



Disability and Classical Education: Student Formation in Keeping with Our Common Humanity with Dr. Amy Richards

Lecture 6: Think Big, Start Small: First Steps for Classrooms and Schools

Outline:

Think Big, Start Small: First Steps for Classrooms and Schools

- Think Big:
 - Put on your distance lenses and look toward the human telos and the ways in which it places us within the great economy.
 - Think big about the kinds of students you would like your school to be able to welcome given the school that it is.
 - What kinds of programs do you dream about being able to offer?
 - What siblings of current students would you dearly love to be able to support?
 - What would be needed in terms of resources, training, rethinking practices, and conversion of heart to be able to do so?
- Be prepared to respond to the two kinds of objections heard most frequently from schools about the feasibility of such welcome.
 - Students with disabilities and learning differences will disrupt the learning of normal students.
 - First response (Simply Classical by Cheryl Swope) should be that the humanity of the child with special needs must determine the education he receives.
 - If we have the anthropology right, the desire for universal doxology will follow naturally.
 - In making adjustments that are intended to help a particular student, the entire class becomes a more humane, a more human and more doxological environment.
 - A school simply does not have the resources for certain kinds of students to succeed or thrive.
 - It is important to know our limits so as not to create untenable situations that will end up doing harm.
 - Part of our vocation as classical schools is to work towards expanding our ability to offer genuine welcome to children with a variety of ways of being in the world, with a variety of vocations.



- Start Small
 - Start with small, manageable steps towards universal design, telic attention, and truly doxological classrooms that welcome all kinds of learners.
 - Second, small is the secret to special education. Limit the number of students with whom we are working at a time.
 - Start small by starting with the present. Ask how you might be able to create order to allow you to love the students who are already with you better.
 - Start with the anthropology audit. Attend to the physical environment.
 - Make a sensory corner in your classroom.
 - Start small by attending to sound.
 - Start small by shifting culture.
 - Talk about telic attention.
 - Start small by finding resources.
 - Resource: Welcoming Children with Special Needs, Empowering Christian Special Education through Purpose, Policies, and Procedures
 - Start small by learning the lingo (IEPs).
 - Start small by starting systems (documentation).
 - Start small by starting young (Search and Teach is a kind of early intervention).
 - Start small by not reinventing the wheel.
 - Start small by staying small.