

## Calasanz and the simultaneous method

Excerpt from the book: THE FORMATION OF THE MODERN SCHOOL

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*Put all diligence in leading the students to school, to the oratory, and to the frequency of the sacraments, and see to do a single class, although two or three more diligent may give three or four more lines of Latin to study than the others; but **all should hear and study the same lessons**, and have no scruples in teaching as you see fit, for so I believe that one should proceed (LETTER. 28 Nov 1625)*

The number of students a teacher can teach should allow him to reach with his lessons conveniently. Once the system of separate classes for each age and different contents was adopted, introducing the <sup>1</sup>so-called **simultaneous** method was necessary.

Everyone in each class had to be instructed simultaneously in the same subject and by the same teacher. The hybrid system two, which took charge of teaching and individual control, was added to the simultaneous method. For this, the well-known Jesuit model was reproduced (which will not be alien to the didactic definitions of Comenius) with decurions in charge of their respective section and various obligations that allowed the teacher to attend to an area. In contrast, the others were engaged in practices or revisions that did not immediately require the <sup>2</sup>intervention of the teacher: *"In the lower schools, while one section reads before the teacher, the other is devoted to studying the lesson or writing; while the writing of the one is corrected, others are entertained in another occupation."*

A methodological criterion of similar inspiration and origin was observed in the upper classes since it was customary to divide them into two camps or sections: *Romans and Carthaginians, Pars Pia et Pars Angelica, Equites et Pedites, Legio Velox et Legio Florens*. In all of them, the competition was progressive. Someone ended up being appointed Emperor and became a privileged assistant to the educator, especially for the review and revision of the lessons. The competition allowed further power of adaptation to the simultaneous method because when it came to exposing what was studied and learned, each one could perform according to their abilities when facing those who had the same level, facilitating the possibility of emulation. After all, the challenge to those who occupied higher positions was not ruled out – as in the original of the Jesuits.

*You will stimulate with prizes the intelligence of children, naming a child Emperor and giving him, for the duration of his errand, the privilege of not being scourged and that of granting two or three graces to the pupils who deserve to be punished (Litomysl Regulations: 6, 7).<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup>Calasanz's letters are frequent, making the corresponding distribution and admonishing for having admitted more students than the teachers can attend. If the pupils are many, they cannot be well taught, being in such great numbers: *there will be a little teacher who tries to teach fifty*. However, the testimonies of the time mention courses of 60 or 70 students, suggesting in these cases the help of the advantaged students.

<sup>2</sup> The decurions according to SANTHA G. (1956: 360 – 362) were students, but in their functions, they belonged to the teaching staff and contributed to the effectiveness of the work of parents and teachers, both in disciplinary control and (to a lesser degree) in didactics.

<sup>3</sup> There it is mentioned that this struggle for honors and recognitions could become an annual contest in which all the schools of the city participated, competing over the teaching of doctrine (catechism): the winner was proclaimed Emperor of all.