The Paideia Seminar: Active Thinking Through Dialogue

In the Secondary Grades
(2nd Edition)
PAIDEIA (py-dee-a) from Greek, pais, paidos: 
The upbringing of a child. (Related to pedagogy and pediatrics.) In an extended sense, the equivalent of Latin humanitas (from which “the humanities”), signifying the general learning that should be the possession of all human beings.

With Gratitude to . . .

All the educators who have worked to open minds in the Spirit of Paideia.

This manual represents our collective efforts.
Dear Reader:

The Paideia Seminar is a dynamic process of thoughtful dialogue. Taken from the basic idea of Socratic discussion, the Paideia Seminar is structured for collaborative thinking to enhance individual and collective understanding. Whether the seminar takes place with young children, teenagers, or adults, it is a powerful and productive event. The process helps develop social as well as critical thinking skills through civil discourse.

We designed the book you hold in your hands so that you may learn about the Paideia Seminar through two primary approaches. First, we offer this as a training manual for your use during guided study, perhaps led by an experienced Paideia educator. Second, we offer this manual as a stand-alone text for your independent learning.

Regardless of your approach to learning about Seminars, we encourage you to explore and experiment. Ultimately, our shared goal is conceptual thinking about the ideas and values that all human beings hold in common.

Sincerely,

Laura Billings and

Terry Roberts

National Paideia Center
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SECTION ONE

BACKGROUND AND RELEVANCE OF PAIDEIA
Paideia Overview

Paideia, as its derivation (from the Greek pais, paidos, the nurturing of a child) suggests, has to do with the proper upbringing of a child. The term implies a holistic education that leads to physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual maturity over the course of a lifetime. The Paideia Program was introduced as an approach to American education in the early 1980s by Mortimer Adler and the “Paideia Group” in a ground breaking book entitled *The Paideia Proposal: an Educational Manifesto* (1982). Adler and his colleagues described a philosophy of education based on a core curriculum with emphasis on equity combined with rigor. Based on both its Greek roots and its place in contemporary American culture, Paideia embodies an educational experience that prepares students to participate fully in a democratic society over the course of their entire lives.

“The three common callings to which all our children are destined: to earn a living in an intelligent and responsible fashion, to function as intelligent and responsible citizens, and to make both of these things serve the purpose of leading intelligent and responsible lives—to enjoy as fully as possible all the goods that make a human life as good as it can be.”

*The Paideia Proposal, p. 18*

These essential tenets of *The Paideia Proposal* are summarized in the following Twelve Paideia Principles.
The 12 Paideia Principles

We believe…

that all children can learn;

that, therefore, they all deserve the same quality of schooling, not just the same quantity;

that the quality of schooling to which they are entitled is what the wisest parents would wish for their own children, the best education for the best being the best education for all;

that schooling at its best is preparation for becoming generally educated in the course of a whole lifetime, and that schools should be judged on how well they provide such preparation;

that the three callings for which schooling should prepare all Americans are, (a) to earn a decent livelihood, (b) to be a good citizen of the nation and the world, and (c) to make a good life for oneself;

that the primary cause of genuine learning is the activity of the learner’s own mind, sometimes with the help of a teacher functioning as a secondary and cooperative cause;

that the three types of teaching that should occur in our schools are didactic teaching of subject matter, coaching that produces the skills of learning, and Socratic questioning in seminar discussion;

that the results of these three types of teaching should be (a) the acquisition of organized knowledge, (b) the formation of habits of skill in the use of language and mathematics, and (c) the growth of the mind’s understanding of basic ideas and issues;

that each student’s achievement of these results should be evaluated in terms of that student’s competencies and not solely related to the achievements of other students;

that the principal of the school should never be a mere administrator, but always a leading teacher who should be cooperatively engaged with the school’s teaching staff in planning, reforming, and reorganizing the school as an educational community;

that the principal and faculty of a school should themselves be actively engaged in learning;

that the desire to continue their own learning should be the prime motivation of those who dedicate their lives to the profession of teaching.

—The Paideia Council
The Paideia Proposal describes both a set of philosophical beliefs and specific teaching practices based on those beliefs. As you can see, the seventh and eighth Paideia Principles include specific teaching practices that are meant to be used deliberately, K-12, across the curriculum. Adler named these teaching practices “The Three Columns.” The Three Paideia Columns of instruction are designed to support specific aspects of learning: conceptual understanding, skill development, and factual recall.

The Three Columns of Instruction

- **Didactic**
  - The Acquisition of Organized Knowledge
  - 10-15%

- **Coaching**
  - Development of Intellectual Skills
  - 60-70%

- **Seminar**
  - Increased Understanding of Ideas and Values
  - 15-20%
The most traditional of the Three Columns is Didactic Instruction, designed to help students master and remember essential information. Didactic Instruction often occurs through the lecture; although, this category also includes strategies like demonstration, audio-visual presentation, and reading from textbooks. It is by far the most efficient way to deliver organized knowledge for student use, but we recommend using it only 10-15% of instructional time with careful attention to supplementary materials that help students master and retain the information. During didactic instruction, students should have a structured means of taking notes and practicing recall.

The Column of instruction to which we would dedicate the greatest amount of classroom time is skill development through Intellectual Coaching. As Adler defined it, “coaching … produces the skills for learning, [specifically] in the use of language and mathematics.” The teacher as coach demonstrates and then gives supportive or corrective feedback while students practice the skill(s). We recommend that teachers devote approximately 70% of instructional time to intellectual coaching because it is these skills that enable a student to continue learning and growing throughout life, and it is these skills that eventually render the student independent of the teacher.

The Column of instruction that has its roots in the teaching of Socrates is the Seminar Column. Adler defined Paideia “Seminar discussion [as fostering] the growth of the mind's understanding of basic ideas and issues.” We recommend that teachers dedicate 15-20% of classroom time to seminar discussion in order that students will grow in their ability to think conceptually.

It is important to note that the Three Columns are best practiced in active synergy, such that each of the three modes of teaching reinforces the other two. The fully realized Paideia classroom features units of study integrated across subject areas. In teaching these units, the Paideia teacher uses all three columns—didactic, coaching, and seminar—where appropriate, and most importantly, uses them in a complementary manner. The teacher introduces students to a body of factual information (didactic), coaches them in the intellectual skills necessary to manipulate and apply that information (coaching), and leads them in a discussion of the ideas and values associated with that information (seminar).
Paideia in the 21st Century

Together Paideia theory and practice provide a holistic approach designed to prepare students to become educated over the course of their lives. However, at a time when schools are under increasing pressure to focus solely on standardized tests, how is the Paideia Program relevant in the world of high-stakes accountability?

Everything we know about life in the 21st Century tells us that our students must be prepared with a wide range of communication and thinking skills if they are to have a chance in the workplace and if they are to contribute to a functioning democracy. In many ways, the Paideia Program is a classical education that is perfectly suited for the 21st Century world. It involves returning to ancient wisdom in response to contemporary challenges.

In 2007, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills—a coalition of American businesses with an international focus, funded in part by the U.S. Department of Education—published an important report1 including six key elements of 21st Century learning that clearly resonate with Paideia education.

1. Core Subjects
   - Reading
   - Mathematics
   - Science
   - Foreign languages
   - Civics, government, economics
   - Arts
   - History and geography

2. 21st Century Content
   - Global awareness
   - Financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy
   - Civic literacy
   - Health and wellness awareness

1 See www.21stcenturyskills.org for the full report.
3. Learning and Thinking Skills
   - Critical-thinking and problem-solving skills
   - Communication skills
   - Creativity and innovation skills
   - Collaboration skills
   - Contextual learning skills
   - Information and media literacy skills

4. Information and Communications Technology Literacy
   - Use technology
   - Learn how to learn
   - Think critically
   - Solve problems
   - Use information
   - Communicate, innovate, and collaborate

5. Life Skills
   - Leadership
   - Ethics
   - Accountability
   - Adaptability
   - Personal productivity
   - Personal responsibility
   - People skills
   - Self-direction
   - Social responsibility

6. Authentic 21st century assessments
   - High-quality standardized testing
   - Effective classroom assessments
   - Mastery of the content and skills
Research to Support Paideia

In teaching these skills, Paideia schools take on many different shapes in response to their unique and fluid environments. Since 1988, The National Paideia Center has translated the Paideia philosophy into training and technical support designed to help educators master both the theory and practice of Paideia. The main phases of training and technical support include: 1) the Paideia Seminar; 2) the Paideia Project; and 3) Paideia School Assessment.

The Paideia Program is a powerful response to the demands of the 21st Century because it provides a long term educational solution, not a short-term fix. For example, the Paideia Seminar is perhaps the most powerful strategy we have to teach “The Learning and Thinking Skills” (# 2 above) as well as many of the “Life Skills” (# 5) that business leaders demand. Furthermore, the Paideia Project provides a unit planning mechanism that is perfectly suited to coaching “Life Skills” (# 5) while using “Information and Communications Technology” (# 4) to produce quality academic products and performances of authentic value. Likewise Paideia School Assessment is advocates a comprehensive approach to authentic 21st century assessment (# 6), a complimentary set of practices to measure holistic student learning.

In addition to aligning with needs related to 21 Century Skills, numerous studies have captured evidence showing how the implementation of Paideia correlates with positive outcomes. The following research excerpts illustrate various outcomes associated with Paideia.

“She loves them because she can talk a lot and choose to agree or disagree with her classmates. Neither mistaken nor different notions about a story result in criticism. Incorrect comprehension of a story is corrected by helpful classmates or prompts from the teacher to help a child self-correct. Differences of opinions are accepted as the norm.”
(4th grader)

“Paideia students had a higher average daily attendance (84% and 91% versus 78% and 85%).”
“Some of the most important outcomes of the [Paideia] seminar, such as improved articulation, higher-order thinking skills, and interpersonal skills, are not directly measurable by current standardized tests. At Githens in the early 1990’s, with few if any sustained, substantial variable beyond the institution of a school-wide Paideia seminar program, writing tests designed to measure quality of articulation and organization of ideas saw striking gains in student achievement over a three year period.”


“Overall, approximately 83% of all students passed the End of Grade Reading Test in the year after Paideia was implemented, which was 6.8% more students than passed the test in 2001. This finding was consistent for male and female (+5.2 and +6.6 respectively) students and especially high for students who are Black (+16.0).”

“The biggest improvement, consistent with the 6th grade data, was with Black students where 9.3% more students passed the EOG in the first year of Paideia than did the previous year. Again, addressing one of the Paideia goals of reducing the achievement gap between Black and White students, there was a 10% change (+9.3 v. -1.5) between these two groups.”

Consistent with grades 7 and 8, the gap between the percentage of successful achievement between Black and White students was reduced by more than 9%.

In summary, Asheville (NC) Middle School showed a noticeable improvement in the percentage of students who passed the End of Grade (EOG) tests in both reading and mathematics from the year prior to implementation of Paideia (2001) and its first year (2002). With regard to reading, the improvement was consistent across all students and all three grades, with one of the more significant findings being that there was a large percentage increase of Black students passing the EOG reading test across all three grades at Asheville Middle. Concerning mathematics, there was a clear and positive impact from Paideia from the year prior to implementation to the end of the first year of the program. This trend was significant with 6th grade students and appeared to level off in 7th and 8th grade as the percentage of students that passed the EOG was slightly lower for each grade. Exceptions to this trend were for 7th grade females and 8th grade black students who saw an increase in percentage of students passing the EOG from 2002 to 2003. Finally, there was a clear and consistent decrease in the achievement percentage gap between Black and White students across both reading and math and all three grades with the exception of 7th grade math.

[elem school] The average increase of 8.5% of students performing at the satisfactory level in 2002 and 2003 is not only solid, but is moderately higher than Jefferson Parrish results of a 2.0% increase and the 3.5% increase at the state-wide level.

[elem school] In language arts, there was a solid and positive difference between the percentage of students at Indian Avenue and Brighton City that performed at proficiency or advanced, with several subgroups (i.e., males, Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites) having positive differences of more than 10%.
Overall, 3rd graders at Park Lodge Elementary School performed better from 1999-2003 on ITBS Reading, Math, and the Reading/Math Composite than did their peers at Clover Park School District and statewide. A consistent finding was that Park Lodge, although beginning its trend with higher scores than Clover Park in 1999, expanded this difference by 2003, often by double-digit percentages. In addition, Park Lodge consistently began its trend below the statewide average in 1999 and “passed” the state by 2003. This trend was consistent across all three domains.

In general, the review of a cross-section of student performance in the academic areas of reading, language, math, science, and social studies revealed a considerable and positive difference in the average national percentile score for students in grades 3-8 that attended CSAS as opposed to their grade-peers in other Hamilton County schools. The students at CSAS typically scored between 15-20 percentile points higher than Hamilton County students across grades 3-8. This noticeable difference was evident in all five subject areas for 2001.


On many levels, Paideia methods help bridge the gaps between the short-term pressures of American testing and the need for sustainable learning. Specifically, in the Paideia Seminar, students practice reading, writing, speaking, and listening as deliberate, learnable thinking skills. Practicing these thinking skills, while studying relevant ideas and values, generates enduring curiosity. Moreover, talking together about ideas and values brings reflection and civility into public dialogue—skills imperative for both citizenship and employment.

Paideia continues to offer American public schools a global response (both in time and space) to 21st century challenges—an approach to teaching and learning that engages all students in the skill development that will help them continue to grow over the course of their life times.

Paideia is a framework for teachers to think about curriculum, teaching, and assessment in a way that provides a holistic and rigorous experience for all students. In this way, Paideia advocates differentiation through participation in the Paideia Seminar and Project.

These strategies work well in a single classroom but are most powerful when practiced school-wide. In a full scale implementation, the Paideia school exhibits the following characteristics:

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See Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink’s *Sustainable Leadership.*
ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE PAIDEIA SCHOOL

Teaching and Learning

Teachers and students approach the core disciplines with regular attention to conceptual ideas and values;

Teachers and students engage in thematically integrated, product-oriented units—driven by sciences, supported by arts;

Teachers plan according to the Paideia three columns: Seminar, Intellectual coaching, and Didactic instruction;

Students continuously learn various strategies to improve their factual recall, their literacy skills, and their conceptual understanding;

Students are given ample opportunity to work individually, in teams, and in grade level groups, for intellectual and social development.

School Culture

The Paideia School is characterized as thoughtful and collaborative—all involved are life-long learners;

Seminar dialogue occurs cyclically, regarding local and global ideas;

Assessment practices are qualitative and quantitative;

Critical thinking is continuously practiced and assessed;

All hands take part in the work: across the school, all have jobs involving participation in the community.
**Leadership**

Decisions are made primarily with a focus on student learning, and secondarily, based on systemic and financial considerations;

Decisions are designated as: to be made by a few & to be made by many;

The school director is ultimately responsible for decisions and there is a clear accountability structure;

Faculty and Advisory Councils participate in decisions;

Student voice is represented through a democratic governance process.

**Community Involvement**

Paideia Projects consistently serve local needs and community members participate as authentic audiences for student work.

The school community engages in relevant seminars and various inclusive learning events;

Community craftsmen and businesses act as masters to upper grade student apprentices.

**Scheduling**

The Paideia School operates in all seasons;

The calendar is set for Seasonal project celebrations;

Weekly schedules are designed for learning and assessment: lecture, labs, and seminars;

Daily class schedules include productive routines, yet time and space are used flexibly.
To Summarize Section One:

- Paideia is a philosophy for education with core beliefs focused on equity and rigor.

- Paideia philosophy integrates 3 instructional practices:
  Seminar for conceptual understanding, Coaching of learning skills, and Didactic Instruction for recalling knowledge.

- As schools align with Paideia philosophy and teaching methods, they support student mastery of 21st Century skills.

- Myriad evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, shows that Paideia implementation supports positive student learning outcomes.
SECTION TWO

THE ESSENTIALS OF PAIDEIA SEMINAR
Definition of Paideia Seminar

The National Paideia Center (c. 2008) defines the Paideia Seminar as a collaborative, intellectual dialogue facilitated with open-ended questions about a text.

In *The Paideia Proposal* Mortimer Adler argued that by focusing dialogue on a relevant text, the seminar engages participants in “a discussion of the ideas, the values, and the forms embodied in [the] products of human art.” The intent of Paideia Seminar is to help “students raise their minds up from a state of understanding or appreciating less, to a state of understanding or appreciating more” (29).

Purpose

Paideia Seminars are designed to improve the individual’s ability to explain and manipulate complex systems.

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We define thinking as the ability to explain and manipulate complex systems successfully, and learning to think as explaining and manipulating increasingly complex systems. By increasingly complex, we mean systems containing larger numbers of discrete elements and more complex relationships between and among those elements.3

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3 “Thinking is Literacy, Literacy Thinking,” *Educational Leadership* 2008.
Seminar Objectives

Specific learning objectives for Paideia Seminar include both intellectual and social skills. That is to say, the stated objectives for any seminar address both thinking and communication.

During the Paideia Seminar, participants practice intellectual skills by analyzing the ideas and values in the text. In this way, the Paideia Seminar is a process for modeling and practicing critical thinking. When engaged in a seminar, the individual participant is witness both to the thinking process of other individuals and to the collective thinking process of the group. Both of these can serve as educative models for clear, flexible, coherent thinking.

The Paideia Seminar is also designed to support collaborative discourse, and therefore, requires that students practice complex social skills. Participants listen actively and respond respectfully.4

A set of objectives for a seminar on the Pledge of Allegiance might read: to think about liberty and justice; to practice building on others’ statements.

“The relation of thought to word is not a thing but a process, a continual movement back and forth from thought to word and from word to thought.”

Lev Vygotsky

4 For a discussion of these skills, see Mortimer Adler’s How to Speak, How to Listen.
Types of Seminar

The Paideia Seminar is an extremely flexible teaching process, appropriate in many contexts. For example, participants may be very young or quite mature in years. A seminar can take place with a group that is together for the very first time or with a group that has an established relationship and interactive norms. A Paideia Seminar may take place in any setting that has the general goal of supporting thinking and communication.

Based on the work of The National Paideia Center, we recognize at least four types of Paideia Seminars: community seminar, faculty seminar, student school-wide seminar, and content area seminar.

Community Seminars involve adults joined by some common ground, either literal or figurative. Community Seminars have occurred in businesses and retirement homes, as well as in schools. This type of dialogue is constructive for building collaborative understanding and to promote thinking processes. Often Community Seminars are associated with a school and include parents and other community members in formal Paideia dialogue. They serve to introduce community members in a “mind’s on” way to an important facet of the school’s life, and they provide a means for discussing ideas and values that are essential to the development of the school community.

Faculty Seminars are designed to invite the school’s adult learners into dialogue about ideas and values relevant to the profession. Formal Paideia Seminar discussions allow practice in the method and give time for a faculty to think collaboratively and, therefore, to understand each other more fully. They are especially powerful in helping to change the culture of a school community, and they are often the only reliable means for teachers and administrators to address personal and professional beliefs regarding the school community.5

5 For a full discussion of the potential effect of faculty seminars see Jennifer Mangrum’s dissertation on “The Evolution of a Professional Learning Community.”
School-Wide Seminars are designed to unify and strengthen the culture of a school. School-wide seminars typically take place on the same day at the same time and involve every student in the building. Generally, they focus on one text and one set of planned questions; although, individual seminar leaders can vary the questions in response to the seminar group. In some instances, using two texts on the same theme may be appropriate (primary versus upper elementary grades for example). In the 1980s during the initial implementation of the Paideia Program, Adler called for the “Wednesday Revolution” (school-wide seminars in mid-week) as a way of introducing Paideia into a school community.

Content-Area Seminars are designed to be integrated into the learning life of the individual classroom in order to support student thinking about the curriculum in one or more subjects. Content-area seminars may occur at the beginning, middle, or end of a unit depending on the unit plan’s structure and sequence. They may occur in all subjects. Content seminars are designed specifically to complement didactic instruction and intellectual coaching by nurturing students’ conceptual understanding of the complex ideas and values that give meaning to the curriculum.

The Paideia Seminar is a collaborative, intellectual dialogue, facilitated with open-ended questions about a text.
The Paideia Seminar Cycle

The Paideia Seminar can be viewed as a five stage cycle. The duration of each stage depends on the Seminar type and objectives, yet we encourage you to consistently address each stage in good form. As you will see, each stage is designed to build on the others and it's through the progression of each stage that the Seminar objectives (both social and intellectual) are accomplished.

The Paideia Seminar Cycle includes:

- Pre-seminar content activities
- Pre-seminar process activities
- Formal seminar dialogue
- Post-seminar process activities
- Post-seminar content activities

We'll discuss each of these stages and suggest a sequence of steps for planning and assessing seminars in the next section of this manual.

To Summarize Section Two:

- The Paideia Seminar has a simple definition and purpose. Each seminar should include a select set of objectives.
- There are at least four common types of Paideia Seminars.
- The Paideia Seminar is a five stage cycle.
SECTION THREE

PLANNING AND ASSESSING

PAIDEIA SEMINARS
A Seven Step Seminar Planning Sequence

We think of seminar planning as a seven step 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

This seven step sequential approach is recommended for when you are planning seminars. Once you draft a seminar plan, we encourage you to continue reviewing and revising all of the stages so that in its entirety, your Seminar Plan becomes increasingly coherent.
Planning Step 1: Identify Objectives

The first step in the planning process is to identify your specific objectives: intellectual, social, and curricular. The more specific your objectives, the greater the likelihood you will succeed. We recommend that this initial step include a full exploration of this important question: exactly why are you planning this Paideia Seminar? You should try to consider the perspective and experience of your key stakeholders while setting the objectives.

Community Seminar objectives flow out of the common concerns of the community. A Community Seminar might be planned to involve concerned citizens in a dialogue about a Homeowners Association issue. The objective might be to engage in civil discourse to review by-laws, voice personal opinions, and make recommendations for officers. A Community Seminar involving school parents might take place in order to form a more closely knit parent-teacher association with an understanding of school policy.

Faculty Seminar objectives are about issues and ideas relevant to the school. In some instances, a new school will have faculty seminars to build a common understanding of the school mission and mutual respect among colleagues. A Faculty Seminar with veteran faculty might also review their values and mission while folding in ideas related to human motivation or brain function theory.
School-Wide Seminar objectives often focus on engaging students in active dialogue regarding the envisioned school culture, the local beliefs and norms about schooling. In addition to social skills practice, objectives might also address thinking about responsibility, cooperation, and relationships.

Content-Area Seminars are based on an in-depth consideration of curriculum and students’ lives. In order to plan a Paideia unit of study, a teacher first analyzes her or his curriculum to determine what part is factual, what part is skills-based, and what part conceptual.

Key Objectives of the Paideia 3 Columns

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Didactic Instruction</th>
<th>Intellectual Coaching</th>
<th>Seminar Discussion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivers Organized Knowledge</td>
<td>Nurtures Intellectual Skills</td>
<td>Fosters Increased Understanding</td>
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Appears in the curriculum as curricular information (often Nouns) that the student will “know.”

Appears in the curriculum as curricular skills (often Verbs) that the student will be able to “do.”

Appears in the form of ideas and values,* often in the introductory material or implied in the body of the curriculum that the student will “understand.”

(Note other examples of 3 Column Map maps in Appendix A.)

Once a teacher has determined what part of the curriculum is conceptual and listed the ideas and values inherent to the curriculum, the content seminar objectives may include those intellectual focal points as well as appropriate social skills for that particular group of students.

Generally, teachers must nurture and coach the social aspect and be sure to set clear process objectives, especially in the first several seminars with a new group of students.
Planning Step 2: Identify Ideas and Values

Keeping in mind that the Paideia Seminar is about thinking and communication, your objectives should connect to the specific ideas, values, or concepts you want to teach.

An idea is a thought, mental image, or notion. A value is an idea that is desirable or worthy for its own sake. We suggest you make a list of at least three and probably no more than five ideas and values that will focus the seminar discussion.

The next page provides a sample list of essential ideas and values, taken in part from Mortimer Adler’s list of 103 “Great Ideas” derived while indexing *The Great Books of the Western World* and from M. Scott Peck’s *Abounding Grace*.

This is by no means a complete list, but it serves as a handy starting point when planning seminars.
# Ideas and Values for Discussion

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Planning Step 3. Select the Text

A Paideia Seminar text is a tangible artifact or document appropriate for the participants’ current level of intellectual and social development. We have found it important that the seminar text is tangible (in whole or in part) for common reference. The text provides the anchor for the dialogue in that the facilitator can bring the participants back to the text if they begin to digress. Furthermore, the seminar text helps create a level playing field.

Types of Texts

Texts can vary widely in form or type from print to non-print. For example, a seminar text may be a poem, a painting, a chart or graph, a short story, an essay, a word problem, a diagram, a map, a sculpture, or the description of a scientific experiment.

Characteristics of Seminar Text

A Paideia Seminar text is selected for many reasons, but an effective text will have the following characteristics:

- Ideas and Values
- Complexity and Challenge
- Relevance
- Ambiguity
Ideas and values

An idea is a thought, mental image, or notion. It is, by definition abstract rather than concrete. A value is an idea that is desirable or worthy for its own sake. The ideas and values that are most powerful in discussion are often those that are most complex and difficult to summarize. That is why a text that is rich in ideas and values has the most potential for challenging thinking skills.

Complexity and challenge

A good text is a ‘complex system,’ it requires “reading” and rereading; it is not easily disposed of; and it is beyond the ability of any one participant to understand fully. (We mean reading in the broadest sense of the word, including viewing.)

Relevance to participants and curriculum

Where possible, the text has a compelling connection to the participants’ lives. Sometimes this connection emerges only in discussion, but it should exist even when not obvious. Furthermore, the ideas and values in the text should align with the intended conceptual curriculum.

Ambiguity

The text can be legitimately considered and discussed from a variety of different perspectives, including perspectives that seem mutually exclusive.
Paideia Seminar Text Rubric

This rubric was developed by a team of teachers who are experienced in selecting seminar texts for a variety of settings. Use this tool to establish the quality of a text by regarding “3” as indicating a strong text on that characteristic and “1” as indicating a strong text on all four characteristics. For best results, involve several evaluators in applying this (or any) rubric.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ideas and Values</strong></td>
<td>Addresses multiple ideas and values</td>
<td>Addresses some ideas and values</td>
<td>Addresses an idea or value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree of Challenge</strong></td>
<td>Few participants comprehend without assistance</td>
<td>Some participants comprehend without assistance</td>
<td>All participants comprehend without assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance</strong></td>
<td>Clearly related to the curriculum and/or students’ lives</td>
<td>Somewhat related to the curriculum and/or students’ lives</td>
<td>Limited in relation to the curriculum and/or students’ lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ambiguity</strong></td>
<td>Is open to a wide variety of interpretations</td>
<td>Is open to some variety of interpretations</td>
<td>Is open to a few interpretations</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Based on what’s been said about effective seminar texts, take a look at the following examples.

**from The United States Constitution**

**Preamble**

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America.

What are the ideas and values?

**First Amendment**

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, Or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; Or abridging the freedom of speech, Or of the press; Or of the right of the people peacefully to assemble, And to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

What are the ideas and values?
Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

Love has earth to which she clings  
With hills and circling arms about—  
Wall within wall to shut fear out.  
But Thought has need of no such things,  
For thought has a pair of dauntless wings.

On snow and sand and turf, I see  
Where Love has left a printed trace  
With straining in the world's embrace.  
And such is Love and glad to be.  
But Thought has shaken his ankles free.

Thought cleaves the interstellar gloom  
And sits in Sirius' disc all night,  
Till day makes him retrace his flight,  
With smell of burning on every plume,  
Back past the sun to an earthly room.

His gains in heaven are what they are.  
Yet some say Love by being thrall  
And simply staying possesses all  
In several beauty that Thought fares far  
To find fused in another star.

Two poems by Robert Frost

What are the *ideas and values* in each of these poems?

How would you rate these two poems on the Seminar Text Rubric?
Although seminar questions vary depending on the text, there is a consistent set of characteristics that defines a strong question. All the questions that you ask during the seminar *per se* should be open-ended, thought-provoking, and clear.

**Open-ended**

All seminar questions should be open-ended. *Open-ended* questions elicit numerous correct responses. To be correct, a response must be justified preferably based on the text. A correct response may also be substantiated based on other credible references. We must be clear, there are indeed wrong answers in Seminar.

**Thought-Provoking**

Seminar questions are designed to elicit student thinking: to explain and manipulate complex systems. Thoughtful questions inspire participants’ thinking by challenging them to analyze, examine assumptions, evaluate, and synthesize.

**Clear**

As much as possible, seminar questions should be clear. Participants should immediately understand what is being asked. Often clarity comes with simplicity: usually the fewer words in a question the better.

Let's practice drafting some questions with the following sample texts.
“Tell all the Truth but tell it slant--”

Tell all the Truth but tell it slant-
Success in Circuit lies
Too bright for our infirm Delight
The Truth's superb surprise
As Lightning to the Children eased
With explanation kind
The Truth must dazzle gradually
Or every man be blind-

—Emily Dickinson

What are some of the ideas and values?

What open-ended questions could you ask?
What are some of the ideas and values?

What open-ended questions could you ask?
Types of Seminar Questions

In addition to being open-ended, thought-provoking, and clear, Paideia Seminar questions are grouped into three types that together provide direction for the dialogue.

Opening Questions are designed to get participants to identify the main ideas and/or values in the text.
Example: What word or phrase in the text is most important? Why?

Core Questions are designed to have participants closely analyze the details of the text.
Example: Based on the text, what is meant by . . . ?
    What is the relationship between _________ and _________?
    What might we infer based on . . . ?

Closing Questions are designed so that participants personally evaluate the ideas and values.
Example: What does this text teach us about . . . ?

Follow-up Questions:

During Seminar, the facilitator works to follow the course of the discussion closely in order to ask evocative, spontaneous questions in response to participant comments. When possible, usually amid planned core questions, a facilitator may also ask a powerful follow-up question. This would be a question that builds and connects what participants have already said. In addition, follow up questions may help highlight or clarify something that has been said. However, follow up questions should be carefully selected, given the ideal ratio of facilitator to participant talk time. In addition, participants should also be encouraged to ask follow up questions as well.
Test your Paideia Seminar questions by asking:

- Is it open-ended? (How many correct responses can you imagine?)
- Is it thought-provoking? (Does it require analysis, synthesis, evaluation?)
- Is it clear? (Can someone else easily understand exactly what you’re asking?)
- Is it an opening question? (Will it elicit participant identification of the main ideas from the text?)
- Is it a core question? (Will it require close analysis of the text?)
- Is it a closing question? (Will it encourage participants to synthesize and evaluate the real world applications?)
from
“The Declaration of Independence”
by Thomas Jefferson

July 4, 1776

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. —That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

What are some of the ideas and values?

Practice drafting seminar questions—

Opening:

Core:

Closing:
“The River Crossing” Problem

Eight adults and two children need to cross a river and they have one small boat available to help them. The boat can hold either one adult, or one or two children. Everyone in the group is able to row the boat. How many trips does it take for all of them to cross the river?

What if there were:

Six adults and two children?

Fifteen adults and two children?

What are some of the *ideas and values*?

Practice drafting *seminar questions*—

Opening:

Core:

Closing:
As you practice planning seminars, you will see definite patterns in the questions. The opening, core, and closing questions coincide with the beginning, middle, and ending sections of the dialogue. Ultimately, all Seminar questions are designed to challenge participants’ thinking. Over the course of a seminar, skilled facilitators ask increasingly demanding questions, questions that ask students to construct increasingly sophisticated answers (for example, going from analysis to synthesis to evaluation).

A second important pattern in seminar questions has to do with their relative “openness.” In *The Paideia Proposal*, the Seminar is described as a combination of Socratic and maieutic (associated with “midwifery”) questions. The following graphic illustrates the relationship between Socratic and maieutic seminar questions in a Paideia Seminar.

![Diagram](#)

- **Opening Question**: Maieutic (Text)
  - Ask students to **identify** rich ideas from the text.

- **Core Questions**: Socratic (Text)
  - Ask students to **analyze** the textual details.

- **Closing Question**: Maieutic (Personal)
  - Ask students to **synthesize** the ideas.
“Maieutic” questions are constructivist in that they are questions meant to help the participants give birth to their own ideas. Consider maieutic questions as those which elicit responses about the participant’s perspective. In Paideia Seminar, the opening questions are designed to ask students to identify what they think is most compelling about the text. Similarly, the closing question asks participants to consider the implications of the textual ideas and values to their lives. These are both what we consider maieutic questions.

In contrast, core questions are what we think of as Socratic. Core questions focus on what is meant by the text and often illuminate contradictions in one’s thinking.

The structure of a Paideia Seminar, including these very deliberately formed questions, distinguishes this process from the more generic Socratic seminar, which has come to mean any form of teaching by asking questions.

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6 For further discussion on types of questions and the use of maieutic questions, see Pelusa Orellana’s dissertation on “maieutic frames.”
Planning Step 5: Construct Pre- and Post-Seminar Content

The next step in seminar planning is to determine exactly what participants will need to prepare for the dialogue. Before seminar, we have a pre-stage that includes two facets we call content and process. As a general rule, the content activities change from seminar to seminar depending on the text, however, the process stage remains consistent as it is the ritualistic element of the seminar.

Note: in pre-seminar the content precedes process; in post seminar, process precedes content.

Pre-Seminar Content

The content components are associated with the intellectual objectives for the seminar. We strongly recommend that you begin the seminar by introducing the objectives and the ideas and values in your very first mention of seminar. You may even have a warm-up exercise wherein the participants begin to think about the identified ideas and values prior to the seminar.

Pre-seminar content also includes distributing the text and supplementary materials to the participants, with directions for strategic reading strategies. As part of the process, participants should explore the structure of the text—number paragraphs/ stanzas/ lines—during an inspectional reading.

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7 See How to Read a Book as well as other supplements for active reading strategies.
Defining unfamiliar vocabulary and addressing relevant background information, including author’s name, historical period, location, and influences are also part of pre-seminar content. As teachers may imagine, the pre-seminar content work could span over several class periods.

Ultimately, pre-seminar content activities help participants master the basics of the text: who, what, when, and where—leaving why to be addressed during the discussion.

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**Assessment Tip**

Examining pre-seminar content work is the first step toward a fair assessment of seminar participation. Teachers may measure (or grade) pre-seminar content work such as graphic organizers, reading notes, vocabulary lists, journal writing, etc.

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**Post-Seminar Content**

After the seminar per se, post-seminar content activities are intended to help participants process and synthesize the conceptual ideas from the text that they discussed during the dialogue.

Often post-seminar content is in the form of writing, but it may also be another type of construction, done either collaboratively or individually.

Teachers often ask their students to write in post-seminar content activities in order to make use of their increased understanding of the conceptual issues involved.
In content seminars, the post-seminar content activities can go on for several days after the seminar discussion itself, both at home and in class. In some instances, you can use the seminar as part of the formal writing process, whereby the discussion is used to generate ideas that students will then organize into longer, more carefully revised statements.

It is important that each seminar cycle feature both the process and product of student thought. Post-seminar writing products will never have the desired sophistication if students have not first thought about the concepts involved through reading, speaking, and listening about them in a deliberate, formal way. By the same token, students are motivated to do the hard work of reading, speaking, and listening by the opportunity to express themselves about relevant ideas—ultimately in writing.

Assessment Tip

Similar to the pre-seminar content, if teachers need to derive a grade, the post-seminar content step can produce relatively valid and reliable data. Post-seminar content work including student writing, drawing, or manual arts can be measured for evidence of intellectual performance.
Planning Step 6: Establish the Pre and Post Seminar Process

The pre and post-seminar process components are designed to increase participants’ awareness of how they communicate so they can improve their skills.

Pre- and post-seminar process activities come immediately before and after the discussion and are used to assess participation skills. The best way to improve students’ ability to participate in civil discourse is to raise their level of awareness about their communication habits.

Pre-Seminar Process

It is essential that all the participants and the facilitator are seated facing each other in a circle or hollow square so they can make eye contact during the discussion. This arrangement contributes directly to the ability of the participants to understand each other clearly. We encourage facilitators to budget time for preparing the space and, once all participants are there, adjust the seating so that all involved can see and hear each other easily.

We also recommend that name tents are displayed for each participant, even in classes where students know each other. These can be made from recycled paper—folded twice so that the blank side is outermost. Some teachers use index cards, collect them at the end of the seminar, and reuse them several times in future seminars.

We offer a script for pre- and post-seminar process in sample seminar plans, but let’s clarify here that you will want to plan a series of points and questions (for pre- and post-seminar process) that will focus attention on civil discourse. In other words, you are discussing how to have a hearty discussion and express different perspectives while remaining respectful.
Pre-seminar process is the stage when: the Paideia Seminar is formally defined and introduced—each and every time it is practiced. We recommend that before every seminar, the facilitator notes the definition and purpose of the seminar. The next part of pre-process involves a full description of the roles and responsibilities. The facilitator takes the opportunity to make it as clear as possible what participants do in an ideal seminar (perhaps with contrasts). Likewise, the facilitator takes time to describe what his/her primary jobs will be. This ritualistic opening of the seminar helps set the stage for civil dialogue.

Once the definitions and roles are clear, then a brief period of self-assessment takes place. At this point, participants are asked to reflect on how they usually participate in large group conversations and set a relevant process goal for the whole group; for example, that only one person speak at a time or that participants will consistently refer to the text. When a group goal is set, participants then set meaningful individual goals for the discussion. Over time, there should be an increasingly clear connection between the group goal and individual goals, and the students should become more skillful at reaching their personal goals.

Assessment Tip
The pre-seminar process step is an ideal place to begin student self-assessment of seminar participation. We strongly recommend that students consistently set a seminar participation goal and note it in writing (if developmentally appropriate). Teachers do this in various ways including having students write on their name tents, their texts, or on personal checklists.

The group goal or goals are best displayed on a board or flip chart so that they can be referred to throughout, and the individual goals can be written by the participants themselves on their name tents or seminar texts.
**Post-Seminar Process**

The post-seminar process stage takes the individual and the group through an important period of self-assessment. Immediately after the seminar, the facilitator asks participants to review their individual participation goals set during pre-seminar and write a brief note about how they did in relation to their goal and why.

The facilitator should then move the post-seminar process stage on to a discussion of the group’s progress in reaching its common goal. For example, if the group chose to “ask sincere, open-ended questions of each other” in order to enhance the group dynamic, the facilitator can ask them to rate their own performance using a simple scale and, once again, to discuss how they did as well as why this habit of mind is so valuable to a group engaged in the common cause of seminar discussion. Participants are asked to reflect aloud and yet are to focus on the entire group’s efforts without using individual’s names.

If you can take the time, it’s helpful to ask a few volunteers to share their personal assessment with the whole group. (Be sure to emphasize this is an opportunity for an individual to speak about him/herself, not others.) Students sharing their individual assessments should always be voluntary, and they should only discuss their participation, not that of others.

For example, a participant may offer that she intended to “refer to the text” in order to help focus her comments during seminar but admits that she only succeeded in doing so one time. This self-assessment provides an opportunity for the facilitator to “coach” this skill—discussing the necessity for a close analysis of the text and the process of substantiation.

If the teacher has opted to have some students sit outside the circle in specified observer roles, one strategy for dealing with large groups, the post-seminar process step is where these students summarize and report on their findings.

As the final move in the post-process, the facilitator reminds the participants to think ahead to the next seminar and to anticipate ways to improve their participation in future discussions.
Assessment Notes

The Paideia Seminar is a multi-step cycle (pre-seminar, seminar, post-seminar) involving reading and writing as well as speaking and listening.

It is humanly impossible to accurately measure student participation during the seminar per se. Although the facilitator may take notes during the seminar (we call mapping and discuss in the following section), s/he is incapable of capturing all of the students’ thinking, speaking, and listening. Therefore, when a teacher needs to give a grade for seminar s/he must use data from pre- and post-seminar. In this way, the teacher should triangulate the data (use three sources) to arrive at a formative assessment. Only at the end of a marking period should a teacher assign a seminar grade—if then.

If you must arrive at “a grade” for Seminar that is both valid and valuable (in terms of nurturing developing skills) carefully study all three sets of data (students’ pre- and post-content work, students’ pre- and post-process indicators, and your seminar map). In this way, you can work in collaboration with participants to guide and motivate their continuous development.

ASSESSMENT OF SEMINAR should INCLUDE consideration of all the following data:

- pre- and post-seminar content work
- pre- and post-seminar process work
- facilitator seminar map and notes (to be discussed in the following section)
Eventually, you can even derive an individual student’s grade based not on a single seminar performance or even an average of individual performances, but rather on his or her progress over the course of a grading period. In other words, your focus and the student’s can truly become growth over time. To that end, the basic tools that we have included in Appendix B are meant to be used collaboratively by you and your students as tools of communication in your on-going quest for more effective and more profound dialogue.

“Be sympathetic with the type of mind that cuts a poor figure in examination. It may be, in the long examination which life sets us, that it comes out in the end in better shape than the glib and readily reproduced, its passions being deeper, its purposes more worthy, its combining power less commonplace, and its total mental output consequently more important.”

William James
Planning Step 7: Reflection

Reflection helps you refine your own skills as a seminar leader and helps you plan the next seminar with the same group of participants. Reflection usually begins with revisiting the stated objectives for the seminar—both social and intellectual—with some assessment on your relative success in meeting stated goals. You should supplement your memory of the seminar with other sources of data: participant self-assessments and post-seminar writing, your seminar map, and your seminar notes.

You should then use the Seminar Reflection Guide (in Appendix B) to structure your thoughts, taking detailed notes on items of particular interest concerning the particular seminar. Finally, you should make notes toward the next seminar, to be used when you begin the formal planning process all over again.
To Summarize Section Three:

Think of Planning and Assessing Seminar as a Seven-Step Sequence:

- Identifying objectives
- Identifying ideas and values
- Selecting a text
- Composing questions
- Designing pre- and post-seminar content activities
- Refining pre- and post-seminar process scripts
- Reflecting on the seminar cycle.
SECTION FOUR

SEMINAR FACILITATION

AND PARTICIPATION
Facilitator Responsibilities

Facilitator Responsibilities during Pre- Seminar

Seminar facilitation is a matter of building the seminar cycle with participants. Importantly, the facilitator’s first job is to introduce the seminar by clarifying the seminar type and objectives as well as key ideas and values. In essence the facilitator should immediately describe the connection between the ideas/values and the seminar goals.

Facilitation of the pre-seminar content is about giving a focus and purpose for the upcoming interactive events. Specifically, therefore, facilitation of pre-seminar content is about clear points and instructions, while distributing materials (text and instructions for reading). This may occur days prior to the actual dialogue, and ideally, at least some of the pre-seminar content instructions are in writing.

After the pre-seminar content and just before the actual seminar, the facilitator sets the stage by giving instructions about process. We have found this stage to be so formulaic (part of the science of facilitation) that it can be scripted. The following page contains a sample of a Pre-Seminar Process Script; the points of emphasis are:

- To define the seminar
- To describe roles and responsibilities
- To have participants self assess—individually and/or as a group
- To have participants set participation goals—individually and or as a group.
Facilitator Responsibilities during the Seminar

During the seminar *per se*, the facilitator should listen carefully in anticipation of asking follow-up questions, monitor the distribution of talk in order to produce a shared dialogue, and map the discussion. His or her goal is that participants experience increased understanding of themselves, the text, and others.

An Effective Facilitator will:

- **Think** about the ideas and values expressed in the dialogue.
- **Question** the participants in order to nurture increased understanding.
- **Listen** actively to each participant and form follow-up questions.
- **Limit** teacher talk turns and talk time; distribute participant talk turns and talk time.
- **Map** the seminar by recording the amount and type of participation as well as the ideas.

Thinking about the Ideas

A facilitator models analytical thinking which for the majority of the seminar is displayed by listening to and taking notes on participant comments. Every so often, usually in the core section of seminar, he or she paraphrases a statement or idea. The facilitator thinking is most clearly modeled by posing follow-up questions that push the dialogue to deeper and more sophisticated levels.

Questioning for Increased Understanding

Seminar facilitation includes both prepared questions as well as genuine, unplanned follow-up questions. While posing challenging, open-ended questions, the facilitator’s tone contributes to the thoughtful and collaborative nature of the dialogue. Likewise, facilitator questions are posed at a pace that allows think time (silence) for participants and, yet, continuously moves the dialogue forward.
Active Listening

Active listening by the facilitator means watching the body language of the participants, gauging the tone of voice used by the speakers, and remaining aware of the general rate and cohesion of participant talk. Ultimately, the experienced facilitator learns to choose the right moment to ask either a planned question or an unplanned follow-up question to nurture a greater depth of understanding. As silence often allows for thinking, facilitators should practice extended wait time after asking a question.

Limiting Teacher Talk Time

The facilitator often appears to play a very passive role during a successful seminar, quietly taking notes and occasionally inserting a question into the flow of the dialogue. In fact, it is his or her responsibility to ensure that the participants’ social and intellectual skills are being exercised as they develop a greater understanding of the text, the self, and others. One of the best ways to do this is to remain silent so that the students can practice.

“The sequence of talk in typical classroom discussion is: teacher-student-teacher-student, etc. In a dialogue, the sequence of talk is more like: teacher-student-student-student, etc.”

Danielewicz, Rogers, Noblit, 1996; Nystrand, 1999
Mapping the Seminar

A seminar facilitator interested in enhancing the quality of the dialogue “maps” (or takes notes about) the discussion for at least three distinct purposes.

The first is to keep track of which participants are speaking voluntarily. By constructing a visual of the talk, a facilitator can collaboratively work to balance the talk. In essence this reason for mapping is to coach the process or the social aspect of seminar.

The second reason to map seminar is to record significant participant comments (questions, references to text, etc.). in order to return to them later while framing follow-up questions. This mapping strategy will help you coach the thinking skills of the participants.

The third is that the mapping process itself is a kind of active listening strategy that will help you discipline yourself to listen critically and objectively.

In summary, mapping will help you during the seminar itself by focusing your attention on who is and is not talking and also on the most effective follow-up questions you should ask.

On the following pages is a standard, blank seminar mapping form, followed by an example of a map created by a seminar leader during a discussion of the French fairy tale, “Beauty and the Beast.”

The facilitator wrote each participant name in the blanks and then used the graphic element of the map to keep track of who was saying what during the flow of the discussion. She used one tally mark to signify each talk turn, a lower case “t” to denote references to the text, and a question mark to note participant questions. In the margins around the outside of the circle, she captured the key ideas of various participants’ discourse, even using quotes for later reference.

It is impossible to overstate the importance of the map to you when you sit down after the seminar to reflect on what actually took place. As suggested in Step 7 of the Planning and Assessing Seminar sequence, your seminar map may become part of your portfolio once you have used it to
fill out the “Seminar Reflection Guide” (see Appendix B), a tool intended to help you self-assess each time you lead a seminar.

Obviously, you will have to revise the actual graphic you use to record your map to fit the size of your class and even the shape in which the students are seated (square, rectangle, circle). In the same way, we encourage you to develop your own shorthand method for coding student comments and taking notes on their thoughts. The vital thing is that you get in the habit of mapping the discussion each and every time you lead a seminar. Ultimately, these maps will guide you as you improve your own facilitation skills as well as coach the participation skills of your students.
An experienced seminar facilitator maps a seminar dialogue for three distinct purposes: 1, to keep track of which participants are speaking and how much; and 2, to record participant thoughts in order to return to them later in framing follow-up questions; and 3, as an active listening strategy.
Seminar Map Sample

Who changed the most during the tale? Opening votes
Beauty - 8  Beast - 10  Pass - 1
Facilitator’s Responsibilities in Post-Seminar Process

The Seminar Facilitator should always budget some time for participants to reflect on the dialogue process immediately following seminar. The first step of post-seminar process is a brief (1-2 minutes) period of silent self assessment. At this point the seminar facilitator can faithfully engage in self-assessment as well by completing the “Seminar Reflection Guide” (building his or her own Seminar Portfolio). Next, time should be spent with the group assessing the collective participation. Then, at least three or four minutes should be allotted for individuals to share aloud their individual self assessment. Finally, the facilitator may ask the group to identify what might be the process goals in the next seminar.

Facilitator’s Responsibilities in Post-Seminar Content

The last step in facilitation is the post-seminar content stage. As in the pre-seminar content, the main job of facilitator is to give clear directions and explicitly state the purpose—why we are doing the seminar and perhaps where this seminar is leading (for content seminars, this would be the time when the teacher makes connections and points to the bigger picture of the curricular unit or project).

Facilitating a Paideia Seminar is both an art and a science. It is a science in that the best seminars faithfully follow a detailed pattern. When the facilitator succeeds in following this pattern, the results in terms of participation engagement and participation understanding are relatively predictable. As the Paideia Seminar cycle is replicated, both facilitator and participants improve their skills.

After one has practiced facilitating seminars and developed confidence with the structure and process, we recommend integrating other features in an artful way. No doubt, each seminar is unique. Even two seminars based on the same text and set of plans end up going in different directions. The
art of facilitation often rests in the pace and tone of facilitation: fast or slow, humorous or serious, personal or impersonal, local or global. The art of facilitation involves listening carefully, taking focused notes, and responding to the flow of the dialogue in a way that encourages and challenges the participants at the same time.

“To be in truth, we must know how to observe and reflect and speak and listen, with passion and with discipline, in the circle gathered around a given subject.”

Parker Palmer
Participant Responsibilities

As part of the collaborative nature of a Paideia seminar, participants’ responsibilities mirror the facilitator’s throughout each step of the seminar cycle.

Engagement in pre-seminar content: actively reading, taking notes, beginning to generate questions about the ideas.

In pre-seminar process: self-assessment of one’s own communication habits and setting a personal goal, contributing to the group goal selection.

Seminar Participation

The essential role of seminar participants is to engage in the dialogue process. Participants should consistently challenge themselves to expand and refine their seminar participation skills. The responsibility of each seminar participant is to think, listen, speak with each other, refer to the text, and address others respectfully.

- **Think** deeply about the ideas and values expressed in the dialogue, examining the various perspectives with an open mind.
- **Listen** by looking at the speaker, perhaps taking notes, and not talking while another is talking.
- **Speak** loudly enough for everyone to hear, asking questions as well as making statements, while looking at others.
- **Refer to the text** by citing specific page and line numbers and quoting actual passages to support a point of view.
- **Address others respectfully** by using others’ names, agreeing/disagreeing constructively, and making connections to others’ comments.
The way students learn to participate in seminar is through practice and coaching. In ways, the facilitator is just that, one among equals. Often it happens that participants coach participants in what is acceptable behavior.⁸

**Strategies for Coaching Seminar Participation**

Naturally, some participants are going to speak more often and may seem to dominate. Likewise, some participants will speak relatively little and may seem passive.

The group dynamic develops over time and patterns reverse or balance only with concerted effort. The participants who talk a lot often feel compelled to do so because some others may not talk at all. Similarly, some participants may not talk much because others are taking up much of the discussion time. As you can see, the group interaction is symbiotic; one side always influences the other.

This is why it is so important, that from the beginning stages of seminar practice, participants identify personal communication goals as a way of raising their awareness of the interactive process. Through this important practice of becoming aware of communication habits, we see consistent improvements in dialogue.

---

⁸ See Pihlgren, A. *Socrates in the Classroom.*
SIMPLE TECHNIQUES

- Start and continuously practice self-assessment before and after each seminar.
- Set “Look at the person speaking” as the group goal with beginners. Consistently coach students on this goal before adding others.
- As need be, call time out from seminar and/or be explicit about reminding participants of their individual and group goals.
- Take a subtle approach by mentioning or reminding of goals before asking a (core or closing) question.
- Have participants tally talk turns themselves. Participants may be given a certain number of tokens or other tangible measure of talk turns and each time they speak, turn in a token. (Use of tokens has a way of taking on a life of its own and should be considered a short term solution to highlight balancing and sharing talk turns among all.)
- Provide select participants a question or two before seminar and have them draft a response they can read during seminar.
- Ask a question and then assign participants to discuss their response in pairs; after a few minutes of paired talk, ask for one in the pair to share a summary of the responses. Repeat the technique later, asking the other in the pair to share.
- Be deliberate about the assigning seats, while balancing between an atmosphere of safety and challenge.
- Create an inner and outer circle (the inner circle should include several more participants than the outer circle) and assign those in the outer circle to take notes on specific aspect of the Seminar. For example,
  - the number of times a textual reference is made
  - how many talk turns a particular group of students take (noting gender or ethnicity, for example)
  - the number of participant questions asked
  - the number of times the teacher talks
  - the sequence pattern of talk turns.

Allot time during post-seminar process discussions for the observers to share their observations.
If you have a group that is too large for your space and participants are at a developmental stage where it is inappropriate for them to take notes on the seminar, have half the class work on an individualized pre-seminar activity while the other half participates in seminar and then reverse the groups.

When hand-raising is an issue, start by having a discussion with your students about what seminar is and why we do them. Ask students what happens when students raise hands as well as what might be the possibilities for having no hand-raising. Ask students how they can have a discussion with no raising of hands and be sure to remind them of what they’ve said as needed.

Help students evolve from the habit of hand-raising by announcing a certain amount of time (say 5 minutes) during the seminar when you’ll work on not raising hands. In your next seminar, try to increase the amount of time with no hand-raising.

Emphasize listening, looking and talking with each other (not to the facilitator/teacher). Explain that the seminar is a shared endeavor. In this format, the teacher is one among equals and the idea is to collaboratively come to a better understanding of the text and related ideas. Be explicit about not looking just at the facilitator and emphasize that participants/students look at each other (look at the person speaking). Doing this also helps them know when they may take a talk turn.

Use a round robin format for responses with these points in mind:

After you ask a question, give participants time to think about their response.

Round robin questions should be a two part question/response. The first part should be a short answer—usually a question that begins with ‘what.’ The second part of the question is usually why and at this point, participants are encouraged to be spontaneous, to jump in and give their answers as they are led to.

Use round-robin responses to questions in order to generate ideas and improve participation. Explain that you will ask a question and that you want to hear everyone’s answer.
After asking the question and giving appropriate think time, select a volunteer to answer; after the person has answered, then ask him or her to choose the direction of the round robin, left or the right around the circle.

When you use a round robin technique, be sure the question will elicit a fairly brief answer, which later can be expounded upon. You don’t want the round-robin process to take too long because participants will have difficulty staying engaged. Ask a round-robin question that can be answered in a few words.

If someone needs to pass that’s okay, but say you’ll come back to them and make a note to do so.

After everyone has answered initially, then follow up by explaining that you want the participants to explain their answers spontaneously.

A variation on round robin is called “hoppin robin.” Many of the same above suggestions apply, but participants jump in when they choose.

Work with participants to build on others’ ideas. Encourage the use of “I want to add to…”

Keep in mind that seminar participation is a learned skill and that over the course of the year, you may work on various aspects of the process as your students evolve. Your seminars will improve as your students grow, and your more challenging seminars will, in turn, inspire further development.

**Improving Seminars over time**

**In the beginning . . .**

- Start with non-print or relatively short texts
- Explain the seminar process very clearly and discuss expectations
- Set one fundamental group goal (age appropriate)
- Take time to practice the seminar process and behavioral skills
- Be willing to have “out of text” dialogue
Along the way . . .

- Select texts that include ideas and values that are both relevant to participants and challenging
- Set group and individual goals
- Decrease facilitator talk
- If need be, pause during seminars to assess participation
- Examine progress made and celebrate success

Down the road . . .

- Coach participants to make explicit connections with others’ comments
- Encourage participants to ask their own questions regularly
- Move toward more “in the text” dialogue focus
- Expect higher-order thinking skills
- Decrease facilitator talk
- Assess and celebrate progress and successes
To Summarize Section Four:

A seminar facilitator is responsible for:

- Leading pre-seminar content and process activities
- Facilitating the dialogue by asking open-ended questions
- Mapping the seminar
- Leading post-seminar process and content activities.

A seminar participant is responsible for:

- “Reading” the text closely
- Setting individual process goals and contributing to group goals
- Sharing ideas by speaking during the dialogue
- Listening actively to others during the dialogue
- Self-assessment in post-seminar process
- Writing or other post-seminar content work.
SECTION FIVE

APPENDICES
APPENDIX A: PLANNING TOOLS
Paideia Three-Column Map

Unit Title: ____________________________________________

Approximate Start and Completion Date: ____________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Didactic</th>
<th>Coaching</th>
<th>Seminar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Must Know Facts &amp; Information</em></td>
<td><em>Skills for Mastery</em></td>
<td><em>Ideas &amp; Values for Understanding</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Sample Paideia Three-Column Curriculum Map:**

*Secondary Grades*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Didactic</th>
<th>Coaching</th>
<th>Seminar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Must Know Facts &amp; Information</em></td>
<td><em>Skills for Mastery</em></td>
<td><em>Ideas &amp; Values for Understanding</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geometric elements including points, segments, rays, lines, angles, and planes</td>
<td>Identify characteristics (e.g., sides, vertices, angles, faces, edges, congruent parts) of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-dimensional shapes including circles, regular polygons, quadrilaterals (square, rectangle, rhombus, parallelogram, trapezoid), and triangles (acute, obtuse, right, equilateral, scalene, isosceles)</td>
<td>Use formulas to find area and perimeter of triangles and quadrilaterals, area and circumference of circles, and surface area and volume of rectangular prisms</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-dimensional shapes including spheres, cones, cylinders, prisms (with polygonal bases), and pyramids (with polygonal bases)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Measurement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Unit Title:** Geometric Shapes and Measures

**Length:** Three Weeks

**Curricular Objectives:** Identify two- and three-dimensional geometric shapes; explain how to find area and perimeter of geometric shapes.
Sample Paideia Three-Column Curriculum Map:
Secondary Grades

Unit Title: 1960’s & Vietnam  Length: Four Weeks

Curricular Objectives: Identify historical facts on the Vietnam War; respond in writing to print and non-print texts; explain ideas around war and peace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Didactic</th>
<th>Coaching</th>
<th>Seminar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Must Know Facts &amp; Information</td>
<td>Skills for Mastery</td>
<td>Ideas &amp; Values for Understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. Historical Facts:  
--Vietnam civil war  
--Events leading up to US involvement  
--Names of key people and events after US involvement  
--US foreign policy since 1950  
--Effects on American society of involvement in war  
2. Different literary genres of print and non-print text.  
3. Terminology used by soldiers  
4. Geography of Vietnam  
1. Gather dissenting information about the war and draw conclusions about reasons.  
2. Complete graphic organizers while reading The Things They Carried.  
3. Reflect and react to literature and non-print texts:  
--Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam  
--Chicago 1968  
--photographs from the era  
--music of the time  
--guest speakers: Vietnam war veterans  
4. Write in personal response journal.  
5. Examine cause-effect relationships.  
6. Evaluate the conduct of US foreign policy since 1950.  
7. Prepare questions and responses for guest speakers.  
8. Select theme and design mural. Prepare timeline and accompanying notes. Work collaboratively and participate in conversations  
9. Develop thematic connections individually and in a group.  
10. Synthesize ideas from varied sources.  
11. Prepare summary and presentation for US History classes.  
12. Inform an audience through writing and speech.  

Honor  
Justice  
Duty  
War  
Beauty  
Emotion  
Peace  
Memory  
Life and Death  
Government  
Law  
Choice
Seminar Plan Form

Text:

Ideas and Values:

Pre-Seminar
Content — Present relevant background information:

Process — Prepare participants to participate in seminar discussion:

Seminar
Opening — Identify main ideas from the text:

Core — Focus/analyze textual details:

Closing — Personalize and apply the textual ideas:

Post-Seminar
Process — Assess individual and group participation in seminar discussion:

Content — Extend application of textual and discussion ideas:
Paideia Seminar Text Rubric

This rubric was developed by a team of teachers who are experienced in selecting seminar texts for a variety of settings. Use this tool to establish the quality of a text by regarding “3” as indicating a strong text on that characteristic and “12” as indicating a strong text on all four characteristics. For best results, involve several evaluators in applying this (or any) rubric.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas and Values</td>
<td>Addresses multiple ideas and values</td>
<td>Addresses some ideas and values</td>
<td>Addresses an idea or value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Challenge</td>
<td>Few participants comprehend without assistance</td>
<td>Some participants comprehend without assistance</td>
<td>All participants comprehend without assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Clearly related to the curriculum and/or students’ lives</td>
<td>Somewhat related to the curriculum and/or students’ lives</td>
<td>Limited in relation to the curriculum and/or students’ lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguity</td>
<td>Is open to a wide variety of interpretations</td>
<td>Is open to some variety of interpretations</td>
<td>Is open to a few interpretations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Generic Seminar Questions

Opening Questions

- What word or phrase is most important in _____________________________?

- What might be another good title for this?

- Do you agree or disagree with main idea or value in this text? (why or why not?)

Core Questions

According to the text, what does the term (or phrase) ____________________ mean?

- In what ways are ____________________ and ____________________ alike (or different)?

- What is the difference between ____________________ and ____________________?

- How do you think ____________ was viewed by (or would be viewed by)____________?

- Does the text agree or disagree with this statement: ____________________?

Closing Questions

- What are the consequences or implications of this text or this discussion?

- How do the ideas in the text relate to today?

- What if _____________________ happened (or were true) instead of________?
APPENDIX B: ASSESSMENT TOOLS
Using Seminar Assessment Tools

The National Paideia Center defines assessment as student-centered and collaborative—intended to inspire on-going skill development. In this spirit, you should use any seminar assessment tool during both pre- and post-seminar discussions.

The following pages include a set of basic seminar assessment tools. During pre-seminar, discuss the process goals listed so that students are actively engaged in talking about each item. Giving this initial step ample time is truly fundamental to setting the foundations for productive dialogue. Therefore, provide clear explanations and give examples as necessary.

Group and individual process goals should be selected based on the assessment tool (see Appendix C for pre-seminar process script examples). The group goal may be pre-determined by the facilitator or established collaboratively by the whole group. However, each participant should then use the same assessment tool to choose an individual process goal for that seminar.

During post-seminar process, the group should reflect on and discuss how well they achieved their collective goal. Participants should then candidly reflect on their individual process goal(s) in writing.

Specific instructions and materials for this is a facilitator decision (see Appendix C for post-seminar process script examples). This individual assessment record of a specific seminar can then go into each student’s seminar notebook or portfolio and inform his or her preparation for the next seminar, thus contributing directly to on-going improvement.

The following seminar assessment tools, including Seminar Groundrules and a Seminar Checklist, can be effectively used in their exact form, at the beginning stages of seminar practice. However, you should revise and align your assessment tools (adding more specificity) to match the growing mastery of participants.
Seminar Groundrules

**Listen** by looking at the speaker, perhaps taking notes, and not talking while someone else is talking.

**Speak** loudly enough for everyone to hear, asking questions as well as making statements, while looking at the other participants.

**Think** deeply about the ideas and values expressed in the dialogue, examining the various perspectives with an open mind.

**Refer to the text** by citing specific details and quoting actual passages to support a point of view.

**Address other participants respectfully** by using their names, agreeing or disagreeing constructively, and making connections to others’ comments.
Seminar Checklist

Name ____________________________ Date ____________________________

Seminar: _____________________________________________________________________________________

Text: ________________________________________________________________________________________

DIRECTIONS:
Before seminar, select one or two items for your personal participation goal(s).
After seminar, circle the most accurate response:
(N)ever, (S)ometimes, or (A)lways.
Write a brief note to yourself about your participation goal(s) for next seminar.

N  S  A  I looked at the one other person who was speaking.
N  S  A  I formulated possible questions for this text
N  S  A  I was courteous to others by actively listening and waiting my turn to speak.
N  S  A  I listened to the ideas of others with an open mind.
N  S  A  I shared my ideas even when I was uncertain.
N  S  A  I built on what was said while giving my opinion.
N  S  A  I cited examples from the text to validate my opinions (agreeing or disagreeing graciously).
N  S  A  I contributed a new idea to the dialogue.

During our next seminar, my personal seminar participation goal(s) will be:

because…
Seminar Reflection Guide

The first version of the “Seminar Teaching Guide” was created in 1994 to help teachers, trainers, and administrators identify components of a successful seminar. In the past ten years the thinking about a successful seminar has evolved, suggesting that modifications needed to be made to the original document. Each item was carefully considered by a number of experts in seminar facilitation. As a result, some familiar items have changed slightly, several new items have been added, some were removed, and some were left unaltered. The purpose, however is the same: to improve facilitation by defining the components that make an excellent seminar.

You may choose to complete this tool as a self-assessment. As soon as possible after the seminar, complete the document. The resulting insights will be more powerful if you use a video recording of your seminar because you will often notice statements and behavior that you did not see during the seminar. This will help you more accurately complete the document.

Another way to improve your seminar facilitation is to ask another teacher, mentor, or administrator to observe you, using the document as a common medium to provide feedback. You may select a section on which you would like to focus and direct the observer to concentrate on items in that section only. If you would like feedback on multiple sections you may request that as well. It should be noted that the document was not intended to be used by someone only observing the video. The seminar is such a dynamic experience that the person providing feedback needs to be in the room throughout the seminar.

Part one of the document asks questions that invite your reflection on your growth through a series of seminars. Each time you complete the form, keep the results in your portfolio and use it to show growth over the school year. The current recommendation is to complete the entire form three times during the school year. Parts of the form may be used at any point. Part 2 has been modified from the earlier format to a Lichert scale to strengthen the idea of the learning process. Often, the numbers require further explanation and space has been left between the items to offer further clarification, suggestions for future behavior, or notes explaining why the item did not apply.

As you complete the reflection, please keep in mind the purpose: to improve facilitation of the seminar as described by the National Paideia Center. It should not be used to calculate a score that could be used to rank or rate the performance of the facilitator.
Name ___________________________________________ Date __________________________

Subject __________________________________________ Grade Level ____________________

Text: (title, genre) _______________________________________________________________

Facilitation goal selected __________________________________________________________

Participation goal selected _________________________________________________________

Part 1

I have led _____ (approximate number) of seminars this year with this class. Were there any special circumstances that should be considered while reflecting on this seminar?

How did this seminar text* address the curriculum?

What did you do to prepare the students for this seminar?

What follow-up activities were planned for the students?

How did you determine student understanding of the ideas and values?

Reflecting on your growth as a facilitator, choose a goal for the next seminar.

Additional Comments
Part 2

For each of the following items please circle 1, 2, 3, or 4 as appropriate.

1 = definitely       2 = probably       3 = possibly       4 = definitely not

Pre-Seminar Activities

1. The text chosen was appropriate for a seminar and 1 2 3 4 the ability of the students.

2. The room was arranged so that participants could easily 1 2 3 4 make eye contact with one another.

3. A process goal was selected before the seminar began. 1 2 3 4

4. The teacher had clearly stated expectations for behavior 1 2 3 4 as evidenced by the students’ actions.

5. Students had adequate preparation for the discussion 1 2 3 4 as evidenced by the quality of comments.

Teacher as Facilitator

6. The teacher was seated on the same level with the students. 1 2 3 4

7. The teacher took notes/mapped the discussion. 1 2 3 4

8. The teacher was knowledgeable about the text being 1 2 3 4 discussed and could locate references to aid students in supporting the point being made.

9. The teacher refrained from giving his or her own 1 2 3 4 opinion during the seminar.
10. The teacher helped make connections between ideas. 1 2 3 4

11. The teacher encouraged student interaction (provided opportunities for shy students, was aware of eye contact). 1 2 3 4

12. The teacher clarified when students misunderstood or factual errors were made by further questioning or probing if not corrected by other students. 1 2 3 4

13. The teacher occasionally paraphrased students’ remarks when necessary for clarification. 1 2 3 4

14. The teacher stopped misbehavior quickly and effectively. 1 2 3 4

15. The teacher accepted and encouraged divergent views and opinions. 1 2 3 4

16. The teacher included the whole group in discussion and did not focus on a select few. 1 2 3 4

17. The teacher refrained from summarizing the discussion (telling students what they learned at the end of the seminar). 1 2 3 4

**Questioning Strategies**

18. The teacher questioned students, not telling or teaching factual knowledge about the text. 1 2 3 4

19. The opening question was broad and each participant was given an opportunity to respond (this does not mean every seminar must begin with the round robin technique). 1 2 3 4
20. The questions posed did not lead students to a preconceived “right” answer.

21. The teacher allowed sufficient wait-time for students to think before allowing responses or asking another question.

22. The teacher was a good listener and framed follow-up questions from student comments.

23. The teacher made smooth transitions between questions asked (not “my next question is”).

24. The teacher asked questions that generated higher order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation).

25. The teacher asked closing questions that encouraged students to explore the personal relevance of text.

**Student Participation**

26. Students had a copy of the text being discussed in front of them or where all could refer to it.

27. Students observed the rules of behavior for seminar participation.

28. Students talked more than the teacher.

29. Students did not require permission from the teacher or other students to speak during the seminar.
30. Students directed comments to each other rather than the teacher.  

31. Students showed respect for others' views and opinions by listening and not criticizing others.  

32. Students supported their statements with references to the text.  

33. Students used each others' names when agreeing or disagreeing with one another.  

34. Students asked meaningful questions during the seminar.  

35. Students were comfortable sharing opinions based on text evidenced by a conversation-like atmosphere.  

Post-seminar activities  

36. The process goal was re-examined and suggestions were made for the next seminar.  

37. The map or reflections was shared with the students.  

38. Students were given the opportunity to further reflect on and articulate their thoughts.
APPENDIX C: SEMINAR TEXTS AND PLANS
Elements of Chemistry (1789)\textsuperscript{9}

\textit{Antoine Laurent Lavouisier from the Introduction}

(1) When I began the following work, my only object was to extend and explain more fully the memoir which I read at the public meeting of the Academy of Sciences in the month of April, 1787, on the necessity of reforming and completing the nomenclature of chemistry. While engaged in the employment, I perceived, better than I had ever done before, the justice of the following maxims of the Abbe de Condillac, in his Logic, and some other of his works.

(2) “We think only through the medium of words.—Languages are true analytical methods.—Algebra, which is adapted to its purpose in every species of expression, in the most simple, most exact, and best manner possible, is at the same time a language and an analytical method.—The art of reasoning is nothing more than a language well arranged.”

(3) Thus, while I thought myself employed only in forming a nomenclature, and while I proposed to myself nothing more than to improve the chemical language, my work transformed itself by degrees, without my being able to prevent it, into a treatise upon the elements of chemistry.

(4) The impossibility of separating the nomenclature of a science from the science itself is owing to this, that every branch of physical science must consist of three things: the series of facts which are the objects of the science, the ideas which represent these facts, and the words by which these ideas are expressed. Like three impressions of the same seal, the word ought to produce the idea, and the idea to be a picture of the fact. And, as ideas are preserved and communicated by means of words, it necessarily follows that we cannot improve the language of any science without at the same time improving the science itself; neither can we, on the other hand, improve a science without improving the language or nomenclature which belongs to it. However certain the facts of any science may be and however just the ideas we may have formed of these facts, we can only communicate false impressions to others while we want words by which these may be properly expressed.

\textsuperscript{9} Translated by Robert Kerr. Great Books of the Western World, vol. 45.
Ain’t I a Woman

Sojourner Truth

Sojourner Truth walked slowly to the podium; her six-foot figure towered over the audience and in her deep, resonant voice, she said:

“Well, children, where there is so much racket, there must be something out of kilter, I think that ’twixt the Negroes of the South and the women of the North—all talk about rights—the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what’s all this here talking about? (She pointed to a minister in the audience.) That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place and Ain’t I a Woman?

Look at me, look at my arms. I have ploughed, and planted and gathered crops into barns. And no man could head me. And Ain’t I a Woman?

I have borne thirteen children and seen most all sold into slavery, and when I cried out with a mother’s grief, none but Jesus heard me. And Ain’t I a Woman? (Women cheered wildly in the audience.)

“He (pointed to another minister) talks about his thing in the head. What’s that they call it?” ("Intellect," whispered a woman in the audience.) “That’s it honey. What’s intellect got to do with women’s rights, or Negroes’ rights?

“If my cup won’t hold but a pint and yours holds a quart, wouldn’t you be mean not to let me have my little half-measure full?

“The little man in black there. He says women can’t have as much rights as men cause Christ wasn’t a woman. Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? (She thundered!) From God and a Woman! Man had nothing to do with him. (The entire church roared with applause.)

“If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back and get it right-side up again. And now that they are asking to do it, the men better let them.

“Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain’t got nothing more to say.”

— Adapted from a speech at Women’s Right Convention, 1851
“Staircase” Problem

In my neighborhood there are six houses each with a staircase made out of square blocks.

A new house is being built. If the staircase is built bases on the illustrated pattern, how many blocks will be in it? How many blocks would be in the 10th staircase? The fifteenth staircase?
Reprinted from The World of M. C. Escher by permission of Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

– M. C. Escher '53
Any Human to Another

Countee Cullen

The ills I sorrow at
Not me alone
Like an arrow,
Pierce to the marrow,
Through the fat
And past the bone.

Your grief and mine
Must intertwine
Like sea and river,
Be fused and mingle,
Diverse yet single,
Forever and forever.

Let no man be so proud
And confident,
To think he is allowed
A little tent
Pitched in a meadow
Of sun and shadow
All his little own.

Joy may be shy, unique,
Friendly to a few,
Sorrow never scorned to speak
To any who
Were false or true.

Your every grief
Like a blade
Shining and unsheathed
Must strike me down.
Of bitter aloes wreathed,
My sorrow must be laid
On your head like a crown.
Traveling through the Dark

William Stafford

Traveling through the dark I found a deer
dead on the edge of the Wilson River road.
It is usually best to roll them into the canyon:
that road is narrow; to swerve might make more dead.

By glow of the tail-light I stumbled back of the car
and stood by the heap, a doe, a recent killing;
she had stiffened already, almost cold.
I dragged her off; she was large in the belly.

My fingers touching her side brought me the reason—
her side was warm; her fawn lay there waiting,
alive, still, never to be born.
Beside that mountain road I hesitated.

The car aimed ahead its lowered parking lights;
under the hood purred the steady engine.
I stood in the glare of the warm exhaust turning red;
around our group I could hear the wilderness listen.

I thought hard for us all—my only swerving—,
then pushed her over the edge into the river.
from the Tao te Ching

Lao Tzu

Be tactful and you remain whole;
bend and you remain straight.

The hollow is filled,
the old is renewed.

Economy is gain,
excess is confusion.

Therefore sages embrace unity
as a model for the world.

Not seeing themselves,
they are therefore clear.

Not asserting themselves,
they are therefore outstanding.

Not congratulating themselves,
they are therefore meritorious.

Not taking pride in themselves,
they last long.

It is just because they do not contend
that no one in the world can contend with them.

Is it empty talk, the old saying
that tact keeps you whole?

When truthfulness is complete,
it still resorts to this.
Of Studies
Francis Bacon

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshaling of affairs, come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience; for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bound in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies; simple men admire them; and wise men use them: for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested: that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others: but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books: else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend. Abeunt studia in mores. Nay, there is no stond or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies: like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again: if his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the Schoolmen; for they are cymini sectores; if he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases: so every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

10 Contemn: despise.
11 Admire: wonder at (with open mouths).
12 Flashy: insipid.
13 Witty: full of nimble fancy.
15 Stond: stoppage.
16 Reins: kidneys.
17 Cymini sectores: “hairsplitters” (literally, “dividers of cumin seed”).
18 Receipt: prescription (in the medical sense), remedy.
On the Liberty of Thought and Discussion

John Stuart Mill

But when we turn to subjects infinitely more complicated, to morals, religion, politics, social relations, and the business of life, three-fourths of the arguments for every disputed opinion consist in dispelling the appearances which favour some opinion different from it. The greatest orator, save one, of antiquity, has left it on record that he always studied his adversary’s case with as great, if not with still greater, intensity than even his own. What Cicero practised as the means of forensic success, requires to be imitated by all who study any subject in order to arrive at the truth. He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side; if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion. The rational position for him would be suspension of judgment, and unless he contents himself with that, he is either led by authority, or adopts, like the generality of the world, the side to which he feels most inclination. Nor is it enough that he should hear the arguments of adversaries from his own teachers, presented as they state them, and accompanied by what they offer as refutations. That is not the way to do justice to the arguments, or bring them into real contact with his own mind. He must be able to hear them from persons who actually believe them; who defend them in earnest, and do their very utmost for them. He must know them in their most plausible and persuasive form; he must feel the whole force of the difficulty which the true view of the subject has to encounter and dispose of; else he will never really possess himself of the portion of truth which meets and removes that difficulty.

Ninety-nine in a hundred of what are called educated men are in this condition; even of those who can argue fluently for their opinions. Their conclusion may be true, but it might be false for anything they know: they have never thrown themselves into the mental position of those who think differently from them, and considered what such persons may have to say; and consequently they do not, in any proper sense of the word, know the doctrine which they themselves profess. They do not know those parts of it which explain and justify the remainder; the considerations which show that a fact which seemingly conflicts with another is reconcilable with it, or that, of two apparently strong reasons, one and not the other ought to be preferred. All that part of the truth which turns the scale, and decides the judgment of a completely informed mind, they are strangers to; nor is it ever really known, but to those who have attended equally and impartially to both sides, and endeavoured to see the reasons of both in the strongest light. So essential is this discipline to a real understanding of moral and human subjects, that if opponents of all important
truths do not exist, it is indispensable to imagine them, and supply them with the strongest arguments which the most skilful devil's advocate can conjure up. To abate the force of these considerations, an enemy of free discussion may be supposed to say, that there is no necessity for mankind in general to know and understand all that can be said against or for their opinions by philosophers and theologians. That it is not needful for common men to be able to expose all the misstatements or fallacies of an ingenious opponent. That it is enough if there is always somebody capable of answering them, so that nothing likely to mislead uninstructed persons remains unrefuted. That simple minds, having been taught the obvious grounds of the truths inculcated on them, may trust to authority for the rest, and being aware that they have neither knowledge nor talent to resolve every difficulty which can be raised, may repose in the assurance that all those which have been raised have been or can be answered, by those who are specially trained to the task.
SEMINAR PLAN: “How Flowers Changed the World”
from The Immense Journey (1946)
Loren Eiseley

Ideas and Values: adaptation, cause and effect, change, evolution, time

Pre-Seminar

Content – Present relevant background information:

Begin the seminar, by explicitly stating that our purpose in participating in this dialogue is to gain understanding of these important ideas: *adaptation, cause and effect, change, evolution, time*, as well as others in this essay by Loren Eiseley. Likewise, our goal is to practice scientific thinking.

Relay that “How Flowers Changed the World” is an essay written by Loren Eiseley from his book *The Immense Journey*. Distribute the essay and note that Eiseley was known for a personal and poetic style called the hidden essay, which he used to explain scientific ideas such as evolution to the general public.

Evolution is the process by which inherited traits become more-or-less common in a population over successive generations. Over time, the process can lead to the development of new species from existing ones.

Ask participants to number the paragraphs in the left margin (totaling 38).

Note this additional background information as needed:

The “Age of Reptiles” was probably 300-200 MYA.

The “Dinosaur Age” (the Mesozoic Era) was approximately 250-65 MYA.

*Cretaceous* times (paragraph 14) refers to the third and most recent period of the Mesozoic Era (*cretaceous* means “of chalk”). Roughly 250-65 mya.

*prehensile* (paragraph 33), referring to tail or hand, means “capable of grasping.”

Ask participants to read the text actively underlining key words and phrases. (Depending on the class, allow students to read in small groups.) Have participants review the text by completing a simple graphic organizer, formatted something like the grid below. Add a fourth category of information of your choosing. Direct participants to write 2-3 key phrases about each category from the text (also noting page number).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plants</th>
<th>Animals</th>
<th>Weather</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ask participants to take a few minutes to look back at their notes on their text and/or graphic organizer. Acknowledge that we will use both page numbers and paragraph numbers for referring to the text.

Process – Prepare participants to participate in seminar discussion:

Be sure participants are settled and seated where everyone can see each others’ face. Then relay…

“A Paideia Seminar is a thoughtful discussion where we work with others to understand important ideas.

“The main purpose for discussing How Flowers Changed the World is to better understand adaptation, cause and effect, change, evolution, and time—to better understand what we think of these ideas as well as how others view them.

“During this discussion, we’re really going to practice building on what others’ say.

“You do not need to raise your hands in order to speak; try to stay focused on the main speaker and wait your turn to talk.

“We’ll also practice listening by using others’ names and paraphrasing what we hear others saying. We will agree and disagree in a courteous, thoughtful manner.

“As the facilitator, my job is to ask challenging, open-ended questions. I will take some notes to keep up with the talk turns and flow of ideas.

“Now, let’s do a little self-assessment. Based on our other discussions, I’m going to suggest that our group goal for today is TO BUILD ON WHAT OTHERS’ SAY.

[Display the group goal for all to see.]

“Now think about how you usually participate in our seminars. What would be a good goal for you today? Maybe you’d like to choose from one of these:

Use others’ names
Refer to the text
Paraphrase others’ ideas
Ask a genuine question

Please write your personal goal at the top of your copy of the text.”
Seminar

Opening – Identify main ideas from the text:

Consider climate, land, plants, and animals? Which of the four was most interesting in this essay? (round robin) Read a short passage that illustrates your answer and explain. (spontaneous discussion)

Core – Focus/analyze textual details:

When Eiseley writes in paragraph 3 that “there is nothing very ‘normal’ about Nature,” what do you think he means? Do you agree?

How would you explain the relationship between the ideas in paragraph 13 (“simple, primitive seeds”) and paragraph 25 (“true, flowering plants”)?

Will someone read paragraph 21 aloud? . . . Why do you think Eiseley uses the terms “chosen” and “devised” to describe what plants are doing?

What do you think Eiseley means by geologic time? Why does he keep referring to it?

Take a look at paragraph 34. Consider the sentences: “Nature had not done well by him. It was as if she had hesitated and never quite made up her mind.” What do you think of this description?

Closing – Personalize and apply the textual ideas:

What does this essay/discussion teach you about your relationship to the natural world?
Post-Seminar

Process – Assess individual and group participation in seminar discussion:

“Thank you for your focused and thoughtful participation in our seminar.

“Take a few minutes to reflect on your relative success in meeting the personal process goal you set prior to the discussion. Please review the goal you set for yourself and briefly reflect in writing to what extent you met the goal. In addition, note why you think you performed as you did.

(Pause for reflection.)

“How did we do as a group? Let’s rate our seminar from 0-5, with 5 meaning perfect and 0 meaning we really need improvement. With a hand signal, how would you rate our seminar for today?

Now, would someone say why you gave us a rating of --- 3, 5, 0? Our group goal was to BUILD ON OTHERS’ IDEAS. How did we do with that specifically?

(Pause for discussion.)

“Now would some volunteer to share your self-assessment and reflection…?

(Invite students to share how they did as individuals and help them identify an appropriate goal for next seminar.)

“What should we work on together next seminar? As always, our goal is continuous improvement: both as individual seminar participants and as citizens. Thanks again for your participation.”

Content – Extend application of textual and discussion ideas:

Ask participants to take up to 30 minutes (depending on your schedule) to go outside and walk about alone. While outside, they should choose at least one attribute of the natural world to consider in detail—preferably something they’ve never really studied before. They should take a notebook, a pen or pencil so that they can sketch and/or take notes. Afterwards, ask them to share their discoveries with others (including any reflections about how this text/discussion changed the way they looked at nature).
SEMINARY PLAN: “The Gettysburg Address” (1863)
Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

Ideas and Values: citizenship, democracy, sacrifice, social contract

Pre-Seminar

Content –

Post the speech in the classroom prior to the seminar.

As you begin pre-seminar, state directly that the purpose is to gain understanding of the ideas and values in the text, among others: citizenship, democracy, sacrifice, social contract.

Read (or have a student read) the text aloud as all other students follow along reading silently. Assign participants the task of taking two column notes while reading the text a second time. Have them set up for two column notes in this way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word or phrase from the text</th>
<th>Your thought or feeling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Discuss the following background information:

🔗 The Gettysburg Address is the most famous speech by Abraham Lincoln and one of the best known speeches in American history.

🔗 It was delivered at the dedication of the Soldiers’ National Cemetery in Gettysburg, PA on the afternoon of Thursday, November 19, 1863, four and a half months after the Union army defeated the Confederates at the decisive Battle of Gettysburg.

🔗 It followed a long and rambling oration by a famous speaker of the day (several hours long) and was so short and so direct that Lincoln had finished speaking and returned to his seat while most of the audience was still settling to listen.

Remind the seminar participants that this is a difficult but also an extraordinarily important text that will require their full attention. Anticipate that much of the discussion will focus on what key words mean.

Consider assigning students strategic seating—mix them up based on gender and habits of discussion. Have students take 3-4 minutes to share with a partner, one item from their two column notes.
Process –

Be sure participants are settled and seated where everyone can see each others’ face. Then relay…

“A Paideia Seminar is a thoughtful discussion where we work with others to understand important ideas.

“The main purpose for discussion the Gettysburg Address is to better understand democracy and citizenship—to better understand what we think of these ideas as well as how others view them.

“During this discussion, we’re really going to practice looking at the person speaking.

“You do not need to raise your hands in order to speak; try to stay focused on the main speaker and wait your turn to talk.

“We’ll also practice building on what others say-- agree and disagree in a courteous, thoughtful manner.

“As the facilitator, my job is to ask challenging, open-ended questions. I will take some notes to keep up with the talk turns and flow of ideas.

“Now, let’s do a little self-assessment. Based on our other discussions, I’m going to suggest that our group goal for today is TOLOOK AT THE PERSON SPEAKING.

[Display the group goal for all to see.]

“Now think about how you usually participate in our seminars. What would be a good goal for you today? Maybe you’d like to choose from one of these:

Use others’ names
Refer to the text
Build on others’ ideas
Keep an open mind
Ask an open-ended question

Please write your personal goal at the top of your copy of the text.”
Seminar Questions

**Opening** –

Have someone read the speech aloud one more time.

Of the 266 words contained in this version of the “Gettysburg Address,” which one do you think is most significant? (round-robin response)

Why? (spontaneous discussion)

**Core** –

Lincoln opens the address by saying that America is a nation “conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” He follows by describing the Civil War as “testing whether … any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure.” What does he mean? What forces would prevent a nation dedicated to equality from surviving?

Why does Lincoln say that they “cannot dedicate, … cannot consecrate, … cannot hallow this ground” when that is precisely the purpose of the ceremony?

Lincoln knew that, if popular, his speech would be reprinted in countless newspapers across America, in both the North and South. Beyond those who were physically present at Gettysburg on November 19, 1863, to whom do you think he was speaking? Why?

Based on the text, what do you think Lincoln wanted his audience to believe or do as a result of his speech?

**Closing** –

Lincoln closes the Gettysburg Address by challenging his audience: “it is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us.” Were he alive today, what “great task” do you think Lincoln would challenge us with?

In what ways could we rise to the challenge?
Post-Seminar

Process – Assess individual and group participation in seminar discussion:

“Thank you for your focused and thoughtful participation in our seminar.

“Take a few minutes to reflect on your relative success in meeting the personal process goal you set prior to beginning the discussion. Please review the goal you set for yourself and briefly reflect in writing to what extent you met the goal. In addition, note why you think you performed as you did. (Pause for reflection.)

“How did we do as a group? Let’s rate our seminar from 0-5, with 5 meaning perfect and 0 meaning we really need improvement. With a hand signal, how would you rate our seminar for today?

Now, would someone say why you gave us a rating of --- 3, 5, 0?

Our group goal was to LOOK AT THE PERSON SPEAKING. How did we do with that specifically?

(Pause for discussion.)

“Now would some volunteer to share your self-assessment and reflection…?

(Invite students to share how they did as individuals and help them identify an appropriate goal for next seminar)

“What should we work on together next seminar? As always, our goal is continuous improvement: both as individual seminar participants and as citizens. Thanks again for your participation.”

Content –

After the seminar, divide the participants in groups of three to five students each and assign the various groups different perspectives from which to respond to the speech. They are to pretend that they were present in the audience on November 19, 1863 and heard Lincoln deliver the original “Gettysburg Address”:

☞ A wounded veteran of the Union army
☞ An escaped slave living in the North
☞ A Southern sympathizer who believes in a separate Southern nation
☞ The mother of a son killed in the battle
☞ An anti-war activist from the North
☞ A Congressman who is Lincoln’s political enemy
☞ A wounded veteran of the Southern army.

Have the groups reread the Gettysburg Address looking for specific statements that would elicit a response from their perspective. Have them compose a letter to a friend who shares their perspective, describing Lincoln’s speech. (Use a standard writing rubric for letter writing and distribute along with this assignment.)
SEMINAR PLAN: Sacrament of the Last Supper (1955)
Salvador Dali (1904-1989)

Ideas and Values: geometry, infinity, mathematics, symmetry.

Pre-Seminar

Content – Present relevant background information:

In the week prior to the seminar post some or all of the following terms on an Art Word Wall (or add them to the class Word Wall if one already exists) in the classroom and work with students to define them.

Elements of Art: form, line, shape, color, texture, space, value.

Principles of Art: emphasis, balance, harmony, variety, movement, rhythm, proportion, unity.

In addition, during the week prior to the seminar, display a color print of the painting for students to examine at their leisure.

On the day of the seminar, ask participants to read (view) the text for a minute and agree to refer to the image into 4 quadrants (upper left, lower right, etc).

Assign the participants to work in pairs. First, place a piece of tracing paper over the painting and secure with small pieces of masking tape. One at a time, in the pair, should use a pencil to trace as much of the painting as possible, focusing on the shapes.

Have the partners remove the tracing paper from the painting and examine the original and the sketch side-by-side. Then they should identify on their representation of the painting (the tracing paper) the shapes, images, and features that stand out as significant by writing or drawing on the paper itself.

Just before the seminar, provide the following background information on Dali:

- Salvador Dali was a Spanish surrealist painter, best known for his technical virtuosity, striking (if sometime disturbing) images, and optical illusions.
- He was heavily influenced by Picasso (among others) as a young painter, and he in turned influenced an entire generation of younger “surrealists.”
- In addition to painting, he also worked in film, sculpture, and photography later in his career.
- He was fascinated by the developments of modern science (DNA, theories about time) and by mathematics, especially geometry.
**Process** – Prepare participants to participate in seminar discussion with a version of the following script:

“We are going to have a Paideia Seminar today. And our purpose is to think together about geometry, infinity, mathematics, symmetry.

The main purpose for doing seminar is to better understand this painting, to better understand ourselves and each other.

“As participants, your job is to really think, listen, and talk with each other. You can help each other do this by using each other’s names.

“You do not need to raise your hands in order to speak; you should really try to stay focused by looking at the speaker and waiting your turn to talk.

“You may agree or disagree. For example, you might say, ‘I disagree with what Joanna said because…

My job as facilitator is to ask questions. I will take notes to be a good listener. I am one among equals here today.

“Now, let’s think about how we normally participate in a discussion as a group. What goal should set for ourselves that will help us talk together? For this seminar, I would suggest **TO BUILD ON OTHERS’ IDEAS.**
[Set group goal and display it for all to see.]

“Please consider the list of personal participation goals that I have listed on the board.”

To look at the person speaking
To refer to the text in detail
To speak at least three times
To ask a question

“Is there one that is a particular challenge for you personally? Will you choose one goal from the list and commit to achieving it during the discussion we are about to have? Please write your personal goal… at the top of your copy of the text, on your name tent or on your goals sheet.”
Seminar

Just prior to the seminar, state directly that our purpose in participating in this dialogue is to gain understanding of the ideas and values in the text. More specifically, our purpose is to discuss the following ideas, among others: *geometry, infinity, mathematics, symmetry.*

*Opening:*

What detail in the painting is most interesting to you? (round-robin response) Why? (spontaneous discussion)

*Core:*

What geometric shapes do you see in the painting?

How does Dali use geometry to convey his ideas?

Based on the text, would you say that certain geometric shapes have a particular character or power? Explain.

What role does symmetry play in this work?

The frame of the painting is a large rectangle? What role does this geometric shape play in the design of the painting?

*Closing:*

Look around you: where do you see geometry in the *natural* world? In the *manmade* world?
Post-Seminar

Process – Assess individual and group participation in seminar discussion:

“Thank you for your focused and thoughtful participation in our seminar.

“As part of the post-seminar process, I would first like to ask you to take a few minutes to reflect on your relative success in meeting the personal process goal you set prior to beginning the discussion. Please review the goal you set for yourself and reflect in writing to what extent you met the goal. In addition, note why you think you performed as you did. (Pause for reflection.)

“Would several volunteers please share your self-assessment and reflection….

“Now I would like us to talk together about how we did in relation to the group process goal we set for ourselves (TO FOCUS ON THE DETAILS IN THE PAINTING). On a scale of one to ten, ten being perfect, how would you say we did? Why? (Pause for discussion.)

“As always, our goal is continuous improvement: both as individual seminar participants and as citizens. Thanks again for your participation.”

Content – Extend application of textual and discussion ideas:
Have the seminar partners decide on a theme (idea or value) that they would like to portray using a geometrical drawing and then sketch their concept on a blank sheet of paper using pencil, pen, ruler, etc. Have each pair share their sketch with the group, sign their work, and then display in the classroom along with a print of Dali’s “Last Supper.”
SEMINAR PLAN: Hamlet’s Soliloquy (~1599)
William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Ideas and Values: courage, dream, life & death thought, language

Pre-Seminar

State directly that our purpose in participating in this dialogue is to gain understanding of the ideas and values in the text. More specifically, our purpose is to discuss the following ideas, among others: courage, dream, life and death thought, language.

Content – Present relevant background information:

Just prior to the seminar, share the following background information:

Our seminar text is the most famous of Hamlet’s soliloquies, the Act III, Scene I “to be or not to be” speech (lines 64-96 in the most common version of the play). In the week prior to the seminar, post and study the unfamiliar words from the soliloquy in anticipation of the seminar.

During the several days just prior to the seminar, show video clips of various actors reading (Lawrence Olivier, Mel Gibson, etc.) performing the speech, while students follow on their copy of the text. As time permits, discuss how the various performances dramatize the text.

On the day of the seminar, share the following background information:

Hamlet is a tragedy by William Shakespeare, believed to have been written between 1599 and 1601.

The play, set in Denmark, recounts how Prince Hamlet exacts revenge on his uncle Claudius, who has murdered Hamlet’s Father, the King, and then taken the throne and married Hamlet’s Mother. The play vividly charts the course of real and feigned madness—from overwhelming grief to seething rage—and explores themes of treachery, revenge, and moral corruption.

Hamlet is Shakespeare’s longest play, and among the most powerful and influential tragedies in the English language. It provides a storyline capable of “seemingly endless retelling and adaptation by others”. During Shakespeare’s lifetime the play was one of his most popular works, and it still ranks high among his most-performed plays.

In the four hundred years since, it has been played by highly acclaimed actors, and sometimes actresses, of each successive age.
Process – Prepare participants to participate in seminar discussion with a version of the following script:

“We are about to participate in a Paideia Seminar discussion of what is probably the most famous scene in the world’s most famous play.

“The main purpose of seminar is to arrive at a fuller understanding of the textual ideas and values in Hamlet’s soliloquy, of ourselves, and of each other.

“As the facilitator, I am primarily responsible for asking challenging, open-ended questions, and I will take a variety of notes to keep up with the talk turns and flow of ideas. I will help move the discussion along in a productive direction by asking follow-up questions based on my notes.

“As participants, I am asking you to think, listen, and speak candidly about your thoughts, reactions, and ideas. You can help each other do this by using each other’s names.

“You do not need to raise your hands in order to speak; rather, the discussion is collaborative in that you try to stay focused on the speaker and wait your turn to talk.

“You should try to agree or disagree in a courteous, thoughtful manner. For example, you might say, ‘I disagree with what Joanna said because…’, focusing on the ideas involved, not the individuals.

“Now, let’s think about how we normally participate in a discussion as a group. Is there a goal that we can set for ourselves that will help the flow and meaning of the seminar? For this seminar, I would suggest TO FOCUS ON THE IDEAS IN THE TEXT.
[Set group goal and display it for all to see.]

“Please consider the list of personal participation goals that I have listed on the board.”

To focus on the person who is speaking
To refer to the text in detail
To keep an open mind
To speak out of uncertainty

“Is there one that is a particular challenge for you personally? Will you choose one goal from the list and commit to achieving it during the discussion we are about to have?… Please write your personal goal at the top of your copy of the text.”
Seminar

Opening – Identify main ideas from the text:
What phrase from the text (other than “to be or not to be”) might best serve as the title to these 33 lines? (round-robin response) Why did you pick that phrase? (spontaneous discussion)

Core – Focus/analyze textual details:
Based on the text, why do you think Hamlet says that “to die: to sleep… ‘tis a consummation devoutly to be wished”?

Does Hamlet choose life or death? How do you know?

How would you describe Hamlet himself—based on this glimpse into his mind under stress?

This play was one of Shakespeare’s most popular during his lifetime and has remained so for 400 years since. Based our discussion, what might make this play so compelling? Refer to the text.

Closing – Personalize and apply the textual ideas:
In this text, Hamlet debates the nature of life versus death. Can you think of other essential paradoxes that haunt human kind in a similar way? Can you describe when you have been faced with a fundamental paradox and how you responded?
Post-Seminar

Process – Assess individual and group participation in seminar discussion with an appropriate version of the following script:

“Thank you for your focused and thoughtful participation in our seminar.

“As part of the post-seminar process, I would first like to ask you to take a few minutes to reflect on your relative success in meeting the personal process goal you set prior to beginning the discussion. Please review the goal you set for yourself and reflect in writing to what extent you met the goal. In addition, note why you think you performed as you did. (Pause for reflection.)

“Would several volunteers please share your self-assessment and reflection…

“Now I would like us to talk together about how we did in relation to the group process goal we set for ourselves (TO FOCUS ON THE IDEAS IN THE TEXT). On a scale of one to ten, ten being perfect, how would you say we did? Why? (Pause for discussion.)

“As always, our goal is continuous improvement: both as individual seminar participants and as citizens. Thanks again for your participation.”

Content – Extend application of textual and discussion ideas:
Ask the participants to work together with one or two other seminar participants to draft stage directions for a famous actor to perform this scene from *Hamlet*. The participants get to choose the actor (or actress), describe the setting and costume, and describe what they as directors would have the actor do while saying his or her lines.
PRE-SEMINARY

Process — Prepare participants to participate in seminar discussion:

Discuss seminar protocol in detail. Distribute a copy of the problem to each student (one she or he can write on) along with scratch paper and pencils, as well as other tools (rulers, etc.) they might need. Designate a clean board for students to illustrate their work.

Content — Present relevant background information:

Focus on “reading” the math problem. Have students read the problem several times carefully, taking notes on what they think are key words and phrases. As a group, discuss definitions for key vocabulary and identify exactly what sort of information will suffice as a “solution” to the problem.

SEMINAR

Opening — Identify main ideas from the text:

Separate the participants into pairs or triplets for this opening question: “What is the strategy you would use to begin solving the problem? Explain it as clearly as possible.” Coach the collaboration. After a few minutes, ask each team to identify a spokesperson to explain the strategy (round-robin with group spokespersons).

Core — Focus/analyze textual details:

Explore the implications of each strategy in turn, taking time to see if it is likely to provide some sort of solution. Possible follow-up questions involve asking the students to compare and contrast the strategies, asking:

- Which yields the most precise answer?
- Which is best for estimating?
- Which can be checked for accuracy?
- Which is fastest?
Which can be used to develop a formula for solving similar problems?

What information do you need to solve the problem that you are not given?

Which information is misleading?

Closing — Personalize and apply the textual ideas:

What is another situation in which you could apply this strategy?

POST-SEMINAR

Process — Assess individual and group participation in seminar discussion:
Allow participants to reflect on the group’s participation in the seminar, as well as goal attainment.

Content — Extend application of textual and discussion ideas:
Have students write a concise set of directions for solving this and similar problems.
Share with the group, defining a list of math vocabulary.
Science Experiment Seminar

PRE-SEMIBAR

Content — Present relevant background information:
Discuss “science” as a way of knowing. Explain that not only are you going to do a scientific experiment, you are going to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the experiment as a “way of knowing” about nature.

☐ Set up the experiment.

☐ Have students work in small groups to articulate a hypothesis for the outcome of the experiment.

☐ Have students conduct the experiment and record their data.

☐ Have groups share their data with the whole class.

Process — Prepare participants to participate in seminar discussion:
Review seminar guidelines and role play behavioral expectations. Using a current seminar checklist or rubric, have each student set a process goal for this seminar. Also discuss what the students should work on as a group to have a successful seminar and select a specific group goal for the dialogue.

SEMINAR

Opening — Identify main ideas from the text:
What did you and your partner(s) hypothesize would be the outcome of this experiment? (round-robin with group spokespersons) Were you “right” or “wrong” in your hypothesis? (spontaneous)

Core — Focus/analyze textual details:
What trends do you see in what you and your classmates expected to happen?
What trends do you see in the data that you and your classmates collected?
How would you modify your hypothesis to make it more “correct” or more specific?
How would you modify this experiment to collect further data?
Closing — Personalize and apply the textual ideas:

What is the relation of the Scientific Method (as we've practiced it here) to the Truth?

POST-SEMINAR

Process — Assess individual and group participation in seminar discussion:

Review the seminar process with the students. Discuss to what extent they achieved their individual and group goals. Plan for the next seminar.

Content — Extend application of textual and discussion ideas:

Have students work in pairs to design the next experiment they would conduct based on the outcome of this experiment. Discuss with them how they will work to collect more valuable (detailed or specific or “true”) data from successive experiments.
APPENDIX D: BIBLIOGRAPHY
Bibliography


