

ACKNOWLEDGE THE AUDIENCE

I am happy to be here today speaking to you about education. As teachers, you are always seeking to learn to do a better job, and we can share our experiences with one another.

Until recently I was a high school math teacher, helping our headmaster implement a classics program at CCA, Chula Vista. I am co-author of a Christian Latin program, and more importantly, I am a mother of eleven successful children, four of whom I taught myself.

The Problem

I know that you care as much as I do about our students, especially when we see them stating their life goals in some cases as "sitting under a bridge". We very much want to give them the tools of learning.

I. What is Classical Christian Education?

Defined

Simply put, it is a Biblical education using classical methods. It is NOT a humanistic "Great Books" education.

You may wonder what is wrong with a Great Books education. I submit to you that, as Christians, we need to be aware of all of the classical writers of the past, but we do not need to immerse ourselves or our student in humanistic thinking. It is important that we know who Caesar, Aristostle, Plato, Thoreau and Marx were, and what they believed, but it is not necessarily or advisable to study each

of them for an extended period of time. We need to study writers who have or had an understanding of God and His character such as Francis Shaeffer, C.S. Lewis and others.

So, a classical Christian education is not an indepth study of humanistic writers; it includes a cursory glance at them, but it concentrates on Truth.

We begin with God, not with human beings. Since all knowledge emanates from God, we want to learn more about Him and His nature and His creation.

The goal of all education is to prepare children for adult life, not to entertain them as they grow up, nor to babysit them. We want them to be **THINK, to KNOW RIGHT FROM WRONG, and to BE ABLE TO TEACH THEMSELVES.**

II. The Classical Method vs. the Modern Method

In modern times the classical method was described in detail by Dorothy Sayers in the "lost tools of learning" and it is available on the internet. I am going to explain it to you now.

The classical method is designed around the nature of a child as he matures. It is called **the Trivium** and it is broken down into three stages: grammar, logic, and rhetoric.

Some people find it easier to picture if they think of a computer system: First, you have Data Input, and then Processing, and finally, Data Output.

You teach across the curriculum, not breaking things into subjects any more than necessary. Integrate each subject and show the connections between subjects. Use primary sources when possible.

Examples of teaching across the curriculum might include teaching the root words for math terms in math class.

Muto means *change* in Latin, so the *commutative* property has to do with changing the order of addends and factors.

In history we learn more than facts; we learn Biblical principles; we study the morality of each time period. In Latin, we also include geography, culture and history.

In contrast, modern education emphasizes inputting facts into the student's mind. There is little understanding of the maturity level of the student. Some modern schools have done such things as assigning second graders essays, expecting junior highers to sit quietly and absorb information without questioning the teacher, and then also to continue only Data Input with juniors and seniors who, by now, should have more choices with their education, assuming some adult responsibilities.

A. Why Logic? To learn to THINK!

to detect fallacies in debates; to recognize false statements when reading the news, watching television

**Fallacies: Lloyd Benson and Dan Quayle – ad hominem
tu quoque – you too!
red herring - true but irrelevant – afterlife (life not fair)**

B. Why Latin?

- 1) Base of English and all Romance languages**
- 2) SAT tests**
- 3) mental discipline**
- 4) medical and technical language**

The inspiration of the Scriptures testifies to the importance of language skills for both comprehending and formulating verbal thought and expression. God has revealed Himself and His plan in words. Words, and the relationship of words, are the basis for ideas, and ideas have consequences in our personal lives and for history. Language skills, therefore, make us more effective in our service to God, and Latin is a powerful and effective vehicle for learning those skills.

Latin has been the most widely used language in all the world's history, and more than any other tongue, it influenced the languages of Europe and the Americas. For developing a powerful vocabulary, Latin is a definite plus.

Latin is equally important for learning the structure of language and grammar. The majority of our nation's founders could read both Latin and Greek, and they were

able to use the English language the way a surgeon uses his scalpel or an artist his paintbrush. Their ability to write and say what they meant with precision is largely because of the skills they learned in their youth from studying these ancient languages. Furthermore, from Latin, a student can branch out into other languages with ease. Studies have shown that students who study Latin tend to perform better in all academic areas. The study habits and memory development gained in the study of Latin are vital factors for success in college and in getting higher scores on the SAT and ACT entrance exams.

C. Why Ethics? In Ethics class, we discuss absolutes and how to make decisions based upon those absolutes. Some topics are listed in your handouts.

Story USNA, Summit Ministries

D. Why Public Speaking? Even if our students are well educated, but they cannot express themselves well, then the battle will be lost. We are in a spiritual and cultural war.

Public Speaking is a very important tool needed to be successful in life. Students' uses of public speaking may be confined to expositions such as a science fair or a presentation of a project. They may even move into even greater places such as debating, conferences, or talks with public officials. As they grow older, their use of these skills will soon become invaluable as they apply for a job, speak at a public hearing, represent themselves or their state to

our government and teach students that were once just like them. The point is, learning the skills to speak well in front of others will benefit your life now and in the future.

E. Why Manners? Manners means consideration for others' feelings. Most Christian students have learned manners at home, but there are always some who have not. Fine points of manners such as telephone manners should be covered, as well as classroom manners, table manners, and introductions.

II. Tools for Learning

A. Data input--- First stage....Kindergarten – 2nd grade Emphasis: Manners and Ethics

Young children enjoy memorizing, singing and sorting things. We can take advantage of this natural ability if we fill their memory banks with lots of interesting facts, set to music when possible. Use their senses; let them experience as much as possible.

This entire first stage of the trivium focuses on training the child and on learning language and its conventions.

Bible: sing their Bible verses with them. Acts 16:31

Coloring: let them color while you teach them a Bible concept

Science: learn the periodic table for chemistry. Make flash cards and drill them.

Senses: smell, touch, feel, hear, observe music, plants, foods.

Math: sort and count buttons, playing cards etc., use manipulatives to illustrate mathematical concepts.

Language: phrases, Latin chants and vocabulary, little songs such as Mica Mica Parva Stella. Names of animals, numbers, sun, moon, stars.

Storytelling: Read a story and ask them to narrate it back to you. Do a great deal of reading aloud to them.

Crafts: use scissors, glue, colored paper, sparkles

Games: oral drills using games. card games

Public Speaking: learn nursery rhymes together and ask for volunteers to stand

and recite them; remind them to be careful to stand tall, smile, look at each member

of the class, and to speak clearly.

Manners: practice introductions, model good and bad eating habits, act out telephone manners using a toy phone.

Ethics: read Aesop's Fables to them; Bible stories.

Model good examples of each before having the student do them.

Older First Stage Students (4th through 6th grades)

Journaling: learn to take notes, make observations.

Research: graph data

B. The second stage of the trivium

Processing –Second Stage.... 7-9th grades

Emphasis: Logic, Ethics, Latin

When does this stage begin? It is often at about 12 years.

As soon as the student becomes argumentative and questions everything. Just like three year olds, they ask "why" for everything. Using the trivium, we can take advantage of this by assigning them work that capitalizes on this. Now your student can "tie" the data he has learned to principles and time periods.

Time Line: Use the timeline for whatever he is studying in history. Either have a class timeline which can be made of colored paper strips and attached to the top of walls with every one hundred year period marked off, or have him/her make a notebook with 50 year periods on each page. Have him/her read biographies and make something to put on the timeline.

Debates: informal ethics discussions on topics such as Absolutes, Islam, War, Abortion, Death Penalty, Stem Cell Research, Gun Control, Dating vs. Courtship, Civil Law and the positives of the Ten Commandments. Either impromptu (**Give a topic and then say "talk"**), or else assign the topic and a few days later divide the class into two teams. Let each team have ten minutes to assemble their notes and then take turns presenting their arguments and refuting their opponents' arguments. If there is time and interest, transition on to formal debates.

Guests: invite guests who have interesting careers and even those whose careers seem less interesting.

Field trips: visit museums, King Tut, beautiful hotel lobbies, hospital tours, tour a submarine, battleship. Travel to anyplace that exposes them to new things. Find out about local college plays and music recitals.

Write short stories: Read *Stone Fox* by John Reynolds Gardiner and write me for his article about "How to Write a Story that's not Boring". (Main character, want, struggle, surprise)

Written reports: Begin with observations; move on to organized reporting; attempt a short term paper.

**C. The third stage of the trivium--- Output....
10th – 12th grades**

Emphasis: Ethics and Public Speaking

Class discussions and informal debates
Formal Public Speaking Class including analyzing others' speeches
Leadership and goal-setting for themselves
Dramatic presentations
Research papers
Current Events discussions
Socratic questioning techniques for all classes
Tutoring younger students, being aware of the learning styles of each age
Formal presentation before graduation
Field trips including travel to Washington DC and/or Europe

III. Implementing it into your school gradually

New schools can integrate the classical method immediately, but most schools will want to make changes gradually. You *can* begin to emphasize the methods immediately which are appropriate for each age, but to actually begin the study of Logic, Latin, Public Speaking, Ethics, and Manners, you may want to introduce them as mini-classes similar to the method used by our school, Calvary Christian Academy in Chula Vista.

We began by using our Electives period to introduce these subjects, and by allowing our teachers to deviate a little from the textbooks and use some of the tools outlined above.

The year was broken into quarters, and in each quarter the Classics teacher taught one class from each of these groups: K-2nd, 3rd – 6th, 7th – 8th, or High School. There were four 30 minute classes per day then, five days a week. The emphasis changed depending on the ages of the students. Here is an example:

Lesson Plans for the First Week. After this week, spend more time on the subjects emphasized.

A. K-2, the Grammar Stage.

Emphasis for this age: Latin, Ethics, Manners.

Monday: Introduction. Manners:

1. Greeting
2. Pass out Rod and Staff books (or reprints)
3. Look at first pictures. Discuss.
4. Gentle Words
5. Mealtime Manners

Tuesday: Latin:

1. Greeting "Salve, Magistra".
2. Teach them the names of animals in Latin.
3. Sing Mica Mica Parva Stella to them and teach them.

Mica, mica, parva stella,
Miror quaenam sis tam bella.
Super terram in caelo,
Alba gemma splendido.
Mica, mica, parva stella,
Miror quaenam sis tam bella

Wednesday: Ethics: Read several nursery rhymes and fairy tales from Aesop's Fables to them. Ask questions.

Thursday: Public Speaking:

1. Teach them proper posture, articulation, eye contact.
2. "The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe" and then "Wee Willie Winkie".
3. Ask for volunteers to speak in front of the group and recite.

Friday:

1. Bible page from Creation Research Institute.
2. Repeat Mica Mica.

B. 3rd through 6th.

Emphasis for this age: Latin, Manners, some Public Speaking.

Rotating Schedule for Ethics

1. Read prayer from "Prayers that avail much for children"...
2. Read story from Hans Christian Andersen or Aesop's Fables.
3. Question students:
 - a. Who was the good person or animal? How do you know?
 - b. Who was the bad person or animal? How do you know?
 - c. Who was the friend of the good person or animal?
 - d. What was the problem in the story?

- | |
|--|
| e. How was it settled?
f. Who can retell the story to us? |
|--|

Monday:

1. Morning Prayer
2. Story: Lion and the Mouse
3. Milkmaid and her pail
4. Ask questions listed above.
5. Begin memorizing chemistry's periodic table using flash cards.

Tuesday: Latin

1. Teach greeting (SALVE, MAGISTRA.... SALVETE)
2. Tell about Latin.
3. Pass out books or pages from Power Glide Activity Book.
4. Read together and pronounce pages 6 and 7.
5. Do: pages 8 and 9 together.
6. Good bye = VALE, MAGISTRA... VALETE!

Wednesday: Logic

1. Teach them how to play chess and let them play one game.

Thursday: Manners.

1. Define manners
2. Examples of poor manners, good manners in class.
3. Introductions. Have them draw names from a box and have one member of the class introduce "Queen Elizabeth" and a class member, deciding who to introduce to whom.

Friday: Public Speaking

1. Discuss public speaking.
2. Teach them the wrong ways and the right ways to articulate, maintain eye contact, have poise, begin and end with confidence, project their voices.
3. Tell them what a recitation is, and that they will be doing them next week.
4. If time, assign 4 recitations.

C. 7th through 8th: Emphasis for this age: Logic and Latin

Monday:

1. Introduction and Overview of Classics program.
2. Expectations from the teacher, grading, consequences of behaviors.
3. Seating arrangements.

Tuesday: Public Speaking:

1. Pass out Student Speech Book.
2. Go over the book. Explain the meaning of the terms in the book.
3. Discuss recitations.

Wednesday: Ethics: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

1. Pass out books; get name and number for each one distributed.
2. Read the first two chapters aloud together. Discuss.

Thursday: Public Speaking:

1. Pass out several recitations.
2. Explain what choices they have in doing recitations.
3. Assign 4 students to recite on the following Monday, and 4 for the following Thursday.

Friday: Latin:

1. Discuss the history of Latin and Rome.
2. Pass out *Ecce Romani* handouts.
3. Translate the first story.
4. Homework: translate the same story on paper, and assign a derivatives worksheet for Monday.

D. High School:

Emphasis for this age: Public Speaking and Ethics

Monday:

1. Introduction and Overview of Classics program.
2. Expectations from the teacher, grading, consequences of behaviors.
3. Ask: is it ever right to kill? Enjoy class discussion.

Tuesday: Public Speaking:

1. Pass out several recitations.
2. Explain what choices they have in doing recitations.
3. Assign 4 students to recite on the following Monday, and 4 for the following Thursday.

Wednesday: Logic: Fallacy Detective.

1. Pass out books and list names and book numbers.
2. Discuss Logic and fallacies. Give extra examples that are not necessarily covered in the book, such as ad hominem attack on your opponent. These will be covered in final test.

Thursday: Ethics. Choose a topic to discuss, research it on the internet, or using Josh McDowell's book *Right from Wrong*, and present the topic, giving students the opportunity and responsibility to discuss it. Examples include: Are there Absolutes?, What is Islam?, Abortion, Courtship and Marriage, Killing and Murder, War, Psychology or PsychoHeresy?, Gun Control, The Positives of the Ten Commandments, Recognizing Different Worldviews.

Friday: Latin:

1. Discuss the history of Latin and Rome.
2. Pass out *Ecce Romani* handouts.
3. Translate the first story.
4. Homework: translate the same story on paper, and assign the derivatives worksheet (which you write up) for Monday.

IV. Recommended texts for a mini-course of each subject:

Creation Research Institute Creation coloring book
Beginning Public Speaking Teacher Edition (\$14.95) or
Student Text ((\$2.95) available from XL Group, 8327
Phillips Rd. SW, Lakewood, WA 98498.

V. Moving on to a full Classical Christian Course: Resources

After your school introduces a classical Christian education, you will likely want to move into a full classical Christian curriculum. You will find that, even in this short introduction, your students are beginning to learn to think!

Harrington

Summary: Teach ACROSS the curriculum; teach using the student's natural maturity level; teach subjects that will help your student learn to THINK, to KNOW RIGHT FROM WRONG, and to BE ABLE TO TEACH THEMSELVES.