

John Adams Academy Classical Leadership Education

“All men who have turned out worth anything have had the chief hand in their own education.” Sir Walter Scott

The education of tomorrow’s leaders determines the level of freedom, prosperity and integrity of the next generation. Leaders select the goals of a nation and the means of achieving those goals.

Leadership Education trains thinkers, leaders, inventors, citizens, entrepreneurs, and statesmen. It educates individuals “how to think” and teaches them why it is important. Robert Hutchins said this type of education is “the education of free men in the knowledge and skills that are needed to remain free.”

Classically educated leaders are prepared to motivate and inspire individuals, communities, and nations to a greater good in an environment of freedom and prosperity that naturally produces the best society has to offer. This awakening is achieved through enduring principles of success. It is not accomplished simply by educating youth effectively, but rather by helping them to internalize the principles of greatness as demonstrated in the lives of notable individuals who have accomplished great things.

Leadership Education presupposes that each individual is born with a unique and individual mission to fulfill. Leadership Education consists of discovering, preparing for, and fulfilling this mission. It is not the role of Leadership Education to fill students with a pre-determined set of facts, beliefs, or processes, but to inspire them to discover their own potential and unique abilities that only they can contribute to society.

Our Founding Fathers and the great leaders of history received a Leadership Education. In the twenty-first century it falls to us to choose what kind of leaders we will produce. The liberty, prosperity, integrity, and stability of our nation and even future civilizations are dependent upon the leaders of tomorrow getting a Leadership Education today. These principles and the wisdom of history are still available to all who are willing to pay the price to educate, work, and implement the timeless principles of a Classical Leadership Education. Those fortunate enough to receive this type of education will truly be able to make a difference in the world.

Vision

The John Adams Academies are restoring America’s heritage by developing servant-leaders who are keepers and defenders of the principles of freedom for which our Founding Fathers pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor.

Core Values

John Adams Academy is preparing future leaders and statesmen through principle-based education. Our core values include:

- Appreciation of our national heritage
- Public and private virtue
- Emphasis on mentors and classics
- Student-empowered learning
- Fostering creativity and entrepreneurial spirit
- High standards of academic excellence
- Modeling what we teach
- Abundance mentality
- Maintaining a culture of greatness

Our long-range vision is that this organization will be a model for the future of public education.

Goals

1. To train thinkers, entrepreneurs, and statesmen with the character, competence, and capacity to do the right thing and to do it excellently in every field of endeavor.
2. To nourish freedom and to instruct others in the principles of liberty and how to maintain it by teaching students “how” to think. Those who only know what to think or when to think cannot maintain freedom or lead others on the path of progress without further leadership skills.
3. To produce individuals that internalize the skills, methods, and structure of a John Adams Academy Classical Leadership Education who go forth to heal society, to preserve freedom to ensure peace, to provide integrity, and to grant prosperity for humanity through noble service using their unique talents in causes greater than self that promote the common good essential to a moral and ethical society.

Structure

John Adams Academy provides a rigorous, systematic study of great minds down through the ages to achieve mastery of a subject and make connections between past events and the expanse of current information. The curriculum of John Adams Academy inspires students through self-discipline to educate themselves in the principles of freedom. In partnership with parents and mentors, students discover and prepare for their unique mission and purpose in life within the following structure:

Classics

From Aristotle to Montesquieu and Locke to Adams, great individuals studied other great individuals. A classic is a work that can be experienced many times over and give something new each time. A classic or great book has three essential qualities: great theme, noble language, and universality.

Classics open our eyes to the true nature of our world and take us across the divide that separates mind from mind. They reveal to us our essential humanity, its beauty and its horror, and hold the mirror up to our unknown selves. With a message of truth that echoes in our lives long after we've turned the final page, a true classic speaks to the heart and soul.

Classics teach us about human nature. They allow us to experience in an intimate way the greatest mistakes and successes of human history. How others think, feel, and act allow us to predict behavior and help us to develop empathy, compassion, and wisdom in our relationships with others.

Classics bring us face-to-face with greatness. As we study the characters, real or fictional, in the classics, we are inspired by their greatness, which is the first step to becoming great ourselves.

In classics we can experience other people's characters more powerfully than in real life because the author lets us see his or her thoughts, feelings and reasons for and consequences of their character's choices. Classics force us to quietly study, ponder, analyze, think, ask, discover, cry, laugh, struggle, and above all feel, change, and become. Because we are then better, we are motivated to go out and serve.

Great literature is miraculous because it makes available to us things that we cannot get in any other way. A classic gives us the personal wisdom to be better as an individual and a citizen of a free nation.

Mentors

A mentor is an individual of high moral character, more advanced than the student who can guide the student's learning. Great mentoring includes six fundamentals:

1. Uses Classics. As students become familiar with them, eventually they are able to articulate the great ideas of humanity; they will know *how* to think, how to lead and how to become great.
2. Personalizes. A mentor helps each student identify where he or she is and what he or she wants to become and then helps the student develop a plan for achieving it.

3. Simplifies. Read, write, discuss. From ancient Rome to modern nations the more complex the national curriculum the less educated the society. A great mentor structures a student's curriculum around three simple processes: reading the classics, writing about them, and discussing what has been learned.
4. Applies lessons to life. Education takes place when the reading, writing and discussion lead to real-life application. Mentors can help students internalize the lessons learned in the readings, and seek out opportunities for application in the community in business, political life, travel, field trips, service projects, etc.
5. Only accepts quality work. Demands intellectual and creative excellence or the work is repeated until excellence is achieved.
6. Sets the example for students. The best mentors are continually learning and improving, reading classics and studying. A mentor cannot pass on a better education than he or she has earned.

The greatest leaders throughout history have used a simple curriculum. They have read the classics, discussed them with mentors who only accepted quality work and applied the lessons learned to real life.

Modeling

Long before leaders begin leading they train and practice in order to be prepared. A critical element of Leadership Education is modeling real-life situations. Students will have the opportunity of modeling various situations; for example, moot courts, mock parliament, parliamentary procedure, historical events, business predicaments, current events, and governmental concerns. In this design, students can be guided in a safe environment to prepare for real-life scenarios.

Application

After practicing through modeling, students will have real-life opportunities to apply the principles they have learned and practiced through internships, community service, vocational programs, employment, travel, and becoming mentors to others.

Student's Unique Mission

The founders were great men and women of long-range vision who operated on enduring principles and lived their lives based upon absolutes through truth and inspiration. Because they had the capacity to translate their vision into reality to fulfill their own unique mission they were great leaders.

As a student your mission is exercising that talent which is particular to you, for the purposes most needed in the world around you, thus adding value to the lives of others

and to humanity as a whole. Discovering mission is a key part of your personal search for meaning and direction in life. You must ask yourself: 1) What am I meant to do? 2) Why was I meant to do it? 3) How am I going to achieve it? Knowing the answers to these questions will enrich your life and empower you in your mission. When you begin to realize your personal mission you not only desire to make a difference in the world and contribute to matters greater than yourself but this realization is indispensable to your own happiness and well-being.

As students progress through the Classical Leadership Education of John Adams Academy they too will discover through truth, inspiration and adherence to absolutes that they have something unique to offer the world. Through classics, mentoring and modeling students will be inspired to prepare for that mission and will naturally hunger for oncoming responsibilities and future contributions in society. They will *become* the change that is needed in the world.

“Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve.” Martin Luther King Jr.

Methods

A “Classical” Education is:

- Language intensive. It demands that students use and understand words, not video images.
- History intensive. It gives a comprehensive view of human endeavor from early beginnings until now.
- Demands self-discipline. A teacher’s job is to teach and inspire. A student’s job is to educate self and apply that education.
- Produces literate, curious, intelligent students with a wide range of interests and abilities.

Lecture

Though over-used in teaching, if done well, lecture has great value. Guest “experts” will regularly be asked to lecture.

Colloquium

Consists of a group of students and a facilitator who have all read a particular book and come together to discuss, address one another, and answer questions about that book.

Sample questions might include:

- What was the author’s meaning?
- Did the author make allusions? If so, explain.
- What was the structure of the story and how did this help achieve the author’s purpose?
- Was there imagery and what did it accomplish?
- Why did the characters act the way they did?

- Can you compare this book with other books that you have read?
- What is the main message of the book?
- List key ideas and analyze these ideas.
- What are key lessons learned?

Written Examination

Just as sustained and serious reading is at the center of self-education, so is sustained and intensive daily writing critical for students to be able to communicate effectively. Daily essay writing and essay exams test not only the knowledge a student has acquired but the ability to organize and communicate that knowledge and apply it.

Oral Examination

Both regular oral presentations and oral exams are vital in preparing students for public performance, thinking on their feet and verbal argument. Excellence in oral persuasion is a key element in being able to move the cause of liberty and inspire greatness in others.

Skills

A Classical Leadership Education is for those who are now and continue to seek higher learning and development. However, for those not planning on a formal four-year university a classical education is still valuable. An educated mind is necessary for any job, from air-conditioning repairman to professor. When a student leaves John Adams Academy knowing how to critically read, effectively write, communicate orally, do math, connect with history and know *how* to think, that student can easily be trained in any specific job skills he may need in the field of his choosing. Such students will have learned *how* to learn.

The most foundational skill upon which all others are built is the understanding, development and application of the attribute of:

- Virtue. The Founding Fathers understood that two types of virtue are necessary for great leaders and statesmen. The Founding Fathers defined *private virtue* as honesty, integrity and character, in both public trusts and in one's personal life; and *public virtue* as voluntarily sacrificing personal comfort or benefits for the good of the nation or community. All true greatness comes from doing the right thing when completely alone and serving without thought of recognition or remuneration.

The following is a list of some, but not all of the skills that are built upon the foundation of virtue and which a leader and statesman must acquire:

- The ability to define problems without help.
- The ability to ask hard questions which challenge prevailing assumptions.

- The ability to quickly assimilate needed data from masses of irrelevant information.
- The ability to work in teams or absolutely alone.
- The ability to persuade others that your course is the right one.
- The ability to conceptualize and reorganize information into new patterns.
- The ability to discuss ideas with application in mind.
- The ability to think inductively and deductively.
- The ability to think, speak, and write clearly.
- The ability to reason critically and systematically.
- The ability to think independently.
- The ability to see connections among disciplines, ideas and cultures.
- The ability to pursue life-long learning.
- The ability to understand human nature and lead accordingly.
- The ability to identify needed personal traits and turn them into habits.
- The ability to keep one's life in proper balance.
- The ability to discern truth and error regardless of the source, or the delivery.
- The ability and discipline to do right and constantly improve.
- The ability and focus to maintain integrity in all decisions.

By helping students master these and other life and leadership skills students, in turn, become leaders, analysts, entrepreneurs and statesmen.

Outcome

In his book “Norms and Nobility” David Hicks paraphrases Plato this way, “The classically educated student aims for more than a life of comfort; she aims for a life that knows and reveres, speculates and acts upon the good, that loves and re-produces the beautiful, and that pursues excellence and moderation in all things.”

A Classical Leadership Education and specifically a John Adams Academy education is not about teaching or learning but about becoming; thus, the quality of life of the individual student changes. In addition to clarity and understanding and polished ability to affect change in the world the students will impact people within their circle of influence. The classically trained student naturally transitions from preparing to serving and is inspired to lift others and move forward the cause of freedom.

The classically educated student not only learns wisdom but becomes wise from living the principles resulting from intensive study, immersion in the classics and the application of this education to improving the world. They will *be* great and will be prepared when called upon to perform the mission unique to them.

From ancient times through recent centuries, only a small, elite number of the population received this kind of education; therefore, only that small fraction was qualified to govern, which by definition demands looking past the immediate or popular to evaluate long-range consequences, cause and effect.

In a Democratic Republic such as the United States, all citizens have a part in government. Based upon true principles each citizen should be able to look past instant gratification, rhetoric, fancy speeches, and simplistic solutions in order to understand the right course of action. Every one of the citizens of this great nation has the responsibility once reserved for only the well-educated, the classically educated. And so, every citizen, college-bound or not, should receive the type of education that will develop greatness in mind and character in order to become an individual of integrity and sound judgment.

If we do not begin to educate ourselves and inspire our children, we will continue to relinquish the privilege of self-government by putting ourselves at the mercy of a few “experts” until the disappearing democratic ideals upon which our nation was founded are completely lost and our American civilization is relegated with, and to those that have fallen.

A classical leadership education as offered by John Adams Academy is the best prevention and the only hope that a “nation conceived in liberty...shall not perish from the earth.”