

Using Seminar and Discussions Effectively

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Please post your name, subject, and discussion techniques you currently use in your classroom on <http://padlet.com/wall/vo6g3m3vqfg3>

Goals/Objectives

- Understand the essential components to effective discussions
- Develop and implement strategies to teach students to use textual evidence in supporting their understanding through discussion
- Develop high-quality questions in preparation for discussion

Preparing for Seminar

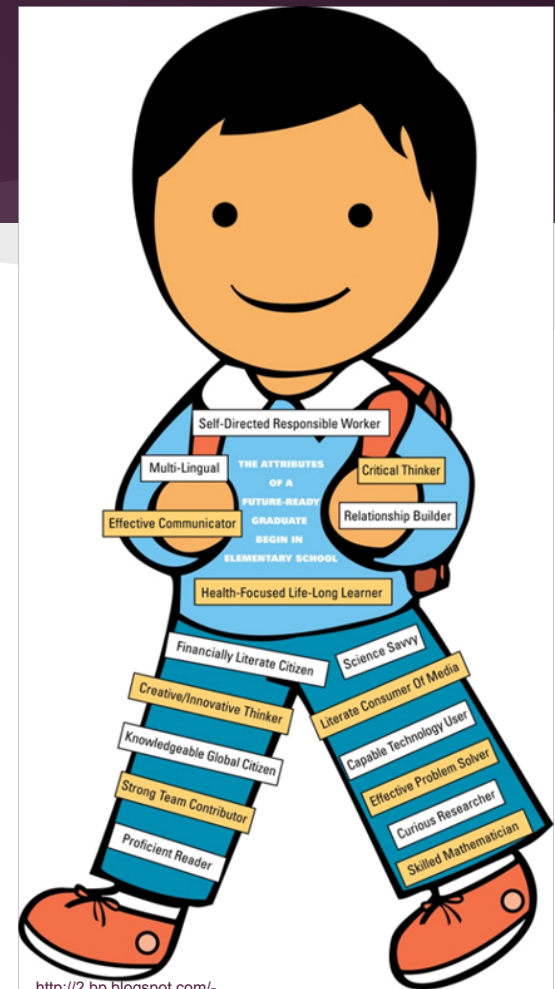
- Pre-reading/activate prior knowledge through focus question:

Why are effective discussions essential in creating 21st century learners?

Take 2-3 minutes to answer the question on the back of your article.

- Close read: Read the assigned text http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/26/paideia-method-socratic-l_n_1380973.html

Annotate pros and cons of using seminars in a classroom, based on the article.



Seminar

Why are effective discussions essential in creating 21st century learners?

Seminar Basics and Procedures



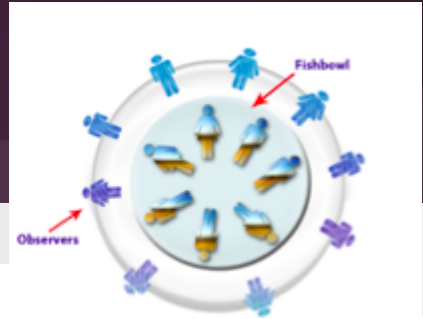
- Based on “socratic seminar” format
- “The Socratic seminar is a formal discussion, based on a text, in which the leader asks open-ended questions. Within the context of the discussion, students listen closely to the comments of others, thinking critically for themselves, and articulate their own thoughts and their responses to the thoughts of others. They learn to work cooperatively and to question intelligently and civilly.” (89)
- Encourages students to become interpretive readers
- Seminars build skills such as active reading (close read), asking and answer questions based on textual evidence, and critical thinking
- Include various levels of questions: factual (one correct answer), interpretive (more than one answer, support by text), and evaluative (agree or disagree with author’s point of view based on own knowledge)
- Requires more than 1 reading of the text

Teacher Responsibility for Seminar

Before:

- Select a rich text. Read it and annotate your own thoughts/questions.
- “Planned Spontaneity”: Generate a focus question and some follow up questions (based on your standards) to stimulate critical thinking but be flexible during the seminar
- Prepare materials such as copies, graphic organizer for annotations, etc.
- Establish expectations and decide on seminar format.

During Seminar



- Establish seminar expectations.
- Put focus question on board. Read aloud to students.
- Facilitate, do not dominate discussion. Allow students to “steer” discussion. Teacher may need to facilitate through follow up questions, reminders of returning to the text or maintaining focus. Teachers should try to avoid asking “follow up” questions after every comment.
- Record observations/notes: Seating Chart
- Encourage all students to participate.

After Seminar

Self-Evaluation Rubric

Self and Partner Evaluation Rubric

Sample of seminar expectations

1. Students must be prepared with materials to participate in discussion. (alternative assignment)
2. Focus discussion on assigned text instead of outside experiences or opinions.
3. Outside opinions may only be introduced when you have evidence.
4. Teacher may only ask questions, not answer them.
5. One person may speak at a time.

Socratic Seminar Ground Rules

1. Speak so that all can hear you.
2. Listen closely.
3. Speak without raising hands.
4. Refer to the text.
5. Talk to each other.
6. Ask for clarification. Don't stay confused.
7. Write & allow others to speak.
8. Consider all viewpoints & ideas. Discuss ideas rather than each other's opinions.
9. Stick to the point under discussion; make notes about ideas you want to bring up later.
9. Know that you are responsible for the quality of the seminar.

Questions of fact, interpretation and evaluation

Fact: 1 correct answer, basic knowledge question

What does Jack take from the ogre the first time he goes up the beanstalk?

Interpretation: More than 1 correct answer, must be supported from text

Why does Jack make the 3rd trip?

Evaluation: Agree or disagree with author's viewpoint; require critical thinking and interpretation

Is it necessary to take risks-as Jack does-in order to grow up and be responsible?



Time to Explore

Check out [Chandra Manning's LiveBinder on Discussion Resources](#), particularly the tab on Questioning.

Why are question stems so crucial in the planning process for a discussion?

Effective Classroom Discussion Example

Questions to Consider

- ✓ How does beginning the lesson with student reflection and a guiding question equip students for the discussion?
- ✓ In what ways did Sarah ensure this to be student-centered, student-led?
- ✓ What does it mean for a teacher to prepare for a discussion

Comparing and Contrasting

With 2-3 people around you, compare and contrast the Socratic Seminar method to the discussion you viewed on the video.

What makes each technique effective?

What makes each one difficult?

Developing Quality Questions for Discussion

Write 3 questions based on your content area, using the question stems found in this Livebinder.

Trade with someone, and exchange feedback on each other's questions.

Students writing quality questions

Links Used Today:

Opening Activity: <http://padlet.com/wall/vo6g3m3vqfg3>

Article for Socratic Seminar: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/26/paideia-method-socratic-l_n_1380973.html

Chandra Manning's Livebinder on Discussion Resources: <http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=450518>

Effective Classroom Discussion Example: <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/strategies-for-student-centered-discussion>

Students Writing Quality Questions: <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/developing-better-questions>

Closing Activity: <http://padlet.com/wall/xo8z4c57z5v>

Resources

Socratic Seminars:

- Basic lesson plan for any socratic seminar <http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/socratic-seminars-30600.html>
- Paideia/Socratic Seminars: Includes established lesson plans/resources for seminars in many subject areas <http://www.paideia.org/about-paideia/socratic-seminar/>
- Implementing seminars with AVID program <http://pms.pasco.k12.fl.us/wp-content/uploads/pms/2014/08/Socratic-Seminar.pdf>
- Livebinder with variety of lesson plans <http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=575162>

References

Great Books Foundation. *An Introduction to Shared Inquiry: 3rd Edition*. The Great Books Foundation. Chicago, IL, 1992.

Great Books Foundation. *The Leader's Role in Shared Inquiry*. The Great Books Foundation. Chicago, IL, 2006.

Israel, Elfie. "Examining Multiple Perspectives in Literature." In *Inquiry and the Literary Text: Constructing Discussions in the English Classroom*. James Holden and John S. Schmit, eds. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2002.

Ticket Out the Door

Please post on <http://padlet.com/wall/xo8z4c57z5v>

- 3 ways to improve what you are currently doing
- 2 new strategies you would like to try
- 1 question you still have