

PARENT TEACHING TIPS

... on How Better Writing Skills Enhance Scholastic Achievement

By Bill Welker, EdD

There is absolutely no doubt about it; research has demonstrated that developing writing skills can definitely assist your child to become an even better student in the classroom. Even though he or she may think that the art and science of writing as an ability only associated with the English composition curriculum, such is without question not the case. Teachers in all the content areas will expect him or her to display textbook and course understandings through the medium of written documents, be it homework reports or essay test questions.

Actually, there are four very sound reasons why writing in the school environment improves a student's level of academic achievement. They are as follows:

- 1. Writing about a specific topic assists the student in learning the subject matter more deeply. When writing in any of the content areas, the student is forced to give more careful consideration to concepts, theme, and ideas read in your academic textbooks.**
- 2. A student's practice in his or her content area writings provides him or her with a basis for becoming a more skillful writer in all walks of life.**
- 3. Other language arts skills (i.e., reading, listening and speaking) are definitely enhanced when writing abilities are promoted. Consider this example.**

While preparing written works, the student must read his or her textbooks in a more serious manner to find supportive facts for his or her paper (reading).

The student may need to interview people (listening). And finally, the student often has to discuss his or her views with others or present an oral report in class (speaking).

- 4. After a student develops his or her initial draft of the report topic, he or she should share it with fellow classmates. Then the student should ask his or her classmates to critique the paper and to react with questions about the report topic. This approach will aid the student in writing the final draft so that it will be more understandable for the intended audience.**

Finally, a student must concern himself or herself with intelligent “sequencing” when writing a report paper. This can be achieved by using the following strategy:

- 1. Decide what should come first, second, third ... and last. It is a good idea to start by making a list of important points of the report paper.**
- 2. After the first draft, the student should ask himself or herself if the paper could be better in another sequential report order.**
- 3. The student should then solicit suggestions from others regarding the sequence structure of the report topic.**

Keep in mind, a classroom report that incorporates such organizational practices will be much easier to read and understand. Furthermore, I am convinced this approach will raise your child’s “writing” grades in school as well.

All students can become better writers. But as I have mentioned many times in the past, the key to improvement in any area of learning is practice. Also note, wide reading will nurture your child’s writing abilities by increasing vocabulary and his or her knowledge base. And the more your child writes, the more he or she will enhance critical “thinking” – a necessary skill for success in both writing and reading.

Parent Proverb

“Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear – not absence of fear.”

- Mark Twain

Next Month’s Column: “Choosing the Right College”

(Editor’s Note: Dr. Bill Welker is a retired reading specialist who was a K-12 classroom teacher for 40 years. He is a former “Teacher of the Year” recipient awarded by the Wheeling Area Chamber of Commerce. His e-mail is mattalkwv@hotmail.com.)