

READING WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES

Using the Socratic Method in History Video Transcript

Raeann McElveen:

Okay, so Lisa and Antonio are going to be our moderators for today. We're going to have approximately 30 minutes for conversation. Antonio and Lisa, I'll give you a five-minute warning. So moderators, you can take it away.

Student:

To start, which "ism" was most influential as cause of conflict leading to global war?

The value that Socratic seminar gives us is being able to speak to a group of people and discuss, like, these big topics so we all can synthesize our knowledge.

We learned that if 300 gone, 700 were left, then this wasn't too bad. We then knew how unimportant our names were...

Addie Male:

What you want to start doing -- just because we have limited time and we want to jump into rich discussion -- you're setting a personal goal for yourself.

McElveen:

We feel really strongly that students set and measure their personal goals at the beginning of seminar. One reason is because we know there are diverse learners in our community, and this is one way to support executive functioning skills. So by writing down the goal, we feel that it holds students accountable and that they can also refer back to their goal while the seminar's going on.

Everyone's going to be actively engaged somehow, whether that's taking notes, whether that's looking for evidence, whether that's speaking and responding to a question.

Male:

If they're not apt to vocalize, that's okay. As long as they're active, they're engaged, and that's evidence of it just as much as someone who's speaking five times.

What's your goal for this seminar? Yeah, Steven?

Steven:

My goal is to have answered two questions and have at least, like, six notes.

Student:

My goal is to take good notes by trying to quote at least one person, writing down one idea.

Student:

My goal is to invite at least three people into the conversation.

Antonio:

They prepare us during lit circles. That's, like, practice in a smaller group. So when we move to Socratic seminar, it's usually organic if you're talking to the whole group if you had that practice.

Male:

We wanted to give them a taste of all the different aspects that we were hoping they would speak to in a seminar. Yesterday, they watched a clip of "Paths of Glory" that shows the trench warfare, and then we set them up on two primary documents. We asked them to read at home, annotate, and email an open-ended question.

Clearly so many of you read it because we received the questions from you.

Antonio:

The questions are developed through the reading and annotating, so if something doesn't make sense or you think of an interesting point that you want to bring up.

McElveen:

Students have seen organically what happens when they have a question that just doesn't provoke conversation. From that experience, they're great at knowing the kinds of questions to ask to be able to prolong this conversation.

Student:

Which "ism" was most influential as cause of conflict leading to global war, why, and what is the evidence?

Student:

I thought it was more towards, like, imperialism almost, because in the article it says, like, Belgium was neutral, it didn't really want the Germans to pass through,

but during this time because a lot of, like, the countries were just trying to just take over territory, they didn't really care and just passed through anyway. Like, that is a main cause because they're just trampling over everyone, they don't really care, they just want to accomplish and take as much as they can.

Student:

So I kind of disagree with what Elijah said because I think nationalism, like our moderator said, is the most, you know, important one because nationalism is like having pride in one's country and I think that pride is what led to imperialism.

Student:

I think it's just militarism that is the most influential...

McElveen:

When it is something that can be answered by three different people in three different ways, that's an ideal kind of question.

Antonio:

I think that's kind of a good segue to ask which European power mostly caused the war.

My job today during the Socratic seminar was to facilitate the conversation evenly to all my peers.

Student:

Serbia and Austria...

Antonio:

I'm just looking to make sure the conversation flows naturally and it's organic, and everyone participates evenly.

Student:

Elijah, I would like to point out that Serbia itself as a country did not shoot the archduke.

Male:

Over time, that's where we're hoping to get to. That they are negotiating it with as little support as possible from us.

Student:

Kind of segueing into more of the soldiers' experience to head to question one. So, in Ernest Hemingway...

McElveen:

There's been times where I've transcribed every single thing that's said during seminar.

Do you guys think that the events that occurred in the Great War were inhumane?

And then we can project it on the Smart Board and students can analyze the conversations.

Student:

Some of the things that happened in the war were very inhumane.

McElveen:

So here's a time where students cited evidence to support their argument. Oh, look, here's a time when two students debated about who was right, and this person gave evidence to support what they had to say, but this person didn't.

Student:

There's so much pressure coming from the generals and, like, the country that you had to fight for.

Student:

Like, it was really inhumane how you're letting out these unskilled people to fight for you and kill themselves, and it becomes a lost generation.

McElveen:

So on that note, as much as we don't want to stop the conversation, it's almost time to leave. So in the last five minutes, what we'd like you guys to do to wrap up our seminar is to reflect on your participation during the discussion. You're going to answer three questions. What's something you did well today during seminar? The second question, what is something you'd like to get better at or improve upon? And the third question, so many of you had great things to say, so shout out a peer: what is something someone else did that you want to recognize?

Male:

We give feedback, so it's a record for them to also see moving forward, how do I want to grow?

McElveen:

And then adding the shout-out piece is just motivation. If someone else says so-and-so did a really great job, just hearing that motivates the students to really work towards their goals in the future.

Who'd like to shout out one of their peers today? Martin, go ahead.

Martin:

I want to shout out Lisa because she did a great job facilitating the discussion.

Student:

I wanted to actually give a shout out to both Lisa and Antonio. I think both of you did a really good job.

McElveen:

It's a collective experience. It's not about one-upping, it's not about competing voices. Sometimes it can get heated, but really, there's this respect that we see. It was just such a moving experience where you can just see that every student either participated or were engaged, took notes, shouted out another peer. It just speaks to the kind of community that we've built and it's a great feeling.

Student:

I'd like to shout out everyone. It's kind of hard for me just to pick one person because, like, everyone that contributes something that enhances the seminar. It kind of, like, brings conversation. Or else we would just be stuck. So shout out to everyone.