



Know **Yourself**. Know **The World**.

# NOVA CLASSICAL ACADEMY™

Classical Education Definition Components

Strategic Plan Objective 1.1

NOVA CLASSICAL  
ACADEMY  
NON SCHOLAE SED VITAE DISCIMUS  
WE LEARN NOT FOR SCHOOL BUT FOR LIFE



# *A Formal Definition*



Building upon the one  
written in 2016-2017

Seeks additional clarity



# Component 1: Formal Definition

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We believe that classical education is participation in the Great Conversation which links humanity in trying to discern what is universally True, Beautiful, and Good. Classical education utilizes the Trivium — the Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric subjects of learning — as well as the Quadrivium — the subjects of Arithmetic, Music, Astronomy, and Geometry — as the best way to prepare students to participate by thinking for themselves and being liberated from blindly following others.

# Component 1: Formal Definition

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Within each stage of the Trivium, students practice knowing (didactic instruction), reasoning (logic/coaching instruction), and generating (rhetoric instruction) information, as classical education focuses on training thinkers. Additionally, virtues are embedded in all instruction because knowledge without virtue is meaningless in the search for Truth, Beauty, and Goodness.



# Component 1: Formal Definition

The goal of our classical education is engagement in the higher ideals of making deep thinkers who seek to live life well and effective citizens who are wise, moral, and ethical. Thus, the end of Nova Classical Academy's approach to classical education is the *eudaimonia* of each of its students. Loosely translated as “happiness”, or more literally “good spirit”, *eudaimonia* refers in Aristotelian philosophy as the highest human good. Like *arête* (virtue) and *phronesis* (practical or ethical wisdom), *eudaimonia* can be difficult to define, which makes it an excellent topic for the Great Conversation.

# *Simplified Definition*



Intended for use with  
external stakeholders



Written at or below 8th  
grade level



## Component 2: Simplified Definition

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Nova Classical uses classical education to teach our students. Classical education uses three stages called the Trivium —grammar, logic, and rhetoric— to train thinkers. We help our students learn facts, connect ideas, and use their learning in new ways. We use virtue instruction to help them make wise and ethical decisions. Students use these skills to improve their lives as well as the lives of others.



# *Stages of the Trivium Example*



How stages of the trivium  
are applied to learning



Ensure consistent  
explanations across  
discipline





## Component 3: Trivium Example with Soccer

Grammar Stage: Players learn the basic skills of soccer like kicking, dribbling, passing, and stopping the ball. The coach first tells players what each skill is and shows what it should look like when performed with a high degree of skill. The coach then breaks each skill into its most basic components and the players begin to try each component with lots of monitoring, guidance, and reteaching as needed. Players continue to practice until they can perform each skill consistently and automatically with a high level of accuracy.

## Component 3: Trivium Example with Soccer

At a more advanced level of the grammar stage, players are able to combine components into a more complex skill, but continue to practice and develop the skill. Throughout all of this stage, the coach will stop the players to retune their skills. Additionally, players will continue to practice and improve their basic soccer skills no matter what level they are playing. Even professional soccer players continue to refine their skills.

## Component 3: Trivium Example with Soccer

Logic Stage: As the players begin to become more proficient in their basic skills, the coach models how to further combine those skills as well as how to use them in specific situations during a game. Players do more team drills and are given opportunities to discern which skill should be used at which time. For example, should a pass be completed or should the player continue to dribble the ball down the field to get it closer to the goal?



## Component 3: Trivium Example with Soccer

The coach provides guidance and instruction, especially if a player is still developing a skill or needs to review best practices in given situations. The coach also provides time for reflection on actions in a scrimmage or game to help players further develop their knowledge of the game and consider why certain actions occurred. The players thoughtfully practice common patterns within a game, often moving these patterns to the grammar stage until they become more and more automatic.

## Component 3: Trivium Example with Soccer

Rhetoric Stage: As players gain mastery with the patterns and skills of the game, they become able to use them in novel ways against uncooperative opponents. Since all of the players understand the rules, techniques, and patterns of the game, they are able to craft new movement patterns that are beyond all that they have so far learned, like being able to deke out an opponent. Having a strong understanding of the grammar and logic of the game, players are able to virtuously engage in conversation with teammates about how to improve their playing experience or to contribute to the team's success.

## Component 3: Trivium Example with Soccer

The coach may still provide input as an expert, but the players are more responsible for their own actions and the work of the team. Even at the rhetoric stage, if something isn't working, the player will go back to the grammar or logic stage in order to continue to improve and refine.



# *Is It Classical?*



A process to help staff  
determine if an  
instructional strategy  
aligns with our definition



## Component 4: Is It Classical?

If you're wondering if a pedagogy or material is classical, run through this list of questions. If you can thoughtfully reply “yes” to at least 9 of them, it is most likely classical. “No, but...” does not count as a “yes.”

1. Is it a primary source, original text, or written by a respected expert in their field or based on such materials?
2. Is it directly related to the content and objectives you are expected to teach in your approved curriculum map?

## Component 4: Is It Classical?

3. Does it engage all students in a way that supports their learning?
4. Does it do the best possible job of conveying the information to students in a way that they will understand it and be able to apply it later?
5. Does it help students make connections between the immediate lesson and other areas of study? (Add an extra “yes” if it helps connect students to the Great Conversation as well.)



## Component 4: Is It Classical?

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6. Does it strengthen students' understanding and application of our virtues?
7. Is it the best use of your limited time with students?
8. Do the students need you to be there to get the most out of the material or lesson?
9. Does it include opportunities for teacher-guided higher order thinking and/or rhetoric stage learning, now or in future lessons?

## Component 4: Is It Classical?

10. Does it thoughtfully and systematically guide students to deeper understanding and more long-term retention of the material?

11. Do you have a method of assessing student learning during and after the lesson as well as a plan to assist students who are having difficulty achieving the learning objectives?

*If you can thoughtfully reply “yes” to at least 9 of them, it is most likely classical!*

A large group of children and adults are gathered outdoors on a paved area, possibly a school courtyard. In the foreground, several young children are reaching out their hands towards the camera or each other. They are wearing various clothing, including school uniforms (plaid skirts, maroon shirts) and casual wear (hoodies, t-shirts). In the background, a large crowd of people, mostly children, is visible, some standing and some moving. The scene is set against a backdrop of green trees and a building. The overall atmosphere is warm and communal.

# THANKYOU

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