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# Covington Latin and the Concept of Acceleration



- A brief overview of today's discussion
- School profile and mission
- Latin School today
- Your materials



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“Failure to provide for differences among students is perhaps the greatest single source of inefficiency in education.

It is still standard practice for large groups of students to move forward at the same speed, cover much the same material, and reach the same standards for promotion from one grade to the next.

The speed is appropriate to the average or mediocre student. Those who could move faster lose interest and waste time.”

– **B.F. Skinner, The Technology of Teaching, 1968**



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“Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.”

– **Luke 12:48 (NASB)**

“(Must I) remind the conductors of the press of their duty to apply to themselves a maxim which they never neglected to urge on the consideration of government - that the possession of great power necessarily implies great responsibility.”

– **Thomas Hansard, British Parliament Member, 1819**

“With great power there must also come great responsibility.”

– **Stan Lee, Amazing Stories #15, 1962**



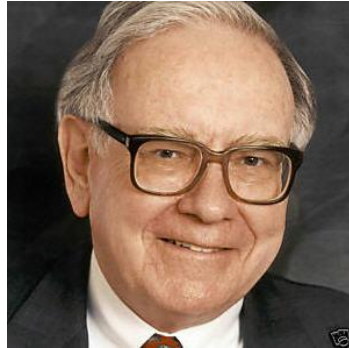
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# Famous faces of acceleration



Michelle Obama



Warren Buffett



Steve Jobs



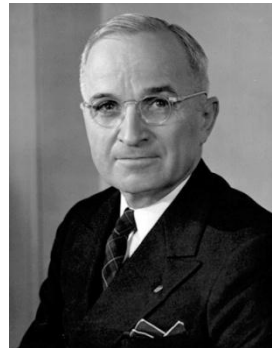
Martin Luther King Jr.



Sandra Day O'Connor



Oprah Winfrey



Harry S. Truman



Richard Nixon



Ronald Reagan



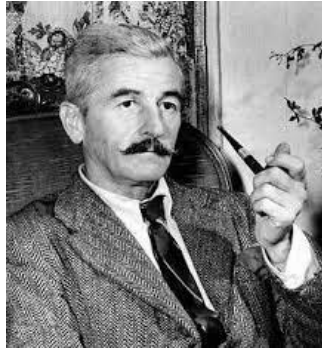
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Neil Armstrong



William Faulkner



T.S. Eliot



Milton Friedman



Simon *and* Garfunkel



Yo Yo Ma



John Legend



Stephen Sondheim



Philip Glass



Roberta Flack



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# What acceleration is...

- Chronological age  $\neq$  grade in all cases
- Academic readiness is a better predictor than age
- Matching the pace, level and complexity of the curriculum to meet students needs
- It is an intervention



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# And what acceleration is not...

- Pushing students
- Forcing students to learn advanced material or socializing with older students before they are ready
- At Latin School we don't really even think of it as acceleration at all. It's all about "fit".



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# Risks of inaction

- Research indicates when gifted and talented students remain in lock step with their age peers rather than moving ahead at an appropriate pace, the resulting risks include:
  - Boredom
  - Poor study habits
  - Underachievement
  - Behavior problems
  - “Entity” versus “Incremental” theories



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“Acceleration is one of the most curious phenomena in the field of education. I can think of no other issue in which there is a gulf between what research has revealed and what most practitioners believe. The research on acceleration is so uniformly positive, the benefits so unequivocal, that it is difficult to see how an educator could oppose it.”

– **James Borland, Professor, Teacher's College,  
Columbia University**



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# Acceleration in the US: a long, slow embrace

- A failure to distinguish between equality and sameness
- There are deeply embedded interests, policy and administrative structure and philosophy
- Administrative difficulties
- The advent of gifted programs, same-grade program stratification, are signs of progress



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# Acceleration types

- Early entrance to school
- Subject acceleration
- Grade skipping
- Grade telescoping
- Curriculum compacting
- Advanced Placement®
- Concurrent enrollment or dual credit enrollment



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# Academic benefits

- Habits developed in the formative years
  - Establishes a university standard
- Immersing students in culture of intellectual peers
  - Raising the bar / culture of enthusiasm
  - Transition can be humbling
- Supportive research abounds



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# Social aspects

- Students need emotional maturity as well as academic maturity to be successful
- Academically advanced students tend to be more emotionally advanced than their peers
- Vast majority of students experience normal socialization
  - Latin School alumni support this in survey feedback and through legacy enrollment



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# Who should accelerate?

- Parents, trust your instincts
  - Underchallenged?
  - Are your kids asked to tutor others?
  - Homework?
  - Boredom?
  - Atrophy?
- Standardized test and teacher observations
  - Entrance Exam and scores
  - Selectivity occurs within families



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THANK YOU



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