



Great Thought  
Inspiring Great Thinkers

# Classical Education

## Parent Education Night

Intellect, Character, and Ideals in the Classical Tradition



“Society is in crisis, [I.A.] Richards argues, because historical change, and scientific discovery in particular, has outstripped and devalued the traditional mythologies by which men and women have lived.”  
(Eagleton, 39)

Eagleton, Terry. Literary Theory: An Introduction. 2nd edition. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996.

# Agenda



- Introduction/Vocabulary
- Sample Lesson
- Q&A

# Introduction/Vocabulary



- Classical
  - Medieval, primary source-based, systematic, spiraling, history-centered
- Core Principles
  - Language-centered
  - Integrated and highlighted character education

# Introduction/Vocabulary



- Trivium
  - “three roads/ways”
    - Grammar (Poll-Parrot (Sayers))
    - Logic/dialectic (Pert (Sayers))
    - Rhetoric (Poetic (Sayers))
- Quadrivium
  - Astronomy, Arithmetic, Geometry, and Music

# Introduction/Vocabulary



- Common Terms
  - Didactic
  - Coaching
  - Socratic
  
- Greek Root
  - *idea, dideos, video*

# Introduction/Vocabulary



Which other words/vocabulary  
do you hear floating around the school?

# Lesson-Grammar Stage



- Foci
  - Vocabulary
  - Technical vocabulary
  - Technical skills
  - Vocal exercises

# Lesson-Grammar Stage



## Shakespeare's Sonnet XXIX

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,  
I all alone bewEEP my outcast state  
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries  
And look upon myself and curse my fate.

Wishing me like to one more rich in hope (5)

Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd  
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope

With what I most enjoy contented least;

Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising

Haply I think on thee, and then my state (10)

Like to the lark at break of day arising

From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate

For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings

That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

# Lesson-Grammar Stage



- Vocabulary
  - “beweep” (2); “bootless” (3); “possess’d” (6); “art” (7); “scope” (7); “haply” (10); “lark” (11);
- Technical Vocabulary
  - English/Shakespearean v Italian/Petrarchan sonnet
  - Iambic pentameter (meter, foot)
  - Rhyme scheme
  - quatrain; couplet

# Lesson-Grammar Stage



- Technical Skills
  - Scanning lines      ˘   ˙
  - Exercise
  
- Vocal exercises
  - Repeat rhythm (drum-beat)
  - Repeat rhyme scheme

# Lesson-Grammar Stage



- Essential tool: memory
  - Children learn to take in large quantities of data and retrieve them back at appropriate times
  - Use mnemonic devices
  - Memory strengthens the mind
- Oratory School
  - Built upon the 14 *progymnasmata*
  - Precursor to the School of Rhetoric

# Lesson-Logic Stage



- Foci
  - Structural connections
  - Linguistic connections
  - Virtues within the text

# Lesson-Logic Stage



- **Structural Connections**
  - connections between quatrains
  - turn in the poem
  
- **Linguistic Connections**
  - themes emerging from language (register)
  - implications of those themes

# Lesson-Logic Stage



- Virtues within the text
  - What is valued within the poem? How?
  - Do you see any of the four virtues at work:
    - Fortitude
    - Temperance
    - Justice
    - Prudence

# Lesson-Logic Stage



- Essential tool: Dialectic
  - Interchange between master (teacher) and student
  - Builds upon pedagogical questions
  - Involves analogical questions to coach a student from what is known to what is new
  - Teacher-directed

# Lesson-Rhetoric Stage



- Foci
  - Answering questions
  - Articulating one's ideas
  - Defending one's ideas

# Lesson-Rhetoric Stage



- Which questions is the speaker attempting to answer?
  - Is there such a thing as true love?
  - Can a woman be attracted to a poor man?
  - What is the relationship between wealth/status and love?
  - Can love overcome all obstacles?
  - Do we believe the speaker? Why?

# Lesson-Rhetoric Stage



- Essential tool: Seminar
  - Seminar is a co-mutual interchange of ideas/thoughts
  - Each contribution should be value-added
  - Each contribution should reflect the background (grammar) and understanding (logic) of the topic
  - Teacher-directed

# Resources



- Nova's Stage Overview documents
- Dorothy Sayers' essay, "The Lost Tools of Learning"
- *The Well-Trained Mind*
  - resource for building a home-school based on the classical model
- *Designing your Own Classical Curriculum* by Laura Berquist
  - more religious and intellectually rigorous exploration of the classical model
- *Classical Education* by Gene Veith and Andrew Kern
- *Norms and Nobility* by David Hicks
- *The Abolition of Man* by C.S. Lewis

# Closing



**QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?**