Classical Christian Curriculum in Australia: What, Why & How?

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Abstract

Sections of the global alternative Christian school movement have found inspiration in the recovery of academic rationalism orientations of curriculum. Classical Christian education (CCE) is a religious orthodoxy curriculum movement that has rediscovered academic rationalism, vis-à-vis the liberal arts tradition. This essay will attempt to contextualize Australian Christian education and the emergence of CCE as a possible "mine of silver and gold". An example of a CCE curriculum product will be analysed to discover the stated aims of the movement. Critical issues for the CCE implementation in Australia will be outlined, with reference to the Alice Springs Declaration (2019).

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Most theorists would agree that the fundamental curriculum question is "what knowledge is of most worth[?]" (Barone, 2010, para.1). However, the answer varies depending on *whose* knowledge, i.e. *the powerful* and the knowledge they value (Smith & East, 2002; Young & Muller, 2013.). Coming, as I do, from the *alternative* (Hill, 1982) new Christian schools movement:

> [Which is] a series of uncoordinated initiatives taken by Christian parents and by evangelical
> churches to create a radical alternative to the predominant secular ethos of the state-
> maintained sector of schools... (Baker & Freeman, 2005 in ap Siôn et al., 2007. p. 1)

I can appreciate that in a secular state, Christian religious knowledge is not highly valued. However, for me, and other practitioners in my milieu, Christian religious knowledge is valued as *powerful knowledge* (Young & Muller, 2013). This knowledge is powerful because it explains the nature and purpose of human existence (the meaning of life) and enables connection to the divine.

In the context of this paper, I define Christian religious knowledge as knowledge about God (the Father), the creator of everything, and his son, Jesus Christ (the Son). This knowledge needs to be revealed by God's spirit (the Holy Spirit) interacting with the intellect, the will and the affections of the learner. In the context of Christian education, this act of divine revelation is often mediated through Christian teachers, towards students. Christian religious knowledge is also experiential, ideally it leads on to a living student-teacher relationship (discipleship) between Jesus and his students mediated by his spirit. Kelsey (1992, in Newell, 2012) calls instruction in Christian religious knowledge *paideia* – affecting the moral and ethical development of the learner.

Christian Education is thus a high stakes endeavor, conceived as being in partnership with the Trinity (Father, Son & Holy Spirit) to reveal divine ontology and ethical living. As such Van Brummelen (2004) insists that Christian educators need their own *discipleship-oriented curriculum*.

I will chart the development of Christian education in Australia and the problem of Christian religious knowledge and curriculum integration. I will then define and explain the curriculum development of classical Christian education (CCE) as a possible way forward for Christian education in Australia. The second section of this paper will place a leading CCE curriculum artifact under the microscope in order to identify the aims of the movement. The final section of this paper will be dedicated to outlining several critical issues in the implementation of CCE in Australia, leading to a comparison between the aims of the Alice Springs Declaration (2019) and the aims of CCE.

Christian Education in Australia

Despite its early disestablishment from Australia's colonial beginning (Lawry, 1965) Christian Education has become a viable choice within the mainstream provision of schooling in Australia, with some 40% of Australian secondary school students enrolled in a Christian-affiliated school (Hastie, 2017). This is due, in part, to the growth of the new Christian schooling movement since the 1960s (Jackson, 2009; Fisher, 2012).

Brian V Hill (1982), foundation professor and dean of the School of Education at Murdoch University (WA) describes the three predominate modes for the delivery of Christian education in Australia:

1) *Independent* (older church schools, tending towards educating the children of the rich, and thus elitist, sub-Christian and with very minimal denominational church input.)

   2) *Catholic* (schools assuming a baptized and catholic student body offering the rituals of belonging, awakening to the reality that most baptized children aren't properly instructed in or committed to the faith)

3) *Alternative* (schools offering a haven from the world for children of Christian parents, but not preparing students well for the rigors of secular society's intellectual life - leading to blinkered, fundamentalist, uncritical thinkers).

Hill offers three challenges to Australian Christian education. Firstly, addressing questions of authentic Christian ethics in schools i.e. preference for the poor. Secondly, ensuring Christian religious knowledge is properly handed down to the next generation, in a way that leads to understanding and committed discipleship. And thirdly, ensuring *autonomous rationality* is fostered, allowing students to critically engage with their own faith tradition and contemporary society.

For many alternative Christian school founders, having a Christian curriculum was one of the motivating concerns (Mechielsen, 1980). However essential state and federal funding continues to be connected to mandated national curriculum, which is secular, pluralistic and multicultural. This has been problematic for new Christian schools (Fisher, 2012).

A normative practice emerged in the curriculum development of these schools consisting of interpreting teaching & learning content through a *Christian worldview* lens as first defined by Orr (1989, [1897]). This has meant filtering and *framing* state mandated curriculum to align with and impart a Christian religious orthodoxy (Cooling, 2010; Thompson, 2003; Van Brummelen, 1988). How schools do this in such a way that engages students through *autonomous rationality* (Hill, 1982) and includes students into an *interpretive community* (Jackson, 1992 in Hull, 2009) has been at the heart of contemporary research in Christian Education (e.g. Cairney, et al., 2011; Edlin, 2014; Edlin & Ireland, 2006; Fennema, 2006; Fisher, 2012; Goodlet and Collier, 2014; George, 2017; Knight, 2016; Murison, 2018; Roy, 2008).

A significant curriculum reorientation is occurring in the global alternative Christian school movement that is *mining the veins of silver and gold* (Augustine in Rotelle, 1996, p. 160) from the ancient past, contributing a great deal of wealth to alternative Christian school theory and praxis.

This curriculum reorientation is known as classical Christian education (CCE). In the context of this paper, I define CCE is a *religious orthodoxy ideology curriculum* movement (Quinn, 2010) that has rediscovered an *academic-rationalism curriculum orientation* (Barone, 2010) *vis-à-vis* the liberal arts tradition as appropriated by Christian theologian Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE). To put it another way, CCE is a Christian liberal arts curriculum being adopted by the alternative, evangelical, Christian schools' movement. For advocates of CCE the liberal arts tradition solves the tripartite problem proposed by Hill (1982) of authentic ethical living, effective faith formation and academic excellence.

Broadly speaking, CCE is a "literary-rhetorical curriculum" Penella (2015), taught within the *Great Conversation* about *Great Ideas* contained in the canon of the *Great Books of the Western World* (Hutchins, 1952). It includes the study of Latin or ancient Greek; arranging child development phase and pedagogy according to the trivium (Grammar, Logic & Rhetoric); emphasizing perennial philosophy (Samsel, 2012) i.e. the explicit teaching of ethics and Augustinian *rightly ordered affections* (Augustine, in Rotelle, 1996*).* All of which are taught out of a concentration on reformed theology and biblical instruction (Wilson, 2003; Perrin, 2004.). Christian religious knowledge is integrated into all the humanities and sciences – as theology is the focus for of all the disciplines (Wilson, 2003). A leading light in CCE, Dr. Christopher Perrin states:

> Classical education was inherited by the church with some modification and put into service for centuries. We are continuing in a tradition… that is both classical and Christian…***we see both the academic and spiritual recovery as intertwined***… (Perrin, 2004, p. 37, emphasis mine)

If Perrin is right, then Christian education need not produce people who *"become either unable to think for themselves or [who are] actively resistant to the Gospel."* (Hill, 1982, p.13). The extent of Perrin's (2004) vision of the life of the mind and *academic recovery* via integrated Christian religious knowledge within the subject disciplines for the cultivation of *autonomous*

rationality (Hill, 1982) will be shown in the curriculum product review of <u>Omnibus I</u> (Wilson & Fischer, 2005) but first we will spend some time understanding the curriculum development history and practice of *classical* Christian education.

Classical Christian Education's Curriculum Development History

St. Justin Martyr (100-165CE), professional philosopher and first Christian apologist to write about pagan education saw Christian religious knowledge as the fulfillment, not the elimination, of Greco-Roman philosophical inquiry (Stefon et al., 2020). However, it was Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430CE), whose adaptation of classical thought to Christian curriculum created a theological system of great power and lasting influence (O'Donnell, 2020). In his treatise <u>De Doctrina Christiana</u> (On Christian Teaching) Augustine argued that curriculum ought to *concentrate* on theology & scripture while synthesizing the best learning from the Greco-Roman world (Howie, 1962). Augustine understood that classical training was essential for Biblical interpretation and the promotion, defense and growth of Christianity and as such, despite its pagan origin, endorsed grammar, logic and rhetoric (the trivium), for Christian students.

For Augustine – knowledge of the world could only be properly understood and ordered correctly by first developing a knowledge of God and experiencing his love. His conception of curriculum was that of a journey to one's home country, a journey of purification and gaining of wisdom through the liberal arts to the ultimate knowledge of God (Rotelle, 1996). As such, by Christianizing the nature and purpose of the Trivium, Augustine set in motion the curriculum development of the medieval period (Kenyon, 2013).

Trivium as a Sequence of Skills

Boethius (477 - 524CE) coined the term *quadrivium* and "[made] the distinction between 'trivium' and quadrivium…on the basis of the former's linguistic instrumentality…and the latter's

coverage of areas of speculative knowledge" (Chang, 1998). Russell (1998, pp.18 -19) describes the trivium as "a continuum, a curriculum or sequence of skills" that "were exclusively verbal: words…were the currency of thought…there was simply no learning without words". Joseph (2002) provides a very useful overview of the nature of the Trivium & Quadrivium as curriculum *arts & theories*:

The Trivium: The three arts of language pertaining to the mind

1.   **Logic -** art of thinking
2.   **Grammar -** art of inventing and combining symbols
3.   **Rhetoric -** art of communication

The Quadrivium: The four arts of quantity pertaining to matter

Discrete quantity or number

1.   **Arithmetic -** theory of number
2.   **Music –** application of the theory of number

Continuous quantity

3.   **Geometry –** theory of space
4.   **Astronomy –** application of the theory of space

(Joseph, 2002, p. 3)

Grammar

Grammar is the first phase in the sequence of skills. Quintilian (35 – 100 CE) described the role of the grammarian to teach children how to read and speak correctly and to interpret the poets (i.e. Homer, Hesiod, Euripides, and Menander) for moral benefit (Murphy & Wiese, 2015). Russell (1998, p.9) defines grammar as "vernacular and Latin reading, vocabulary and grammar theory". Kilwardby (in Russell, 1998, p.9) defines grammar as "the science of writing correctly, of pronouncing writings correctly, and of understanding correctly things pronounced correctly." Grammar includes syntax, metre, rhythmics, modes of signification, and arrangements of parts of a discourse and letter writing – leading students to the ideal *rectus loquendus et scribendus* (righteous speech and writing) (Russell, 1998).

Logic (dialectic)

After the grammar phase students developed their logical reasoning. Kilwardby (ibid.) described logic as a rational and verbal art, teaching the method of reason that applies to the mind and to discourse, aiming at not merely correctness but accuracy to nature and the truth. Logic instruction sought to take the ideas *"marked in the head"* i.e. *private mental language* (inducing, recognizing, cogitating and identification, imagination and signification) and turning it into *public verbal language* (Russell, 1998, pp. 21-27). Logic involved models, hierarchies, categories, anatomies and taxonomies all useful for syllogistic reasoning (Russell, 1998).

Rhetoric

In the Rhetoric phase *"students learned to write and speak by reading and listening to model texts… to isolate, analyze, and emulate desirable features found therein"* (Fleming, 2003 p.108). Rhetoric relied heavily on a process of *Imitatio*, which Quintillian explained as *"using exemplary texts that [possess] some attributes worthy of emulation as models for the production of new texts"* (Terrill, 2016, p.158). *Imitatio* included activities like reading an original text aloud; explication, judgement of the text; memorization and recitation; paraphrase, translation, transliteration between prose and verse; abbreviation, and amplification, mooting courts and political debate. A set of handbooks called *progymnasmata* (Calboli Montefusco, 2016) staged students through writing exercises to lay the groundwork for their declamations (Fleming, 2003, p.100):

1. fable
2. tale
3. saying
4. proverb
5. refutation
6. confirmation
7. commonplace
8. encomium
9. invective
10. comparison
11. characterization

12. description
13. thesis
14. law

The *progymnasmata* were the "central element in ancient education… with influence on all modes of [ancient] literary culture" (Penella, 2015, p.161) They can be seen as *rationally ordered* (Fleming, 2003), moving from simple to complex; from short to long texts; from poetic to civic modes of discourse; from narrative to argumentative activities; from concrete to abstract subject matter, from closed to open discourse schemata, from irrefutable to controvertible topics; from more to less teacher assistance. Rhetoric concluded with declamation – students giving their own speeches pretending to be located orators on hypothetical circumstances (Heath, 1997; Potter, 2013 in Chronopoulos, 2014; Penella, 2015). Quintilian famously described the orator, the ideal product of the trivium, as "the good man, speaking well" (Murphy & Wiese, 2015). Studying rhetoric was intended to develop *facilitas*, the capacity to produce appropriate and effective language in any situation (Murphey, 1990 in Fleming, 2003).

The sequencing evident in the *progymnasmata* corresponds with the contemporary psychology about how students best learn (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987 in Fleming, 2003). Fleming (ibid.) argues that the *progymnasmata* was well designed, integrated, developmentally sound and highly effective. This rational sequencing gives meaning to the phrase *academic rationalism* as a curriculum orientation.

Trivium as Tools for Learning

Building from Boethius's *linguistic instrumentality* (Chang, 1998), Sayers (1947) and Joseph (1937) understood that language development in the trivium was the basis for all of learning - a set of *tools* for learning. First, a learner needs to understand the definitions, facts and *linguistic foundation* (Lewis, 2017) of a subject (i.e. grammar), then understand how these facts rationally interact together (i.e. logic) and finally using this understanding in application to influence others and create new knowledge (i.e. rhetoric):
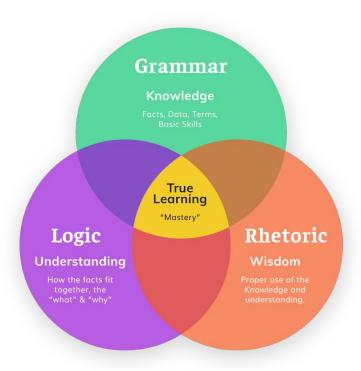
Figure 1. The Trivium (Vanguard Classical School, 2020)

Trivium as Child Development Model

Additionally, Sayers (1947) conceives of child development through three phases associated with the Trivium. Grammar *Poll Parrot* stage (early childhood) which has a predilection for memorization, repetition, chanting, and acquiring facts. Thus Vaughan (2019) argues that CCE is an essentialist curriculum orientation, but only where it is developmentally appropriate for learners.

The next stage of Logic is the middle childhood and adolescence Sayers (1947) calls the *Pert* stage, in which learners are insufferably drawn to argumentation and debate. Sayers (ibid.) contends that this stage is perfectly suited to teaching formal logic and logical fallacies so that students are better trained in what is already coming naturally to them. Finally, as students move into the Rhetoric stage of young adulthood, they desire to appreciate beauty and eloquence and to make an influence in the world. She called this phase the *Poetic* phase of development. In this phase students

should be trained in improving their skills in oration and construction of hypotheses. Garland (1992)

expresses Sayer's ideas in the following chart:

Beginning Grammar(Pre-Polly)	GRAMMAR (Poll-Parrot)	LOGIC (Pert)	RHETORIC (Poetic)
Grades K-2	Grades 3-7.5	Grades 7.5-9	Grades 10-12
Approx. ages 4-8	Approx. ages 9-11	Approx. ages 12-14	Approx. ages 15-18
Student Characteristics:	*Student Characteristics:*	*Student Characteristics:*	*Student Characteristics:*
1. Obviously excited about learning *2. Enjoys games, stories, songs, projects* *3. Short attention span* *4. Wants to touch,taste, feel, smell, see* *5. Imaginative,creative* *6. Likes to copy, imitate*	*1. Excited about new, interesting facts* *2. Likes to explain, figure out, talk* *3. Wants to relate own experiences to topic, or just to tell a story* *4. Likes collections, organizing items* *5. Likes chants, clever, repetitious word sounds (e.g. Dr. Seuss)* *6. Easily memorizes* *7. Can assimilate another language well*	*1. Still excitable, but needs challenges* *2. Judges, critiques, debates, critical* *3. Likes to organize items, others* *4. Shows off knowledge* *5. Wants to know "behind the scenes" facts* *6. Curious about **Why?** for most things* *7. Thinks, acts as though more knowledgeable than adults*	*1. Concerned with present events,especially in own life* *2. Interested in justice, fairness* *3. Moving toward special interests,topics* *4. Can take on responsibility, independent work* *5. Can synthesize* *6. Desires to express feelings, own ideas* *7. Generally idealistic*
Teaching Methods:	*Teaching Methods:*	*Teaching Methods:*	*Teaching Methods:*
1. Guide discovering *2. Explore, find things* *3. Use lots of tactile items to illustrate point* *4. Sing, play games, chant, recite, color, draw, paint, build* *5. Use body movements* *6. Short, creative projects* *7. Show and Tell, drama, hear/read/tell stories* *8. Field trips* *9. Reinforce conceptual understanding of letters, numbers, associated meanings* *10. Provide copying, imitating opportunities*	*1. Lots of sensory work, projects* *2. Field trips* *3. Make collections, displays, models* *4. Plan integration of material through variety of means* *5. Teach and assign simple research projects* *6. Recitations, drama, memorization, chants, sound-offs* *7. Drills, games, songs* *8. Oral/written presentations*	*1. Time lines, charts,maps (visual materials)* *2. Debates, persuasive reports* *3. Drama, reenactments, role-playing* *4. Evaluate, critique (with guidelines)* *5. Formal logic* *6. Research projects* *7. Oral/written presentations* *8. Guest speakers, trips* *9. Collaborative work in groups*	*1. Drama, oral presentations, poetry* *2. Research, integration of disciplines, synthesis of ideas* *3. Classic literature, history, speeches, debates* *4. Give responsibilities, e.g. working with younger students, organize activities* *5. In-depth field trips* *6. World view discussion/written papers* *7. Construction/public defense of theses*

Figure 2. Lost Tools of Learning Illustrated Chart, (Garland, 1992)

Thus, the classical trivium informs pedagogy, child development and skill sequencing &

subject knowledge. As such, this conception of liberal arts as a curriculum framework was settled for

almost a thousand years right the way up into the early modern world (Perrin, 2004).

Classical Christian Education's Hidden Curriculum

Perrin (2014) has codified principles for CCE pedagogy which, I suggest, are an attempt to define and aim towards an ideal *hidden curriculum*, which Synder (1971, p.4) calls "the social and emotional surround of formal education". These principles can be found at the end of this paper in Appendix A. Hurworth (2011, Appendix B) is more polemical in approach, but offers an Australian perspective on what he perceives as the problems of the hidden curriculum in modern education, juxtaposed against CCE's alternative.

<p align="center">Curriculum Product Case Study:</p>

It would be worthwhile now spending some time taking an in-depth look at one curriculum product from the CCE movement.

Omnibus I: Biblical & Classical Civilization (Wilson & Fischer, 2005)

Omnibus, from the Latin meaning 'all encompassing' is a *Great Books* course for lower Secondary school students that takes its shape in the form of a 600-page textbook designed to be used over one year in conjunction with a weighty reading list, including:

Table 1. Texts and topics contained within Omnibus I

Main Books	Ideas	Supplementary Books	Ideas
Genesis	The character of God, The nature of Man, creation, sin, punishment, covenant.	Chosen by God	Predestination, Calvinism.
Exodus	Art, freedom, free will, law, crime & punishment, Egyptology.	Till We Have Faces	Justice, love, mysticism, rationalism.
Epic of Gilgamesh	Pagan gods, salvation, friendship, textual criticism.	Narnia Series	Creation, curiosity, allegory, temptation, atonement, cultural supremacy, narrative,

			celebration, aesthetics, fear, emotions, legalism, licentiousness.
Code of Hummurabi	Nature of man, salvation, justice, law, mercy.	Isaiah	Prophets, repentance
First and Second Samuel	Fathers & sons, politics, culture, religion, change, leadership.	Jeremiah	Consequences, god's sovereignty.
First and Second Kings	Literary composition, prophecy, idolatry, rise and fall of nations, judgement.	Minor Prophets	Tolerance, sin, evil.
Odyssey	Greek meter, poetry, the heroic, maturity, marriage, immortality, home & family, hospitality, humor, loyalty, theft.	The Best Things in Life	Natural law, truth, goodness, materialism, success, ethics.
Histories	The Image of God, Histography, cause and effect, body image, pride, violence, revenge, death, fate.	The Unaborted Socrates	Life, sexual ethics, infanticide, abortion, justice, equality, murder.
Oresteia	Government, theatre, justice & mercy,	Galatians	Law and grace, slavery, Christian living.
Plutarch's lives	Virtue, duty, politics, leadership, monarchy, democracy, wisdom.	Romans	Election, evangelism, salvation.
Theban Trilogy	The problem of evil, fate, civil disobedience	James	Works, Christian living.
The Last Days of Socrates	Autonomy, Trinity, goodness, wisdom, immortality, materialism., Platonic philosophy.	The Eagle of the Ninth	Friendship, ambition, loyalty.
The Early History of Rome	History, hegemony, just war theory, nationalism, politics, authority, nobility, diversity,	The Screwtape Letters	Temptations, demons, Satan, marriage.

	loyalty, punishment.		
Luke and Acts	Jesus, Religion, Old testament & new testament, gospel, civilization.	The Holiness of God	Holiness, uniqueness, God's attributes.
Aeneid	Destiny, ambition, marriage, life after death, future, self-defense.		
The Twelve Caesars	Motivation, culture, power, equality, leadership, political science., corruption, omens.		
Julius Caesar	Ambition, tyranny, anarchy, foreign policy, rhetoric, tragedy.		
Revelation	Judgement, eschatology, angels.		

Each chapter assigns a selected reading from the book list above, as well as offering a contextual essay to frame the text within, or as an antithesis to, a *Christian Worldview* (Orr, 1989). As Fischer (2005, p.5) puts it, *"all of the material that we come into contact with along the path must be sifted and evaluated by the inscripturated word of God".*

Each chapter has at least three sessions, each with textual analysis questions and discussion questions plus some activities for students including *progymnasmata* exercises, debates, recitations, drawing and creative writing tasks. The course is structured around the Socratic method - a series of leading questions and analogies, guiding students to discoveries through friendly conversations about universal philosophical questions (Wilberding, 2019), as a response to the ideas and concepts presented in the texts. Socratic method "has a significant potential to develop students' critical thinking skills, as well as critical reading and listening" (Byrne, 2011; Tienken, et al., 2009; Paul & Elder, 2007; Ennis, 1987 in Zare & Mukundan, 2015). As the book list above indicates there is an integration of theological, historical, political, philosophical and literary texts.

Omnibus I is the first of a six-part course:

Table 2. Scope and Sequence of the Omnibus Series

Title	Period	Years	Emphasis
Omnibus I	Ancient	Beginning – A.D. 70	Logic
Omnibus II	Medieval	70 - 1563	Logic
Omnibus III	Modern	1563 - present	Logic
Omnibus IV	Ancient	Beginning – A.D. 180	Rhetoric
Omnibus V	Medieval	180 - 1563	Rhetoric
Omnibus VI	Modern	1563 - present	Rhetoric

The Omnibus has *the great books* arranged chronologically through time. As such it represents a

perennial (Samsel, 2012) and academic-rationalism curriculum orientation.

Fischer (2005, pp. 1-4) describes the Omnibus as a form of *Imitatio*:

> All important ideas are set on the table to explore and understand *…* the goal or destination
>
> of this course is to learn to reason well and communicate winsomely. **What better way is**
>
> **there to learn to argue and speak or write than to study the greatest arguments and the**
>
> **most winsome rhetoric**? Who could be better teachers than Moses, Jesus, Dante, Virgil and
>
> Milton? (emphasis mine)

Wilson (2005, p. x) declares in the preface that the purpose of the Omnibus series is equip students

to be critical thinkers:

> a time of basic training; it is boot camp. Students are being taught to handle weapons…we
>
> want them to walk away with a profound sense of the *antithesis* [between a Christian
>
> perspective and a Pagan perspective] … The task of every Christian parent bringing children
>
> up to maturity…is to do it in *a way that equips…*

Detweiler (2005, p.xi) understands this project in terms of developing students who will take on

roles of leadership and influence guided by ethics. He states in the publisher's preface:

> There is no doubt in my mind that classical Christian education and the rigorous study of
>
> the greatest works of Western Civilization is a tool to create leaders like no other – godly

leaders who understand that this is God's world, Christ inherited it, and we are to take dominion of it to His glory.

Terrill (2016, pp. 168-169) supports this purpose when opposing the pernicious notion that a liberal arts education is about learning for its own sake, *"Imitatio* [in Rhetoric] is valuable only to the extent that it is understood as preparation for civic engagement—its treasures are meant to be spent*".*

Thus, from the stated intentions of a leading CCE curriculum product, the educational aims of CCE are (a) to include students within the tradition of a liberal arts education through *imitatio*; (b) to equip students by developing critical thinking, so that they would grow into a resilient & mature Christian faith and (c) to equip Christian students for ethical leadership in future vocations, in order to positively influence contemporary society.

Given the depth of content, the opportunity to critically engage with significant philosophical ideas and the high expectations around reading requirements, it is safe to say that based on this curriculum product that Hill's second and third objections to Christian Education in Australia could be soundly defended. CCE equips for understanding and commitment in Christian religious knowledge and develops the life of the mind, such that civic engagement and leadership have become key outcomes of the movement. This can be shown in the Good Soil Study the first empirical research conducted on the effect of classical Christian schools (Goodwin & Sikkink, 2020):

While [CCE] alumni reported more volunteerism in general, they were much more likely to volunteer and lead outside [and inside] of their church…[CEE] alumni believe in public debate and that they have an obligation to address problems in our culture. They also seek jobs that will allow them to influence their communities and culture, and they are willing to take lower pay to do it.

It is now time to turn to the question of CCE curriculum implementation in Australia.

Critical Issues in CCE Curriculum Implementation

The CCE movement has international reach and growing mainstream acceptance. For example, Goodwin & Sikkink (2020) found that more than 1% of private school students in the USA attend a school accredited by the *Association of Classical Christian Schools* (ACCS). Additionally, an estimated 300,000 students in the USA are receiving a classical Christian education from other, non-accredited, Catholic or home school contexts (Zylstra, 2017). Furthermore, ACCS accredited schools exist in Brazil, Canada, England, Indonesia, Rwanda, South Africa, South Korea and Scotland (Goodwin, 2020). Emerging research on the learning and life outcomes of CCE graduates is very promising (Goodwin & Sikkink, 2020). However, Australian reception of CCE has been limited, despite some initial development, for example at St. Philomena School, QLD (2008), St Augustine's Classical Christian College, WA (2011, no longer operational), Charlotte Mason College, QLD (2017) and Comran Deo, WA (Launching 2021).

So why hasn't CCE been energetically received in Australia? What are the mechanisms that are holding CCE back in influencing the *alternative* (Hill, 1982) new Christian schools? I propose the following critical issues for CCE to address in Australia include:

a) *Australian culture* – overcoming skepticism towards intellectual & aesthetic pursuits perceived as elitist. Parents have little understanding of a liberal arts educational paradigm and not many Australian examples exist in the mainstream.

b) *Post School Pathways* – How will CCE assist students towards university or TAFE acceptance? How will CCE help children fulfil their place as future workers, especially in the field of STEM?

c) *Teacher efficacy* – How will teachers be equipped to teach CCE when they themselves have not had a CCE education?

d) *Funding* - The most critical issue relates to how CCE startups can navigate through state mandated curriculum in order to attain non-government school registration and therefore state and federal funding.

School Registration, Funding and Alternative Curriculum

To instruct students in the liberal arts, as described by CCE, a dedicated focus is required by schools to allocate significant time, resources and organizational structure to the project. Fleming (2003), for example, claims that rhetoric schools operated between six to eight hours a day of intense study for three to four years. (Murphey, 1990, in Fleming, 2003).

A major hurdle for this resourcing is evident in that state and federal funding is coupled with mandated curriculum through binding legislation, (e.g.: S*chool Education Act 1999*; *School Education Regulations 2000; School Curriculum and Standards Authority Act* 1997.) These acts require non-government schools to be registered by the Director-General of the Department of Education in accordance with the *Registration Standards for Non-government Schools* (Western Australia, 2020) including:

STANDARD 1: CURRICULUM

1.2

Curriculum for students in…Pre-Primary to Year 10 inclusive, is:

(a) approved, accredited or recognised by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority; and/or

(b) a programme of study meeting the needs of each student delivered through an **Individual Education Plan.**

1.3

Curriculum for students in… Years 11 and 12:

(a) enables all students to achieve a Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE), Cambridge International A Levels, International Baccalaureate Diploma or another qualification approved by the Director General; and/or

(b) provides a programme of study meeting the needs of each student delivered through an **Individual Education Plan.** (emphasis mine.)

The most obvious and straight forward way of mounting this registration and, therefore, funding hurdle would be by enrolling every student on an *Individual Education Plan* as defined by the Standards (Western Australia, 2020):

An *Individual Education Plan* (IEPs) sets out a student's individual learning goals, support needs and services to be provided which:

(a) is developed in consultation with the student and his or her parents/guardians;

(b) contains sufficient information, milestones and detail to guide all staff working with the student;

(c) may have an explicit focus on literacy and numeracy skills; social skills; emotional and behavioural regulation skills; health and wellbeing skills and/or physical skills;

(d) records regular assessment and evaluation of student progress and achievement of identified outcomes and targets;

(e) stipulates a commencement date, monitoring dates and review dates; and

(f) is reviewed and revised at least twice each school year.

Given that most IEPs are designed for students who have an intellectual or physical disability or who have significant behavioural intervention requirements, this approach may not be in keeping with the spirit of the standards and would be likely to be flagged and queried by department officials. The second way of overcoming the funding challenge would be to arrange CCE within the pre-existing *Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment* Outline notional time allocations (Western Australia, 2016):

Table 1: Notional teaching time allocated to each learning area (Pre-primary to Year 10)

	Hours per week over 40 weeks per year (based on a 25 hour school week*)			
	Pre-primary –Year 2	Years 3–6	Years 7–8	Years 9–10
English	6	6	3	3
Mathematics	5	5	3	3
Humanities and Social Sciences	2	2	3	3
Science	2	2	3	3
Health and Physical Education	2	2	2	2
Languages*	0–2	2	2	0–2*
Technologies*	2	2	2	0–2*
The Arts*	2	2	2	0–2*
Unallocated time**	2–4	2	5	5–11
Total Time	25	25	25	25

Notes:
a) Decisions about the organisation and delivery of curriculum, including opportunities for integration, are best made at the school level.
b) Teachers are best placed to make professional judgements about the time taken for individual students to learn a body of knowledge, understandings and skills.
c) * These learning areas are not mandated after Year 8.
d) ** 'Unallocated time' would actually be greater than shown, depending on the number of hours of teaching per week at each school.
e) It is anticipated that schools will provide opportunities for students to specialise in a learning area subject to a greater extent from Year 9.

Figure 3: Notional Teaching Time Allocations (Western Australia, 2016)

This would require a radical shift away from the *Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline* designated subject areas as described above would need to be blended into an integrated and realigned grouping as point *a)* above allows. For example:

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	Maths	Discipleship Groups	Maths	Maths	Discipleship Groups
2	Omnibus*	Omnibus*	Omnibus*	Omnibus*	Omnibus*
3	Integrated Science#	Integrated Science#	Integrated Science#	Integrated Science#	Maths
4	Latin	Latin	Latin	Latin	Logic^
5	Music / Choir	Drawing	Music / Choir	Drawing	Logic^
6	Music / Choir	Drawing	Music / Choir	Drawing	PE

* HASS, English, RE

^ English, Maths, Digital Technology

Science, Materials Technology, Geography, Health

Table 1. Example CCE School Integrated Timetable

The weakness in this approach is that while subjects may have been combined with new nomenclature, the problem still exists that mandated syllabus content is expected by Western Australia (2014) to be taught in the teaching programs.

Another approach for overcoming the funding hurdle is to be granted recognition of an alternative curriculum. This has been achieved by the International Baccalaureate, Steiner and Montessori education associations. The task of gaining recognition of an alternative curriculum has to date, been untried as the administrative burden has been perceived as insurmountable. The criteria are explained below (Western Australia, 2020b):

4. CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION

4.1 The submission for recognition of a curriculum…that aligns with the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline should address the extent to which it:

a) aligns with the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, specifically… the second goal

b) demonstrates how the proposed curriculum will assist students in becoming confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners and active and informed

members of the community, taking account of the elaboration of this goal on pages 6 to

8 of the Alice Springs Declaration.

Applicants then need to demonstrate how the proposed alternative curriculum compares to the

principles and guidelines in the *Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline* (Western

Australia, 2014). Including the extent to which an alternative curriculum provides for students to

learn the curriculum content and meet the achievement standards, it must also provide information

about reporting to parents, with reference to *the Pre-Primary to Year 10: Teaching, Assessing and*

Reporting Policy.

Despite the task ahead, having a recognized alternative curriculum, I believe, would prove a boon

for the growth of CCE in Australia. Allowing new schools to start on equal footing with government

funded mainstream schools.

To this end the goals of the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* (Australia, 2019)

have been addressed by referencing the academic literature surrounding CCE curriculum (Appendix

C). As demonstrated in Appendix C, a liberal arts curriculum as envisioned by CCE properly addresses

the goals of the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration.*

Conclusion

Recommendations

The great task ahead for CCE curriculum recognition in Australia has begun. The next step for

CCE practitioners is to compare the *Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline* with CCE

curriculum products and (a) develop or appropriate a CCE curriculum framework, (b) create a scope

and sequence and (c) devise a set of assessment & reporting procedures that align with the *Pre-*

Primary to Year 10: Teaching, Assessing and Reporting Policy.

The Trivium has been the curriculum of Europe and many of its settler societies up until the

modern era (Fleming, 2009). Alternative Christian schools in the USA and globally have been

discovering the Trivium's academic rationalism in the hope of reviving educational standards, and to authentically integrate Christian religious knowledge. This essay has outlined the classical Christian education movement as the locus for this curriculum reorientation. Australian alternative Christian schools have much to gain from the CCE movement, as such it is incumbent on alterative Christian school leaders to engage with the CCE movement in the interests of the students they educate. My hope is that this essay demonstrates some ways forward for educators who have a vision for classical and Christian education in Australia, who like Augustine, seek to mine the veins of silver and gold of the ancient and medieval worlds. In doing so I believe that Hill's (1982) tripartite critique of Christian education in Australia will be soundly resolved.

The Ten Essential Principles of Classical Pedagogy

1. **Festina lente**: We must make haste slowly, mastering each step rather than rushing through content.

2. **Multum non multa:** It is better to master a few things than cursorily cover content that will be forgotten.

3. **Repetito mater memoriae:** Lively, regular review and repetition makes learning permanent.

4. **Embodied learning:** The rhythms, practices, traditions, and routines we create are just as important for learning as our front-of-the class instruction.

5. **Songs, chants, and jingles**: The most important content/skill we wish to create should be taught or reinforced with a song, chant, or jingle.

6. **Wonder and curiosity:** We should seek to impart a love for truth, goodness, and beauty regularly by modeling our own wonder or love of that which is lovely.

7. **Educational virtues:** We should seek to cultivate virtues of love, humility, diligence, constancy, and temperance in the lives of students.

8. **Scholé, contemplation, leisure:** We should provide adequate time for reflection, contemplation, and discussion of profound and important ideas—both inside and outside the class; both with and without students.

9. **Docendo, discimus:** By teaching, we learn; older students should teach younger students to master material; you don't truly know something until you can teach it.

10. **Optimus magister bonus liber est**: The great books contain enduring wisdom and excellence that make them masters that will master us as we return to them time and again; we expose students only to the best literature.

(Perrin, 2014)

Appendix B

Comparison between most modern education and classical Christian education

MOST MODERN EDUCATION	CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
EGALITARIAN – Every student should attain the same level of achievement.	EXCELLENCE – Take each student to their highest possible potential, encouraging learning enrichment.
MULTICULTURAL – Critical of Western Civilisation and emphasising the negative aspects of the British past, undermining Australia's Christian and Western heritage.	WESTERN – Recognises the great contribution of Western culture -including the unique British heritage - to Australia and the world. Acknowledging the West's triumphs and failures, while also recognising the beauty in other cultures.
RATIONALISTIC – Emphasises mathematics and science at the expense of art, literature and history.	UNIVERSAL – Emphasises the humanities, arts and sciences to bring a richer, more comprehensive perspective.
SECULAR – Holds the 'spiritual' as personal and separate from education. Avoids deeper philosophical issues.	INTEGRATED – Holistic approach to education appreciates the framework of philosophy and religion for all subject areas.
RELATIVISM – All moral positions are relative and hence all positions must be appraised equally.	CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW – Standards of right and wrong exist in all subject areas. Students are encouraged to be discerning and make judgements accordingly.
FRAGMENTED CONTENT – By separating knowledge into distinct subjects, it can be more easily understood and taught by "specialist" teachers.	INTEGRATED SUBJECTS – Content should be taught in an integrated way enabling students to understand continuity across the spectrum of subjects.
TEACHES FACTS AND FUNCTIONAL SKILLS – Students primarily learn about subjects focusing on the ones that help them 'get good jobs'.	TEACHES CRITICAL THINKING – Students learn to think beyond subject-matter to evaluate it. Knowledge is not the primary goal - wisdom is.
PROGRESSIVE – Always experimenting with new techniques, ideas and methods, because of a belief that "old fashioned" is defunct and out of date.	TRADITIONAL – Conserve educational standards that have a clear record of success, while appreciating advances in technology etc.
ENTERTAINMENT LEARNING – Engaging students in the learning process with entertainment.	ENGAGE AND CHALLENGE – Students thrive with the challenge of a rigorous curriculum and enjoy the sense of true achievement.

(Hurworth, 2011)

Appendix C

The extent to which Classical Christian Education addresses the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (Australia, 2019)

The goals of the Alice Spring's Declaration are detailed below; I will address each goal elaboration (**bold**) as a criterion for the proposed alternative curriculum of Classical Christian Education to address.

Methodology

I will draw on scholarly literature surrounding (a) liberal-arts education, (b) Christian education and (c) classical Christian education to address the Alice Spring's criteria. Wherever possible empirical studies have been sourced and cited.

Limitations

The risk with this methodology is that one gets the impression of needing to cherry pick literature to align with the goals and as such my own personal bias may also be at play. CCE is an emerging field and not a lot of literature is available. Additionally, empirical studies in liberal arts education and Christian education generally, are also limited.

Goal 1: The Australian education system promotes excellence and equity

Australian Governments commit to promoting excellence and equity in Australian education. This means that all Australian Governments will work with the education community to:

Provide all young Australians with access to high-quality education that is inclusive and free from any form of discrimination
CCE is a high-quality education offering (Goodwin & Sikkink, 2020), that can be funded in an inclusive way (Zylstra, 2017).

Recognise the individual needs of all young Australians, identify barriers that can be addressed, and empower learners to overcome barriers
Australian young people face a barrier to accessing a quality traditional liberal arts curriculum. This essay and comparison are an attempt to overcome that barrier.

Promote personalised learning and provide support that aims to fulfil the individual capabilities and needs of learners

A liberal arts education teaches young people how to learn, so that they can fulfil their capabilities, including gifted children (Vaughan & Morgan, 2015) Classical Christian education seeks to provide support to the Australian educational environment.

Ensure that young Australians of all backgrounds are supported to achieve their full educational potential

CCE is not just for children of Christian parents and is open to all comers.

Encourage young people to hold high expectations for their educational outcomes, supported by parents, carers, families and the broader community

CCE graduates (Goodwin & Skikkink, 2020) and Christian School graduates (Cheng & Iselin, 2020) both demonstrate that Classical and Christian education empowers students with preparation for academic success, a life of meaning and purpose and dealing with personal relationships, leading to graduates contributing to the common good.

Ensure that education promotes and contributes to a socially cohesive society that values, respects and appreciates different points of view and cultural, social, linguistic and religious diversity

According to Cross et al. (2017) alternative Christian school graduates reflected the behaviours of the Social & Civic attributes of the Curriculum Council - honesty, respect, tolerance and understanding, care, inclusivity and responsibility, thereby contributing to a socially cohesive society.

Ensure that learning is built on and includes local, regional and national cultural knowledge and experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and work in partnership with local communities

Aboriginal knowledge is valued in a liberal arts context (Larrimore, 2012). Appreciating the values and ethics that are embodied in dreaming stories and connection to country. As a Christian community, reconciliation is critical. Aboriginal partnership will be developed at the local level.

Collaborate internationally to share best practice and help young Australians learn about and engage with the world

CCE is a global movement (Goodwin & Sikkink, 2020) which is well serviced by a community of practice in the form of curriculum materials, conferences, accreditation partnerships and podcasts.

Support all education sectors – government and non-government, secular and faith-based

CCE is a non-government, faith-based educational offering. As such CCE fits the scope of this support.

Promote a culture of excellence in all learning environments, by providing varied, challenging, and stimulating learning experiences and opportunities that enable all learners to explore and build on their individual abilities, interests, and experiences

A culture of excellence is promoted in CCE (Goodwin & Sikkink, 2020). The liberal arts are varied, challenging and stimulating. The trivium is designed for learners to build on, develop and explore

their own experiences, abilities and interests. Fleming (2003, p.117) says that rhetorical exercises *"balance attention to the gifts and needs of individual students"*.

Ensure that Australia's education system is recognised internationally for delivering high quality learning outcomes.

Without a strong liberal arts presence in Australian schooling, international reputation is at serious risk. Malcom (2017) shows that Asian liberal arts education is on the rise. If a liberal arts education is becoming increasingly valued in Asia, and Australia does not have a robust liberal arts educational offering then our third biggest export market is at risk.

Goal 2: All young Australians become confident and creative individuals who…

Have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, cultural, spiritual and physical wellbeing

Growing in their discipleship through their Christian religious knowledge, CCE students develop a balanced sense of self-worth, self-awareness and significant sense of personal identity that enables them to manage their wellbeing. (Cheng & Iselin, 2020; Goodwin & Sikkink, 2020)

Develop personal values and attributes such as honesty, empathy, loyalty, responsibility and respect for others

The primary aim of a liberal arts education is the moral formation of learners. Teachers explicitly teach values and ethics through the *great conversation* with moral theologians and philosophers, as shown in Wilson & Fischer (2005) above. See Cross et al. (2017) above.
CCE alumni volunteer at a greater rate (Goodwin & Sikkink, 2020)

Are resilient and develop the skills and strategies they need to tackle current and future challenges

Smith (2018, para. 15) argues that a liberal arts education is best placed to work within the uncertainty of the future for several reasons:

1) It is a human-focused education which, through broad-based and pluralistic subject matter and philosophical enquiry into the questions of human existence, can begin to nurture students with the aim of fostering a resilient and intellectually rounded graduate…

Are able to recognise, adapt to, and manage change

Smith (ibid.) continues:

2) [Liberal arts] embraces difficulty, complexity and uncertainty [and] does not patronise students or give them false belief in the stability of the world…
3) it moves with the currents of cultural and economic instability rather than remaining fixed and stagnant. This creates a modern graduate with an understanding of the difficulty inherent in twenty-first century life.

Have a sense of optimism about their lives and the future

Carver & Scheier (2014) show that optimism predicts career success, social relations and better health. Hunt (1811) argues that optimism is grounded in the understanding that despite the negatives and positives in life, God's creation is intrinsically good.

Goodwin & Sikkink (2020, p. 49) demonstrate that CCE graduates feel empowered and capable.

Show initiative, use their creative abilities and are enterprising

Hong (2015, p. 1) suggests that to develop creativity:

> learners should practice flexible thinking for building various connecting structures of the brain…the teachers need to activate various domains of the brain by asking questions, presenting specific cases, storytelling… the brain and brain network are the basis for the exercise of creativity, and essential requirements for the exercise of creativity are: communication with literature; communication among individuals; and communication among groups.

Hong's findings are found in the practice of liberal arts curriculum with a focus on engagement with the canon of western literature, dialectic and Socratic method. Sheppard & Zaragoza (2018, p.1) argue that *"an interdisciplinary liberal arts program can prompt innovative ideas and self-discovery when fired in a kiln of social and economic justice."*

Have the imagination, knowledge, skills, understanding and values to establish and maintain healthy, satisfying lives

See Wilson & Fischer (2005); Carver & Scheier (2014); Sheppard & Zaragoza (2018); Cheng & Iselin (2020) and Goodwin & Sikkink (2020) above.

Understand their responsibilities as global citizens and know how to affect positive change

Characteristics of a liberal education are defined by attributes such as character and personality formation, critical thinking skills, leadership development, and appreciation of difference (Rothblatt, 2003 in Wright 2013). Characteristics needed for the development of socially responsible leaders (Komives et al., 2007 in Wright 2013)

Grey (2012 in Smith 2018, para. 16) notes "the moral dimension which liberal arts education has always had in creating 'statesmen' [, an idea] which has been remade…as 'thought leaders' and 'global citizens'.*"* In developing an understanding of logic and rhetoric, the CCE liberal arts curriculum offers students the opportunity to develop skills in oratory and composition, two general skills required to change people's minds and affect change.

Preparedness for directing political activity is one of the longstanding traditions of a liberal arts education (Rothblatt, 2003).

Goodwin & Sikkink (2020) demonstrate that CCE graduates volunteer at a higher rate.

Have the confidence and capability to pursue learning throughout life, leading to enjoyable, fulfilling and productive employment

A liberal arts education is always meant to be the foundational education a learner receives before specialisation. As described earlier, the intention of the Trivium is to equip students with the knowledge and tools they need to be lifelong learners. Specialisation comes after the general foundations have been laid. As Adler (1961, p.11) argues:

> The connection of liberal education with scientific creativity is not mere speculation. It is a matter of historical fact that the great German scientists of the nineteenth century had a solid background in the liberal arts. They all went through a liberal education which embraced Greek, Latin, logic, philosophy, and history, in addition to mathematics, physics and other sciences… this has been the educational preparation of European scientists down to the present time. Einstein, Bohr, Fermi, and other great modern scientists were developed not by technical schooling, but by liberal education.

Relate well to others and form and maintain healthy relationships

The Cardus Education Survey (Cheng & Iselin, 2020) demonstrates that 67% of alumni of alternative Christian schools say they feel their school prepared them for *dealing with personal relationships* compared with just 53% of government school graduates. This is due to the spiritual formation that these schools provide. CCE falls within the alternative Christian schooling tradition.

Are well prepared for their potential life roles as friends, family, community and workforce members

CCE alumni have healthy families. They have much lower divorce and cohabitation rates compared to the other groups (Goodwin & Sikkink, 2020, p. 6)

Embrace opportunities, make informed decisions about their own lives and accept responsibility for their own actions

Liberal arts students believe that the academic activities in which they are presently engaged matter for their future and are able to make connections between academic work and future employment (Luke, 2004). As such they acquire the skills to make informed decisions about their lives.

As Rothblatt (2003, in Wright 2013, p.66) explained, being liberally educated, students "acquired the necessary understanding of how to live in society, how to make decisions, how to obtain employment, how to relate with others, how to be a wary consumer – in sum, how to manage in everyday life"

Have a sense of belonging, purpose and meaning that enable them to thrive in their learning environment.

Cheng & Iselin (2020) found that Christian School alumni were more likely than other Australian school sectors to find a sense of meaning, purpose and direction of life.

Successful lifelong learners who…

Develop their ability and motivation to learn and play an active role in their own learning

Seifert et al. (2008) found that liberal arts experiences had a positive effect on lifelong learning…and leadership. Supporting the ideas that CCE curriculum develops a student's ability and motivation to learn.

Have the essential skills in literacy and numeracy as the foundation for learning

Students educated using the essentialist developmental model of the Trivium utilized in Classical Christian schools scored significantly higher on Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) than students who were educated using non-classical methods (Vaughan, 2019) revealing that the CCE curriculum orientation develops in students skills in literacy and numeracy.

Engage in respectful debate on a diverse range of views

As envisioned by Zook (1947, cited in Debate and Liberal arts, 1953, para. 1) …liberal arts education will cultivate respectful debate by stressing:

(1) the importance of being informed, of basing decisions, actions and opinions on accurate facts;
(2) knowledge of where and how to acquire information; and
(3) ability to appraise, relate, and integrate facts in order to form valid judgments. The habit of making this approach can best be developed by leading the student to apply it at every opportunity in his life on the campus, in solving problems inside and outside the classroom

Are productive and informed users of technology as a vehicle for information gathering and sharing, and are able to adapt to emerging technologies into the future

Ames (1994) demonstrated that science and technology understanding can be taught effectively from a liberal arts perspective. Balmer (2007) argues that a new paradigm of integration between the sciences and liberal arts has emerged, reinforcing Adler's (1961) perspective above.

Are able to think deeply and logically, and obtain and evaluate evidence as the result of studying fundamental disciplines

Teaching syllogisms and logical rules, as well as logical fallacies is a core part of the trivium (Sayers, 1947, Wilson 1991). These critical thinking skills can be applied across all of the disciplines.

Are creative, innovative and resourceful, and are able to solve problems in ways that draw upon a range of learning areas and disciplines and deep content knowledge

See Hong (2015) above.

Are inquisitive and experimental, and have the ability to test different sources and types of knowledge

See Hong (2015) above.

Are responsive and adaptive to new ways of thinking and learning
Anders (2017) and Stross (2017) in Gobble (2019, p. 66) argue that: The liberal arts develops an array of skills needed by even the most technology-focused companies: effective communication, social intelligence, adaptability, and the ability to synthesize diverse bits of information into coherent, persuasive narratives. These skills lend themselves to employment in what Anders refers to as the "rapport sector" or the "empathy economy"— jobs such as project management, user experience design, or marketing.

Are able to plan activities independently, collaborate, work in teams and communicate ideas
Cheng & Iselin (2020) demonstrate that Christian school graduates can effectively deal with the personal relationships required to collaborate and work in teams. The liberal arts curriculum is focused on communicating ideas effectively through dialectic and rhetoric.

Continue to improve through formal and informal learning in further education, and training or employment, and acquire the skills to make informed decisions throughout their lives
Liberal arts students believe that the academic activities in which they are presently engaged matter for their future. Liberal arts students are able to make connections between academic work and future employment (Luke, et al., 2004). As such they acquire the skills to make informed decisions throughout their lives.

Are able to make sense of their world and think about how things have become the way they are
Anders (2017) and Stross (2017) in Gobble (2019, p. 51) argues that *"a [liberal arts] curriculum… requires students to engage thoughtfully with culture and history and grapple with their meaning and ongoing impacts."*

Are confident and motivated to reach their full potential
See Luke, et al. (2004) and Goodwin & Sikkink (2020, p. 49) above.

Active and informed members of the community who…

Act with moral and ethical integrity
"Two often-cited goals of liberal education are critical thinkers and good citizens." (Winter, McClelland, & Stewart, 1981 in Newell, 2012, p. 301)

Have empathy for the circumstances of others and work for the common good, in particular sustaining and improving natural and social environments
Characteristics of a liberal education are defined by attributes such as character and personality formation, critical thinking skills, leadership development, and appreciation of difference (Rothblatt, 2003 in Wright 2013). Characteristics needed for the development of socially responsible leaders (Komives et al., 2007 in Wright 2013)

Appreciate and respect Australia's rich social, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity and embrace opportunities to communicate and share knowledge and experiences

See Rothblatt (2003, in Wright, 2013) above.

Have an understanding of Australia's system of government, its histories, religions and culture

Anders (2017) and Stross (2017) in Gobble (2019, p.66) argues that *"a [liberal arts] curriculum… requires students to engage thoughtfully with culture and history and grapple with their meaning and ongoing impacts."*

Are committed to national values of democracy, equity and justice, and participate in Australia's civic life by connecting with their community and contributing to local and national conversations

Preparedness for directing political activity is one of the longstanding traditions of a liberal arts education (Rothblatt, 2003 in Wright 2013).

Understand, acknowledge and celebrate the diversity and richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Larrimore (2012, para. 16) highlights the great potentiality in a liberal arts curriculum understanding, acknowledging and celebrating the diversity and richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture. Framing Aboriginal dreaming stories in the great tradition of ethical dialectic and Aristotelian virtues in order *"to find ways of learning from [Aboriginal Australians], being changed by them, even, potentially, possessed by them? …to teach the settler [student] to be indigenous."*

Possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians

See Larrimore (2012) above. A liberal arts orientation positions student to see *"Aboriginal elders as teachers"* passing on knowledge and wisdom (para. 15)

Are informed and responsible global and local members of the community who value and celebrate cultural and linguistic differences, and engage in the global community, particularly with our neighbours in the Indo-Pacific regions.

The enlargement of one's perception of the world and one's possibilities within the world are distinctive characteristics of the liberally educated student (Simmons, 1998)

Seifert et al. (2008) found that liberal arts experiences had a positive effect on intercultural effectiveness, inclination to inquire and lifelong learning, well-being, and leadership. Suggesting that a CCE curriculum develops active and informed students who are responsible global and local community members. A liberal arts education can be a conduit for fostering acceptance and appreciation of cultural difference (Brown, 1994 in Wright 2013)

Malcom (2017) shows that Asian liberal arts education is on the rise thus by engaging with the liberal arts tradition in Australia, mutually beneficial conversations and understandings can be developed.

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