

“SINE DOCTRINA VITA EST QUASI MORTIS IMAGO”

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VOLUME XXI NUMBER IV

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# CLASSIS

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE  
ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

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DECEMBER, 2014

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CLASSROOM PRACTICES FOR  
CULTIVATING THE AFFECTIONS

*by Jenny Rallens, The Ambrose School*

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*by Matt Whitting, Logos School*





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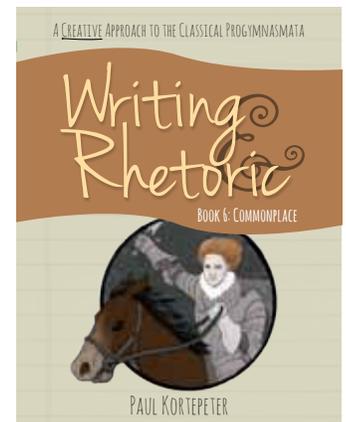
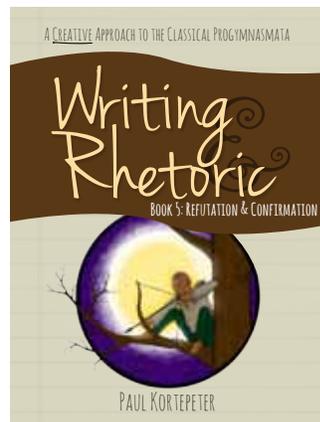
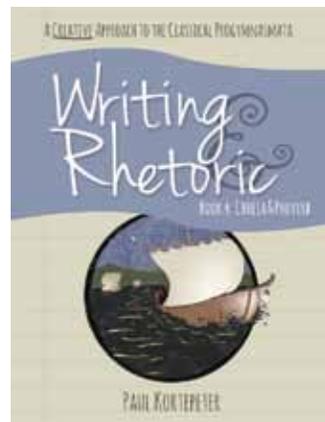
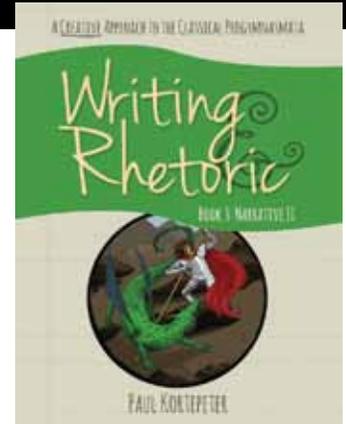
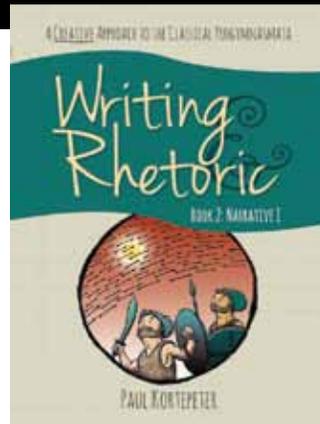
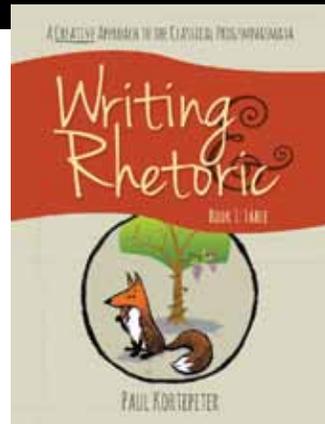


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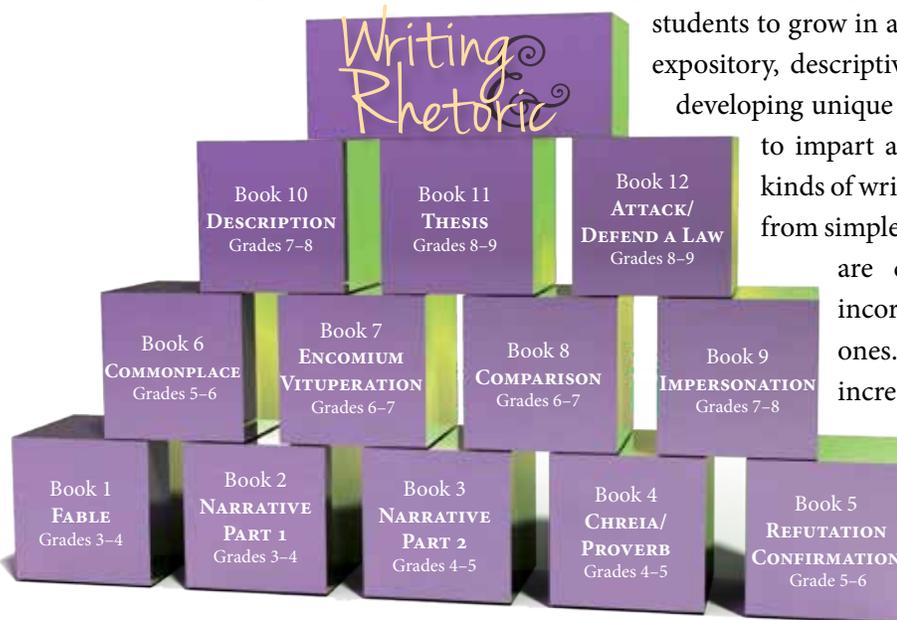
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## HIGHLY-RATED PRESENTATIONS FROM THE 2014 REPAIRING THE RUINS CONFERENCE

The articles in this issue are based on presentations given at last summer's conference. Those who heard these presentations gave the speakers high marks on the post-conference evaluation. Two of these articles (Rallens and Whitling) are transcribed from audio recordings and shortened to fit space in *Classis*.

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*Classical Christian education:  
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The primary mission of this association is to promote, establish, and equip schools committed to a classical approach to education in light of a Christian worldview grounded in the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

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# CLASSROOM PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATING THE AFFECTIONS

*by Jenny Rallens, The Ambrose School*

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*Note: This article has been  
prepared from an audio recording.*

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Every time I get to speak on this topic with fellow classical educators, I am so excited because I was a classically educated student, as was my husband, pretty much kindergarten through twelfth grade and on into college at New Saint Andrews. We really feel that our affections, our hearts, were truly molded by our classical education. In many ways I am here to give back a little, to pay a debt of gratitude to teachers like yourselves. I just want to say thank you for the work you are doing. It truly is making a difference in the lives of students like myself.

As a fifth-grade teacher, I am responsible for teaching my students many things: spelling, Latin, Shurley grammar, math, history, and how to write a good topic sentence. But as a classical teacher, I am also supposed to be shaping the character of my students. We learn from C.S. Lewis that training affections, or cultivating virtue, or teaching students to love truth, beauty, and goodness and the Lord in each other is actually what education is for. These noble goals are often listed as our chief objectives, even on our school's website. In his book on education [*Abolition of Man*], C.S. Lewis says that the most important thing that we are doing is shaping

what students love. He says this "virtue is rightly ordered love, the condition of affection in which every object is accorded that kind of degree of love which is appropriate to it." Students "must be trained to feel pleasure, liking, disgust, and hatred at those things which are actually pleasant, likeable, disgusting and hateful."

When I first started teaching, I was so excited that my job wasn't just to teach Latin and grammar and history, but actually to form students' characters and to change their lives. How am I supposed to go from the daily events of my classroom and my curriculum to actually forming their affections and shaping their hearts? How in the world do we actually do this in our lessons and our routines and our homework assignments? How do we actually train a student to love one thing and hate another? Lewis goes on a few pages later to say that it is not any explanation of virtue or even a list of reasons why virtue is good that will actually help a student grow in virtue or shape their heart. Instead it is habit-shaping practices, bodily actions that most shape the heart.

This really hit home to me one year when I was teaching my eighth-grade girls a Bible study on gratitude. (All of my examples from this year will come only from eighth-grade girls because in 7th and 8th grade at our school we separate genders. The boys are in one classroom and I teach the girls.) They would come to my

*Jenny teaches and mentors other teachers at the Ambrose School in Boise, Idaho. She first delivered the content of this workshop as part of an in-house teacher training at Ambrose this past summer. She graduated with a BA from New Saint Andrews College and is currently working on her MA at Oxford University in England.*

classroom for a period and we would read Bible verses and I would teach them theological principles and they got really good at this. They could quote Bible verses. They could explain the theological underpinnings of gratitude, how it was so important in our lives, and give brilliant examples. However, I started to notice that something was really wrong. These same students who were so eloquent and so knowledgeable about gratitude in the classroom would walk out of my classroom and down the halls grumbling about their homework, about their teacher, or about the way their hair looked that day. I started realizing that I was reinforcing this deadly message that said there is separation between what we talk about in the classroom and what you actually live out in your real, everyday lives.

After experimenting for a few years, it has been my experience, as Lewis suggested, that it is the habit-forming practices (or liturgies, as others have called them), that most shape affection. By practices I mean how we do what we do in the classroom: things like methods, routines, pedagogies, the form of our assignment—basically how we teach the content of our curriculum. I want to distinguish the practices of classical Christian schools from the content, which is what we teach.

A lot of the energy of classical education in the past three decades has gone into figuring out what we should teach and why. Remembering that Latin is something that we should teach and giving defenses for why we should teach it is an example. I want to direct our attention beyond the content to how we teach it because, as Lewis says, simply having virtue in our curriculum doesn't mean our students will actually develop a love for virtue.

And so my question is, *how do we use our academic practices to shape our students affections and what are the ingredients of those practices that most powerfully shaped students hearts?*

Lewis' words in *The Abolition of Man* reminded me of

meeting a girl at this very ACCS conference about two or three years ago. Like me, she was classically educated, kindergarten through twelfth grade. She recently graduated from college. A couple of co-teachers and I asked her about her experience. We wanted her to share with us what she had gotten out of classical education. Sadly she told us that the fruit of her experience had made her cynical; that she approached the world, because of how her teachers had taught her, only looking for worldview truth, whether it was in a Shakespeare class or a chemistry class or a Bible class. This left her with an approach to creation, and history, and art, as something only to be judged and evaluated and analyzed for its worldview context. Analyzing worldview truths in her life had completely outweighed loving beauty and living out goodness. When she encountered a story, all she could think about was whether or not it had a good worldview. When she encountered an awe-inspiring cathedral, her instinctive response was to criticize it and say something like, "Well, heresy was preached here once."

Though this wasn't her teachers' explicit goal, the affections that had been formed in her heart were a love for rational proof, judging, and being right. While she had taken Shakespeare and chemistry and Bible classes, the way she was taught those subjects actually influenced her more than the content of the lessons. The constant emphasis on worldview, at the expense of everything else, had left her only with the knowledge of truth and how to measure it and no real understanding of how to live it out. I am not trying to say at all that truth is bad, but the way in which we teach truth can itself be true or false. Simply getting our students to know or think about truth is not our primary calling as teachers. More than just graduating students who have a good worldview and great critical thinking skills and good theology and reading comprehension, we want our students' lives and loves to be shaped by what happens in our classroom. We want our students to go out in the



world and do things. We want them to spread the gospel and bring their friends to church and worship the Lord and create beautiful works of art and serve people. In fact many of our schools have goals for a graduate that list these exact things.

I am so passionate about this because I am a graduate of classical education and I experienced this sort of heart transformation, but many of my friends and peers who are also classically educated had a very different experience—sort of the opposite because of the way that they were taught, even though the curriculum and content was quite similar. C.S. Lewis addresses the importance of the way that we learn to know something in *Mere Christianity* and he uses an example of the Atlantic Ocean to do this. Knowing the Atlantic Ocean is a metaphor for knowing God. He says there are a few different ways you could go about getting knowledge of the Atlantic Ocean. First, you could read tons of books and basically find out all the facts that there are about the Atlantic Ocean. You could look at maps and study charts and diagrams and come away with this wealth of factual knowledge but you wouldn't actually know the

Atlantic Ocean until you had experienced this, until you had played in the waves and watched the tide and felt the salt breeze in your face and heard the roar of the waves and that there is a physical and visceral type of knowledge where you come to know something by feel rather than by intellect. I think in this example Lewis makes it clear that how you learn about the Atlantic Ocean is the most important factor in whether you have real knowledge of the Atlantic Ocean at all.

We saw earlier that Lewis said in *Abolition of Man* that virtue is the result of having emotions that have been trained by habit. There are a number of ways of understanding and articulating this principle that it is our habits that shape what our hearts love. Our hearts are touched through the practices and these physical experiences that we have. So we might say that to train affections, we should teach through experiences as well as explanations. We might also say that the way we learn something is more influential than the something that we learned, that the form of a lesson teaches as much as its content, or that the way to a person's heart is through their body.

Liturgy is a good word to describe the methods and pedagogies and practices in our classrooms, because liturgy means a habitual practice, an action or a behavior that is repeated and that subconsciously shapes us. It is also the form that we use to deliver the content of our lesson, the thing that structures our days and in the end, it is what most shapes our lives. As a teacher, we all have liturgies in our lessons and our classrooms, even though they may be invisible to us. So think about things like: How do you review a topic? How do you assign homework and what kind of homework do you assign? How do you assess your students? How do you begin and end your classes? How do you spend the class time? Do you spend most the time lecturing? Or are you a discussion-based teacher? Are you a crafty projects sort of teacher? In addition to the practices of our lessons, we also all have liturgies of our classroom, things like: How do we address our students? How do you punish and reward them and get their attention? How do we relate to them and expect them to relate to each other? Even how are our classrooms arranged? How do we allow our students to ask questions or make comments? What are our daily routines?

I don't think we give as much thought to these things as we do to teaching the content itself. But liturgy is so important, even though it seems like a trivial thing. Thomas Cranmer wrote, "The mind is captive to what the will wants, and the will is captive to what the heart wants." Because our goal in classical Christian education isn't just to teach students information, but to form their hearts, we don't want them to just know truth and goodness, we want them to live out goodness and be truthful and love beauty. We want to shape their hearts to reach their lives. This is done in part through reaching their senses. In other words, if our goal as educators is not just right knowing or right thinking but it is rightly ordered love and then right action, and since action requires heart engagement, and since the heart is disciplined through bodily habits, I think it is our

practices that are actually the part of education that most shape our students lives.

So, for example, here is one illustration of an affection that I wanted to cultivate. I want my students to understand that truth isn't just a list of propositions; truth is the person of Jesus Christ. Obedience of the Lord isn't just following a list of rules, it is following the example of the story of Christ's life in the gospels. I tried to cultivate this affection in them by always using stories to explain moral questions. Or when I had a discipline situation, I used a story from something that we were reading in class to address their sin. I learned that while it is true that experiential practices seem to shape affection it wasn't quite as simple as, OK I'll give my students a fun experience—and boom!—their hearts will be changed. I discovered this with many practices that went terribly wrong and I realized that I needed a model for good academic liturgy, something to use as a measuring stick for my development of classroom practices. After doing some research, especially in the early church in the medieval era, I found that I didn't need to reinvent the wheel. There are so many incredible models of educational practices from the early church in the Middle Ages which were built from serious study of God and Scripture and the nature of man, which were developed specifically for the purpose of shaping affections.

One of the most prevalent medieval liturgies for learning something is a three-step liturgy expressed in the metaphor of honey-making. This is probably the most common medieval metaphor for study and learning and the most common "template" for lesson planning, if we could call it that, from the early church in the medieval era.

First, a bee flies around as we know and it collects nectar; second, it digests the nectar; and thirdly, that digestion results in the production of honey. These three stages of honey-making, the medievals said, correspond to the three stages by which anything is truly learned in

a way that it is internalized, in a way that it can shape the heart. They named these three stages: *lectio*, *meditatio*, and *compositio*. In other words, first you collect from what you are learning, then you spend time digesting it, last of all you compose with it both by creating external things and by living a life that is shaped by what you have been studying.

Another common medieval metaphor that went along with the honey-making one was the *lectio*, *meditatio*, *compositio* progression of eating. This came from the early church's view of reading the Bible as a type of feasting on Scriptures where first you took the word in, you ingested it, then you digested it, and finally the Word made you grow. This was a practice that would be followed by a medieval monk in the library with Homer and then in the chapel with his Psalter. It was designed to cultivate virtue by shaping the affections of students who practiced it. Gregory the Great, one of the people who developed this model, said, "We ought to transform what we read within our very selves—so that when our mind is stirred by what it hears, our lives may concur by practicing what has been heard." Because this progression of *lectio*, *meditatio*, *compositio* is a liturgy that so deeply originates in Christian tradition and is for the purpose of training students' affections, I found that it is an incredibly fruitful model in planning both lessons *and* the flow of an academic day for the purpose of shaping students' affections.

Here is one example from my eighth-grade class. First, I made the mistake of sending my students home with a packet of Augustine's *Confessions*, to read on their own, followed by a quiz the next day. Yes, it was after a whole week of reading and talking about it and common placing it together, but from the amount of frantic and desperate texts the night I assigned that reading, it was clear the students weren't getting it. These questions are really easy, but I thought Augustine was challenging in high school and college and these are just beginning eighth grade girls. These questions were terrible. "Name

one experience of infancy mentioned by Augustine." This isn't what I wanted my students to be getting out of Augustine when their affections could be shaped by his beautiful portrayal of what love for God is or how our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Him. So to make a long, sad story short, my students bombed this quiz as a class. And even worse, those who got all the answers right, didn't understand the reading and they definitely didn't love it. If I shaped any of their affections, it was affection for despising Augustine.

Here is what I came up with instead and this is very simple. There are far more creative ways of implementing *lectio*, *meditatio*, *compositio*.

What I did next time, repenting of the error of my first way, was rather than give students several pages of Augustine to read, I gave them two paragraphs. I gave them two whole class periods and divided them up in pairs. They spent two whole class periods analyzing their passages. They took pages of notes, they drew pictures, and they covered their passages with analysis. That was the *lectio*, the collection stage. Then for the *meditatio*, the digestion stage, I gave them an assignment of preparing to teach a brief lesson to the class based on what they had learned from Augustine. We were in book ten, which is his book on memory and why memory is a virtue and necessary for being a human and so on. I encouraged my girls to think about our own practices of memory. How do we as classical students go about memorizing? This required them to go back over the reading they had done, think about what it meant, and how to communicate it to the rest of the class. It was really amazing to walk around from pair to pair as they were working on this phase of the project. I would hear things like, "Wow, Augustine is so cool!" and "Look at how he is talking about our senses being the gateway to memory," and "I can totally use this when memorizing my Latin vocabulary or my history dates." For the end of the *meditatio* stage, going on into the *compositio* stage, they taught their lessons on Augustine memory

with each other. I was so impressed, not just by their depth of understanding Augustine, but by how much more they had understood and how much more they had gotten from reading one paragraph in two hours versus ten pages in one night. Not only were they able to communicate their deep understanding of Augustine to the class but they did so using methods that Augustine said would help engage the memory, using emotions and word pictures and senses of smell, taste, and touch. And they told me they loved it. Later in the year they kept referring to “Oh, Augustine was so much fun!” They were actually applying what they were learning in Augustine to something relevant, which was the practice of how we do memory ourselves or understanding why memory is a virtue. This continued to bear honey throughout the rest of our eighth grade year as the girls built memory palaces to do their history homework and borrowed his philosophy of memory in their own lives. They said that they wanted to reinvent the way classical grammar schools teach memory based on Augustine as well. They also said that they loved Augustine and they loved deep reading now because of the way that we did this. I had been really dreading teaching Augustine to junior-high girls, but it was amazing to me to see how much the girls loved it because the girls understood it. There is a monumental difference between assigning a reading and a quiz versus following this liturgy of collect, digest, and compose.

The other thing that I discovered is in order for this liturgy to be most effective for a particular lesson, I also needed to contextualize these practices in a whole day that was designed to shape affections. I realized my students are formed just as much by their experiences five minutes before class starts and five minutes after class ends. It is possible for the liturgies of the rest of the day to undermine what is being communicated through following *lectio*, *meditatio*, *compositio* and the actual content of humanities. I realized this was happening at the beginning of the year because we would get down

to three to five minutes of class and I would say, “OK, we need to stop everything! Rush! Cram everything in your binders!” I would give rapid fire announcements: “OK, don’t forget that if you fail this test it is worth a fifth of your grade, and this project is really important so study it so that you get an A, and by the way there is a pop quiz tomorrow, and you want to make sure you study for it so you can make sure you get a good grade.” What I have realized is that the liturgy of the way of ending class was contradicting and undermining what I was doing in class. During class, I was saying learning is about what you love and then living it out. In the last five minutes of class, my practices were saying that school is about cramming all the right things into your agenda, and worrying that you got the homework agenda right so that your grades wouldn’t suffer. Something I say to my students all the time is, “You haven’t learned this until you are living it.” But as the teacher, I also have to remember they are learning what I make them live. That includes what we were living together before and after the lesson itself. I realize that it doesn’t matter how much I am shaping their affections in class if I am contradicting it by the liturgies I draw the rest of the time.

I am still working out how to do this in an eighth-grade classroom when I don’t have the students all day long but I did make some changes, especially to the way that we ended class. I would stop ten minutes before the bell rang and spend time praying and singing and thanking God for what we had learned. Then I would give the students 3–5 minutes at the end of the day where I would play background classical music and they would journal and write down things that they learned that day and wanted to remember. That way I felt like the practices I was using to end class weren’t contradicting the practices that I was using to teach class.

In addition to daily liturgies, I have also inculcated practices to form students’ hearts that structure all of our different routines, our beginnings and our endings,

our meal times, our breaks, our passings periods, with different traditions. One example of a yearly tradition is that in fifth grade we would begin the initiation ceremony to mark the beginning of the year to say “you are beginning something new, something that is about changing who you are as a person.” We would have the students come up to the front of the class. They would sign an enormous charter and then we would pray a prayer of blessing over them and have them recite a class promise. Also, in fifth grade another favorite, regular practice was—and this just happened about once a month—that whenever I was reading a particularly suspenseful chapter to my students, I would have them bring pillows and blankets. I would make hot chocolate. We would push all the desks and chairs to the side of the room, black out every little bit of light that could possibly come through windows with black trash bags (they were very meticulous about that bit), and then we would turn our flashlights on and drink hot chocolate and read *Lord of the Rings* or the *Hobbit* in the dark on the floor. I found that sometimes it is these practices of sitting on the floor, in a blanket, in the dark with your flashlight, or drinking tea while reading, that really opened the doors to students’ hearts. I really want to emphasize this. These practices are not just a fun in the fluff. I am a very strict, hard teacher. I believe that these practices are what opened the door to making my students able to love Augustine.

The principle is that following this idea of *lectio*, *meditatio*, and *compositio*, inculcating practices that structure both our days and our individual lessons, actually most shaped students’ affections. Therefore these little practices, these things that we sometimes think of as trivial, can be the difference between life and death.

In his essay, “The Weight of Glory,” Lewis comments on the gravity of what we as teachers often think are the trivial daily interactions. I paraphrased this quote to make it about teaching students rather than people in

general. But it really made me change how I approached my students in my practices, to think about them in these terms.

It is a serious thing to teach in a school of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the most frustrating, rebellious, or boring student in your class may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree or another, helping our students to one or other of these destinations.

That terrifies me and sends me to my knees on a regular basis.

. . . it is with the awe and circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with our students, our lectures, recesses, passing periods, lunches, classes, bathroom policies, lesson plans, discussions, discipline moments, grades, classroom décor, and parent-teacher conferences. There are no ordinary students. You have never taught a mere mortal.

# ERB ANALYSIS AS A TOOL FOR TEACHERS

by Rod Gilbert and Doreen Howell, Regents School of Austin

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*Note: This article has been prepared from an audio recording.*

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In 1996 Regents School of Austin had the wisdom to adopt the Comprehensive Testing Program (CTP) published by the Educational Records Bureau (ERB) as its annual standardized achievement tests. Over the years there were many times, just out of sheer exhaustion and busyness we would take the test, send it in to be scored, give a cursory review of the results and just like other schools, we would “smile and file.” In the last five years, we determined that if we are going to use the test, then we should use it to help teachers. We set out to find ways to capture the data so that teachers could get another insight into the journey of the children that were coming their way. Our purpose in using the CTP is:

To maximize the teacher’s ability to understand each individual child’s strengths and weaknesses

that can be detected by testing so that the teacher is equipped to respond with confidence and make every effort to see that the child’s needs are being met and to demonstrate to the teacher their own strengths and weaknesses through multiyear trend analysis.

The first thing you must do when using the CTP data is to realize that this testing battery is not a “high stakes” test and therefore administrators, teachers, and parents should not become stressed out about outcomes in one year alone. There is a lot to learn about your school through data received from testing, but no decisions about curriculum, teachers, or students should be made from one year alone. Many times when we have shared data with teachers or parents, they said, “That affirms what I suspected.”

Here are three ways to make data helpful to the teachers:

*Rod Gilbert serves as the head of school at Regents School of Austin. He was the head of the upper school for four years, and then he became the head of school seven years ago. Prior to his start at Regents in 2003, he served as the founding assistant headmaster of Trinity Academy of Raleigh in North Carolina. Doreen Howell is the associate to the head of school at Regents School of Austin. She is currently in her 21st year with Regents, thirteen of which she served as head of grammar school. She is the founder of Texas Colloquium, an organization for administrators of classical Christian schools in Texas, and is the co-founder of the Regents Institute for Classical Educators (RICE).*

1. Show teachers how their contributions usher students through their educational journey.
2. Teach teachers to read reports and find information about their current students.
3. Help teachers see their own strengths and weaknesses in multiyear trend analysis as they strive to be the best educators they can be.

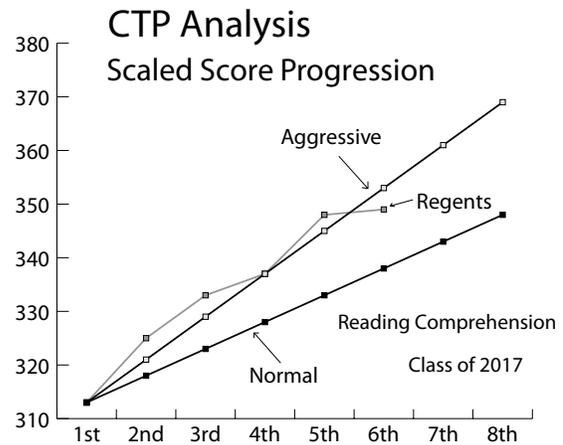
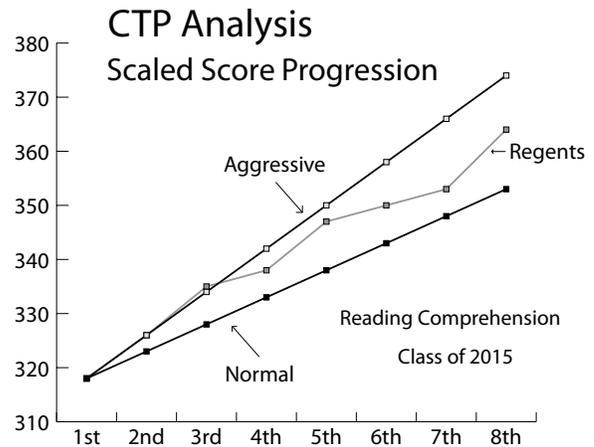
## TEACHER CONTRIBUTION

Using trend analysis of *scaled scores*, we learned to track a class through their eight years (1st–8th grade) taking CTP exams at Regents by creating a graph that looks a lot like a graphic on the Weather Channel showing a hurricane’s predicted course. Imagine Hurricane Ralph bouncing up the East Coast of the United States. A cone-shaped graphic shows us potential and likely pathways as it moves north from Bermuda to North Carolina.

We begin with the first year the class takes a particular section of the test. We only graph the seven tests that are common through all the grades: Verbal Reasoning, Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension, Writing Mechanics, Writing Concepts, Quantitative Reasoning, and Math 1 and 2.

In order to show progress or lack of progress in these areas we needed to know the average progress, in scaled scores that the test creators would expect from one year to the next. Our ERB Member Services representative’s response to that question was: “In the Verbal Reasoning and in each of its subtests (Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension, Writing Mechanics, and Writing Concepts), a 5–8 point increase in scaled scores would be expected. In the Quantitative Reasoning and in its subtest of Math, a 10–13 point increase in scaled scores would be expected.” Using a 5-point increase as an expected normal increase, we created the lower line on the graph below. And the upper line is created by an aggressive 8-point increase. If we were showing Quantitative Reasoning or Math, the lower line is created by 10-point increments and a more aggressive

upper line is created by 13-point incremental increases. Then taking the rounded average mean scaled score found on the Administrative Summary of the test, we plot the middle line from year to year to show the actual Regents average.



The information in the above graph shows teachers their part in this class’s progress. This is a picture of Reading Comprehension within the same year for the Class of 2015 and the Class of 2017. Think of these classes as hurricanes—they are bumping along each year and we are trying to give a general prediction of where they might show up the next year. This is a quick way for school leaders to see that we are delivering what we say we are from year to year. This is also a quick way for our leaders to see that these classes are progressing just as we would hope they would progress.

According to that five- and eight-point progression, if the class were to progress five points every year it would be a respectable increase. That is good. We are not teaching to the test but we are expecting them to progress at a reasonable rate. We are not trying to run along that hot pink line or force every class to function at a high level, we are just trying to see where we are. We have tracked the Class of 2015 from first grade all the way through eighth grade and you can see their bumps along the way, but they have always been “in the cone.” The eighth grade teachers were encouraged that all the work they had done through the year helped the class progress toward a strong entrance into high school. Remember that a multiyear trend analysis gives you a better picture of progress. We have all experienced the traumas that can sometimes happen on testing days. If we made decisions based on those one-day experiences, we would not be doing a service to anyone. It is amazing the encouragement that can come with these simple charts.

## KNOWING THE CURRENT STUDENTS

One of the most valuable reports for teachers is the most current “Individual Instructional Summary” for each student in the class. With our new capability of re-forming classes through the online TestWhiz Portal, this is so much easier. When you have three years’ worth of data in the portal you can also share individual student progress through the years with the teachers to show

them areas of strength and weakness that carry over.

We demonstrate for our teachers how to compare independent norm Percent Content Mastery on each line with the student’s Percent Content Mastery and they begin to see the strengths and weaknesses.

What is the response from the Regents faculty? Our teachers are now asking for test data before school starts in late August because they realize that they can be more proactive in working with students in areas of weakness. For example, in the chart below, Analogical Reasoning, Word Meaning, and Supporting Details are all areas of weakness. The interesting thing was that when the teacher saw this particular student’s report, the teacher quickly said, “This looks like a global thinker, but we need to help this student focus on details in lots of areas.” I was impressed how the teacher picked up on those generalizations across the tests.

At this point in August we ask teachers to brainstorm

Multiple Choice Tests and Subscore Categories	Students Tested	Number of Questions		Percent Content Mastery	Average Percent Content Mastery				
		Presented	Attempted		Grade %	Sub Pub %	Ind %		
Verbal Reasoning	20	40	40	67	63	66	76		9
Analogical Reasoning	20	16	16	88	88	86	66	22	
Categorical Reasoning	20	10	10	60	62	70	80		20
Logical Reasoning	20	14	14	80	72	73	82		32
Vocabulary	21	30	30	70	64	65	70		
Word Meanings	21	12	12	67	68	71	75		8
Precision	21	8	8	50	56	56	62		12
Application	21	10	10	90	66	64	69	21	
Reading Comprehension	22	32	32	87	68	70	74		17
Explicit Information	22	10	10	46	67	72	75		29
Inference	22	12	12	71	74	76	80		9
Analysis	22	10	10	56	65	61	66		10
Writing Mechanics	20	40	40	85	66	72	68		13
Spelling	20	9	9	86	88	62	87		1
Capitalization	20	8	8	63	81	83	79		16
Punctuation	20	10	10	30	59	70	68		38
Usage	20	13	13	69	68	74	70		5
Writing Concepts & Skills	21	40	40	77	64	77	73		4
Organization	21	12	12	75	69	75	71	4	
Purpose, Audience, Focus	21	8	8	75	61	79	75	25	
Supporting Details	21	11	11	91	86	72	66		14
Style and Craft	21	9	9	67	73	85	81		6
Quantitative Reasoning	22	45	45	47	55	52	53		3
Comparison	22	18	18	86	65	87	89		3
Extensions/Generalizations	22	15	15	40	42	43	43		14
Analysis	22	12	12	42	57	55	56		1
Mathematics 1&2	21	60	60	65	70	61	64		19
Number Systems and Number Theory	21	9	9	78	76	86	89		17
Numbers and Number Relationships	21	10	10	90	76	69	73		15
Geometry and Spatial Sense	21	8	8	75	69	61	60		24
Measurement	21	8	8	38	73	58	62		1
Probability	21	8	8	62	72	57	61		6
Statistics	21	8	8	63	70	67	69		18
Pre-Algebra	21	9	9	44	59	60	62		3
Conceptual Understanding	21	22	22	59	68	61	62		
Procedural Knowledge	21	21	21	67	75	62	65		2
Problem Solving	21	17	17	71	67	61	64		7

with other teachers on their level or above or below to find methods or objectives on which to focus during the coming year. The teacher is aware of individual students' levels of ability, but they think in terms of the whole group and have found that activities that help the needy students are beneficial to the others as well.

Once you get your teachers interested in this data, you can't stop them. It is like setting a fire. Once administrators win teachers to it, the teachers ask for it. Doreen even had a slide for the annual ERB Report at Regents that was a bunch of hungry birds looking up like a mom dropping a worm on them. The caption at the bottom said, "The teachers really want the data now." We realized that we had won. We had shattered all the scary myths of misusing standardized tests to hurt teachers or to at least scare them or parents using the data in a way that is not helpful. Once they know it is for them and it is part of their dashboard to help children, they are going to come up with ways to use the data to inform their teaching and see patterns and trends like never before.

## TEACHER'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

We were able to capture the data for many of our long-time teachers because we have years of data to review. This analysis works better for an elementary faculty that keeps their same class for most subjects than it works for an upper school faculty, although it can give insight into English and math teachers. In the review of the data, a piece of information began to appear that showed us the passions of some of our teachers. For example over a five-year period we had a teacher whose class scored highest in Word Analysis among all the tests and at the same time during those same five years her scores in Math were the lowest. In conversation with her we told her that we thought her skills in teaching Math needed some sharpening and she very quickly agreed and welcomed help to improve teaching in that area.

Then we said, "But no one seems to be able to do Word Analysis better than you; your students always excel in that area and many times in Reading Comprehension." We worked on a plan to help in Math through the year and sure enough the next year Math was not the lowest score for the group and Word Analysis was still on the top. Good teachers respond to coaching, and coaching with the backing of data truly invests in teachers.

You can use these trends to help your teachers. But remember one year's worth of data does not make a trend. We believe you need three years of data to really see a strength or weakness. You can do this with one teacher in a grade level or multiple teachers teaching the same grade level.

At Regents we have the luxury of having five teachers in each grade level and we are able to rank them within the grade level and see a comparison of strengths and weaknesses among them. We have been able to use that kind of information to identify passions and see where we might be able to use a teacher as a mentor.

Most schools only have one or two teachers at a grade level. If that is the case for your school, just contact Doreen Howell at [dhowell@regentsaustin.org](mailto:dhowell@regentsaustin.org) and she will show you how to get to the same kind of information for your smaller faculty.

Just a word of caution: in our data-crazed world we must be careful about the availability of data to the general population. Transparency is good, but data like the teachers' strengths and weaknesses should be equated to information like a teacher's salary. We believe that information should not be public. Teachers bring more than specific skill sets to the classroom. A teacher may not be the best at Writing Mechanics, but she is the best when the child is going through an eating disorder because her ballet coach told her she needed to lose weight. Living life alongside these lovely children means that life is sometimes hard and messy. Demoting the child-teacher experience to simply one test would violate our classical, Christian mission. Therefore,

wisely use the data-driven decision making as a PART of our holistic view of teachers and your students, and be cautious when it comes to data sharing.

## CONCLUSION

Thank you for what you do on behalf of children and families. It is a burden that you bear to mentor children each day and you are to be commended. When you add to your tool box the academic skill sets that you are trying to give them every day, you are often going to be misunderstood and I beg you to just work hard at teaching the families what you are trying to do and win them into your partnership. Invest in listening to parents and find ways to merge your vision with their vision, so that there is one cohesive vision for each child.

Use the data, improve the students and teachers, train the families to understand why we would even think of using a battery of achievement tests. I leave you with this

one experience related to our use of the CTP. We have many veteran families. I had a new mom of a first grader in a parent meeting this spring and in front of 50 other families she said, “Mr. Gilbert, where do we go online to do private tutorials to make sure that my daughter can do the best that she can possibly do on the second grade year reading test?” I was going to say, in a very diplomatic way, something like, “Don’t do that to your child,” but before I could get it out of my mouth, two moms in the room, who have children in college, spoke up. They said something like, “You are asking exactly the same question we did in 2003. Ease up. By the time your child gets through puberty you won’t even care about this. So, just hang on for a long ride and calm down.” This statement does not reject data-driven decisions, but it sure puts it in perspective.

There is “gold” in the testing you do each year, but like a miner, you have to dig for it. Happy digging!



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# SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE: TEACHING GEOGRAPHY AT THE PRE-POLLY STAGE

*by Angie Epps, Riverbend Academy*

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“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.”

When God inspired Paul to include these sentences in his letter to the church at Philippi (Philippians 2:3-5), He knew that we all have a tendency to make things all about us (Me! Me! Me!). At the root of this self-centeredness is, of course, our sinful nature forever fighting to keep us from looking outside our own needs and desires to the needs and interests of others.

In a classical, Christian school, teaching and demonstrating the idea of putting other’s needs ahead of our own should be a primary goal in the academic setting. Imagine what a classroom would be like if all the students and the teachers had “the same attitude of Christ Jesus” when it came to how they viewed themselves. Think about how much more classwork could be accomplished! We as teachers have so much information that we want to pour into the brains of our students before they leave us at the end of the year

that we sometimes forget about teaching them to love others and Christ more than themselves and learning. This endeavor should be at the top of our lists in order to accomplish the whole academic picture.

This makes the role of a pre-polly teacher so important. We set the foundation and guide the students’ thoughts and abilities towards a view of school and teachers in general, a love of learning, a foundational knowledge, specifically, in math, phonics, reading and handwriting, but most importantly a working knowledge with a biblical worldview. As pre-polly teachers (kindergarten through second grade) we *get* to set that foundational thinking of “others first, me last.” Though pre-polly classes can sometimes be known as the classes that do crafts and take naps and wipe noses and tie shoelaces, we should also be known for so much more!

I take the time I have with my kindergarten class very seriously. Yes, we do crafts. We don’t take naps. I do wipe the occasional nose, and I definitely can tie shoelaces in my sleep, but if you walk into my classroom on any given day, you will find my students “experiencing” school. I want them to use all their senses when learning, so much so, that they don’t even realize they are learning. I want

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to encourage other pre-pollies, like myself, that we are more than just about the ABCs and 123s (though that's very important).

Teaching geography is a sensational way to begin to show children at the pre-polly stage that they are more than just who they see in the mirror. Who would imagine that by the end of my forty days of teaching geography to a bunch of five- and six-year-olds that, among other things, they can tell you about the poverty level of many families on the continent of Africa; tell you about the homeless children of Brazil or the many orphans in China due to the one child per family rule; name all seven continents and the four main oceans; can read a basic map and follow a basic map key; count to ten in Spanish, Swahili, and Russian; or tell you that Japan is north of Australia on a map?

Coming from this biblical worldview that we are all egocentric in our thoughts due to man's Fall in the Garden, I begin prepping my children for their studies of geography (taught after Christmas) on the first day of school by showing them their place in this world. If you don't believe that even young children are egocentric in their behavior and attitudes, then step into a kindergarten class on the first day. Before proper classroom training (and sadly sometimes after) each child comes into the classroom with the idea that the universe revolves around them. They are still "babies" essentially with a preschool mindset and have parents that usually think that whatever they do is genius. Don't laugh! You know we've all thought that about our own children. It's my job as their teacher to take these twenty or so children and teach them that there are others around them that are just as important in my eyes and most importantly in God's eyes. This is where we begin talking about what makes each of us special—how unique God has made each of us—while at the same time balancing that with learning manners, proper classroom behavior, and self-control.

## THE PROCESS

My first unit in science deals with the body systems, the five senses, personal hygiene, nutrition and exercise. This helps them to grasp what an amazing creation they are in Christ. We then move into discussing our classroom community and how we should treat others around us, which then leads to discussing our school as a community with each class functioning as a separate entity while still being a part of a bigger unit. Finally, I take that as a lead into our community of Ormond Beach, Florida, and how our school, Riverbend Academy, fits into it.

We take lots of field trips at this point. What better way to learn about your community than by visiting it? I find that as we visit each location (fire station, a working farm, grocery store, post office, hospital, etc.), the students really begin thinking about themselves in a new way: How can I contribute to my community? What can I do to help others with the job I choose?

This idea of taking the students from thinking about just themselves to a more broad picture of how they fit into this world is continued with a brief study of American history followed by a "Celebrate America" program that we perform at a veterans' nursing home close to Veteran's Day. Again, this field trip gets the children to think outside of themselves.

This leads us to discuss our city and pray for our mayor. We then take that knowledge of a city and I show the children how many cities make up the state of Florida. This opens their eyes to how many mayors there are that need prayer, which leads to a discussion of our one governor of Florida and how he is in charge of all the mayors. The picture broadens even more with a study of our state of Florida and a great class project to learn all we can about where we live. This, of course, leads to where our state fits into the whole United States of America and that there are fifty governors we need to pray for, who, in turn, are led by one president of the United States who also needs our prayers.

By starting very specifically at the first of school and broadening the students' views of where they fit in, it prepares them for when I finally get to teaching about the world as a whole. The children now see how small they are on such a huge earth. Lord willing, it deepens their understanding of what a great and mighty God we serve that could create everything with just one word but knows each of them by the very hairs on their head. It's awe-inspiring to teach and it's amazing to see the children begin to really see where they fit in, in the grand scheme of things.

## INTEGRATING GEOGRAPHY

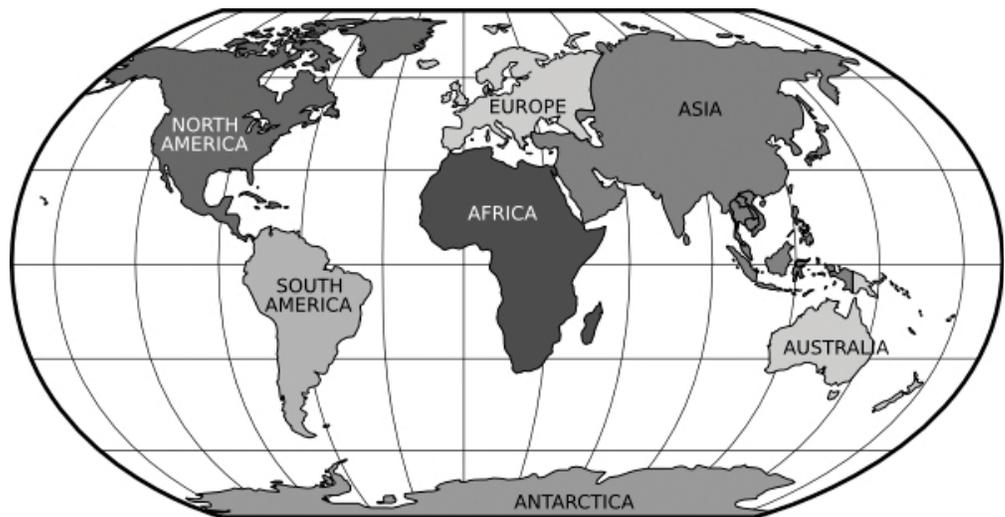
I know that seems like a lot of preparation for an eight-week unit on geography, but I have found it to be so helpful for these little, literal thinkers. When we return from Christmas break, I begin our studies of the world. This helps the children to understand that there are other children around the world just like them who love to play and learn just like they do. It also gives me the opportunity to present the gospel to my students again by reminding them that these other children around the world need a Savior just like they do, and that they were born into sin as well. Children everywhere need to know that Christ died for those whom He called in every country, tribe, and tongue. We know this because Revelation 7:9–10 says,

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They

were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

These verses, along with many others throughout our lessons, are a great way to also show the children a need for missions to all countries in the world. In fact, as I teach each continent and country, I make sure to include a missionary (past or present) that they can learn from. This, again, is taking the children outside of themselves to think about others.

I have two special songs that I teach the children to help them remember the continents and the oceans.



The continent song gives me a guideline as to which continent I cover from first to last. I choose one unique country to teach about from each continent so that after we have discussed one, each child gets to fill in their own passport page. I pre-make my passports for kindergarten to fill in with the countries' flags, and handwriting lines to write the countries' names, plus a short activity for them to complete, but in first and second grades they can easily do more with their passports.

During my presentation at the 2014 ACCS conference, I presented the teachers with ideas for each country my students study that allow me to integrate each subject

with a small bit of the culture of that country for the week. For example, when studying Brazil, I do an activity during math time that goes along with the idea of spearfishing which is a very popular and necessary way of fishing on the narrow parts of the Amazon River. I create “fish” with math facts and answers and the children get to “spear” the answers together with wooden skewers. This activity reinforces what we learned during social studies the day before and keeps Brazil “alive” during math the following day.

Integrating each country studied on each continent can be as simple as playing music from that country when the students are doing silent seatwork (depending on the style of music) to as complicated as playing organized games on the playground like “Last One Standing” which is a gladiator-style game we play when studying the country of Italy.

The point to all of my geography studies is to immerse my students in the culture we study each week throughout all my subjects—math, grammar, science, social studies, art, music, reading, recess, and even snack time. Doing it this way takes a good deal of planning ahead but it’s truly worth it when you hear the students discussing each country and its culture with one another during their free time. Some of the sweet examples I’ve heard in my classroom include, “I wonder if boys in Italy know we call football soccer over here?” or “We should hold our pinkies up while we drink our CapriSuns today like the Queen of England does with her tea!” or “I think it would be awesome to go on an African safari!” or “I don’t need blubber like the penguins in Antarctica because I live in Florida,” or “Mrs. Epps dances the Mexican hat dance like a Mexican lady” (that one makes me laugh), or “If no one tells those boys and girls in Australia about God what will happen to them? Maybe we should tell them!” (That’s my favorite).

At the end of the eight-week study, we have a huge celebration that we call an International Feast. We invite parents to join our class as we eat kid-friendly food from

around the world. I hang international flags around the room and we decorate with props we’ve used throughout the study. The students are also encouraged to bring in an item from home that is from another country for a show & tell time. The students love it! The parents love it and, of course, I love it!

If you don’t study geography as a pre-polly teacher, I would highly encourage you to give it a try! It’s just another way to expose your students to the uniqueness of each person God has created—regardless of what country they are from. As we know from Genesis 11:1–9, it was God who confounded the languages of the people of Babel so they would spread throughout the lands, be fruitful and multiply. As a teacher, I want to take all those wonderful differences and use them as an opportunity to teach the children to think outside of themselves, beyond their family in their little homes, past their kindergarten class at their school, through their community, city, state and country, and into all the world through their study of geography.

For more specific and detailed information about how you can apply this in your classroom, please feel free to contact me at [caepps@gmail.com](mailto:caepps@gmail.com).

# BOYS AND CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

*by Matt Whitling, Logos School*

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*Note: This article has been  
prepared from an audio recording.*

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According to the Department of Education, boys are one year to a year and a half behind girls in reading and writing. Of high-school dropouts eighty percent are boys. In England, Canada, Australia, Germany, France, and Japan—in fact, in thirty-five developed countries—girls outperformed boys in overall educational markers, with the most drastic difference being in reading and writing. Boys are six times more likely than girls to have a learning disability, three times more likely to be registered drug addicts, and four times more likely to be diagnosed as emotionally disturbed. They are at greater risk for schizophrenia, autism, sexual addiction, alcoholism, and all forms of antisocial and criminal behavior. They are twelve times more likely to murder someone and their rate of death and car accidents is greater than girls by 50%. Men commit 90% of major crimes, 95% of burglaries, and they comprise 94% of drunk drivers. And so when you look at the statistics, it can put certain people—moms in particular—into a froth of concern. There are people that are concerned globally for males and the pendulum swings back and forth. It is really fascinating.

There are other people that look at other data and say,

“No, we should be more concerned about our daughters, our girls.” In education especially, it’s interesting to watch the pendulum. One in particular has to do with what we think about boys and girls and the differences between them. Before 1960, we could title the mentality that was there as “gender absolutists.” Before the 60s, pretty much everybody knew that boys and girls were different from birth. As we moved into the 60s, that was still commonly held but the foundation had slowly begun to erode as to why they were different at birth or what it was that they held in common and what was different between the two. The second period that we can look at is 1960 roughly to the 90s, which we could title as gender relativists. There are people who were really into the idea that you could take a young man and raise him as a young woman or vice versa and they thought it was all the culture that you raise them in. It was all the nurture that was taking place that really set the gender direction that your child was going. There were some awful train wrecks that followed that. It was the sort of thing where you take a young girl and have her play with trucks, hand grenades, and plastic M16s and weapons, and then take the boy and give him teacups, forks and knives and spoons, and try to do role reversals. We saw some real messes in young people as

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a result of that sort of thing.

About 2005 to present, we are back to the gender absolutists. The primary reason for that is recent brain research that has taken place. You can see scientific evidence now where people are telling us “boys and girls really are different. And we have run tests that verify this.” Again we see the swing—there are pendulum swings in education when it comes to curriculum, when it comes to the nature of the children, and what teaching looks like. G.K. Chesterton has this wonderful quote about this sort of a swing. He says, “It often happens that science arrives eventually at a truth which common sense has derived without its aid a long time before.” And so brain research, which is fascinating, has really put us back squarely in this position where people have acknowledged there is a difference.

It is not all how children were raised that determine certain things. Some of the fruit of brain research work shows that girls hear better than boys. Girls are more easily distracted by noise. They are more interested in the human face. Researchers will put a little mobile over the crib—one of the sections is a human face, and one is a block that will have all different patterns. The girls gravitate toward the human face. They want to see the face. For the guys—whether a human face, a square, a rectangle, a triangle—if it is moving his eyes are on it. Girls tend to draw pictures of people, pets, and houses. They are more emotional and more collaborative, and tend to underestimate their abilities. Boys are more interested in moving objects. They prefer different colors than girls. They draw pictures of rockets, car crashes, and warfare. They overestimate their abilities. Regarding the drowning rate, for every one girl that drowns every year, 10 boys drown. That is really stark. The contrast between people dying in a swimming accident has a lot to do with girls who are looking at their surroundings and making a conservative judgment as to what they are going to do and, more often than not, underestimating their abilities. And it serves them well. Then you have

young men who look at a situation and say, “I can do it. Not only can I do it, but I can do it at night. I can do it in a body of water that is unknown. I have never swum across this river before and, in fact, I can’t see the other bank, and I am intoxicated, but I can do it.” It is a really interesting dynamic to look at, but when you look at some of the statistics and studies, it really shouldn’t surprise us that much. When we look at the way that young men are built, we find they are risk takers, they tend to rush off and lead. The fact that they are at the top of those sorts of charts—more men drown than young women—is nothing to brag about. But as you see culture erode, it would make sense that men are at the forefront and are leading the charge down.

Researchers have done little studies with college students. They will take a college age guy and put him in a room with six little pool rings. In the middle of the room is a little post, like a post for horseshoes. They have marked off a one-foot mark away from the post, two feet, five feet, ten feet, fifteen feet, and then twenty in this room. They will tell the guy he will be all alone and that his job is to get these six rings on that post. So that he can do this privately and on his own, the guy in the white lab coat exits. They have a little video camera in the room. The young man will go to five feet or ten feet away from the post and throw the six rings. The researchers will then put a young lady in the room. They will tell her the same thing: six rings on the post. She will go one foot away and get all of them on the post. It is not that difficult of a project. The guy is back there trying to get it from five or ten feet.

For stage two, they bring in two female observers who are peers, college-aged gals. They are watching her and they will say, “Six rings, do as well as you can!” She will go one or two feet away and ring all of them quickly. Then they bring the guy in. He has two young men, college-aged guys, sitting and watching him. If he was a five-footer on his own, he goes back to ten feet. If he was a ten-footer, he will go back to fifteen or twenty



feet because they are watching now. And his rationale is that he doesn't want them to think he is a wuss. And the result is 0 for 6 many times from 20 feet away.

This is called a "risky shift." When a young man is in a situation where there are observers, this risky shift takes place where he wants to take more of a risk. He was already risky enough on his own but he has people watching him: he backs up and doubles the difficulty level. Sometimes he fails miserably. The risk of him not getting one loop on the rod goes up and he takes that risk. He wants to take the risky shift.

Part of thinking about boys and classical Christian education is just getting it, getting the way that God has built them. There are weaknesses and strengths for both. This is nothing about girls just being smarter, obviously. Young ladies are made for a purpose. God is calling them to serve Him in a certain way in the kingdom. With young men, He is calling them to serve in a different way, with different roles. There are many similarities between the two but something that we need to recognize is that they are different. You are going to have young men and young women in your classroom

and it is good to be aware and ready for both. Here are some simple examples. Every year our sixth graders take a bike trip at the end of the year. It is a big celebration; they do a nice long bike ride up north and it's beautiful. When we are talking to the students before the bike trip, I will say, "Girls, let me have your attention. Ladies, throughout the trip make sure that you are including everyone. When it is lunchtime, sit together, talk to everyone, circulate, include. Don't go off into a little group and exclude people." And then I will say, "Boys, are you listening? STAY ON THE PATH!"

There are different temptations that boys and girls are going to face. Boys tend to do things that will endanger their lives. Just foolish. It is do and then think, afterwards. Girls' temptations can be more social. They communicate well. They understand their feelings a lot better than guys do. If you have a 17-year-old lady and she is having a hard time, you can sit down with her and talk it through and many times she can describe to you exactly what is going on. You can sit down with a 17-year-old boy and you can get about as much out of him as you could a 7-year-old boy. Emotionally, he

sometimes has no idea what is happening; verbalizing it is twice as hard. He is just in the midst, he is just living, it is all right here. It doesn't go that far down sometimes. Knowing who you are dealing with and what you are dealing with can help you to be strategic.

The goal is that you should want your son to imitate God as he carries out his masculine role in life. I would like to go through five different aspects of masculinity that you should want to see in your sons at home and that you should expect to see, and at least in a certain sense, nurture in the classroom. These are not things that I made up. If you have read Doug Wilson's book *Future Men*, he alludes to this. (William Mouser, the author of *Five Aspects of Man: A Biblical Theology of Masculinity*, says similar things.) Others have looked biblically at these attributes of masculinity and said, "Let's look for these things and try to foster them in our sons."

The first sort of thing that you want to see in your boys is to be *lords*. By lords we mean we want young men who exercise dominion, who are adventurous and visionary, the sort of young men who can take responsibility and who can deal with authority. Picture young people growing up. You might want your son to have a tree fort or some kind of fort that is on the ground. There are some parents that would rush off and purchase one and then have the company come and set it up in the back yard, and that is the fort for your son. I would encourage you to not think that way. Think about your sons being lords and being adventurous and building for the kingdom of God. Baby steps of building look more like buying them tools and helping them build their own fort. So the creative thinking, the dreaming up what we are going to build, and the process of actually building it is one of those masculine attributes that we want to see from a young age. Use Legos even—young boys building things with Legos. You could look at it and say lordship. He is learning to exercise dominion. He is creating. And then there is something that he has made. Parents that go in and do everything for their

sons miss out on some of those opportunities that they would otherwise have.

Second, we want our young men to be *husbandman*. The idea behind this is that we want them to tend and keep. In order to do that, they need to be patient, careful, and hardworking. In order to tend and keep, they have to have something to tend and keep. They need to be responsible for something. It could be a garden, it could be pets, it could be responsibility for mowing the lawn every week. But they need this. As parents, you need to be able to risk your stuff in order to allow your sons to be lords and husbandmen. What do I mean by your stuff? I mean all of your stuff. You need to be willing to let them break your things. You need to be willing to have them do jobs and have them do it not as well as you would have done it. You know that even when it comes to doing the dishes, it's a risk, right? As parents, if you teach your kids how to do the dishes they are going to break some. You need to be willing to just give it all away because you love your kids. You want to give them this responsibility and with that responsibility there is the potential that they are going to mess it up. There is a temptation for parents—as you give them the responsibility—to hover. I know what it is like to have a job and have someone who is supervising me in such a way that I am thinking about them more than I am thinking about doing my job. Some of us dads are like that. We give a job; we are going to have our son mow the lawn so he is going to be a husbandman. And dad is out on the porch watching for "holidays" the whole time and critiquing. If there is a problem he is out there, "Whoa! Come on over and let me tell you what you are doing wrong." Your boy says "yes, sir" and then he is going to try and not make that mistake again. The biggest thing on his mind is that dad is critiquing all the time, just breathing down his neck. As a father, you need to have some safety things in place and do some little practices with them, but then you need to set him free to do the job and go away. Sometimes as parents, you need to

create some space and then tell them, “Hey, when you are done we will take a look at it. We will see how it went.” It’s like someone editing your writing assignment. There are going to be some things that you miss. Let’s talk about it when you are finished. But let him do his job well. Let him catch some of his own mistakes as he does that, and then go help him and graciously show him some things that could be better next time, or that we need to clean up right now. But don’t hover all the time.

Another thing that I think is important for young men in this realm is they need to know what it is like to work for somebody else, and especially as your boys get older. For teens, if they are always working for mom or dad—especially if they are always working for mom—it is not the healthiest thing for them. Have them get a job where they have someone else who is their boss, someone else who gives them feedback and input as they work for money for that guy. It is great experience for sons to know what it is like to have a good boss, what it’s like to have a bad boss, and to navigate their life. Summers are wonderful! There are some people that will say, why take three months off? It should just be full-time school all the way through. But summers are a whole three months for your sons to work, to get experience doing different jobs, and to have different bosses. I think it is wonderful for young men to step out and get used to going away to work and having a boss.

So lords, husbandmen, and then the third attribute that we want to see is *saviors*. And by this I mean dragon slayers. They need to be strong, sacrificial, courageous, and good. They need to be the sorts of young men who rescue, protect, crush, kill, conquer, and win. In very plain terms, if your son is a wuss, he can’t do it. You should be able to get outside yourself every now and then; you have certain strengths as a parent, certain things that you are probably doing really well with your sons. Every now and then get out of that and try to see from an outside perspective. What are your blind spots? Sometimes in classical Christian circles, we can be really

good at academics—sons, young men that are really bright and really diligent in the classroom—and just wimps. You want to see that and try to hedge and round them out. Ask yourself: “Is this the sort of young man that could put a dent in the culture for the kingdom of God or not? Is he too much of a sissy? Is he a momma’s boy?” And if he is, then you have to think through what to do. How do you give him some attributes that would allow him to be a savior, a dragon slayer?

Your kids need to be good at killing things: weeds, insects, snakes. Our second son is Jed. When he was thirteen, we were on a trip to California to visit my folks. In four days he put down eight or nine rattlesnakes. When we go home to California over spring break, sometimes it is too cool for the rattlesnakes to be out. They are in their little dens, little rock piles. Every now and then you hit the den and they are out. Jed would go from rock pile to rock pile with his .22 rifle and shoot these rattlesnakes and then bring them in and say, “Pop, look at what I have.” It was a big rattlesnake. Then after lunch he’d come back with two sometimes! These are the times for mom . . . right? That’s why the balance is so important. God gave these children a father and mother to help balance each other out. Work together as a team. There are so many times when my dear wife has had to say, “Matthew, I need to go inside, now.” Because she knows that I am not going to discourage it. I see these things and I think, “Jed, look at you go!” And she thinks, “Oh, no!” She has to leave sometimes. But it is that idea of killing the dragon. It could look like little boys in the backyard with BB guns shooting soldiers, trying to shoot the soldiers over. Things that moms might think, “That is just a sin. He is murdering and murder is a sin.” Well, there are different ways to look at it. If your son is pretending to be a drunk driver and he is running people over on the sidewalk, that is a sin. That is the sort of thing that a dad should step in and say, “No, no, no, we do not do that.” Saviors are good. They are rescuing as they kill, they are still good,

and they are still rescuing. A situation like the drunk driver thing, that is a sin. If you have a young man that is pretending there is a sniper who is shooting the family members and the young man has to sneak up behind him and slit his throat, that is when dads should say, “Well done. That is good. You are a savior and you are doing the right thing.” Let’s be honest about it: they are going to have this natural urge to kill and destroy things, to blow things up if they have the right equipment. Your job is to try and funnel it and realize they have been made for a purpose. We are talking about putting a dent in culture. If you always come in and squash it and say, “That is stupid,” or “That is wicked” then you are pushing something down and pushing your son into a different category where he doesn’t have this savior aspect. You want to look and say, “Here is what is really good about that and here is what needs to be cleaned up, right?” You want to separate the wheat from the chaff and we will talk about that in a little bit.

Saviors—very important. Your sons are going to want to know when they get to fight. If they have a sister, talk to them about the fact that their job is to protect their sister. They will want to know “is this the time? Do I get to punch him now?” Almost always it is no; it is not now. The times when your son should be ready to punch somebody is when they are hurting her and the offender won’t stop. Then the brothers go and punch him and they keep punching him until he stops. It is the idea that you don’t start a fight, but once you get into it, you always finish a fight. It is their job to make sure they protect their sister, and in a classical Christian school there aren’t that many great chances. Most of the time people are behaving themselves. But you want them to be poised and ready in case they ever had to.

The fourth attribute is that we want our sons to be *sages*. We want them to be wise. And so they have to be smart, and shrewd, and well educated. They need to be teachable, studious, thoughtful. This is a balance. If they are a kiss-up in the classroom to their teachers, that is

not what you want. You want a son who sees the value in what he is learning, who is working really hard to do well and at the same time with a little bit of distance. It is not as though he is in love with all of his teachers and just waiting for another word of wisdom to come out of their mouths. He appreciates this, but there is a masculine distance where he says, “Yeah, I am learning what I can and basketball practice is in half an hour. I’m almost ready for that.” It is a balance of wanting to see them be wise and to take school seriously.

Part of what follows from this is they should be money smart, so give little baby lessons when they are making money from a summer job or you are paying them to do certain jobs. They need to learn early about tithing. 10% goes to the Lord, 10% is to save, 80% he can use for what he wants. I think it is important for boys to have 80% to blow sometimes, and by that I mean they save up. My oldest sons went through this airsoft stage. The older boys would look at a catalog where they could buy an airsoft rifle for only \$125. We had a two-week rule: before they could blow a wad of cash (\$50 or more) on something significant, (they had to sit on it for two weeks to think about it, to compare prices, and research, and make sure they wanted to spend \$100 on this airsoft rifle. So we gave a two-week buffer period and then we would let them waste it. It is really healthy! Sometimes you can cage your sons into never making a bad choice. Why not let them work really hard for that \$100? Buy that airsoft rifle. Shoot it for an afternoon. Have a friend step on it and have it just be toast. And then they realize: this is a piece of junk. To learn that lesson, \$100 is nothing. If they can learn it when they are 8 or 9 or 10 years old, what a valuable thing for them to understand business-wise! There is going to be all sorts of application later on.

The last attribute is they should be *glory bearers*. And by that we mean they need to understand that they are representatives. They are responsible and they need to be holy. What a great opportunity when you send your kids

to school for them to realize that they have a billboard that they are walking around with on the front of them and on the back of them that says, “This is a Whitling. This is a Christian kid.” Whatever they do, wherever they go, whatever they say, they are advertising: “This is what a child of God acts like. This is what a son of Whitling acts like.” They advertise even more so when they go to their summer job and are working for some boss who doesn’t know the Lord and he just wants them to do the job. They have a sign on them: “This is a Whitling. This is a child of God. This is a student at Logos school.” Boys in particular need to know that those things are printed on the front and the back of their billboard as they walk around. They are representing certain people and that is important for them. They need to be responsible.

Those are some attributes—there are more. Get the *Future Men* book and read that. I would like to take those ideas and say those are attributes we want. But you should also want to see your sons be like the godly men that God loves. If you look at the Scriptures, you think of David. God loved David. He was a man after God’s own heart. David was a warrior poet. We should want that for our sons. In our day and age especially, there aren’t a lot of warrior poets. You can find poets and you can find warriors, but to see those two elements in one person is pretty rare. You may ask, how do I make my son a warrior? There are a bunch of different ways, but I believe that in our day and age, in this culture, the warriors—unless you are doing something pre-military—our warriors are athletes, young men who are working hard. There is physical discipline. There is hard mental work. There is pushing yourself beyond what you think you can do. There is competition and combat. There is an enemy that you are fighting against. You have somebody who is giving orders. You can win or you can lose. Many times there are observers there watching to see how you do. For boys in particular, if parents say they don’t do athletics because of some kind of Christian ideal or some sort of classical goal that

they have, I think it is very difficult for them to create an opportunity for their sons to learn to be warriors.

Sometimes it should be dangerous. As an example, we had a great opportunity when our kids were young. We had a man in our congregation who loved boxing and started a boxing club. So our little guys, when they were teeny, learned how to box. Their gloves were bigger than their heads. They would go out there and learn how to take a punch to the nose. They wore head gear. For the elementary kids, I watched and it was all really healthy and good. There were no concussions going on. It was all slow motion. The gloves are so big and heavy. Every now and then someone would get hit in the nose. What a wonderful experience for a young man to get hit in the nose and have to deal with that and respond to it! That is something that we have lost as a culture, because we are trying to protect everybody so much. When I saw the junior-high school guys, 8th graders, and then high school and beyond, my thought was if they did this a lot they wouldn’t have as many brain cells as I would want them to have at the end of it. So I think there is a balance to it. If you have your kids boxing year round, and they are getting competitive, and they are taking hits to the head regularly, I would have concerns about that. Try to find a contact sport where you can have your kids from a young age learn how to take a hit and give a hit. Could they play football? Could they play lacrosse? Is there an opportunity where they could go not just contact, but impact at times? There is a reason why the paramedics are waiting there, because there is a risk of injury. How are you going to make warrior poets if the warfare is so tame and nobody could ever get hurt? Regarding poetry, these young men who are working hard and in some sort of a combat situation have got to be learning poetry, and then learning to write it on their own, loving it, enjoying it, and seeing it as a masculine activity. That is not easy to do—it is a real balancing act. It takes hard work. But that is what we are shooting for.

Let’s talk about immature masculinity. You are raising

your sons to leave. This can be hardest on mom, right? She wants to hold on tight. The whole point is for this son to go out, and that is why in the Scriptures, children are compared to arrows. If you are shooting an arrow, you have to pull the trigger to shoot your arrow. Taking aim, pulling it back, sharpening the arrow—all of that business is about when you pull, you want him to go. And you want him to hit the target. And you want him to kill whatever it was that you were shooting at. That is why you are aiming for vitals. You could raise your son in such a way that he is always within the bubble and when you finally pull the trigger you are praying that everything goes OK. Or you can raise your son where he has left so many times you can't even keep track of them all. He has been practicing leaving since he was teeny, little teeny leavings.

That is why I love preschool. It is not as though the academic content in preschool is something that parents couldn't teach. It is because Logos is a 2–3 day-a-week packed program, where it is just a little leaving, practicing going out and coming back. Another metaphor is that you want your sons to be like boomerangs; you want to send them out and have them come back—not just leave and hate this place and never come back but to go out, and then come back, and go out, and then come back. It is a practice of leavings that you are getting them ready for. The second thing is your sons, as they grow up, will exhibit behaviors that will shock and astonish their mothers. Our son Jed is our poster child for this. Jed always gets the most stories because he deserves it. He is the one that rides no hands down the steep gravel driveway waving at mom on his way down, and she sees it. She sees what is coming and she has to go inside. Jed is the one who has the frozen loaf of bread and sees the trash can across the kitchen and knows that he can throw it through the air and hit the trash can. He is not going to hit the glass front of the oven that is right next to the trash can. He breaks it. He is the one who shot the basketball through the middle window of the dining

room. Over and over again, you look at the situation and can think (mom thinks many times) “idiot, from top to bottom!” Dad has to come in and say, “OK, son, here is what was really good about that. You were aggressive, you were confident, you took a risk, you thought you could do it, and that is the wheat. Now here is the chaff. You need to learn to see around corners.”

For boys, mom says there is no corner that needs to be seen around. This is a linear equation. If you do A and B, you are going to get to C. I can see it coming before you even start thinking about it. But for boys, talk to them about seeing around corners. Tell them what they need to keep an eye out for. Tell them the qualities that you saw that are really good. Tell them, “Next time make sure that you do this. Make sure when you get to the bottom where the gravel is really soft, at least one hand on that handle bar is what you need, right? So you can navigate it.” It is this wheat and chaff business that I think young men need to be coached through instead of the whole business being squashed.

Since 2005, or roughly thereafter, people started to realize there are differences in boys and girls. Educators tend to be on the forefront of the pendulum, pulling and clawing and rushing off to extremes. Some educators have said we need to have single sex schools. There are differences and so they need to be in different locations at different times. Don't have boys and girls in the same classroom. I think that there are certain times and certain places where that is shrewd, where it is wise. God hasn't given us a definitive answer to the question. You as a parent, or an administrator, or on a school board have to look at it and decide what you are going to do. It's a wisdom call. When I look at classes like junior high P.E. in particular, I want the guys and the girls separate. Some of it is modesty issues. Some of it is warrior mentality issues that we are trying to teach the boys. Some of it is just the sports that you are working on that might be specific to a particular gender. But even with that said I have observed some pretty interesting things.

I am the junior high boys P.E. teacher and have the 7th and 8th grade boys every afternoon. Seventh period I run the mile with them. Our girls P.E. teacher, every now and then, will be sick or can't be there, and I will cover for her and so I will have the guys and the girls together. When we run the mile together, I will have a third or almost a half of my guys PR (i.e., personal record) when they are running with the girls. In other words, they run faster when the girls are there with them. They are giving me more when the girls are present. I think of my own home. I have six boys and one girl and dinnertime conversation. As I was growing up, my dad would interject occasionally and say, "That is not a dinnertime subject." My brother and I realized what he was talking about. There are conversations that have gone around my table that my dad would have wanted to veto, way before I did, because it is a pretty masculine group that I have. But if you put one or two young ladies that are of similar age to my sons at the table, it changes the tone of what is going on there. It is kind of like running the mile, where we step up because we realize that the audience is a little bit different. I think that there are some things like that in a classroom dynamic. If you think that just putting all the junior high boys in a classroom together is going to be a blessing to them, sometimes it might be. I know what it is like to coach all guys together and there are advantages to that in a combat situation. But it can be, tone-wise, not always what you want in a classroom every day, day in and day out. I really appreciate the balance of having both in the classroom. It doesn't mean it is bad to separate them for certain amounts of time. If they are excluded completely, if you say the boys have to be separate from the girls all the way through, I think there are dangers in that. I don't think it is healthy all the time. When we go into a worship service, we don't separate the men and women. They sit together. When you look at a young man and a young woman, they have more in common than they have different between the two of them. They are both made in the image of God.

They both should be studying the same sorts of subjects. The academic standard should be really similar between the two of them. There are some particulars that if you want to tweak something you can, but it's good to keep your eyes open when you do that.

Are schools rigged against boys? There are people that think that maybe they are. My encouragement to you is to say, no, not necessarily. Make sure that is not the case. Part of it is simply understanding. If you have a school that has a woman administrator and all lady teachers and no men on campus at all, then you need to compensate for that. You may not have the balance that you want, *de facto*. You may need to do things specifically to make sure that you are not catering toward things like this. Say you are going to give a citizenship award—we call it the Knights Award, or faculty commendation. Especially if you have all female staff, make sure that you are not giving that to all the good girls and all of the boys that act like them. That is not what you want. You want to see young men with masculine goals. They are going to be taking dumb risks at times. They are going to be disagreeing with teachers in a respectful way at times. But you should be able to see and appreciate masculine attributes. Encourage it and separate the wheat from the chaff. See that you are not trying to have one ideal or one mold that everybody needs to fit into, and it is a feminine one. If you have a mix, if you have a balance between the two, it can be fine.

A quick thought on leadership versus separatism. If you want your sons to be leaders, they have to have peers. If you want your son to be the leader of the football team, he has to be on the football team. You can imagine situations where you think you are preparing him for something, but it is all hypothetical. You haven't put him in a realm where he could actually do what you want him to be able to do. In order for him to be a leader, there have to be people that might follow him, hypothetically. If you want him to be a good leader, he has to be going in a good direction. He has to be a godly

young man. He has to be the sort of guy that other people his age would look at and say, “I would follow him.” That is not an easy thing to concoct all by yourself. It is challenging. If you are homeschooling and you have a son and he has three younger siblings, you may think he is a leader. Well, of course, he is a leader. He is the oldest of his siblings and you have put him in charge all the time. Put him in a group of his peers and then you will see whether anybody would ever want to follow him. That is part of the task of the warrior poet. You have to ask yourself if there are godly friends around him that would rub off some of his rough edges so that he is prepared to lead and someone might possibly follow after him as he goes in that direction. Your project in this whole thing is that you want to send him out to do damage. You are sending him out to do damage and to put a dent in the culture for the glory of God, for the kingdom of God. Those sorts of young men are not easy. They are not convenient. There are times when they are difficult to deal with. Have you watched the *Lone Survivor* movie? Look at Navy Seal type guys. Ask yourself, to be really good at combat, how inconvenient would it be for a mom to have to raise that sort of a guy? Is this a polite and gracious and soft spoken, sit-with-his-hands-folded-in-his-lap sort of guy? The sort of people that are going to go out and do warfare are the sort of people who are a handful at home. You are looking at a coin. One side of the coin is really hard, really challenging. We have a young man with a strong will and he is not afraid of mom. Then you look at the other side of that coin and you think, “What better material for a warrior than that?” He’s hardheaded, aggressive, won’t stop, keeps charging, a little bit careless and risky at times. You need that at times—someone to send in first. That is going to be some of your sons; you want to foster that and make sure that they are ready to go. Send them out.



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