



Institute for
Excellence in
Writing

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IEW's Mission: Teaching Teachers **How to Teach Writing**

By Julie Walker

My IEW® story is simple: I was organizing classes for a group of homeschooling parents and teens in Southern California, and I had no idea how to teach writing. My eldest son was one of those teens, and, quite frankly, I was tired of arguing with him. You see, I know how to write. What I didn't know at the time was how to teach writing. Big difference. And our "lessons" became arguments. Grammar: Yes, we did years of that. He could diagram sentences and spell better than most his age. But this clever prose lacked something, and I didn't know exactly what. Thus the arguments. I wasn't clear, and his writing was, well, not as good as I thought it could be. How could I lead a group when I couldn't successfully teach my son?

Enter IEW. All that was offered those many years ago was a *Teaching Writing: Structure and Style* (TWSS) seminar, so I arranged to have Andrew Pudewa come to Biola University to teach the tutors of the program, some parents, and me. I was amazed! I was inspired! I was ready to start! Since there were no ready-made lessons, I just figured it out. And while it did help that I had three years of full-time teaching under my belt, IEW's method made possible my solid training as a capable writing instructor.

Fast forward nearly twenty years, and I'm now the Director of Marketing for IEW. Incredibly, one of my primary tasks is overseeing the development of new products, and the materials we now carry to help new-to-IEW parents and teachers implement the Structure and Style Writing Method™ are plenteous! But learning how to teach writing still starts with TWSS, the core program that I enjoyed all those years ago. My story is not unique. In fact, it's not too different from Rebecca Morley's, an accredited IEW instructor from Florida. Except that she learned of our method just a few years ago. And she has no children of her own. And she started by learning the *Teaching Writing: Structure and Style* Writing Method along with the Student Writing Intensive DVDs. Hmm...

Okay, maybe our stories are actually dissimilar in most ways except this: We both learned by taking the TWSS seminar and agree that there is no better way to learn to teach writing. Says Rebecca, "IEW is systematic and breaks the writing process down

into pieces. It's not too much. Students' mastery of skills is always being guided, but never unreasonably. Having specific objectives in the form of a checklist gives students confidence." Over the years, Rebecca has used the following student materials, all based on the TWSS: *Student Writing Intensive* (all levels), *All Things Fun and Fascinating*, *Finding Narnia*, *Medieval History-Based Writing Lessons*, *U.S. History-Based Writing Lessons*, *Windows to the World*, *Fix It! Grammar*, and *Rockets, Radar, & Robotics*.

So how can we have such different settings but similar results? The key is in starting with learning the method in IEW's teacher training materials.

In my experience, most writing programs focus on student materials, assuming the parents or teachers took writing methods courses in college, or perhaps are just smart enough to figure it out, relying on grammar worksheets, fill-in-the blank brainstorming ideas like mind-mapping (gasp!), and then expecting them to evaluate a composition based on a prompt. Not IEW. Through watching the teacher training course (See pages 6–7 for more details about the writing method.), teachers and teaching parents are equipped with a step-by-step way to teach writing that is both easy to learn and effective in its application.

Because every teacher is different, we offer options for homeschoolers just starting out with IEW:

- Learn the TWSS course, and make up your own lessons.
- Learn the TWSS, and use one of fifteen theme-based writing lessons offered in a variety of levels and topics.
- Learn the TWSS while your students enjoy the SWI video course.
- Learn the TWSS while your students enjoy the SWI video course and the *Fix It! Grammar* lessons.

Do you see the pattern? Learning starts with the TWSS!

My homeschooled sons are now successful men, and the children I taught have children of their own. Although my years of being a schoolteacher, homeschooling parent, and co-op leader are long gone, my enthusiasm for IEW lives on. It is my hope that you too will see the value of learning the method and being able to teach it, that you will not default, like I did many years ago, to workbooks which don't work.

Parents and teachers, whose implementation of the TWSS clinched success similar to Rebecca's and mine, I salute you. Those of you who are new to IEW, I invite you to become part of our community as we seek to equip teachers and teaching parents with methods and materials which will aid them in training their students to become confident and competent communicators and thinkers.

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