Great Books Programs and NAGC Standards

As your school implements the NAGC recommendations for gifted education, Great Books materials and professional development can help you meet the classroom practices and teacher learning components described in the NAGC's six programming standards. The table below highlights the student outcomes and evidence-based practices met by Great Books programs. Note: Only NAGC standards that are met through Great Books programs are listed.

Standard 1: Learning and Development

Description: Educators understand the variations in learning and development in cognitive, affective, and psychosocial areas between and among individuals with gifts and talents, creating learning environments that encourage awareness and understanding of interest, strengths, and needs; cognitive growth, social and emotional, and psychosocial skill development in school, home, and community settings.

Student Outcomes and Evidence-Based Practices	Great Books Materials and Professional Development
1.1 Self-Understanding. Students with gifts and talents recognize their interests, strengths, and needs in cognitive, creative, social, emotional, and psychological areas. Evidence-based practices for educators include helping students: • Identify their strengths, interests, needs, and abilities (1.1.1, 1.1.2) • Discover their talents and build noncognitive skills (1.1.3)	During the Shared Inquiry sequence of activities, students: • Share their reactions to issues and texts (pre-reading, sharing questions, Shared Inquiry discussion) • Articulate their interest in specific questions for discussion • Learn etiquette guidelines that develop self-management and collaborative skills • Pursue their own interests and/or express themselves creatively through a range of extension activities In Great Books professional development courses, educators: • Learn how to elicit and use a range of student questions to drive instruction • Explore ways that the Shared Inquiry sequence promotes social-emotional learning

Standard 1: Learning and Development, continued

Student Outcomes and Evidence-Based Practices	Great Books Materials and Professional Development
1.2 Self-Understanding. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate understanding of how they learn and recognize the influences of their identities, cultures, beliefs, traditions, and values on their learning and behavior. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Using activities that match students' individual learning needs (1.2.1) • Helping students develop identities consistent with their potential (1.2.2) • Creating a learning environment of high expectations for all, support for perceived failures, and respect for different cultures and values (1.2.3)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Differentiate activities to meet students' developmental levels and learning needs • Communicate to students that diverse ideas are welcome and that all comments are to be respected • Use follow-up questions and open response options to make critical thinking accessible to all students • Demonstrate that exploring a text involves thinking aloud, and that testing and changing ideas is a natural part of that process • Establish a classroom culture of collaboration, listening, and mutual respect by using Shared Inquiry guidelines and etiquette recommendations • Lead conversations about texts that represent a range of cultures
1.3 Self-Understanding. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate understanding of and respect for similarities and differences between themselves and their cognitive and chronological peer groups and others in the general population. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Grouping students in varied ways for learning (1.3.1) • Modeling respect for people with diverse abilities, interests, learning needs, and goals (1.3.2) • Explaining developmental differences and using materials and activities that match students' varied abilities, interests, and needs (1.3.3)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Use similar and mixed-ability groups flexibly • Facilitate conversations about texts written by and depicting people with different experiences, abilities, and goals • Set learning goals with students and choose activities that match students' needs

Standard 1: Learning and Development, continued

Student Outcomes and Evidence-Based Practices	Great Books Materials and Professional Development
1.5. Cognitive, Psychosocial, and Affective Growth. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate cognitive growth and psychosocial skills that support their talent development as a result of meaningful and challenging learning activities that address their unique characteristics and needs. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Using instructional practices that promote cognitive and social-emotional growth (1.5.1) • Differentiating instruction to develop abilities that support growth and achievement (1.5.2) • Developing research-supported interventions for students with gifts and talents who are underachieving (whose learning is not commensurate with their abilities) to develop their talents (1.5.3)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Use Shared Inquiry activities and follow-up questions to build students' social-emotional skills, including self-management and healthy relationship practices • Help students develop and support individual answers to questions about challenging texts • Use challenge and support options to enable all learners to participate effectively in Shared Inquiry activities • Use formative assessments to customize instruction and pace it effectively for students working at a range of levels
1.6 Cognitive Growth and Career Development. Students with gifts and talents identify future career goals that match their interests and strengths. Students determine resources needed to meet those goals (e.g., supplemental educational opportunities, mentors, financial support). Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Using learning progressions that incorporate social awareness, academic planning, and psychosocial skill development (1.6.2)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Use the Shared Inquiry activity sequence to build students' social-emotional skills and help students reflect on their learning • Identify and support students' individual interests and suggest ways students can pursue them individually or with peers

Standard 2: Assessment

Description: Assessments provide information about identification and learning progress for students with gifts and talents.

Student Outcomes and Evidence-Based Practices	Great Books Materials and Professional Development
2.4 Learning Progress. As a result of using multiple and ongoing assessments, students with gifts and talents demonstrate growth commensurate with abilities in cognitive, social-emotional, and psychosocial areas. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Using differentiated formative assessments so that all students are challenged (2.4.1) • Using differentiated product- and performance-based assessments to measure academic and social-emotional progress (2.4.2) • Using standardized and classroom assessments that measure academic progress (2.4.3) • Using and interpreting qualitative and quantitative assessment information to understand each student's needs (2.4.4)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Use a range of formative assessments to evaluate students' progress and set individual goals • Use portfolio and writing assessments to measure students' academic progress • Use a critical thinking rubric and reflection forms to measure students' cognitive and social-emotional growth in Shared Inquiry activities, including discussion • Use multiple-choice tests to assess comprehension and vocabulary • Create project-based learning options that allow students to pursue their interests and demonstrate academic proficiency, including cross-curricular proficiency
2.5 Learning Progress. Students self-assess their learning progress. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Providing opportunities for students to set personal goals, keep records, and monitor their own progress (2.5.1)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to help students: • Keep records of their Shared Inquiry work using a Reader's Journal • Reflect on their work in discussion, including their listening, speaking, and social-emotional skills

Standard 3: Curriculum Planning and Instruction

Description: Educators apply evidence-based models of curriculum and instruction related to students with gifts and talents and respond to their needs by planning, selecting, adapting, and creating curriculum that is responsive to diversity. Educators use a repertoire of instructional strategies to ensure specific student outcomes and measurable growth.

Student Outcomes and Evidence-Based Practices	Great Books Materials and Professional Development
3.1 Curriculum Planning. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate academic growth commensurate with their abilities each school year. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Developing differentiated plans for students with gifts and talents (3.1.2) • Designing curriculum that incorporates challenging, complex content for students with gifts and talents (3.1.4) • Using formative and summative assessments to adjust instructional plans (3.1.5)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Differentiate Shared Inquiry activities to meet the needs of students with gifts and talents • Focus instruction on conceptually challenging texts that support in-depth inquiry • Use formative and summative assessments, as well as student reflection tools, to customize instruction and pace it effectively
3.2. Talent Development. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate growth in social and emotional and psychosocial skills necessary for achievement in their domain(s) of talent and/or areas of interest. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Planning curriculum that incorporates goal setting, resiliency, self-management, social awareness, and responsible decision making (3.2.1) • Designing learning experiences that cultivate social and emotional and psychosocial skills that support high achievement and talent development (3.2.2)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Use Shared Inquiry activities and follow-up questions to build students' social-emotional skills, including self-management and healthy relationship practices • Use student reflection tools to help students monitor their progress and set learning and social-emotional goals • Create peer-to-peer opportunities for students to work constructively together on interpretive projects • Help students extend the Shared Inquiry emphasis on weighing evidence to real-world decision making

Student Outcomes and Evidence-Based Practices	Great Books Materials and Professional Development
3.3. Responsiveness to Diversity. Students with gifts and talents develop knowledge and skills for living in and contributing to a diverse and global society. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Using curriculum that is responsive and relevant to diversity, connecting to students' life experiences and including multiple voices and perspectives (3.3.1) • Encouraging students to connect to others' experiences, examine their own perspectives and biases, and develop a critical consciousness (3.3.2) • Using high-quality, appropriately challenging materials that include multiple perspectives (3.3.3)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Focus instruction on a wide range of texts from a variety of cultures, chosen for their literary quality and ability to sustain meaningful exploration • Use questioning to help students make personal connections to texts that originate from both familiar and unfamiliar contexts • Ask follow-up questions during discussion that encourage students to explain their reasoning, respond to the ideas of others, and entertain multiple answers to a complex question
3.4 Instructional Strategies. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate their potential or level of achievement in their domain(s) of talent and/or areas of interest. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Selecting and adapting instructional strategies to differentiate instruction for students with gifts and talents (3.4.1) • Providing opportunities for students with gifts and talents to explore or research domain(s) of talent or area(s) of interest (3.4.2) • Using models of inquiry to engage students in critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem solving in order to reveal and address students' needs (3.4.3)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Draw from a repertoire of instructional stances and strategies to foster students' engagement with texts and ideas • Use the Shared Inquiry method of learning to help students explore complex questions and texts in depth • Create project-based and research opportunities for students to investigate their areas of interest • Regularly engage students in sustained critical thinking about texts and creative work based on texts • Use the Shared Inquiry method to help students define a problem, think critically about it, and weigh evidence for possible answers

Student Outcomes and Evidence-Based Practices	Great Books Materials and Professional Development
3.5 Instructional Strategies. Students with gifts and talents become independent investigators. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Modeling and teaching metacognitive models such as self-assessment, goal setting, and monitoring of learning (3.5.1) • Modeling and teaching cognitive learning strategies such as rehearsal, organization, and elaboration (3.5.2) • Scaffolding independent research skills within students' domain(s) of talent (3.5.3)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Use think-alouds, inquiry guidelines, and student reflection tools to help students monitor their own progress and set learning goals • Create a learning environment in which students are encouraged to collaborate by offering initial ideas, elaborating on them, and modifying them as needed • Increasingly release responsibility for parts of the learning process to students as they become more proficient
3.6 Resources. Students with gifts and talents are able to demonstrate growth commensurate with their abilities as a result of access to high-quality curricular resources. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Using current, evidence-based curricular resources that are effective with students with gifts and talents (3.6.1)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Use an inquiry-centered curriculum and proven instructional practices to challenge all students • Differentiate activities to meet the needs of high-ability learners

Standard 4: Learning Environments

Description: Learning environments foster a love for learning, personal and social responsibility, multicultural competence, and interpersonal and technical communication skills for leadership to ensure specific student outcomes.

Student Outcomes and Evidence-Based Practices	Great Books Materials and Professional Development
4.1. Personal Competence. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate growth in personal competence and dispositions for exceptional academic and creative productivity. These include self-awareness, self-advocacy, self-efficacy, confidence, motivation, resilience, independence, curiosity, and risk taking. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Maintaining high expectations for all students through meaningful and challenging activities (4.1.1) • Providing opportunities for self-exploration, pursuit of interests, and development of identities that support achievement and a love of learning (4.1.2) • Creating environments that establish trust, support, and collaborative action among diverse students (4.1.3) • Providing feedback that promotes perseverance and resilience and that focuses on mistakes as learning opportunities (4.1.4)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Use an inquiry-centered curriculum and proven instructional practices to challenge all students • Differentiate activities to meet the needs of high-ability learners • Create project-based and research opportunities for students to investigate their areas of interest • Create a learning environment that encourages students to collaborate by offering initial ideas, elaborating on them, and modifying them as needed • Group students for activities flexibly, in ways that help diverse students learn from one another • Use follow-up questions to encourage sustained thinking about a problem • Use follow-up questions to help students develop the flexibility of mind needed to reconsider their answers as well as the ability to refine their thinking or change their mind without embarrassment
4.2. Social Competence. Students with gifts and talents develop social competence manifested in positive peer relationships and social interactions. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Providing learning environments for both solitude and social interaction (4.2.1) • Assessing and providing instruction on psychosocial and social and emotional skills needed for success in school, the community, and society (4.2.3)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Use a range of inquiry-centered activities to help students work independently and collaboratively to develop and refine their responses to the ideas in a text • Use think-alouds, inquiry guidelines, and student reflection tools to help students monitor their progress and set social and emotional goals

Student Outcomes and Evidence-Based Practices	Great Books Materials and Professional Development
4.3 Responsibility and Leadership. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate personal and social responsibility. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Establishing a safe and welcoming climate for addressing personal and social issues (4.3.1) • Giving students a voice in shaping their learning environment (4.3.1)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Use an inquiry stance to create a classroom climate of student collaboration and respect for the ideas of others • Use students' own questions and interests to drive instruction
4.4. Cultural Competence. Students with gifts and talents value their own and others' language, heritage, and circumstance. They possess skills in communicating, teaming, and collaborating with diverse individuals and across diverse groups. They use positive strategies to address social issues, including discrimination and stereotyping. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Modeling appreciation for and sensitivity to students' diverse backgrounds (4.4.1) • Modeling appropriate language and strategies to effectively address stereotyping and bias (4.4.2) • Providing structured opportunities to collaborate with diverse peers on a common goal (4.4.3)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Focus instruction on a wide range of texts from a variety of cultures, giving students the opportunity to respond to characters with backgrounds both similar to and different from their own • Use inquiry guidelines and etiquette expectations to guide discussion that is respectful to all participants • Create regular opportunities for students to work together in pairs, small groups, and large groups to share responses to texts and collaborate on exploring problems of interpretation
4.5 Communication Competence. Students with gifts and talents develop competence in interpersonal and technical communication skills. They demonstrate advanced oral and written skills and creative expression. They display fluency with technologies that support effective communication and are competent consumers of media and technology. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Providing resources that reflect the diversity of their student population in order to enhance oral, written, and artistic forms of communication (4.5.2) • Providing an environment where students use technology to communicate responsibly and express themselves creatively using the platforms, tools, styles, formats, and digital media appropriate to their goals (4.5.4)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Focus instruction on a wide range of texts from a variety of cultures, giving students the opportunity to respond to characters with backgrounds both similar to and different from their own • Use digital technology to enhance students' learning, customizing activities to match the resources available and to meet students' capabilities • Use an inquiry stance to help students develop critical thinking skills, including the ability to recognize authorial intent and/or bias

Standard 5: Programming

Description: Educators use evidence-based practices to promote (a) the cognitive, social-emotional, and psychosocial skill development of students with gifts and talents and (b) programming that meets their interests, strengths, and needs. Educators make use of expertise systematically and collaboratively to develop, implement, manage, and evaluate services for students with a variety of gifts and talents to ensure specific student outcomes.

Student Outcomes and Evidence-Based Practices	Great Books Materials and Professional Development
5.1 Comprehensiveness. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate growth commensurate with their abilities in cognitive, social-emotional, and psychosocial areas as a result of comprehensive programming and services. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Using multiple approaches to accelerate learning within and outside of the school setting (5.1.1) • Using enrichment options to extend and deepen learning opportunities within and outside of the school setting (5.1.2) • Leveraging technology to increase access to high-level programming by providing digital learning options and assistive technologies (5.1.5)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Differentiate activities to meet the needs of high-ability learners, including using different learning modalities • Create project-based and research opportunities for students to investigate their areas of interest • Use digital texts and activities, as well as enrichment options that incorporate digital tools, to challenge and meet the learning needs of all students
5.2 Cohesive and Coordinated Services. Students with gifts and talents demonstrate yearly progress commensurate with ability as a result of a continuum of Pre-K–12 services and coordination between gifted, general, special, and related professional services, including outside of school learning specialists and advocates. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Developing a Pre-K through grade 12 continuum of programming and services in relevant student talent areas that is responsive to students' different levels of need for intervention (5.2.2) • Planning coordinated learning activities within and across a specific grade level, content area, course, class, and/or programming option (5.2.3)	Great Books materials and professional development equip educators to: • Implement the proven and consistent Shared Inquiry method of learning across all grade levels • Differentiate activities to meet the needs of high-ability learners, including using different learning modalities • Use themes, consistent activities, and topics to connect learning across grade levels and subject areas

Standard 6: Professional Learning

Description: All educators (administrators, teachers, counselors, and other instructional support staff) build their knowledge and skills using the NAGC-CEC Teacher Preparation Standards in Gifted and Talented Education, (NAGC-CEC) Advanced Standards in Gifted Education Teacher Preparation, and the Standards for Professional Learning. Institutions of higher education utilize these standards and the NAGC Faculty Standards to ensure quality professional learning experiences in pre-service, initial, and advanced educator preparation programs. Educators frequently assess their professional learning needs related to the standards, develop and monitor their professional learning plans, systematically engage in coaching and learning to meet their identified needs, and align outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards. Administrators assure educators have access to sustained, intensive collaborative, job-embedded, and data-driven learning and assure adequate resources to provide for release time, fund continuing education, and offer substitute support. The effectiveness of professional learning is assessed through relevant student outcomes.

Student Outcomes and Evidence-Based Practices	Great Books Professional Development
6.2 Psychosocial and Social-Emotional Development. Students with gifts and talents develop critical psychosocial skills and show social-emotional growth as a result of educators and counselors who have participated in professional learning aligned with national standards in gifted education and Standards for Professional Learning. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Participating in ongoing professional learning to understand and apply research to practice with regard to psychosocial skills necessary for the development of gifts and talents and social-emotional development of individuals with gifts and talents (6.2.1)	Great Books professional development equips educators to: • Use Shared Inquiry activities and follow-up questions to build students' social-emotional skills, including self-management and healthy relationship practices • Use think-alouds, inquiry guidelines, and student reflection tools to help students monitor their progress and set learning goals • Help students discuss highly charged topics respectfully and with a willingness to listen to diverse opinions

Student Outcomes and Evidence-Based Practices	Great Books Professional Development
6.4 Lifelong Learning. Students develop their gifts and talents as a result of educators who are lifelong learners, participating in ongoing professional learning and continuing education opportunities. Evidence-based practices for educators include: • Regularly reflecting on and assessing their instructional practices, developing professional learning plans, and improving their practices by participating in continuing education opportunities (6.4.1) • Participating in professional learning that is sustained over time, incorporates collaboration and reflection, is goal-aligned and data-driven, is coherent, embedded and transferable, includes regular follow-up, and seeks evidence of positive impact on teacher practice and on increased student learning (6.4.2)	Great Books professional development equips educators to: • Use an inquiry stance, not only to teach but also to reflect on their own practices and their collaboration with other educators • Develop advanced skills in inquiry-centered instruction through face-to-face workshops, webinars, classroom coaching, and video coaching • Ascertain the specific needs of their implementation and collaborate on creating professional development experiences that offer customized support • Use a variety of reflection and assessment tools to evaluate their own and students' progress, and to set specific learning goals