



SOCIETY
for
CLASSICAL
LEARNING

THE JOURNAL

Volume IV

WINTER 2011

A conversation on education in the classical tradition



3 What Mastery Demands: Using Standardized Tests Effectively

John Seel provides a basic roadmap for using standardized tests in the classical school.

5 Human Assessment

Robert Littlejohn describes how data can inform professional improvement.

7 The Challenge of Education: Classical Education's Response to Henry Adams

Christopher R. Rush shows how some assessment tools are rooted firmly in classical education.

9 Assessment in the Grammar School

Tammy Peters and Betsy Howard explain how assessment helps grammar-school teachers prepare their students for the upper grades.

Assessment

11 Reflections on Ten Years with the PSAT

Gail Mitchell reveals why her classically educated students perform well on the PSAT.

13 AP and the Classical School

Susan Dougherty highlights some value in AP courses and tests.

15 Accreditation as a Means of Institutional Assessment in Classical, Christian Schools

Timothy P. Wiens encourages schools to embrace outside accountability through accreditation.

17 The Essentials of a True Writing Program: Part 2

Terrence O. Moore concludes his explanation of how to teach writing.



ROBERT INGRAM, SCL CHAIRMAN

THE JOURNAL
A publication of the
Society for Classical Learning

Publisher:
Marvin Padgett

Editor:
Daniel B. Coupland, PhD

Design:
Jamie Robinson

Best Practices

About five years ago in Orlando, I heard Pat Bassett, President of the National Association of Independent Schools, use the same quote that Robert Littlejohn employs as the opening words of his article: "The plural of anecdote is data." Upon hearing these words, I immediately felt exposed. Most of us make our living off of heartwarming anecdotal stories touting the virtues of our schools. We all have that one story told over and over again ad nauseum. Truth be told, some of the stories are several years old and need to be refreshed. But how many of these compelling stories do we have? Can they be updated weekly? Do they add up to real, hard data? Or do we make our stock and trade only in realms of subjectivity and anomalies?

With this issue of the Journal, we hope to provoke an ongoing dialogue in the Great Conversation. We investigate ourselves and dare to surface issues that some prefer not to consider. Benchmarking, best practices, professional standards, national norms, comparative data, accreditation, and faculty credentialing must become front and center in our local and national posture. Until anecdote becomes data, the broader educational community will not respect what we are doing, and our influence will be marginalized. Perhaps worse, we may never know if we are deceiving ourselves with the education we purport to be delivering in the classrooms.

To be continued at this summer's conference in Baltimore.....

Rev. Robert Ingram

Headmaster, The Geneva School, Orlando
SCL Chairman

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robert F. Ingram, Chairman The Geneva School	Todd Harris Veritas School
Marvin Padgett, Treasurer P&R Publishing	Peter H. Vande Brake, PhD North Hills Classical Academy
Daniel B. Coupland, PhD Secretary Hillsdale College	E. Christian Kopff, PhD University of Colorado, Boulder
Mark Guthrie Caldwell Academy	Robert Littlejohn, PhD Trinity Academy
Andrew Kern CIRCE Institute	Jim Van Eerden The Helixx Group
Leslie Moeller, JD Geneva School of Boerne	

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

The Society for Classical Learning is a professional society committed to promoting the cultural benefits of the classical, Christian tradition by providing leadership and support, opportunities for the exchange of ideas, and standards of excellence for educators and schools.

The Society for Classical Learning is a non-profit organization. Gifts to the society are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

The Journal welcomes unsolicited manuscripts of 2,000 words or less on topics of relevance to professional Christian educators. *The Journal of the Society for Classical Learning* is published three times annually and is available by subscription.

Inquiries regarding advertising in *The Journal* should be emailed to thejournal@societyforclassicallearning.org.

CONTACT

The Society for Classical Learning
122 Fleetwood Drive
Lynchburg, VA 24501
Website: societyforclassicallearning.org
Email:
thejournal@societyforclassicallearning.org

What Mastery Demands: Using Standardized Tests Effectively

by John Seel, Ph.D.

“*Aim at nothing and you will always hit the target.*” – Anonymous

Reality is more like rocket science than finger painting. Whether we want to admit it or not, reality is exacting. Reality is demanding and to meet its demands, accountability to standards is required. There is a widespread complaint about standardized testing. It is accused of taking over the curriculum, truncating creativity, stifling the imagination, and shortchanging individuality. But the complaint often reflects a view of education out of synch with reality. Let me explain.

What is the overriding task of education? Education, like all other social sciences, depends on one’s understanding of human nature. If the child is the center of the universe and the task of education is to unleash the child’s own native ability, then certain assumptions invariably follow. If, on the other hand, God is the center of the universe and the task of education is to orient the child’s affections, reason, and embodied habits to Him and the design of creation, then the task of education is quite different. The first assumes that the child is the measure of all things. The second is that God and creation place demands on the child. The first is progressive and the fruit of the Enlightenment. The second is traditional and the fruit of the Greek and Christian tradition. Modern education, and the teacher training that accompanies it, is largely under the sway of progressive premises. As such, it’s based on a false anthropology.

If the challenge of education is to equip children to conform to objective realities, then one’s attitude toward standardized testing is quite different. The only question then is which test is adequate

to the task, not whether testing is necessary.

There are basically four kinds of standardized tests. The first kind compares students against public schools in general categories such as numeracy and literacy – Stanford and Iowa as well as state mandated exams fit this kind of test. The second does the same against private schools – such as the ERB’s CPT-4. The third compares students against subject matter mastery – such as Advanced Placement exams, SAT II, and the International Baccalaureate program. The fourth compares students against international norms – such as the International Mathematics and Science Study. In international comparisons, the U.S. has fallen from the top of the class to just average according to the tri-annual OECD Programme for International Student Assessment. Of 30 comparable countries, the United States ranks near the bottom. Take math – Finland is first, followed by South Korea, and the United States is number 25. Same story in science: Finland, number one again. The United States? Number 21. In results published last month, the United States came in 15th in reading, 23rd in science, and 31st in math. If this were the NFL, coaches would be fired.

All forms of testing are standardized to a given cohort. There are tests that measure ability against academically dysfunctional schools and those that measure students against academically aspiring schools. Obviously school boards and administrators can superficially make the school look better by comparing the school’s performance against lower standards. And yet, such schools are perpetuating a fraud against parents and students. They are giving them the feeling of mastery, when the reality of mastery has not been attained. This lie

must be stopped.

Most Christian schools charge tuition. Therefore it is inappropriate to make comparisons with the “free” public schools down the block. Parents investing serious dollars have a right to demand more value for their investment than the fall back position of public schools.

We need to demand subject matter mastery of our students in an age and grade appropriate manner. We might carefully reconsider the habit of tracking students by ability. All students – regardless of native ability – should be held to the same high standards. We might avoid biasing grades to short-term memory (by including daily homework grades in the term average) rather than long-term memory that reflects sustained learning.

What would happen to our schools, for example, if we demanded every student pass a comprehensive exam at the end of the year and pass with 80% or higher in order to matriculate to the next level? What would happen if teachers were terminated if less than 80% of their class failed to meet this standard? Invariably, such goals, seemingly draconian, would make an enormous difference in the classroom. It would align the classroom to the kind of expectations that are routinely found on the football field and basketball court. And there are schools that have done just this to great effect. Subject matter mastery places a high standard on classroom teachers and students. There is something honest about it that is quite refreshing.

It is true that many standardized tests are poor measures of learning. The issue is not standardized testing, but which tests best reflect the mission of the school. A school that calls itself “college prep” might measure its students against the performance expectations of Select (3-3-3) and/or Highly Select (4-4-4) colleges and universities. To measure oneself against colleges that will take students with a pulse and a check are no measure of one’s academic standards. There is only a few Christian

colleges that fall into the Select category and none to my knowledge that fall into the Highly Select category, except perhaps The King’s College in New York City, which makes a point of its selectivity. If a high percentage of one’s graduates attend Christian colleges, then one’s college admissions success says little about the quality of one’s academic performance.

In general, repeated studies have shown that Christian K-12 schools lag two-years behind their secular public and/or private school counterparts. This is outrageous. Organizations such as the Council for Educational Standards & Accountability (CESA) have been explicitly created to address this problem. CESA exists to motivate, support, and to hold accountable Christian schools that aspire to superlative academic standards, institutional best practices, and collaboration with like-minded schools.

Minimally, Christian schools can aspire to the highest standards of academic performance and accountability. They might well consider gravitating toward ERB achievement tests, not being satisfied with tests that only measure numeracy and literacy, and aspiring to meeting national norms in subject matter areas, whether those of the Core Knowledge movement or the Advanced Placement exams.

And it is becoming increasingly clear that national norms are inadequate to global competition. We might take into consideration the practices and curriculum of high achieving countries such as Finland, Korea and Singapore. It’s time to give our students some straight talk, like that of Thomas Friedman, who did not hesitate to write in *The World is Flat*, “Do your homework or you will be working for the Chinese.” Quoting a Chinese government official, Friedman writes, “Your average kid in the U.S. is growing up in a wealthy country with many opportunities, and many are the kids of advantaged educated people that have a sense of entitlement.

➤ See “Mastery,” *continued on page 6*

Human Assessment

by Robert Littlejohn, Ph.D.

“The plural of anecdote is data.”¹

To a great extent we have the higher education community to thank for the concept of assessment – at least as it pertains to education. Assessment became the mantra of higher education accreditation in the 1990s, leading to the generation of massive amounts of data at colleges and universities across the nation. But, what to do with all these data? That was the dilemma faced by thousands of institutions until the turn of the millennium when accrediting agencies began to realize the purpose of the data produced through assessment was institutional improvement. Suddenly, only data that were relevant to answering questions about institutional direction and strategic improvement were of value, and such data could genuinely help frame and answer questions that, in turn, could guide the improvement process.

Similarly, assessment applied to human performance (i.e., evaluation) must be improvement-focused. And, the best evidence that improvement is possible or, indeed, warranted is, likewise, data. No longer is the subjective opinion of a single supervisor, based upon the perfunctory annual (or semi-annual) visit to the classroom sufficient to convince the professional educator that improvement is necessary or important. Without data trends, corroborated by a variety of sources, the performance review process is reduced to little more than a difference of opinion, often between someone with many years of classroom experience (the reviewee) and an administrator with, perhaps, considerably less classroom experience (the reviewer).

In reality, there are numerous predictors of professional success for the contemporary independent school teacher, with mastery of subject, curriculum development, pedagogy, and instructional and classroom management skills sharing the lime light with other now equally important indicators. Today’s master teacher must also master a growing set of essential soft skills, such as team work, peer and supervisor relations, parent communication, and student relationship building. So, the effective assessment process must accumulate and benefit from data relevant to each of these aspects of professional development and success.

In recent years, Trinity Academy of Raleigh has gradually implemented such a process, incrementally adding survey data from peers, parents and students to already existing supervisor and self-evaluation instruments. Instruments have been collaboratively developed and revised by teachers and supervisors, with input from students and parents, where appropriate. Brainstorm sessions have identified professional and relational skills and characteristics that are valued by each constituency group, and online surveys (Survey Monkey) have been used to prioritize a list of 20 assessment questions for each instrument. Surveys have been similarly created for teaching assistants, academic administrators and administrative staff. Parents and upper school students have completed the surveys online, and staff have identified peers who could reasonably review their performance and whose performance they could confidently review via online survey.

¹Raymond Wolfinger, cited in Nelson W. Polsby, *The Contributions of President Richard F. Fenno, Jr.* PS, Vol. 17, No. 4. (Autumn, 1984), pp. 778-781. Pg.779.

Although we are still learning, we have already seen considerable value in this process for relevant professional development and genuine performance improvement. The data speak for themselves, especially as compared to whole-staff averages for the 20 assessment questions. Staff are readily able to see patterns from multiple sources that corroborate both areas of professional strength and those where improvement is necessary. We have found it to be a creative way to provide objective feedback for typically subjective notions about performance.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of our implementation of the process is building a credible means of rewarding current performance and performance improvement into the process. For three years, our board has designated a generous pool of “merit compensation.” Everyone gets something, but higher performers (as judged by survey data sets) are rewarded more generously. Perhaps not surprisingly, this reward system has been met with decidedly polarized reaction. As NAIS president Patrick Bassett notes in speaking engagements:

The culture of schools’ workplace militates against innovative thinking about

compensation: Teachers prefer predictable, non-competitive compensation and resist being “singled out.” NOTE: Research shows, on the other hand, that rigid pay scales discourage high ability individuals to enter or stay in teaching. (Goldhaber, The Urban Institute, “How Has Teacher Compensation Changed?” Selected Papers in School Finance 2000-2001).

The system is not perfect, but is far superior to the “standard” in many independent schools. As Paideia, Inc. president Bruce Lockerbie often quips: “The first evaluation most private school teachers or administrators receive is on the back of a pink slip.”

It is important to express thanks to Eddie Krenson, VP for Non-Public Schools with SACS-CASI, for leading Trinity Academy in the initial process of implementation of principles of performance review that he has personally adapted from Independent School Management (ISM).

Robert Littlejohn, Ph.D., is the Head of School of Trinity Academy of Raleigh. He is also the co-author (with Charles T. Evans) of Wisdom and Eloquence: A Christian Paradigm for Classical Learning.

☞ “Mastery,” from page 4

Well, the hard reality for that kid is that fifteen years from now Wu is going to be his boss and Zhou is going to be the doctor in town. The competition is coming, and many of the kids are going to move into their twenties clueless about these rising forces.” At the very least, it is time for Christian educators to face up to this reality.

This is not to suggest that Christian teachers are anything less than highly motivated, altruistic, underpaid competent classroom teachers. They are and I have had the privilege to work with some of the best. And yet, it is high time that we get over our allergic reaction to standardized tests. Use only the best. Use them appropriately and embrace account-

ability. Without them we cannot achieve our best. Without them we will be bypassed by students from countries that do. Our children deserve more. Christ and his kingdom demand more. The best Christian educators must demand nothing less.

John Seel is a founding board member of the Council for Educational Standards & Accountability, former headmaster of The Cambridge School of Dallas, and currently president of nCore Media, a super computing company based in Los Angeles that provides high performance computing solutions to the entertainment industry in computer generated images and special effects.

The Challenge of Education: Classical Education's Response to Henry Adams

by Christopher R. Rush

Early in his seminal yet humanistic autobiography, Henry Adams declares his thoroughgoing frustration with formalized schooling. "The chief wonder of education," writes Adams, "is that it does not ruin everybody concerned in it, teachers and taught" (55). After finding his own education not in school but in personal life experience, Adams charges the classroom with one main failure: "Nothing in education is so astonishing as the amount of ignorance it accumulates in the form of inert facts" (379). By his own admission, a Modern (19th century) Harvard education had done nothing substantial for him. Classical education, as evidenced through classical assessment, answers Adams's challenge to formal education handily.

Though the grammar stage is rife with facts, the dialectic stage of the classical education is driven by discursive reasoning and fueled by logical and rational interaction. By this stage, education is no longer about the "inert facts," which Adams apparently never got past in his classrooms. Now subjects and data are "grist for the mental mill," as dialectical pedagogy drives information and ideas in an active process of thesis interacting with antithesis resulting in synthesis. Dialectic students learn to structure their thinking and comprehension of basic facts into logical patterns. Littlejohn and Evans in *Wisdom and Eloquence* remind us this stage "is designed to help students develop faculties of discernment based on regular patterns of thinking. The point is to bring predictability and order to the students' minds" (172).

Assessment here furthers the emphasis on dialectic interaction. Littlejohn and Evans offer several options of meaningful assessments to

fulfill this classical stage: composing arguments by example, analogy, or authority; composing syllogisms proved by deduction; identifying and avoiding fallacies of conclusion and causation; memorizing and identifying classical informal fallacies; and constructing arguments both in favor of and against the same proposition (109). In addition to these interactive assessments, the classical system of Progymnasmata exercises (also described in *Wisdom and Eloquence*) provides meaningful opportunities for dialectic students to express their comprehension and reasoning skills through written and verbal presentations.

By forming systems of thought in dialectic students, assessed through classical exercises (written, verbal, and mental), classical educators progress beyond simple rote memory of inert facts and prepare students for the continued rigors and more independent syntheses of the rhetoric stage. Francis Bacon once said, "The duty and office of rhetoric is to apply reason to imagination for the better moving of the will." Building upon the structures of logical thought formed during the dialectic stage, rhetoric students should now be prepared to synthesize their own analyses in imaginative and analytical ways through eloquent, meaningful expression. Littlejohn and Evans say that this is done through

activities that move students from remembering information and testing how well they remember that information in pre-set circumstances toward using what they have learned to solve problems, to connect information from one context to another, or to create a new framework for

understanding or describing the world around them. (174)

As the culmination of the Trivium, the rhetoric stage allows more freedom for both the instructor and students. Students should be personally responsible not only for their own learning, but also for their methods of assessment, to a degree. We are well past the simple recollection of basic facts and finding the “right answer”: now students need to express themselves and their comprehension of their world as mature individuals responsible for the conditions of their intellects and souls.

The variety of assessments in the rhetoric stage is diverse and rigorous: the common topics of conjecture, degree, and possibility; research; compositions of intrinsic appeals; and, in most classical schools, the senior thesis in written and public defense formats. Discussions and public presentations (especially for a senior thesis defense) are important to be sure, but the primary assessment medium of expression for students to utilize the wisdom and eloquence of a classical education is writing. According to Littlejohn and Evans,

Whether the assignment is a creative topical essay, a critique of a theatrical performance, or a laboratory report, students must be taught meaningful expression through writing. If writing is for reading, we will best serve our students as editors, encouraging individual style and voice while holding them accountable for good grammar, sound logic, and thoughtful applications of knowledge in everything they write. (175)

When done rightly, rhetorical assessments combine the pursuit of truth and wisdom with the freedom of eloquent expression, whose final aim is the formation of adults.

Despite having been failed by a Modern education, Henry Adams himself knew what he had missed:

The object of education for [the] mind should be the teaching itself how to react with vigor and economy. No doubt the world at large will always lag so far behind the active mind as to make a soft cushion of inertia to drop upon...; but education should try to lessen the obstacles, diminish the friction, invigorate the energy, and should train minds to react, not at haphazard, but by choice, on the lines of force that attract their world. What one knows is, in youth, of little moment; they know enough who know how to learn. (314)

What Adams describes is precisely what a classical education provides. When classical assessments follow classical education, students truly know how to learn.

WORKS CITED

Adams, Henry. *The Autobiography of Henry Adams*. New York: Modern Library, 1931.

Littlejohn, Robert and Charles T. Evans. *Wisdom and Eloquence: A Christian Paradigm for Classical Learning*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006.

Christopher Rush has a BA in English and Secondary Education from Clarke University, a BS in Biblical Studies from Emmaus Bible College, and an MA in Literature and Writing from Union Institute and University. He has taught English, Bible, and Senior Rhetoric at Summit Christian Academy in Yorktown, Virginia since 2003. He and his wife Amy have one daughter, Julia.

Assessment in the Grammar School

by Tammy Peters and Betsy Howard

Assessment—a sweeping, daunting term, describing any number of methods in the field of education. While the very word often unnerves students and faculty alike, the classical grammar school teacher balks not at the excessive triviality of more administrative red-tape but at the gravitas of a classical expectation for assessment. Assessment in the grammar school claims three tiers, echoing the division of the trivium. Classical educators at the poll-parrot stage primarily anticipate assessing their students by testing memorization, as Dorothy Sayers defends in her essay “The Lost Tools of Learning.” Students who have chanted information together in class demonstrate their mastery of each subject by reciting these “pegs” from memory. This, however, is only the beginning. Teachers following the classical model have set their expectations too low if they limit their grammar school assessment merely to mastery learning. A robust grammar school assessment not only includes a component of mastery (a grammar or poll-parrot skill), but also analytical application (an early dialectic skill) and imitation (a pre-rhetoric skill). To illustrate, consider the following description from a classroom at Mars Hill Academy.

Last week the third grade students performed their final graded recitation of “The Nightingale and the Glowworm” by William Cowper. Each one gave a word-perfect rendering of this eighteenth-century poem. The teacher’s objective: word-perfect memorization, and each student did indeed achieve 100%. Later that day, the same class took a grammar quiz in which they analyzed and diagrammed

a number of sentences. This time the students hardly demonstrated perfection. As the teacher expected, the students wrestled with the grammar concept in a new context. Most performed in the 90% range. The teacher was quite pleased. That afternoon, in history, these students rewrote the Roman legend of “Horatius at the Bridge.” They were instructed to work through each paragraph, imitating—but not copying—the tale. The teacher checked the students’ work for proper indentation, capital letters, and punctuation as well as how well they captured the “voice” of the legend.

As demonstrated in the classroom snapshot above, grammar school assessment includes all three aspects of the trivium, beginning on the grammar level. Because both dialectic and rhetoric work depend upon the “building blocks” laid in the memorization of the grammar stage, the teacher ought to expect some element of identical replication from each student. To test by memorization successfully, the teacher must both review with the students and frame that information in a context sympathetic to memorization. Whether with mnemonic devices, meter, or song, teachers help their students to memorize by reviewing facts and figures in the same order. When tested, whether with history chants, science statements, poetry recitations, or math facts, each student will be able to provide three key events of 1453 or the alkaline metals most readily in the rehearsed order. Such consistent repetition helps the student retain the information and encourages the teacher to expect word-perfect mastery around the classroom.

The dialectic or analytical aspect of assessment appears in grammar school when students apply a skill demonstrated in class on their own. Unlike testing memorization, the teacher assesses the students' grasp of the material by significantly changing the context surrounding the new skill. For example, a quiz on adverbial elements will contain not only new sentences but also a new arrangement of the adverbs which the students have not encountered: some adverbs will appear at the beginning rather than the end of the sentence, and some will appear as phrases. Here the student applies John Milton Gregory's "law of the lesson" himself, working with a known skill through unknown material. Because the grammar school student is just beginning to explore this dialectic task, the teacher does not expect mastery. Rather, the teacher is looking for the students' engagement with the material – for one, as Theodore Roosevelt described, "in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood." The teacher expects mistakes; the teacher corrects the mistakes and applauds the diligent, if often errant, effort. A solid performance evidences that the student can apply the skill with 85% accuracy. The same expectation applies to the class's average grade. In grading the application of a skill, however, the teacher is not primarily concerned with taking away points for mistakes (though he will). The teacher's interest lies in encouraging those who attempt to create their own contexts to apply their new skill.

A pre-rhetoric component appears most readily in grammar school assessment in the practice of composition. When students begin to imitate the masters in writing, they primarily practice piecing ideas together – not parroting information or analyzing thought. Teachers may require students to replicate a folk tale or a legend at this age. Grammar students need

not worry about developing a new story line but should work within the framework of the existing one. Because the classical Greek progymnasmata exercises of writing a fable or a narrative are multi-faceted, they prove difficult to analyze on a rigorous standard. For this reason, grammar school teachers exercising this rhetorical skill may use a rubric scale which assesses several areas to arrive at a final grade, including grammatical (e.g., mechanics, punctuation, and spelling) and rhetorical (e.g., sentence structure and language usage) elements. Teachers allot a set percentage to each area of assessment to determine a grade.

Assessment that follows the three disciplines of the trivium records a student's understanding of the material in a lesson at the level of memory, in the application of a skill, and in imitation. While the elements of grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric together frame a classical teacher's methods of assessment, each grade level employs a different degree. At the second and third grade level, the grammatical memory still proves dominant; students only just begin to practice dialectic application and toy with rhetorical imitation. Meanwhile, by fifth and sixth grade, just on the cusp of the dialectic stage, students exercise their memorization with longer application and more imitation. Weights for grading memory quizzes, analytical worksheets, and composition pieces change accordingly, as does the amount of time the teacher spends in the classroom working on such skills.

Assessment at the grammar school level, therefore, becomes the seamless preparation for rhetoric school assessment. At Mars Hill Academy, grammar school teachers consider all their students as future rhetoric students. When final exams and thesis projects take the stage

✎ See "Grammar," continued on page 12

Reflection on Ten Years with the PSAT

by Gail Mitchell

I have served as guidance counselor for New Covenant Schools in Lynchburg, Virginia, for ten years. In 2001, we had a total of 24 students in grades 9-12. We have now doubled that number, going from 6 or 7 students per grade to 10-15 students per grade (still very small classes by most standards). Yet in those ten years, we have had nine National Merit Commended Scholars and seven National Merit Finalists (with two more Finalists and another Commended Scholar likely to be announced next fall, based on this year's scores). We are the only private school in our region that can boast such numbers, and only one very large public school surpasses us in this regard—in number, but certainly not in percentage of a class! My guess is that other classical, Christian schools are having the same success, which begs the question: What is it about classical education that translates so well into high PSAT scores?

The class size certainly has something to do with strong test performance, even during the testing experience itself. There are fewer distractions, less noise, and, therefore, more focus on the task at hand when ten bodies are in a room compared to twenty or more. Students in a small class tend to know each other very well and are very comfortable together in all kinds of situations, including testing. The teacher, too, knows each student's abilities and needs much better, especially in a school like ours where teachers will have a student in more than one class through the high school years. With teachers able to focus on each of them, students will likely perform better on tests and on class work. I realize I am stating the obvious, but it may not be so clear when applied to the PSAT testing. Unlike larger schools who often put all the students together in a large, impersonal

space, such as a cafeteria, for purposes of efficiency, our students take the test with their own class in a familiar classroom. Being in a comfortable, familiar place can have a positive impact on test performance.

Class size alone, however, is not the key to high PSAT scores. Other private schools in our area also have small classes, yet they do not have the track record we do regarding test scores. Classical education itself is the key. For those of you who may not have looked closely at a PSAT or SAT test in the last few years, the old "Verbal" section is now "Critical Reading." Students must read passages, not for information, but in order to analyze the author's themes, viewpoint, context, and writing style. Since all of our humanities classes do the same, the students don't find this task to be a problem. The Critical Reading section also asks students to define difficult vocabulary words in context. As I told my 10th-grade literature class today, classical schools read the "real stuff," instead of a condensed or watered-down version. We do use vocabulary lists to familiarize students with the definitions of difficult words, but those lists all come from the books they are reading for the class. Our Great Books curriculum provides students with opportunities to master an adult-level vocabulary early on and to understand the different connotations of words as well.

The same can be said for the Writing section of the PSAT. We write—a lot—in all our classes, so students have many opportunities to develop their writing abilities. The books we read come into play in the writing component, too. The best way (in my opinion) to become a good writer is to read the very best that has been written in order to understand how the English language is supposed to sound,

instead of the way we normally speak it.

The one area where the classical curriculum does not seem to have as positive an effect is in mathematics. Our scores on the Math section of the PSAT are still much higher than the national average, but they aren't as high as the Critical Reading and Writing sections. This does not mean we aren't teaching math well; on the contrary, I think our school has an outstanding math program. Math, however, may be a subject that is more difficult for many students to master. We are bombarded with language from the moment we are born. Math, on the other hand, can often seem abstract and detached from everyday life, especially at the high school level and beyond. While it is still our task to help each child maximize his or her abilities—and the classical curriculum is definitely the best way to do that—we must recognize that

some of those abilities will have more variation than others.

I end on a cautionary note: The PSAT is given only once a year and must be taken on one specific day. It is not a measure, ultimately, of a student's intelligence or a school's success or failure. It is just one test. We should use the information from the PSAT as only one of many means of evaluating what we do—not so we can say we are “better” than other schools, but to reach that goal of guiding our students to become the persons God would have them be.

Gail Mitchell holds a B.A. in Mathematics and the M.Ed. in Counselor Education. She came to New Covenant Schools in 1995 as a teacher for the first high school class. Gail teaches classes in math and literature and has also served as the school counselor since 2001.

∞ “Grammar,” from page 10

in rhetoric school assessment, rhetoric school teachers, therefore, expect, as stated in the Mars Hill exam guide, that their students will demonstrate “understanding and not merely knowledge in their work. Teachers will test their ability to identify links, make comparisons, evaluate, and synthesize.” If classical educators hope to graduate students who synthesize memorized work with rigorous analysis in their own composition, that introduction must begin with a sort of grammar school testing that echoes the trivium in structure and intent. Integrating the trivium into a classical curriculum to such an extent that it manifests itself in basic assessments – such is the pursuit of a classical education.

Tammy Peters teaches third grade and is the Assistant to the Grammar School Principal at Mars Hill Academy in Cincinnati, Ohio. Peters has taught first grade through graduate school and held the position of district reading specialist in Mequon, Wisconsin. She holds a B.A. from University of Wisconsin, Madison and a M.A. from Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Betsy Howard teaches Logic I, 5th-grade Grammar and Literature, and high school Spanish at Mars Hill Academy in Cincinnati, Ohio. Before graduating from Hillsdale College with a B.A. in English, Spanish, and Religion, Howard also participated in the inaugural years of the classical teaching apprenticeship at Hillsdale Academy.

AP and the Classical School

by Susan Dougherty

Classical educators vary in their opinions of Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Should they be offered? Do the objectives prescribed in an AP course conflict with the objectives of a classical curriculum? If a school chooses to offer AP courses, how many students should take them and when? While these are valid questions, a separate matter that warrants consideration is the value that AP examinations afford both the students and the school even when AP courses are not offered through the school. AP test scores can aid students in college admission and scholarship selection, provide them greater opportunity and flexibility once enrolled. They can also provide schools with data useful for marketing to families and colleges—all of which make offering and coaching students for successful completion of AP exams highly beneficial.

More high school seniors are applying to college than ever before, and GPAs are continually rising. AP tests can help determine which top students are truly outstanding. The exams are scored on a scale of 1-5. A score of 3 or higher yields credit at most US colleges and universities, while 4's or 5's are required for the more select institutions. Colleges do not require official reporting of AP test scores before offering admission, but many applications allow students to self-report, and counselors and teachers can highlight competitive scores in their letters of recommendation.

If a school boasts of a rigorous college preparatory program, AP scores can validate its claim. Students from schools with few or no AP course offerings will not be penalized by admissions committees, but top students stand out less without standardized test scores such as AP.

An unweighted GPA of 4.0 takes on new meaning when paired with 5's on AP tests.

Students applying to highly competitive colleges or prestigious scholarship programs must demonstrate intellectual curiosity, a high level of academic engagement, and a willingness to take academic risks in order to distinguish themselves from other similarly qualified candidates. A recent Trinity graduate transferred to our school at the beginning of his junior year. He was one year ahead of his class in math and accompanied by a stellar academic record, so we offered him the opportunity to enroll in an online AP Statistics course. Doing so positioned him to sit for the AP Statistics exam his junior year and rejoin his classmates in his senior year for AP Calculus. The score he earned, along with other evidence of academic acumen, helped him to gain admission into Princeton University.

Entering college with AP credits also provides benefits beyond the application process. Once accepted, the extra credits allow students the flexibility to study abroad, double major, or complete an internship—all without extending college beyond four years or forcing students to choose between summer employment and experiential learning opportunities. AP credit can also boost a student's class standing, allowing him to register for classes earlier and thus affording him greater course selection.

College counselors and teachers should work cooperatively to advise students on whether to take AP exams and on which tests to take. If a school does not offer AP courses in every subject, faculty in advanced courses can familiarize themselves with the AP exam in their discipline and coach motivated students on how

to prepare themselves for the test independently. Non-incremental courses such as US History and English Language and Composition are good choices for most students. Those planning to major in math, science, or pre-health related fields should understand the pros and cons of placing out of introductory courses in their major, a situation which could mean they spend their first semester of college competing with upperclassmen for grades. (While colleges may grant credit for successfully passed AP exams, the grades in those courses do not factor into the college GPA.) Ultimately, the choice to take an AP exam should be made jointly by the teacher and the student. They might consider the student's intended major, the teacher's opinion of the student's maturity to prepare and

to succeed, and whether a passing score places the student into a higher level of a discipline than is wise for a college freshman.

Regardless of your opinion regarding AP courses and exams, our society recognizes the Advanced Placement experience. Prospective parents may unfairly judge schools that do not offer AP courses or tests in a less than positive light. Solid AP scores on a school's profile help colleges understand the rigor of the school's curriculum. At the very least, the merits of AP exams should be considered when advising your high school students.

Susan Dougherty is the Director of College Guidance at Trinity Academy of Raleigh.

2011

SUMMER CONFERENCE

JUNE 22 - 25 | BALTIMORE, MD

Join the Society for Classical Learning for challenging speakers and great conversation in one of our nation's most exciting destinations. Reserve your space now!

BALTI *more!*



Mount Vernon Place

Accreditation as a Means of Institutional Assessment in Classical, Christian Schools

by Timothy P. Wiens, Ed.D.

Christian schools have faced great difficulty in the last several decades. Educating students in independent Christian schools—including classical, Christian schools—may become more difficult in the coming years. Those involved in Christian schooling know that the economic and political realities of private education in America mandate that these schools be superlative in order to survive. Because of current economic and political realities, classical, Christian schools must begin to consider how and why institutional assessment and accountability is increasingly important for their subsequent survival and ongoing effectiveness.

The first issue for many schools to consider is that of seeking and maintaining accreditation through a nationally recognized accrediting body. Accreditation is meant to assist with important functions taking place inside and outside of the school. It serves to ensure that the institution is meeting minimal academic and institutional standards of quality and effectiveness. The accreditation process, including a school's self-study, inspects the governance structure of the school, the admission process, student life, academic and co-curricular programs, the faculty, the administration, health and safety oversight, and other pertinent programs that function to confirm the quality of the school. By meeting the standards of an accrediting body, a school examines its mission and verifies that its programs are designed around the stated mission.

Completing the self-study for accreditation ensures that school personnel—including the board, administration, faculty, and staff—are all accountable for the work that takes place in the

school. As the self-study process should minimally last throughout the course of one school year, involving every employee and many constituents, the school—and every facet therein—is examined closely to ensure quality and to promote future development.

Likewise, through the accreditation process, outside educators observe the school's programs to ensure the institution is in fact meeting the standards of the accrediting body through implementation of appropriate programs and practices. This peer-review process is not only a worthy learning measure, it is also healthy, as it enables schools to better see through the lens of visiting educators where strengths and weaknesses exist.

Institutional accreditation functions to certify the overall academic program of a school. The idea of ensuring core competency within each student through the academic program is a central focus of the accreditation process. In addition, this process ensures that schools hire qualified teachers who have minimally obtained a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Understanding that the quality of a school can only be as good as its faculty, accrediting bodies ensure that schools hire and retain high-quality individuals and provide professional development programs to promote growth of the faculty and assure quality within the classroom.

Institutional accreditation also serves also to validate the diploma or certificate granted by an institution. Outside agencies, employers, and institutions of higher learning are assured that schools that hold national, regional, or state

accreditation have met a quality standard. While most colleges state that a student's high school being accredited is not necessary for college admission, the reality is that those students who graduate from schools who have attained and maintained accreditation are often given preferential treatment in the admission process, because accredited schools are perceived to have met certain standards for student success and achievement.

Classical, Christian schools must consider how they will attract and maintain a constituency that has more schooling options. Charter schools, magnet schools, quality public schools, non-sectarian independent schools, other Christian schools, and home schooling provide a great variety of competition for the classical school. Ensuring that the classical, Christian school maintains its distinction is of utmost importance. Networking within the classical school community will enhance the classical educator's knowledge of curriculum, professional development programs, and other important facets of what it means to be distinctly classical. Likewise, such networking can provide opportunities to assess one's school through benchmarking with other like-minded institutions.

Being in a community with only classical schools, however, may not be healthy. Attending professional development gatherings—such as the annual conference of the National Association of Independent Schools, a symposium by the Council

on Educational Standards and Accountability, or a PAIDEA Conference—will allow classical educators to gain valuable insight from their non-classical peers. Likewise, classical educators' presence at these national gatherings will encourage the spread of many ideas from classical education to a broader audience.

The classical school that engages students through the liberal arts must not be an island unto itself. While independence and autonomy have often been hallmarks of the classical school, accountability and dependence upon one another will be the way in which classical schools not only survive in the coming years, but also thrive, impacting the lives of generations of students to come. As we consider what it means to be a classical, Christian school that promotes the flourishing of our students in all areas of life, may we remember that, through close self-analysis and a strong institutional assessment initiative, we will improve the quality of our programming in every area and, in turn, bring glory to God. As St. Paul reminds us in Romans 11:36, "For him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."

Timothy P. Wiens, Ed.D., is an Assistant Professor of Education at Wheaton College and the Executive Director of the Council on Education Standards and Accountability. Dr. Wiens was Headmaster of Boston Trinity Academy, an urban Christian school in Boston, MA.

The Essentials of a True Writing Program, concluded

by Terrence O. Moore

*H*aving labored to establish the ends and means of good writing in the last issue, I should very quickly be able to show how a classical education answers them in every particular. Classical education by its very nature invites students to have “points” to make on matters of great moment. The method of Socratic discussion employed in all subjects, but particularly in literature, requires students to answer questions such as “Was Julius Caesar a great man or a tyrant?” “Did Robinson Crusoe learn to be more human by being away from human beings?” “Would we find ourselves more alien or at home in Huxley’s brave new world?” “Does Dostoyevsky show through Raskolnikov’s turmoil that religious faith is the only true antidote to the will to power?” Now compare these questions to the thoughtless ones being asked of students in regular public schools. Is it any wonder why our students are engaged (*nihil humanum mihi alienum est*) and typical students are bored and completely alienated from the inquiry into the human condition? Our students are having to figure out who they are, where they have come from, and how they must act in the world. Wishy-washy answers to inane questions, the routine of the regular public schools, won’t do.

The points that our students have to make are not based on their untutored “feelings” and reflex opinions as at other schools. The constant refrain of progressive education is “how does this make you feel?” rather than “what do you know?” A classical education demands students to know things: many, many things as it turns out. Students cannot offer glib commentary on how the world works without having a deep knowledge (or at least beginning to

have one) of the people and events that have shaped and continue to shape that world. Initially, our students speak and write on topics that are confined to a particular text or experiment or historical moment. By the time they graduate, however, they are able to marshal these discreet articles of knowledge to make sense, with some more advanced study, of almost any problem or challenge that comes their way. These basic facts are precisely the pieces of evidence that their less-informed fellow students and colleagues will neglect, still relying, as Plato’s prisoners, on the shadows of the cave.

To write well, as we have said, the writer must know grammar. Students in classical schools typically study grammar formally in every grade K-9 and continue to encounter grammar either in foreign languages or in the comments they receive on their papers in grades 10-12. Many schools ease into grammar by devices that set sentence structure to nursery rhymes or jingles, but students are ready to start more formal methods even in the early elementary grades. In addition, teachers in all grades and in all subjects should vigilantly police their students’ bad usage by correcting incorrect or substandard speech in class, no matter the subject under discussion at the moment. “Me and Johnny need to go to the bathroom” is unacceptable. By the fourth grade, if not earlier, students should be knee-deep in sentence diagramming, just as Churchill was as a boy. Further, students at classical schools will generally take at least three years of Latin, starting in the later elementary grades or the middle school. To the progressive “educator,” and to the ultra-utilitarian singing his chorus of “job skills for a twenty-first-century work force,” Latin is anathema.

“Why would you waste time on dead languages with so much new technology and information out there?” (The world “out there,” you see, is very scary!) These whiz-bang progressives forget the basic Aristotelian insight that human beings are the creatures that use language, and language—whether texted or tweeted or faxed or e-mailed or sent in Morse Code or still yet written down with quill and ink—still has a basic structure that anyone must acquire to express himself logically, vividly, and forcefully. While students are often awfully casual about the grammar of their own language, they cannot afford to be so in Latin class. Even if they make it all the way through grade five without learning how to employ the parts of speech, the various forms of the past tense, the indicative and the subjunctive moods, and all the other hard facts of grammar, they cannot escape them through three or four or more years of Latin. Latin was in the past and remains today the boot camp of ordered expression.

Words are the meat and potatoes of a classical education. A student has no excuse for graduating from a classical school with anything short of an immense vocabulary, a ready “stock of words” in Franklin’s phrase, and an ability to choose the right word on the right occasion. Both the academic program and the atmosphere of a classical school encourage students to become masters of words. In the first place, a classical headmaster should be hiring only articulate teachers: in every grade and in every subject. Second, the teachers in classical schools do not “talk down” to students but encourage students to come up to their level. Children are emulative beings. They follow the verbal patterns to which they are exposed. For this reason, the greatest of classical schoolmasters, Quintilian, urged mothers to spend time with their infants rather than passing them off to servants. Even in the crib, babies would become accustomed to the standard speech of their well-spoken mothers rather than pick up

the bad grammar of the uneducated, according to Quintilian. In every class in a classical school, therefore, two levels of instruction are taking place: first, in the particular subject matter at hand and, second, in the form of civilized speech through which subjects are discussed and explained to students. Though nominally a teacher of history, the more time I spend in the classroom, the more I consider myself a teacher of language. Consider for a moment the many words that must be understood to have a meaningful discussion about our political history: liberty, equality, sovereignty, faction, justice, rights, inalienable, happiness, limited, government, federalism, and so on. Not only are such words misunderstood or only vaguely grasped by today’s young men and women. Such is the impoverished language of today’s culture and schools that often students have not even encountered these words. Every year I am surprised by a word that whole classes of freshmen in college have never encountered or cannot define. A few years ago it was the word *bicameral*. How can students who have supposedly taken years of American history and in most cases a semester of government in high school not know the word *bicameral*? To what extent did the American Founders think that their liberties depended upon the principle of bicameralism? The different outcomes of the American and French Revolutions are one measure of the importance of the matter.

All is not left to osmosis and chance in the imparting of the meaning of words in a classical school. From the first day of kindergarten, students are taught the meaning of words. At some point, one hopes, the students will learn the meaning of the words of the Pledge of Allegiance which are by no means easy (allegiance, liberty, justice), but ought to be understood nonetheless. Students are required to look up words they encounter in the rich literature they read from the second grade onward. At least by the fourth grade, students learn “word histories” by being introduced

formally to Greek and Latin roots. At some point in the upper elementary or middle school students formally study Latin, the language which accounts for about 60% of English word origins. Should a girl be praised for her “pulchritude” or a boy for his “pecuniary prescience”? A proper Latin student will not even have to look those words up. Finally, even in the higher studies of literature, science, history, and other subjects, students continue to discover the precious treasures found in the words of the English language. In a moral philosophy class I used to teach to high school students we would spend a lot of time on the differences between happiness and fun as found in some of the texts. The word history is instructive. “Fun” seems to have come from the Middle English *fon*, the word for fool. The “fool” or jester in a medieval court was always the character cutting up and making light of everything. The individual who pursues fun, then, in contrast to Jefferson’s (or Aristotle’s) happiness, takes nothing in life seriously. The consequences of such a life can be easily seen in Jane Austen’s Lydia, the character in *Pride and Prejudice* who speaks of nothing but fun (and uses bad grammar to boot). Language, then, is not mere ornament. It is nothing less than the medium through which we govern ourselves, express our souls, and live out our lives. We cannot afford to be sloppy or unknowing about language.

A classical school also requires the student to write logically and with coherence. It is often said by classical schoolmasters that “the logic stage” of learning trains the young mind to make logical distinctions about complex subjects so as to gain understanding. At the same time, it is not easy to explain what exactly “logical distinctions” are. In terms of writing, however, the issue is a little clearer. Logic usually refers to the marshalling and ordering of evidence so as to make a compelling argument based, we hope, on truth. The untutored student will often say, “I know what I want to say, but I just can’t say it.” As a result, he

will often resort just to his feelings or a jumbled assemblage of platitudes. The classically-trained student, who will have read, among other things, The Declaration of Independence and the Lincoln-Douglas debates—models of logical expression—will be able to deploy quotations, historical events, the actions and decisions of men and women in history or characters in literature, the results of scientific experiments, plausible theories of human nature, and, of course, the meaning of actual words, in order to prove his case. To this end, the classical student will be able to handle more than the silly, trivial, or ho-hum essay questions required on state standardized tests, the most popular being, “Tell us who your hero is and why,” with the standard response being incoherent ramblings about my dad or Beyoncé or the current champion cage fighter. Rather, the student will be able to take on questions such as, “Was Washington really the ‘indispensable man’?” or “To become human, were Adam and Eve bound to fall?” Such questions require much work in the grammar of history or philosophy, to be sure. What did George Washington do, exactly? How precisely did the story of the Garden unfold? Yet such probing questions also demand the strenuous exercise of a logical mind. What might constitute a single man in history being indispensable? Could the Revolution have been successful without Washington? Can we imagine a Revolution without a Madison, a Jefferson, an Adams, or even a Franklin, yet not without Washington? Might America have become something very different had the Founding Father acted differently, even in a single moment? (Newburgh, perhaps?). In what respects were Adam and Eve “human” before the Fall? In what respects were they not? What does it mean to be human? Is knowledge opposed to happiness or to human goodness? Is freedom the opposite of obedience? Were there fallacies in the serpent’s argument? Was it in any sense—at least technically—true? Did the original couple have the mental capacity to beat the serpent’s argument?

Should they have entered into the discussion in the first place? And so on. The thinking to ask these kinds of questions, the answering them, and the ordering of them into a coherent and convincing thesis is a logical undertaking of no small degree. And such an intellectual enterprise sure beats the “critical thinking skills” so much talked about and so little demonstrated by the prevailing education regime. The logician might even be prone to ask whether there can be thinking that is not critical or whether thinking is an art or a discipline rather than a skill.

A classical education also seeks to impart style in the writer. Style, admittedly, does not come without great effort on the part of the student. Yet for any student who knocks, the door will be opened. Just as Franklin worked hard to acquire an elegant English style by internalizing the essays of Addison, so students at any classical school read, analyze, and—above all—enjoy the best that has been written and said in our great language: from Shakespeare to Milton to *The Federalist* authors to Burke to Emerson. Style, like dress, is an emulative fashion. The classical school does not leave students’ style to drift in the winds of popular culture or to be further truncated by the high-tech grunting of the text or the tweet. Nor does the school only count on the influence of the teachers’ verbal habits, though that, too, as we have said, is of consequence. At the classical school, the young keep company—we dare not say “hang out”—with the most celebrated writers who ever put quill or pen to paper. The masters of the language are our students’ private tutors in the elements of style. For hours every day students of the classics consider, to be sure, the great writers’ aims, examine their evidence, follow their logic, learn their words, and wrestle with their insights into the human condition. Even so, our task would not be done if the students failed to appreciate—and to imitate—the finest style of the finest writers. The student truly ambitious of becoming a “tolerable English writer” cannot falter in that noble, some

would say that noblest, art.

One more thing. True art only comes with practice. I am told that learning a musical instrument requires two hours of practice every day. To become a virtuoso takes more. The craft of writing is no different. Writers write. They spend a fair portion of their day writing. Even when not writing, they often look at the world as they would write about it. Students at classical schools have to write. Their teachers compel them to write often, and then those teachers correct that writing with considerable attention to the elements of good writing. Those teachers are not reticent with red ink. If my intelligence is accurate, students at classical schools write about four to five times more than do their counterparts at regular public schools. Whether so much time spent writing is warranted can be seen in simply asking the question, In what field of endeavor does four times more practice not produce better results?

We began this subject by asking whether classical schools have a better approach to writing than the canned “programs” of the typical school. We ask that question again: Who has the real writing program, them or us? Consider two football teams, the players being of equal size and speed. One coach was a solid player in his day and became a great student of the game. He has mastered the playbooks of Lombardi, Shula, Landry, and Walsh. The other is a ham-and-egger. He was never a first-string player himself and has spent no time with the great luminaries of the game. The first team has an elaborate playbook, but it is based upon the fundamentals. It is also tailored to the strengths of his players. From this playbook, the coach carefully chooses the plays that make up a distinct game-plan aimed at the weaknesses and strengths of every opposing team. The coach knows which play to call on which down. The second team has a limited and predictable playbook that the coach bought from a profitable publishing company called *Step Up to Football*. The book consists of a couple of

running and a couple of passing plays. Its method is straightforward. First down: run up the middle. Second down: run up the middle. Third down: pass in desperation. Finally, the first team practices several hours a day, five days a week. The practices are extremely orderly and comprehensive. The second team practices once a week; their practices seem more like an unorganized pick-up game than a real practice. After practices, the first team watches films of their previous game and goes over and over the mistakes they made. They also watch the films of the team they will play in the next game to know what they are up against and to learn how they will approach their adversary. The second team watches

a lot of films, to be sure, but nothing to do with football. Which of these two teams will be the most prepared on game day? Which team has the better “football program”?

Terrence O. Moore teaches history at Hillsdale College and was the principal of Ridgeview Classical Schools in Fort Collins, Colorado. He has written on the subjects of liberal education, limited government, and moral culture for the Claremont Review of Books, Touchstone, The Family in America, Human Events, Big Government, The Washington Times, and several newspapers. He is the author of the forthcoming The Perfect Game: A Story of Boys, Baseball, Friendship, Family, and Faith.

NEXT ISSUE OF THE SCL JOURNAL

*Conference Edition
Spring 2011*

The Journal welcomes unsolicited manuscripts of 2,000 words or less on topics of relevance to professional classical, Christian educators.

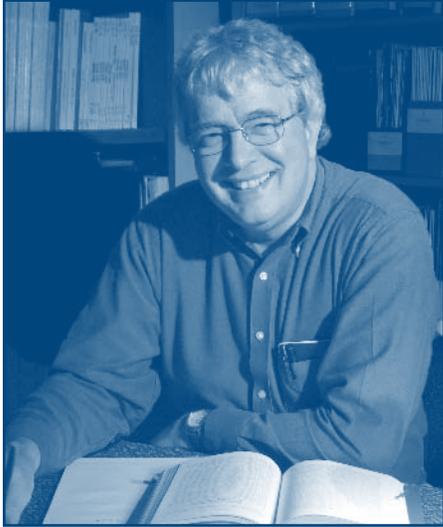
Please send all inquiries to the editor, Daniel Coupland, at dcoupland@hillsdale.edu.

www.SocietyForClassicalLearning.org



Summer Conference 2011

FEATURED SPEAKERS



ken Myers

Ken Myers is the host and producer of the *Mars Hill Audio Journal*, a bimonthly audio magazine that explores the significance of major cultural trends for Christians who are striving to be in the world but not of it. He was formerly editor of *The World: A Journal of Religion and Public Life*, a quarterly journal whose editor-in-chief was Richard John Neuhaus and of *Eternity*, the Evangelical monthly magazine. For eight year, Mr. Myers was a producer and editor for National Public Radio, working much of that time as arts and humanities editor for the two news programs, Morning Edition and All Things Considered. A graduate of the University of Maryland and of Westminster Theological Seminary, Mr. Myers serves as a contributing editor for *Christianity Today* and has served on the Arts on Radio and Television Panel for the National Endowment for the Arts. Learn more about Mr. Myers at www.marshill.org.

bradley j. Birzer

Bradley J. Birzer is Russell Amos Kirk Chair in American Studies and Professor in History, Hillsdale College, Michigan. Author of *American Cicero: The Life of Charles Carroll* (2010), *Sanctifying the World: The Augustinian Life and Mind of Christopher Dawson* (2007), and *J.R.R. Tolkien's Sanctifying Myth* (2003), Birzer is Chairman of the Board of Academic Advisors for the Center for the American Idea, a Senior Scholar with the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, and a Fellow with the Mitch McConnell Center. Biographer Joseph Pearce named Birzer's biography of Christopher Dawson the best book of 2008, and Luke Nichter of CSPAN recently labeled Birzer as one of the 25 best living scholars of American history. Birzer's latest book examines the western liberal arts tradition in the work of cultural and literary critic Russell Kirk. He and his wife live in Hillsdale and are expecting their seventh child.



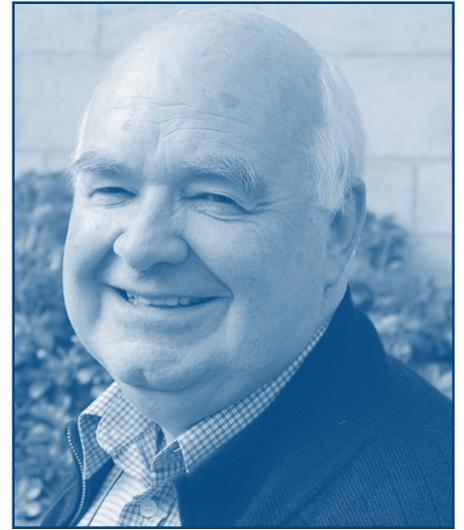
john Lennox

John Lennox is Professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford, Fellow in Mathematics and the Philosophy of Science, and Pastoral Advisor at Green Templeton College, Oxford. He is an adjunct Lecturer at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, and at the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics. He is also a Senior Fellow of the Trinity Forum.

He studied at the Royal School Armagh, Northern Ireland, and was Exhibitioner and Senior Scholar at Emmanuel College, Cambridge University, from which he took his M.A. and Ph.D.

Dr. Lennox worked for many years in the Mathematics Institute at the University of Wales in Cardiff, which awarded him a D.Sc. for his research. He also holds a D.Phil. from Oxford University and an M.A. in Bioethics from the University of Surrey. He was a Senior Alexander Von Humboldt Fellow at the Universities of Würzburg and Freiburg in Germany.

In addition to over seventy published mathematical papers he is the co-author of two research level texts in algebra in the Oxford Mathematical Monographs series. His most recent book, on the interface between science, philosophy, and theology, is *God's Undertaker—Has Science Buried God?* (Oxford: Lion-Hudson, 2009). He has lectured extensively in North America and Eastern and Western Europe on mathematics, the philosophy of science, and the intellectual defense of Christianity. He debated Richard Dawkins on "The God Delusion" and "Has Science buried God?" He has also debated Christopher Hitchens on the New Atheism and on the question: "Is God Great?" John and his wife Sally have three grown children and four grandchildren and live near Oxford, England.



john Seel

Dr. John Seel is a cultural renewal entrepreneur and educational reformer. He is the president of nCore Media, a visual supercomputing company providing high performance computing solutions to the entertainment industry for special effects and computer generated images. He is a founding board member of the Counsel on Educational Standards & Accountability and former board member of the Society for Classical Learning. He and his wife, Kathryn, now live in Cohasset, Massachusetts, but are soon moving to Los Angeles, California.

New Covenant Schools
122 Fleetwood Drive
Lynchburg, VA 24501

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #405
LYNCHBURG,
VIRGINIA

Join Us
FOR OUR
2011 ANNUAL
SUMMER CONFERENCE

CHALLENGING
SPEAKERS
and
GREAT
CONVERSATION

In One of
Our Nation's
MOST EXCITING
DESTINATIONS



Baltimore, MD
JUNE 22 — 25, 2011