

PROJECT

DELIBERATE QUESTIONING

USING SOCRATIC SEMINARS TO DEVELOP CRITICAL THINKERS

DATE

JANUARY 23, 2012

PRESENTER

LISA DAVIA RUBENSTEIN

What makes an idea worth spreading?

**What is the purpose of
education?**

Purposeful Learning

Relevant Processes



Quality Content

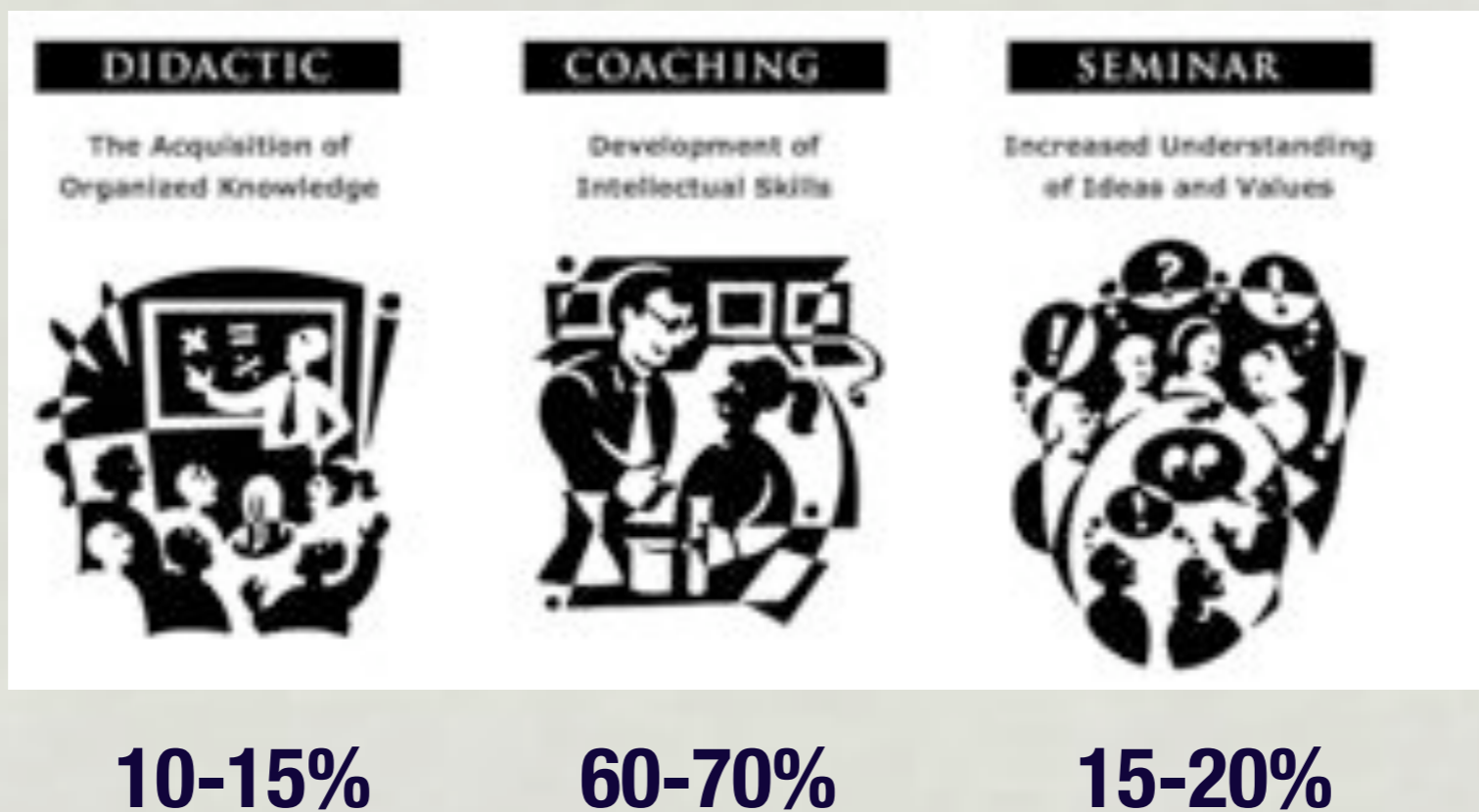
Evaluation of Curriculum

- **Honorable:** Is it worth their time? Could they easily look up the information? Does it honor the world we live in and the students we teach?
- **Transferrable:** Is it teaching a thought process? Could this idea be adjusted to apply in other areas? Are we explicitly teaching this transfer?
- **Transformational:** Will it change the world? Will it change the students' perspective?
- **Beneficial:** Will it make the world better? Is it useful?
- **Exciting:** Does it engage the students? Does it inspire students to think about how they want to use their talents?

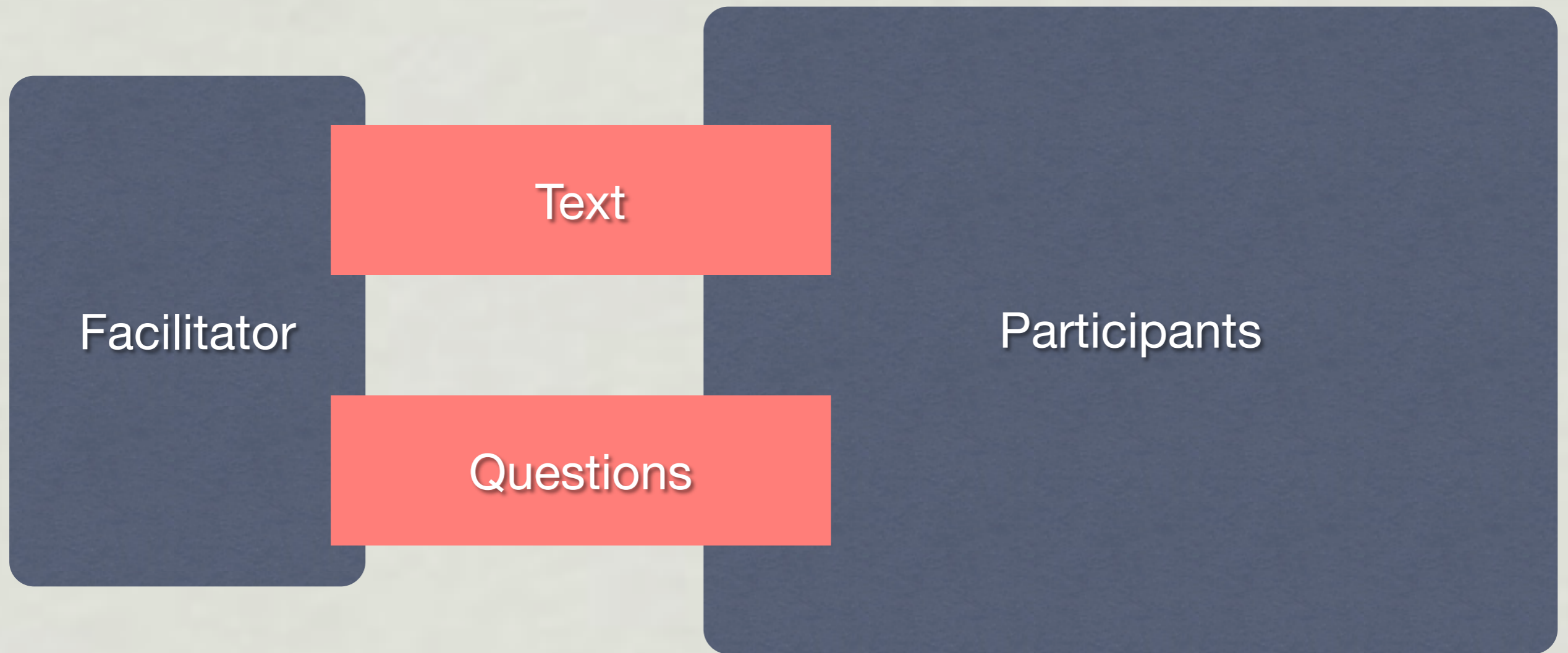
Balance



NATIONAL PAIDEIA CENTER



ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF A SEMINAR



Ideas and
Values

Degree of
Challenge

Evaluation
of Text

Curricular and
Personal
Relevance

Ambiguity



Disclaimer: Please READ OR WATCH all talks before showing your class!

Shai Agassi's bold plan for electric cars

TED2009, Filmed Feb 2009; Posted Apr 2009



477,203 Views

Like Dislike

INTERACTIVE TRANSCRIPT

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

ABOUT THIS TALK

Forget about the hybrid auto -- Shai Agassi says it's electric cars or bust if we want to impact emissions. His company, Better Place, has a radical plan to take entire countries oil-free by 2020.

Share your ideas to improve the travel experience:
[facebook.com/delta](https://www.facebook.com/delta)

WHAT TO WATCH NEXT



Saul Griffith's kites tap wind energy
05:20 Posted: Mar 2009
Views: 259,662 | Comments: 83

Al Gore on averting climate crisis

INTERACTIVE TRANSCRIPT

English

Click on any phrase to play the video from that point.

So how would you run a whole country without oil? That's the question that sort of hit me in the middle of a Davos afternoon about four years ago. It never left my brain. And I started playing with it more like a puzzle. The original thought I had, this must be ethanol. So I went out and researched ethanol. And found out you need the Amazon in your backyard in every country. About six months later I figured out it must be hydrogen, until some scientist told me the unfortunate truth, which is, you actually use more clean electrons than the ones you get inside a car, if you use hydrogen. So that is not going to be the path to go.

And then sort of through a process of wandering

Subtitles Available in:

21 languages (OFF)

Embed this video: [copy and paste](#) object width

DOWNLOAD

FAVORITE

EMAIL

CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE

WOULD THIS BE AN APPROPRIATE TEXT?

WHAT ABOUT THIS TEXT?

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

A Few Big Ideas

- * Balance
- * Change
- * Conflict
- * Connections
- * Culture
- * Discovery
- * Environment
- * Exploration
- * Honor
- * Order
- * Patterns
- * Perspective
- * Power
- * Proof
- * Repetition
- * Survival
- * Symbol
- * System
- * Variance

**Where else could you find a
text?**

Types of Content

- * Poem, Fictional Story, Essay
- * Multi-Media Presentation
- * Work of Art
- * Picture, Graph, Map, Diagram, or Chart
- * Word Problem or Scientific Experiment
- * Primary Source Documents



**How to tell students what to look for
without telling them what to see is
the dilemma of teaching.**

Lascelles Abercrombie

Junior Great Books Format

- * Text Opener, First Reading, Sharing Questions
- * Second Reading with Directed Notes
- * Interpreting Words
- * Shared Inquiry Discussion (and Textual Analysis)
- * Writing After Discussion

Touchstones Format

- * The students do not prepare.
- * The whole class including the teacher sits in a circle.
- * The teacher reads the text aloud.
- * The students read the text silently.
- * The students do individual work.
- * The students do small group work.
- * The teachers asks an open-ended question to start the discussion.
- * The students do not raise hands. All participants follow the ground rules. There is no true conclusion. The discussion ends when the bell rings.

Paideia Format

Pre
Content
Process

Open
Opening

Identify

More
Closed
Core
Questions

Discuss

More
Open
Closing

Personalize
and Apply

Post
Content
Process

EVALUATION OF QUESTIONS

Clear

Thoughtful

Open

Big Ideas

MAE JEMISON

OPEN QUESTIONS

Critical Thinking Components

- ✱ Analyze an argument. Logical? Relevant?
- ✱ Ask and answer questions of clarification of challenge.
- ✱ Judge the credibility of a source.
- ✱ Make and evaluate observations.
- ✱ Define and evaluate definitions.

Questioning Formats

Analysis	What it is What it isn't What it ought to be What it implies
Comparison	How things are similar How things are different Illustrates changes over time
Description	Explains using the senses
Problem Solving	Describes and analyzes a specific problem Proposes a solution Convince others that the solution is reasonable

Freedman, R. L. (1994). *Open-ended Questioning-A Handbook for Educators*. Parsippany, NJ: Dale Seymour Publications

Types of Questions

Inference Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•What does this situation tell you about the character?•When might this have been written?
Interpretation Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•How would this be different if...?•What does this reveal?
Transfer Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•How might another person respond in this situation?•How would changing a variable in this situation change the outcome?
Questions about Hypotheses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•How might history be different if...?•Based on current social/political issues what might change in the future?
Reflective Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•What concepts do you know well / need to work on understanding better?•Does my work reflect my understanding?

Shaunessy, E. (2005). *Questioning Strategies for Teaching the Gifted*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

General Outline

Pre-Seminar

Content: What is the relevant information? (You may want to give the students an opportunity to think about this at home or overnight.)

Process: What should we work on as a group and as individuals to make this a good seminar?

Seminar

Opening: What is the speakers' purpose? What would be a good title for this talk? (Make sure the students are supporting their answers.) What is the speaker's passion? What is the most important idea?

Core: What is meant by...? Is this the appropriate solution? What is the difference between this speakers' approach and...? How do you think this speech would be viewed by...? Did the speaker support his or her ideas? Is any of the information misleading? What further experiments might be completed to support this perspective?

Closing: What does this speech teach us about...? How do these ideas relate to our curriculum? What are the barriers to the implementation of this solution or idea? Why is this important? What are other related questions? What did you learn from the other participants? Do you have any ideas for improving the speaker's ideas?

Post-Seminar

Process: What did we do well during our discussion?

Content: What are your new ideas?

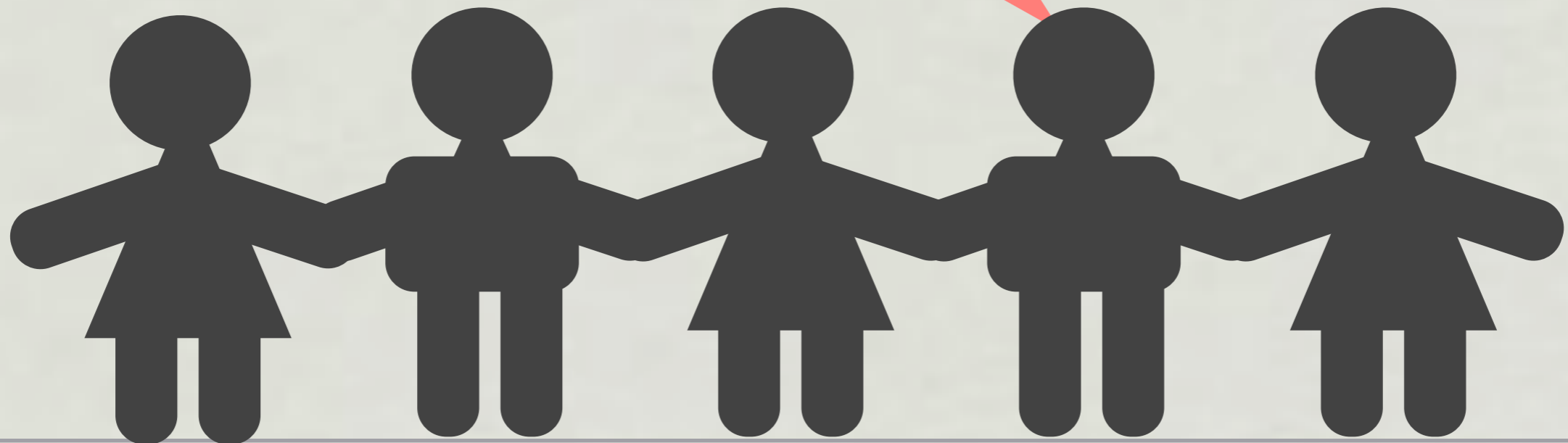
QUICK WAYS TO MOVE THE DISCUSSION

Agree or
disagree...

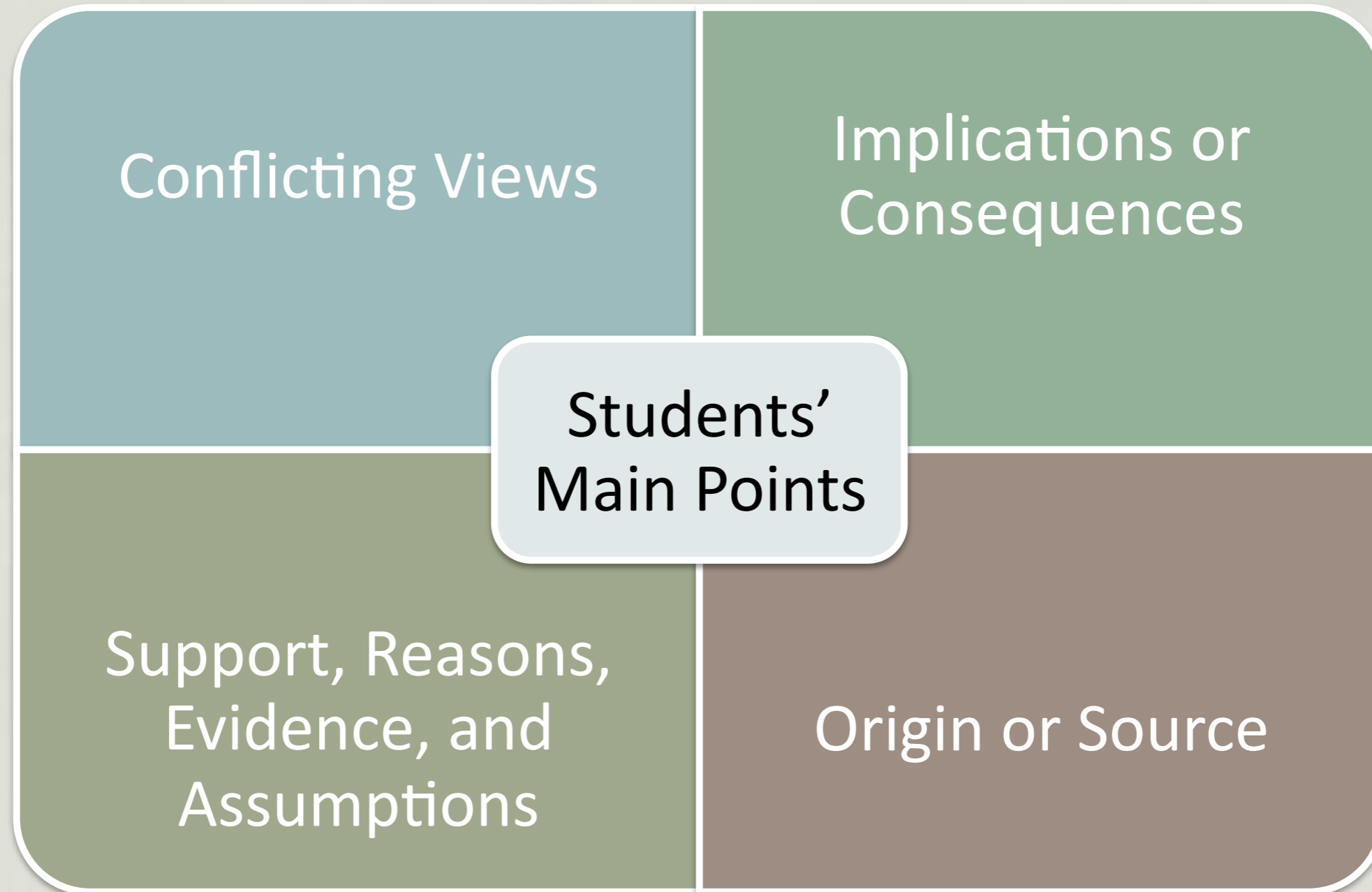
Rephrase...

Add on...

Revoice



MOVING THE DISCUSSION



Amy Tan and Questions

- ◆ “[Life experiences] led me to my big questions. And they are the same ones that I have today. And they are: Why do things happen and how do things happen...How do I make things happen.”
- ◆ “But I go back to this question of, how do I create something out of nothing? And how do I create my own life? And I think it is by questioning.”



Stephen Hawking and Questions



- ◆ "...questions I would like to talk about are: One, where did we come from? How did the universe come into being? Are we alone in the universe? Is there alien life out there? What is the future of the human race?"
- ◆ "All of my life I have sought to understand the universe and find answers to these questions. I have been very lucky that my disability has not been a serious handicap; indeed, it has probably given me more time than most people to pursue the quest for knowledge."

If questions are at the beginning of all knowledge, why aren't we teaching students to ask them?

Types of Student Questions

Need to Know
Information

Curious About
Information

Materials

Wonder

Process



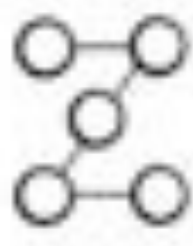

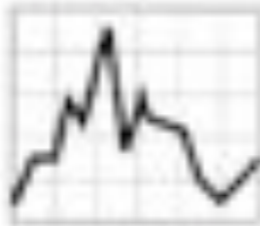
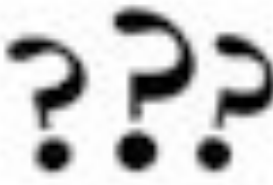




Connections

Content

Application

**Challenge: Keep track
of all the questions your
students ask in 1 day.**

Student Friendly Question Guides

Dimensions of Depth & Complexity		
DIMENSIONS OF DEPTH AND COMPLEXITY	 LANGUAGE OF THE DISCIPLINES	 DETAILS
 PATTERNS	 VALUES	 TRENDS
 UNANSWERED QUESTIONS	 ETHICS	 BIG IDEAS
 RELATE ACROSS TIME	 MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES	 WORKING DISCIPLINES

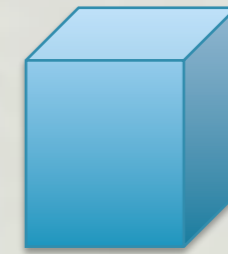
Illustrations and symbols of dimensions of depth and complexity are from: Understanding by Design (Copyrighted and licensed by Jossey-Bass), Learning Technology: Learning Technology in Research and Practice (Copyrighted and licensed by Jossey-Bass), The Dimensions of Depth and Complexity (Copyrighted and licensed by Jossey-Bass), and Learning Technology (Copyrighted and licensed by Jossey-Bass).



DEVELOPING STUDENT QUESTIONS

	is	could	can	will	might	did
Who						
What						
Why						
When						
How						
Where						

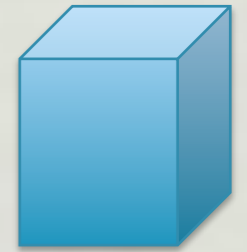
What questions do experts in the field ask?



Using Cubes

Cube 1: Who, What, Why, When, Where, and How

Cube 2: Is, Can, Will, Could, Might, Did



Use prompting phrases

It might be interesting to know (understand how, why, if)

I wonder if _____ is related to _____.

I wonder what factors contribute to _____.

Analyze questions.

- ◆ What makes a question good?
- ◆ What makes it bad?
- ◆ Is it an inquiry, clarifying, critical thinking, or inference question? When should you use different types of questions?

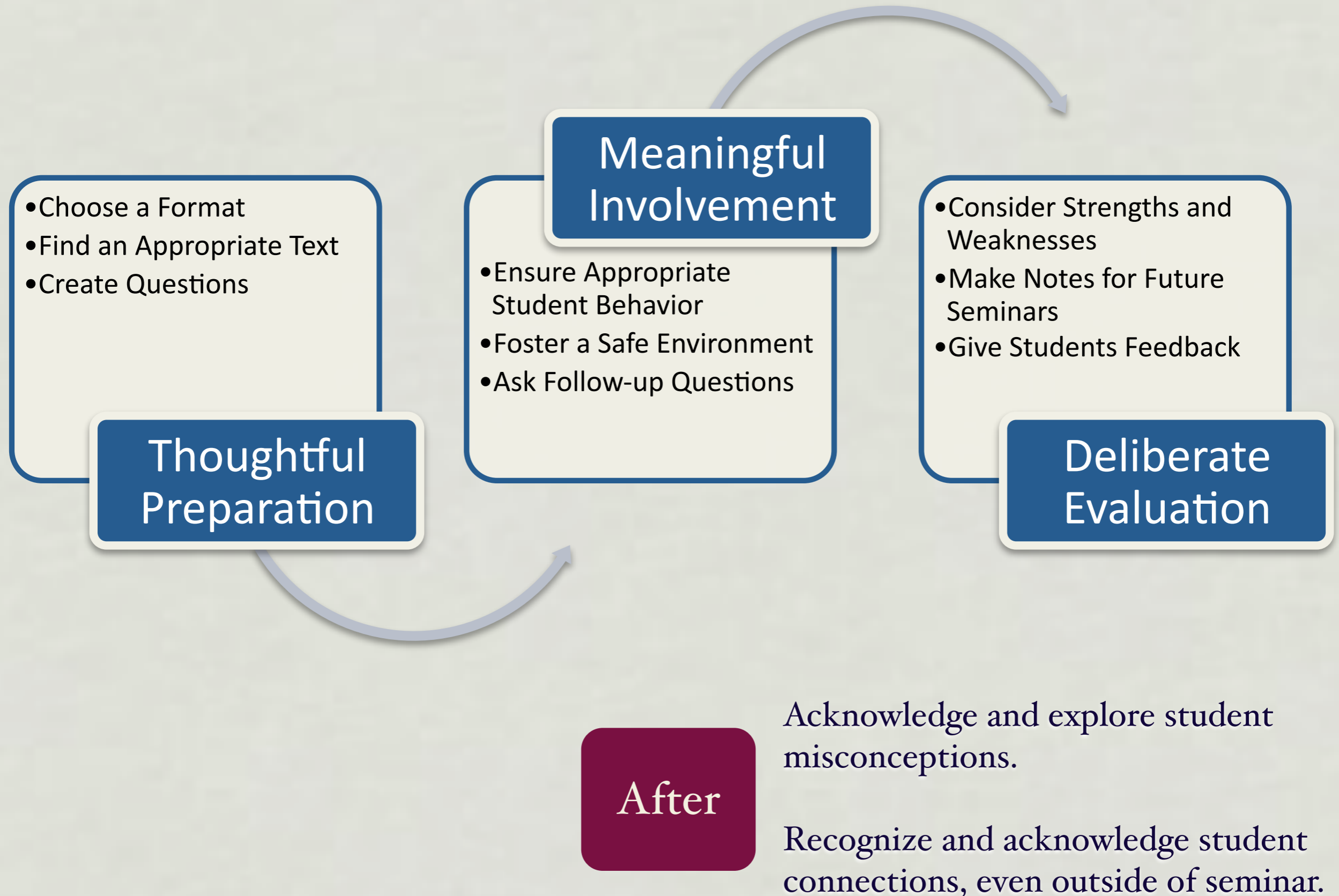
Build a wall.



Schedule it frequently.



FACILITATOR'S ROLE



Socratic Seminars Int.

(www.socraticseminars.com)

- ✿ Speak so that all can hear you.
- ✿ Listen closely.
- ✿ Speak without raising hands
- ✿ Refer to the text.
- ✿ Talk to each other and to the middle of the circle, not just to the leader.
- ✿ Ask others for clarification. Don't stay confused.
- ✿ Invite and allow others to speak.
- ✿ Consider all viewpoints and ideas.
- ✿ Know that you are responsible for the quality of the seminar.

Participant's Role

- ✱ Prepare.
- ✱ Be polite.
- ✱ Participate.



Teaching Students to Respond

- * Use students' names.
- * Ask for reasons or clarification.
- * Support other students' ideas with examples or counterexamples.
- * Honestly evaluate ideas. Be willing to change your mind.
- * Refer to the text.
- * Engage with all students.



People Problems

- ✱ Too many people
- ✱ Shy people
- ✱ Overbearing people

After the fun...

The Scarlet Letter: Socratic Seminar Reflection

Within a seminar, there should always be an air of curiosity. Others should inquire into the opinions of peers, not simply succumb to every answer as the only one allowed. Thus, I feel that today's seminar went well. Every participant benignly and respectfully showed their view on different topics of *The Scarlet Letter*, contributing a wide range of thoughts and ideas. One thing that I learned plenty about was the relations between the symbolism in *The Scarlet Letter* and the connections they have to the Christian religion. Myself not being a Christian, I found it very helpful when fellow classmates would bring up points such as: "Hawthorne tries to incorporate Hell through the burning sensations, red colors, and angry feelings throughout the book." I think our class could have referenced specific spots in the text more often. Moreover, it was disappointing to lift up my book and wait for a page number that never came. One interval in the book truly reached out to me as the essence of Pearl's relationship with her mother, on page 88, "Tell me! Tell me!" repeated Pearl... "It is thou that must tell me!" This really captured a moment to show where the origin of Prynne's feelings that Pearl was a "demon offspring" (88) came from. Although there were points that I didn't have the chance to bring up – several times the group had collectively moved onto another topic before I could speak – I think that I did fairly well sharing creative thoughts that would add to the conversation. I enjoy Socratic seminars because they only follow a basic respect guideline; otherwise, students are fully capable of bringing the topic in whatever direction they choose. I think we should certainly have seminar discussions more often to allow our creative flow and exchange of ideas about all books we read.

Beyond Writing...

BEATRICE CORON

USE OF PRODUCTS



Evaluate.



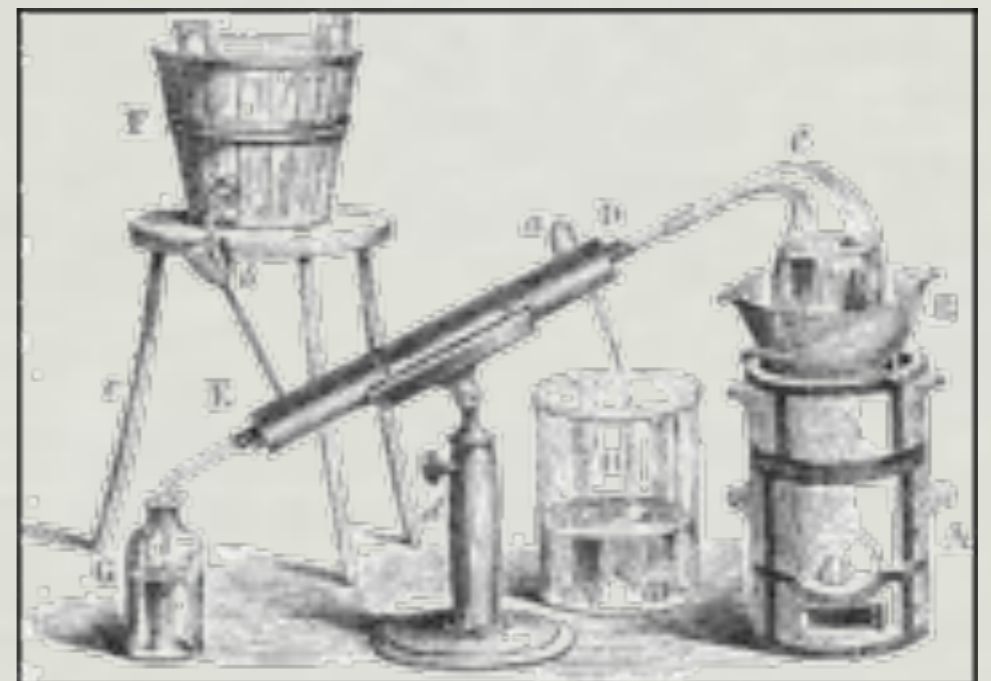
<http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/article.asp?id=13>

Seminar Improvement

- ✿ Seminar is an iterative process.
- ✿ **Beginning:** Start with non-print or short texts, explain the process, take time to practice the process skills, coach participation skills, set group goals.
- ✿ **Middle:** Select more in-depth texts, encourage pre-seminar discussion about the process, set both group and individual goals, decrease facilitator talk, assess progress and celebrate success.
- ✿ **End:** Encourage students to ask their own questions, set individual goals, decrease facilitator talk, coach participants to make explicit connections with other's comments, assess and celebrate progress.

Sharing

- **INVITE TEACHERS TO PARTICIPATE IN EACH OTHER'S SEMINARS.**
- **HOLD SEMINARS FOR STAFF MEETINGS.**
- **VIDEO TAPE A SEMINAR. USE THAT TO SPRINGBOARD A STAFF SEMINAR.**
- **PROVIDE RESOURCES. HELP THEM FIND TEXTS AND DEVELOP QUESTIONS.**



Deliberate.

ideas worth spreading

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