



## David Hicks: Commentary on Hospitality, Education History, and Classical Architecture

### Lesson 3: Key Figures in Education History

#### Outline:

Do you have any thoughts on the works of E. D. Hirsch?

- David regards E. D. Hirsch as a very important voice in our times and his work at the Core Knowledge Foundation.
- In fact, David's is involved in launching international core knowledge schools.
  - These schools rely on core texts that build from kindergarten.
  - The idea is that they will enter a world in which they know something and share those things in common with one another.
- David shares his views on a perspective of American history that portrays the experiment much like the Bible reads, as a protracted and unrequited love story.
- He goes on to point out how our unhealthy engagement with science and technology and a mechanistic worldview accelerates the division of people across various orientations and creates warfare in its wake.
  - If anything, the American story reveals the horrid price paid for being deeply divided as a people.
  - The high points of our civilization are the times when we have transcended our differences and forgiven one another.

Did you ever meet Mortimer Adler?

- Shortly after *Norms* was published, David met Adler while speaking at a conference in Wisconsin.
- He comments on the overlap of *paideia* as a Greek concept between culture and education in their writing projects at the time.
  - Historically, Greek schools were instituted to teach the culture.
  - Ironically, it is the culture today that instructs students, largely through our devices.
  - Namely, modern theory coming out of the Academy is tested out on students in schools and teachers are expected to produce results without common sense training.
  - What is driving the social sciences today is the idea of a breakthrough theory of how people learn.



- This thinking can be summed up in saying, “We murder to dissect,” the idea that what we want to study we first reduce into parts so that the thing is no longer there.

How would you summarize the history of education?

- David begins answering this question by first describing how the Oxford system works and the advice he was given to focus one of his exam questions on what part of education most interested him.
- He shares his interest in the idea that during the Renaissance, classical civilization was rediscovered and therefore civilization was reborn.
- He points to the fact that the ancient world had much to teach them about what had been lost.
  - As a result of individuals reading ancient texts, Christianity regained the beauty of man created in the image and likeness of God.
- There is a feeling that that moment has arrived again in education.
  - It is time to bring the past to life again and rediscover our heritage in both its Judeo and classical sense and express it through our own sensibilities and experience of the modern world.
- The dominant view of modern education is that the past “got it wrong” and “we’re going to rewrite it and get it right.”
  - It is an arrogant, immature, and tragic attitude carried over into the Academy.
  - The further we go with this mindset, the more we lose touch with the past.
- In overcoming this obstacle, David collaborates with his brother on several books to:
  - restore a little piece of the past to young people
  - restore the riches of ancient civilizations and of the Renaissance
  - get them excited about life and asking the important and interesting questions
- We all get one shot at education and if it is not steeped in the riches of the past and core knowledge, we will suffer for a lack of this knowledge.