

"A New Grading Method: Motivation by Admiration, Hope and Love"

Charlotte Mason begins her educational philosophy with the thought that "the child is a person, a human being with a spiritual origin." Grades were not a part of her program. She recognized that in many school statistics, prizes, and grades were more important than the child's genuine attainment of knowledge. Her students either understood or they didn't, but each was expected to do his best.

As students grew older, the curriculum became more factual: terminology was highlighted, memorization over-emphasized, and real thinking left behind. The child's desire for knowledge is usually crushed by the heavy weight of this system. Curiosity, with which every normal child is born, becomes "schooled out," and the child's soul is forced into the "good grades" straight-jacket.

According to Charlotte, teachers possess 3 legitimate educational instruments-3 ways to motivate children to learn: **the atmosphere of environment, the discipline of habit, and the presentation of ideas.** Thus her motto: Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life.

I would like you to consider some new "grades" (or reasons for living and learning) that need to come out of the shadows and into the light.

The New Grade "A"

Children should be taught to recognize and *admire* the righteous, the pure, the heroic, the beautiful, the truthful, and the loyal in their educational life. Living books touch the emotions as enthusiasm seeps through the information. Biographies lead the way for our awe of God, wonder of nature, interest in history, and the finer, simpler or noble things of life. It would be a pity if this part of education were missed.

Grade "H"

What good is *hope* in education? How sad it is to think of so many children, poor of soul, who show up to the classroom without any hope of really learning anything or aspiring toward anything. Meeting grade-level requirements in the early years is not as important as steadfast effort. All children need to be nourished daily on ideas from experience, culture, and a wide curriculum. Children will be motivated by the happiness and hopefulness of their own brands of accomplishments. We need to be sensitive to the different learning styles and the way children express their differing intelligences. Acknowledging a child's strength and giving him opportunity for development, as well as showing patience with any skills that are slow in developing, will give him hope.

Love is Grade “L”

Charlotte tells us not to ignore the greatness of love in the atmosphere of the homeschool. Charlotte taught that we live by admiration, hope, and love, and without these three we do not live. Part of the educational life is an atmosphere of love and understanding. On the other hand, that doesn't mean there should be a lax atmosphere. Parents are in authority, and children in obedience. The ideal educational syllabus would be one of strenuous effort alternating with wisely employed leisure. When students strive to obtain grade “L”, they will learn respect, courtesy, discipline, responsibility, honest effort, forgiveness, acceptance of natural consequences, restitution, careful service and allegiance.

These new grades apply toward all three areas of education: Education for character (moral), education for serviceableness in life (technical), and education for the understanding and appreciation of life (culture).

Karen Andreola's book "A Charlotte Mason Companion" chap. 45 (pgs 337-342)