

# ESSENTIAL, EFFICIENT AND ENCOURAGING EDUCATION

*Copies of overheads can be found at*  
[www.welltrainedmind.com/convention.php](http://www.welltrainedmind.com/convention.php)



JESSIE WISE

## I. Stories

1. My education
2. Educating my children

## II. Essential Education

### The Method of Classical Education

- **First**, the child works to master basic skills.
- **Next**, the child learns to reason.
- **Then**, he learns to express himself and pursue a special interest.

*Early grades* should focus on these skills:

1. Read what is printed on a page.
2. Comprehend what is read.
3. Speak standard English clearly and correctly.
4. Communicate in writing using proper grammar, spelling, and word meanings.
5. Learn addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

*These are the tools to communicate creativity.*

Repetition for mastery of skills lays the foundation for understanding and expression as the child matures.

*Middle grades should focus on:*

1. Acquiring more content and continuing basic skills.
2. Reasoning about content- thinking through an argument.
3. Doing critical thinking exercises and taking a logic course.

*Upper grades (high school) should focus on self-expression:*

1. Thinking through his/her own ideas.
2. Expressing ideas verbally.
3. Writing about ideas.

### III. Efficient Education

Education that is *not* Efficient:

1. Teaches concepts to young children for which they are not ready.
2. Spends too much time re-teaching skills the older child should have mastered earlier.
3. Promotes critical thinking for children who are too immature to do it.
4. Pushes creativity too early- taking time from learning basic skills.

“Efficient” means “ highly effective and productive.”

*Efficient Education for the young child:*

1. Gives the child tools for gaining information for himself –this prepares him for a life-time of **self-education**.
2. Returns to reading instruction based on the sounds letters represent.
3. Incorporates repetition to teach young children the necessary basic skills.
4. Provides structure in both content and time management
5. Sets reasonable goals and requires the child to meet them.
6. Gives the child correct models from which to work.
7. Does not value creativity over accuracy.
8. Corrects work so the child forms accurate habits
9. Believes that mature adults should make many decisions for the immature child.

Efficient Education for the middle school child:

1. Requires a change in focus.
1. Teaches the child critical thinking and logic.
1. Applies critical thinking and logic to writing.
1. Helps him understand cause and effect in life.

Efficient Education for the high-school student:

1. Teaches the high-school student to express himself persuasively with WORDS.
  - A. By studying literature.
  - B. By thinking about history.
  - C. By practicing the skills of spoken and written communication.

## IV. ENCOURAGING EDUCATION

### A. Encouragement

1. Consists of more than just saying words.
2. Raises a child's confidence to do what is difficult.
3. Needs an external agent (you).
4. Does what is best for the child, even if he is not happy or excited about it. "Feeling good" at the moment is a poor substitute for the lasting satisfaction of truly learning.

### B. Correction

1. Correction is *positive* when it affirms that the child can correct his mistakes and successfully complete a task.
2. Instructor should be sensitive to frustration.
3. Instructor should offer patient, frequent, and consistent help.

### C. Discouragement can come:

1. When the student is pushed too quickly.
2. Pushed beyond his ability.
3. When a child is belittled.
4. When you speak sarcastically to the child.

#### D. Success

1. Assume an expectation of the child's success.
2. Work to train habits that lead to success.
3. Encourage the child on the way to success.
4. Praise *effort* and *diligence* and *attitude* and *progress*—no matter how small!

#### V. Conclusion

Our goal is to provide our children with *essential*, *efficient*, and *encouraging* education

We train children in the essential skills.

We require children to use their growing abilities efficiently.

We patiently encourage them to maturity and excellence.

## JESSIE WISES' S CONTACT INFORMATION

The Well-Trained Mind  
*A Guide to Classical Education at Home*

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