

Expectational Education, Part 3 | The Universality of Expectations

I. The Modern Approach

- The Modern Perspective started taking root in American in the early 1900's. While child labor laws are quite valuable, like most government programs, the legislation which removed the kids from the sweatshops lacked nuance and foresight. No one should be surprised to discover that the government created even more problems than they solved. In their attempt to address the scores of children who now no longer had anything productive to do with their lives, compulsory schooling became the government's answer. The government didn't create compulsory education because they fundamentally believed that all children needed to be educated, they just wanted the urchins off the streets. The quality of the education offered and the fact that it was created primarily to provide very little more than supervision resulted in an education whose very genesis had nothing to do with appropriate high expectations.
- For the first time in human history, education actually started to devolve in America, but this was not due to the ability or maturity of the students, it had everything to do with keeping the machine running. Government programs not only have a tendency to mediocrity, they also often have a very counter-productive effect—creating far more problems than they solve. Fast-forward 100 years, and we can see just how much we've lowered the expectations for our students.
- Have you ever looked at the "curriculum" of ancient schools? You can even go back to the 1800's if you want. There are many adults today who would not be able to understand what children were being taught just a couple hundred years ago in this country.
- And it's not because we're stupider. It's because no one has ever expected us to do any better. It's not that we're not capable of greater Cognitive and Spiritual Maturity, we just don't have any reason so push ourselves.

II. Universal Approach

- Explanation the Universal Perspective is unique to Expectational Education because it balances what we know about a person with what we know about mankind as a whole.
 - The Universal Perspective does not favor the experiences of any one nation. It's not interested in nationalism because it seeks to understand the potential and power of *all* students in general—mankind as a whole.
 - The Universal Approach is also unique because it rejects the idea that modern man is somehow better than ancient man. We're not more evolved . . . in fact, the Bible teaches that—despite our technological advances—we have de-evolved in more ways than we are comfortable admitting.
 - The Universal Perspective is not interested in judging educational methods and styles whether ancient or modern, First World or Third World. The Universal Perspective is most interested in determining the potential and power of children and teens overall. Where as the Modern Perspective would have us see children as so much less than they are, the Universal Perspective helps us to see that our children and young adults are capable of so much more than our society currently expects of them.
- The individual's potential is understood not through the narrow lens of modern exceptionalism, but through the encompassing lens of human history. Only when such a perspective is adopted can we see that our students are capable of far more than we realize.

- Mary Shelly wrote Frankenstein at the age of 18.
- Laura Ingalls Wilder started teaching school when she was 16.
- Louis Braille created the Braille language for the blind when he was 15.
- Mozart wrote his first symphony at age 8.
- For thousands of years teenagers have started families and built businesses.
- And history is replete with child and teenage monarchs who successfully ruled empires. The Bible talks about them, and the history books are full of them, and many of them did a really good job.
- For thousands of years societies have unilaterally agreed that you become an adult when your body transitions into puberty. The idea is that when you're old enough to procreate, you should be old enough to procreate. And the assumption up until recently has been that procreation was done by adults in a biblical family structure.
- According to the Scriptures, to be an adult is to be at a certain stage in your physical maturity, and to be a *mature* adult is to be spiritually mature. We need to be teaching our kids how to love, trust, and obey God. We need to have high biblical expectations that they should and can glorify Him with their choices. Then as they transition into adulthood, we can help them continue to grow in those truths. And we need to stop making excuses for our kids' sinful behavior.
- In Expectational Education, we believe the Universal Approach helps us have a more accurate understanding of the potential of any given student's cognitive abilities and spiritual maturity because it assumes they are at least capable of achieving the average of what people their age have been achieving since the beginning of time. And the average of what young people have been achieving since the beginning of time is significantly higher than what they're achieving today.
- We need to recognize that God has created people with the ability to be and do far more than they realize. When we look universally at what people have accomplished in the past and what they're accomplishing across the globe, we should easily come to the conclusion that we—as the average westerners—are not achieving what we should be able to accomplish.
- Some people are energized by that realization. They see the exciting prospect of what they and their family can be, and it lights a fire under them to help them achieve those Appropriate High Expectations. But others get overwhelmed looking at the difference between what we are and what we could be.
 - If you're in that first group, be encouraged. Light that fire. See how awesome your family can be by the grace of God and to the glory of God. I believe the tenets of Expectational Education can help you achieve them.
 - But if you're in the second group, simplify the situation. Remind yourself that God wants everyone in your home to do their best. We can all agree on that. And—sure—you may have been functioning off the wrong idea of your family's best. You may have had too low of expectations. It is what it is. For now, let's focus on simply taking God at His Word. Once we have done that, Expectational Education can help you take the next steps to actually helping each member of your family grow into the Appropriate High Expectations God has for them. To use another forestry metaphor, don't get overwhelmed by the idea of having to chop down a whole forest. Just focus on the one tree in front of you, and we'll move to the next when the time comes.