writing classes). This has been especially true of various types of writing classes, since we spend a great deal of our time and energy writing composition and language arts books.

I have taught language arts and/or composition classes once a week all day (or twice a week—once locally and once in another city) for eight years to test the programs we have written—and for an additional five years (using a host of other programs) prior to that. Our son has taught these for five years, and our daughters have taught them off and on throughout the past four years as their schedules permit. This article will focus on what I have found to work (or not work) in teaching writing in a small group setting. It will focus on composition only (i.e. not a student’s entire language arts, like our complete Character Quality Language Arts) since composition is what most homeschooling groups focus on. (Teaching complete language arts classes once a week for two to three hours per level (and checking all of those assignments) can be done, but it is laborious and

taxing—and not for the faint of heart!)

I have dozens of tips to pass along to you, but first let me elaborate on the system I use to teach composition classes to homeschoolers, so that when a tip refers to an aspect of one of my classes, it will make more sense. My composition classes generally last twelve to fourteen weeks (of one semester). I group students according to grade levels and whether they have been in my writing classes before or not. The books I use (*Meaningful Composition*) are not just writing idea books or sentence or paragraph writing. They contain full-length reports and essays directed step-by-step at each class' writing level. I say that because I need to allow a lot of class time to edit and critique students' writing assignments (as opposed to just having the students take turns reading a few sentence description of an animal, etc.). Classes last from one hour and a half to two hours, depending on the number of students in the class and the level (i.e. how long their papers are!). Generally speaking, I try to limit classes to six students per class, but with research paper, I can handle more than that in the upper level research paper class since it is more of a weekly meeting/check on sources and cards, followed by short instruction time rather than in-class editing. (I grade the final papers outside of class since they are twenty to thirty pages long!)

I will enumerate some things that I think contribute to a successful co-op or small group composition class below. They will be in no particular order. Many of them reference our composition program, *Meaningful Composition*, but you may do the same type of thing with any strong composition book that has complete writing assignments (i.e. from research (if needed), to outlining, to rough draft, to revisions, to final copy) or even with homemade writing assignments that you detail in the form of a handout, etc.

1. Have your lessons planned out ahead of time. Since we write curriculum, more times than I care to remember, I have been completing the writing of a lesson or creating of a writing checklist on the morning of my class! This creates undue stress and leads to lack of preparation (as I forget important things, etc. at the last minute). Whether you create the writing lessons or you use a pre-made writing curriculum, it pays to know what you are going to do ahead of time, have all of the copies you need, etc.
2. In choosing materials to use for your class, be sure they have the level of direction and instruction that you need, as the teacher. Some teachers feel confident with a little blip: "Write one hundred words about an authority that you should respect. Use two sources and tell what those sources are within the text of your report." Many do not! It is frustrating for you as a teacher to not have the direction you need; however, it is even more frustrating for the students to be given something that vague to write about. I prefer that everything is laid out step-by-step for me when I teach writing—and not just for me, but also for the students. I don't want to just put samples of how

they should

cite sources on the board for them. I want them to have them in hard copy—to take home and model from. In selecting your writing lessons, the more directed, the better.

3. Focus on complete, finished products. Younger children may just be learning to write sentences,

and then paragraphs. However, the focus of your writing class should be writing! Too many writing

programs are all technique—learning to write a description, learning to write with imagery, learning

to write creatively. All of that is good—and should be incorporated into a strong writing program.

But simply learning to write with imagery does no good if the student does not know how to write a

story or re-tell an event that contains that instance of imagery. In other words, don't just teach him

to write descriptively about a scene that took place in his life, but instead teach him to write the en-

tire event—and place that description in his essay. Writing exercises are good—but students (and

parents!) like to come out of class with reports, essays, stories, and letters that they can be proud of.

4. Allow enough time to check all of the students' work in class (unless you have arrangements to re-

ceive their work earlier and have it edited ahead of time). A major part of the learning process in

my composition classes is peer editing and critiquing. At the beginning of each class, I tell the stu-

dents to put their work in stacks: this stack should be the outline of your new report; this stack

should be the Checklist Challenge (CC) and the "colorful" page (the report they did the CC to); this

stack should be the final copy of last week's report; etc. (Demand that students write their names

in the upper right hand corner of every page before they put their pages in stacks from the begin-

ning to avoid confusion.)

Then they are instructed to pass their rough drafts of this week's writing to the left (or right). Each student has a certain color of editing pen that he or she is assigned at the beginning of the semester, and each one is to begin editing his neighbor's paper immediately—while I check the stacks and record grades. Each student writes his name in his color pen in the upper left hand corner of the paper he is editing (so I can check his editing skills when I get the paper and so a student can ask his peer what a certain thing meant if something is unclear). As they finish editing their peers' papers, they pass them to the next person, and that person writes his name beneath the previous person's and uses his color pen to edit.

When I am finished checking the stacks of work they have made for me (I'm sitting at the table with them), the students get their work out of the stacks and the finished papers

(the ones that everyone has edited) come to me for editing and critiquing. We do have some down time in which all of the students are finished peer editing, and they are waiting for me to finish my edits, but they are usually putting their other stacks away, checking my remarks, making corrections, etc. (They may also start on the next assignment or two as they know what is coming since we follow an outline-write-revise-final pattern with all writing assignments.)

My color of pen rules (purple)! That means that if I write "stet..." (a proofreader's mark that means to ignore the previous edit) beside another color of pen, they should ignore the edit and leave the item as it was. Students know that I might "stet" their editing suggestions. This gives them the freedom to insert a comma or change a spelling without fear that they will misdirect their peers. I will check it eventually, and if the edit is not right, I will fix it.

At first, students are hesitant to edit. They are sure they do not know much to write, suggestions to make, etc. However, after a few weeks, they are editing like pro's, asking me if a comma should be in a certain place, how to spell something, etc. It is really a group effort—and much fruit comes from this editing/critiquing process.

Of course, girls like this editing process more than boys (shocker, huh?). Nonetheless, everyone is expected to try his or her best to find errors. If I sense that a class is not working hard at the editing process, I will start taking grades on editing, just like I do for an outline or a report. This means that when I get the rough drafts, if your name is first or second on the editor's list of names, and you only have a mark or two in your color of pen, while others much later found a lot more mistakes, you will get a low editing grade. I can tell when kids are doing a perfunctory reading of the paper, but not really trying to edit. It isn't fair to the other students to have an unmotivated editor—plus, the lazy student will not learn to edit if he doesn't edit. Another bonus is that if a student is a poor editor in the beginning, but really wants to learn, he can benefit from the papers that he receives near the tail end of the editing process. He can see the edits that others found (and study the edits that I mark on his papers) to become a better editor.

Lastly, students are often driven by peer pressure—either positive or negative. I see this all the time in our cottage classes. A writing class (or speech and debate class) is an opportunity to use peer pressure for the good! I can tell in the first week or two of a class how motivated that class will be (in part, at least; obviously, I can motivate them as well) by how many studious, responsible, diligent students I have in that class. Writing classes can go up one to three grade levels based on the skill and motivation of the students. In classes where I have two or three outstanding students, everyone gets significantly better. Peer editing comes to play in this because a formerly-laxed student will work harder knowing that his paper is going around the room next week. Peer editing is a win-win situation.

5. If you can tag teach a writing class, it would be even better! When I have an especially large class,

I will sometimes have our daughter Kara (senior now) help me. She will take a stack of work,

check it, record grades, etc. or she and I will split the editing stack, and she will edit half and I will

edit half. She has been doing this type of thing for me since she was fourteen, and she is a pro! If

you can get another teacher who teaches/grades like you to help you with the in-

class checking of

everything, you will probably be less stressed. Of course, you can always have the students turn

everything in, then grade at home and bring it back next week.

Here are two examples of how to handle all of that paper work (in class, spontaneously like described above and as work you take home to grade):

a. In the first scenario (the one that I use), I check all assigned work for that week right in class.

Then we go over what is upcoming, and I assign next week's work. In this situation, there is

never a lapse (i.e. waiting for me to check rough drafts for a week, then they come back to that

assignment). Thus, this week, they might have the following homework I will check:

i. Final copy of paper they started two weeks ago

ii. Checklist Challenge revisions for last week's paper (the CC chart, along with their "colorful" report—

the copy of the report they marked their CC changes with colored highlighters or colored pencils)

iii. Outline for this week's paper

iv. Rough draft of this week's paper

v. Note: Then they will have homework from any of those things (i.e. the next step in the process) and

we will start researching or outlining a new paper.

b. In a scenario in which you take home all of their assignments and bring them back the next

week, you would take all of those things home to check, and they would start on all new work

that week (plus the next step in what you graded and brought back). The reason I do not use

this approach is because the student is working on so many reports at once with this method—

you are taking home a CC ("colorful" with revisions highlighted) copy of one paper and an out

line/rough draft of another (this week's homework assignments). Then you are giving back stuff

from the previous week, so they are doing the next step on all of that—in all, they would have

the three reports/essays you gave them back from last week (in various stages—homework

listed below) and the two or three stages of this week's homework you are taking home to

check—up to five different papers at one time. You would give them back what you took home

last week, so they would have the following homework this next week:

i. Checklist Challenge on rough draft from two weeks ago

ii. Final copy of the CC ("colorful") report from two weeks ago

iii. New outline

iv. New report

6. Try to balance their homework. I tell my parents up front that the student will have

two, three, or

four hours each week of homework (depending on grade level), and I try to keep it even each

week. They are usually doing a final on one paper, a CC on another, and starting a new (research,

outlining, brainstorming, etc.). This cycle continues throughout the semester so that they are always

writing, always in various stages with their projects. I make it clear to parents, also, that this

is not extra-curricular, like basketball or girl scouts. This is part of their school, and they should

treat it as such. When a student gets behind on his work, the whole class suffers as we try to catch

that student up, check his work separately, etc. (I even recommend that this be that student's Eng-

lish, for the most part, for that semester. When students try to do another full English program and

my two hours class with four hours of homework, something usually suffers.)

7. After all homework is checked and returned, I turn my attention on to next week's assignments.

Continuing reports are touched on, and the students put colored post-it notes on the edges of their

MC book to indicate pages that have homework assignments on them. I try to spend the last

twenty to thirty minutes of class introducing new writing assignments, especially if it is a type they

have not done yet, like a research-based report or a story. Again, all of my instructions for these

are in the student's book, so we read them and review the examples, etc. and have time for ques-

tions. Additionally, if it is a new class (many students come to class each year, so I have some

complete "classes" that have used my approach for many years), I try to review a new Checklist

Challenge item (revising item) each week. If they have had a lot of grammar already, this is usually

a matter of reminding them of what they already know about prepositional phrase openers, double

adjectives, etc.---and teaching them to use them themselves. Too often, students are loaded with

grammar facts, but they do not know how to write with those same items they have learned to find.

8. Also, if the students are nearly all new, I use the first week or two (when we have little or no home

work to check) to teach the basics of Key Word Outlining for sentences (since our books contain

passages and reports/essays using this approach), our paragraph-by-paragraph outlining ap-

proach, and how to code and do the Checklist Challenge (overview— not each revision item yet). I

try to get as much instruction in the first week or two as I can (without overloading them) so then they can write, write, write the remainder of the semester.

9. I also teach proofreaders' marks the first week (for older students) or two per week throughout the semester. The students learn these easily (and actually enjoy them) as I mark their papers with them, and they start the second week, at least, marking omission, capitalize, and some other basic ones. Proofreaders' marks make all editing/revising universal. You don't have to wonder what someone meant by a mark since we all use the same ones. You don't have to write a bunch in the margin when you are editing someone's paper—you simply use a proofreader's mark to indicate the change you think needs to be made. I do write things in the margin, especially about content, sentence combining, redundancy, etc., but basic proofreaders' marks take care of the majority of edits that students put in or suggest.

10. The younger classes are actually the most difficult ones to teach. There is only so much information they can absorb all at one time. There is only so much writing they can do (i.e. usually just one or two paragraph reports at first). Thus, your limitations for instruction and checking work are greater. If you are using a writing book that has a lot of grammar, sentence writing, and just starting paragraph writing (like MC 4+), I recommend that you mix that up (i.e. do not just do all the grammar, then all the sentence writing, then all the paragraph writing). Once they know the basics of what a sentence contains (i.e. difference between a real sentence and a fragment or dependent clause), you may begin on what a paragraph contains and start writing paragraphs almost immediately—even while going back to earlier parts of a book for grammar, writing techniques, etc. This way you are involved in actual whole, finished products quicker. (This is the suggested lesson plan that we have for MC 4+ and the other elementary books coming out.)

11. Encourage students to key their reports and essays on the computer. I can remember having to do various drafts of reports and just cringing at the thought of it—well, that doesn't have to be the case with our kids in this electronic generation! If there is one benefit of all of that texting, Facebooking, and blogging for kids, it would have to be that kids are learning the keyboard earlier and

earlier. Even for my own younger children, I will key two paragraphs of a report and they will key one, etc. Suddenly, those revisions do not look so daunting. All of my purple pen marks do not make them cry to think of those extensive rewrites! Most of my students (from fifth grade on or so) write their outlines by hand, key their reports, input revisions with pen and highlighters (the CC), then key their finals. Some savvy students even do their CC revisions on the computer using the color shading tool to mark CC revisions. Talk about "colorful" papers!

12. Most parents want writing grades. We have various policies with classes through TFT, but as a general rule, we do not grade elementary classes at all. We sometimes grade middle school (especially in writing), and we seldom grade speech and debate (though Ray generally gives each student one-on-one feedback at the end and will help parents determine a grade for the class, if desired). For writing class, I use a writing Rubik that looks something like this (bold font/underline are normal grades—research, opening paragraphs, closing paragraphs, source citation, and editing grades are all possible additions and take away from the "normal" aspects so I always have 110 points possible*):

Research (if applicable).....11 possible
 Outlining.....**22 possible w/out research grade** (11 possible if research grade)
 Write rough draft...**33 possible w/out open or clos paragraphs**; 22 if open/clos paragraph)
 Opening/closing paragraphs (combined)...11 possible
 CC (revisions)....**33 possible w/out source citation assigned**; 22 w/ source citation
 Source citation.....11 possible
 Final Copy.....**22 possible** unless editing grade is used; then 11
 Editing grade.....11 possible (if grade is desired for this)

Grading Scale:

11=A	10=A-	9=B+
8=B	7=B-	6=C+
5=C	4=C-	3=D+
2=D	1=D-	0=Fail

13. Remember that you are an extension of someone's homeschool. When a student does not turn in work, I give him one week to bring it in, unless he has an excuse from his parent. The parent may tell me at any time that a week is too busy or there is a problem, and a report or essay will be skipped for that child. Obviously, this makes it harder in class, but they are the parents, and they know their family's limitations. When the parents desire for something to be skipped, in

terms of

grading, that is a 0 out of a possible 0, as if the assignment never existed. Also, it is easier to skip

one assignment altogether (i.e. not do the instructional essay at all) than it is to skip bits and

pieces of a few assignments. I have never had parents take advantage of this policy.

They want

their child to learn and get the most out of the class, so unless a child is sick, there's a family

emergency, or a vacation is in the middle of class, parents usually make the student comply. Be

sure to communicate with a parent if work is not being done, attention is not being paid, etc. I have

been lax on this many times as I hoped things would clear up with my gentle reminders, and then I

have regretted not telling the parent sooner. I don't like to have to tell a parent that his child is dis-

ruptive, lying, or not working hard, but it has to be done at times.

Teaching writing classes (and my complete language arts classes) has been a true joy to me over the years. I look forward to each week, and I adore my students. There have been some classes that were more trying than others, but I try to set a tone of enthusiasm, kindness, diligence, and encouragement. I see it as my responsibility to not just teach writing but to pass on a love for learning and a passion for the written word. Enthusiasm breeds enthusiasm! My returning students know that they will receive encouragement, smiles, high fives, and sometimes even candy. They know this is a safe place where people are not allowed to make fun of others or put people down. They know that while writing is hard work, it can also be fun...and ending up with a portfolio of outstanding final writing products keeps them coming back.

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