

## Teaching Grammar in Context: The Beauty of the Five-Minute Lesson

*“Teaching writing and teaching grammar must be inseparably connected.”*

Constance Weaver, *Grammar to Enrich & Enhance Writing* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2008)

### Weaver’s 12 Principles

1. Teaching grammar divorced from writing doesn’t strengthen writing and therefore wastes time.
2. Few grammatical terms are actually needed to discuss writing.
3. Sophisticated grammar is fostered in literacy-rich and language-rich environment.
4. Grammar instruction for writing should build on students’ developmental readiness.
5. Grammar options are best expanded through reading and in conjunction with writing.
6. Grammar conventions taught in isolation seldom transfer to writing.
7. Marking corrections on students’ papers does little good.
8. Grammar conventions are applied most readily when taught in conjunction with editing.
9. Instruction in conventional editing skills is important for all students but must honor their home language or dialect.
10. Progress may involve new kinds of errors as students try to apply new writing skills.
11. Grammar instruction should be included during various phases of writing.
12. More research is needed on effective ways of teaching grammar to strengthen writing.

### Charlotte Mason Parallels

Weaver’s principles coincide with many of Charlotte Mason’s because they are based on

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

“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).

### Charlotte Mason Notes

“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

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: