



Junior Great Books Digital Classroom Meets Educators' Many Needs

Content2Classroom supports Great Books' mission-driven work

www.content2classroom.com



Introduction

When the Great Books Foundation decided to upgrade their digital offerings, they sought a truly interactive experience that brought their content to life while ensuring fidelity to their original instructional materials and methodology.

With the continuing rise in the use of digital technology in classrooms, compounded by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Great Books wanted to meet the needs of new and underserved audiences, as well as current users; they needed a partner to help them take this strategic next step.



The Story

For 75 years, the Chicago-based **Great Books Foundation** has been on a mission to foster critical thinking in readers and learners of all ages. Recently, the Foundation has focused efforts on K–8 students through the Junior Great Books program. Through reading, writing, and group discussion, Junior Great Books provides learners and teachers with unparalleled print and digital tools that develop reflective and critical thinking skills while strengthening social and civic engagement. The Foundation's widely recognized Shared Inquiry™ method gives learners ways to examine material, interpret content, and draw evidence to support their interpretations.



The Challenge

"We were really looking to take the experience to the next level."

Great Books was keen to embrace all the advantages that technology could bring to K–8 students. The new initiative aimed to take Great Books to the next level, bringing top-quality literacy content to the widest possible population while continuing to support strong relationships with current customers.

Great Books undertook an extensive search to identify the right partner, with a goal of ensuring that expanded digital experiences would not only equal but enhance their successful print program. The right partner needed both top-notch technical capabilities and a shared commitment to their mission and learner outcomes.

Great Books was looking for a wide range of capabilities to enhance the digital application of their books and professional development programs. The new platform meets these needs by:

- Streamlining the learning process, with students reading texts and completing interpretive activities in the same online space
- Including audio recordings of texts (where applicable), which students can activate at any time during a session
- Aligning each activity to commonly used standards, with new standards being added regularly
- Retaining page references to print materials so teachers and students can work with books or online
- Simplifying the evaluation and grading of students' work
- Making it easy to track individual and class time spent on assignments



Why Great Books Chose Content2Classroom

“The whole ethos ... was that it would be a true partnership between our two organizations. The prospect of that level of partnership was really appealing.”

The Foundation selected Content2Classroom because it prioritized the potential for growth, improved features, flexible usage, high-quality hybrid learning experiences, and differentiation for students in Junior Great Books Digital Classroom.

From the beginning, Content2Classroom rose above other companies by delivering a practical, hands-on-view of what the digital evolution could look like. Using the much-loved Junior Great Books story “Thank You, M’am” by Langston Hughes, Content2Classroom built a sample unit to demonstrate their understanding of the intricate ways Shared Inquiry needs to be supported on a digital platform.

“Being able to provide a sample differentiated Content2Classroom immediately.”

Content2Classrooms’ commitment to the search process allowed Great Books to see the type of sustained support they would receive throughout the partnership. C2C’s curriculum design knowledge and editorial experts provided Great Books with a layer of support that would continue beyond the contract phase and expand in the future.



The Solution

The two partners set to work against a specific set of requirements and a back-to-school deadline. It kicked off with a discovery phase designed to get both teams quickly up to speed and immersed in the C2C platform functionality. Great Books shared the many intricacies of their program and Content2Classroom effectively modified the platform to meet their needs. Teams collaborated on strategic plans, project goals and scope, and troubleshooting.

“The communication has been really good, C2C has been great, and they explain... each step.”

The collaboration launched Junior Great Books Digital Classroom[SR1], a complete solution for online and hybrid inquiry-based learning, supporting the Shared Inquiry™ method and providing high-quality, renowned Great Books learning experiences. The content platform allows for a parity between the print and the digital experience. Students and teachers are able to navigate between print books and the digital platform easily.



The Results

Through its partnership with Content2Classroom, Great Books has seen vast improvements in the user experience compared to its previous digital platform. Teachers have more flexibility in how they use the program, as there is much more that they can determine and direct within Junior Great Books Digital Classroom. The platform now also has the potential to adapt content to the user, which was not possible with previous digital iterations.

Due to the many improvements, Great Books has seen an increase in purchased licenses. As the partners head into Year 2, they continue to work together on valuable new features drawn from user feedback, keeping the book wide open on continued success.

