



Teaching the Great Books with Josh Gibbs

Lesson 3: How to Do Deep Reading

Outline:

The Deep Read Assignment

- You must get the students to a place where they can yield to the text. The Deep Read Assignment can help.
- To assign a Deep Read Assignment:
 - Choose a very short, but dense passage that can be read quickly and multiple times.
 - Require students to write one question per word (50 is a good amount).
- This is a difficult exercise when you start out so give students a clear example.
- Typically, it will start with a few informal questions. Students will begin to have complex trains of thought after about 30 questions.
- It is helpful to make this a test score at least once.

The Impacts of the Assignment

- Students learn the value of rereading great work and might even gain a sense of wonder.
- It shows how these books just keep on giving.
- Pop Art has trained students to look only once because you get new stuff only on that first glance, but classics invite you to go deeper and look again.
- The Deep Read puts students in the posture to listen and look again.
- It is not a mere assignment, but a way to orient around a text.
- It is often very confusing to start because it is so foreign to some students.
- The mindset of listening and yielding to the text is the same the teacher ought to take.
- By the end (question 50 or so), students are asking abstract questions about the form of the text and its ideas, not just the content.
- Get to a point when some students ask if you are reading too deeply into the text.