**A Lecture on Writing Education**

Dear parents and students, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls,

This is Dr. Joe greeting our WeChatting friends with hails. Hello, hello, hello! Welcome aboard! Before I try to answer the questions presented by our anxious audience, let’s visualize this. It’s 11 o’clock of Sunday night, but Jason, a ninth grader of an elite magnet school in Houston, Texas, is agonizing over a writing assignment—a brief academic discussion of John J. Pershing’s leadership in World War I—which is due on Monday morning. Jason loves reading, and he could devour ten popular novels in a week. The makes him a smooth user of street-smart jargon, and he loves to write the dialogues full of buzz words between chums. But wait a minute, an old-fashioned G.I. Joe called Pershing? And references and citations required? Are you kidding me! Jason, the pop book guy in school, was simply not born for this. He has struggled for this Pershing fella for two weeks, but the sentences in the piece still sound like the colloquial words by Junior from *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian.* What can he do? Dad and mom are also sleepless with nervous minds on the score Jason might face.

To face the reality, many parents are worried about their children, from first graders to high school seniors, when facing the volatile monster of writing. This syndrome can certainly torture Janet from grade 7 or Monica of grade 5; only they might face the different problems like “writing fiction in a non-fiction tone” or “describing a lovely field trip in a loose style of recording accounting entries.” The apprehension is firmly founded, isn’t it? Well, it doesn’t have to be like that. With proper training, these boys and girls can definitely become mature writers standing out for their ages.

In fact, the first question people often ask is: “Can a student be trained to be a good writer?” Or as some parents might render it: “Do I still need to train my kid’s writing if he loves books like he does arcade games?” The crystal-clear answers are “Yes!” and “Yes!” In the next one hour or so, I will try my best to answer the various questions and concerns from the eager parents and students and share with you, the audience members, my years of experiences of teaching writing and communication.

Question1:

My child has very strong self-esteem so that he would not allow parents to offer opinions and comments on his writings. What can I do?

It is not unusual for the parents to face the embarrassment of doubtful children. The solution depends on your English reading/writing level as well as your communicating ability. If you are a professor of English writing, more than likely, your kids will listen to your words. If you barely understand what they write, you probably won’t bother making comments. Most clashes happen when you think you have found the blemishes in their essays and they don’t think that’s the case. If you have a really stubborn child who won’t allow you any opportunity of criticism, you can let him turn in his writing to the English teacher in his school. If the teacher’s commenting words are negative, he would realize his dad or mom is capable of judging works of writing. Next time he would sit down and discuss with you about his stories. Problem solved! If, however, his school teacher is too busy to provide comments for your darling kid or it is not school work at all, you can submit it to Dr. Joe for professional opinions. If the same issues as you point out are found, he probably will give in next time when you try to offer your two cents. What if what you think wrong proves not the case and he refuses your any kind of opinions in the future? What if he still won’t allow you any room of critique even if his writing is proven problematic? Then you should send him to an interpersonal communication boot camp which Dr. Joe can also help because your kid’s issue is not on his pen tip, but in his heart.

Question 2:

If my child misses any class, can he still make up for the loss?

Certainly. Every enrolled student will receive emailed class audio recording and PowerPoint slides after the class meeting.

Question 3:

My child doesn’t seem to have much interest in writing. What can I do?

Most students don’t show interest in writing simply because they don’t have fun in it. In Dr. Joe’s writing classes, on the other hand, they enjoy the class exercises and interactive activities, like author guess, in-class quiz, sentence exercise, short paragraph exercise, and story scene discussion. Each and every single student in a class is fully engaged in knowledge and skills charged learning process. In fact before they realize it, the class time is already up. Therefore our fellows don’t feel bored in the class. Instead, they can’t wait for the next meeting which comes in a week. So the answer to this question is: “Entrust your kids to the professional hands.”

Question 4:

I want my kids to study with you, but some parents say the kids will know how to write naturally after they read enough books. What do you think?

Can I ask some questions first? Do you send your swimming kids to a swimming club so they get the best training or you simply think they can watch Michael Phelps on YouTube every day and practice themselves to get the gold medals? Do you drive your young pianist to a renowned teacher so he can someday pass the Piano Grade 8 exams or you show him the Arthur Rubinstein DVDs expecting he becomes one of the great naturally? If your answer is that you want your kid to train with the best swimming coach and piano teacher, why in heaven do you trust your young and playful child can make himself a good writer without proper training with an experienced writing educator? Let me tell you this: When letting loose your beloved one in the jungle of tons of unknown books without finding him a mentor and advisor, you are risking your child’s future betting a game you can’t afford to lose! Another tip I want to share with you without charging you a penny: Class competition, peer pressure (in the positive sense), and learning dynamics in Dr. Joe’s class will boost your kid’s writing more effectively. You make the judgment.

Question 5:

Do grade 6 students need to train following the rules of expository, narrative, descriptive and persuasive writings or they can also improve skills by writing journals and titled articles?

For the young students like sixth-graders, they don’t need to wrestle with the complicated concepts of expository or narrative or any others. We teach them the specific writing skills and train them with titled writing exercises including hidden theoretical factors so they won’t be bound by the unnecessary armor and they can play the game of writing with grace, beauty and freedom. When they grow older, we will gradually add some theories so they can use them as weapons of study.

Question 6:

How do we guide the younger kids so that they start to love writing?

Let them watch quality movies and TV shows and read great books for their age. Then tell them the movies and shows are enjoyable because they are written well. You can also find some same-age friends for them and let them playing writing games together. Of course, enrolling your kids in Dr. Joe’s writing classes will certainly open a door of group learning fun.

Question 7:

How can I catch the keys to write a good essay?

Get involved in our writing classes so we can give you one key after another to open the very many different treasure boxes. A good essay is too general a topic and thus you can find tons of unique keys for various good essays. It’s simply a mission impossible for this short lecture to answer this encyclopedia-sized question.

Question 8:

How to teach kids to collect and prepare topics for writing?

Keep a good notebook where they can save their sparkling ideas whenever they have them. They can put some words under those topic ideas once they have a few minutes of free time. In the long run, the topics they collect will satisfy many of their writing needs.

Question 9:

Does weekly journal help the writing skills? How to make it a meaningful and fun thing to do?

Absolutely. Write about what really excites you and post the journals on Dr. Joe’s writing forum so the teachers, parents and students can all make cool comments.