



**2018–19**  
TEACHER  
OF THE  
YEAR

**IEW's  
Featured  
Teacher:  
Mr. Andrew  
Youngblood**

is the Director of Regina Chesterton Academy at Cardinal O'Hara High School outside of Philadelphia. He used IEW for fourteen years as Headmaster at Regina Coeli Academy and in a co-op as a homeschooling dad, and he now teaches Structure and Style at Cardinal O'Hara High School. He is also the Curriculum Coordinator for the Chesterton Schools Network, which is currently made up of fifteen schools across the country.

# SUCCESSFUL TEACHERS AND EXCELLENT WRITERS

*What happens to a school using IEW's very efficient, quick to adopt 14-hour training program*

*by Beth O'Connor*

**FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS**, IEW has chosen a remarkable teacher who has implemented IEW in his or her classroom with enthusiasm and fidelity. This year, we introduce to you our 2018–19 Teacher of the Year, Andrew Youngblood. Andrew has been implementing IEW with students for over fourteen years.

This past August, I personally met Mr. Youngblood at the 37th Annual Chesterton Conference in Orlando, Florida, where he was meeting with administrators and teachers from the Chesterton Schools Network. His role as Curriculum Coordinator is to oversee IEW training among the Chesterton Schools Network and to demonstrate how to weave the IEW methodology into their integrated classical curriculum. His knowledge and excitement of IEW methodology was palatable. His stories of student success will bring great encouragement to other educators.

*What does our methodology do differently from other writing programs you have tried?*

IEW breaks writing up into component pieces, and we don't assume the students know those pieces. We teach it to them and show them techniques for how to be successful. I do know that in other programs we talk about what a paragraph comprises, but I just don't think their instruction is as in-depth or as concrete as IEW's.

*How do you work with your high school students who read and write below grade level?*

This is the most exciting part about the program. I do get students who are very weak in their writing skills. My first year I had students who didn't know the difference between a noun and a verb. I spent time outside of class working with them going over very basic grammar, but in the meantime they were writing their essays using the IEW methodology with the rest of the class.

IEW allows teachers to meet the needs of all the students. For students in need of remediation, it is a great overview of grammar and sentence structure that they may never have received. For the more advanced students, the method allows them to express thoughts in more complex ways. That is what is so brilliant and so necessary when implementing a program in a classroom or school. Schools need to find programs where the students' strengths can be celebrated and the weaknesses can be remediated at a pace that is comfortable for the children and where they can see measurable success.

*Do you feel this makes it easier or harder for the teacher and her workload? How long does it take to grade papers?*

If you are implementing the IEW methodology and using the checklists, those papers are the easiest and fastest to grade, and the workload is reduced

drastically. I am not giving a grade based on whether or not it is a good paper. I am grading the paper based on the student's use of new techniques that might be challenging for him or her. Has the student grown by incorporating these techniques? This goes to the core issue of the teaching of writing. Writing in education is so backwards in that people expect the composition to be perfect. I will use swimming as an analogy. The way some programs teach writing is this: I throw you in the pool, and I want to see a really good freestyle. When did you teach them how to do the freestyle? IEW allows students to try things and work on things like structure and not worry: "Is this the best paper I could write?" It is the best paper because they are trying new techniques, figuring out how to construct a sentence, how to construct a paragraph.

IEW provides a very concrete way of making people excellent writers. We are teaching excellent writing skills to students, but the way we are doing it is by breaking it down into composite skills. Then, within those composite skills we're giving them specific ways to improve. That is what is different about IEW, and I think that is what is genius about IEW. A lot of writing programs assume that students know what structure and style are, and if we tell them to be creative, they go to that stylistic technique level without actually having been taught the skills. Saying to freshman students: "All right, I want a creative paper, I want a well structured paper, I want a well researched paper with outstanding resources, and I want you to have MLA formatting," I have expected too many component pieces for them to be successful unless they already know how to use those component pieces. But if they already know how to incorporate the component pieces, what is the point of doing the assignment? They already know it. What are we teaching when we are teaching writing? That is where a lot of teachers get tripped up. They don't recognize that writing is a composite skill.

*What suggestions would you have for other schools or districts trying to implement IEW? Why do you feel it is necessary for all of your subject level teachers, not just the English teachers, to complete the TWSS training and practicum assignments?*

I really see this as a school-wide program, and it puts all the teachers on the same page. Clearly it is in the best interest of the students to provide a uniform approach to the skill of writing, and you will find more growth at a faster pace through a school-wide application. Ultimately, and this is important as well, it will be easier for the faculty to teach writing. They will be part of a team approach, and they can rely on one another. It's a recipe for success.

At Regina Coeli, in the co-op, and now with the Chesterton Schools Network, one of the first things we did was use the IEW methodology to integrate the curriculum. With classical education you need integrated disciplines, not isolated disciplines. These are frequently asked questions: How do you get the teachers to work together? How do you get them to integrate? We immediately looked at IEW to be that integrating factor. The core subject teachers are never teaching how to implement IEW, but

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Andrew  
Youngblood  
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they are giving assignments based on an IEW rubric.

Teaching one writing methodology also solves a huge problem in education in general. We have all these different teachers. Each one has his or her criteria. Every student spends a lot of time and energy learning the expectations of each teacher. Now, there is a uniform writing system for the entire school!

*How are you supporting the teachers at the Chesterton Schools Network in regard to the IEW training?*

I don't have any question in my mind that Andrew Pudewa is a uniquely gifted presenter. I think everyone that watches the DVDs comes away with an excitement about implementing the program. As the curriculum director, I help the teachers and schools get to the point where they see IEW as useful, usable, and interesting. For example, when we teach students about the comma, we need to have buy-in from the students. They must want to learn how to use a comma. I think it is the same with teachers. They are all so busy that it is hard

to make time for something unless they are really interested and motivated to do it. Once teachers start watching the DVDs, they are immensely successful in teaching the program. Training teachers how to teach the program is very easy. Being able to learn an entire writing program by watching for only fourteen hours is amazing. It is phenomenally quick. Teachers take classes for continuing education that are way more than fourteen hours to learn a particular skill for education. Through this training I find that teachers become very successful in terms of content; the program is actually very efficient and quick to adopt.

### **Mr. Youngblood uses these IEW materials:**

Teaching Writing: Structure and Style  
DVD Seminar, Workbook

Classroom Supplement and Lesson Plans  
Level C

Classroom Posters

Checklist Generator™

*(Mr. Youngblood is a Premium Member.)*



**Beth O'Connor** is an IEW Schools Division educational consultant. She holds an M.A. in Special Education: Deaf Education, and has taught students, both deaf and hearing, in kindergarten through the university level for more than 20 years.

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