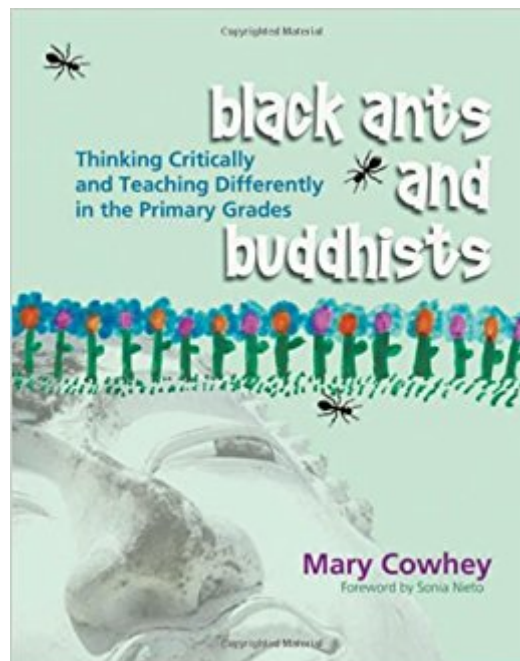




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# Black Ants And Buddhists: Thinking Critically And Teaching Differently In The Primary Grades



## Synopsis

What would a classroom look like if understanding and respecting differences in race, culture, beliefs, and opinions were at its heart? Welcome to Mary Cowhey's Peace Class in Northampton, MA, where first and second graders view the entire curriculum through the framework of understanding the world, and trying to do their part to make it a better place. Woven through the book is Mary's unflinching and humorous account of her own roots in a struggling large Irish Catholic family and her early career as a community activist. Mary's teaching is infused with lessons of her heroes: Gandhi, Eleanor Roosevelt, Helen Keller, Martin Luther King, and others. Her students learn to make connections between their lives, the books they read, the community leaders they meet, and the larger world. If you were inspired to become a teacher because you wanted to change the world, and instead find yourself limited by teach-to-the-test pressures, this is the book that will make you think hard about how you spend your time with students. It offers no easy answers, just a wealth of insight into the challenges of helping students think critically about the world, and starting points for conversations about diversity and controversy in your classroom, as well as in the larger community.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This fascinating text takes readers on a journey. The book is nothing short of provocative." - Childhood Education  
"Written in an engaging style, this is an inspiring book for educators and parents alike." - Mothering  
"Every page is jam-packed with valuable information that defies a single

reading." - Education Review

Mary Cowhey has been teaching first and second grade at Jackson St. School in Northampton, Massachusetts for nine years. Before becoming a teacher, she was a community organizer for fourteen years. She has won numerous awards for teaching, including a 2002 Milken National Educator Award, an Anti-Defamation League World of Difference Teacher Recognition Award, and a National League of Women Voters Award.

This book is something that should be required reading for every future educator. Mary Cowhey has a way with words and a way of relating her life to what happens in the classroom- truly, after reading this book, most of my doubts about being a teacher who can impact students' lives were lifted. I really cannot say enough good things about this book. It's not pretentious, it isn't preachy- it's very real. Realness is what is needed in this changing educational climate. Please check this book out- keep it on your book shelf. One of the few textbooks I'm thankful for having to purchase- a book I'll cherish for the rest of my life.

I cannot rave about this book enough! If you are going to be a teacher or are one already you have to read this book! In this book Mary Cowey tells you about her diverse classroom and all of the many conversations she has with her children. She talks about how she teaches them social justice, and going against the main stream way of teaching. I have cried many times reading this book because it is so moving. She give so many examples of how she taught lesson, what books she used etc. ABSOLUTELY AMAZING! I am going to be a teacher and after reading this book I think every teacher should have to before entering a classroom!

Great anecdotal stories and peaceful teaching.

I LOVED this book! It provides amazing insights into supporting a classroom that is inquiry-driven. I was very encouraged by the author's generous sharing of (mostly) age-appropriate literature. She was also quick to point out that this style worked for her, given her political leanings. As a Canadian, the American History rhetoric got to be a bit tiring by the end of the book. I would certainly recommend this book for any educator who is interested in breaking out of the confines of teaching to standards tests or feels chained to a textbook series.

Friendly, practical and honest. As a teacher myself I found it inspiring and timely and a very worth while look at spontaneous, humane teaching and learning.

Every classroom should be so lucky to have this teacher. She incorporates humane education and creativity in all of her lessons. :)

I really enjoyed this book. I laughed and almost cried listening to her stories and I wish that I had a teacher like her when I was younger.

This is a fabulous book. If you want to know how to teach so students will want to learn, you need to read this book. Mary Cowley also writes so readers will want to read (her book, at least!).

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