

AAA - Happy Birthday!

Transcript of Episode 450

Andrew Pudewa: I don't really think that there's anything that could be called another subject that would be more valuable than writing, in the long term. So I would stick with the writing, especially at 12 years old.

Julie Walker: Hello, and welcome to the Arts of Language Podcast with Andrew Pudewa, founder of the Institute for Excellence in Writing or as many like to say, "IEW." My name is Julie Walker, and I'm honored to serve Andrew and IEW as the chief marketing officer. Our goal is 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.

Julie Walker: What time is Andrew?

Andrew Pudewa: Where?

Julie Walker: Oh, I know, right, right here in Oklahoma, it is 12 noon. And we are, of course, doing our Ask Andrew Anything podcast. Andrew asked me this morning, "Do I get to see the questions?" And my answer was, no.

Andrew Pudewa: She's a bully. That's all I can say.

Julie Walker: So, we also have, well, a wonderful surprise for our viewers right now. Andrew and I are not in the studio alone. We actually have a dozen or so people who are here from all over the United States who work for IEW and who have been together doing a retreat. So not the kind of retreat where we get massages and pedicures...

Andrew Pudewa: Is the one where we, we, we do rappelling and ziplining. And then we, after that, get on the floor and have a push up contest.

Julie Walker: We are definitely not doing that. This has been a very good working retreat. Some of you who have been around IEW for quite a while know that we have a new magalog that comes out every year, and we've been working on that. We've been working on new projects. And so this is just an incredible group of people that we have here today, as well as many of our customer service and schools team that are here in the studio. So Andrew, the reason why I can't show you the questions is I'm not going to ask you them. They are. Are you okay with that?

Andrew Pudewa: Whatever you have planned, I will be happy.

Julie Walker: Okay. Sounds great. This episode will be launching on our 30th birthday, IEW's 30th birthday. So this is our happy birthday IEW episode. All right, Allyson. Take it away.

Andrew Pudewa: Oh, we're playing musical chairs.

Allyson Heins: are. Happy

Andrew Pudewa: Well, thank you.

Allyson Heins: Yes. Of course. It's an honor to be here. Hi, everybody. My name is Allison Hines, and I live in Cartersville, Georgia.

That's just north of Atlanta. And I am honored to work with the IT team, the customer service team, the marketing team, the editing team. I get to see lots of pieces. And it's so much fun. I really enjoy it.

Andrew Pudewa: We appreciate you very much. And thanks for coming all the way from Georgia.

Allyson Heins: Yes, it's good to be here. So my question is from a mother who has several children, all the way from middle school down to a newborn baby. And there are just not enough hours in the day to school that length and different ages of children. And often she feels that the middle schooler is not getting enough attention.

Do you have any advice for how to manage homeschooling multiple children and paying attention to that oldest?

Andrew Pudewa: Well, there are a few principles that I often suggest to people. Everyone's situation really is individual and every child is different. But one principle I always suggest is teach from the top down. Put the most energy into the oldest kids because you have the least amount of time remaining with them before they Basically grow up and do something else.

And so prioritize the oldest kid and then just trust the trickle down effect. the younger children, they absorb from the environment. They'll overhear stuff. They can keep them as long as they stay relatively clean and alive. You can ignore them for part of the day and prioritize the oldest kids.

The second basic principle is to chunk your kids. So, grab the top one, two, maybe three, and do what you can with them together, and then grab the next, two or three down, and do what you can with them together. So your cumulative subjects, like language, particularly foreign language, math, where each child really needs to be working at the proximal level of challenge, those kind of have to be done individually, but you should be able to set one off, do this, check with me if you have any questions, so they're working mostly independently.

Whereas the non-cumulative things like history, literature, science, those you really can do in groups, and you don't have to study history chronologically. In fact, my friend Martin often says, history is not chronological. In other words, you can learn a particular thing or period of history, and then you can go forward or backwards of that and learn another particular thing in history. You don't have to bring everyone from ancient through medieval to Renaissance to

U. S. to modern. You can jump around. And that is one reason why knowing dates is so helpful. So a lot of people criticize, why bother to know dates? You could just ask your phone when so and so lived or when such and such a war happened.

But if a person has dates to affix to names and events, then when you learn something, you've got a place to put it, and it goes in order, and it makes a lot of sense. So, those would be my two suggestions. And then, always remember that the advantages of a larger family almost always outweigh the disadvantages of the increased chaos that that can create in your life.

And when they're all grown up and you look back on it all, then you won't regret having lived through the chaos and having that large family because then you have the best chance of having as many grandchildren as possible, which is, as far as I can tell, the only really good thing about getting old.

Allyson Heins: Thank you for that advice.

Luke Hoyhta: Happy birthday, Andrew.

Andrew Pudewa: Thank you, Luke. I guess there's going to be a pile of these.

Luke Hoyhta: There might be. I'm Luke Hoyhta. I'm the Graphic Designer here. And I'm also from Oklahoma. I have a little bit of a drive in. So, how do you transfer the skills that you've learned from Structure and Style into other languages?

Andrew Pudewa: There's two things: structure and style. If you are practicing the structural models, learning how to collect up and organize and sequence and support information, that's a cognitive skill that's going to carry over no matter what you do. Teenage boys, in particular, will say something to me like, "Well, I'm not going to have to write when I grow up because I'm going to: fill in the blank."

Be an engineer, go into the military, whatever. And I would say, it doesn't matter what you do. Be an engineer, go into the military, be a garbage collector. And if you can speak and write well, if you can communicate well, you'll rise up to a position of influence and leadership. The best engineer stays an engineer because he's a great engineer, but the engineer who's good at engineering and can communicate engineering ideas will rise up and have more influence and opportunity to serve in a greater way. So that's immediately transferable because those are just the basic thinking skills.

On the style side, there's two things that are happening. One is, you're getting more and more comfortable with grammar. And grammar is the logic of how languages fit together. And the other thing is variety of expression. So by working with the stylistic techniques, year after year after year for several years, you start to get this just absolute confidence with the grammar of it. And if you're supplementing that with something like *Fix It! Grammar* or even better studying a foreign language like Latin, then you're getting more x-ray vision into the

deep logic of language. And that's going to carry over into any language you study, even something that's very, very different like Japanese, Chinese, Russian.

Okay. Then with the style, when you have a variety of ways to express ideas and say things, then you're in the habit of always saying, well, what's the best word? What's the best phrasing? What's the best combination? What sounds right, looks right, feels right, makes good sense? Those are, again, transferable skills.

I am not completely fluent in any foreign language. But I do believe that students who grow up with a good foundation in all of those things, the structural ideas of organizing and presenting, or organizing ideas and presenting them in a logical way, as well as grammar and variety of expression, those should all, so if you do end up, go live in Guatemala for a year, your Spanish should be very good if you grew up with Structure and Style.

Luke Hoyhta: That make sense?

Andrew Pudewa: I hope so.

Luke Hoyhta: Thanks so much.

Andrew Pudewa: Thank you.

Jeff Nease: Well, happy birthday, Andrew.

Andrew Pudewa: It's, I mean, I wouldn't have even noticed it was 30 years, except Julie has to make a big deal out of it, but thank you,

Jeff Nease: You're very welcome. My name is Jeff Nease, and I am from right here in Oklahoma. And my role here within the company is a few different roles. I'm the Implementation Coach, so I'm responsible for going out and training teachers in the IEW methodology as well as an Educational Consultant and an online instructor.

So AI has been a hot topic in the realm of education. If you could control AI, you could program it, how would you program AI to be supportive of excellence in writing?

Andrew Pudewa: I can't really imagine doing something I can't do. I can't imagine climbing Mount Everest because I know that the physical limitations would preempt any possible success in that endeavor. I feel kind of the same way about AI. It's just too big, too massive, too much unknown. I do suspect that what plebes like you, what I see, is just the smallest little tip of the iceberg of what exists.

So I don't know. I do know that the big question that people have, of course, is, well, if AI can write better than most people, why should we bother teaching most people to write? I guess one thing would be for AI to tell you, what I have just given you is imperfect. You need to make it better before you use it, lest you repeat mistakes.

That would be a good kind of disclaimer at the top of every AI search. I do think that a lot of kids who, or even adults who use AI, we get information. Who are we trusting? What do we even know about where that information came from? Therefore, a good habit for all of us to have would be to always ask the AI, large language models will do this: Where did you get your information? And then you can look at the sources, and if you wanted to, I suppose, try to track down some of those primary sources and verify and then use the information. I don't know where it will go, none of us really do. The question is how might it affect those of us who still believe that teaching writing is an important thing.

I think a good analogy would be math. So, a lot of people say, well, why do you teach algebra? Nobody uses algebra, except the few people who do, but you're teaching it to everybody. Couldn't you be teaching them something more useful? Well, I don't think we learned algebra and geometry and trig or whatever because we need that today.

I mean, some people do, but I don't. However, the thinking skills that are trained in the process of learning algebra, geometry, etc., or the thinking skills that are learned in the process of learning Latin, it's training logical processes at a very high level. And that's what's making the neural connections and the cognitive functions.

And we don't understand how that all works. We do know one thing. Our brains are still faster in making connections between the information that we have better than AI can do. So we're teaching writing not so that everyone can go and write better emails or write better reports if they go work for the FBI or write better speeches if they have to get a gig at the White House.

And that may happen, and those people are all going to use AI like they do, just like engineers use technology to help them. But if you can't think above that to some degree, if you don't know what you're doing with math, you're not thinking mathematically, you're not going to be good at using math. Same thing with language. If you can't look at it and think above it to some degree, then it's going to control you, you're going to be at the functions. I think it goes down to, the world ten years from now, there will be people who think well in a myriad of ways and therefore can use AI effectively. And then the people who can't think well, and AI will just simply use them.

Jeff Nease: Absolutely. Thank you so much.

Andrew Pudewa: Don't know if that answered that question, but it was my best attempt.

Hannah Averitt: So my name is Hannah Averitt. I live and work right here in Tulsa, Oklahoma. And I am on the product team and the editing team. So, Andrew, the question I have for you is from someone who is new to IEW. So they ask, "How do we use the teacher student combo of history-based lessons differentiated by grades 4 and 6?"

Andrew Pudewa: Well, we have an excellent customer service team that answers questions like this all day. So I probably should pull one of them up. Maybe you could answer the question. I guess my answer would be, we primarily do teacher training as a foundation. And

so, watching that course, the TWSS, working at it, Gradually, over weeks or months, however long it takes, that's an investment in yourself.

So as a teaching parent, as a tutor, as a teacher, you're going to be permanently enriched by learning our system as an adult, as it's being taught to adults, getting all of the, kind of, deeper logic to why we do the things we do. And that's really the core of what we've always done, but over the years we've found that creating student materials to then help teachers implement all those ideas makes them more and more successful.

So, having then the student materials, whether it's an SSS course on video, it sounds like this person is wanting to use the history based writing lessons. You're going to have much greater confidence, success, and consequently joy in using the history based writing lessons after you have started the process of learning it yourself.

For the differentiation between grade four and six, I don't really see a huge thing there. Most Families, co-ops, even some hybrid schools or charter schools that have mixed age classrooms don't have a problem with that, and we have ideas as well as actual tools that teachers and parents can use to, say, customize the assignments.

With the history-based writing lessons, we have a simpler source text, so if you've got one of those two kids that needs a little simpler reading level, that's available. We've got checklist generators that we can use to modify the checklist. You can modify a checklist just by cross something out or add something in.

It's only if you want it to look cute, you use the checklist generator. But I have almost always actually all of the classes I've taught have all been mixed age groups with at least two years difference between the oldest and the youngest. I find that sometimes, the younger kids are just as sharp or faster in a way than some of the older kids.

So I would just say teach them together, get going, and if you need to customize the assignment for the younger one, uh, you can do that. And if you have any more questions on this, How to get the tools to do that well, we have an excellent customer service team.

Hannah Averitt: so

Andrew Pudewa: Sure. Thank you. Hello, Elisa.

Aleeza Sanchez: My name is Aleeza Sanchez and I actually am also here in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and I am part of the customer service team. You did a fantastic job answering,

Andrew Pudewa: Thank you. I'm glad you, you heard and could approve.

Aleeza Sanchez: The question I have for you is actually two part, and they're asking about their student who has ADHD. What would you do to encourage the student who dislikes reading to read more? And would you feel that an audiobook is as good or equivalent to actually reading a book?

Andrew Pudewa: So to answer the last part of that question, first, audio books are excellent. And I am a huge fan of audio books, especially for kids who have not a natural inclination toward reading a lot. Either because of ADHD or other attention issues or dyslexia, whatever's going to impede. And you can just fill up that mind with great literature and vocabulary and nuance and rhythm and beauty of language.

I don't think any of us actually hear as much high quality English as we would benefit from. I don't know that you could ever get too much beautiful language into your mind through your ears. So, full speed ahead on audiobooks. Now, depending on the age of this child, which we don't know. You do hit a point, usually around, I don't know, 11, 12, where you start to worry, Oh no, is this kid just going to listen to audiobooks forever and never be able to read?

That is not a problem I have ever seen actually happen. Lots of kids around 11 or 12 would much prefer audiobooks over paper books because they can hear and listen at a higher level than their own decoding and their speed allows. So, keep them both going. In terms of encouraging the student, well, there's a few, a few ways.

Number one, you can, work hard to find books that are going to appeal to that child. Uh, with boys, these are usually books with semi heroic characters who are involved in some level of violence in order to accomplish good in the world, either through historical fiction or science fiction or fantasy or whatever.

And so, in getting the right book can really make a difference. One trick that I have tried and found it successful, and I think other parents have too, is find that book and then rather than throw it to the kid and say, read it, read the first few chapters aloud and then kind of get too busy. Hopefully, the student will now be interested in the book and you leave it lying around and say, I'm just so busy.

You can read it if you want to, and hopefully the curiosity will work. That was with my son. He didn't read a book until he was 12 years old, but the first book he did read all the way through, except for the first three chapters, was about a fifth, sixth grade reading level, *The Bark of the Bog Owl*, and, he liked the book so much.

And then I said, I'm leaving on a trip, don't read it without me. Well, of course, he couldn't resist. So I came back, he'd read the whole thing. And that was a huge breakthrough. there are other things you can do, I'm not a big fan of Pizza Hut or the food they sell, but you could use the Pizza Hut strategy, which is, for every book you read, you get a something or other.

I wouldn't recommend Pizza Hut pizzas, I would recommend something a little more healthy and good for the brain and body, but some kind of goal that you can acknowledge with some kind of reward idea. Something that hopefully is good for the student and say, read the book, get the reward. I know any number of kids who read books only because they want to watch the movie.

And my grandson, who does not like reading, would be the first to tell you, reading is stupid, audiobooks are better because you can do stuff while you're listening to audiobooks. He did slog through the entire *Fellowship of the Ring* because that was the only way his mother was going to let him watch the *Lord of the Rings* movie, and then he slogged through the rest of them, and now he's on *Huck Finn*. Why? Because he wants to watch the movie. So that may be of help too. But mostly I would say to parents who have kids that don't like reading, especially within that range of 10, 11, 12, 13—Don't stress over this. It's not a deal breaker. They will grow up. Their decoding skills, their attention issues or dyslexia issues will not be as much of an impediment in a few years as they are now. So, trust the system.

Aleeza Sanchez: Well, thank you very much.

Andrew Pudewa: Sure. Aleeza, by the way, was one of my most favorite students when she was, what? Aleeza, how old were you when you started these videos? Thirteen? Now she's all grown up and married and expecting a child and one of our key people here. So it brings a tremendous amount of joy to my heart when I get to continue to know these students as they become these awesome young adults.

Brooke Hafer: Well, happy birthday,

Andrew Pudewa: Hey, thank you.

Brooke Hafer: Well, my name's Brooke. I am also a part of the customer service team, and I also work here at the Bixby office in Oklahoma. So, my question is from a mom who has been a part of the Classical Conversations community for about three years now. They are no longer doing Classical Conversations this year. She has a high schooler, and she would like to know where the best place to start.

Andrew Pudewa: There are a lot of options. I think that if you're used to the theme-based format, a really good way to jump back in is to use the *Bible-Based Writing Lessons*. I think it's very challenging. It's great content. The book is a natural extension from what that student has previously experienced. And it gets pretty challenging pretty quickly, so I think that would be a good thing to do.

If for some reason they wanted to try the video format, that would be good, probably the SSS1C. It does presume no previous experience. But, if you did theme-based for a few years and then didn't do it for a few years, it's okay to assume they forgot almost everything and work from there. The SSS1C, as you know because you tell people this all day, is a pretty rigorous high school level course.

In fact, it is even available for accredited college or university credit through Christian Halls International, through a few universities that they work with. So, getting the SS1C, you're doing the equivalent of what would be a whole year of grammar and composition at the college level, especially if you add in the Fix It! Grammar.

So I think either of those are good options. It's kind of just a matter of—do you want to be super involved and dig into the theme based book with the kid and read it and talk to them and help them? Or would you like something that's a little more plug and play here, go watch the video, do the thing. I'll help you if you need it.

That would be the determining factor or the cost. The theme-based book is going to be less than the video course, but whoever asked that question, give it a try. If you try one and you don't like it, you can always swap out and do the other.

Brooke Hafer: Well, thank you, Andrew.

Andrew Pudewa: Thank you for all the other good questions you ask all day, every day.

Answer.

Marci Harris: My name is Marci Harris, and I am an IEW Online instructor, and I serve the IEW editing team. I'm from Indianapolis, Indiana.

Andrew Pudewa: Thank you for coming to Oklahoma for our event.

Marci Harris: I love being here. My question comes from a parent who knows how much you value speech and debate. What is the best way to prepare for debates? And what kind of essay or outline should she have her children write and memorize?

Andrew Pudewa: Well, I don't know if this person has already been involved in speech and debate for a year or two or more, or is now new. If it's the latter situation, then my advice would be find some people who are doing speech and debate and hang out with them. Learn from who's got the experience. And so most clubs have a good amount of experienced kids who've been doing it three, four, five years, parents, coaches, and that's going to be your absolute best preparation is hang out with those people, learn from them, do what you can.

If you're completely new and you don't have a club, then you should find one probably through NCFCA.org, or STOA is the other group. Both are great leagues, and they have wonderful training materials available and a system. And go to a tournament, and mind blowing, lights go on, you start to see it all. If this person has already been doing that, and now is saying, well what's the best way to prepare to be even better? Well, one thing would be to watch videos of the top kids.

And so, if you're involved in policy debate, go on YouTube, watch the National Championship video. speeches and debates that are policy or Lincoln Douglas or dramatic interp or persuasive. So there's a lot of video of very high level kids available. And that was, that's great. We didn't have that when I got going with this twenty years ago, but that would be one thing.

Obviously, we have our *Introduction to Public Speaking* course and It is meant to be kind of a runway, if you will, to get the kid confident and going smoothly, getting fast enough to then

take off into that world of competition. I think one area that all of us, any age, would benefit from is, and I'm getting more and more convicted on this, is memorizing great things that other people wrote.

And practicing those so that you can deliver them smoothly and fluently, whether that's a beautiful poem or an excerpt or even a speech from a great orator of the past, we don't really have any good examples of great orators in the present, at least not that I see readily in the current world of politics.

But we can look back and see some phenomenal examples. I often would refer people to Frederick Douglass and some of his speeches. And I've known kids who did memorize a Frederick Douglass speech, and there's nothing that would compare to that in terms of just so actively, powerfully furnishing the mind with the vocabulary, with the idiom, with the allusion, and with the essence of beautiful, true, and powerful ideas beautifully presented.

So, I think we all should be, at least I'm trying to always be engaged in memorizing something and then just finding random people to practice it on, usually grandchildren who really don't care that much, and sometimes my wife who also doesn't necessarily care that much. But I'm not doing it for them, I'm doing it for me, and, I just think we, we tend to think—memorizing poems is for little kids. No. I think it's for everyone who wants to grow in their mastery of language.

Marci Harris: Absolutely. Thank you so much

Andrew Pudewa: I hope that answered that question.

Heidi Thomas: Happy birthday.

Andrew Pudewa: Oh, my. This is a big pile of cards.

Heidi Thomas: My name is Heidi Thomas. I live in Northern Illinois, right on the Wisconsin border outside of Rockford. I am an IEW online instructor. I am a product developer and an editor here at IEW. So I have a question from the mother of a high school son. And she writes, how do I encourage my son to use his IEW skills, specifically to write the key word outline when he writes for other teachers?

Andrew Pudewa: Well, I don't know that you can encourage high school sons very well.

Heidi Thomas: true.

Andrew Pudewa: Our thinking is that somehow we're going to cheerlead them into doing more or better. They're pretty much going to do what they want to do. I do believe that when kids grow up making key word outlines, they may hit a point where they kind of rebel against it just because in their mind, they think, "Oh, that's just extra work. I know what I'm going to write. I'm just going to launch in and write the first paragraph first and just crank this thing

out.” And a lot of them can do it decently well, and they have internalized to some degree that thinking what you're going to say or what you're going to write before you write it.

A lot of students will discover at some point, and I'm not sure you can force this. But they will discover that it actually does save time, that it will make a better end product, but I don't know you can convince them of that. It's something they kind of have to discover on their own.

I would say, hopefully, if this is a high school student who's hitting, say, 15, 16 years old, and has an aptness for this kind of thing, get them involved in some higher level classes. Look into the dual enrollment thing. Get them involved in a class. From someone else, so there's external accountability, and then you as the parent can be more of their support and helper, you're on their team, rather than you're the one saying you have to do this, and the kid's saying, well, I'm going to do as little work as I can and get away with this so I can get back to my real life.

That external accountability around that age, 15, 16, that is provided through dual enrollment opportunity, I think, goes a long way towards shifting for that getting more grown up about the whole thing.

I will tell you an interesting thing. I was recently at a conference and I was talking to a mother who works for a law firm. I don't know what her actual training is, but her job is writing briefs for the lawyers and they do. This particular firm does pretty high level stuff like Supreme Court, State Supreme Court level stuff, whatever. And so her job is basically to get all of the decisions that have come down and rulings or commentaries on those decisions, and then put them together in a brief for the lawyers at the firm she works for.

And so she told me when I met her a few months ago in California, that she wondered if she could do a unit six with this process that she has done many times. And so she thought, yeah, I'll just give it a try. So she got her first source, second source, third source, I don't know how many sources, made little outlines, source outlines, created a fused outline, and then put together the final project.

She said it took longer than she usually spends to prepare to write the thing. But once she had that preparation in place. The thing just flowed out and it was much better and much faster to get to the final product.

So, it's kind of like that anything—kids want to jump on the court and play the game rather than do the wind spirits, dribble drills and technical things that actually would make them win more easily. That's just human nature. So, I think that at some point you hit adulthood and you say, hey, if I do all the technical practice, whether it's music or sports or writing, in preparation for the test on the court or the recital or the final project, they hit that point where they say, aha, preparation makes the whole thing much better. But it is a level of discipline.

I don't know that you can just convince someone to do it. They kind of have to discover on their own. So hopefully that young person will hear this answer and take it to heart.

Heidi Thomas: Yes, so true. Thank you.

Andrew Pudewa: Thank you, Heidi. I want to just say how much I love editors because their job is to be sure I do not look stupid in public. And there is nothing more valuable than that.

So,

Sabrina Cardinale: Happy birthday, Andrew and IEW.

Andrew Pudewa: It's not my birthday, but it is nostalgic to think 30 years ago I did that first TWSS seminar.

Sabrina Cardinale: I'm Sabrina Cardinale, and I live near the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, and I work with the product development team and I do some editing also. So the question that I have for you, Andrew, is a parent would like to know: "Do you have some tips for spotting students' use of AI as opposed to their own work?"

Andrew Pudewa: I don't. I know that it is possible to run student writing through various analytical systems that will detect things like plagiarism or AI. I mean, there's actually an AI that is trained to detect whether writing has been created by AI. A couple professors I know, and this seems to be more of a problem in the college world than the high school world, but I'm sure it happens there too. He actually will expect them to include things that were in lectures that he gave, or readings specifically that he gave that would not be part of the general world of large language model AI database stuff. And some of these, chat GPT, unless you pay for a pretty upgraded version, you're dealing with stuff that is a year or two older, and it wouldn't necessarily be able to access either the newest information or the specific information that the teacher kind of put out there and suggested, "Hmm, you could use this in your writing." So I don't know, I've tried a little bit to see if AI could produce source texts.

And I tried one experiment and I asked it, I have this interface with four different large language model AI interfaces, and I asked, gave it the same prompt, and it gave me four versions of a simple little thing, not a lot of need for historical accuracy. It was more the retelling of the myths of the founding of Rome. What I discovered is that none of them could produce a source text that I liked, that I thought would be a good one for the kids I'm teaching.

So, I don't know where that's going to go. I do know for a fact that teachers who care are returning to something that's been dead for a long time, and that's the in-class essay. The blue book exam. So yeah, you can do all you want with AI, but come into the classroom, close the laptop, here's some paper, answer the essay questions right here, right now, and that's sheer panic for some students who aren't prepared for it.

So, depending on where they end up, I think, most teachers are contriving ways to be sure that their kids can use AI, but it doesn't replace their own thinking and writing and become a substitute intellect for the students themselves, but it's a big problem everywhere.

I think we have the best tools to help students, but I don't know what the solutions really are. The interesting thing too is, young people today, if you were to suspect them, or even accuse them, Did you copy and paste and change, or did you use AI? They wouldn't perceive that as being wrong in any way. Right? They don't perceive that as cheating or anything because the mentality of young people is: "we use technology. That's what we do. That's the world we grew up in. So what are you complaining about?" So there's kind of a philosophical divide there between old people like us who would say, well that's not quite fair, that's not quite legal, and kids are like, of course it's legal, of course it's fair, it's like using a radar detector so you don't speed. I don't know where that goes, we'll see.

Sabrina Cardinale: Thank you so much.

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah, thank you for that easy question.

Danielle Olander: My name is Danielle Olander, and I am from the west side of Michigan, just outside of Grand Rapids, and I have the fun of working with IEW as an editor and an online instructor and also as a customer service agent. I have a question from a mom who said, "right now I am typing my 12 year old son's assignments because it causes a lot of stress when he writes them out. Would you pause IEW and do typing lessons? Or just keep going with me typing. There's not really room in our schedule for another subject unless we drop IEW temporarily."

Andrew Pudewa: Well, a couple comments, number one, I don't really think that there's anything that could be called another subject that would be more valuable than writing in the long term. You could possibly make an argument that music is extremely important, but in terms of if you quit writing to do, I don't know, science or something, I don't know that you'd get a big gain out of that. So I would stick with the writing, especially at 12 years old. The other thing I don't know from this question, and this is probably the biggest question, Is this child writing on paper, and then mom is typing it from a handwritten paper? Or, is this child dictating, and the mom is typing what the child is saying?

Those are kind of two different scenarios in my mind. If the child is writing on paper, The mom is typing it, then print it out, give it back to the child, let the child edit to some degree. So the idea would be, try to not fix it on the fly and save them the process of reading what they wrote and being sure that it sounds good and they like it and that all the words make sense and everything's there.

So, if the child is writing on paper, that's actually kind of a plus, because the opposite is a bigger problem, in my mind, which you see in a lot of schools now as they're trying to get every nine year old to type everything. And so the kids aren't actually learning to put a whole paragraph on paper for any reason. That I think is a worse situation, but there certainly would

be some value in practicing typing. So, get a game-like thing. I mean, all our kids learned with Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing. I don't even know if that still exists anymore. I would try to find one that could be done for a very short time, maybe ten minutes.

Four or five days a week and you know ten minutes out of the day everyone can steal ten minutes out of the day and Practice a skill like typing and just get gradually a little faster a little faster I think there's still a good argument for learning to type with the right fingers on the right keys because that will improve speed although I do know some people who don't do that and can whip out stuff pretty fast with two or three fingers.

So, I don't know. But I wouldn't stop doing writing regularly, three, four, five days a week, or some part of that process, in order to do something else like improve typing speed. I would try to keep going and then just squeeze in another ten minutes. You would be surprised. Ten minutes, four days a week for five, six months, bam, you'd be awesome at typing. You would gain the skill very, very rapidly. But if you don't have the consistency and you just do it whenever you feel like it, yeah, you could be frustrated for years. And I don't know if that fully answers your question. If not, she can write to you and you can.

Danielle Olander: I can answer her question.

Andrew Pudewa: Thank you, Danielle. God bless you. Oh, Denise. I'll have to read all these at some point.

Denise Kelley: Hello, I'm Denise Kelly, and I'm the product manager for IEW and also the online class director. And I live in Lynchburg, Virginia. And I have a question for you too. "So, how do I teach my children if we don't speak English and they don't go to public school?"

Andrew Pudewa: Well, you would teach them in the language you do speak. I'm assuming this is specifically about English

Denise Kelley: I would assume

Andrew Pudewa: The challenge would be English grammar and composition and being sure that it's good. I would like to say that there is a huge neurological advantage in growing up perfectly bilingual. So if you do speak a foreign language and you speak that language in your home while you live in an English speaking country, that child will likely grow up perfectly bilingual. I know a lot of families that they didn't require the child to speak back to them in the language of the mother. And so that kid now grows up and can pretty well understand it, but doesn't have the confidence and fluency to speak that language.

So don't quit because the advantages of being perfectly bilingual, which are not practical in my mind, they may or may not be useful, but they're neurological because your language part of your brain, when you learn a second language, and you make all the connections between those two languages, huge brain growth, huge brain development.

It is very rare to meet a perfectly bilingual person who grew up in a bilingual situation and speaks both languages very naturally who isn't very smart about everything else at all. So you've got this huge advantage. In terms of the correctness of the writing, number one is use audiobooks, right, so they can hear elegant, sophisticated, correct, beautiful language in large quantity. And it's okay to read to them, even if your pronunciation, if she's feeling like her pronunciation isn't kind of good enough, it's okay, don't worry, because the world around will take care of fixing the pronunciation thing. And there will still be benefits of reading aloud to them, even if you have an accent you wish was a little less of an accent.

In terms of writing, then we do have online tools like Grammarly and AI that will check grammar, and so that's possible. I think a better option would be find someone who could be the student's editor. And if you're using our writing system, you know that I'm always encouraging kids. So, hire an editor, and the editor will fix up the paper and give it back to you with no smile attached, and if you don't feel like you have the confidence to do that yourself, try to find someone who can, maybe a relative who is a native speaker, or a friend from church, or maybe the kid has an older acquaintance, friend of a sibling, older teenager who's pretty good at language and could help in that proofreading process so that that final version they produce will be as close to what we would generally consider correct or standard usage.

Those are a few ideas. All in all, be happy about having bilingual children because that will be the greatest gift. I hope they'll look back and just say, I am so glad that my parents made me speak German to them my whole childhood because now I can. And you've got a bigger, more well developed neural network because of it.

Julie Walker: Denise, you mentioned that you are the director of our online classes, and so one of our listeners has a question, and I thought, who better to answer it than you, because it's a little tricky one, and it's about online classes. All right, here we go. Does IEW consider making online classes with theme-based books.

Denise Kelley: No.

Julie Walker: No.

Andrew Pudewa: No.

Julie Walker: And, just the reason for that, I know the answer to that. We really appreciate having our online instructors have the benefit of having the students watch and learn Andrew as their teacher and then the online instructors come alongside. And without those *Structure and Style for Students* videos, there would be a lot lost in translation. So thing books don't have that same instruction.

Andrew Pudewa: And also they have a lot of time during the class meetings to talk to the kids and talk about grammar stuff and answer questions and do all of that really important stuff. If they had to kind of introduce that lesson from the theme-based book, that would take

most of the time. And it wouldn't nearly be as efficient. And we wouldn't get as good of results. That would be my thought.

Denise Kelley: Yeah. So what I would add to that is our online classes are video driven. And those are the videos that you've made, and we haven't done that with theme-based books.

Andrew Pudewa: And it saves all of your teachers from having to find all the good jokes.

Denise Kelley: That's true.

Julie Walker: That's true. Andrew's got all the jokes. Part two of the question is, "will there be online 3B classes?"

Denise Kelley: Eventually there will be a 3B online class.

Julie Walker: And then the final question, this is all, all packed into online classes with one of our listeners. Thank you. These are great questions. "There are not many high school writing classes. Would you consider just an essay writing online class?"

Denise Kelley: We have essay writing in our online classes. We're not going to, we wouldn't make an online class that would just teach essay writing because We do that so well, and we teach a lot of other things in that same class. So our B leading up into our C, which is our high school classes, teaches essay writing.

Andrew Pudewa: I would add in one little thing just so people understand. We are extremely careful about the people that we have and the training and the support and the experience levels they have. We could probably get lots more students if we just hired people who are kind of interested in the job. But we don't want that.

So we're extremely protective of the quality of the experience for the students. So that's really something of great value that people get when they pay for the online class. It's not a warm body. It's not a random person. It's not someone we recruited. Hey, could you fill a slot and teach these classes?

We don't do that that way. And so, that's why our numbers are still not small, but they're moderate. We're not trying to make it thousands of kids doing this. That would gradually undermine the excellence of what we're trying to

Denise Kelley: Yep. We vet our teachers very, very carefully. Cream of the crop.

Julie Walker: Thank you, Denise. Andrew, we have one more question

Cynthia Lescault: Happy Birthday

Andrew Pudewa: Oh, thank you. Thank you.

Cynthia Lescault: So my name is Cynthia Lescault, and I live outside of Raleigh, North Carolina, and I am part of the customer service team, and I get the great privilege of also

working on the event team as the assistant event coordinator, exhibitor, and part of all the other questions I get to answer.

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah. And that's, there's a lot to do on this event coordination side.

Cynthia Lescault: Yes.

Andrew Pudewa: I appreciate it. You helped me not have to be in two places at the same time.

Cynthia Lescault: I try really hard. So, Since we're coming to the conclusion, and in any good conclusion, we ask the most significant question, and why? So I have been tasked with the most academic question that could be asked today.

Andrew Pudewa: Okay. Well, shoot.

Cynthia Lescault: What kind of birthday cake does Andrew have on his healthy diet?

Andrew Pudewa: I'm not sure who thought this was the most significant question. But I will be quite honest, I generally don't like cake. I suppose there are some cakes I would eat, to be polite to whoever made the cake. But if I were going to do something like that, I would just prefer some ice cream with a candle on the top.

But it would have to be the right kind of ice cream, probably a organic milk, if possible, with a candle. A natural sweetener, and it would be unfortunately really expensive, so I don't eat much ice cream. What else would I like? I once saw a kid who asked for a steak, a meat cake for their birthday. And the parents, they piled up some steaks with bacon in the middle. And melted butter over the top, and it was like a total carnivore cake, and I thought that's a good idea. But I have never experienced that, and you don't have to worry about doing that for me.

Cynthia Lescault: So I don't have to add that to one of my events.

Andrew Pudewa: No, actually, I'm just happy eating kind of low key healthy. My grandson makes cookies once in a while. But I think they are sweetened with honey.

Cynthia Lescault: Well, thank you for asking that, answering the most significant question.

Julie Walker: Thank you,

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah, I've obviously got some reading to do here. Thank you all.

Julie Walker: Thanks for being here. Thank you.