



Charlotte Mason: A Liberal Education for All

with Jason Barney

Lecture 10: Narration and the Habit of Attention

Outline:

Narration

- Narration is a holistic way of learning, a centerpiece of learning.
- Narration trains students in the habit of attention, focus.
 - It is the act of knowing that we are looking for.
 - We recognize attention deficit more because it is becoming more of a problem.
- Attention is the one habit to rule them all. This is the habit that makes a scholar.
- What habits are our lessons and modern curricula and hoops training students in?
- John Milton Gregory writes how the learner must attend with interested to the truth that he would know or learn. Attention is the master habit by which all learning takes place.
- We are trying to help our students pursue excellence. We can't do that if we don't spend time training our **students** on how to focus. Narration helps a student to do this.
 - When the brain is overstimulated and distracted habitually, our focus ability diminishes.
- The reason why it is so important to focus intensely on the task at hand while avoiding distraction is because this is the only way to isolate the relevant neural circuit enough to trigger useful myelination.
 - If we want to build the complex language and mathematical skills, we need to get rid of distractions and help them focus specifically on the skill to be mastered here.
- A single reading is a condition insisted upon. Otherwise we will put off the habit of attention.
 - There is a time and place for review, but consider what your teaching practices trains your students in.
- Where is the joy and excitement in learning?
 - What do we enjoy the most? People were most happy and joyful and least depressed when they were at work, when they were engaged in some meaningful activity that requires their full focus.



- People enjoy a challenge that they find meaningful that absorbs their whole focus. We were made for the challenge.
- When you get fully focused in on something you experience joy.
- We want to create an atmosphere where learning new things is enjoyable.
- In narration a student gets lost in the flow of thought.

Narration and other habits:

- Wonder
 - All philosophy begins in wonder (Plato).
 - We want to cultivate imagination in a young child. Narration gets a child fully involved in their storybooks.
- Deep Reading
 - Deep reading is so powerful, it is the heart of our classical education curriculum.
 - We want them to get lost in challenging and rich books. This was the historical understanding of grammar.
- Discussing Great Texts
 - We need the ability to have an important conversation over important matters.
- Fluent Long Form Speech
 - This is the baseline habit of rhetoric.
 - They need many opportunities to speak in front of others in long form, narration gives these opportunities.