

## THE CLASSICAL LESSON CHECKLIST

### Lesson Checklist (for preparation and review)

**Note:** no lesson can contain all elements listed in this form and teachers should not attempt to involve them all in any one lesson--this could be dangerous to one's health.

**The Seven Laws of Teaching:** The seven criteria listed are taken from *The Seven Laws of Teaching*, by John Milton Gregory. These criteria will be used by the Headmaster in evaluating lessons, but they should also be used by teachers as a pedagogical guide and checklist--as a kind of heuristic device for discovering areas of weakness and for creating better lesson plans.

**Essential Principles of Classical Pedagogy:** These eight criteria should also be used for evaluation and guidance.

#### 1. Festina Lente

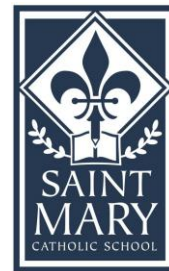
- ☐ The teacher works to ensure mastery of each step of learning, and does advance students to further study until mastery has been reached.
- ☐ The teacher creates a learning atmosphere conducive to mastery rather than quickly "covering material."
- ☐ The teacher seems to understand that the classical curriculum is not primarily the content and pace suggested by a published resource or textbook.
- ☐ The teacher models a focus on mastery of each step of learning.

#### 2. Multum non Multa

- ☐ The teacher prefers to teach a few things deeply and well rather than cursorily covering many things that will not be mastered.
- ☐ The teacher seems to understand that students will forget the majority of information that is merely "covered" with conventional teaching and assessment.
- ☐ The teacher communicates to students that mastery of a concept, skill or subject will increase joy of learning and lead to further study and mastery.
- ☐ The teacher models mastery of learning in his/her own life.
- ☐ Broad overviews of a concept or subject are put in the context of learning for mastery and deep enjoyment

**Comments:**

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## 3. Repetitio Mater Memoriae

- ☐ The teacher understands that regular repetition and review is necessary to acquire mastery.
- ☐ The teacher uses a variety of means for review/repetition appropriated to the students' age and level of learning.
- ☐ The teacher makes review interesting and so enables students to acquire a deeper mastery and increased appreciation for what is studied.
- ☐ The teacher requires students to rephrase, summarize and explain the objects of their study.

## 4. Embodied Learning

- ☐ The teacher understands that classical education aims first for the formation of a human soul and thus seeks to cultivate each student by bodily pathways and not only by rational means.
- ☐ The teacher understands that the rhythms, practices, traditions and routines we create are just as important for learning as front-of-the class instruction.
- ☐ The teacher employs rhythms and practices that shape students to love the true, good and beautiful.
- ☐ The classroom is decorated with beautiful art and graphics that cultivate students' affections for the true, good and beautiful.
- ☐ The classroom is more like a home than a conventional school institution.
- ☐ Beautiful music is commonly played throughout the day.
- ☐ Students are blessed and prayed for on a daily basis.
- ☐ A classroom liturgy of appropriate thanksgiving, praise, singing and petition is employed on at least a weekly basis.

## 5. Songs, Chants and Jingles

- ☐ The lower school teacher regularly (daily) employs songs, chants and jingles to help students master important information.
- ☐ Songs, chants and jingles are sung with enthusiasm, skill and creativity.
- ☐ Teachers, students and parents contribute to the creation of songs, chants and jingles.
- ☐ The upper school teacher continues to employ songs, chants and jingles as one important teaching and learning tool.

## 6. Wonder and Curiosity

- ☐ The teacher understands that all learning should be stimulated and motivated by a student's natural wonder and curiosity about God, the world and ourselves.

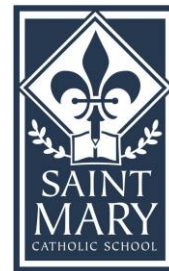
## Comments

- ☐ The lower school teacher understands that a student's natural wonder and curiosity should be cultivated, expanded and protected.
- ☐ The upper school teacher understands that an older student's natural wonder and curiosity are threatened in this culture and need to be carefully guarded from distraction, trivia and cultural norms of "coolness."
- ☐ The teacher regularly models his/her own wonder at learning, study and discovery.

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-St. John Paul II

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## 7. Educational Virtues

- ☐ The teacher understands that a student without student virtues is not a student at all.
- ☐ The teacher's lesson plans reflect his/her effort to develop student virtues such as love, humility, courage, temperance, constancy, diligence and patience.
- ☐ The teacher employs practical methods designed to foster and develop student virtues.
- ☐ Students display sufficient virtues that they are independently studying and learning even without the presence and prompts of the teacher or parents.
- ☐ Students show signs of loving that which is lovely (cultivated affections, ordered loves) and loving what must be done.
- ☐ Both the teacher and students are aware of the danger of disordered passions and student vices and seek to overcome them.
- ☐ The teacher collaborates with parents to cultivate student virtues.
- ☐ The teacher models the chief student virtues himself/herself.
- ☐ Teachers display a combination of warmth, enthusiasm, order and respect in the way they manage the classroom and maintain student discipline.

## 8. Scholē, Contemplation and Leisure

- ☐ The teacher understands that contemplation and reflection are necessary for students to deeply understand and love various manifestations of truth, goodness and beauty.
- ☐ The teacher makes time in class for relaxed discussion and contemplation of the important truths the class is studying.
- ☐ The teacher displays skill and wisdom in the way he/she leads discussion of important truths, such as biblical teaching, literature, history, works of art, principles of mathematics, science and music.
- ☐ The atmosphere of learning in the classroom is peaceful and relaxed, even when students are busily and actively engaged in learning and learning activities.

### Comments:

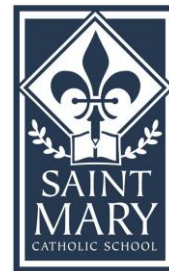
## 9. Docendo Discimus, By Teaching We Learn

- ☐ The teacher often has individual students explain to the class how they have solved problems (e.g., math, Latin translation).
- ☐ Students entertain questions from the class and are given opportunity to express their ideas, reasons and beliefs.
- ☐ Students give brief oral reports or presentations before the class demonstrating the fruit of their study, thinking and work.
- ☐ Older students occasionally make presentations to younger students, or tutor younger students.

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- ☐ The atmosphere of learning in the classroom is peaceful and relaxed, even when students are busily and actively engaged in learning and learning activities.

## The Seven Laws of Teaching

**1. Teacher's Knowledge:** A teacher must be one who **knows the lesson** or truth or art to be taught (Know thoroughly and familiarly the lesson you wish to teach--teach from a full mind and a clear understanding.)

- ☐ Lesson prepared by fresh study
- ☐ The lesson has analogies/illustrations to more familiar facts and principles
- ☐ The lesson is presented in familiar language
- ☐ The lesson proceeds from simplest notions to the broadest views
- ☐ The lesson is related to the lives and experience of the learners
- ☐ The teacher works to ensure real understanding in the minds of the pupils
- ☐ The lesson assumes that complete mastery of a few things is better than an ineffective smattering of many
- ☐ The teacher appears to have studied for the lesson well in advance
- ☐ The teacher works from a written outline

**2. Student Interest:** A learner is one who attends with interest to the lesson (**Gain and keep the attention and interest** of the pupils upon the lesson. Do not try to teach without attention.)

- ☐ The students display: 1) passive attention 2) active attention 3) absorbed "effortless" attention
- ☐ The teacher works to secure absorbed attention
- ☐ The teacher communicates that the students must engage in mental toil and effort to help achieve this absorbed attention
- ☐ The teacher does not begin lesson until attention has been secured

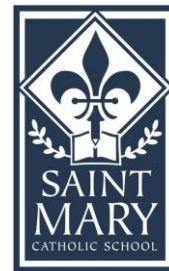
## Comments:

- ☐ Teacher regains attention if it is lost
- ☐ Teacher does not exhaust the attention of the students
- ☐ Arouses attention, when necessary, by variety in presentation
- ☐ Kindles and maintains interest and attention
- ☐ Age-appropriate illustrations and applications
- ☐ Appeals to the interests of the students (e.g., favorite songs, stories and subjects of students)
- ☐ Reduces distractions (inside and outside the classroom) to a minimum
- ☐ Prepares beforehand thought-provoking questions
- ☐ Makes presentation attractive using illustrations and other aids; but these aids are not so prominent so as to become distractions
- ☐ Exhibits and maintains enthusiasm

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- ☐ Makes use of eye contact and gesture

**3. Clear Language:** The language used as a medium between teacher and learner must be common to both (Use words understood in the same way by the pupils and yourself--**language clear and vivid** to both).

- ☐ Does the teacher appear to fully understand the student?
- ☐ The teacher knows and understands the language of his students.
- ☐ Does the student appear to fully understand the teacher?
- ☐ Is the teacher's speech generally of plain and intelligible expression?
- ☐ Do students do much of the talking?
- ☐ Does the teacher summon to his aid the experience of the students?
- ☐ Are gestures, visual aids and other non-verbal communication utilized (illustrations, objects, pictures)?
- ☐ Are analogies used?
- ☐ Does the teacher resist becoming a lecturer (too talkative)?
- ☐ Does the teacher secure from students as full a statement as possible of their knowledge of the subject?
- ☐ Are new words taught to the students?
- ☐ Does the teacher test the student's understanding of the words he uses?
- ☐ The teacher has students rephrase concepts to make sure they clearly understand.
- ☐ The teacher is not fooled by appearances, but probes and checks a student's understanding.

**4. Associative Knowledge:** The lesson to be mastered must be explicable in the terms of truth already known by the learner--the unknown must be explained by means of the known (**Begin with what is already well known** to the pupil upon the subject and with what he himself has experienced--and proceed to new

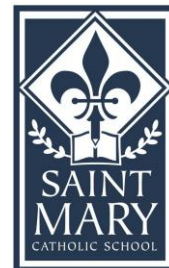
## Comments:

- ☐ Material by single, easy and natural steps, letting the known explain the unknown.)
- ☐ Since much of the truth is mastered by expression, the students do much of the talking
- ☐ The lesson is less lecture and more discussion and debate
- ☐ The teacher knows what words students use and their meanings
- ☐ The teacher secures from students a full statement of their knowledge on the
- ☐ subject in order to learn their mode of expression and to correct their knowledge
- ☐ The teacher expresses himself in the language of the pupils
- ☐ The teacher uses simple words and always defines new, difficult words
- ☐ The teacher repeats thought in other language when students fail to understand
- ☐ The teacher helps explain the meaning of words with illustrations, including
- ☐ illustrations from the experience of students

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**5. Mental Initiative and Discovery:** Teaching is arousing and using the pupil's mind to grasp the desired thought to master the desired art (**Stimulate the pupil's own mind to action**). Keep his thought as much as possible ahead of your expression, placing him in the attitude of a discoverer, an anticipator. Excite and direct the self-activities of the pupil, and as a rule tell him nothing that he can learn himself) The teacher seeks to help the student think and discover for himself—to rethink and relive the knowledge the teacher seeks to impart.

The teacher does not push learning beyond the capacity of students to understand.

The teacher ensures that students think and study independently (with guidance)

The teachers seeks to motivate and stimulate mental exercise in the students

The teacher makes us of the some of the following exercises: comparison of the new with the old; the alternating analysis and synthesis of parts, wholes, classes, causes and effects; the action of judgment and reason; and the effects upon thought of tastes and prejudices.

The teachers appeals to and seeks to inspire the students love of knowledge for its own sake and the desire for knowledge to be used as a tool in solving problems or obtaining other knowledge.

The teacher seems to believe that each child has the potential to become an absorbed, excited life-long learner.

The uses of knowledge are pointed out to the student by the teacher.

The teacher seeks to awaken the student's moral responsibility, motivation and sensibility for the pursuit of knowledge (e.g., the glory of God, the love of man).

## Comments:

- ☐ The teachers seems to prefer the excited thinking and conversation of his own students to his own voice.
- ☐ The teacher is only a lecturer for short periods of time
- ☐ The teacher is constantly and regularly asking important qquestions and soliciting qquestions in the minds of his students.
- ☐ The teacher frequently begins and ends lesson with an important question.
- ☐ The teachers does not give explanations that "settle everything" and ends all thinking on the subject.
- ☐ The teachers does not rest until each student is awakened and asking qquestions.
- ☐ The teacher shows how understood truths lead to other facts that renew questioning and thinking.
- ☐ The teachers shows how an understood truth still retain qquestions about its consequences, applications and uses.
- ☐ The students seem free and enthusiastic to ask qquestions.
- ☐ The teacher does not quickly answer qquestions, but rephrases them and secures deeper thought.
- ☐ The teachers finds a "point of contact" between the lesson and his students.

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- ☐ The teacher regularly assigns or asks stimulating questions which awaken inquiry.
- ☐ The teacher patiently waits for students to express their questions and thoughts.
- ☐ The teacher resists the temptations to tell the student all he knows on a subject.
- ☐ The teachers seems to understand that knowledge comes by thinking not by being told.

**6. Mental Reproduction and Integration:** Learning is thinking into one's own understanding a new idea or truth or working into habit a new art or skill (Require the pupil to reproduce in thought the lesson he is learning--thinking it out in its various phases and applications till he can express it in his own language.) **The pupil must reproduce in his own mind the truth to be learned.**

Application of this law is mainly for older students (dialectic and rhetoric).

- ☐ The teacher trains his students how to study.
- ☐ The student, rather than the teacher, actually does most of the work of education.
- ☐ Students exhibit the character of a self-discoverer or investigator.
- ☐ The students can rephrase or translate thought into their own or other words.
- ☐ Students ask for evidence and reasons for the truths they study.
- ☐ Students are aware that truths and problems they study are related a larger network of knowledge.

## Comments:

- ☐ The teacher helps students to see the practical utility/applications of the truths they study.
- ☐ Students seek to apply their knowledge to practical purposes of life and thought.
- ☐ The teacher asks "why" frequently and regularly, so that students understand they are to give reasons for their opinions.
- ☐ Student are encouraged to "try their own power of expression."

**7. Review:** The test and proof of teaching done--the finishing and fashioning process--must be reviewing, rethinking, renewing, reproducing, and applying of the material that has been taught, the knowledge and ideals and arts that have been communicated (**Review, review, review**, reproducing the old, deepening its impression with new thought, linking it with added meanings, finding new applications, correcting any false views, and completing the true.) The completion, test and confirmation of the work of teaching must be made by review and application.

- ☐ The teacher engages in regular review, especially at the beginning and end of a lesson.
- ☐ Most lessons close with a summary that serves as a review.

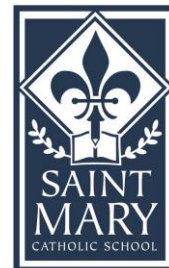
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- ☐ Review is built into lesson plans approximately every 5 or 6 lessons.
- ☐ Courses end with a final, thorough review that are searching and



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- ☐ comprehensive, leading students to a familiar mastery of what they have learned.
- ☐ The teacher does not let his concern to "cover material" keep him from review.
- ☐ Review is not a lifeless, colorless repletion of questions and answers.
- ☐ Review by the teacher includes fresh conceptions, new associations and applications.
- ☐ Review is varied and includes: mere repetition of words and lessons, quick review of a fact or phrase, a broad review of an entire subject (thorough restudy).
- ☐ The teacher engages in partial reviews on a single fact or principle, the recall of some event or person, or a difficult point or question.
- ☐ Complete reviews are employed as cursory review of a whole field in a few general questions or in a full and final reconsideration of the whole ground.
- ☐ Students are sometimes encouraged to re-read important selections (perhaps with a different emphasis or question in mind) for deeper understanding.
- ☐ Review is spread over days and week and not done in single concentrated periods.
- ☐ Students exhibit new associations from review.
- ☐ Review often consists in calling up a fact or truth and applying it to some use.

## Comments:

Review sometimes makes use of the body and hands; and objects (visual aids).

Students show that reviewed material has become imbedded in their permanent memory.

Students seem to understand that success in scholarship requires the habit of regular review. *Repetitio mater memoriae.*

## Spiritual Leadership

- ☐ The teacher consistently exhibits love, joy, peace and spiritual maturity in his daily work and relationships in the school.

## Classroom Appearance

- ☐ The classroom is neat and clean
- ☐ The whole room is used creatively to reinforce material presented.
- ☐ Routines and maintenance procedures are simple but adequate.

## Classroom Discipline

- ☐ The teacher consistently enforces his own and the school's discipline policies
- ☐ to provide and orderly atmosphere.
- ☐ Students understand what is expected of them and display a good degree of self-discipline.

## Planning/Communications

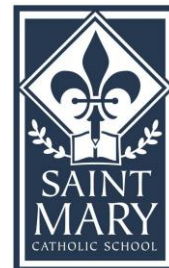
- ☐ The teacher's plans show creativity and a good use of time in class.
- ☐ The teacher's plans are clearly written and turned in on time each week.
- ☐ The teacher's planning obviously uses the curriculum guide for timing and content.
- ☐ The teacher communicates effectively and frequently enough with parents.

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☐ The teacher allows for parental input and involvement in the class.  
Professionalism

☐ The teacher demonstrates a biblical approach to his work by his punctuality, compliant attitude, appearance, etc.

Teacher Observed \_\_\_\_\_

Date Observed \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

General Comments/Summary:

Signature of Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

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