

ACCA Faculty Summer Reading 2014

Professional Development

Name: Rachael Hansen

Date: 7/10/2014

Book/Author: The Seven Laws of Teaching by John Milton Gregory

Teacher Book Review:

Through the book "The Seven Laws of Teaching" Gregory lists the seven laws of teaching and then describes them. For each law he gives an explanation of the law and its importance. I liked how at the end of each chapter there is a list of tips for the teacher to follow in order to abide by the law. There was also a section stating how most people misuse the law. I enjoyed this book and would recommend it for any teacher.

Rating: 4 - Really liked it

Recommended For: Teachers

Name: Rachael Hansen

Date: 6/25/2014

Book/Author: The Fault in Our Stars by John Green

Teacher Book Review:

This is a book about the everyday life of teens battling cancer. The book is full of love and laughter as well as tears. Cancer is a very active part of life these days. It seems everyone is affected by it in one-way or another. This book helped me to understand how many people with cancer perceive their disease as well as the fate it may bring them. Having young friends and family that are currently battling cancer this book was a very close reality for me and I would defiantly recommend it, but be sure to have your tissues handy!

Rating: 4 - Really liked it

Recommended For: Adults and Teens

Name: Laura Keesee

Date: Jul-14

Book/Author: Leisure: The Basis of Culture by Josef Pieper

Teacher Book Review:

Leisure: The Basis of Culture, was a challenging but rewarding book to read. Leisure, as defined by Pieper, is not idleness "but freedom and detachment of the human spirit which enables a man to contemplate and be at peace in those worlds of ideals from which he draws strength and nourishes his soul." Pieper seeks to warn humanity against continuing to allow work to take over, invade, and even define

who we are. He aims to show that common aspects of our culture such as needing diversion and amusement, wanting more and more things, and defining our worth by tangible evidence of our work are a result of our lack of leisure. The book appears in many ways to be a commentary on Psalm 46:10, "Be still, and know that I am God."

Rating: 4 - Really liked it

Recommended For:

Name: Laura Keesee

Date: July, 2014

Book/Author: A Grief Sanctified: Passing Through Grief to Peace and Joy by J. I. Packer

Teacher Book Review:

In A Grief Sanctified, J.I. Packer presents and comments on the memoir Richard Baxter wrote after the death of his wife, Margaret. Richard Baxter was a Puritan pastor and author (1615-1691). The memoir includes many excerpts from Margaret's letters and Baxter's sermons. Through these the reader is introduced to two courageous Christians as they humbly and honestly struggle with fear and doubt. Packer writes, "This is a book for Christian people about six of life's realities – love, faith, death, grief, hope, and patience." I found the book to be personally challenging and comforting.

Rating: 4 - Really liked it

Recommended For:

Name: Brett Edwards

Date: 21-Jul-14

Book/Author: The Case for Classical Christian Education by Douglas Wilson

Teacher Book Review:

Wilson provides a very readable analysis of the essential elements of a classical Christian philosophy of education. As one of the central figures in the classical Christian movement it is important that administrators and teachers are familiar with Wilson's vision for education. Ranging from Dorothy Sayers application of the Trivium to the place of athletics in a Christian school, he tries to cover a wide variety of questions and issues in the movement. It feels disjointed at times but is still enjoyable. For any classical Christian educators that are growing weary I would recommend reading the final chapter "A Call for Teachers" at least once a year. I recommend this book.

Rating: 4 - Really liked it

Recommended For: Teachers, parents and board members

Name: Brett

Date: 7/23/2014

Book/Author: Salt by Mark Kurlansky

Teacher Book Review:

This book is a history of salt. With managed expectations this is a good read. After all salt doesn't quite have the character of a Napoleon or Einstein. Kurlansky provides a brief overview of salt's inconspicuous impact on the history of the world from China to the Caribbean. Along the way you learn a lot about food (recipes included) and other interesting events in world history.

Rating: 3 - Liked it

Recommended For: Food lovers and history buffs

Name: Melissa Hobson

Date: 7/6/2014

Book/Author: This Is Your Brain on Music by Daniel J. Levitin

Teacher Book Review:

In This Is Your Brain on Music, musician and neuroscientist Daniel J. Levitin explores what happens in your brain when you listen to music. He provides a good exposition of the basics of music for those of us who don't know from rhythm or downbeat. He also brings readers up to speed on the history of research on memory and music. The implications toward the book's end attempt to reveal why we have an emotional attachment to popular songs from our teen years.

Classical schools, Christian schools, and Sunday schools alike use chants and songs as an aid in memory. This fact is no accident. Levitin writes out of a curiosity to find out *why* this works and what the long-term effects will be.

Rating: 4 - Really liked it

Recommended For: Anyone who is interested in the inner workings of the brain and brain research ought to give this book a read.

Name: Melissa Hobson

Date: 7/28/2014

Book/Author: Instructing a Child's Heart by Tedd and Margy Tripp

Teacher Book Review:

"Formative instruction" is the focus of Tripp installment. The book is organized as a call to formative instruction followed by an introduction of it and, finally, application of the concept. While I find all of Tripp's books a little difficult to read, this book provides some wonderful guidelines I plan to use as a teacher and a parent. The best feature of the book is the role-playing "script" toward the end. If this book is not in

our parent resource center already, I believe the school should add it sooner than later.

Rating: 3 - Liked it
Recommended For: Teachers and Parents

Name: Christina Barbulescu **Date:** 7/31/2014
Book/Author: The Paideia of God and Other Essays on Education by Douglas Wilson

Teacher Book Review:

"In the ancient world, the paideia was all-encompassing and involved nothing less than the enculturation of the future citizen." This book is a collection of essays by Douglas Wilson. It provides some good detailed explanations for the need for classical Christian education, and the contrasts with what is provided elsewhere in the world. Wilson explores the failings of secular education, as well as what he sees as the failings of the evangelical church. To the question of why our classical Christian school isn't participating in any given educational fad, Wilson, for example, states that "Classical education assumes the problem is with our lust for innovation in teaching methods and strives to refine a tested adherence to the old." Some of the topics discussed in this book include, dress and uniforms, school vouchers and school independence, the connection between Reformed churches and classical Christian schools, and how secular thinking has corrupted Christian schools.

Rating: 3 - Liked it
Recommended For: Parents and teachers of classical Christian schools

Name: Christina Barbulescu **Date:** 6/10/2014
Book/Author: Bringing Up Bebe by Pamela Druckerman
Teacher Book Review:

Pamela Druckerman is an American journalist who unexpectedly found herself living herself in Paris with her British husband. Shortly thereafter, she became pregnant with her first child. Upon this, she began observing some surprising differences between American parenting and French parenting. The French parents seemed much more content than their American counterparts, and the children were much better behaved. Druckerman first observed these differences with skepticism, but after having two more children in Paris, achieving the success of having real French friends, and navigating through French life, she slowly became a fan of most of these differences. So what are these differences? Well, that is best answered by reading the book, but here is a sampling:

*The French parents put a high value on teaching their children to be independent. This often is accomplished through a decidedly hands-off approach. French children are very much encouraged to play independently without adult interference.

*French children are taught to cultivate the likes of French adults because of the parents' convictions that their tastes are good. So, you will not find a "Kids Menu" in France.

*French parents believe parenting is only part of their identity and shouldn't take over too much of their lives. A reflection of this is how French moms don't start dressing differently or enjoying adult time much differently after having children. There is some wisdom found in this book. The wise portions are consistent with what I believe as a Christian. For example, I agree that Parents know what is best for their children, and should act with conviction. Children should not take the control of the family. However, as a Christian, I know that this is because Jesus Christ should be recognized as Lord of the family. I also like how the French children are taught how to be patient, to use self-control, and not to give in to their wild desires. This seems to create a much more respectful culture. Also, it is so true that the happiness in the parents' marriage creates happiness in the entire family.

Some points on which I disagree: French parents seem to be a bit too disinterested in what their children are doing. I like to spend time with my children, and often playing with them because I like being with them (shock)! I like finding out about their interests. It is a joy for me not inferior to putting on heels and going out for a night on the town.

France is currently a post-Christian (so they think) culture. The things they are doing right as far as parenting goes, are right because of ideas that have some roots in Scripture. I greatly enjoy cultural studies, so this book was not only interesting, but also helpful as a parent.

Rating: 4 - Really liked it

Recommended For: Parents or anyone that works with parents and children

Name: Tyler Proffitt

Date: 6/1/2014

Book/Author: Home by Marilynne Robinson

Teacher Book Review:

In *Home*, Marilynne Robinson returns to familiar territory in the fictional town of Gilead, Iowa to explore the meaning of grace through complicated relationships and imminent death. Her previous novel, *Gilead*, focused on the Rev. John Ames, an elderly man with a young family preparing for death by writing a family history and memoir for his son. *Home*, running parallel, takes on the story of Ames' best friend, John Boughton and two of his children that have come home for his final days. The novel's tension centers on the return of the Boughton family's prodigal son, Jack,

whose presence in Gilead both delights and disrupts his dying father and his dutiful sister, Glory. In bringing these three characters back under the same roof, Robinson beautifully captures the presence of grace through difficult family relationships. Robinson roots Jack's return in his search for restoration. He unsuccessfully seeks to reconcile with his father through a confession of faith that both know to be in disingenuous despite Jack's efforts. He does however, experience grace through reconciliations with his sister and Rev. Ames—a man always skeptical of him. Jack's anxieties are linked to his own search of a home for his own family—a black woman he cannot be married to and the child he has with her. While I think that as a piece of written work, Gilead is greater by only a slight degree, Robinson's work in Home is an ultimately stronger novel because of the way in which she writes her characters as well as her ability to capture the presence of grace in the mundane aspects of our relationships and everyday life.

Rating: 5 - It was amazing

Recommended For:

Name: Tyler Proffitt

Date: 7/28/2014

Book/Author: The Seven Laws of Teaching by John Milton Gregory

Teacher Book Review:

As I prepare for my first year of teaching, Gregory's Seven Laws provides a useful framework for me as I prepare my lessons for the year. The fifth law, which states that, "Teaching is arousing and using the pupil's mind to grasp the desired thought or to master the desired art. Excite and direct the self-activities of the pupil, and as a rule tell him nothing that he can learn himself," has been especially useful in thinking about teaching dialectic students effectively in ways that encourages them to be active participants in the learning process. I want to be careful not to promote passive learning, but instead push students to participate in the process through discussion and discovery. For history, this could mean spending less time in the textbook and more with primary sources while for science I hope to use experiments not just as "breaks" from our normal lessons, but as visible demonstrations of the concepts we are learning. His emphasis on a common language between the student and teacher as well as the necessity to teach from the known to the unknown are a useful reminder that lessons don't occur in isolation from one another, but are part of a broader narrative. Gregory's work will be a useful tool for constant self-evaluation in my lesson planning and what I'm teaching.

Rating: 4 - Really liked it

Recommended For:

Name: Lexi

Date: 25-Jul

Book/Author: Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning by Douglas Wilson

Teacher Book Review:

Wilson believes that education is about the training of a whole person and he explains that how we choose, or don't choose, to train and educate our children has eternal consequences. In this book he presents a strong case for the value of a Classical and Christian education. I appreciate how he not only promotes a certain type of education, but also addresses some modern secular and Christian educational "reforms" and why they don't work. (And in the Christians' case, why some of them are unbiblical - such as imposing prayer upon the secularists, which violates their religious rights.) With clear arguments and many applicable illustrations, this book is very easy to read and follow - a great resource for both Christian parents and teachers.

Rating: 4 - Really liked it

Recommended For: parents and teachers

Name: Lexi

Date: still reading... on pg 500

Book/Author: Shogun by James Clavell

Teacher Book Review:

A swashbuckling, clash-of-cultures tale with sea captains and samurai - really, what more could you ask for? Shogun definitely earns its epic label. I have always loved stories that involve different peoples and cultures learning how to interact with one another, and that is perhaps one of the things I appreciate most about this novel. I have a fascination with Japanese culture and it has been fun to see a lot of what I know to be true of the Japanese people illustrated in this story. Clavell also frequently incorporates the Japanese language, which is fascinating and helps the setting come to life.

Two things are keeping me from a 5-star rating: 1) The writing isn't phenomenal (but it doesn't detract too much from the story) and 2) with a myriad of people and places, it can be a bit hard to follow at times. All in all, a thrilling read.

Rating: 4 - Really liked it

Recommended For: anyone who appreciates a good adventure (and isn't too picky about historical accuracy)

Name: Pam Grote

Date: 7/31/2014

Book/Author: Culture Shift by Albert Mohler

Teacher Book Review:

Mohler's book is a series of essays on our culture today and Christianity's impact--great or small. While his writing on headlines and politics is perceptive and biblically on the money, I enjoyed especially his thoughts on having an exit strategy from public school, raising a generation of wimps (comments on Hara Estroff Marano's article which every parent should read), living in "the age of dishonesty," and "the content of our character-King's dream and ours." Mohler talks about our challenge today, like Aristotle's fish--we "don't even know that we are wet" as we swim in the cultural confrontations around us. How are we to remain faithful..and how should we think and respond? Mohler gives some clear, insightful answers in a very readable way.

Rating: 4 - Really liked it

Recommended For: anyone

Name: Pam Grote

Date: Jun-14

Book/Author: The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie by Alan Bradley

Teacher Book Review:

I love mysteries-murder mysteries a la Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, Agatha Christie's Poirot, Chesterton's Father Brown. There really hasn't been a new, engaging, quirky, lovable detective in a while. Enter Alan Bradley, a 70 year old Canadian author, whose invention of 11 year old Flavia de Luce is simply wonderful. An adolescent protagonist solving not one, but two, murder mysteries could be a literary bad move, but Flavia is a precocious, determined, gifted amateur chemist--with a fully equipped laboratory in the attic of her stately home--who is able to get the better of her annoying older sisters in spite of her pigtails and braces. Her narrative is filled with brilliant descriptions and vocabulary and captivates the reader in the first few pages. And because this is Bradley's debut novel at age 70, it gives me lots of encouragement for the things I might accomplish in my golden years!

Rating: 4 - Really liked it

Recommended For: anyone

Name: Michelle Williams

Date: 15-Jun-04

Book/Author: Hannah Coulter by Wendell Berry

Teacher Book Review:

Hannah Coulter was recommended to me several times by different people. It took me a couple of years to finally get to it, but I am so glad I did. God often brings things

in to your life in the most timely manner. I think he brought this book into my life at just the right time for me to connect with it in a powerful way.

Hannah Coulter is the story of a woman who grows up in Port William Kentucky (a fictional place) in the 20th century. She is born around the time of WW1 and reaches adulthood just before WW2. Hannah encounters struggles in her life that many of us can relate to. She loses her mother at a young age, lives life with a not so loving stepmother, becomes a widow at a young age, and at one point in her life is without a family at all. Hannah Coulter never becomes bitter over her circumstances, but responds to each loss with acceptance and growth. Hannah's second marriage, to Nathan Coulter, is a beautiful example of a real and loving marriage. Neither are perfect and both are genuinely human, yet they work together and learn from and with each other as they raise their children and farm their land.

Wendell Berry is an English professor and has a special decades long interest in taking care of the land in our country. He is an advocate for family farming and stands in opposition of corporate farming practices in our country and throughout the world. His ideas about the proper use of land and the wholesomeness of farming as it used to be in our country are a thread that runs throughout the book.

Another thread running through the book is the importance of relationships and community. In the story, Berry weaves in examples of folks loving their neighbors and accepting others in a beautiful way.

The thing that amazed me about this book is that he was able to so convincingly write from the perspective of a woman. As I was reading this story that Hannah was telling about her life, I was really in the moment and felt as though I was talking to a woman who had really lived all that she was relating. Hannah is at times profound in her thoughts about her life and its circumstances.

Some words I would use to describe this book are genuine, wholesome, nostalgic, and inspirational.

Rating: 4 - Really liked it

Recommended For: Most anyone

Name: Michelle Williams

Date: 31-Jul-14

Book/Author: The Abolition of Man by C S Lewis

Teacher Book Review:

The Abolition of Man is considered to be one of C S Lewis's most prophetic books. In it he begins in an essay called Men Without Chests to critique an English grammar and composition book written for high school students. He points out that the writers of the book, who he renames as well as their text out of respect, have not in fact done a good job of teaching students how to write, but in fact have imposed their

philosophy of values judgment on the students who would be learning from their text. C S Lewis uses this example to show how culture was at his time falling into the deception that all values are subjective and based on the feelings of the one making a values judgment. Lewis argues that there are certain universal moral values that are grounded in ultimate truth. He calls them the Tao, which means "The Way". In the appendix he shows how these values, such as the sanctity of life, honesty, courage, etc. , exist in all cultures from the most ancient times by providing examples from Sumerian, Chinese, Egyptian, Greek and Hebrew ancient writings.

Lewis goes on to state that when you take these innate values that God has written on the hearts of all mankind away by teaching that they are subjective, you cause children to grow up to be "Men Without Chests" or men who are all head and no heart.

In the second essay "The Way" Lewis points out that men who say that there are no objective values are self contradictory as they are claiming to make a statement that is objectively truthful about the fact that there are no objective truths.

In the third essay, The Abolition of Man, Lewis predicts that this new relativistic approach to values and truth can ultimately lead to struggle for power and tyranny. Of course Lewis was writing in the midst of WWII and could see a connection between the politics of the day and the relativistic thinking that had its roots in the Enlightenment.

This is a fairly heavy philosophical piece of reading mainly because of the way Lewis uses language to structure his argument. I found it difficult at times to grasp the finer points he was trying to make in the text although the big picture of his argument was apparent. I had to reread small sections at times throughout the book to more fully grasp what Lewis was saying.

Rating: 3 - Liked it

Recommended For: someone wanting a theory of thought and education book

Name: Donna

Date: Jul-14

Book/Author: The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency by Alexander McCall Smith

Teacher Book Review:

The No 1. Ladies' Detective Agency series is about a female private detective in Botswana. Each book in the series is full of wit. The main character, Mma Precious Ramotswe, compassionately contemplates each case as she provides a solution. There are a variety of cases which include finding a missing person, child rearing, righting a wrong, and infidelity. She uses wisdom as well as common sense in providing answers for her clients. This light read will draw you in to finish each book in the series.

Rating: 3 - Liked it

Recommended For: Adults
