Critical & Creative Thinking: in the blended learning classroom

By: Christina Arnberg & Kim Paska
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I know you won't believe me, but the highest form of Human Excellence is to question oneself and others.

— Socrates
What does Socratic mean?

Socratic comes from the name Socrates, Classical Greek philosopher who developed a Theory of Knowledge.
A Socratic Seminar is a method used to understand information regarding a seminar starter.

Participants seek deeper understanding of complex ideas through thoughtful dialogue, rather than by memorizing bits of information.
The vision

Socrates believed that enabling students to think for themselves was more important than filling their heads with “right answers.”
### Differences Between a Seminar and a Class Discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminars</th>
<th>Class Discussions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97% student talk</td>
<td>97% teacher talk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student average response = 8-12 seconds</td>
<td>Student average response = 2-3 seconds</td>
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<tr>
<td>No teacher approval or disapproval (affirming feedback is taboo)</td>
<td>Teacher judgment – emphasis on correctness; limited extended thinking</td>
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<td>Thinking is paramount, backed up with textual evidence</td>
<td>Rightness is paramount; thinking ends as soon as one is right</td>
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<td>Students listen to peers</td>
<td>Students listen primarily to teacher</td>
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<td>Student ownership for “flow”</td>
<td>Teacher ownership for “flow”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific accountability as testing/documented evidence for grading</td>
<td>A “frill”; nebulously, it counts as participation grade. If absent, didn’t really miss anything—just a class discussion</td>
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Seminar Guidelines

- Analyze the seminar starter.
- Generate questions to support your thinking.
- Listen carefully and do not interrupt.
- Speak clearly so everyone can hear you.
- Give others your respect.
- Do not raise your hands.
- Address each other as Mr. & Ms.
- Talk to each other, not just to the discussion leader.
- Discuss ideas rather than others' opinions.
Language Arts Seminar in Action!
Language Arts Seminar in Action!

Blended Learning Set Up

The Bear Who Spoke: Socratic Seminar
Complete the Socratic Seminar Response Packet before our class next week.

- Template_Socratic Seminar Packet
  Google Docs
  Each student will get a copy

- the_bear_that_spoke.doc
  Google Docs
  Each student will get a copy

- socratic Seminar: The Bear Who Spoke.docx
  Google Docs

Link
https://flipgrid.com/0bece8
Language Arts Seminar in Action!

Blended Learning Set Up
Preparing for the math seminar:

KWC
Preparing for the math seminar: Processing
math seminar in action!
Science Seminar in action!

How might we be able to transition to use more renewable energy?

Isabela Voina  May 17
To be honest, I think we’d have to slowly transition over to use renewable energy over a mildly long period of time. I’m saying this because that makes it so we don’t transition instantly, because that would mess up businesses a ton. The only problem with this would be, What would we do with oil rigs or people who have lost their jobs? What about all those people who basically live off of mining coal or digging up oil?

3 replies

Rashi Adhikari  May 17
That is a good point. I think people shouldn’t worry a lot about their jobs because people are needed to make solar panels and supplies in factories since people would only depend on renewable energy. The problem is that if we don’t slowly start to transition to renewable energy, we could end up with no energy at all. There would be no energy to make renewable supplies.

Deniz Seyhan  May 17
I like the idea that we don’t make this change instantly. Maybe we can hire the workers to build the renewable energy sources, and use the extra metal from the oil rigs as stuff for something like wind turbines?

Molly Hogan  May 18
I think the people who you said were losing there jobs should work in companies that are starting to make the renewable energy thingies. It’s a win win
Science Seminar in action!
How can I monitor participation?
Seminar Rubrics

Communicator Self-Assessment Grades 3-5: Socratic Discussion
Students can use this reflective self-assessment to support their growth as communicators.

Examples of communicator skills:
These are examples of the skills of a communicator; check the boxes of all the skills you have demonstrated.

- I listen and ask questions so I can understand.
- I speak clearly for a reason and in a way that helps others understand me.

Reflective Questions:
What is your biggest strength as a communicator? My biggest strength as a communicator is...

Rubric Scoring Guideline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Minimal (1)</th>
<th>Basic (2)</th>
<th>Proficient (3)</th>
<th>Advanced (4)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Seminar preparation work is completed and text is referred to during the discussion, but is misquoted and/or used without specific purpose or explanation.</td>
<td>Seminar work is carefully and thoughtfully completed and text is appropriately supported with comments and insights into the reading.</td>
<td>Seminar work is thoughtful and insightful and text is appropriately cited and interpreted with allusions to other readings which give additional support to comments and ideas.</td>
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| Participation | Has little to contribute during the discussion and/or makes comments that diverge from the question posed by the moderator. | Contributes to the discussion in a limited way and/or does not express ideas clearly and succinctly. | Shares valuable insights and ideas during the discussion, stays focused on question posed, and expresses ideas clearly and succinctly. | Extends and expands discussion by bringing in new information and unique insights relevant to the question posed by the moderator. |

| Follow-Up | Little or no connection to the insights and ideas generated during the seminar discussion. | Extends and expands ideas and insights gained through the reading and discussion. | Reflects new insights gained during the discussion and extends and enriches comments and reactions to the reading. | Reflects a clarification and critical examination of the comments and ideas generated during the discussion and offers additional insights and unique insights relevant to the question posed by the moderator. |
Project based learning

Capture your students' attention with real-world problems.
Project Based Learning

6th Grade Road Trip PBL

Created by: Christina Arnberg and Kimberly Paska
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KEEP CALM
it's
QUESTION
TIME
What can you refine to allow students more critical and creative freedom in your blended learning classroom? How can we help? Let’s work!