AP COGO

Performance Based Assessment

**SOCRATIC SEMINAR PROCEDURES**

**Rationale & General Information**

In regards to teaching and learning, the *Socratic Method* is based on Socrates’ theory that it is more important to ***enable students to think for themselves*** than it is to merely fill their heads with the "right" answers. A *Socratic Seminar* is a method by which students try to understand information by creating a dialogue in regards to a specific issue or theme. In a *Socratic Seminar* participants seek a deeper understanding of complex ideas through thoughtful dialogue which includes critical thinking and the analysis of varying perspectives. This process encourages divergent thinking rather than convergent thinking.

Dialogue is exploratory and involves the suspension of biases and prejudices; whereas, debate is a transfer of information designed to win an argument and to bring closure. As Americans, we tend to be excellent at debate, but we generally do not do dialogue very well…

**Dialogue is characterized by…**

* Suspending judgment
* Examining our own work without defensiveness
* Exposing our reasoning & looking for limits to it
* Communicating our underlying assumptions
* Exploring viewpoints both broadly and deeply
* Being open to disconfirming data & varying perspectives
* Approaching someone who views an issue differently not as an adversary, but as a colleague in the common pursuit of a solution

Participants in a *Socratic Seminar* respond to one another with respect by carefully listening instead of interrupting. Students are encouraged to “paraphrase” essential elements of another’s ideas before responding, either in support of or in disagreement…

**What do I do *prior* to a Socratic Seminar in order to fully prepare?**

* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Read** the assigned 3 articles and 1 that you found on your own & **take notes**, while keeping the **FOCUS QUESTION** in mind
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Research the topic (*search for additional resources, information, data, etc*.) and add notes to your analysis sheet.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Brainstorm themes relevant to the topic
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Brainstorm connections among the facts and details
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Create **at least three** open-ended questions

***\*\*\*Open-ended question are those that are insightful & not easily answered – they will require proof, insights and group dialogue in order to explore potential answers to the question\*\*\****

**General Participation Guidelines**

* Talk to ***each other***, not to the teacher
* **Do not** raise your hands; take turns speaking
* **Do not** monopolize the conversation
* **Do not** engage in hostile exchanges
* Listen carefully & with an open-mind
* Speak up so that everyone can hear you
* Discuss ***ideas***, rather than each other’s opinions
* Do not stay confused; ask for clarification
* You are **RESPONSIBLE** for the success of the *Socratic Seminar*, as there will be minimal intervention from the teacher
* Sleeping, clowning around or being off-task (*cell phones, work for other classes, etc*.) is never appropriate during a *Socratic Seminar*; such behavior will earn you a “0” – there will be **NO** warnings…

**Method for Socratic Seminars in AP COGO**

For a *Socratic Seminar*, the classroom is arranged in a **circle**.

**Circle Procedures/Responsibilities**

1. Your responsibility is to discuss the focus question with the goal of being able to answer it individually and collaboratively.
2. Use your individually created open-ended questions to begin and continue the discussion appropriately.
3. Respond to questions/prompts using text, notes, annotations – your own insights and observations – to support your responses. **You should be prepared to keep the conversation moving along, in addition to including every member of the group.**
4. I will provide you with several questions to help guide the discussion. You should use these questions as a starting point; however, **DO NOT BE AFRAID TO STRAY FROM THE PROVIDED PROMPT.** Ask questions to clarify and/or to “*probe*” another participant’s ideas.
5. There is no official discussion leader for a *Socratic Seminar*, so make sure that the discussion stays on track and moves along at a good pace. You do not have to raise your hands. **Comments should be addressed to the circle and not to me**.
6. Because there is no discussion leader and because there will be very little teacher interference, you must make sure that all group members **participate** and **are treated fairly (and with respect)**. This is an open discussion, but it should not turn into a free-for-all.
7. **You are graded on your participation** (*asking questions, making comments, citing text*) **and level of insight**. Students **MUST** include every member of the circle.

**REMEMBER**, you will not necessarily be graded on *how often* you participate, but the **WAY** in which you participate. You must **LISTEN** to each other, ask questions, cite the readings, maintain the discussion, offer insights and include everyone.

**YOU SHOULD NOT MONOPOLIZE THE FLOOR, TALK OVER EACH OTHER OR ARGUE. BE RESPECTFUL OF EACH OTHERS’ IDEAS BUT DON’T BE AFRAID TO CHALLENGE EACH OTHER.**

I will be tracking the discussion and noting the **WAY** in which you participate.