

The Paideia Socratic Seminar:

*A Strategy for Increasing Understanding in Text, Ideas
and Values, and the Self and Others.*

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PaTTAN's Mission

The mission of the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) is to support the efforts and initiatives of the Bureau of Special Education, and to build the capacity of local educational agencies to serve students who receive special education services.

PDE's Commitment to Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Our goal for each child is to ensure Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams begin with the general education setting with the use of Supplementary Aids and Services before considering a more restrictive environment.

Outcomes For Our Time Together

Goals: Increase understanding about:

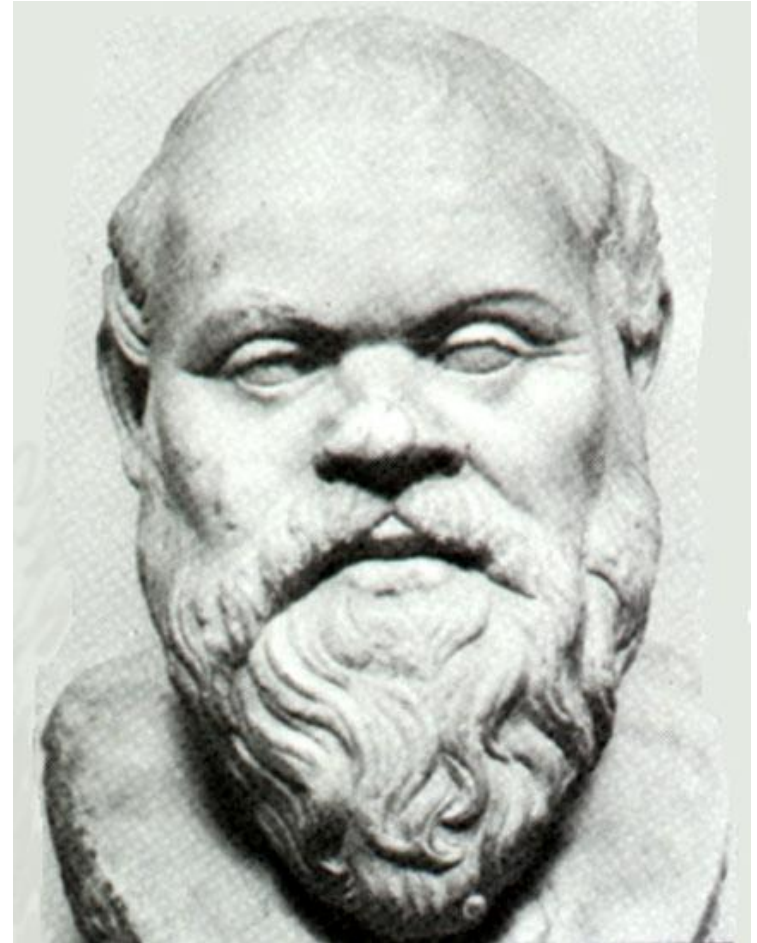
- 1. *what a Socratic seminar* is and is not.**
- 2. *implementing* Socratic seminars.**
- 3. *conducting* Socratic seminars.**
- 4. *assessing* Socratic seminars.**
 - connections and resources

Potential Seminar Outcomes:

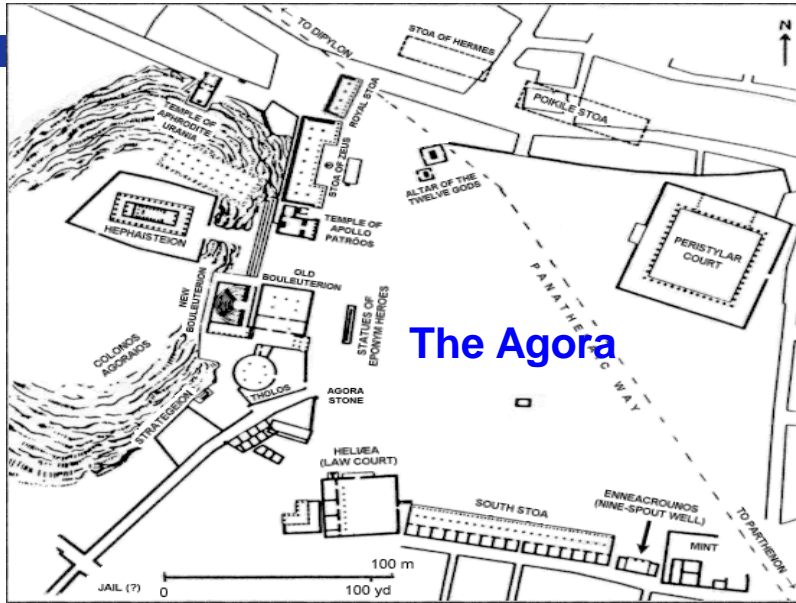
1. higher order thinking skills;
2. cross-curricular connections;
3. increased reading comprehension;
4. “Ground Zero” formative assessment;
5. 21st Century, Future-Core Ready Instruction;
6. increasing understanding in Text, Ideas and Values, and the Self and Others.
7. Reinforcing and refining R,W,S,L skills
8. Reinforcing and refining social skills

First a Little Folklore

- **Why is there a seminar named after Socrates?**
- **Why did questioning ultimately get Socrates sentenced to death?**
- **What were Socrates' last words?**



ers



1. Socrates was seeking answers to the bigger questions.
2. Socrates' original pupils were quick learners.
3. "I drank what?????"

“The best education for the best is
the best education for all.”

~Horace Mann

**Where does the Socratic Seminar fit into
Pa. Standards?**



The Revised Bloom's (RBT) Taxonomy Table

THE COGNITIVE PROCESS DIMENSION

THE KNOWLEDGE DIMENSION

	1. REMEMBER	2. UNDERSTAND	3. APPLY	4. ANALYZE	5. EVALUATE	6. CREATE
A. FACTUAL Knowledge						
B. CON- CEPTUAL Knowledge						
C. PROCE- DURAL Knowledge						
D. META- COGNITIVE Knowledge						

Comparing the RBT with Webb's DOK

Webb's DOK

- Recall
- Skill/Concept
- Strategic Thinking
- Extended Thinking

RBT

- Remember
- Understand, Apply
- Analyze, Evaluate, Create
- Analyze, Evaluate, Create

Literature Performance Level Descriptors

Content	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
Author's Purpose	Identify	Explain	Analyze
Word Meanings	Apply synonyms, antonyms, affixes, context clues	Infer (Draw conclusions)	
Meaning of Text	Summarize	Analyze, Explain (author's use of words and phrases to inform and influence readers)	Evaluate (author's use of technique and elements to communicate ideas)
Connections Between Texts	Explain	Analyze	Evaluate
Elements of Literature	Describe, Compare	Interpret, Analyze	Evaluate
Literary Elements & Devices	Identify	Explain	Analyze
Genres	Identify (structure and format)	Analyze	Interpret, Analyze, Evaluate
Text Organization (including Graphics and Charts)	Explain	Analyze	Evaluate
Fact & Opinion	Differentiate, Explain	Interpret, Analyze	Analyze
Bias & Propaganda	Identify, Explain	Explain, Describe	Analyze
Sequence	Interpret, Analyze		
Essential & Nonessential Information		Distinguishes	

Standards (Pa and CC)

- **L.6.1.1.A:** Listen critically and respond to others in small and large group situations. Respond with grade level appropriate questions, ideas, information or opinions.
- **L.6.1.1.B:** Demonstrate awareness of audience using appropriate volume and clarity in formal speaking presentations.
- **L.7.1.1.A:** Analyze the role and place of standard American English in speech, writing, and literature. Evaluate as a reader how an author's choice of words advances the theme or purpose of a work. Choose words appropriately, when writing, to advance the theme or purpose of a work.
- **SIS.2.A:** Respect and recognize the feelings and perspectives of others.
- **SIS.2.C:** Use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.
- **SIS.3.B:** Apply decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations.
- **CC.11-12.SL.1.c** Comprehension and Collaboration: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CC.11-12.SL.1.c** Comprehension and Collaboration: Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
- **CC.11-12.W.9.b** Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning [e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court Case majority opinions and dissents) and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy (e.g., *The Federalist*, presidential addresses]”).

Where does the Seminar Fit?

DIDACTIC



The Acquisition of Knowledge

10-15%

COACHING



Development of
Intellectual Skills

60-70%

Seminar



Increased
Understanding of
Ideas and Values

15-20%

What I See...

DIDACTIC



COACHING



Seminar



- Student driven discussion
- Free-flowing conversation
- Rigorous examinations of text
- Meaningful dialogue
- Masterful questioning
- **Dialogic Instruction**

The Seminar

“...a mode of teaching...by asking questions, by leading discussions, by helping students raise their minds up from a state of understanding or appreciating less to a state of understanding or appreciating more.”

(Adler, 1982)

The Seminar

“...formal discussion based on a text, in which the leader asks only open-ended questions.”

Discussion

- Free-floating talk
- Teacher-directed talk
- Not teacher talking 70%



Students questioning Students

The Socratic Seminar

“...a mode of teaching...by asking questions, by leading discussions, by helping students raise their minds up from a state of understanding or appreciating less to a state of understanding or appreciating more.”

(Adler, 1982)



The Seminar

The National Paideia Center (circa 2001):

“...a collaborative,
intellectual dialogue
facilitated with open-
ended questions
about a text.”



PAIDEIATM
ACTIVE LEARNING

Purpose of the Seminar

- The purpose of the Paideia seminar is to increase understanding—understanding of the textual ideas and values, as well as an understanding of self and others.
- “...seminars are designed to improve the individual's ability to explain and manipulate complex systems.”

(Thinking is Literacy, Literacy Thinking. *Educational Leadership*, 2008.)

Goals of the Seminar

- **Intellectual Development**

Critical Thinking Understanding

Application Analysis Evaluation

Creation

- **Social Development**

Communication skills including listening
and speaking

- **R,W,S,L Standards**

Seminar Objectives

- Participants will practice intellectual skills by analyzing the ideas and values in the text.
- Participants will support and practice collaborative discourse.
- Participants will listen actively and respond respectfully.

Other Things to Consider

- Is this seminar primarily about helping students master the process (that is to practice the “social” skills necessary to engage in civil dialogue?)
- To you intend for the seminar to teach a specific curriculum?
- Will this be a part of the curricular unit? If so, would it take place at the beginning, middle or end of the unit?
- Is this seminar to address issues of ethics or character?
- Frequency of seminars—how often?

7 Step Seminar Planning Sequence

1. Clarify the objectives
2. Identify the ideas and/or values
3. Select the text
4. Develop the questions
5. Construct the pre- and post-content
6. Establish the pre- and post- process
7. Reflect

Components of the Seminar



- Text
- Questions
- Facilitation
- Participation

A Closer Look at Components



But first...A Formative Assessment moment



TEXT SELECTION



Selecting Texts

PSA:

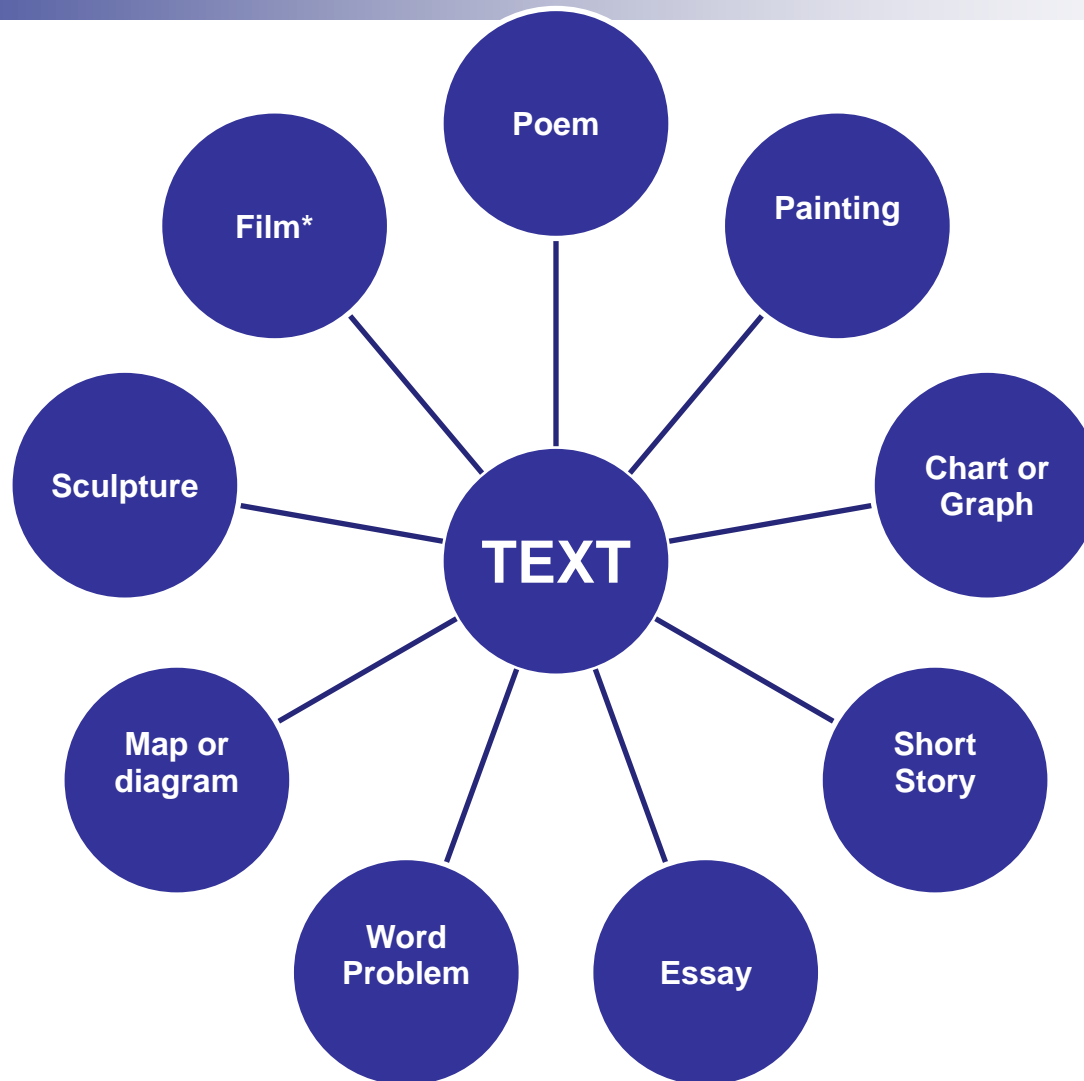
Curriculum is your road map!!!

- Ideas and Values (apply the conceptual lenses)
- Degree of Challenge
- Curricular Relevance
- Ambiguity

Selecting Texts

- A Paideia Seminar text is a tangible item or document appropriate for participants' current level of intellectual and social development.
- It is important that the text is “tangible” for common reference.
- Texts can vary widely in form or type from print to non-print.

Selecting Texts



“The first [feature of a classic] is thickness, referring not to the width of the book, but rather to the density of its discourse. Much is going on in every paragraph.”

~Jaques Barzun

Text Selection

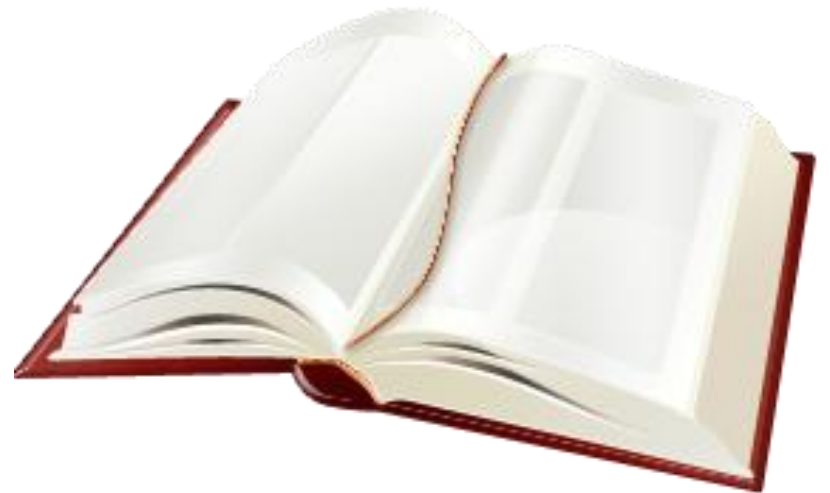
- Deconstructing the truth—you have to consider the polar opposites inherent to the texts you select.
- Search for texts that say life is both Yin and Yang, dark and light.
- Identify those elements.

Text Structure, Organization, and Orientation

- **THIS IS IMPORTANT**

1. When possible, provide text(s) that students can write on and personalize (even if in pencil to be erased later)
2. As a part of the seminar cycle (preferably pre seminar) **have students number the lines, paragraphs, sections etc.**
3. Why?

Seminar Questions



Seminar Questions

- Seminar questions should be open-ended.
- “Open-ended” questions elicit many correct responses.
- Seminar questions are designed to elicit student thinking.
- Seminar questions should be clear.
- Participants should understand what is being asked.
- Often, clarity comes with simplicity and a few words.

Types of Seminar Questions:

- **Opening**—get participants to identify the main ideas in a text.
- **Core Questions**—have participants closely analyzing the details of the text.
- **Closing Questions**—get participants to personalize and apply the ideas.

Something to Think About:

Often (maybe always) the best and most important questions you ask in a seminar are NOT the questions you write. Rather, they are the unplanned questions that arise out of the participants dialogue.

Remember:

- Open-ended
- Thought provoking
- Clear

Seminar Facilitation



The teacher, facilitator,
seminar leader is considered
the “first among equals in a
joint effort to reach a goal
that is shared by all.”

~Adler, 1984

Role of the Facilitator

- ***Nurture*** the inclusiveness and depth of the dialogue.
- Goal is to have participants ***experience increased understanding*** of the self, text, and others.
- Adler calls it “***priming the pump***” of discussion.

Responsibility of the Seminar Facilitator

- **Map** the seminar.
- **Listen** actively to each participant.
- **Think** in an effort to nurture the depth and diversity of points of view.
- **Question** participants in order to nurture increased understanding.
- **Limit** teacher talk and increase participant talk.



“Understanding is more stimulated than learned. It grows from questioning oneself and being questioned by others.”

(Sizer, 1984)

Seminar Participation

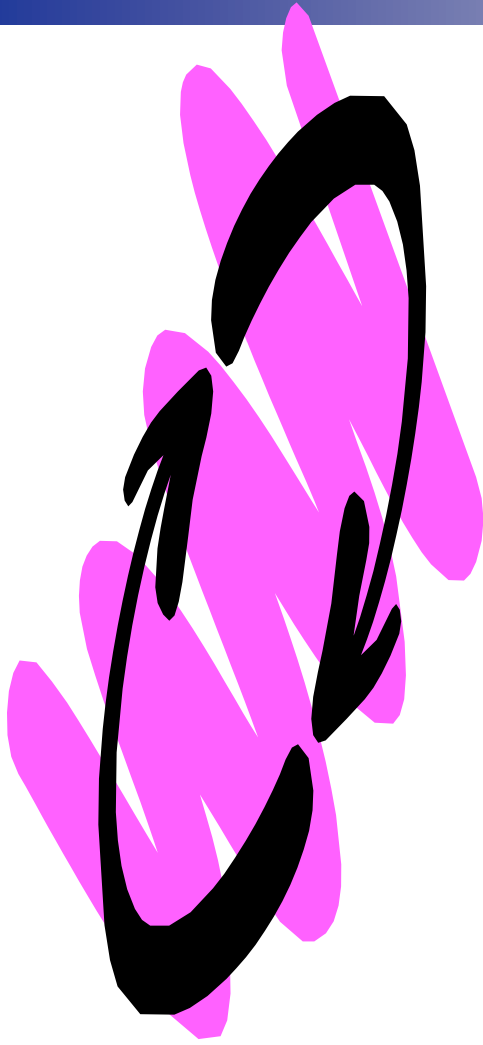
A seminar participant is expected to:

- 1. engage*** in the dialogue process.
2. be consistently ***challenged*** to expand and refine his or her participation skills.
3. be held to ***high expectations*** and a specific set of ground ***rules***

Seminar Ground Rules

- Listen
- Speak
- Think
- Refer to text
- Address others respectfully
- ***“Are there any rules that you would like to add?”***

The Paideia Seminar Cycle



**The seminar can be viewed
as a 5 stage cycle:**

1. Pre-seminar content activities
2. Pre-seminar process activities
3. Formal seminar dialogue
4. Post seminar process activities
5. Post seminar content activities

Pre-Seminar

1. Analyzing curriculum
2. Selecting text(s)
3. Developing questions
4. Prepping students for thinking/talking about text
5. Reading or studying the text
6. Arranging for seating
7. Setting expectations for facilitator and participants

Pre-Seminar Content

- Provide thorough prep of the textual content.
- Close reading or studying of text.
- Coach students to use good reading strategies.
- Take notes.
- Note questions.
- Didactic “chunk”.

Assessment of preparation can include:

- Student notes
- Graphic organizers
- Preliminary questions
- Collaborative assessment involving students and teachers.

Pre-Seminar Process

- Attention to process is necessary to prep for genuine dialogue.
- Take time to identify the roles and expectations of both parties.
- Establish ground rules.
- Select group and/or individual goals.
- Assessment starts before the seminar.



Seminar

- The Paideia Seminar is an intellectual, collaborative dialogue facilitated with open-ended questions about a text.
- Dialogue includes some teacher talk that allows for more student participation.
- Less teacher talk sets the stage for a safe place to take intellectual and social risks.
- Creation of a safe environment is essential
- As seminar begins, the basic components come into play.

Post-Seminar



- Post-seminar process work is aimed at true self-assessment of the dialogue.
- Post-seminar content activities are aimed at applying the ideas and values in a meaningful way.

Post-Seminar *Process*

“Process” is the time when *all* assess the dialogue process.

- **Process often takes the form of group discussion designed to:**
 1. Review successes.
 2. Review areas for future improvement in following ground rules.
 3. Assessing facilitation.
 4. Writing time for facilitator and individuals to reflect individually.

Post-Seminar *Content*

- Content is the ***extension*** and ***application*** of the seminar text and dialogue ideas, concepts and values into the lives and course work of the participants.
- Directions to an assignment/activity
- Coaching students as they apply ideas and values in a variety of ways.

Post-Seminar *Content*

- Writing activity
- Constructing a model
- Map making
- Other manual applications
- A combination of activities
- Assessing/evaluating for grading occurs in this area.
- Evaluating during the actual event is discouraged.
- This will decrease the quality of the interaction.

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Assessment and evaluation of Paideia seminars should be a collaborative, continuous process focused on developing good thinking and communication skills over time.

“Chance favors the prepared mind.”

~Louis Pasteur

In Closing

**Helpful Hints
And
Questions and Answers**



Strategies for Improving Seminars

- **Use round-robin responses—to** generate ideas and improve participation
- **Use paired discussion—to** increase talk time and talk turns by reluctant participants.
- **Use individual writing—to** improve the quality of the responses to seminar questions.
- Start the thinking by focusing on **THEME**

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Sources

- Anderson, Lorin. Presentation 2 for PaTTAN Expository Writing Institute. October 25, 2010.
- The Paideia Seminar: Active Thinking Through Dialogue in the Secondary Grades, 2nd ed., 2008. The National Paideia Center.

The End