



Promising Program Brings Back Classical Education

FreedomProjectEducation (FPE), based in Appleton, Wisconsin, opened its online doors to high-school students for the first time in September. Your reporter (despite being considered an adult in some circles) decided to take advantage of the program's offerings and further her knowledge base. So I enrolled in an FPE class.



American Opinion Foundation established [FPE](#) to provide an education in the classical tradition of America's Founders, according to the institution's website. The heritage of classical education is one almost non-existent in America today, but one I believe to be superior. It is certainly what appealed to me in the first place. Course offerings include Latin, Logic, English Grammar and Composition, Spelling and Vocabulary, and one of my favorites, the Bible as Culture. The courses in English and Literature require students to have a thorough comprehension of works ranging from Shakespeare to C.S. Lewis, and are designed to strengthen writing skills as well. And listen to this description of the 11th grade Chemistry course: "Taught from the perspective that modern chemistry is the direct result of natural laws instituted by the Creator God, the course covers significant figures in chemistry, units, classification, the mole concept, stoichiometry, thermochemistry, acids and bases, solutions, atomic structure and more." Not only is it demanding and interesting, but is designed in keeping with FPE's mission to honor and promote America's Judeo-Christian foundation.

I enrolled in the "Independent Reading" class. While in it, I delighted in revisiting some texts I'd read before, some I hadn't read, and ones I wanted to read. It challenged students (and me) with Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* and George Washington's *Farewell Address*, as well as other works. Since the courses include two weekly online sessions with the rest of the class, it provides ample opportunity for discussion with the instructor, as well as other students. Some of the younger students



Written by [Kelly Holt](#) on December 6, 2011

in my class (as young as 13) found Tocqueville a bit demanding, but soldiered on without too much whining and demonstrated a remarkable ability to understand the material *and apply it* to what they see happening in America today.

Alan Scholl, FPE's executive director told *The New American* what makes FPE different. "We offer quality in our classical approach. While we don't intend to replace parental involvement in education, the program provides what you could call tutors. They are experienced, can teach in a classical manner, and are experts in their fields."

The validity of that concept was borne out in my own experience. I did not expect the instructor to be approachable, but she became my friend. She was a real person, and I witnessed her genuine concern that the students learn not what to think, but *how* to think. And she did it with infinite patience and kindness. She was exceptionally learned and well-read — exemplary of FPE's intent to provide high quality. And the course was available at a remarkably low cost. Scholl commented on the cost and how, by spending a few dollars, homeschooling parents could greatly add to the quality of their children's education: "Not everybody can be an expert in everything, so to be able to provide these experts, supported by parents at home, is another benefit of FPE. We have one NASA scientist teaching science! These teachers can teach tough subjects at a higher level and a lower cost." Not a bad deal at all.

Parents are pleased, too. In an unsolicited [letter](#) from a parent whose son was coincidentally enrolled in the same Independent Reading class in which I was enrolled, FPE was praised for how well the program was run, and the proud parent claims the son found it very challenging but loved it.

Even though the program was designed for high-school students when it started this year, a full K-12 curriculum will be available by March, and classes will be open for all levels by next September. FPE is participating in many important homeschool conferences and events, and back at the ranch, has been able to add employees to the group of interns and volunteers supporting the program.

FPE is funded by foundations and individuals who believe in and understand the value of classical education. As many parents become increasingly displeased with government education, college professors become discouraged at having to send freshmen for remedial studies, and employers tire of having to educate employees, FPE fills a need and fills it well. Not only are Americans aware that education is failing in America, but many are coming to understand not just the value, but the need for classical studies. Scholl added, "Our worldview is integral to the program and one thing that I think is responsible for its success. For example, we teach the rule of law, not of the mob, and the difference between republics and democracies. You won't get that in some other places." That worldview is apparently something people have been waiting for.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to participate in a program like this, one not available to me as a younger person, and prayerful that the bright young minds I encountered in my class will be strengthened in their pursuits. I was enchanted with them and left hopeful for the future.



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