



## The Principles of Classical Pedagogy

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### Lesson 12: Scholé and Contemplation (Restful Learning)

#### Outline:

##### Recovering a School of Scholé

- Aristotle's Politics: Undistracted time to study the things that are most worthwhile, usually with good friends, usually in a beautiful place, usually with good food and drink.
- We need to cultivate this in our own lives and for our students.
- This is a principal of restful or contemplative learning. We have to master some things slowly.
- The world scholé is the root word for our English word school. There isn't a lot of scholé in our schools anymore.
- Scholé has to do what human beings are for (anthropology) at a very deep level. Humans are meant for knowing what is true, good, and beautiful.
  - All humans desire to know (Aristotle).
  - Knowledge comes through contemplating, not just active learning.
  - There needs to be a sabbatical pattern in our teaching (1 unit out of 7, 5 minute of 35).

##### Going Back to Go Forward

- Sometimes when we have lost our way, the quickest way forward is to return home.
- Every revolution is a restoration of something important and perennial.
- In this age of distraction we have nearly forgotten scholé.

##### What is Most Needed Today, Seven Survival Skills

- Seven Survival Skills from Tony Wagner, *Global Education Gap*
  - Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
  - Collaboration Across Networks and Leading by Influence
  - Agility and Adaptability
  - Initiative and Entrepreneurialism
  - Effective Oral and Written Communication
  - Accessing and Analyzing Information
  - **Curiosity and Imagination** – How do we acquire curiosity and imagination? Give ourselves time to be curious and imagine. Set aside ordered space and time.



- We need to know how to think, to reason, analyze, weigh evidence, problem solve, and to communicate effectively. These are essential survival skills for all of us. The longer our children are in school, the less curious they become. (Wagner)
- These are the traditional desirable outcomes of a liberal arts education.
- Scholé is undistracted time to be at wonder.

## Josef Pieper, Leisure the Basis of Culture

- Enjoying being at wonder at the things that are true, good, and beautiful (the deepest realities of the Cosmos).

## Scholé, Pieper

- The disposition of receptive understanding, contemplative beholding and immersion in the real.
  - This is an open hand that receives understanding as a gift (rather than grasping hand).
- Only someone who has lost the spiritual power to be at leisure can be bored.
- Total world of work vs. scholé (receptive understanding).
  - Our Western conception of work has swallowed up scholé.
- Scholé is a work of a different kind: harder than active work.
- The Greek conception of scholé, to “do” leisure/scholé: (*scholén agein*).
  - There is a truth that comes through a contemplative beholding.
  - Open the hands of your mind to receive understanding as a gift.

## What is it?

- Psalms 27: David says, “One thing that I seek is to dwell in the temple of the Lord and to gaze upon his beauty all the days of my life.”
  - Is gazing and dwelling learning?
  - Look into something until you see.
  - Stay with something long enough until it reveals itself to you.
- Psalm 1: The blessed man meditates day and night.
- 2 Corinthians 3: We are transformed into the image of Christ, as we gaze on Christ with unveiled faces, transformed into that image of Christ with ever increasing glory.
  - The Christian is to be contemplating Christ, and becomes like Christ over time.
  - Medieval maxim: We become like that which we behold.
- Christ spent times in the mountains and wilderness in prayer and fasting for 40 days.
- To look at or view with continued attention; observe to study thoughtfully.
- To consider thoroughly; think fully or deeply about.



- The world contemplation means “in the temple”. The temple was a sacred place set aside for a receptive understanding.
- Ratio and Intellectus
  - Ratio is the thoughtful collecting more active part of learning.
  - Intellectus refers to a more contemplative part.
  - We need both of these in harmony with one another.
- Do we have opportunities for intellectual learning as well as rational learning?

## School of Scholé: School of Wonder

- *A-scholé* meant not being at leisure, or working.
- The Romans used *otium* for rest. *Negotium* meant a denial of rest, or business.
- The Greek and Romans elevated the restful part of life.
- Contemplation, conversation, reflection, leisure, rest.
- Bonum Utile – Bonum Commune

Bonum Utile	Bonum Commune
Work	Leisure/Freedom
Training	Education
Power	Wonder/Joy/Celebration
Means	Ends
Ratio	Intellectus
Head	Chest
Useful	Blessed
World: Raw Materials	Creation to be enjoyed
Functionary	Creator
Worker	Lover
All self-explanatory	The whole → soul
Shrunken soul	Full, charged soul
Necessary	Sufficient
Monotony	Adventure

## Sister Concepts

- Synonyms: Scholé, Otium, Leisure, Reflection, Focus, Study, Rest, Solitude, Festival, Friendship, **Admiration**
- **Antonyms:** Multi-tasking, Frenzy, Bustle, Activity, Busy-ness, Anxiety, Amusement, Distraction, Idleness, Boredom
- There is a lot of amusement but not actual inspiration.
- You will consider what you desire.
- Don't just do something, stand there!



## PGMAPT

- Education is rooted in piety and leads to wisdom through gymnastic, music, and the seven liberal arts.
- Philosophy and Theology are capstone studies.
- Wonder → Admiration → Wisdom
  - This is a central process as we do this over and over again.
  - Teachers are wonder workers, muses, who provide opportunity for contemplation.

## Why Is It Hard?

- Our world is more like a carnival than a monastery.
- We are drawn to amusement more than music.
- We lack models.
- We lack (or think we lack) opportunity. We allow published materials to rule over us.
  - Include 5 minutes of contemplative teaching and opportunity.
  - Learning to see by drawing (art/science).
- We were educated/raised in and to distraction.

## Know It By Studying it

- What is worth viewing and thinking about deeply?
- Learning involves receiving the blessing of understanding that comes to us as a gift.
- This will give us joy. Joy can come through skills, but joy often comes when we are in a receptive state.
- This is a part of your humanity that you may not have exercised for a good while, but you have a history of contemplation.
  - When was the last time you were mesmerized by something that kept you thinking and discussing?
- Spiritual contemplation/meditation
- Do this in small doses at first.
- Place, Décor, Time: Order space for contemplation. Is the space and time properly ordered?
- Solitude/Friendship (highest good): You have to model this yourself.



*The Incredulity of Saint Thomas, Caravaggio, oil on canvas, 1601-1602*