**Worthy leisure education and teaching**

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# Abstract

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# Introduction

Does studying math, history, literature, science, or any other academic school subject, contribute to the moral virtues of students? I assume that many consider the answer to be negative, and that many others do not consider the question at all. This attitude is part of the prevalent cultural atmosphere that sees a split between developing moral virtues on the one hand, and the main activity of schools of studying academic subject matter on the other (Cam, 2014; Biesta 2009, 2010, 2015). In order to bring the two together, I have suggested elsewhere (Segev, 2017) a rough model based on MacIntyre’s (2007) idea of virtues in the context of practices. This model includes six aspects of the academic curriculum and the percentage of time that each should be taught for the study of it to contribute to the morality of the students. The present article offers an additional perspective that reveals the inner connection between studying school academic subject matter and developing a central moral virtue of the liberal tradition.

A potential specific humane quality is considered to be a virtue through the medium of three particular contexts: (1) the general tradition and culture, (2) the practices one is engaged in and (3) the personal life-long (unified) quest for the good life (MacIntyre 2007).

My thesis is that, since school originates from the liberal tradition and is one of the key institutions with which this tradition may manifest, and since one of the main metaphysical ethos or assumptions of the liberal tradition is that reality as a whole is potentially good and reasonable and that people potentially possess the freedom to actualize the good and reasonable potential of reality, the potential humane quality, that in the context of that tradition is considered a virtue that is hoped to be developed by studying the academic school curriculum, is the love of wisdom. I.e. the constant aspiration to empower our awareness of the true, good, just and beautiful potentialities of reality, while always keeping in mind the basic intuition, the basic assumption, that although this aspiration will probably never be fully realized once and for all, individuals and the communities should nevertheless do the best they can to keep on pursuing these potentialities and, as much as is possible, actualize them.

This last condition, that calls both for a life-long devotion to revealing the truth and at the same time to accepting that the results of that devotion will be relatively poor (i.e. never fully revealed once and for all), presupposes the humane readiness to do something for its own sake, for its inner value and not its outcomes. This brings me to the idea of leisure and to the distinction between leisure and the language of outcomes that predominates the discourse on school. In order to maintain both the activity of studying the academic curriculum and a moral intention regarding this intellectual activity, this activity should be conceived as a leisure activity.

After reviewing the literature on the subject, I argue for a definition of leisure as *life-moments which do not serve any purpose beyond themselves, and that include an activity that is valuable for its own sake*. I also find it important to show that the liberal culture, which appreciates freedom and leisure, has a hierarchy of leisure activities. This indicates that not all leisure activities are of equal value, and those leisure activities and moments that are coherent and contribute to the above virtue possess special worth and are distinct from other leisure activities that do not have the same contribution. In this context I find it relevant to show that this hierarchy does not call for coercion or contradict other liberal values such as freedom and autonomy.

This perspective clarifies the potential unification between the academic curriculum and the flourishing of students' morality, and I name it *worthy leisure education* or *leisure of schooling*. I go on to describe the practical aspects of this approach, and I call for teachers to create their lessons (*educational gatherings)* as *events* which are not directed at outcomes beyond themselves. I name this approach to teaching: *non-outcome teaching* or *teaching here and now*. I conclude the article by describing a number of virtues that teachers who wish to excel in implementing this approach should develop.

# Perceptions of leisure

In their discussions on leisure, Godbey & Mack (2006), rely on the perception of leisure as a specific *activity*. They claim that despite the subjective nature of the terms “free time” and “leisure,” empirical studies in which leisure is measured, refer to leisure as a specific activity. Here they include a long list of leisure activities such as playing, reading, going out to cultural events, volunteering, religious activity and more (Godbey & Mack, 2006, 49-50).

Stebbins (2005) criticizes attempts to view leisure as an array of culturally determined activities like reading, tourism, or hobbies. He claims that the perception of leisure as a certain activity strips the term of its essence. A more precise definition of leisure, he argues, will emphasize uncoerced behavior. In his words: “Behavior is uncoerced when people create their own leisure” (Stebbins, 2005, 350).

Stebbins' perception of leisure, as well as others’, like Esteve et al (1999), and Joudrey and Wallace (2009), draw upon the study of Dumazedier and Latouche (1962). These researchers also emphasized elements of freedom or non-coercion, defining leisure as an activity that an individual engages in by her own will, when she is free from work or other social or family obligations (Joudrey & Wallace, 2009; Esteve et al. 1999).

In their original study, Dumazedier and Latouche included an additional category to the leisure/non-leisure dichotomy: semi-leisure. This refers to activities that are not work but still require commitment and responsibility, such as familial responsibilities (Dumazedier and Latouche, 1962, 21). For our purposes, we will suffice with the general reading of Esteve et al (1999) and Joudrey & Wallance (2009): “Leisure refers to activities in which a person voluntarily engages when they are free from any work, social or familial responsibilities” (Esteve et al., 1999, in Joudrey & Wallace, 2009, 197).

I accept these criticisms against the perception of leisure as a certain activity, and would like to emphasize the element of *non-benefit* found in leisure (see also Jalbert, 2009). This element clearly exists in Aristotle’s distinction between an activity that is done for an end apart from the activity and beyond it, and activities that are ends for themselves (Aristotle, 1934, Nicomachean Ethics, Book 1, Section 1). This additional quality establishes leisure not only as an activity resulting from a choice that is free of any commitment or coercion (Stebbins, 2005), but also as an activity or life moments (weeks, days, hours, minutes) that do not serve as means to an end beyond it. Ruskin defines this as a state in which “an individual ‘forgets himself’ in the process. The activity is done for its own sake” (Ruskin, 1999, 11, in free translation from Hebrew).

However, while Ruskin is of the opinion that the leading cause of this state is "the individual’s good feeling" (Ruskin, 1999, 11, in free translation from Hebrew, my emphasis), I believe that we should *not* seek a cause for leisure. I believe that, in defining leisure, it is better to stay with the lack of functionality of the time and to avoid searching for this time’s *causes*. The reason is that, in searching for a cause, we undermine the quality of "in and of itself" because we are actually placing the value on the cause – the pleasure or a different matter – rather than on the activity or the specific period of time itself. All these considerations have led me to define leisure as *moments of time of human-life that are not directed at any purpose beyond themselves*: neither to fill a need nor to play a certain role (professional, social or other) that one took on or was given; neither for the sake of finding a romantic partner nor to feed one’s children or support their education; and neither for work nor for professional training or errands. This is *a* *state which is disconnected from all our different functions, obligations or needs – it is the time* ***after*** *we finish all we are obligated to do.* It is important to emphasize that these moments are not to be identified with moments of rest or “breaks.” A rest or break refers to moments intended to serve other moments or result from moments of fulfilling a preceding role.

It is interesting to note that adopting this logic allows us to conclude in the opposite direction: from our choices and actions during our leisure time, to what constitutes for us the meanings of our life. The reason is that what we do with these leisure moments (that is, after we have rested, eaten, reproduced and cared for our offspring) reflects the central content of our lives, their purpose and meaning. During these moments, there is no element of inevitability, they are a complete, pure expression of our free choice, directed to the here and now.

# Leisure and Education

How do these aspects of leisure provide meaning and explanation for studying academic subject matter? The discourse on leisure education seems to be primarily influenced by the perception of leisure as a set of particular activities—linking it to what is typically understood as a leisure activities. This may consist of 1) education that includes outdoor activity, sports and different kinds of games, 2) education that deals with pleasant activities such as cooking, sailing, watching a movie or going to a concert, or 3) education that includes activity of a personal-social nature. The last option would be intended for group bonding, or for the personal development and enrichment of each participant in the group. For example a lecture on a popular subject, a tour of an archaeological excavation, or a group project.

Behind this view of leisure in education lie an assumption that education for leisure must be unconventional and cannot take place within a conventional classroom. Mashiach (2004) contributes to this view by moving leisure education from schools to the community. He writes: “Within the framework of the school, the student's time was controlled by the school system and the curriculum. In order to take full advantage of leisure, the concept of leisure must be assimilated as a way of life within the communal systems and to create tools and services to implement this [his] approach” (Mashiach, 2004, 44, in free translation from Hebrew). This view applies not only to the nature of the activity but also to the nature of teacher-student relations. In the same book, Spector and Cohen-Gewerc (2004) describe apprenticeship, and not classroom instruction, as the way to establish an empowering educational connection, which better corresponds, in their eyes, to the nature of leisure.

But school was not always considered a space that contradicts leisure. The term school is historically derived from the Ancient Greek word *scholē*, meaning leisure (Aloni, 1998, 21; Rojek, 2010, 189; Masschelein and Simons, 2013; Nakosteen, Lawson and Others 2017). The combination of the meanings is based on the idea that students came to school for their own leisure, and made a completely free choice to dedicate themselves to cultivating their virtues in the educational institution. This connection between freedom or leisure on one hand and education and personal development toward human perfection on the other, was founded under the influence of Plato, Aristotle and the various schools that were influenced by them (for example Plato's idea of education as an activity of study for its own sake in the Laws 1.643d).

In the Middle Ages, this attitude was tied to the educational tradition of liberal arts and *paideia*. The Greek meaning of *paideia* is learning or education, and was related to classical approaches to education. These approaches drew, again, from the founding fathers (Socrates, Plato and Aristotle) of the classical tradition and were passed on to the Christian school and universities in Alexandria and so forth (Paideia, 1998). The curriculum of the *paideia* tradition included grammar, logic, rhetoric, music, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy (Aloni, Avisar, Hop and Yogev, 2007; Aviram 2010; Masschelein and Simons, 2013). These subjects are called Liberal Arts, or Liberal Arts Education, following the Roman terminology, that is, areas of knowledge that liberate from the vanities of reality, to its origins and nobility (Willmann, 1907; Aloni, Avisar, Hop and Yogev, 2007; Nakosteen, Lawson and Others 2017). The objective of the studies was not to train learners for a particular role, but to develop their virtues towards human perfection (Peters, 1970; Thiessen, 1989; Aloni, 1998; Aviram, 2010). These areas of knowledge also constitute the educational foundation of the modern age, and remain to this day (Aviram, 2010). It is important to remember that the process in which learning these fields of knowledge has become instrumental is a distortion of its original role of developing perfection in a person who directs her/his spirit to the exalted aspects of reality and its origins. A branch of this educational tradition lies also in the idea of *Bildung* which too sees education as lifelong process that aims at the development of one's full potential as a human being (Willbergh, 2015; Hansen-Gluklich, 2017).

That being the case, we see that the virtue that lies at the heart of the tradition that ties education to leisure is the love of wisdom. I.e. *the constant aspiration to empower our awareness of the true, good, just and beautiful potentialities of reality, while always keeping in mind the founding fathers’ (Socrates, Plato and Aristotle) creed that, although this aspiration will probably never be fully realized once and for all, individuals and communities should nevertheless do the best they can to keep on pursuing these potentialities and, as much as is possible, actualize them in their lives*.[[1]](#footnote-1)

How do these ideas, that seem to be connected to a very demanding and difficult way of life, relate to the concept of leisure, which we defined as time that does not serve a purpose beyond itself? How does this demanding leisure of the *scholé* relate to leisure in general?

Before answering these questions, and without elaborating on this here, it should be noted that such and similar questions were asked by many critics of the above educational tradition. One source of criticism was the post-modern relativistic arguments that attack the idea that we have a reasonable criterion for preferring one educational belief or curriculum over another. This approach is usually connected to the belief that the hegemony of the classic school curriculum is a form of arbitrary coercion of one particular political group trying to force its particular values on other groups and individuals. In the eyes of technological-instrumental positivists, that in many cases connect to a neo-liberal approach, the above educational tradition had failed to contribute to the economic growth, the working market and the special new demands of the worker of the 21st century. From the humanistic psychology perspective, the above tradition had failed to put the child at the center of the educational process, and so had prevented children from fulfilling themselves and achieving their own individual happiness.[[2]](#footnote-2) It is not the purpose of this paper to deal directly with such attacks, yet reexamining the moral value of studying the academic curriculum as a leisure activity may remind us of its inner worth. Now I will return to the question regarding the connection between the demanding leisure of school described above and leisure in general.

# Worthy-leisure or leisure of schooling

Stebbins (1982; 2016) draws a distinction between (1) serious leisure, (2) unserious or casual leisure, and (3) project-based leisure. Serious leisure serves as a basis for people who want to express their skills, fulfill and empower themselves outside of the labor world, which becomes dense and reduced. Serious leisure, as opposed to unserious leisure, demands investment and involves a dimension of deep identification, effort, importance, care, and integrity. And therefore, even if not necessarily so, it can include unpleasant feelings and situations, lack of joy, gravity, sorrow and even anxiety. This is opposed to the sense of lightness and attraction characteristic of unserious, casual leisure, which, by definition, should include immediate satisfaction, and does not require, or only require some learning and skill (Stebbins 1982, 258). Project based leisure can, like serious leisure, demand effort, be unpleasant and even require special knowledge and skill. However, unlike serious leisure, it is directed at the execution of a single, discrete event, like preparing a fundraiser for a certain cause, or a big birthday party for a friend (Davidson and Stebbins 2011; Stebbins, 2016).

Here, I would like to focus on one of the qualities of serious leisure referred to by Stebbins. Serious leisure is characterized in part as culturally valuable activity or time (Stebbins, 1982, 254). If we focus on this property of leisure as a cultural value, we find it necessary to narrow and sharpen the scope of the word “serious,” and designate it as worthy, or worthy leisure – leisure that is worthy from a cultural point of view. While "seriousness" can exist in regards to matters which are far from being culturally valuable, this is not the case for the title "worthy." For example one can be very serious in astrology.

But how can we distinguish between worthy-leisure and other kinds of leisure, that is, between objects and activities of high cultural value, and those of lesser cultural value? It seems prima facie impossible to determine what a worthy leisure activity is as opposed to simply a leisure activity. In fact, the very idea of “worthy leisure” seems paradoxical since, if these are free moments, which do not serve any inevitable matter or an obligation, then it is not possible to claim that they “must” include a certain activity or specific content. Some people like to travel, others enjoy dining at restaurants; some like to play with their children, others like to help refugees, or to watch sports—each person chooses what she wants to do with her free time. Therefore it would seem that the idea of “worthy leisure” is a paradox.

Nevertheless, is it true that each activity and each subject of observation or study possesses the same value or worth? After all, even if we try to be very politically correct, it seems wrong to state that leisure dedicated to, say, gambling and drug abuse is equally valuable to leisure dedicated to yoga and volunteering at the local community center. The distinctions become clearer if we think of the educational context. Is there moral-educational equality between a teacher who takes her students on a tour to the safari and shows them extraordinary animals, and a teacher who takes her students to a shopping center and gives them free time to walk around between the stores? In both cases, there are no outcomes beyond the activity. In this sense, they equally belong to what we characterize as leisure education. However, they hold different values. We value the time in which the children go on a tour of the safari with an adult, more than the time where the adult determines a meeting time and place and dismisses the students to the shopping center. If this intuition is correct, the fact that we believe that the individual must aspire to a life which includes leisure—times that are valuable in and of themselves and do not serve purposes beyond themselves—means that the *content* of that time, or the specific character of the activity that takes place, are *not* negligible considerations.

One of the reasons that some of us tend to see a contradiction between the idea of leisure and a perception that ranks the internal value of the activities and their quality derives from a subjectivist-relativist ethical approach (MacIntyre, 2007; Huemer, 2005). We assume that worth and value are relative and depend on individuals or their culture and so we tend to believe that the idea of worthy-leisure is paradoxical.

On the other hand, it is difficult to ignore our strong intuition that some activities possess higher value than others, and that engaging with them thus makes these moments worthier. This intuition may be related to the moral centers of gravity of our culture. Surely, even if we believe in freedom of the individual, autonomy and equality among all people and their choices, this belief by itself and everything it involves (i.e. the preferred political structure of a liberal democracy, the preferred philosophical-ideological canon, the preferred literature, the preferred science, history, art, architecture, the character of the modern metropolis, the preferred relations between the authorities and the individual, the preferred way of life and so forth) is rich with *content* and *activities* that are *closer* to the spirit of a liberal culture than other content and activities. They *better correspond* to its values than, say, bullfights and rhinoceros hunting.

It is probably this hierarchy of values of the liberal tradition (which some liberals are repulsed by), which, on the other hand, is the source of the well-known fear of being dragged into relativism without standards in which “anything goes” and everything is equally legitimate (MacIntyre, 2007; Boghossian 2006).

This idea of ranking the qualities of pleasure or happiness is familiar to us throughout the history of philosophy. Thus, for example, in the beginning of the tradition, Aristotle drew a distinction between different qualities of pleasure (Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, book 10 sec. 3, trans. 1934,). A similar principle that distinguishes qualities of pleasure is found in Mill, who writes, for example, "…a beast's pleasures do not satisfy a human being's conception of happiness. Human beings have faculties more elevated than the animal appetites…" (Mill, 1864, 11). Matthew Arnold too distinguishes between different qualities of pleasure and happiness. In his treatise “Culture and Anarchy,” he calls for the creation of educational systems which will cultivate humanity so it will not deteriorate into an anarchy (Arnold, 1993; Meller, 2013; Aloni, Avisar, Hop, and Yogev, 2007).

These three philosophers express the internal tension within the liberal tradition, which on the one hand believes in freedom and thus in the equality of all free choices, but on the other hand understands that not all free choices are of equal value. My idea of worthy leisure lies within this necessary inner tension.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Traditionally, the objective of a liberal education was not to free the individual and release one to engage in *any* type of leisure one “feels like.” Liberal education was directed at worthy-leisure; at a personal and social development of a life of contemplation that elevates beyond functional daily life; education for the purpose of arousing attention, astonishment and wonder in the individual and society toward their surrounding reality (Gary, 2006, 121; Wise, 2014, 17).

Now, the tradition of the liberal culture provides a variety of activities and subjects to study and make observations on. These largely overlap with the different subjects in the fields of science, art and the humanities, that are found today on school curricula, and which can stimulate and develop the ability to study and observe reality (the true, good, just and beautiful potentialities of reality). Thus, in worthy leisure education, we would, for instance, prefer to engage in a subject of study from the world of Euclidean geometry than to watch American Idol; we would prefer hiking as a class in a nature reserve over spending class time in a shopping center; we would prefer to read Dostoevsky than to participate in a car race.

Therefore, the suggested view of worthy leisure education or leisure of schooling maintains that, whether the experience of subjective pleasure occurs or not; whether there is a desire or not, if a certain activity or subject-matter expresses the cultural ethos,[[4]](#footnote-4) then there is an inherent value to its existence in a classroom.

# Towards teaching here and now

In addition to his observation of the category of serious leisure, Stebbins (2016) also suggests an approach to leisure education. Stebbins is of the opinion that leisure education requires the parties involved (consultants, volunteers, coaches, counselors) to teach his theory, which distinguishes between the three types of leisure, and encourage the learners to see the value in serious and project-based leisure. In attributing an exaggerated value to his own model, he believes that:

“Since the general public is largely unaware of the concepts of serious and project-based leisure, the first goal of educators for leisure […] is to inform their clients or students about the nature and value of these two. Such information is important for anyone searching for an optimal leisure lifestyle” (Stebbins, 2016, 879-880).

I disagree with him for three reasons. First of all, this information regarding his distinction was not needed for many whose lifestyle was optimal in terms of their seriousness and the values of leisure identified by Stebbins. Nonetheless, they did not know anything about his distinction, nor were they concerned with leisure. Second, there is no guarantee that anyone who learns the theory (the instruction itself will probably be entirely instrumental) will *know* how to develop a lifestyle that includes serious leisure. Above all, an individual cannot achieve the proper seriousness Stebbins refers to, if his or her motivation is to achieve a lifestyle of serious or worthy leisure. This is because devotion to a matter that he or she takes seriously, must, in Ruskin’s words “make him forget himself” (1999, 11, in free translation from Hebrew), that is, be unrelated to models of leisure or to their gains/losses as a result of the activity (as Stebbins suggests).[[5]](#footnote-5)

Unlike Stebbins, I suppose that, as in all good education (which takes into account that the medium also transmits a message), teaching with the approach of worthy leisure education requires that the characteristics of leisure and worthy leisure be manifested through the educational gathering and instruction methods themselves. Earlier I indicated that the main property of leisure is time which does not serve any matter beyond itself and which has no instrumental aspects. Therefore, in my view, the main characteristic of teaching is that it cannot be directed towards outcomes beyond the educational gathering itself. Teaching with this approach must fulfill the educational demand by being an activity that occurs entirely for its own sake, free of any purpose or outcome beyond it. By “outcomes” I mean for example a desirable cognitive state of understanding, a certain skill, an exam, an assignment, a project and so on. In other words, teaching should be an educational event “here and now.”

One conceptual consequence of this approach to teaching is the perception of education and teaching as an *event*, a *state*, or a *state of being*, and *not* as a process, as it is commonly perceived (see also Masschelein and Simons, 2013). The word “process” indicates a change toward a particular outcome. This outcome gives the process a direction, a meaning, and therefore, the process is secondary to it. Thus, in worthy leisure education, to perceive teaching as a “process” is less adequate than to perceive it as an “event” or an “occasion.” Events are not necessarily directed toward external matters, and so in contrast to processes may be valuable in and of themselves.

Therefore we should understand the lessons, or educational gatherings as I prefer to call them here (i.e. the gathering of people who are going to study, observe or contemplate a worthy subject, or be involved in another activity of a worthy leisure), in terms of *events*, *scenes*, or *ceremonies*. These concepts create a point of view that unites time and space in one event. And the unification of the time and space in an event forces us to refer to the “here and now” of the educational gathering and so draw the meaning from within it, rather than from future outcomes. To summarize this idea, teaching in worthy leisure education is not directed toward outcomes beyond it, and so it should not be viewed as a process; rather, it should be viewed and designed as an event, a scene, or a ceremony which keeps the unity of time and space and thus our attention is focused "here and now" on the worthy subject we are examining or studying, or on the worthy activity we are engaged in.[[6]](#footnote-6)

# Choosing and defining objectives of non-outcome teaching in teaching here and now

That teaching here and now is not directed toward outcomes beyond it does not mean that it has no objectives. One of the basic criteria in selecting aims for an educational gathering is that the objects of study, or other planed activity, reflects aspects of reality, or true, good, just or beautiful potentialities of it.[[7]](#footnote-7) This means that the amount of reason or rationale of the educational gathering is a function of the amount of truthfulness, goodness, justice and beauty that the object at the center of the gathering expresses. Such objects are summits of the liberal culture, i.e. objects, phenomena or subjects that have established our best idea up till now of the true, good, just and beautiful potentialities of reality. Examples of objects are the Mona Lisa, the law of non-contradiction, or the American Civil War. Objects, phenomena, or other possible subjects that do not meet the criteria are, for example: the superiority of the Aryan race, effective ways of whale hunting, or the certainty of astrology.

The activity in the educational gathering can be theoretical or non-theoretical. Theoretical activity can be studying, observing, contemplating, or speculating about an object that is culturally valuable, such as those mentioned above. Non-theoretical activity of an educational gathering should also meet the criterion of culturally valuable activity. Examples of such activities are: going on a hike, reading, playing a musical instrument, building a bridge, helping the needy, woodworking, solving social problems, etc. Possible activities that do not meet the above criteria are, for example: rhinoceros hunting, gambling on money, or practicing pagan ceremonies with animal sacrifice.

How is it possible to define the objectives of an educational gathering involving non-outcome teaching when teaching to here and now? In regular teaching that is directed towards outcomes, the definition of the aim of the lesson is usually focused on the outcome. These outcomes are usually targeted at the students’ consciousness. The following formulations are examples of this common approach: “The student will become familiar with…”, “the student will understand that…”, “the student will learn how to…”, “the student will develop a skill to …” and so forth (Guri-Rosenblit, 2014, 173). In contrast, in teaching here and now that is not directed at outcomes beyond the event of the gathering itself, the objectives must be defined in such a way that focuses the teacher on what is happening in the educational gathering itself. Although the examples of objectives that I give below may seem to be similar to the examples I gave above (of the way that teaching that focuses on outcomes defines its objectives), there are deep differences between the two. Objectives in non-outcome teaching here and now are defined according to the following formulas: “In the educational gathering, we will *examine* the circle and its properties”; “we will *observe* the phenomenon of autumn”; “we will *raise questions* regarding the Book of Samuel”; “we will *study* the structure of matter, the term molecule and the phenomenon it is supposed to represent”; “we will *search* for the forces operating on bridges”; “we will *reflect* on the play Uncle Vanya by Chekhov.” Non-theoretical objectives will be framed according to the following structure: “In our educational gathering, we will *read* the play Uncle Vanya by Chekhov”; “we will *hike* together along a stream”; “we will *play* basketball”; “we will *sing* songs while playing guitar”; “we will *write* an essay”; “we will *dissect* frogs”; “we will *analyze* English sentences”; “we will *paint* with oil paints”; “we will *deepen our relationship* with each other” and so forth. Again, the point is that the teaching objectives are phrased in such a way that they do not continue beyond the event of the educational gathering itself.

# The required virtues for teachers of worthy leisure

These characteristics place a number of requirements on the teachers and thus their training. In terms of their knowledge, values and identity, the teacher of worthy leisure must be familiar with their tradition—the liberal tradition (Segev, 2017). They must be familiar with its core principles, as well as the core issues it is concerned with in the present (Aloni, Avishar, Hop, and Yogev, 2007). Of course, teachers must know very well or (as beginners) at least well enough, the materials and skills of their field of knowledge. But they also have to have an understanding of their field of knowledge in the context of the general tradition of knowledge. The teachers must be as familiar as possible with the peaks of this tradition; the philosophical, scientific, technological, historical, social, and political contexts of their particular field (Segev, 2017). They should see themselves as part of that tradition and identify with the idea of study for its own sake. Teachers must view their field of expertise (mathematics, history, physics or literature; special education, early childhood education, or language) as one that expresses good, true, just or beautiful potentialities and aspects of reality. These values are the source from which the teacher should draw the justification for their occupation as teacher and educators in general and for each educational gathering in particular.

In terms of the preparation for an educational gathering, the teachers must make sure they identify (again and again) the object of study, and see (again and again) the values it expresses. It does not matter whether the teachers planned the lesson or course, or whether they execute an existing lesson plan. Nor does it matter if they taught it already (a year ago, semester, or week ago), they must observe the object in question before each educational gathering, and make sure that they identify its boundaries, internal parts and the values it expresses. This kind of preparation is comparable to the stage that in the teaching jargon often called “setting the objective” of the lesson. However, when practicing worthy leisure education, identifying the objective means *choosing*an object which meets the conditions of worthiness that have been described**.** Again, this object, the aspects of reality and the values it expresses,constitute the purpose, the rationale, of the educational gathering**.** Such preparation is necessary because the coming educational gathering is a unique event, an occasion, a ceremony. Nothing - not an exam, not what the students will remember afterwards or be able to do; not the understanding performance, the project, nor the homework – can replace the educational gathering. So the teacher cannot arrive to such a special event with just a vague memory of the main object of the event – its purpose.

But what if, during a certain educational gathering, the students do not see the object or values it reflects? In any case, teachers must always do everything they can so that the students capture something of the object and its values. At the very least they should create the foundation in their relations with the students so that the students believe that the subject at the center of the educational event has good, true, just or beautiful potentialities. Furthermore, it is very important that the students, even though they do not immediately see the potentialities, nevertheless believe in their own capability of capturing them some other time in the future.

The last requirement that I will note is regarding the state of mind of the teacher of worthy leisure. Being a personal example in worthy leisure education demands that teachers view the educational gathering as a *leisure event*. So, as an activity that they find value and happiness in performing regardless of their future earnings. Just as many artists would continue doing their art (music, painting and so) without earnings, as a hobby, so teachers of worthy-leisure must feel that they find value, pleasure and appeal in gathering with children or youth to show them the aesthetics of overlapping triangles or the justice in returning a lost item, or the sophistication and beauty of Oedipus Rex. If we expect the students to experience the educational gathering as a time and place that is meaningful by its own virtue, not as a mean to another end, then as exemplars, the teachers must embody and express the unique virtue of the object or activity of the educational gathering. One way is to show a large amount of enthusiasm in participating in the educational gathering and in leading it.

This last demand and in a way the whole idea of worthy-leisure can find inspiration in the Jewish tradition in which teaching and learning for its own sake, mostly the Talmud, is an everyday activity. In many ways, the place of worthy objects and activities of the liberal tradition is parallel to the place of learning the Talmud in the Jewish tradition. This analogy is expressed in the dominant central place of the particular canon of works of art and of art in general, or of the accepted scientific theories and of science and knowledge in general, and above all the philosophical canon. The never-ending practice of studying the Talmud for its own sake can find its analogy in the dominant place of the never ending quest and exploration of the unknown and the allegedly known in the liberal tradition.

# Conclusion

In order to show the potential unification between studying the school's academic curriculum and developing moral virtues, two matters commonly considered to be separated, I suggested the approach of worthy leisure education, which includes the practice of teaching here and now and not towards outcomes. I defined leisure as *life-moments which do not serve any purpose beyond themselves*. These moments include an activity that is valuable for its own sake. I have also shown that our liberal culture, which appreciates freedom and leisure, has a hierarchy of leisure activities, meaning that not all leisure activities are of equal value. Yet, this hierarchy does not contradict liberal values since it does not require coercion or limitation of freedom.

Drawing on the tradition of *paideia* and liberal arts education, I described the preferred liberal virtue as the constant aspiration to empower our awareness of the good, true, just and beautiful potentialities and aspects of reality, while always keeping in mind the basic assumption that, although this aspiration will probably never be fully realized once and for all, the individual and the group should nevertheless do the best they can to reveal those potentialities and, as much possible, to actualize them in life. In this way, I have arrived at the model of worthy leisure education and teaching here and now.

This model calls for creating educational events which are not directed at outcomes beyond themselves, and so they draw their value and meaning from the object of study or another activity that is valued in the liberal tradition.

I went on to describe what sort of virtues are needed by teachers who practice worthy leisure education and teaching here and now. Lastly, I described some principles for teacher training, both in terms of required knowledge and skills, and in terms of the attitude with which they should be presented to the educational gathering.

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1. See the combination of these well-known canonical citations from Plato and Aristotle. "[…] the fact is, gentlemen, it is likely that the god is really wise and by his oracle means this: *'Human wisdom is of little or no value*.' And it appears that he […] uses my name, and makes me an example, as if he were to say: 'This one of you, O human beings, is wisest, who, like Socrates, *recognizes that is in truth of no account in respect to wisdom*" (Plato, Apology 23a-b, trans. 1966, My emphasis); "Most of the points I have made in support of my argument *are not such as I can confidently assert*; but that the belief in *the duty of inquiring after what we do not know* will make us better and braver and less helpless than the notion that there is not even a possibility of discovering what we do not know, nor any duty of inquiring after it—this is a point for which I am determined to do battle, so far as I am able, both in word and deed" (Plato, Meno 86b-c, trans. 1967, My emphasis); "*If* therefore among the ends at which our actions aim there be one which we will for its own sake, […] it is clear that this one ultimate End must be the Good, and indeed the Supreme Good. Will not then a knowledge of this Supreme Good be also of great practical importance for the conduct of life? Will it not better enable us to attain our proper object […]? *If* this be so, *we ought to make an attempt to determine at all events in outline what exactly this Supreme Good is* […]” (Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics, book 1 sec. 2, trans. 1934, My emphasis). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For further reading on such and other critics of the academic liberal education tradition, see for example Schilling, 1986; Aviram 2010; Back, 2012; Noddings, 2013; Priestley and Biesta, 2014; Segev, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See also Raz (1986) who, regardless of the value he finds in the autonomous choices themselves, still differentiates between the worthier autonomous choices taken within the moral sphere, and autonomous choices taken outside the moral sphere. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See above the description of the liberal virtue, i.e. the constant aspiration to empower our awareness etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The mental state of *flow* is relevant here, but should not be set as a goal. Firstly, it is a very high mental target. Secondly it may distract the focus of our attention from the content to ourselves, i.e. again a situation that is targeted towards outcomes. My assumption is that if a person wants to achieve the mental state of *flow*, they paradoxically should *not* direct their attention to what they want. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. One may suppose that Aristotle's distinction between *energeia* and *kinesis* can help to characterize the two different processes: teaching towards outcome and non-outcome teaching. But there is much dispute regarding the right use of these terms and many different meanings of the term *energeia* in the philosophy of Aristotle, that it may create more ambiguity than clarity. (On the ambiguity of the meaning of this distinction see Chung-Hwan, 1956; Polansky, 1983; Gonzalez, 2006; Cohen, 2016.) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. I am currently ignoring criteria such as the target audience, which are also common to other educational approaches. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)