# Time-Honored Pedagogies in the Classical Classroom

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ICLE Summer Conference 2019

## Content

- **True, Good, and Beautiful** – Make sure schoolwork is truly meaningful, important, has a point, so that students feel it is worth their attention and worthy of their love. Use only books, art, music, etc. that are True, Good, and Beautiful. We are (re)-training the children's aesthetic. Some books are better: the prose are better, ideas are deeper and resonate better with children, more beautiful illustrations. This is an education based on stories of literary merit written by authors who love their subjects; the author's enthusiasm is brought into the classroom, and students interact with scientists, mathematicians, philosophers, historians, artists, poets, and explorers. (Compare this to textbooks written by committee and full of dry, pre-digested facts.)
- **Christocentric**
- **Virtues**
- **Setting:** When teaching the T, G & B through story, there is always a time (timelines) and a place (maps) for our content (stories)
  - **Mapping** – Geography of Place, how physical landscape impacts the action of history. Involves pausing during a story telling or history readings to locate a mentioned place on the globe or in an atlas. Also, tracing maps, coloring, drawing, labelling.
  - **Timelines and Book of Centuries** –A timeline in book form. Starting in 5th or 6th grade, a log of people and events as they are encountered in all the topics (history, science, art study, etc.). Two- page spread per century.
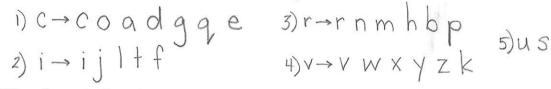
## Skills of the Trivium: Grammar – Logic – Rhetoric

- **Letters & Words:**
  - **Reading** – Letters. Phonetic instruction.
  - **Spelling** – By word families. 27 English rules of spelling.
  - **Vocabulary** – Give synonyms in context (for younger students); discuss word meaning and what the vocabulary adds to the story (older students). Greek and Latin roots. Etymology fun.

- **Sentences & Quotations:**
  - **Copywork** – Handwriting should not be endless sloppy repetition, but short careful focused work – a training in Beauty, "a gift for God" -- of a quotation or paragraph in elevated English.

    **Handwriting stroke families** (manuscript):

    1) c → c o a d g q e    3) r → r n m h b p

    2) i → i j l t f    4) v → v w x y z k    5) u s

  - **Dictation** – Students briefly study a passage for punctuation and spelling, then write down the same as it is read out loud to them. Fill a **Commonplace Notebook.**
  - **Grammar & Punctuation** – Models and imitation. Once taught, expect excellence.
  - **Latin & Greek** – Grammar, vocabulary, and, eventually, translation.

- **Telling & Writing:**
  - **Read-Alouds** – by teacher. A story-based curriculum: Teach the *Mind* to think rightly; teach the *Heart* to feel rightly; So, that the *Will* will do rightly.
  - **Narrations** – Narration is a basic methodology of classical education. Narration is an active retelling (pictorial, oral, written) of what the student has heard and learned. Such a retelling requires the use of the child's whole mind as well as their memory, and demands careful attention to a single reading of the source, without review and repetitions.
  - Ideas (Key Words), Order, and Style

- o **Progymnasmata** – "Pre-writing exercises" involving imitation that students do before they write original things. One of the defining features of the progym is that after simple copywork (which is "progymnasmata" and can start as early as kindergarten), there are 2 main exercises: Imitating content while changing structure, and imitating structure while changing content. 12 steps of progymnasmata, starting in 4th grade.

- **Memorizing & Speaking:**
  - o **Memorization** – This is primarily for poetry and scripture. (Math facts should be acquired through usage and understanding. Latin endings through usage and chant. Science facts through usage.) Memorization stocks the heart with T, G, and B. Poetry involves syntax and diction.
  - o **Recitation** – Students stand to recite memorized poetry and speeches. Comportment, eye contact, and delivery are emphasized. Additional practice can come from standing and reading aloud the history or science readings of the lesson.

- **5 Canons of Rhetoric:** Invention, Arrangement, Style (Eloquence), Memorization, Delivery
  - o Oral and Written Narrations: The student learns to collect ideas, organize them, and relate them (the first 3 canons of rhetoric).
  - o Poetry: Memorization and Recitation (the 4th and 5th canons of rhetoric).

- **Scheduling & Integration:**
  - o **Daily Language Arts Practice:** handwriting/copywork, spelling, Latin, grammar & punctuation exercises, progym writing exercises, poetry memorization & recitation.
  - o **"Weekly" History/Literature Lessons:** (a suggested order, depends on content) vocabulary, setting (mapping, timeline), STORY read-aloud, narration, discussion, re-presentation with excellence, copywork in commonplace, picture study/music study/math/science/etc., as appropriate.


## Skills of the Quadrivium: Arithmetic – Geometry (Art) – Music – Astronomy (Science)

- **Mathematics** – Euclidian-style, building from known to unknown. (Start with intuitive axioms and deduce propositions, called theorems, from these.) Know and understand math, do NOT memorize it. Learn to apply what you know (word problems).

- **Music:**
  - o **Composer Studies** – A training in listening.
  - o **Singing** – Hymns and folk songs. Gregorian chant.

- **Observation** – both of nature and during picture studies. A training in seeing, beholding.

- **Art:**
  - o **Picture Studies** – Look at a piece of art. Set art aside. Describe it in words or draw a copy from memory. Four quadrant method. If well done, get to put the art picture in your notebook (next to written description.)
  - o **Tracing Masterpieces.** Also, seeing, imitating, and practicing elements of art in projects.
  - o **Handcrafts**

- **Science:**
  - o **Nature Notebooks**— Wonderful combination of studying God's creation and learning artistic skills – dry brush watercolor. Students pick one item from a Nature Walk (rock, shell, twig, sighting of bird) and draw it in their notebooks. They might then identify that particular item (sandstone –sedimentary rock; Eastern bluebird (*Salia*), a Thrush) in a Peterson's guide and learn more.
  - o **Consider 4 Causes** (material, formal, efficient, final), so there is inherent meaning in what is being taught.