



Teaching the Great Books

Kelly Beck and Lesley Clifton



The Great Books, defined.

A cannon of around 150 works, written of the course of 2500 + years, which ask and attempt to answer the most important questions of existence.

Great Books Curriculum: Learning to read, discuss, and write about the ideas of the Great Books.

The Great Books...

1. Ask and answer universal questions
2. Have stood the test of time
3. Have shaped our culture



Finding a Self

Who will your students become?

What will they commit to?

What beliefs about themselves and the world will they own?

The Great Books ask and answer the universal and fundamental questions of life:

1. Who am I?
 2. Why am I here?
 3. What is my place?
 4. What is good?
-

“In a conversation that has gone on for twenty five centuries, all dogmas and points of view appear. Here are the great errors as well as the great truths. The reader has to determine which are the errors and which are the truths.”

Robert Hutchins

Formation of the Whole Child

The Great Books educate:

- Mind
 - Skills
 - Character
 - Soul (the place from where value and meaning come)
-

Empathy

Def. n. the ability to understand the thoughts and feelings of another

- Understanding another's point of view
 - Disagreeing respectfully
 - Together seeking truth with equity
-

Examples of Empathy in the Great Conversation

Economics: Mercantilism--- Adam
Smith---Karl Marx

What is a human?

Pagans---Plato---Dante---DesCartes

What is the author
saying?

Do I agree/disagree?

What are the reasons I
agree/disagree?

“ It is the task of every generation to reassess the tradition in which it lives, to discard what it cannot use, and to bring into context with the distant and immediate past the most recent contributions to the Great Conversation.”

-Robert Hutchins

Listening and Communicating

- Learn to distinguish between the value of a person and the value of their ideas
 - Learn to express their own ideas
 - Experience being heard and understood
-

Preparing Children to Read the Great Books

A practical guide

- Model delight in the stories/contexts of the stories
 - Aesop's Fables
 - Nursery Rhymes
 - Retellings of Myths
 - Historical Fiction
- Select stories that teach universal values
- Read A LOT
- Teach students to value working hard to understand



We'd love to hear from you!



The survey can be accessed via Sched or using the QR code.

Please make sure you complete the conference survey so your name can be entered into a **drawing for an Amazon gift card.**

The Great Books Process

Support the Brain's Natural Process

1. **PRE-READING:** Understand the parts, to understand the whole (prep for reading).
 - Finding Definitions
2. **READING:** Interacting with the content
 - Reading, then Summarizing (What did I just read?)
3. **SEMINAR :** Making Logical Connections
 - **Pre-seminar:** Writing down initial ideas
 - **Seminar Discussion:** speaking ideas, comparing/ contrasting with other's ideas
 - **Post-Seminar Writing:** consolidating ideas; (What did I learn? Did I change _____ my mind?)



We'd love to hear from you!



The survey can be accessed via Sched or using the QR code.

Please make sure you complete the conference survey so your name can be entered into a **drawing for an Amazon gift card.**