



Introduction to Classical Education

with Dr. Christopher Perrin

Lesson 10: The Developing Models of Classical Education

Outline:

Theme and Variation in the Renewal of Classical Education

Good Things Grow

- The one and the many, unity and multiplicity.
- Music: The pianist will have to study the great tradition of great pianists and composers. You can't set yourself free and just make great music without reference to those who have gone before you.
- Art: Study those who go before you to find your own art. This is how art grows and makes progress.
- Theology, the Church: There is a progress we make increasing our understanding of who God is. We study the past to know ourselves better and to make additional progress in the present.
- People: People grow and mature. I change, but I remain the same person.

Good Reasons for Change

- New circumstances
- Geography, climate
- Language: We no longer instruct in Latin.
- Politics, Economy, Industry
- Discovered Knowledge
- New technology: When the printing press was discovered, education changed. Students began to use books rather than copying the great works into their own notebooks. Computer, laptops, internet are new technologies.

How can something change and yet remain the same?

- Purpose, Goal
- Standards, Principles: The seven liberal arts were consistent thematic arts. The commitment to study the great ideas of humanities become a persisting idea for what education is.
- Motive: The acquisition of wisdom (knowing Christ in all his ways) and virtue have always been the traditional ends of education.

ACCS: Association of Classical and Christian Schools

- Classical Christian education uses methods and content that develop thinking, articulate, well-rounded graduates.



- Classical, Christian schools provide the best possible education to help every child reach their God-given potential.
 - **Age-specific K-12 learning** (following God-given strengths at each stage of growth)
 - **Time-tested method and content** (defining facts, orderly organization, persuasive way to present acquired material)
 - **Christ-centered curriculum** (all knowledge is interrelated and points back to God the Creator; biblical standards of conduct, parental responsibility)
 - **Academically rigorous** (high expectations for student learning; students who love the subjects their teachers love and follow their example)
 - **Nurturing community** (shared commitment for teaching children to love learning and growing in godliness; students know they are loved; respect for their parents and teachers)

The Circe Institute

- Classical education is the cultivation of wisdom and virtue by nourishing the soul on truth, goodness, and beauty by means of the seven liberal arts and the four sciences, so that, in Christ, the student is enabled to be better known, glorify and enjoy God.
- We believe there are a few common and controlling ideas that set classical education.
 - First, classical educators have a high view of humanity
 - Second, classical educators are logocentric
 - Third, classical educators take responsibility for the western tradition
 - Fourth, classical educators teach in light of the forgoing elements, leading to an emphasis on language (the trivium), mathematics (the quadrivium), and modes of teaching, governance, and assessment that support the rich goals of education.
- Other common features of the classical education include:
 - The use of classical books and art,
 - A general preference for great art, music, and literature
 - An integrated curriculum
 - And idea-focused teaching

Society for Classical Learning (no longer on their website)

- The Society of Classical Learning has existed since the mid-1990s to facilitate and encourage thinking and discussion among professionals associated with Christ-centered education in the liberal arts tradition.
- Current mission of the SCL: SCL exists to help your school thrive.

Classical Christian Education (Dictionary style definition)



- CCE is a **traditional** approach to education rooted in western civilization and culture, developed by the church, grounded in piety and governed by theology, employing the historic **curriculum** and **pedagogy** of the seven **liberal arts** in order to cultivate men and women characterized by **wisdom, virtue, and eloquence**.
- CCE employs the seven **liberal arts** and the **great books** in order to **cultivate** men and women characterized by **wisdom, virtue and eloquence**.
- CCE employs the seven **liberal arts** and the **great books**.

Truth, Goodness, and Beauty

- The emergence and growth/development of classical education in the United States roughly follows the concepts of truth, goodness, and beauty.
- **Truth: 1981 (The Trivium Arts, Stages):** Douglas Wilson wrote *Recovering Lost Tools of Learning* as an exposition of Sayers' essay. We needed to implement the arts (curriculum of liberal arts particularly the verbal arts of grammar, logic, and rhetoric).
 - The arts correspond to the stages of learning. Each of those arts give insight into pedagogical approaches.
- **Goodness: 2000 (Community, Virtue):** As many school were maturing, we began to realize that the arts could only thrive in rich soil of loving community (1 Corinthians 13, If we speak in tongues, but have not love we profit nothing).
 - If we teach logic without love, we are in danger of creating more clever devils (Lewis).
 - We should be developing warm Christian community.
 - We need to cultivate virtues in our students, which are love, humility, temperance, fortitude, industry, perseverance (intellectual, student virtues)
- **Beauty: 2009 (Embodied Ideals):** With the publication of *Desiring the Kingdom* Smith by James K.A. we began to realize that we need to pay attention to how schools are beautiful.
 - Our ideals can be embodied for all 5 senses.
 - We have to appeal to affections by all means (senses) because this shapes the hearts and desires of what our students will love.
 - How the school is decorated
 - Various liturgies of our day

Blind Men and the Elephant

- We can fall prey to the Fallacy of Generalizing, which is easy to do and almost impossible to avoid.
- You might see a classical school and think that is what classical education is.
- Classical education is deep and wide and has a number of facets. We really can't understand it in a thirty minute lecture or one brief visit.



Theme and Variation (Regardless of the Flavor, Start with Really Good Ice Cream)

- Greek Paideia
- Roman Educatio
- Early Medieval Liberal Arts
- Medieval University
- Renaissance Ad Fontes (Rhetoric)
- 19th Century Academics

Different Settings for Classical Schools (Setting:Curriculum)

- Catechetical School: Grammar, Scripture
- Homeschool: Grammar, Scripture, Literature
- Small Shop: Discrete Subjects such as Grammar, Rhetoric, Dialectic
- Palace School: Trivium, Quadrivium, Literature, Scripture
- Cathedral School: Trivium, Quadrivium, Literature, Scripture
- Monastic School: Trivium, Quadrivium, Literature, Scripture
- Parish School: Trivium, Quadrivium, Literature, Scripture
- Town School: Trivium, Quadrivium, Literature, Scripture
- University: Trivium, Quadrivium, Literature, Scripture, Philosophy, Theology, Medicine, Law

Historical Flavors

- Consistent Anthropology
- Consistent Purpose, Goal, Motive, Standard
- Variety of Settings
- Thematic though varying curricula
- Evolving but thematic pedagogy
- Evolving but thematic embodiments
- Natural variation of instructional language
- Consistent study of Latin and Greek language and literature

Contemporary Theme and Variation

- Prep School + Trivium + Trivium Stages
- Prep School + Trivium + Quadrivium + Trivium + Stages + Virtue Education
- Prep School + Integrated Liberal Arts + Liturgical Community
- Integrated Liberal Arts + Liturgical Community + Trivium Stages
- Charlotte Mason Influence

Contemporary Configurations

- Homeschools
- Homeschool co-ops
- Cottage Schools
- UMS Schools – University Model Schools



- Parish/Church Schools
- Private schools
- Paidea Public Schools - Inspired by Mortimer Adler, incorporating pedagogies of didactic and seminar
- Core Knowledge Schools – Inspired by E.D. Hirsh, *The Schools We Have and Why We Don't Need Them*
- Classical Charter Schools – They are focused on adopting great books, liberal arts, and virtue education.

Various Themes that Find Expressions of Classical Education

- Trivium Arts/Quadrivium Arts: There was a bigger focus on the recovery of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. After about 15 years there was a renewed focus on the recovery of the quadrivium arts.
- Trivium Stages: There was a focus on stages of learning that correspond with the teaching of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. This could be insightful for organizing how we teach as students grow.
 - Some of these schools could have even been called trivium based schools.
- Integration of Arts & Learning: We cannot keep subject in sealed silos. There is a unity in a web of knowledge that finds coherence in Christ the Logos, who holds all things together.
- Liturgical Community and Embodiment
- Educational Wonder (PGMAPT): The ideas that wonder is an important part of the educational enterprise.
- Blended together: Learning stages, Integration, Community, Wonder, Virtue
- Virtue is being recovered as well as an important theme.
- A lot of charter schools are holding truth, goodness, and beauty as transcendental realities.
- These important elements mix together in various ways, all finding coherence in Christ the Logos.

Prep School Model

- The school preparing students to go to college.
- Prep schools tend to be focused on academic rigor, and that are preparing students to do well in college. Usually these include sports and clubs.
- A prep school tends to view subjects as isolated subjects. The teacher themselves are not master of all of the arts. The education that is offered tends to be segmented rather than integrated.
- There is room for a lot of different combinations, but the reality is that there are schools that tend to privilege some elements over others in different combinations.

Central and Peripheral Elements

- What is central and what is peripheral?



- What is central to your school or homeschool?
- What is intermediary? What is on the outside?
- At a Christian school, it should refer to Christ being at the center of the school.

What would your bubble map look like?

- What would your style school look like?
- There are some different styles. What a classical school looks like in China is different from what a classical school looks like in Texas.
- Friendship Bread: A good culture
 - You can bake the same bread using the same culture as your friend, who gave you the culture. You can bake a lovely loaf of bread knowing you are sharing something. You can add different seasonings and spices, but in another important way you have the same DNA.

One Dough, One Culture

- One dough, varying spices
- One goal, motive, standard, curriculum
- Varying settings, emphases, sequencing, electives, traditions, extra-curricular
- We are one and various
- Thematic, principle/purpose-based growth should continue