

ACCA Faculty Independent Sessions

Professional Development

Name: Rachael Messer

Date: 5/8/2014

Seminar or Activity: Is Beauty in the Eye of the Beholder?

What you learned from this session:

This afternoon I listened to a podcast entitled "Is Beauty in the Eye of the Beholder?" Through this podcast they talk about the difference between things we are attracted to and things that are truly beautiful. When a new catchy song comes on the radio one might think the song is great. However after listening to it several times realizes it is not a truly beautiful song. Or you may see a guy and think wow he's attractive, but after getting to know him you may quickly change your mind. When we are attracted to something it is more sensory and imitate where as true beauty is more than skin deep. Sometimes we may not be attracted to something that is truly beautiful. Such as a dark movie that depicts truth.

They also spoke about opinions and how when someone says, "I like that painting" they are telling you about their self. Where as when someone says, "That painting is beautiful" they are telling you about the painting itself.

The podcast came to an end before they answered their original question however they ended by saying beyond taste there is an universal reality of trust, goodness, and beauty and that we need to teach our children at an early age to love things that are truly beautiful. This question was first asked in the 3rd century BC by the Greeks and has been debated ever since. So I ask you, is beauty truly in the eye of the beholder?

Would you recommend: Yes

Where to find resource: CiCRCE Audio Library

Name: Christina Barbulescu

Date: 5/8/2014

Seminar or Activity: Know What You Want Students to Learn, and Ensure They Learn It by Tom Spencer, ACCS Classis, Summer 2014

What you learned from this session:

Spencer is sharing insights from the book by Fenwick English, entitled, Deciding What to Teach and Test. English is a leader in advocating improvements in education, and is considered to be the "father" of curriculum mapping.

English believes that identifying what we want students to learn is paramount. He sees this is as the best way to improve student learning. It also provides a chance to unify parents, teachers, and students. This role, he believes, should be taken back from textbook publishers and test makers.

Once a school knows what it wants students to learn, besides using curriculum and

standardized tests, it can conduct exit interviews with graduates and parent surveys to measure itself.

English sees standardized tests as valuable in providing peer comparison (comparing students to other schools' students), to identify strengths and weaknesses. However, he sees the tests as misused with curriculum is changed around the tests. Another mistake he sees is the adoption of a test that doesn't match curriculum. He says that teacher made tests, and school made tests have some value.

This article reminds me that an educators need to think deeply about what they want to see students learn, rather than order curriculum and tests that will tell them.

Thankfully, ACCA has a vision of what we want to see in graduates. Matching up this vision with practices is an ongoing process.

Would you recommend: Yes

Where to find resource: ACCS Classis, online

Name: Laura Keesee

Date: 5/8/2014

Seminar or Activity: Recovering the Lost Tols of Learning, Douglas Wilson

What you learned from this session:

I read this book near the beginning of my classical teaching career and wanted to revisit it. Wilson does, as usual, an excellent job developing and explaining the whats and whys of Classical Christian education.

Classical Christian education must: have a biblical understanding of the nature of man and knowledge, take into account that because there is a Creator God, the universe coheres (subjects not taught in isolation), knowledge/education cannot save, impart a love for learning (loving both the process and the knowledge). There is a great summary on page 100 under heading, "Emphasize grammar, logic, and rhetoric in all subjects).

Would you recommend: Yes

Where to find resource: On bookshelf in Michelle's room

Name: Melissa Hobson

Date: 5/8/2014

Seminar or Activity: What makes us feel good about work?

What you learned from this session:

Dan Ariely explains several different experimental models where they tried to capture meaningfulness of labor. They designed very cool experiments with legos and origami. They looked at value by the "workers" and value of observers. I really enjoyed how they attempted to quantify things like value and satisfaction.

Would you recommend: Yes

Where to find resource: http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_ariely_what_makes_us_feel_good_about_our_work#t-8631

Name: Brett Edwards

Date: 5/8/2014

Seminar or Activity: Grammar Stage Writing by Matt Whitlink

What you learned from this session:

Whitling simplifies writing by thinking of it in two genres; narrative and storytelling. Narrative is interested in the idea of storytelling. Expository seeks to explain or give reasons for a particular belief. He expresses his appreciation for the Shurley grammar program. He also discusses the strengths of Andrew Pudewa's Excellence in Writing program. Whitling praises the value of imitation in writing when executed in the grammar stage. Schools need to develop a writing program and curriculum that builds upon itself. There needs to be collaboration amongst all teachers curriculum development should be reformational and not revolutionary. Revolutionary development wants results now and seeks to make big jumps to achieve the desired results as soon as possible. Reformational curriculum development seeks long term results and is patient with curriculum reform. How a student holds their pencil is important and penmanship does matter. ACCA might consider having students independently read at least one poem a day. The goal would be to simply read and not necessarily connected to any assignment. Poetry is good for the soul. Grading criteria for lower elementary should be clear and easy to understand for students, teachers and parents. For upper elementary the grading criteria changes. There are two categories; one for content and a second for mechanics. Writing assignments should usually be read aloud to the entire class.

Would you recommend: Yes

Where to find resource: http://www.accsedu.org/conferences/conference_recordings_playlist_and_archive

Name: Michelle Williams

Date: 5/8/2014

Seminar or Activity: The History of the Natural Method of Teaching Latin Parts I and II

What you learned from this session:

Disclaimer: This article was published in The Classical Teacher, Memoria Press's Catalogue in which they sell Latin Materials that employ the Grammar Translation Method of teaching Latin. Therefore, the article's bias against the Natural Method is predictable.

In part I of the article, Henry Wingate, retired Director of the Darden School Library,

describes the history of Latin instruction in universities until the 17th century.

Wingate maintains that even though Latin was the spoken language on university campuses until that time, "Latin students first learned their native language until they were well versed in Latin grammar and syntax and had spent a thousand hours or more reading, writing, memorizing, and reciting Latin." Only then did the boys in the university schools begin to speak Latin in the classroom. The main idea behind what Wingate is saying is that the student's native language was the main tool used to teach them the rudiments of Latin before expecting them to speak and think in Latin. Then in the 1850's a Scot named J S Blackie began to advocate the method of teaching Latin using only Latin. The name of the method became known as the Natural Method. A Frenchman named Sauveur advocated the same thing. Wingate notes that the movement lasted about thirty years but never demonstrated its effectiveness. Meanwhile, from 1902-1928, WHD Rouse, a professor at Cambridge, used the natural method in his classrooms as a way to address the difficulties that boys in particular have with the grammar translation method. He conducted his classes solely in Latin with no English permitted. Rouse was not able, however, to help others learn how to teach in the natural method and Wingate quotes two sources that both assert that Rouse's method requires a special kind of teacher and that others who attempted it failed utterly.

Wingate concludes by proposing that the effectiveness of Latin instruction methodology should take into account 3 things: the historical record of its use, the soundness of its fundamental tenets, and its compatibility with the generally accepted goals of Latin instruction.

Wingate states that historically, the Natural/Direct Method has not been successful. He states that on the second point that the amount of time usually spent on Latin instruction in schools, he mentions two years, is not enough time to progress to reading ancient Latin literature using the Natural/Direct Method. (Nor does the Grammar translation method, I would say!) Finally, he states that (and this is the only point in which I think is worth really thinking about) Natural/Direct Method does not do the job of helping students in the training of the mind, understanding the English language better, and helping to develop the English vocabulary of students who study Latin.

At ACCA we have made the decision to try the Natural/Direct method in the classroom beginning next year. I am looking forward to seeing how it works out and how well it achieves ACCA's goals for Latin instruction.

Would you recommend: Yes

Where to find resource: Memoria Press catalogues Winter 2013, Spring 2014 Copies will be stored on the Teacher Resource shelf in my room.

Name: Lexi

Date: 5/8/2014

Seminar or Activity: The Way They Learn by Cynthia Tobias

What you learned from this session:

I continued to read from The Way They Learn, which I began several professional development days ago. It's a book full of basic learning styles and how to work with them. Today I read chapters 5-7, in which I learned more about the Dominant Abstract Random and Dominant Concrete Random learning styles. Chapter 7 asked the question of how all the different learning styles concentrate. I find it refreshing to read about learning styles. It reminds me that my way is not always the best way for others and that I need to continually be thinking about how other people learn and catering, to some degree, to the different styles of learning in the classroom. I remember comparing this book to the Five Love Languages. It still makes me think of that. Just as we should figure out how to love others in ways that mean love to them, even if we have to work a little harder at it, so we must be willing to take other's learning styles into consideration and be willing to understand and work with them. I like the way this author does not give all learning styles a "free pass" in not being able to work in certain ways. She remains adamant that nothing is an excuse for not doing one's best. I also like the fact that she recognizes we can never cater to every child's learning style all the time. She does stress, though, that because we cannot do that, we must help children identify areas that may be frustrating and challenging for them and learn to use their natural strengths to help them in those situations.

Would you recommend: Yes

Where to find resource: teacher resource shelf in Michelle's room or borrow from me

Name: Pam Grote

Date: 5/8/2014

Seminar or Activity: The Dangerous Article for Boys by Martin Cothran

What you learned from this session:

Well-written and thought-out as well as entertaining, Martin hits the nail on the head with this article about the dearth of inspiring and character-building literature for boys. They need heroes--we all do--but in today's climate of effeminate men, that's not what they get. What they really need is "...the things boys like in books: action, adventure, danger, and bloodletting... and an iron moral code" that the hero enforces with a vengeance.." They don't need, as experts today would have us believe, a "deeper engagement with their own lives." How many stirring examples in literature are we giving our male students so they can be inspired to grow into courageous young men?

Would you recommend: Yes

Where to find resource: Memoria Press--articles