

TEACHING GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT: THE BEAUTY OF THE FIVE-MINUTE LESSON

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“Teaching writing and teaching grammar must be inseparably connected.” Constance Weaver, *Grammar to Enrich & Enhance Writing* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2008)

I. Weaver’s 12 Principles:

- A. Teaching grammar divorced from writing doesn't strengthen writing and therefore wastes time.
- B. Few grammatical terms are actually needed to discuss writing.
- C. Sophisticated grammar is fostered in literacy-rich and language-rich environment.
- D. Grammar instruction for writing should build on students’ developmental readiness.
- E. Grammar options are best expanded through reading and in conjunction with writing.
- F. Grammar conventions taught in isolation seldom transfer to writing.
- G. Marking corrections on students’ papers does little good.
- H. Grammar conventions are applied most readily when taught in conjunction with editing.
- I. Instruction in conventional editing skills is important for all students but must honor their home language or dialect.
- J. Progress may involve new kinds of errors as students try to apply new writing skills.
- K. Grammar instruction should be included during various phases of writing.
- L., More research is needed on effective ways of teaching grammar to strengthen writing.

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II. Charlotte Mason parallels

"As knowledge is not assimilated until it is reproduced, children should "tell back" after a single reading or hearing; or should write on some part of what they have read" (Vol. 6, Preface and p. 155).

A. Weaver's principles coincide with many of Charlotte Mason's because they are based on . . .

B. "Teaching grammar to enrich and enhance writing is teaching grammar as possibility. We see it as positive, the offering of options rather than the avoidance of errors; as productive, especially in the sense that it produces effective sentences and paragraphs; and as eminently practical."
—Constance Weaver

C. Prescriptive rules often don't coincide with how language is really used. (Chapter 3, p.48)

1. Teach something _____, realizing it may be better understood and completely applied with more guidance.

Examples:

2. Supply plenty of examples, since _____ may be deduced from examples even if our teacher explanations are not well understood.

Examples:

3. Show examples of a new grammatical skill but also _____ them with easily confused instances that are not examples.

Examples:

4. Applaud _____, the trying out of new things grammatically, even when the learning is partial or incomplete.

Examples:

5. Accept and welcome the new kinds of _____ that come with experimentation and risk-taking, not to downgrade the writing or the writer.

Examples: